

Career Development Experience Toolkit Overview

September 3, 2025



I-WIN

Illinois Work-Based Learning
Innovation Network



EdSystems

EDUCATION SYSTEMS CENTER *at*
NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

EdSystems' Context



*Helping create a world
where students have
clear, unambiguous paths
to college and career
opportunities that equip
them for meaningful
participation in the global
economy.*

Outcomes We Seek

- That seamless **college and career pathways** increase learners' success
- That **longitudinal and qualitative data** inform research agendas, policy, and continuous improvement
- That **innovative practices** are understood and positioned for scaling

Our Guiding Principles

- Equitable
- Systems-centric
- Evidence-based
- Bi-directional

Policy, Practices, and Impact



Areas of Practice

Advancing college & career readiness & success

- Secondary to postsecondary pathway mapping
- Work-based learning
- Transitional instruction
- Dual credit and enrollment
- Competency-based approaches
- Evaluation frameworks
- Collective impact networks

Services We Offer

Connector, strategist, implementer, intermediary

- Models and implementation resources
- Program design, pilot, and scaling
- Data systems and tools
- Capacity building and professional learning
- Policy development and legislative advisory
- State agency/interagency staffing support
- Intermediary leadership



Explore the [I-WIN Resource Hub](#)
and [subscribe to the newsletter](#)



Highlight and explore
innovative models for
work-based learning



Engage in conversations
on creating sustainable,
high-quality models
that provide broader
and more equitable
access, focusing on
building social capital
for historically
marginalized students



Build connections
among communities to
share best practices,
learnings and resources



Identify needs for state
policy changes or
support systems



Introduce yourself!

Please take a moment to share in the chat your:

- Name
- Role
- Organization

Plus, share any questions top of mind for you about career development experiences and/or the toolkit.

Today's discussion:

- Understanding Career Development Experiences (CDE)
- Exploring the CDE Toolkit
- Strategies for Effective Implementation
- Community-Based Models and Proven Practices
- Actionable Next Steps and Resources



Understanding Career Development Experiences (CDE)

*Background, definition and role in Illinois'
work-based learning continuum*

Policy Framework for CDEs

A career development experience is statutorily defined in the [Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act](#) and included in [Illinois' Career Pathways Dictionary](#) as part of Illinois' broader work-based learning continuum.

Career development experiences are a required component of the [College and Career Pathway Endorsement framework](#) and in Illinois' Every Student Succeeds Act as a College and Career Readiness Indicator.



Work-Based Learning & Host Continuum



Definitions: [Illinois Career Pathways Dictionary](#)



TERM

career development experience

DEFINITION

A supervised work experience relating to an individual's career area of interest that includes the following:

1. A course transcription and corresponding school credit for the experience, compensation of the student's work hours for the career development experience, or both.
2. A workplace with authentic working conditions and tasks that include, but are not limited to, timekeeping, evaluation of work, responsibility to adhere to safety protocols, or adherence to the organization's standard operating procedures. The workplace experience must reinforce the relevant technical and essential employability competencies.
3. Collaboration between the school district and the community or business partners in developing and monitoring the experiences.
4. Feedback is given to the student.
5. At least 60 hours of participation completed by the student through a single experience or across two experiences; however, no individual experience may be less than 20 hours.

In addition to workplace settings in business or community partner locations, a supervised career development experience may include a workplace setting that is:

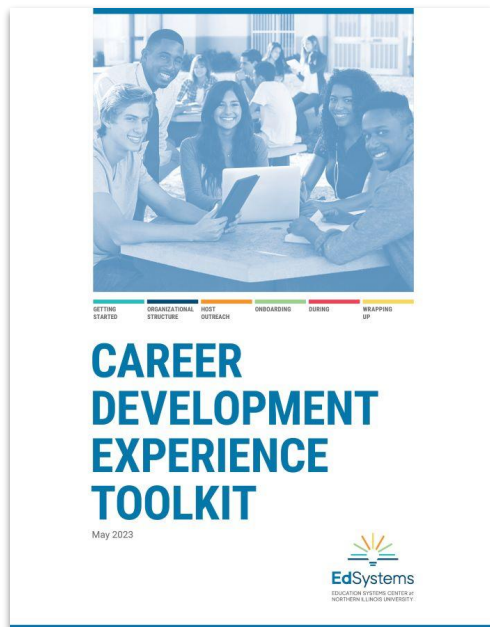
- based in the school district if the setting is authentic and the district employee serving as a supervisor is fulfilling the role of an industry mentor or supervisor rather than the role of a classroom teacher; or
- virtual if it includes authentic virtual, remote, or hybrid working conditions and a mentor or supervisor who is an employee of the workplace's organization.



Exploring the CDE Toolkit

Deep dive into the guidance, templates, and resources included in the toolkit plus strategies for effective implementation

Toolkit Purpose and Structure



- Designed for a wide range of users.
- Organized by stages of CDE implementation, from initial planning to execution and evaluation.
- Includes customizable templates plus best practices and resources.

Accompanying Resources

CAREER DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE TOOLKIT RESOURCES

Resources and templates
to support design and
implementation

August 2023



CAREER DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE TOOLKIT COMPANION PIECE



CAREER DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE TOOLKIT FACILITATION GUIDE



Onboarding Resources

Onboarding for Participants

▼ DEMONSTRATING READINESS

▼ PREPARING FOR THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE

▼ FIRST DAY NEEDS & CONSIDERATIONS

▼ PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES

Onboarding for Hosts

▼ CLARIFYING EXPECTATIONS

> ORIENTATION

1. Template | Host Orientation Presentation: PowerPoint
2. Template | Guidebook for Hosts: PDF // Word
3. Resource | Participant Tasks Examples by Pathway Endorsement Area
4. Resource | Questions for Experienced Hosts
5. Resource | Workplace Accommodation Toolkit from the Job Accommodation Network (JAN)
6. Resource | Inclusive Internship Programs: A How-to Guide for Employers from the U.S. Department of Labor

▼ FIRST DAY NEEDS & CONSIDERATIONS

▼ YOUTH DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

Let's Explore Some Resources

Host Outreach

Resource

[Participant Task Examples by Pathway Endorsement Area](#)

Template: Host Profile

[PDF](#) // [Word](#)

Onboarding

Template: Participants Program Outline & Expectations

[PDF](#) // [Word](#)

Template: Guidebook for Hosts

[PDF](#) // [Word](#)

During

Resource

[Host & Participant Check-In Meetings](#)

Template

[A Guide for Site Visits at Hosts](#)



Strategies for Implementation

- Determine areas of need for your CDEs and focus on the applicable section(s) to start.
- Adapt the toolkit's sample documents to fit your local context.
- Share toolkit resources with industry partners.
- Offer professional development with your team using toolkit materials.



Community-Based Models and Best Practices

*Proven approaches to designing and delivering high-quality
career development experiences*

Community-Based Models

Northern Kane County Health Sciences Internships

Structured, rotational career development experiences, including a health sciences rotational internship and a pharmacy technician Internship. Includes a range of employer-facing resources.

In-House Internships

Naperville Community Unit District 203 and Cherry Creek School District offer in-house CDEs for students, placing them within their own school offices, ranging from IT to transportation, marketing, and accounting.

Boone County Manufacturing Internship

Job descriptions for a variety of CDEs in manufacturing with different employers. Includes student and employer facing resources.

Common High-Quality Practices

Multiple
opportunities for
reflection

Industry partners
serve as both
mentor and
supervisor

Tasks that reinforce
essential and
technical skills

Clear points of
contact to navigate
needs

Students are
engaged as
valuable assets

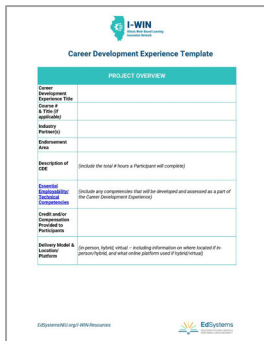
CDE is relevant and
informs next steps



Next Steps

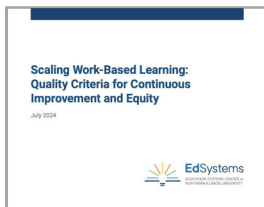
Actions and resources to strengthen existing or design new career development experiences

Additional Resources




Career Development Experience Design Template

A practical planning tool designed to help organizations conceptualize, structure, and document high-quality CDEs. The template provides a flexible framework to guide your thinking and ensure alignment with state requirements.



Scaling Work-Based Learning: Quality Criteria for Continuous Improvement and Equity

A framework to help communities enhance work-based learning. Includes quality criteria, resources, and equity considerations.



What can you do next?

Review the Toolkit

Familiarize yourself with the structure, key components, and available templates.

Identify Your Starting Point

Use the toolkit facilitation guide to assess where your organization is in the CDE development process.

Engage Your Team

Share applicable pieces of the toolkit with colleagues and partners to build shared understanding and momentum.

Coming Up with I-WIN...



October 27: Community of Practice

[Regional Office of Education #47](#) will share how they are supporting schools in designing, implementing, and evaluating team-based challenges that promote collaboration and real-world problem-solving.

[Register now](#)



November 12: Roundtable

Join for a virtual roundtable discussion focused on building regional partnerships with employer partners to ensure all students from local schools have equitable access to work-based learning.

[Register now](#)



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Thank you!

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