



Teacher Externship Handbook For Employers

Workforce Solutions Panhandle

3120 Eddy | Amarillo, TX 79106
P: 806-372-5521 | wspanhandle.com

2026 EDITION

Equal Opportunity Is the Law

The Panhandle Workforce Development Board, as a recipient of federal financial assistance, must provide the following notice that it does not discriminate on any prohibited ground.

It is against the law for this recipient of federal financial assistance to discriminate on the following bases: against any individual in the United States, on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions, sex stereotyping, transgender status, and gender identity), national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, disability, or political affiliation or belief, or, against any beneficiary of, applicant to, or participant in programs financially assisted under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act on the basis of the individual's citizenship status or participation in any WIOA Title I—financially assisted program or activity.

The recipient must not discriminate in any of the following areas:

- Deciding who will be admitted, or have access, to any WIOA Title I—financially assisted program or activity;
- Providing opportunities in, or treating any person with regard to, such a program or activity; or
- Making employment decisions in the administration of, or in connection with, such a program or activity.

Recipients of federal financial assistance must take reasonable steps to ensure that communications with individuals with disabilities are as effective as communications with others. This means that, upon request and at no cost to the individual, recipients are required to provide appropriate auxiliary aids and services to qualified individuals with disabilities.

What to Do if You Believe You Have Experienced Discrimination

If you think that you have been subjected to discrimination under a WIOA Title I—financially assisted program or activity, you may file a complaint within 180 days from the date of the alleged violation with either:

- The recipient's Equal Opportunity Officer (or the person whom the recipient has designated for this purpose);
- Director, Civil Rights Center (CRC), US Department of Labor 200 Constitution Avenue NW, Room N-4123, Washington, DC 20210 or electronically as directed on the CRC website at www.dol.gov/crc

If you file your complaint with the recipient, you must wait either until the recipient issues a written Notice of Final Action or until 90 days have passed (whichever is sooner), before filing with the CRC (see address above). If the recipient does not give you a written Notice of Final Action within 90 days of the day on which you filed your complaint, you may file a complaint with CRC before receiving that notice. However, you must file your CRC complaint within 30 days of the 90-day deadline (in other words, within 120 days after the day on which you filed your complaint with the recipient). If the recipient does give you a written Notice of Final Action on your complaint, but you are dissatisfied with the decision or resolution, you may file a complaint with CRC. You must file your CRC complaint within 30 days of the date on which you received the Notice of Final Action.

If you wish to file a complaint, please ask the Workforce Solutions Panhandle staff, or you may contact the Equal Opportunity (EO) Officer:

Leslie Hardin, EO Officer

415 SW 8th Avenue
Amarillo, TX 79105
806-372-3381/ Fax 806-373-3268
Relay Texas: 711 or
1-800-735-2989 (TDD)
1-800-735-2988 (Voice)

Jon Pokorney, TWC EO Officer

101 E. 15th Street, Room 556
Austin, Texas 78778
(512) 463-2400 / Fax: (512) 463-7804
Relay Texas: 711 or
1-800-735-2989 (TDD)
1-800-735-2988 (Voice)

Introduction

What is a teacher externship?

A teacher externship is a specialized professional development opportunity designed for Texas high school educators, immersing them in various industries for firsthand experiences. This initiative establishes a direct link between teachers and regional employers, allowing educators dedicated time in a workplace environment. The primary objective is to narrow the gap between classroom instruction and practical applications, empowering teachers to enrich their curriculum with relevant knowledge for a more career-aligned educational experience.

Significance for Teachers

Teacher externships hold significant meaning for both Career Technical Education (CTE) and core academic teachers, serving as a bridge between skills-based and knowledge-based education. The experience enables educators to constantly update their knowledge, connect classroom content with students' career interests, and play a crucial role in students' development of academic and technical skills required for the workforce.

Purpose

The purpose of a teacher externship is to immerse educators in business, industry, and service-based organizations, providing a practical understanding of how classroom content and learning strategies are applied in the workplace. Teachers enhance their pedagogical practices by incorporating new methods, labor market information, and employment skills, ultimately increasing the relevance of student learning.

Benefits

Teacher externships offer transformative experiences, energizing faculty and changing the classroom dynamic by making educators more empathetic to their students' world. With firsthand exposure, teachers can design meaningful classroom activities, projects, and work-based learning opportunities, adding relevance to students' learning. The experience also allows teachers to explain the value of what students are learning more effectively and fosters cooperative learning environments.

Moreover, externships benefit both teachers and hosting employers. Teachers gain fresh perspectives, tying curriculum to real-world applications, while employers contribute to education by informing educators about their expectations, offering input to the curriculum, and providing various avenues of involvement, from guest speaking to internships.

Externship Responsibilities

Employers participating in the externship are required to meet specific criteria to ensure a meaningful and productive experience for the educators. The program defines essential responsibilities to be fulfilled by employers throughout the externship period. This serves as a guideline for employers to maximize the benefits of the externship and enhance the experience of the educator.

Employer Checklist

- Offer Externship Opportunities
- Communicate with Staff
- Participate in the Externship
- Schedule a Field Trip or Classroom Visit
- Engage with Teachers
- Connect with Your Teacher
- Sign the Time Log

Who is eligible to participate in the externship?

The Summer 2026 Teacher Externship program will serve **Texas Panhandle middle and high school Teachers, Adult Education & Literacy (AEL) Teachers, Institutions of Higher Learning (IHE) Teachers, school counselors, and school administrators (Superintendents, Principals, and Assistant Principals) from participating Independent School Districts (ISDs).**

Educators be at least 18 years of age, eligible to work in the United States, and if male and born after 1960, be registered with selective services.

How will the educator be paid?

The \$2,000 stipend will be paid directly to the teacher by the Panhandle Regional Planning Commission once all requirements have been completed.

How long is the Teacher Externship Experience?

*** Teachers are required to participate for a minimum of ten (10) days to a maximum of fifteen (15) at the worksite, with each day being at least four (4) hours. (See the sample schedule below)**

How is time logged?

The educator will be supplied with a time log, once the externship experience has concluded, please sign their time log.

Is a field trip or a classroom visit required after completing the Externship??

Employers must include either a field trip to an Employer or a classroom visit by an Employer's staff member or guest speaker (in-person or virtual), following the Externship completion.

***New requirement for 2026**

Required Documents

Employer Agreement

A Non-financial Agreement is required from all participating employers.

- Each business MUST fill in each highlighted sections, sign, and date. Either mail or email it to externship coordinators at:
 - Workforce Solutions Panhandle
Business Services Unit
3120 Eddy
Amarillo, TX 79106
 - Scan & Email to businessservices@wspanhandle.com

**Teacher Externship Program
Employer Letter of Agreement**

Between the Panhandle Regional Planning Commission (PRPC), Workforce Solutions Panhandle,
Region 16 Education Service Center (ESC)

and
ABC Company|

Subject: Workforce Development Program for Texas Panhandle Educators and Businesses

Purpose

This Letter of Agreement establishes a collaborative partnership among the above-named employer, the Panhandle Regional Planning Commission (PRPC), Workforce Solutions Panhandle, and the Region 16 Education Service Center (ESC) for the Teacher Externship Program. This program is designed to provide educators in the Texas Panhandle with direct, hands-on industry experiences, enabling them to integrate relevant skills and knowledge into classroom teaching to better prepare students for future careers.

Program Objectives

- Equip educators with current industry insights to enhance classroom instruction.
- Foster partnerships between local businesses and schools to address workforce needs.
- Support student skill development and career awareness through educator-designed, career-focused lesson plans.

Responsibilities of Each Party

Employers:

- **Externship Hosting:** Host educators for a five- to ten-day externship, with a minimum of four hours per day, providing a meaningful externship experience as outlined in the Employer Handbook. This includes exposure to workplace practices, industry trends, and essential skills needed for success in your field.
- **Employee Engagement:** Offer opportunities for educators to shadow employees, tour facilities, and participate in activities reflecting daily business operations, including informal interviews and department meetings.
- **Post-Externship Collaboration:** Facilitate a field trip to the workplace for students or arrange for an employer representative to visit the educator's classroom, either in-person or virtually.
- **Program Evaluation:** Complete a post-externship survey to provide feedback on the program's effectiveness.
- **Professional Environment:** Ensure a professional and nondiscriminatory environment for educators during the externship, consistent with program standards.

Panhandle Regional Planning Commission (PRPC):

- **Administrative Oversight:** Manage program funds, including disbursing a \$1,000 stipend to each educator upon successful completion of program requirements.

Suggested Activities for a Teacher Externship

1. Allow the educators to visit a variety of departments to gain a sense of the depth of industry opportunities.

2. Take them brief tour of the facilities and departments:

- offices
- meeting rooms
- common areas, “water cooler”, bulletin boards/announcements
- training facilities
- other: _____

3. Present an orientation to the “human resources” department/functions:

- application materials
- job listings
- working conditions and benefits
- summer hire/internship programs
- sample resumes
- salary ranges for various positions
- performance review processes and tools

4. Allow the educator to conduct structured interviews; to obtain information on the following:

- the variety of occupations and positions in each department
- educational and skill requirements for your position and others in your department
- the career path you took to your position
- “a day in the life...”
- common and more unusual problems and challenges
- quality and performance standards and measurement
- “what I like most and least about working in this industry”
- current and future skill needs
- short- and long-term industry trends

5. Educators can observe:

- meetings
- informal “coffee talk”
- presentations
- interviews
- screenings
- lunch and/or work breaks

6. If appropriate, plan a project, supply the educator with:

- instructions and opportunities for questions and dialogue
- tools
- timeline

7. Allow the educators to work in a given position for a period of time, under the supervision of someone who can provide orientation and training in that job.

Sample Schedule

As part of the Teacher Externship Program, participating educators are required to complete a minimum of ten (10) days of externship experience and at least four (4) hours per day at the employer's worksite. This requirement is designed to ensure that educators have sufficient time to immerse themselves in the workplace environment, observe industry practices, and interact with professionals in the field.

Sample Externship Schedule:

Week 1: Foundations and Immersion

EXTERNSHIP DAY 1	
4 Hours	Program Kickoff & Company Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome and introductions with leadership and key staff Overview of company mission, values, and organizational structure Review externship goals and schedule Guided tour of the facility and major departments
EXTERNSHIP DAY 2	
4 Hours	Department Rotation 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign educator to first key department Observe daily operations and workflows Participate in entry-level tasks or projects relevant to the department Q&A with team members to understand job roles and skills
EXTERNSHIP DAY 3	
4 Hours	Department Rotation 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage the educator in new tasks and projects. Provide a clear view of the team's daily workflow and processes. Encourage questions and discussion with team members.
EXTERNSHIP DAY 4	
4 Hours	Department/Position/Project #3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immerse the educator in a new department's function. Allow the educator to participate in meetings or collaborative sessions, when appropriate. Offer insights into the specific skills and knowledge required for this area of the business.
EXTERNSHIP DAY 5	
4 Hours	Mid-Point Review & First Week Wrap-up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold a check-in meeting to discuss the educator's experiences and observations. Address any lingering questions and gather feedback on the first week. Briefly outline the plan for the second week.

Week 2: Advanced Learning and Partnership Planning

EXTERNSHIP DAY 6	
4 Hours	<p>Department/Position/Project #4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the educator to a fourth department or project. • Connect the new tasks to previous experiences to build a comprehensive understanding of the business. • Facilitate discussions with team members about their roles and career paths.
EXTERNSHIP DAY 7	
4 Hours	<p>Department/Position/Project #5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the educator to a fifth and final department or project. • Offer hands-on experience and a fresh perspective on a different aspect of the business. • Encourage the educator to synthesize their learning from all previous rotations.
EXTERNSHIP DAY 8	
4 Hours	<p>Leadership & Strategy Deep Dive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The educator will shadow a manager or team leader for a half-day. • Provide a look into the decision-making process, team management, and problem-solving strategies. • Discuss the critical soft skills and leadership qualities needed for professional growth.
EXTERNSHIP DAY 9	
4 Hours	<p>Industry Trends & Skills Gap Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host a focused session with a subject matter expert. • Discuss current industry trends, emerging technologies, and critical skills gaps. • This session helps the educator align their curriculum with the real-world needs of your industry.
EXTERNSHIP DAY 10	
4 Hours	<p>Wrap-up & Future Partnership Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A final debrief to answer any remaining questions. • Discuss the long-term talent needs of your industry and how the educator can share this knowledge with their students. • Collaboratively plan for future partnerships, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Classroom visits: A company representative can visit the school. ○ Student tours: The educator can bring a class of students to tour your facilities. ○ Job shadowing or internships: Explore how your company can create future opportunities for students.

After the Externship

Congratulations on successfully completing the externship experience with our organization! As we wrap up this phase of the Teacher Externship Program, it's crucial to ensure a smooth conclusion and fulfill program requirements. Here's what you need to do at the conclusion of the externship:

Signing the Educator's Time Log:

Please review and sign the educator's Time Log, documenting their participation and learning outcomes during the externship period. Your signature verifies their engagement and is essential for program evaluation.

Engagement Opportunities for Students:

As part of the program requirements, offering additional engagement opportunities for students, such as:

- Hosting a field trip to your organization to provide students with firsthand exposure to your industry and workplace environment, or;
- Conducting a virtual or in-person presentation at the school to share insights from the externship experience and inspire students about career opportunities in your field.

Complete the Externship Experience Evaluation:

Your feedback is invaluable in assessing the effectiveness of the program and identifying areas for improvement. Please take a few moments at the conclusion of the Teacher Externship Experience to complete the evaluation at <https://wspanhandle.com/teacher-externship-employer-evaluation/>.

Helpful Websites

Labor Market Information

[Texas LMI](#)

[Watch the instructional videos!](#) A suite of easy to use labor market research tools that provides time series labor market data and inquiry capabilities for labor force, employment/unemployment estimates, industry and occupational projections, and occupational wage data.



[Texas Labor Analysis](#)

Texas Labor Analysis is an online suite of labor analysis tools to help provide insight into the Texas labor supply and labor demand. Create in-depth statewide or regional reports for aggregated or single regions.



[Texas Wages](#)

Not sure how much to pay for different jobs in your business? Check out TexasWages.com to move your business forward!



[The Texas AutoCoder](#)

Enter any job title or job description and we will

Students, Counselors, & Teachers

[Career and Technical Education Downloads](#)

Career and Technical Education downloads will provide a list of in-demand occupations that are aligned with Texas Career Cluster and Statewide CTE Programs of Study information. This data is arranged by region and contains relevant labor market information to help understand which jobs are most likely to be available and well-compensated.



[Texas Internship Challenge](#)

The Texas Internship Challenge is a partnership between the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), Texas Education Agency (TEA) and The Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), who challenge employers to offer paid internships and make it easy for students to search and apply for them.



[Texas Reality Check](#)

It's difficult to predict the future, but it's never too early to start planning for it. Texas Reality Check will show you how much your living expenses will cost, and the amount of money you will need to earn to pay for them.



provide you the best match among the hundreds of Standard Occupation Classification (SOC) codes. Find wages, projections, job postings on WorkinTexas.com, and much more.



[Texas Skills to Work](#)

Designed to help you use your military experience to transition to a job you already know how to do in the civilian workforce.



[Monthly Help Wanted Online](#)

Monthly HWOL provides real-time labor market information useful in tracking the extent and nature of employers' demand for labor by occupation, industry, and geography. Find the latest industry, and employment trends for jobs in the State of Texas.



[TWC Unemployment Insurance Claimant Interactive Map](#)

The Texas UI Claimant Dashboard maps Unemployment Insurance claims by TWC Workforce Development Area, county, zip code and legislative district. Data downloads are available for all the information displayed.

[Texas Career Check](#)

Our newest online tool, Texas Career Check offers information on hundreds of job titles, pay information, and future projected jobs, this interactive website can help answer your education and career exploration questions.



[State Training Inventory](#)

STI is designed to assist customers locate education and workforce training programs, see the connection between education and occupations, and estimate the formal supply of skilled workers.



[Texas CREWS \(Discover Texas CREWS\)](#)

Tell us what college you want to attend, what you want to study, and we'll tell you what you could make in that field, and how much you could owe when you graduate.



[Texas OnCourse](#)

Texas OnCourse empowers you—pre-K through grade 12 students, parents, teachers, and counselors—to make decisions that will help you, your child or your students succeed after high school.

Contact Information



Phillip Flores
Workforce Solutions Panhandle
Business Services Representative
(806) 350-1606
pflores@wspanhandle.com



Sarah Barnes
Workforce Solutions Panhandle
Business Services Representative
(806) 350-1618
sbarnes@wspanhandle.com



Mindy Hampton
Region 16
Learning Leader, CTE/Lead CCMR / Counseling and Support Services
(806) 377-5145
mindy.hampton@esc16.net

Workforce Solutions Panhandle

3120 Eddy | Amarillo, TX 79106
P: 806-372-5521 | wspanhandle.com