

Governor's Best Practices in Workforce & Economic Development Award Nomination Application

Nominated Project Title:

Experience Work Project

Project Lead Name: Kristen Whitener or Brian Humphrey

Phone numbers: 360.428.8547 or 360.416.3510

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Summary of nominated project (No more than two sentences.):

The Experience Work Project (EWP) is a bridge between the business community and the local schools and colleges via an easy-to-use web-based platform that facilitates conversations and learning between business and education.

It is designed to help prepare young adults in secondary and post-secondary vocational training for the world of work through job shadows and internships. A robust learning experience helps prepare students for the changing demands of a global and technology-driven economy and well prepared students are better employees.

Region and/or communities benefitting from project: Skagit County/Northwest Washington

When (month and year) did nominated project launch: May 2008

Has the project/activity operated continuously since then: Yes

If not, explain:

Start-up costs: \$12,500

Most recent annual budget: \$21,000

List your major funding sources, including tax credits or incentives, grants, and other private sector support:

Primarily funded by Mount Vernon Chamber; Northwest Workforce Council WIA and Skagit Valley College Student Support

Describe the purpose (need) and the unique approach taken by the nominated project to satisfy the stated need (450 words or less)

Businesses report a growing skills gap between what they require of new workers and the work readiness of young entrants to the labor market. In response, Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the Northwest Workforce Council, created the Experience Work Project which matches students in vocational training programs from both high school and community and technical college with businesses offering on-site opportunities for career exploration, job shadows or internships; and creates mentorship relationships with young adults moving into the workforce. This community partnership leverages the role of the Mount Vernon Chamber to serve local business and provides business a means to influence the knowledge and work readiness of young adults in the pipeline. At the same time, the Northwest Workforce Council has tapped an expanded pool of businesses which creates new opportunities for better coordination of business outreach activities and increasing the activity and engagement of business with the workforce system.

Describe how the nominated project incorporates both workforce and economic development practices and provides a benefit to workers and employers. (250 words or less)

The Northwest Workforce Council, with the Mount Vernon Chamber, and community partners, has developed robust relationships with businesses which maximize opportunities for young adults to connect to employers. By providing authentic exposure to the requirements of the world of work, young adults in secondary and post-secondary vocational training can make informed choices on course selection, preparation and training options during and after high school by linking the requirements of work with their education and training preparation. Students benefit from being better prepared to link education and training with career opportunities. Businesses benefit from engagement with the workforce system to communicate directly what they need from employees, help shape the preparation and development of the young adult population, and have access to new skilled and prepared workers.

Will the nominated project continue into the future? Yes

If yes, how will it be funded and sustained.

The employer match system of the Experience Work Project is hosted and staffed by the Mount Vernon Chamber. The Mount Vernon Chamber is the fiscal agent. Costs associated with student participation, including internships, are borne by the program or educational institution from which the student is referred. Other funding sources include user fees, donations and grants.

In an attachment, demonstrate how this project/activity has made a quantifiable difference to the economic health of working people and employers. (Tables and graphs based on verifiable numbers. Words should be used only to support the data and should be kept to a minimum) Check when done.

See attached

A short concluding statement on why you believe this project/activity is noteworthy or unique and should serve as a best practice model. (100 words or less)

The Experience Work Project is an innovative approach to expand the alignment of workforce and economic development by providing a direct means to enhance businesses' ability to find qualified workers. This collaborative project creates new business engagement in the workforce preparation system which opens the way for connecting additional business services beyond internships and mentorship. The Experience Work Project results in better student retention in secondary and postsecondary vocational training, vocational certificate completion, and relevant connection to the employing community.

Program or Project's website or webpage: www.experienceworkproject.com

List the leading individual(s) or organization(s) that should receive special recognition for their role in the project or activity. Please provide name, title, role, address and phone number.

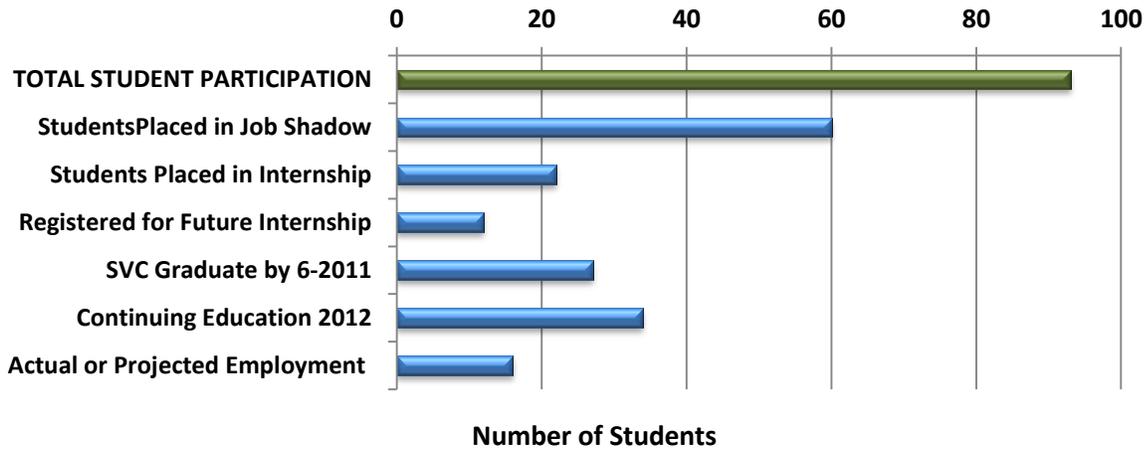
- **Kristen Whitener**, President/CEO Mount Vernon Chamber, 105 East Kincaid, Mt. Vernon, WA 98273, 360.428.8547
- **Darlene Mindrum**, Experience Work Project Coordinator, 105 East Kincaid, Mt. Vernon, WA 98273, 360.428.8547
- **Brian Humphrey**, WorkSource Skagit Administrator, Northwest Workforce Council, PO Box 2009, Bellingham, WA 98225 360.416.3510

Name and contact information of person completing this nomination form:

Brian Humphrey, Northwest Workforce Council: bhumphrey@nwpic.bellingham.wa.us, 360-416-3510;
PO Box 2009, Bellingham, WA 98225.

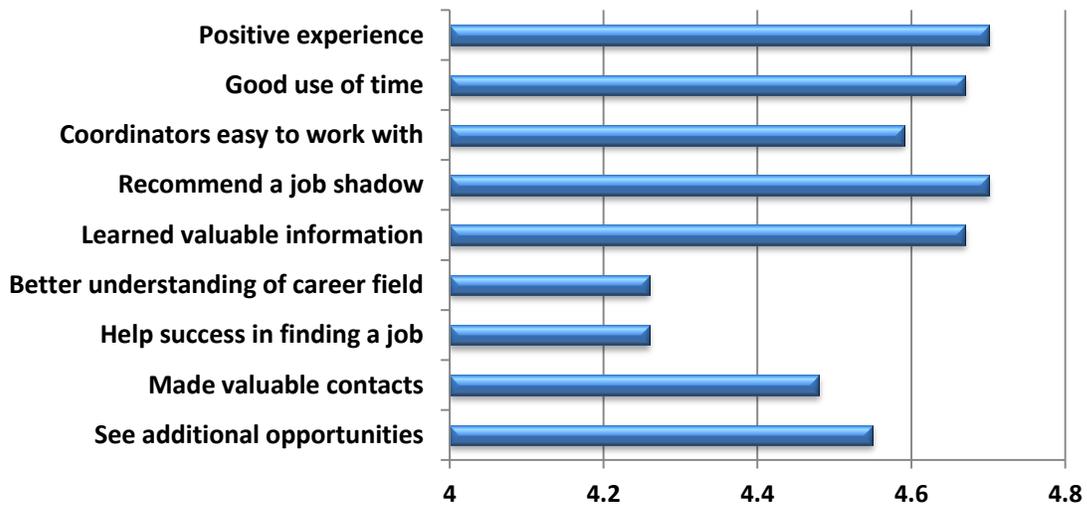
Experince Work Project

Student Participation July 2010 through June 2011



Surveys and evaluations were used throughout the project for both students and employers to develop measures and to identify possible future opportunities for improvement. Final measures include the following:

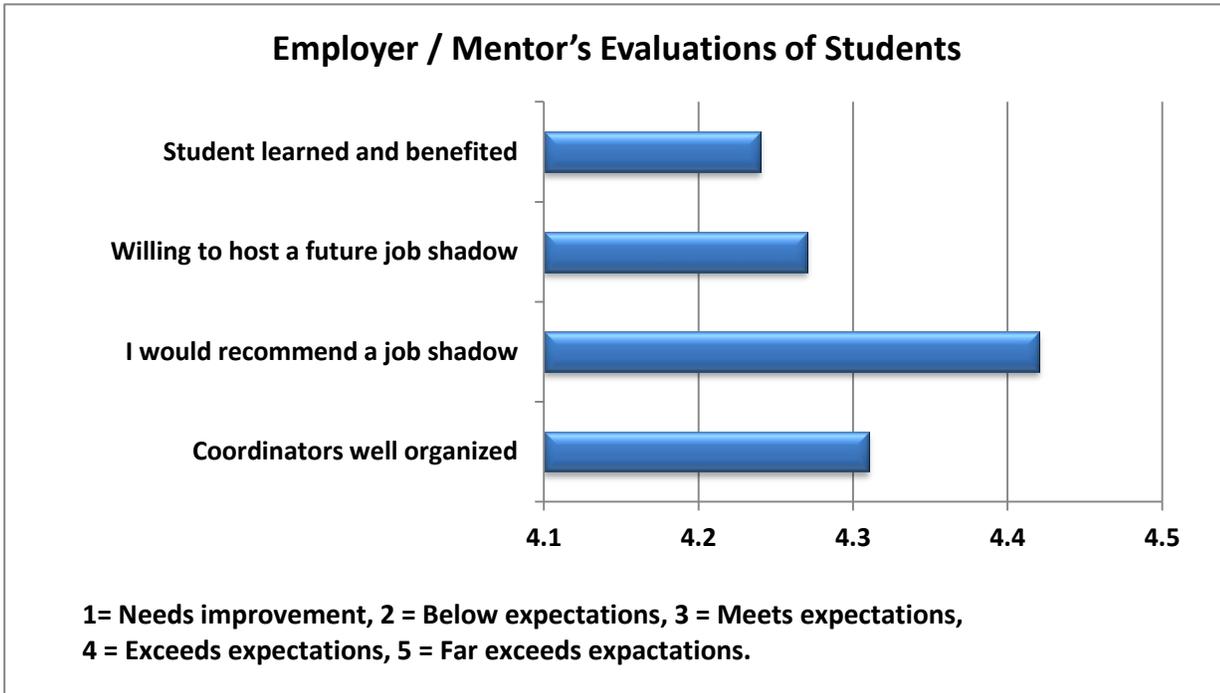
Student's Evaluations of Job Shadow/Internship Experience



1= Needs improvement, 2 = Below expectations, 3 = Meets expectations,
4 = Exceeds expectations, 5 = Far exceeds expectations.

Experince Work Project

Mentors evaluating students were asking if they would be willing to host a job shadow or internship again in the future. Of those employers that responded, 100% said they would like to participate again.



Mentors rated student's professional behaviors. Of those employers that responded, all students either met or exceeded employer expectations.

