

Summer Work for ME

Project provided Bangor area high school students with developmental disabilities with a range of paid work experiences to help them gain insight into their own strengths and interests and cultivate career awareness.

Project Outline

1. High school students with a disability are identified as eligible for the project by transition vocational rehabilitation counselor.
2. Interested student/family meet with SW4ME staff and transition VR counselor to review project information and enroll, if interested.
3. Community rehabilitation provider, KFI, does job development at Eastern Maine Community College (EMCC) and hires the job coaches.
4. Transition VR counselor and KFI schedule time for the enrolled students to attend a site visit at EMCC work site prior to first work day.
5. Students work at each work site for 2 weeks, then rotate to a different site. At the end of 6 weeks, students have sampled 3 different work situations.
6. Students work Monday through Thursday from 8am-noon. On Fridays, students attend a skill-building workshop to reinforce workplace experiences and provide an environment for discussion.
7. Students are paid minimum wage while they work (16 hours/week) and also are paid to attend and participate in the workshop sessions (3 hours/week).
8. Project begins the last week in June and runs through the first week in August.



Workshop Topics

- Self-Determination
- High/low notes of the week for you
- Disclosure of disability
- Requesting accommodations
- Filling out job applications
- Dealing with difficult work situations - role play
- Resumes
- Obtaining references
- Financial literacy training with Finance Authority of Maine
- Banking – checking and saving accounts, debt cards
- Social media – how do employers use it?
- Visit to Maine CareerCenter
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): what does it have to do with me?



Funding and Expenses

In 2015, **the initial year** of the Summer Work for ME project, the University of Maine Center for Community Inclusion and Disability Studies (CCIDS) obtained a grant from the Maine Developmental Disabilities Council in the area of innovative employment for people with developmental disabilities. A planning group was formed to implement the project outline, locate a community worksite with multiple job options onsite, and identify an area high school with eligible and interested students.

In 2015, the grant funded several expenses related to the project: CCIDS staff time to coordinate the project; KFI's job development and hiring of job coaches; mileage reimbursement for students and families traveling to and from the EMCC work site; the purchase of supplies and materials used at the Friday workshop sessions; and the students' wages for their participation in these workshops. The Maine Department of Labor, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation program provided funding for the students' wages while working and also covered the costs of the job coaches.

In **year two** (2016), the scope and structure of the project remained the same, however, the grant amount awarded was less than the 2015 level, so the following adjustments were made to account for the difference: the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation program provided travel reimbursement funds to students/families and covered the cost of students' wages to participate in the Friday workshop sessions. CCIDS covered the costs of materials and supplies for these weekly workshop sessions.



Summer Work for ME received funding from the Maine Developmental Disabilities Council and leveraged funding from the Maine Department of Labor, Bureau of Rehabilitation Services to provide job coaching for the students at the work sites through vocational rehabilitation program situational assessment dollars. Community rehabilitation provider, KFI, led the development of the work sites at Eastern Maine Community College and coordinated the hiring and training of job coaches. Additional funding was provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (Grant No. 90DD0005).

For more information about Summer Work for ME, please contact Janet May, M.Ed., Coordinator of Transition and Adults, janet.may@maine.edu

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