
DATE: January 21, 2026
TO: Youth Committee
FROM: Noramah Burch, Youth Program Manager
RE: **Discussion Item: Work Experience (WEX) Policy #01-26 v.2**

BACKGROUND AND CURRENT SITUATION

On November 19, 2025, the Youth Committee reviewed Policy #01-26 v.1, our proposed Work Experience Policy. The Committee's discussion of the revised policy included:

- avoiding past challenges with some private sector placements and subsidized wages
- ensuring WEX placements align with career pathways
- balancing flexibility with guardrails
- preventing limitation of opportunities
- reducing excessive bureaucracy

WORK EXPERIENCE (WEX) POLICY – DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

On Equity, Access, and Real-world Impact

- How does the current policy affect access to work experience opportunities for youth with barriers to employment?
- How do we ensure that youth with barriers have the same chance to gain experience as those who can access jobs through traditional channels? How do we ensure work experience leads somewhere for youth without professional networks, rather than becoming resume line items that don't open doors?
- What strategies can we use to attract businesses that provide high-quality work experience rather than just placements?
- How do we balance exposing youth to career possibilities versus giving them immediate marketable skills?

On Employer Partnership

- How do we handle the tension between giving youth meaningful work and protecting WEXs from being used as free labor?
- In what ways do we cultivate employers in growth sectors and career pathways versus placing youth in available WEXs?