

# Summer Employment Starts Success



**By Brianna Morse  
Youth Program Manager**

With nearly one year of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act under our belt, the Department of Workforce Development and its youth service provider partners continue to focus on serving the young Hoosiers most in need of our services. No service is more important and timely as we feel summer creeping upon us as the summer employment and work experience service available through the WorkOne Young Adult Services programs around the state.

Reports from a Pew study released in summer 2015 state that the summer employment rate for youth has been on the decline over the last twenty years. In fact, fewer than 32% of eligible young adults were employed between June and August of 2014. According to Pew, researchers have found a variety of explanations for why the rate of teenage employment is decreasing, all of which are not considered employment by the Bureau of Labor Statistics:

- fewer low-skill, entry-level jobs than in years before;
- schools returning earlier than ever;
- more students taking summer classes;
- more teens doing unpaid community service work and
- more students taking unpaid internships.

Although there may be many factors that contribute to a high youth unemployment rate, our WorkOne Youth teams and their employer relations support teams are focused on finding short-term work experience placements, job shadow opportunities and paid internships that will greatly benefit the youth engaged in our programs. Surely we can all agree that the youth benefit from these work experiences through an increased knowledge of employer expectations, specific skill sets required on the job, practice managing money and a personal budget, and the list goes on.

But what about the benefits to the community and the employers; don't we all win when we take a chance on a youth? Below are just a few reasons why having a summer youth employee can benefit everyone.

1. Gain new insights and creative thinkers. Millennials have a different way of seeing the world, and employers can put this to the test by asking them to help with projects that the full-time staff have been stuck on or need a new viewpoint. If you want help getting the word out on a particular project or product, consider asking your summer employee or intern to create some social media buzz or short videos to make your product more visible to a new market.
2. Mentoring opportunities for staff. Many of the youth involved in our programs could use another caring adult to help them wade through the world, especially if that person is already employed in the youth's dream job. What better person to help them navigate challenging educational paths than someone who is tried and tested in the field. Consider taking a short coffee break with your summer employee or intern

and letting them interview you on your career path and the lessons you learned along the way.

3. Opportunity to mold the workforce pipeline. In addition to the free labor employers may receive if connected to a WorkOne Youth Program, they will have the chance to test potential employees for full-time jobs. Often times, the youth will put their best foot forward when trying to impress an employer or supervisor as they are hoping their short term experience will lead to longer, more meaningful employment. Even if it doesn't work out, worksites should feel confident that the skills they are teaching the youth will benefit a future employer down the road. Consider doing a performance evaluation with the youth halfway through and at the conclusion of their work experience so they have strengths they can share in future interviews and some skills they will need to continue to nurture.

Youth who are employed during the summer can gain a new sense of responsibility, confidence and passion for their future career path. These work-and-learn experiences are paramount in having a skilled and enthusiastic talent pipeline which will help us achieve our 1 million jobs goal by 2025. Help a youth get started today, building their future tomorrow!

