

Groundhog Job Shadow Day – Resources and Best Practices

(Updated January 2014)

General

- Useful links:

<http://www.americaspromise.org/Resources/CareerExplorationToolkit/For-Youth-Organizations.aspx>

<http://www.groundhog.org/groundhog-day/>

<http://lindberggrp.com/2010/10/06/national-job-shadow-day-coalition/>

http://www.educationworld.com/a_curr/curr050.shtml

- Seize this opportunity to educate employers about Job Corps, and lay the groundwork for long-term relationships.
- Get the entire center involved.
- Contact elected officials and community leaders – they help generate increased participation and media coverage. (Make sure that Job Corps is mentioned as appropriate in related media coverage.)
- Think about what shadow mentors at job sites can do for Job Corps beyond Groundhog Job Shadow Day; strategize about targeted sites based on who, what, and why you want to reach them. Also remember that job shadowing can occur at any time; Business and Community Liaisons, Career Transition Service providers, and other staff members may wish to incorporate additional job shadowing opportunities during other times of the year.

Planning and Participation

- Start planning and making all logistical arrangements in advance, especially regarding major considerations such as transportation and meals.
 - Partner with local transit companies to arrange transportation vouchers.
 - Plan and test travel routes.
 - Coordinate efforts and logistics, and share leadership roles among centers to maximize opportunities, especially if centers are located in close proximity.
- Hold centerwide assemblies to motivate students to participate.
- Build enthusiasm by engaging students in the planning process, and let them know why job shadowing is important.
 - Ask students to create Groundhog Job Shadow Day promotional posters and materials.
 - Establish student committees to help plan participation.
 - Assign specific planning duties to students to promote “ownership.”
 - Involve students in site selection – let them contribute to a “wish list” of workplaces where they would like to shadow, and then involve them in following up with appropriate contacts.
 - Students may promote employer participation by attending/speaking at local Chamber of Commerce meetings, Community Relations or Industry Council meetings, workforce investment board meetings, etc.
- Establish a Groundhog Job Shadow Day bulletin board for ideas and updates.
- Advertise in the local news media for interested employers to serve as workplace mentors.
- Get proclamations issued by local elected officials (i.e., getting the mayor to declare Job Shadow Day in your town).
- Prepare students/provide orientation.
- Give each student an information sheet with specifics about where he/she is going (i.e., location, company name), the appropriate contact person and other details at least one day in advance.
- Ensure that students are adequately prepared to answer general questions that employers may have about the Job Corps program.
- Invite prospective workplace mentors to participate in Job Corps activities so that they can learn more about the program and meet the students.
- Contact staff and students at local colleges and universities about being mentors.

- Ask staff from Workforce Investment Boards and local One-Stop partners, such as local Dislocated Worker, Vocational Rehabilitation or Apprenticeship programs, to consider serving as student mentors.
- Hold a pre-Groundhog Job Shadow employer luncheon to explain job shadowing and answer questions.
- Remind workplace mentors of their commitment at least 2 days in advance.
- Make sure students know how to dress appropriately for their workplace shadowing experience.
- Have a back-up plan for students who sign up late to participate, and for those who signed up but could not participate.
- Arrange to have a guest speaker and/or rally to generate enthusiasm.

Approaches to Participation

- Adjust and be flexible
- Allow students to shadow center staff, especially at rural centers.
- Allow students who are waiting to be enrolled in a specific trade to shadow students who are already advanced in that trade.
- Approach members of your Center Industry Council, Community Relations Council, Vocational Advisory Council, and other external contacts who already play a role on center about being workplace mentors.
- Enlist the assistance of Career Technical Training instructors in finding workplace mentors.
- Ask Job Corps staff to enlist spouses and associates as workplace mentors.
- Arrange shadowing opportunities with media and public officials to maximize Job Corps' impact on public awareness.
- Check Web sites such as www.americaspromise.org and www.mentoringusa.org to locate mentoring organizations, and additional opportunities near you.

Day of Event

- Make sure all students arrive on time at all shadowing sites.
- Give students disposable cameras to document their day.
- Provide students with Job Corps brochures to hand out to mentors and their organizations.
- Have students wear Job Corps pins, shirts, or something appropriate for the workplace that connects them to the program.
- Have Job Corps shadows review resumes of current job applicants as part of shadowing activities.
- Ensure that students have appropriate items for their shadowing experience (i.e., a pen, pad, resume, Job Corps brochures, lunch money).

Follow-Up

- Allow time for reflection and follow-up – let students compare experiences in a structured setting; capture good ideas for next year.
- Have students write summaries of their experiences, possibly as a group and/or as an academic assignment.
- Have students draft “thank you” e-mails to mentors within 5 business days after their shadow experience. Share photos of Groundhog Job Shadow Day with workplace mentors.
- Ensure that staff receives feedback directly from employers/workplace mentors when the day is over.
- Place an advertisement in the local media, thanking employers who served as workplace mentors.
- Hold a luncheon on center to thank workplace mentors.
- Produce a video to thank workplace mentors.
- Post photos on your center Web site (or send them to the Office of Job Corps so that they can be posted on the Job Corps Web site).
- Capture lessons learned and best practices in a Groundhog Job Shadow Day journal as a reference for future job shadowing activities.
- Be sure to complete the survey administered by the National Office of Job Corps, and include all relevant information.