



Work Experience Success

Why it works, what sets up apart?

Up Front Preparation

Project YES is a Youth serving organization in the heart of the San Joaquin Valley. Project YES focuses on employing and giving disconnected youth the opportunity to re-connect with their future through employment and obtaining self-sufficiency. One of the strongest aspects about Project YES is our Paid Work Experience Activity. Allowing youth to earn their first paychecks or work in a setting that has strategic planning has a natural attraction and engagement aspect which is critical for our youth to stay engaged and have long term success.

In our Program Preparation we engage employers up front in the process of the “pre-training” of each client. By the time youth get to the actual “paid work experience” they have a better concept and business culture of what each employer is expecting. This point of reference for the clients has proved to be invaluable. Teaching youth “soft skills” is of course critical but if youth have no concept of it really means to get up early, do hard physical work, clean toilets, take out trash, and deal with grouchy bosses then all of the soft skills we are so concerned about teaching does not go farther than the first week of employment. Youth do not have true concepts of “WORK”! The importance of being able to actually work through issues as the youth are employed and earning ties everything together.

The other aspect we understand to be most challenging for our youth is youth learning how to manage their lives around the responsibility of having a job. A lot of youth lose their job or are not successful in school due to factors which have nothing to do with their actual jobs. As our youth are on their “paid work experience” we are assisting them with building their overall life skills which we know directly contributes to on the job success. We do this through by creating additional activities, i.e.; life skills workshops, scheduling appointments, dealing with family, and the “stuff” that youth say they have in their lives.

Matching the client to the right job

Of those youth who are placed in a paid work experience staff have done a lot of up front work with the youth to do the best job matching possible. We are also including the employer in this aspect and asking what the employer envisions 6 months from now. We want to not just place youth in a “paid work experience” just for the experience. We want youth to know that when they perform well they will be rewarded with a permanent job offer from the employer. Planning beyond today becomes critical for this success not only for the youth but the employer. Finding companies who are not only interested in working with youth but truly investing in youth is critical. Employer’s buy into our system because we are providing a valuable service. Besides

the up-front cost savings for employers we are providing opportunities for employers to build a more stable workforce and train youth who really want to buy into whatever company philosophy that is being sold.

Project YES has invested many years of advocating for youth in the workplace and when our youth are successful this changes the employers expectations and creates a level of trust that now has grown to over 300 employers county wide. Youth come to Project YES because they know they will be given this opportunity to work no matter what circumstances have got them where they currently are. Our Standards of Success have created a seamless process for which Youth Employee and Employer both benefit. Let's be clear—businesses want and need to make money—are we creating employees who will be money makers for business or money wasters? We believe at Project YES we are helping businesses make money through giving them great young workers which in turn creates future jobs for more of our youth.