Job Shadow Program Toolkit

Job shadowing is a great opportunity for our future workforce to gain valuable insight through real and relevant learning as they begin to determine the paths they will take post-high school. The goal is for students to come away with a better understanding of their field of interest and the skills needed to be successful.

Steps to Plan a successful Job Shadow

Step 1 – Planning

Determine your program's focus and participants. Are you aiming to place a select group of students, a specific class or after-school program, or an entire grade? Is the experience open to any students that wish to participate?

Determine how or if to implement the program into the students' curriculum. Is the program geared toward a class that will then complete a report or project based on their experience? Is the experience mandatory for an entire grade? Is this an extracurricular activity being offered?

Identify your partners and reach out to local employers.
Consider:

- Who will identify potential hosts and provide the employer contacts?
    - **TIP:** Your local Chamber of Commerce is a great resource, but other organizations, like a workforce placement agency or job training center can be helpful as well! There may be programs already in place.
- Who will contact and coordinate with the employers for securing participation and scheduling?
    - **Note:** This takes some time depending on the number of students you intend to place. Reach out to employers and confirm participation in advance to finalize scheduling at least 1-2 weeks out from the job shadow day(s).
- Who will place or match the students to their job shadow positions?
    - **TIP**: This is best done by or in conjunction with someone familiar with the students, to ensure appropriate placements and that necessary accommodations are made.

Identify what method will be used to assess students' interests or otherwise determine job shadowing preferences.
Questions to answer:

- Will students take a career inventory or interest survey?
- Will students otherwise be able to identify or rank their preferences?

- How many interests/preferences will students identify?
    - **TIP:** It is helpful to have at least two, if not three, preferences per student if you are matching based on their interests--it may be more difficult to find hosts for some fields than others, or simply good to have backup options if a host falls through.

Career Solutions Interest and Values Assessments (link button)
https://www.nmcareersolutions.com/vosnet/Student/StudentWizardPage.aspx?enc=C1oDnK6KJB+AybxRo44YmDh8U3sMjPPFOD0SqybBvCY=

Define success for your job shadow program.
Questions to answer:

- What are your goals and objectives for the students? For the hosts?
- What do you want to measure or report on?
- Will the students identify their own goals and objectives as well?

Determine the logistics of your program.
Questions to answer:

- How long will the students shadow in a day? Across how many days?
    - **TIP:** Be flexible. If possible, have multiple dates for students to shadow on in order to allow your hosts the flexibility of selecting a date that works best for them.
- Will students contact hosts on their own, whether to introduce themselves or for any coordination of their experience?
    - **TIP:** Having students confirm details with their hosts, such as when and where they should arrive, serves as great practice in business interaction for them, and cuts down on the coordination needed in placing students. Be sure to confirm this is okay with your job shadow hosts before going this route.
- Will students transport themselves to and from their shadow location?
    - **TIP:** If some but not all students have their own transportation, aim for students to shadow together in small groups in order to travel with one another to and from their shadow sites.
- Will students be responsible for their own lunch if shadowing for a full day?

Step 2 - Putting it into Practice

Outline clear guidelines and expectations for the job shadow hosts.
Be sure to:

- Relay all logistical details, like the length of shadow time, student lunch needs, process for email correspondence, etc.
    - **TIP:** Depending on your number of host participants, consider an employer info session to relay all details and expectations, as well as to answer any questions all at once.
- Outline all program expectations for the experience. Do students need Q&A time set aside, should they be given a tour, provided a job description, or solely observe daily activities?

Set clear expectations and provide best practices for students to follow during their experience.

Identify:

- How students should communicate with their hosts.
- How students should prepare for their job shadow.
    - Should students research their host business? Should they draft a list of questions to ask, and if so, what kinds of questions?
- How you expect the students to behave and dress.
    - **TIP:** Set a standard of business casual attire and have students confirm with their host if they should dress more or less professionally.
- What students can do to make a good impression--i.e. promptness, a firm handshake, eye contact, no phone use, and thank you notes following their experience.

Notify parents of the job shadowing experience and relay all important details.

Create and distribute:

- Permission forms to inform parents of job shadow program dates and transportation needs.
- Liability waivers for parents to release the school, business hosts, and any partnering organizations or individuals of liability for the students.

Step 3 – Follow-Up

Evaluate the program against the goals and objectives you set.

Be sure to:

- Survey the business hosts, including if and how they benefitted from the experience and how it may have impacted their organization.
- Survey the students on their experience, including what they feel they learned or gained from job shadowing.
- Identify how students are otherwise reporting on their experience, if applicable.

Thank your job shadow hosts. This is a great opportunity to relay the impact they have made, send out any surveys, and determine if they would be willing to participate again in the future. Ensure students personally thank their hosts as well.

Promote the success of your program. Report out your survey results, testimonials, or any other takeaways from your students or job shadow hosts. Consider highlighting the program on your own website, at meetings or events, or even through reaching out to local media. This provides free publicity for your business hosts and showcases what your school or organization is doing for students.

SAMPLE - Job Shadow Host Guidelines

Thank you for volunteering to host students at your place of business! This is a great opportunity for our future workforce to gain real-world experience and valuable insight as they begin to determine the paths they will take post-high school. The goal is for the students to come away with a better understanding of their field of interest and the skills needed to be successful in that field. To ensure this is a successful and impactful experience for both sides, below you will find some general information on the process, as well as guidelines and expectations for hosting.

- **Please be aware that all students will be instructed to contact you to confirm details of their experience** (i.e. time and location, dress requirements, materials to bring, etc.). Please respond to them with this information at least **48 hours in advance** of their shadowing day.

- Students are expected to shadow within their school hours, but timing can be flexible according to your schedule. Note that their school day runs from_____, so expect them to be able to arrive no earlier than_____and need to leave no later than_____. If you cannot make the full day work, please just aim to provide a long enough experience to be impactful.

- You are not expected to stop your daily activities to host the students, this should be a true job *shadow* experience as much as possible. Allow the students to observe you go about your daily activities, taking them to meetings, on client calls, or to see patients. You can also engage the students in relevant reading or a small project. Do give students a tour of your workplace, an overview of your role and career pathway, and an overview of your organization's structure.

- Let the student know when appropriate times are for questions. Aim to leave some time at the end of the day for Q&A or discussion if possible.

- You are not expected to feed the students, but you certainly can if you like. All students will be responsible for their own transportation, so allow them time to get their own lunch if they will be shadowing for the full day.

- Note that you are not liable for the students--all have been required to take home a liability waiver to be signed by parents and returned to the school in order for them to participate. Nonetheless, please exercise caution in where you take them and what you allow them to do.

- If your organization requires students to sign any sort of confidentiality agreement or waiver, please let *(your program contact)* and the student know prior to the shadowing day.

Please be kind! For many of the students this is their first real experience in a work environment--please make it a positive one for them!

SAMPLE - Student Expectations and Best Practices

(Your Organization Name) is excited to be a part of what we hope will be an impactful job shadowing experience for you. We believe this is a great opportunity for you to gain real-world experience and valuable insight into how skills and passion come together to create a successful career.

The individuals you will be shadowing at various organizations are volunteers that have agreed to host you at their place of business. They are ready and excited to serve as your mentors for a day. Please remember, they are business professionals that will expect you to behave in a professional manner. In order to help you understand what some of their expectations may be and to make sure you have the best experience possible, we have outlined some best practices as guidelines for your job shadow day.

- **YOU MUST REACH OUT TO YOUR HOST IN ADVANCE of your scheduled job shadow day to confirm details for your experience,** including the date, time you should arrive, the location you should meet at, appropriate dress, and any materials you may need to bring. Many may have specific instructions, dress code, and timing adjustments you need to be aware of--it is your responsibility to get this information from them.

- **Research your job shadow host employer/organization** to better understand their business and prepare you for the day. Visit their website and conduct a quick search for general information.

- **Develop a list of specific, thoughtful questions** to ask your host employer, whether about their organization, its operations, or their own career path.

- **Consider your own career aspirations** and be prepared to answer questions about your personal interests and goals.

- **Make a positive first impression**: introduce yourself, shake everyone's hand, and make eye contact. You would be surprised at what a long way these small things can go!

- **Turn off your phone**, or at least keep it put away--be respectful of your host's time by giving them your full attention.

- **Strive to have a positive outlook** and make the most of your job shadowing experience. Show enthusiasm and appreciation for the opportunity.

Say thank you. After completing your experience, send a thank you email within 24 hours of your job shadow, or mail a handwritten note to make a truly lasting impact.

SAMPLE - Parent Communication & Permission Form

Date:

Dear Parent(s),

Your student is enrolled in/a part of *(Your School & Program Name)*. As an important component of career exploration, we are partnering with local businesses to offer each student a job shadow opportunity during school hours. There will be one required job shadow experience provided for your student. Students will have a variety of job shadow options to choose from based on the results of their interest and values assessments to ensure they are actively engaged in this experience.

The job shadow experience for your student will take place on_____.

Students are to provide their own transportation with permission from parents. Arrangements can be made, if a student does not have transportation.

We are excited for this opportunity for real and relevant learning, and for our students to experience how skills and passion meet to create a career. We hope we have your support as well!

Authorization of Transportation

By signing below, I give consent to allow_____to use their own transportation to and from the job shadow experience. *(Your School/Organization Name)* is not responsible for accidents or personal injury. Do not sign if you want transportation provided.

_____
Signature of Parent

_____ _____
Printed Name Date

SAMPLE - Student Liability Waiver

I, the parent or guardian of_____, give my voluntary consent to his/her participation in *(your School & Program name)* job shadow day.

In consideration of my child participating in the *(your School & Program name)* job shadow day, I hereby release *(the school, business hosts, and any partnering organizations or individuals, and their officers, directors, employees and agents)*** from any and all liability resulting from my child's participation in *(your School & Program name)* job shadow day.

I understand and agree the above listed entities do not assume and disclaim any risk, liability, responsibility or obligation in the event of harm, an accident, injury, illness, death or property damage to my child. In the event of an accident, injury, or illness, the above stated and its agents will make every effort to contact parents/guardians immediately if necessary.

_____ _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian Date

_____ _____

Printed Name of Parent/Guardian Phone Number

****Be sure this section includes your school/organization, the state, participating businesses, and ANY AND ALL partnering organizations and their employees and agents.**

SAMPLE - Business Host Post-Shadow Survey

1. **Your Organization** (optional) _____

2. **Please rate your responses to the following:**

   a. **I understood the goals and objectives of this experience.**

   STRONGLY AGREE AGREE NEUTRAL DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

   b. **This experience was beneficial to me or my organization.**

   STRONGLY AGREE AGREE NEUTRAL DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

   c. **I felt I was able to impact a student.**

   STRONGLY AGREE AGREE NEUTRAL DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

   d. **I would participate in this experience again.**

   STRONGLY AGREE AGREE NEUTRAL DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

3. **Was this your first experience hosting job shadows?** YES NO

4. **What benefit did you/your organization gain from this experience that you will utilize in the future?**

5. **Who, individual or organization, would you recommend to host job shadows in the future?**

6. **Please provide any comments or suggestions on how we might improve this process.**

SAMPLE - Student Post-Shadow Survey

1. **Your Job Shadow: _____**

2. **Please rate your responses to the following:**

   I understood the goals and objectives of this experience.

   STRONGLY AGREE AGREE NEUTRAL DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

   This experience was beneficial to me.

   STRONGLY AGREE AGREE NEUTRAL DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

   I gained something from this experience that I could not have in a classroom.

   STRONGLY AGREE AGREE NEUTRAL DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

   This experience helped me determine whether or not I will pursue this career in the future.

   STRONGLY AGREE AGREE NEUTRAL DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

   I would recommend job shadowing to my friends or peers.

   STRONGLY AGREE AGREE NEUTRAL DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

3. **Was this your first experience in a work environment?** YES NO

4. **Did you feel you were missing anything to make this experience successful? Why or why not?**

5. **What was the best part of your experience?**

6. **Please provide additional comments or suggestions on how we might improve this process.**

Program FAQs

Key Stakeholders

- School Administration
- School Site Contact
- Businesses
- Students

Benefits

What will students gain?

- Soft skills, and work readiness skills
- An understanding of career pathways and available resources (schooling, certificates/licenses/degrees, training)
- Opportunities to try multiple or new careers
- Opportunities to experience a questionable career and while allowing for time to change focus or careers if necessary
- Opportunity to prevent unnecessary investment in education or resources that may be otherwise wasted if a student were to find out later in life that they do not want to pursue a particular career
- Awareness and understanding of daily, weekly, yearly tasks and industry insights
- Awareness of job market potential in New Mexico
- Business contacts for the future
- Potential job opportunities (internships, entry level positions, etc.)

What will a business partner gain?

- Better understanding of what the students are interested in and what is important to today's generation as well as what that generation is looking for their employers
- An opportunity to promote to and educate your region of local opportunities
- A recruiting tool for the great students that are already in their own communities
- An opportunity to give back to their community and help shape tomorrow's leaders

Expectations

K-12 Districts

- School Administration
    - Leadership buy in is needed to get opportunities set up
    - Determine where in their current programs there is an opportunity, if none create one (ex: career readiness class)
- School Site Contact

    - Learn about the interests of the students, work with the businesses to match students with the appropriate organization

Students

What do students expect out of a job shadow program?

- General overview of the company and industry
- Experience the day-to-day tasks
- Learn the career path to pursue said career
    - How much education is needed beyond high school
    - What resources are available for said education
    - The length of time of the program
    - Entry level ways to get experiences that will help students get a job (internships, entry level positions, etc.)

Businesses or Partners

What should businesses prepare for?

- Allow for opportunities to bring career exposure to students; show students what you do, where you do it, and how you do it
- Providing an orientation of the organization and industry
    - Complete with any confidentiality contracts (if needed)
- Show students a day in the life of said employee
- Describe career pathways to that career
    - Amount and type of education needed beyond high school
    - Learn about the resources available for said education
    - Length of time of the program
    - Entry level ways to get experiences that will help students get a job (internships, entry level positions, etc.)

Logistics

Planning time for a K-12 District to develop a job shadow program?

- Different for each school given the resources that are currently available versus starting from scratch

Length of time student was part of a job shadow?

- 1 day per student

Timeframe?

- Can be flexible given availability of all partners included

Resources

What resources are available to develop and plan a job shadow program?

- Junior Achievement of New Mexico

Junior Achievement has resources and partners available to replicate proven and impactful

job shadow programs in New Mexico: https://newmexico.ja.org/index