On-the-Job Learning Experiences

What is an on-the-job learning experience?

An on-the-job learning experience is when a person spends time at a workplace learning about and participating in the job tasks of employees at that workplace. This is one of the best ways for a person to learn new skills and gain valuable experience. As you help members with employment needs, you may consider an on-the-job learning experience to improve their employability.

Who can benefit from an on-the-job learning experience?

Individuals who lack skills or have little or no experience in the field they wish to enter may benefit from an on-the-job learning experience. Such experiences will help them gain valuable skills and make them more desirable to prospective employers.

Individuals who, for various reasons, have a difficult time doing well with traditional hiring processes, but have the potential to be good workers, may also benefit from on-the-job learning experiences. Such experiences may help them get a foot in the door and prove to an employer that they are capable employees.

It may be wise for an individual to seek an on-the-job learning experience to accompany formal training or education they are receiving. In fields where experience is more important than formal training, an individual may seek an on-the-job learning experience to help him develop the skills necessary to start a career in that field.

How can I help someone identify on-the-job learning experiences?

Identifying appropriate on-the-job learning experiences is an important task. Before you help someone pursue an opportunity, make sure to have a clear understanding of the person’s employment goals so you can seek opportunities that will help the person reach those goals.

Finding on-the-job learning experiences may require resourcefulness and creativity. Here are some ideas to help you:

- Network with family, friends, Church members, and community members.
- Identify companies that need extra help or already have job openings.
- Approach businesses that routinely work with volunteers.
- Identify training programs that provide internship or apprenticeship opportunities.

How can I help ensure that an on-the-job learning experience will be valuable?

Once someone has secured an on-the-job learning experience, work with that person to ensure they’ve set goals and objectives that will guide the experience. Have the person write down those goals and objectives in a plan, and review the plan throughout and at the end of the experience. Also, encourage the person to keep an ongoing list or journal of the things he or she is learning. Check in with the person regularly to make sure everything is going well. You may even wish to ask the person’s home teacher or visiting teacher to check in on a regular basis.