

Hiring youth (14-17 year-olds) is a great way to fill gaps in the workforce on a short-term basis and provide young people with an introduction to healthcare careers. This document is designed to provide a starting point for healthcare facilities to develop a hiring program for minors. It was developed with the help of Alaska AHEC and lessons learned from facilities across the state. **This is not a legal guide**, nor is it all-inclusive. Please consult the Department of Labor (DOL) and your legal, risk, and compliance teams prior to implementing a minor hire program.

INITIATION PHASE: Assemble a team

- Identify executive support or sponsorship**
 - Develop relationships and build trust among supporters, advocates, and those who share your passion to prepare Alaska's youth for the future healthcare workforce.
 - Determine the best way to communicate the opportunity:
 - > Consider the SBAR (Situation, Background, Assessment, Recommendation) formats or other clear communication tools.
 - > Communicate the benefits of employing minors:
How can employing minors support workforce needs, now and in the future?
How else will employing minors benefit the organization, individuals, and Alaska's future workforce?
What research supports hiring minors?
- Consider forming a workgroup or steering committee.**
 - Team members may include Human Resource (HR) leads, talent acquisition and recruitment, educators, subject matter experts, legal representatives, school district partners, and community organizations.
 - Keep the size manageable (3-5 people).
 - Define the project objectives, scope, value proposition, and risks.

PLANNING PHASE: Developing the program and policy

- Identify broad job categories within your organization that are appropriate for minors and align with your project goals.**
 - Which current or future staffing need are you trying to solve?
 - How does hiring minors align with your organization's strategic and workforce plans?
 - Have you researched federal and state child labor laws and regulations?
 - > Reference the work permit, DOL Field Operations Handbook (Chapter 33), and the Wage and Hour Administration's Pamphlet 200. Be familiar with these resources and consult your legal department for the final determination.
 - > Review work permit requirements: Alaska requires that minors under age 18 have a permit to work. Note the duties that are permissible for minors in different age groups.
 - > Contact Wage and Hour (DOL) and your local DOL Job Center representative to include them in your network.
- Communicate with and gain support from hiring managers.**
 - Give advance notice prior to starting the program and provide updates on progress.
 - Share job market research, projections, and how hiring minors can support staffing needs.
 - Share expectations and requirements of departments that employ minors.
- Points to consider with specific job duties.**
 - Use existing job descriptions as a starting point.
 - Work with managers to determine job roles within specific departments.
 - Get feedback from HR/recruitment and update as needed.
 - Keep legal and senior leadership apprised of project developments.
- Develop an Employing Minors policy.**
 - Follow your organization's policy-making guidelines.
 - Be sure to involve key stakeholders identified in the initiation phase.
 - Solicit the help of organizations that have successful minor hiring programs for feedback and advice.

IMPLEMENTATION PHASE: Hiring minors

- Work with school district partners.**
 - Start working with teachers and counselors early so that they are aware of hiring timelines and employment opportunities for their students.
 - Work with counselors and teachers to build soft skills including problem solving, communication, and collaboration.
 - Introduce work-based learning (i.e. job shadowing) experiences as early in the school year as possible.
 - Provide supplementary programs and courses to prepare students for employment.

- Support hiring managers.**
 - Develop a manager’s guide to employing minors including job duty limitations, break and hours-worked requirements, child labor laws, and the organization’s Employing Minors policy.
 - Consider offering short training sessions.
 - Assist managers in determining skills, interests, aptitudes, and attitudes that the organization is looking for in candidates.
 - Ensure Human Resources is available to answer questions and designate a point of contact.

- Look for ways to make your employment opportunities appealing to minors.**
 - If your program is career exploration focused, attempt to place students in areas that best meet their career interests by giving them the option to pick their top three departments in the recruitment process.
 - Host recognition events and social gatherings with sponsored lunches, gifts, and prizes to celebrate students. Use these events to inform students about career and scholarship opportunities that are available to them.

- Clarify expectations.**
 - Communicate expectations clearly to minors and reiterate them during the job interview process and orientation. Important expectations may include the use of personal phones during work hours, attendance and punctuality, appropriate behavior, and conflict management.
 - Discuss workplace expectations with teachers and counselors to enlist their help in reinforcing them with students.

KEYS TO SUCCESS

- Consistently build trust among stakeholders and keep them informed of developments as the project progresses.
- Communicate, communicate, communicate – even if the news seems like a “bad” development– communicate anyway!
- Remember that it is a team project and that every team member and stakeholder has an important role to play.
- Capitalize on each team member’s strengths.
- Be available to assist community and academic partners in matters that are not directly related to minor employment. To build stronger relationships, “each log is needed to build a bigger fire.”
- Accept that there will be setbacks and challenges but your organization can find solutions, pivot as needed, and continue on the journey.
- Be open and vulnerable when you need to be with stakeholders. People are more likely to help you when they know that you are human.
- Consider potential barriers and start looking for ways to overcome them as a team.
- Express gratitude for the big and little things - both are impactful to the overall progress.