

Northeast Oklahoma Workforce Investment Board
Matching Summer Youth Employment Program Placements to Career Goals

The Northeast Oklahoma Workforce Investment Board operated a summer youth employment program in Nowata, Delaware, Craig, Washington, Rogers, Ottawa and Mayes Counties, providing work experience and work readiness training to 155 youth during the summer months.

Youth in the program were partnered with a career manager to help identify career goals. As those goals were established, youth were provided work experience opportunities to match their career goals. During the work experience, youth were trained and mentored by their employers and career managers. Youth were taught skills needed for successful employment, and offered the opportunity to participate in financial literacy training, academic improvement classes, and social growth programs as well.

Employers from both the public and private sectors partnered with the Northeast Oklahoma WIB to provide the summer employment opportunities to the youth. Employers were encouraged to mentor the youth matched with them, provide them on-the-job training, and help them develop the career skills needed for success.

The summer youth employment program provided other opportunities for older youth participating in the program beyond the education and summer work experience. Several of the youth participating in the program have been hired by the worksites; others will be attending training in alignment with their career goals. Some of this training will be funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, but some will be funded by the employers.

The summer youth employment program had a huge impact on the youth involved in the program. Ashley, a 20-year-old single mother from the Bartlesville area, has been hired permanently by her worksite. Ashley's summer work experience was in the Bartlesville workforce office assisting customers. She gained valuable experience from her summer employment in the workforce center and was mentored by staff and provided the training necessary for successful employment beyond the summer work experience.

The WIB received approximately \$284,000 for the summer youth employment program. The federal government requested that 80 percent of these funds be used by March 31, 2010; as of Sept. 30, Northeast Oklahoma has spent 86 percent of the funds received.

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