



# Partner Agency Manual

2023



CHICAGO COOK  
WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP

A proud partner of the  American Job Center network

Opportunity Works is sponsored  
by The Office of the President of  
the Cook County Board of  
Commissioners and the Chicago  
Cook Workforce Partnership



Toni Preckwinkle  
Cook County  
Board President



CHICAGO COOK  
WORKFORCE  
PARTNERSHIP



Transportation  
Distribution  
Logistics



Information  
Technology



Manufacturing

# Contents

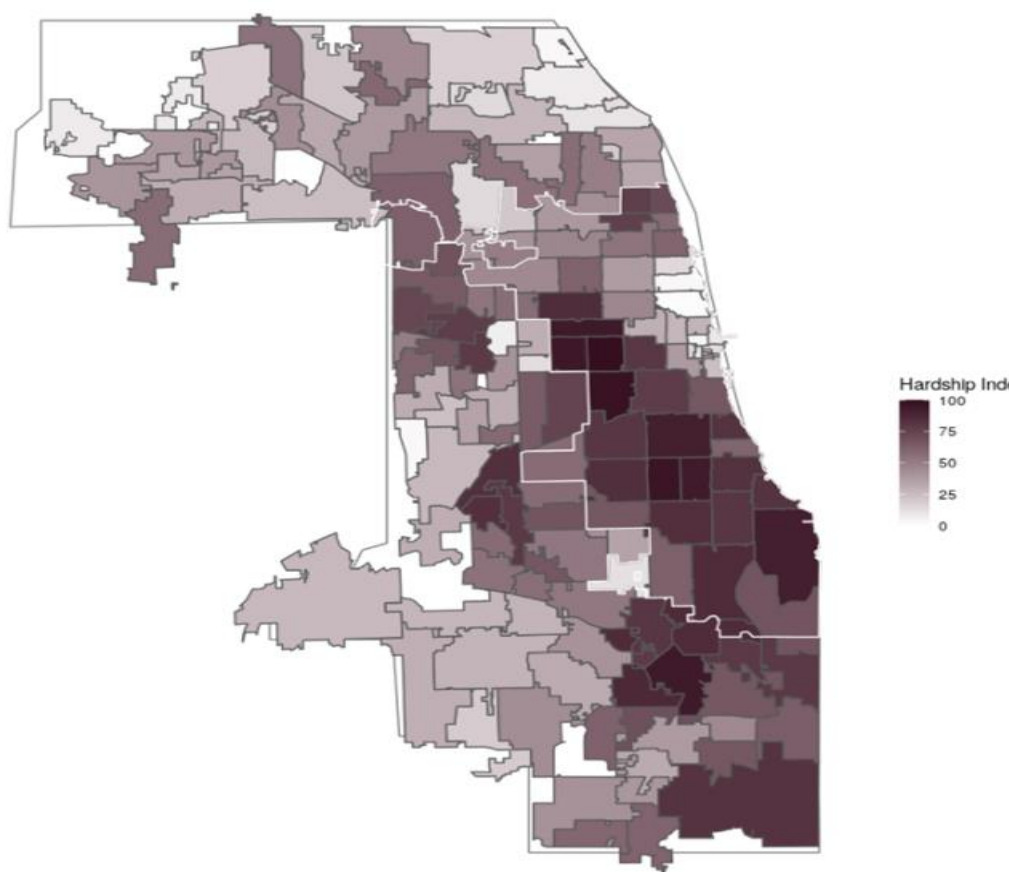
I. Program Overview.....	4
A. Background and Purpose	
B. Program Goals	
C. Program Design	
D. Outcomes and Metrics	
II. Business Engagement.....	9
A. Develop Quality Internships	
B. Maintain Quality Internships	
III. Engaging Young Adults.....	12
A. Outreach/Recruitment	
B. Determining and Documenting Eligibility	
C. Assessment, Enrollment and Orientation	
D. Career Mentoring and Planning	
E. Foundational Skills Training	
F. Digital Literacy Training	
G. Ongoing Training and Career Exploration	
H. Internship	
I. Supportive Services	
J. Successful Transitions	
IV. Reporting and Administration.....	24
A. Tracking Program Data	
B. Reporting and Performance Management	
C. Program and Fiscal Monitoring	
V. Communications Guidelines.....	27
VI. Attachments.....	29

# I. Program Overview

## A. Background and Purpose:

**Opportunity Works** was created by the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership at the request of the Offices of the President of Cook County. It was designed to address both the needs of growing businesses and high rates of young adult unemployment in suburban Cook County. The program connects young adults who are out of school and work to career pathways in high-demand, high-growth industries including Manufacturing, Transportation, Distribution & Logistics (TDL), Information Technology (IT), Healthcare and Construction.

**Opportunity Works** places young adults in subsidized internships, exposes them to viable careers, expands their skill sets, and connects them to the training and resources they need to achieve long-term employment.



Source: US Census ACS (2019) and IDOC (March, 2021), University of Chicago Inclusive Economy Lab

1

2023 Partner Agencies

# I. Program Overview

## B. Program Goals:

### Build Talent for Businesses in Target Sectors



- Create stronger community connections
- Access resources through public workforce system
- Identify and develop future workforce

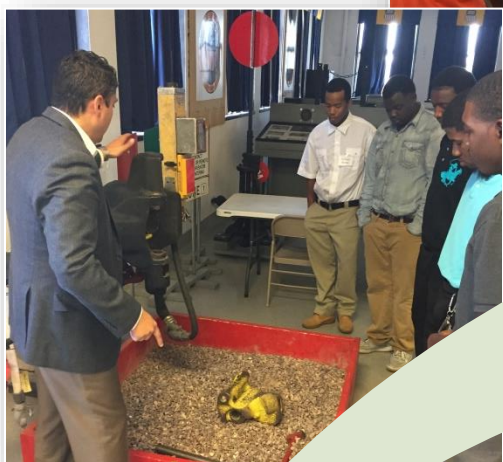
### Develop Career Pathways for Young Adults



- Earn income while learning about local opportunities
- Gain sector-based experience
- Access employment and education resources

# I. Program Overview

## C. Program Design:



### Training:

- **1 to 4 Weeks** Foundational skills, sector specific skills training, industry recognized credentials, digital literacy, 1:15 staff-participant ratio

### Internship:

- **6+ Weeks** Subsidized internship in target sectors + continued training with service providers maintaining 1:15 ratio

### Transition:

- **Within 6 Months** Program success occurs when participants connect to next step on their career path

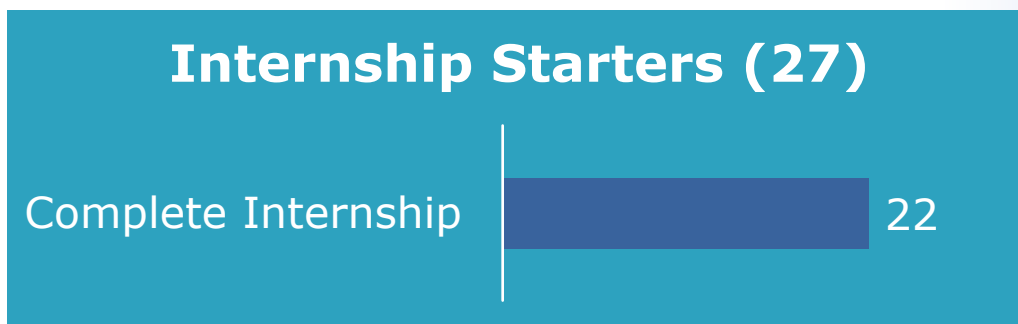
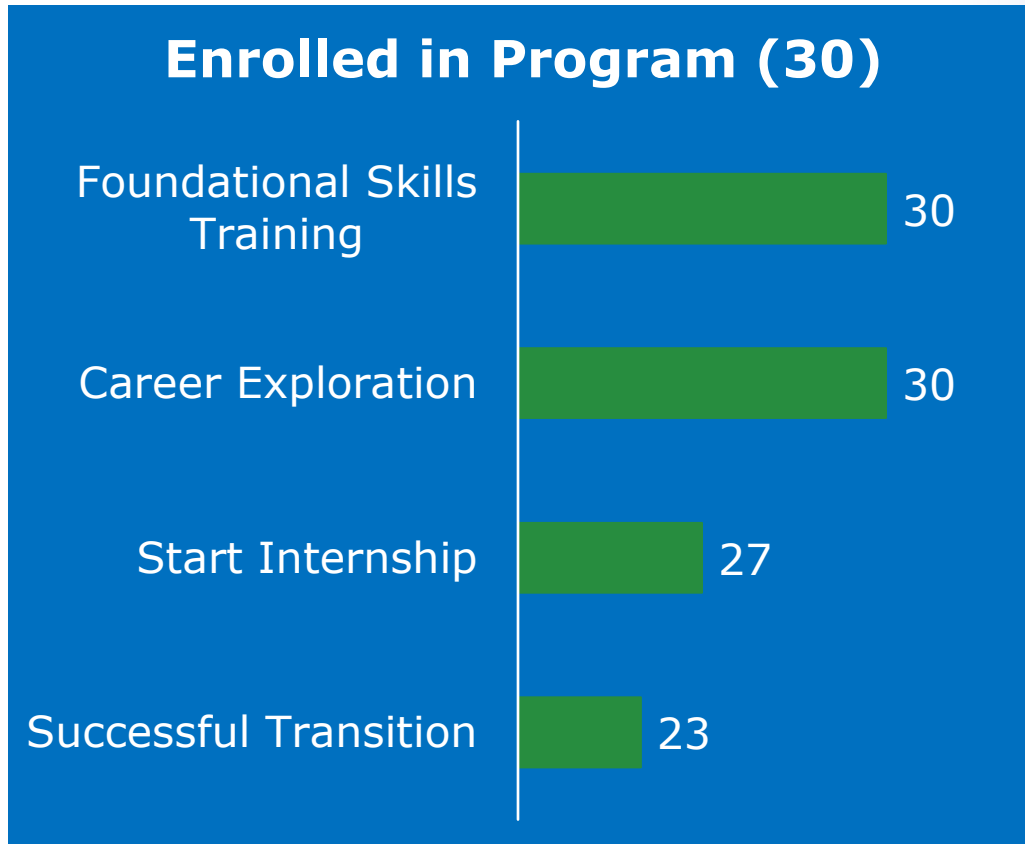
# I. Program Overview

## D. Outcomes and Metrics:

Metric	Outcome
Participate in foundational skills training	100% of enrollees
Participate in an internship	90% of enrollees; Based on length of foundational skills training
Complete an internship	80% of those that start internship ( <i>getting a job during internship counts as success</i> )
Participate in career exploration	100% of enrollees
Participate in digital literacy training	100% of enrollees
Successful transition to unsubsidized employment, or a workforce or education /training program	75% of enrollees within 6 months of starting Opportunity Works

# I. Program Overview

## D. Outcomes and Metrics: Agency Sample



# II. Business Engagement

## A. Develop Quality Internships:

Opportunity Works partner agencies are responsible for recruiting businesses in target sectors that are committed to developing the next generation of workers to serve as Internship Host Sites.

Quality is the primary focus of business partnerships. It is important to be transparent about program requirements, and clear when communicating your expectations of Internship Host Sites. Opportunity Works Internships must be valuable to the employer and provide participants with exposure to viable career pathways that includes relevant info and experience.

### Before placing participant with business, you must:

- Conduct **Business Orientation**
  - Review Opportunity Works model, and the roles and responsibilities of all partners.
  - Must use **Business Orientation PPT**; also, see sample **Business Orientation Agenda**.
- Obtain signed **Host Site Agreement** that clearly defines relationships and responsibilities of all involved parties.
- Obtain or develop internship position description **and** complete an Internship Training Outline (ITO) in partnership with business.
- Place copies of Host Site Agreement, Position Description, and ITO in participant files.
- Enter all Host Site information in the **Program Data Tracker** placement detail tab (see section IV.A and Attachment 28).

2	Business Outreach Flier
3	Host Site Agreement
4	Business Orientation PPT
5	Business Orientation Agenda

# II. Business Engagement

## *Internship Development Tools*

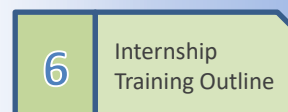
Along with the Host Site Agreement and Business Orientation Presentation, The Partnership requires the use of the **Internship Training Outline (ITO)** in guiding the creation and customization of Opportunity Works internship placements.

The ITO is a tool used by partner agency staff and site supervisors to focus on the learning of participants during their internship.

- Work with the business to record the skills that can be learned by the participant in the ITO.
- Include skills that are relevant to the work environment, as well as to the specific to the intern who has been matched with the business. Skills can include a range of requirements like showing up on time or programming a CNC router.

The **position description** is created by the business or the partner agency and should describe proposed activities the participant will be completing.

- Can be in the format preferred by either the business or partner agency.
- The position description is **not** customized to the intern.
- The Partnership encourages delegate agencies to use sample language from O\*NET OnLine at [onetonline.org](http://onetonline.org) in developing position descriptions.

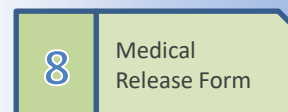
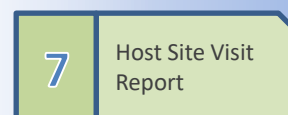


# II. Business Engagement

## B. Maintain Quality Internships:

Opportunity Works partner agencies maintain high quality internship placement opportunities while participants are completing their internship and throughout the entirety of the grant period. At a minimum, program staff must:

- Visit each Host Site at least two times to check in with participant and supervisor.
  - Make sure participant is engaged in activities related to internship description and ITO
  - Assist supervisor and/or participant in addressing any challenges at Host Site.
  - Complete **Host Site Visit Report** for all formal visits and keep a copy in the participant file.
  - Use the results from Working Impact surveys during final site visit to provide interns with an honest and supportive assessment of their performance. (See section III.H for more info.)
  - Include Business Relations and Economic Development staff from The Partnership whenever possible.
  - Ensure that all host sites have a **Medical Release Form** for their Opportunity Works interns on site.
- Host events to build stronger relationships with businesses. At a minimum, invite businesses to participate in:
  - Business orientation
  - Mock interview workshops and hiring events
  - Participant Milestone Celebrations
- Immediately notify The Partnership in the event that a business partner behaves inappropriately or is not satisfied with Opportunity Works services.



# III. Engaging Young Adults

## A. Outreach/Recruitment:

Partner agencies are solely responsible for meeting enrollment goals and should engage in outreach activities that they know to work for their communities.

Agencies must:

- Use marketing materials created or approved by The Partnership
  - Obtain approval from The Partnership’s communications manager before using additional materials (see Section V.A.)
  - Promote the program via social media (OK without approval) and other media easily accessible to target population
  - Promote the program at events and locations outside of agency facilities
- The Partnership will promote the program with elected officials, juvenile and criminal justice agencies, IL Department of Child and Family Services and Housing Authority of Cook County. Partner agencies should coordinate with The Partnership before outreaching to these entities.
- Every potential participant **must** complete the online application, which can be found at <https://chicookworks.org/initiatives/opportunityworks/>. Partner agencies should instruct the young adults they recruit to select their agency when they complete the application.
- Using the online application, The Partnership will screen for age, residence, and unemployment; and send applications to agency selected by applicant or will assign those with no selection based on geography.

9 Recruitment Postcard

10 Electronic Fliers English/Spanish

# III. Engaging Young Adults

## A. Outreach/Recruitment:

### *Information Sessions*

The Partnership recommends that Partner Agencies conduct group or individual information sessions to inform applicants about Opportunity Works before enrolling them. Sessions should include information about:

- Eligibility and suitability criteria
  - Demonstrated interest in employment
  - Drug testing when applicable
  - Addressing prior court involvement
- Required commitment
  - 30 hours per week for at least 7 weeks (training and internship.)
  - Interest in employment or additional training at end of program
  - Code of Conduct (see page 16)
  - Understanding of realities of focus sectors, shift work
- Program components
  - Career mentoring
  - Training and career exploration
  - Internship
  - Wages or stipends amounts/protocol
- Labor Market Information and long-term earning potential in targeted sectors
- Relevant information about potential host sites
- Referrals to other resources
  - American Job Centers
  - Other Programs at partner agency
  - Other Opportunity Works partner agencies

# III. Engaging Young Adults

## B. Determining and Documenting Eligibility:

Opportunity Works participants must meet all “baseline” criteria **and** fit into **one or more** of the target population groups.

Baseline Eligibility. Participants **must** meet all criteria:

- 16-24 years at time of enrollment; and
- Suburban Cook County resident, unless agency obtains **Program Exception Form\*** from The Partnership; and
- Unemployed at time of enrollment

Target Populations. Participants **must** fall into **at least one of the following categories:**

- Self or family socioeconomic status negatively impacted by Covid-19 pandemic.
- Face a barrier to employment; and/or
- Live in an income eligible household

Partner agencies **must** certify eligibility prior to enrolling participants in the Career Connect Program Application for Opportunity Works; and they **must** collect and add the required eligibility documentation to the participant’s file. Participants may complete a **self-attestation form** to document unemployment and/or an employment barrier. See Section 1 of the File Coversheets - Attachment 31, and Attachment 13 for further guidance on documenting target population eligibility based on income.

\*The Program Exception Form (Attachment 15) must be used to request authority to enroll someone who does not meet baseline and/or target population criteria. Exceptions are granted at the sole discretion of The Partnership.

12	Automatic Eligibility Communities
13	Economic Eligibility Documentation
14	Income Worksheet
15	Program Exception Form
16	Self Attestation Form

# III. Engaging Young Adults

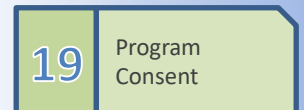
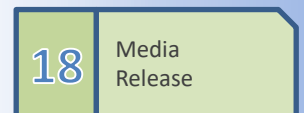
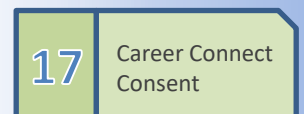
## C. Assessment and Enrollment:

Use evidence-based and effective tools to assess eligible applicants to determine suitability for Opportunity Works and to learn more about the applicant’s background, skills, aptitude and interests.

- Use formal and informal tools.
- Consider previous experience as well as current interest and motivation. One of the top indicators of applicant success, as noted by RFI responses from businesses, is an eagerness to learn and engage in work activities.
- The Partnership does not require Opportunity Works agencies to use TABE 11/12 to assess participants but does encourage use of uniform assessment processes to objectively assess applicants.

If someone is eligible, suitable, and they want to participate – sign them up! You must enroll the participant before they begin training. To enroll, complete the following steps:

- Complete the Career Connect Registration and Application for Opportunity Works.
- Begin a participant file to maintain and store physical records.
- Complete the paper enrollment forms:
  - **Career Connect Consent**
  - **Media release**
  - **Program Consent**



# III. Engaging Young Adults

## C. Orientation:

All enrolled participants must attend an orientation session that covers:

- Program schedule (dates, times, and locations of all program activities)
- Pay dates and whether payments are provided as wages or stipends
- Program expectations/**Code of Conduct**
- Goals and length of program
- Introduction to Career Mentor
- Description of career mentoring and planning process

Orientation can take place before the program starts or on the first day of foundational skills training.

See **Sample Program Calendar** and **Internship Assignment** attachments as examples of clear communication standards.

20	Code of Conduct
21	Internship Assignment
22	Sample Program Calendar

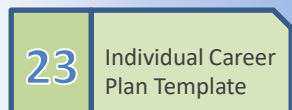
# III. Engaging Young Adults

## D. Career Mentoring & Planning:

The Partnership uses the term “Career Mentor” to recognize the unique relationship that effective staff members develop with young adults. Staff should expect to provide participants with guidance, motivation, and a positive example, as they assist them in pursuing employment and training goals.

Assign participants to a career mentor upon enrollment into program. Career Mentors work with each participant throughout their training and internship to prepare them for following a career path after the internship. Career mentors should have no more than 15 participants that they are serving through training or internship services at one time.

- Utilize assessment results to better understand the participant’s experience, career interests, skills and abilities, as well as any needs for additional supports.
- Provide career exploration opportunities such as Illinois Worknet resources, road trip nation videos, field trips to Opportunity Works business partners.
- Work with participant to create an **Individual Career Plan** that identifies short and long-term employment and education goals. Goals and action steps included in the plan should support quality job matching, wage progression, and career ladder opportunities. This plan should match the ISS/IEP in Career Connect and be documented there.
- Include clear action steps for connecting the participant to a job or additional workforce and education services at end of internship.
- Action steps should be revisited on a regular basis throughout the training and internship.



# III. Engaging Young Adults

## E. Foundational Skills Training:

Partner agencies must utilize a foundational skills training curriculum that effectively covers these core competencies:

- Self-awareness, self-interest, and career planning
- Teamwork and collaboration
- Social and emotional development
- Job seeking skills including resume and interview preparation
- Effective work habits, punctuality, workplace communication, and other job keeping skills
- Personal and business ethics
- Financial literacy

Agencies must provide foundational skills training at the start of the program for at least one week.

- Career exploration activities should begin during the week of foundational skills training (i.e., completing career assessments, conducting a site visit at an employer partner, or reviewing LMI related to sector).
- Agencies may cover some of the core competencies during the ongoing weekly training sessions.
- Training practices should be trauma informed and individualized to participant experience to greatest extent possible.
- The Partnership encourages agencies to engage participants in experiential learning whenever possible.

# III. Engaging Young Adults

## F. Digital Literacy Training:

Partner agencies must utilize a digital literacy training curriculum that effectively covers these core competencies:

- Microsoft Word
- Microsoft PowerPoint
- Microsoft Excel
- Do's and Don'ts of Social Media

Agencies can provide Digital Literacy training at the start and/or throughout the program for participants.

- Digital Literacy activities should begin during the week of foundational skills training.
- A digital literacy assessment/questioner must be used to determine levels of digital literacy and participant need.
- Agencies may cover core competencies during the ongoing weekly digital literacy training sessions.
- The Partnership encourages agencies to engage participants in experiential learning whenever possible.

# III. Engaging Young Adults

## G. Ongoing Training & Career Exploration:

Partner agencies must engage participants in ongoing training and activities that promote career exploration and skill building outside of the internship host site experience.

Agencies should engage participants a total of 24 hours during the six-week internship, typically this can be scheduled for four hours on one day a week. This program component should be clearly communicated to both participants and business.

The ongoing training activities should center on structured career exploration activities that:

- Address a range of career pathways and training options in the target industry sectors.
- Motivate participants to pursue additional training and set goals for their future employment.
- Develop work and industry-relevant competencies.
- Encourage individual character development.
- Are varied and engaging. i.e., sector specific training, job shadowing opportunities, field trips to businesses, employer panels, volunteer service opportunities, and foundational skills workshops.

# III. Engaging Young Adults

## H. Internship:

Partner agencies must engage all participants who complete training in a paid internship with a private sector employer:

- Participants should be engaged in an average of 30 hours of paid activity per week between the internship and ongoing career exploration and training activities, for a minimum of six weeks.
- Internship must be in Manufacturing, IT, Healthcare, Construction, or TDL, unless partner agency receives prior approval from The Partnership to place a participant in another high-demand, high-growth sector.

Opportunity Works internships are broadly defined and can involve one or more of the following types of activities:

- Work experience, where the participant performs functions that are typically assigned to staff employed by the business.
- Job shadowing, where the participant spends time with one or more employees to learn more about their job duties and expectations; or
- Training or pre-apprenticeship programs, where the participant is engaged in formal or informal training conducted by the employer or their designee.

# III. Engaging Young Adults

## H. Internship:

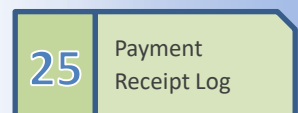
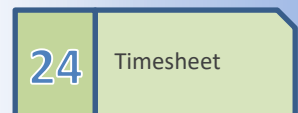
Follow guidelines for developing and maintaining quality internships as specified in Section II.

Partner agencies must compensate participants on a clear and well-defined schedule, using the following protocol:

- Partner agencies and Host Sites must utilize the attached Opportunity Works **Timesheet**.
- If the Host Site prefers an alternate method, the agency should also record time spent using the Opportunity Works time sheets.
- Partner agencies must compensate participants on a clear and well-defined schedule. Establish written protocols for disbursing checks. If paper checks are provided to participants, you must use the **Payment Receipt Log**.
- If using direct deposit, pre-paid debit cards, or other form of electronic payment, partner agencies must ensure that there are no undue fees or high user costs associated with the service.
- Maintain record of payment and timesheets as documentation for participant compensation.

At the end of the placement with the Host Site, the internship experience should be evaluated:

- Both supervisors and program participants must complete the Working Impact survey during the last 10 days of the internship.
- If an employer supervisor does not complete the survey, the intern's Career Mentor must complete the program staff survey.

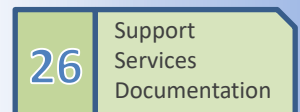


# III. Engaging Young Adults

## I. Support Services:

Opportunity Works funding allows for support services expenditures so that participants can be better prepared to meet the challenges of their internship, and not be discouraged by low level financial barriers. Partner agencies should utilize program funds for uniform clothing, work/internship related equipment and transportation expenses necessary for the young adults to participate in the program and successfully meet business requirements.

When providing support services, agency staff must create documentation to demonstrate that the resources were provided to the participants. Use the attached **Support Services Documentation** form along with copies of receipt(s) and include in participant file. This documentation may be requested by the Fiscal Department at The Partnership for reimbursement purposes.



# III. Engaging Young Adults

## J. Successful Transitions:

The primary goal of Opportunity Works is to expose young adults to viable careers in the region, and to motivate and support them in their pursuit of a career pathway.

Partner agencies must connect 75% of enrolled participants to the next step in their career pathway within six months of beginning the program – whether they completed an internship or not. Documentation of these transitions should be included in the participant files. Successful transitions that count toward this outcome include:

- Placement into unsubsidized employment.
- Enrollment into high school or GED program (for those who started out-of-school).
- Enrollment into a workforce or apprenticeship program that leads to unsubsidized employment (for example, an apprenticeship program, or an intensive Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act program).
- Enrollment into a post-secondary education program, including college or vocational training.
- Enrollment into a program that addresses significant barriers to employment, such as an intensive substance abuse program. These situations will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by The Partnership to determine if the outcome will be counted towards the 75% goal.

# IV. Reporting and Administration

## A. Tracking Program Data:

Partner agencies are required to use Career Connect, The Partnership’s case management and business services data management system, to enroll participants and to track all services and outcomes. Specifically partner agencies must:

- Use the **Program Data Tracker** to compile core program information and guide career connect program documentation.
- Complete a Career Connect Registration form for all participants – this form may be completed partially by the applicant
- Complete the Career Connect Opportunity Works Application for participants you want to enroll into the program.
- Track key services in Career Connect. Some services will have a start and end date, while others will be recorded as transactional “same day” services. Ensure that participant case file includes relevant documentation.
- Track key outcomes in Career Connect. Ensure that participant case file includes relevant documentation.
- Utilize the **Career Connect Services** overview table to guide program activity documentation.
- Enter case notes on each participant at least once a month while the individual is participating in Opportunity Works.
- If a partner agency plans to leverage program funding from both Opportunity Works and WIOA, they must follow the process outlined in **WIOA and OppWorks**.
- Program evaluations are tracked using Working Impact Surveys as described in section III.H and **Attachment 32**

Partner agencies must also maintain physical files on each participant enrolled in Opportunity Works, organizing the files in the order specified in the **File Coversheets**.

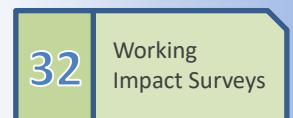
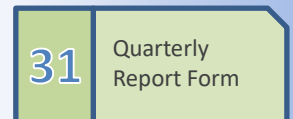
27	Program Data Tracker
28	Career Connect Services
29	WIOA and OppWorks
30	File Section Coversheets

# IV. Reporting and Administration

## B. Reporting and Performance Management:

In addition to tracking program information using Career Connect in a timely manner, partner agencies must also:

- Collect Working Impact Employer surveys for each employer.
- Complete Working Impact Staff surveys for each participant who does not receive an employer evaluation from their internship supervisor. (People not placed in internships and people whose supervisors don't complete the survey.)
- Collect Working Impact Youth surveys from all program participants.
- Submit/Update participant data via live Monthly reports utilizing Microsoft Teams (see Program Data Tracker – Attachment 27 for example) established by The Partnership.
- Monthly Reporting is due on the 15<sup>th</sup> of every month - or preceding Friday if the 15<sup>th</sup> falls on a weekend.
- Submit Quarterly Report Form (see attachment 31) on the 15<sup>th</sup> of April, July, October, and December during the program year.
- Submit monthly reimbursement vouchers by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month.
- Send electronic calendar invitations to [jwilliams2@chicookworks.org](mailto:jwilliams2@chicookworks.org) for:
  - Career exploration and participant milestone celebrations
  - Any public events organized on behalf of Opportunity Works or as part of program delivery(Invite Name Format: Organization Name – Event Name)



# IV. Reporting and Administration

## C. Program and Fiscal Monitoring:

The Partnership will conduct regular program monitoring through data analysis, site visits, and file audits. Partner agencies are expected keep updated records in Career Connect and paper participant files documenting their engagement with program services.

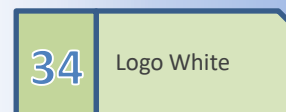
New partner agencies should be prepared for an early fiscal monitoring visit to ensure that proper policies and procedures are in place to ensure appropriate use of Opportunity Works funds.

The Program Coordinator will conduct routine site visits to assess progress, provide technical assistance, and document lessons learned. The Program Coordinator will also convene all partners on a regular basis.

# V. Communications

## A. Communications Guidelines:

- Partner agencies should promote Opportunity Works to connect with potential business partners and participants through outreach practices that are appropriate for your networks and communities.
- The Partnership has provided outreach materials to engage businesses and young adults. If you wish to create other materials or brand other items for Opportunity Works, use the provided **logos** and request approval from Joshua Williams via [jwilliams2@chicookworks.org](mailto:jwilliams2@chicookworks.org).
- If you are planning a public event for Opportunity Works let both Joshua Williams and Abram Garcia know the details of the event.
- If receive an inquiry from the news media about Opportunity Works, inform Joshua Williams as soon as possible.
- When referring to the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership, please use our full name or “The Partnership.” CCWP is not an abbreviation for our organization.



## **Additional Guidance:**

Contact Abram Garcia at The Partnership with any questions you have about implementing Opportunity Works programming.

[agarcia@chicookworks.org](mailto:agarcia@chicookworks.org)

(708) 553-7139

Contact Joshua Williams at The Partnership with any questions relating to documenting Opportunity Works services in Career Connect.

[jwilliams2@chicookworks.org](mailto:jwilliams2@chicookworks.org)

773-560-9980

## VI. List of Attachments

1. 2022 Partner Agencies
2. Business Outreach Flier
3. Host Site Agreement
4. Business Orientation PowerPoint
5. Business Orientation Agenda
6. Internship Training Outline
7. Host Site Visit Report
8. Medical Release Form
9. Recruitment Postcard
10. Electronic flier (Eng/Span)
11. List of American Job Centers
12. Automatic Eligibility Communities
13. Economic Eligibility Documentation Checklist
14. Income Worksheet
15. Program Exception Form
16. Self-Attestation Form
17. Career Connect Consent Form
18. Media Release
19. Program Consent Form
20. Code of Conduct
21. Internship Assignment
22. Sample Program Calendar
23. Individual Career Plan Template
24. Internship Timesheet
25. Payment Receipt Log
26. Support Services Documentation
27. Program Data Tracker
28. Career Connect Services
29. WIOA and Oppworks
30. File Section Coversheets
31. Quarterly Report Form
32. Working Impact Survey
33. Logo Blue
34. Logo White