

## **Job Readiness Training Program Manual - 2014**

### ***Mission Statement***

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The mission of the Job Readiness Training (JRT) program is to improve the overall functioning of at-risk high school students at home, in school, and in the community. The goals and objectives of the JRT is to:

- 1) Increase the employability of at-risk high school students.
- 2) Improve school attendance and academic performance, decrease school dropout rates, and increase the likelihood of high school completion and enrollment in secondary education or the military.
- 3) Reduce the recidivism rate for students served by the program that are involved with DJJ by preventing further delinquency and/or violence.

### ***Overview of the Program***

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JRT is an employability skills training program for at-risk high school students. The JRT sites can be located in conjunction with DJJ's Teen After School Centers (TASCs). TASCs are daily after-school programs based in local churches, community centers, and other public buildings across the state that are staffed by employees and volunteers with a heart for students. These centers serve students in need of additional structure and assistance and are designed to reduce the likelihood that program participants become involved in the juvenile justice system. TASCs provide supervision, homework assistance, structured daily activities, service coordination, and resource development for at-risk students and their families.

The JRT program provides career exposure, and a community internship/work experience component for at risk high school students. Each JRT site will operate the program after school during the spring and fall for 10 weeks after school (subject to approval by SCDJJ). The 10 week programs will include 15 hours of Job Readiness Skills Training, for which the youth can earn a stipend of \$7.25 per hour for successful attendance and participation in the training. 20 youth per site will attend the program three days per week after school for the first four weeks of the program, where they will complete the first 9 hours of training, and then once per week for the final 6 weeks of the program where they will complete their final six hours of training.

After successfully completing the first four weeks of training, youth will begin working at their 40 hour community internships where they will earn \$7.25 per hour for each hour of internship. It is expected that the youth will work at their internships two days per week for approximately three to four hours per day over the six week period. The JRT coordinator will visit students at their internships at least once every two weeks to assess their progress, provide support and to help youth and /or employers resolve any problems that may arise.

Each JRT will provide services to juveniles between the ages of 14-17, who are considered at-risk youth or under probation or parole supervision for nonviolent offenses. Each JRT site will also provide programmatic services to encourage teamwork and build self-confidence and self-esteem. Furthermore, these sites will conduct structured workshops with the overall goal of the participant advancing vocationally upon completion of the required program timeframe.

The JRT sites will establish a summer program that will serve up to 20 high school students per site and operate for five weeks beginning in June and ending in July. The summer program begins with five days (20 hours) of employability skills training for which students can earn a stipend of \$7.25 per hour for successful attendance and participation. After successfully completing the training, students begin an 80 hour community internship where they will earn a stipend of \$7.25 per hour while gaining real life work experience. Youth will be scheduled for 20 hours per week at their internships over a four week period to complete their 80 internship hours.

### **Program Staff**

Program staff consists of a part-time (20 hours per week) Employability Skills Training Coordinator at each site. The coordinators are responsible for enrolling students into the program, providing the Job Readiness Skills training, scheduling guest speakers to share information with students about their careers, maintaining and reporting data on the students served, and arranging and supervising the community internships.

### **Referrals/Acceptance in the Program**

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Students can be referred to the DJJ's Job Readiness Training program by a variety of sources including the Family Court, law enforcement, a local TASC site that serves the county/region, school resource officers and school staff, DJJ staff, the students themselves and their parents. The JRT Coordinator, in collaboration with their respective DJJ Prevention Specialist, screens applicants to verify that they meet the criteria for admission to the program.

Once it has been determined that the student meets the eligibility criteria for the program, the JRT Coordinator then provides the following services:

- „. An orientation on the JRT program for the student and their family, securing a commitment that the student will attend and complete the program, and having the parents sign all required consent forms.
- > A discussion of transportation arrangements with the student and family to ensure the student can safely get to and from the program.
- > Scheduling the student to attend the next phase of the program.

### ***Spring and Fall After School Programs***

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The JRT Spring and Fall After School Programs each serve 20 high school students. The 10 week programs include 15 hours of Job Readiness Skills training, for which students can earn a stipend of \$7.25 per hour for successful attendance and participation in the training. Students attend the program three days per week after school for the first four weeks of the program, completing 9 hours of training, and then once per week for the final six weeks of the program where they complete their final six hours of training.

After successfully completing the first four weeks of training, students begin working at their 40 hour community internships, earning \$7.25 per hour for each hour of internship experience completed. It is expected that students work at their internships two days per week for approximately three to four hours per day over the six week period. The JRT Coordinator visits students at their internships at least once every two weeks to assess their progress, provide support and encouragement, and to help the students and/or employers resolve any problems that may arise.

During the final six weeks of the program, students attend the afterschool program one day per week to complete their final six hours (one hour per week) of Job Readiness Skills training. In addition to providing ongoing training, the six weekly sessions provide a forum for students to share their internship experiences with the other students, receive support and encouragement from the other students and staff, and be exposed to additional career opportunities.

### ***Summer Program***

The five week JRT Summer Program serves up to 20 high school students. New Students should be considered first for the summer program however continuing students may be allowed to remain if the JRT coordinator determines that recruiting new students is problematic. The JRT coordinator should consult with the respective DJJ Prevention Specialist about the recruitment of students. The Summer Program begins with five days (20 hours) of Job Readiness Skills training for which students can earn a stipend of \$7.25 per hour for successful attendance and participation. After completing the training, students begin an 80 hour community internship where they earn a stipend \$7.25 per hour while gaining invaluable work experience. Students are scheduled work their internships 20 hours per week for four weeks.

As in the afterschool program, the JRT Coordinator recruits local businesses to offer internship opportunities and provides an internship orientation to the individuals that supervise the student interns. In the Summer Program, the Coordinator visits each student at their internship site on a weekly basis to assess their progress, provide support and encouragement, and help the student and employer resolve any problems.

### ***Job Readiness Skills Training***

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Students enrolled in the JRT program receive 20 hours of Job Readiness Skills training provided by the JRT Coordinator, for which they earn a stipend of \$7.25 per hour for successful attendance and participation in the training. Students complete a pre-test and post-test to measure the knowledge gained through the skills training sessions. The Coordinators are responsible for verifying the student's successful completion of the training and providing stipend payments for the students. The main topics covered in the Job Readiness Skills training curriculum include:

- > Preparing to Enter the World of Work
- > Resume Writing
- > Job Search Skills
- > Interviewing Skills
- > Problem Solving Skills
- > Listening and Oral Communication Skills
- > Coping with Anger
- > Resolving Conflicts
- > Assertiveness
- > Resisting Peer Pressure
- > Working as a Team

### ***Student Internships/Work Experiences***

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While the Job Readiness Training and other activities provide students with important skills needed for success in the workplace, one of the most powerful learning experiences for JRT students is their community internships. For many of the students served by the program, their internship represents their first "real job," and provides them with the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to secure their own employment after graduating from the program.

Students in the Spring and Fall Programs have the opportunity to complete a 40 hour internship in a community business where they earn a stipend of \$7.25 per hour while gaining invaluable "real life" work experience. Students in the Summer Program can complete an 80 hour community internship. In the Spring and Fall Programs students work at their internships after school and/or on the weekends, while students in the Summer Phase typically work during the normal workday schedule.

JRT Coordinators provide the following services in support of the student internships: recruiting local businesses to offer internship opportunities:

- > providing an internship orientation to the businesses that will supervise the student internships;
- > completing Internship Work Site Agreements with each site visiting each student at their internship site at least every two weeks to assess their progress, providing support and encouragement, and helping the student and/or employer resolve any problems they may experience during the internship;
- > picking up the student's time sheets, processing requests for stipend payments for the students, and ensuring student receive their stipend checks.

### ***Successful Completion/Discharge from the Program***

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#### **Requirements for successful completion of the Spring, Fall and Summer Phases:**

- > A minimum of 80% attendance at the afterschool centers during the 10 week Fall and Spring Programs and 4 out of the 5 days for the Summer Program week of training (Note: students will only receive stipend payments for training sessions attended and completed).

- > A minimum score of 80% on the Job Readiness Skills Training post test

;- Satisfactory attendance, behavior, and participation at the student's internship site.

#### **Discharge from the Program:**

Students may be discharged from the program for the following reasons:

- > Student exhibits behavior (verbal or physical) that indicates he/she is a threat to him/herself or others
- > Student fails to meet attendance requirements for the program
- > Student fails to meet behavioral standards for the program
- > Student commits a new criminal offense while in the program

Note: Students discharged from the program for attendance or behavioral reasons may be considered for acceptance into the program for the next phase if there is a reasonable expectation that their attendance and/or behavior will now meet program expectations.

## ***Performance Objectives/Measurable Outcomes***

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The following performance objectives/measurable outcomes will be used to measure the success of the JRT program:

### ***Performance Objectives:***

- > 80% or more of youth enrolled will successfully complete the program.
- > 80% or more of youth will demonstrate skill attainment by achieving a minimum score of 70 percent on the Job Readiness Training post-tests.
- > 80% or more of youth will stay in school, earn a G.E.D. or graduate from high school while in the program.
- > 80% or more of youth under DJJ supervision will successfully complete the conditions of their probation, parole, or contract with DJJ and/or will not be rearrested for a new criminal offense for one year after completing the program.

## ***Data Collection/Progress Reports/Program Evaluation***

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A comprehensive database and evaluation plan for JRT has been developed by DJJ staff. JRT Coordinators at each program site will be trained to enter program information on the database and submit monthly progress reports to DJJ. DJJ staff will compile a combined quarterly Progress Reports for all JRT sites, and will work collaboratively with DJJ's Office of Research and Statistics to complete a year end evaluation of the program's performance.

Data collected and reported will include the following:

- > Demographics on students served by the program
- > Number of hours of Job Readiness Training completed by students
- > Number of Internship hours completed by students
- > Job Readiness Training Pre and Post Test Scores
- > Outcome data for JRT participants collected one year after program completion that will include the following measures:
  - o School attendance,
  - o School behavior,
  - o Academic performance-diploma/GED completion
  - o Enrollment in secondary education or the military
  - o Any new referrals to DJJ

## ***Staff Training***

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All new JRT Coordinators will receive initial training before beginning work at their respective JRT site. There will be an agenda provided for the JRT Coordinator Training with a list of the topics covered in the training.

Coordinators will be scheduled for other DJJ and/or outside trainings at the discretion of their respective regional DJJ Prevention Specialist.

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