



GETTING STARTED

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CREATING A QUALITY CAREER DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE

ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS

For a career development experience (CDE) to have impact and contribute to meaningful competency development for participants, the components and learning outcomes need to be explicit. The CDE should be a carefully monitored work experience in which participants have personal and career-related goals and the opportunity to reflect throughout the experience. A quality CDE, at minimum, will include the following features and outcomes:



Opportunity to Reflect

Time is provided throughout the CDE for participants to examine both how and what they have learned – specifically their development and attainment of essential employability and technical competencies.

Support from an Industry Expert

Host staff are consistently available and work one-on-one with participants. Along with providing tasks, they coach participants through best practices and are the primary provider of feedback on a participant's professional skills assessment (see "During" for more details).

Tasks that Reinforce Competencies

Participants are provided a variety of tasks that are meaningful and reflective of authentic working conditions. Competencies developed through completion of these tasks are transferable and applicable to multiple career and postsecondary options.

Participant and Host Support

Opportunities are available for the participant and host to submit feedback directly to the managing organization to address successes and challenges of the CDE. The managing organization is also available throughout the CDE to address needs in real time for both the host and participant.

Assets- and Needs-Based Approach

Participants are valued as resources of talent with background knowledge and lived experiences that are recognized as a benefit to the host. CDEs will provide a framework to build on the potential of all participants and provide needs-based support for participant's areas of growth and development.

Relevant and Rewarding

The CDE is applicable to a career pathway that a participant is pursuing and engages them in a network of industry professionals for future advising and contact purposes. Participants are recognized for their work through some form of credit, compensation, or both.



TOOLKIT TERMINOLOGY

Definitions for the terms "participant," "managing organization," and "host" are given in the Introduction.

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PLANNING THE CDE

With the essential components of a quality CDE in mind, your managing organization can begin to build out a timeline of events and action items for your program. Each of these components and their related items should always refer back to the type and rigor of CDE that you want to offer both participants and hosts. This quality check at multiple points along the planning process will ensure that CDEs result in successful experiences for all parties involved.

A summary of CDE components and related action items to consider includes:

HOST OUTREACH

Recruit and secure host sites for participant CDE placements.

Collect information on host sites and determine capacity for offering CDEs.

Train staff as needed if participants are completing CDE in-house.

ONBOARDING FOR HOSTS

Review and confirm expectations for host responsibilities and experience for participants.

Determine any specific onboarding needs for participants to complete before their first day.

Establish your managing organization as a support and resource provider throughout the CDE process.

ONBOARDING FOR PARTICIPANTS

Complete any needed pre-assessments to determine participant readiness and any unique needs or accommodations.

Collect participant interest and permission forms to determine placement site and approval to participate.

Prepare participants for a professional environment through training and resources.

DURING

Develop professional skills assessment(s) relevant to current CDE offerings for participants.

Determine a timeline and process for collecting host and participant feedback (site visits, surveys, phone calls, etc.).

Prepare a plan and resources for situations where hosts and/or participants may experience challenges.



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Consider the ways other stakeholders can be involved in the development and implementation process of a CDE program. It will be important to maintain open lines of communication and solicit input/feedback from those stakeholders directly affected outside of hosts and participants. Families, principals, teachers, youth workforce development professionals, and intermediary organizations are a few examples of stakeholders capable of providing leverage and engagement to develop a strong CDE program.

WRAPPING UP

Determine how this data and information will be collected and where it will be housed within your managing organization.

Outline the process and provide any necessary materials for participants and hosts to complete to close-out the CDE.

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ACCESS & EQUITY

All participants – regardless of race, socioeconomic status, gender, prior academic achievement, or special learning needs – should have equitable access to and opportunity for full participation in CDEs. Managing organizations play a critical role in ensuring access and opportunity for participants. Some items to consider to determine whether a CDE is providing equitable access are:

Location of CDEs

- Are they strategically located to provide a variety of accessible sites for all participants?
- How will participants be supported to meet the transportation needs of getting to host site?

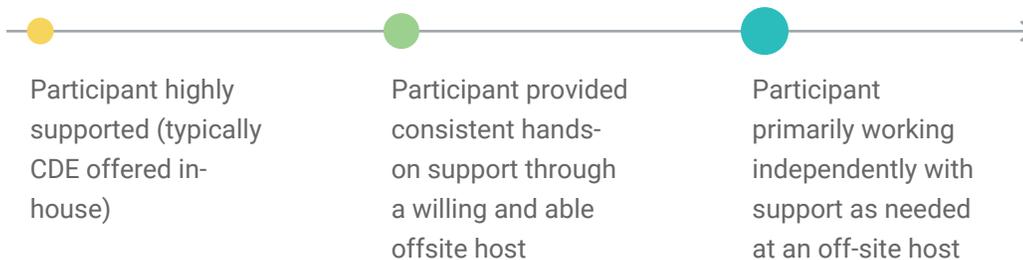
Access to Information

- Have all participants been provided the same information and options regarding CDE opportunities?
- How and where is information being delivered so that all potential participants are aware of CDEs?

Supports to Succeed

- What tailored supports are available for each special group represented by participants?
- How are participants assessed to determine any specific needs and/or supports to complete the CDE?

It will be necessary at times to customize and modify the experience on a case-by-case basis, but a general diverse selection of CDE models can be helpful to provide a continuum of levels of support and placement site options. One great example of a diverse continuum is the tiered system High School District 214 has implemented to accommodate various levels of support and supervision needed for student CDE participants. This structure considers whether a participant is prepared to go off-site for their CDE and the ability of an off-site host to provide the needed level of hands-on support and guidance throughout.

**ENGAGING DIVERSE POPULATIONS**

Successful engagement of a diverse population of participants may involve adjusting your CDE program's terminology, group norms, and personal interactions. These adjustments should be incorporated into the design, delivery, and implementation of your CDE program. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Adolescent Health, has compiled [resources and information](#) on designing services and materials to fit the needs of diverse youth.

**EXEMPLAR**

See the [D214 Career Pathways Guide](#) for more detail on their tiered system.

MODELS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

There are several models for CDEs, and each of these might entail a range of total hours for the participant. However, for a CDE to count toward a College and Career Pathway Endorsement or as a College and Career Readiness Indicator for ESSA, it must total 60 cumulative hours through a single experience or across two experiences.

Note: No individual experience may be less than 20 hours. This means a CDE can be one 60-hour experience, two 30-hour experiences, or one 20-hour experience plus one 40-hour experience.

Models may include any of the following examples:

- Internship
- School-based enterprise
- Supervised agricultural experience
- Cooperative education
- Research-based internship
- Remote work for a client or employer
- Student-led enterprise
- Youth apprenticeship

Following are descriptions of each model and community examples.

MODELS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

TYPE OF CDE	INTERNSHIP	MICRO-INTERNSHIP
DESCRIPTION OF MODEL	Typically defined as a period of work experience offered for a set period of time and refers to a wide range of job placement opportunities	Short-term professional assignments that can take place year-round and typically range from 5–40 total hours of work to accommodate participant schedules
COMMUNITY EXAMPLE	RUSH University Medical Center – REACH MedSTEM Pathways	Streamwood Career Exploration Program
SCHEDULE & LENGTH OF PROGRAM	6 weeks, occurring in the summer	5 days, occurring over participant's spring break
TOTAL # OF HOURS	120	32.5
HOST COMMITMENT	Hospital staff volunteer based on schedule availability, rotated to provide hands-on support to participants	Staff member assigns project deliverables and consults on participant project development process
TYPICAL PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants explore several departments and units in the hospital setting through hands-on learning Participants take courses in college and career readiness, life and workforce skills development Participants network with other students and healthcare professionals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants are placed with local organizations to learn about business, with an emphasis on work ethic, management, and career opportunities Participants work on industry-based projects to produce a business proposal with the potential for implementation that solves an host-identified challenge
LOCATION	Hospital site; placement varies by departmental needs	Participants are placed with a range of local organizations
CREDIT VS. COMPENSATION	Paid	Paid
LINK(S) FOR MORE INFORMATION	MedSTEM Internship	U-46 School District: Streamwood High School Students Explore Career Pathways on Spring Break Video: Streamwood High School Career Exploration Program 2019

MODELS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

TYPE OF CDE	SCHOOL-BASED ENTERPRISE (SBE)	SUPERVISED AGRICULTURAL EXPERIENCE
DESCRIPTION OF MODEL	An entrepreneurial operation in a school setting that provides goods/ services to meet the needs of the market, managed and operated by students as hands-on learning laboratories that integrate National Curriculum Standards in marketing, finance, hospitality or management	Experiential and work-based learning as an integral component of academic course work to extend beyond the classroom and into the community, providing participants with opportunities to apply academic and occupational skills in the workplace or a simulated workplace environment
COMMUNITY EXAMPLE	District 211 Family and Consumer Sciences, Practices in Entrepreneurship	SAEs are a required component of an agriculture education program and intended for every student
SCHEDULE & LENGTH OF PROGRAM	One semester, two-period course	Varies depending on program model; typically occurring outside of classroom hours
TOTAL # OF HOURS	2–5 hours/week	Varies depending on program model
HOST COMMITMENT	Participants are supervised by their course instructor(s)	Formulated by the participant with the support of parent/guardians, hosts, and the agricultural instructor
TYPICAL PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants take on increased responsibility in the management of a bakery/coffee shop with items available for purchase weekly by school staff and their peers • Participants are trained in advanced culinary techniques and production management for running a successful business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Own and operate a business by planning, implementing, operating, managing finances, and assuming risk for an enterprise • Work, volunteer, and/or serve in an workplace setting • Choose an agricultural problem and design a plan to investigate and analyze • Keep records of business related and personal time and finances for personal growth and literacy
LOCATION	In school	Varies depending on program model
CREDIT VS. COMPENSATION	College credit with local community college	Can receive educational credit, service credit, and/or compensation
LINK(S) FOR MORE INFORMATION	District 211 Curriculum Guide	The National Council for Agricultural Education Explore SAE

MODELS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

TYPE OF CDE	COOPERATIVE EDUCATION	RESEARCH INTERNSHIP
DESCRIPTION OF MODEL	A structured method of combining classroom-based education with practical work experience, providing academic credit for structured job experience and related class includes units in skills required for successful employment	Participants are hired for specific tasks within an established project and receive basic training in research skills and data collection methods that can be incorporated in all aspects of research, providing for greater decision-making authority and leadership development
COMMUNITY EXAMPLE	Lake Park High School District Cooperative Marketing Education	Field Museum Digital Learning Internship
SCHEDULE & LENGTH OF PROGRAM	2-semester long program, one class period with early release last period of the day to complete hours at host site	Monday to Friday for 6-weeks, 6.5 hours per day, occurring in the summer
TOTAL # OF HOURS	Up to 540 hours	195
HOST COMMITMENT	Provide at least 15 hours of work per week, pay students, and participate in an evaluation meeting twice per semester	Provide training and coaching on items as needed for participant's projects and tasks
TYPICAL PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-school study of life skills such as communication, interviewing, and preparation for college and careers • Early release for students to work real jobs in the community • Students are matched to jobs through school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants work with museum plant specimens through research and the creation of a digital media interactive to showcase their work through installments available for public view • Participants rotate among departments and collaborate with scientists, digital learning specialists, and designers
LOCATION	Hybrid: In school and at host site	Field Museum, Chicago, IL
CREDIT VS. COMPENSATION	0.5 credit/semester for the class component, 1 credit/semester for the job component	Paid
LINK(S) FOR MORE INFORMATION	LPS – Cooperative Education	Field Museum High School Science and Digital Learning Program

MODELS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

TYPE OF CDE	REMOTE WORK FOR A CLIENT OR HOST	STUDENT-LED ENTERPRISE
DESCRIPTION OF MODEL	A work experience program in which the participant gains experience while working in a remote, online professional setting and is not physically present at the job location	Voluntarily formed groups who join together to raise awareness, support and engage in entrepreneurial activity that introduces learners to the possibility of different pathways into employment, such as entrepreneurialism
COMMUNITY EXAMPLE	Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce Foundation STEM Internship Program	INCubatoredu
SCHEDULE & LENGTH OF PROGRAM	Monday to Friday, 7-weeks, 20–25 hours per week in the summer	2-semester course
TOTAL # OF HOURS	140–175	Follows course hours and schedule
HOST COMMITMENT	Clients of the Illinois Small Business Development Center who have an expressed need for help with their website, social media strategies and/or online marketing programs provide parameters for the work and are available for consultation as needed	Entrepreneurs and industry experts serve as volunteer coaches and mentors guiding student teams through the processes of developing hypotheses about a business concept, testing those hypotheses, adapting, and continually learning and improving
TYPICAL PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE	Participants build websites, create digital multimedia presentations, and develop social media platforms	Participants define the opportunity, create solutions, and embrace the outcome, even if they cannot succeed
LOCATION	Students work remotely at the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce	Location where the course is offered
CREDIT VS. COMPENSATION	Credit	Credit
LINK(S) FOR MORE INFORMATION	Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce Foundation	INCubatoredu

MODELS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

TYPE OF CDE	REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP
DESCRIPTION OF MODEL	Provides an opportunity for youth to finish high school and continue on a pathway toward multiple career and educational opportunities, such as entering a registered apprenticeship program, earning an associate and/or a bachelor's degree, and obtaining sustainable employment; seeks to enhance the competitiveness of businesses by connecting youth to work-based learning and developing in-demand skills and competencies
COMMUNITY EXAMPLE	District 214 Department of Labor (DOL) Registered Youth Apprenticeships: Cybersecurity, Automotive Technology and HVAC
SCHEDULE & LENGTH OF PROGRAM	Two academic calendar years including the summer between
TOTAL # OF HOURS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • November - May (Junior Year): 20–30 hours/month • Summer: 28 hours/week • August - May (Senior Year): 15–20 hours/week
HOST COMMITMENT	Participate in training sessions, interview and hire youth, provide on-the-job training, pay youth wages, participate in regular progress reviews, worksite training/work hours, and comply with child labor laws
TYPICAL PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE	In-school youth, at least 16 years old, work alongside hosts to receive an authentic experience to qualify and prepare them for furthering training and employment upon graduation from high school
LOCATION	Host site with related instruction inside classroom
CREDIT VS. COMPENSATION	Participants receive escalating wages as they progress from junior to senior year of high school
LINK(S) FOR MORE INFORMATION	<p>D214 Program Framework</p> <p>Department of Labor: Youth Apprenticeship Tools</p> <p>Department of Labor: Apprenticeship Policy, Investments, and Data and Statistics</p>



WORK-BASED LEARNING RESOURCES FOR IT

The Illinois Science and Technology Coalition partnered with EdSystems and the Illinois Education and Career Success Network to develop the [Guidebook of Professional Learning Experiences within Information Technology](#), organized by team-based challenges and career development experiences. Each example includes a summary of the program/experience, timeline for implementation, funding model, impact, and case study examples of successful activity.

NEEDS OF THE LOCAL LABOR MARKET

To provide a CDE that translates into real access toward meaningful employment for participants upon program completion, it is important to understand and consider the needs of the local labor market. Managing organizations should consider the information you already compiled to determine your pathway programs, specifically:

- What industries are growing and will have future demand for employees?
- Which occupations within these industries have stable or increasing demand?
- Are there jobs that require a particular skillset hosts struggle to find?
- How can the technical competencies be used to validate the needs of hosts?



COMMUNITY EXAMPLES OF DETERMINING LOCAL LABOR MARKET NEEDS



Belvidere School District 100 collaborates with local employers to determine the professional characteristics and skills they feel are necessary for high school students to be successful in their space. District 100 leadership parallels these responses to those outlined in the PWR Act Essential Employability and Technical Competencies to validate how their student programs meet local needs.



The Greater Peoria Economic Development Council identifies the most critical job needs in the Peoria region and determines learning pathways for those jobs. These opportunities are communicated through learning exchange programs and marketing efforts to youth, parents, and educators in the region.



Vermilion Advantage leads economic and workforce development by determining needs and opportunities from both employers and workforce education programs. Through established and trusting relationships, they serve as a liaison to connect employers with participants to help prepare youth to best access future local career opportunities.



THE ROLE OF AN INTERMEDIARY

An intermediary who already has a trusting relationship with hosts in the community can be especially helpful. They may be a local chamber of commerce, local workforce innovation board, or an economic development agency in the region. Intermediaries can be responsible for operational functions and for both daily thinking about next steps to move career pathway system development forward and acting as the effort's champion. It is likely that they already have data and information gathered that can best inform the types of CDEs a managing organization offers as well as which hosts would be most willing to work directly with participants.

CDE ONLINE TOOLKIT RESOURCES

CREATING A QUALITY CAREER DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE

TEMPLATE | Planning Timeline: [PDF](#) // [Word](#)

RESOURCE | Race Forward: [Racial Equity Impact Assessment](#) from

RESOURCE | U.S. Department of Health & Human Services: [Positive Youth Development Resources](#)

MODELS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

EXEMPLAR | Young Invincibles Report: [“Making Youth Apprenticeships Work for Illinois’ Young Adults”](#)

EXEMPLAR | Illinois Science and Technology Coalition: [Guidebook of Professional Learning Experiences within Information Technology](#)

EXEMPLAR | District 214: [Apprenticeship Framework](#)

EXEMPLAR | Supervised Agricultural Experience: [SAE for All Student Guide](#)

EXEMPLAR | Supervised Agricultural Experience: [SAE for All Teacher’s Guide](#)

NEEDS OF THE LOCAL LABOR MARKET

RESOURCE | Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity: [WIOA Regional Planning](#)

RESOURCE | Illinois Department of Employment Security: [Labor Market Information](#)

RESOURCE | Illinois workNet: [Labor Market Information: Step-by-Step Guide](#)

RESOURCE | Illinois workNet: [Career, Wages, and Trends Search](#)

RESOURCE | Illinois workNet: [Demand Occupations](#)

RESOURCE | Illinois workNet: [Detailed Information on National Career Clusters and Related Programs of Study](#)

RESOURCE | JFF Pathways to Prosperity: [Work-Based Learning Intermediaries](#)

RESOURCE | JFF: [Work-Based Learning Delivery Systems, Intermediary Design, Diagnosis, and Improvement](#)