



TEXAS
Department of Family
and Protective Services

Summer Internship Pilot Program Evaluation

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Executive Summary

Pursuant to House Bill 1608, 85th Legislative Regular Session, 2017, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) was directed to establish a paid or unpaid summer internship pilot program in one or more DFPS regions for youth age 15 or older, currently or formerly in foster care. The pilot is expected to provide these youth with the opportunity to develop marketable job skills and obtain professional work experience through a summer internship with a participating business, nonprofit organization or governmental entity. DFPS may collaborate with other state agencies as appropriate. DFPS may enter into an agreement with the entities to allow the entity to award internships to youth who participate in the pilot. Not later than, April 1 of each year, DFPS shall select youth for the pilot program. Each of these youth shall enter into an agreement with the organization awarding the internship and DFPS relating to the terms of the internship.

Additionally, not later than the second anniversary of the date the program begins, DFPS shall complete an evaluation and produce a report on the Summer Internship Pilot Program. The evaluation of the program must include the following:

- (1) number of youth who participated in the pilot program;
- (2) location and type of internships provided under the pilot program; and
- (3) details of the department's efforts to recruit eligible youth to participate in the pilot program.

To comply with the legislation, DFPS collaborated with Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas located in DFPS Region 3 to establish a Summer Internship Pilot Program. DFPS Region 3 has an established Memorandum of Understanding with the Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas Board to provide priority services to youth currently or formerly in foster care in their coverage area which could include a summer internship pilot program. Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas coverage area includes: Collin, Denton, Ellis, Erath, Hood, Hunt, Johnson, Kaufman, Navarro, Palo Pinto, Parker, Rockwell, Somervell and Wise counties. Through this collaboration, Workforce Solutions of North Central Texas partnered with Marshall's Department Store and Consumer Value Store (CVS) Pharmacy to provide a summer internship to help youth develop job skills and gain work experience.

Evaluation of the Summer Internship Pilot

Implementation of Legislation

DFPS collaborated with Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas in partnership with Marshall's Department Store and Consumer Value Store (CVS) Pharmacy to provide a summer internship pilot program to help youth develop job skills and gain work experience.

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To establish the pilot, DFPS met several times with the Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas board and their office staff in 2017 and 2018 to discuss plans for the summer internship pilot and determine interested potential employers. Marshall's Department Store expressed an interest in providing internship opportunities for youth who are currently or formerly in foster care. With Marshall's commitment, a pilot was established. During initial discussions with Marshalls, four participating stores were considered, but later it was determined only one store would participate in the first year of implementation of the program, before expanding to additional stores.

At the end of the first summer internship pilot in 2018, DFPS, Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas and Marshall's evaluated the following:

- what each organization learned through the pilot process,
- further definition of roles and responsibilities of each organization, and
- expansion of the internship program to additional stores for summer 2019.

Marshall's continued their participation in the summer of 2019 by providing internships at their TJ Maxx store in Waxahachie, Texas and Marshall's store in Plano, Texas. This provided a total of two sites in their retail network participating in the pilot program.

In addition to partnering with Marshall's, DFPS and Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas entered discussions with CVS Pharmacy in 2019 to identify possible internships. As a result, CVS provided internships during the spring and summer of 2019 in their stores located in the Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas coverage area.

DFPS Recruitment of Youth to Participate

For each of the internships held during the summers of 2018 and 2019, and spring 2019, DFPS identified youth ages 16 and older living near the Marshall's and CVS participating store locations. Internships started when a youth turned 16 because of store policies. Outreach was conducted with internal DFPS staff, CitySquare Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) Case Management and After Care services contractor, CitySquare Transition Resource Action Center (TRAC) and other community partners to find interested youth for the internship.

Additionally, DFPS utilized data that showed youth that lived in the general proximity to the participating store locations and within the Workforce Solutions coverage area. DFPS staff contacted the identified youth to determine interest in participating in the internship pilot. Names of interested youth were provided to the Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas office staff prior to each internship. DFPS provided training to Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas office staff on the needs of youth currently or formerly in foster care and available resources to support their employment since Workforce Solutions had the responsibility to assess each applicant and train- potential and selected participants.

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The Workforce Solutions office screened each potential applicant for the internship and ultimately selected pilot participants. Participants were provided job training during the initial assessment phase. Training consisted of the following:

- work readiness that included interviewing, resume writing, leadership modules, and financial literacy modules in addition to career assessments to help match with job placement.

In addition, the DFPS State Office Youth Specialist (summer 2018 and 2019) or Region 3 Youth Specialist (spring 2019) provided training to youth and young adults who participated in the internship program on appropriate boundaries related to the sharing of personal information on the job.

Participation in Internship Pilot

The goal of the pilot was to identify a minimum of five youth to participate during each summer and spring internship. The actual number of beginning participants for the three internship pilots were 13. During the internship pilot programs, several trends were identified that impacted the ability of some of the participants from successfully completing the program. These included:

- transportation issues such as spending several hours on the bus to get to work,
- competition from other employers paying a higher hourly rate closer to the participant's home,
- relocation of the youth out of area, or
- life issues such as parenthood or legal issues.

Solutions to the identified trends included the following:

- DFPS frequent communication with Workforce Solutions office staff,
- paying participants for time to travel to work,
- increased wages, and
- DFPS working with youth through life experiences to complete their internship.

Time of Internship	Number of Youth Selected	Number of Youth Completed
Summer 2018	Four youth were selected, but only three moved forward during the initial assessment phase.	Of the three youth who participated, two completed the ten-week internship program. The third youth completed three weeks but withdrew due to personal life circumstances (birth of child and long commute).

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Time of Internship	Number of Youth Selected	Number of Youth Completed
Spring 2019	Five youth were selected, completed the initial assessment phase, and participated in the internship beginning in February.	Of the five youth who participated, only one completed the internship. The remaining four withdrew due to personal life circumstances (legal issues, birth of child, and move out of area).
Summer 2019	Five youth were selected, completed the initial assessment phase, and participated in the internship beginning.	Of the five youth who participated, three completed the internship. One of the three that completed the internship extended it to 17 weeks. Two youth withdrew due to personal life circumstances (death of a family member and legal issues).

Internships Provided

The pilot internship was in the Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas board area which is part of DFPS Region 3 (Collin, Denton, Ellis, Erath, Hood, Hunt, Johnson, Kaufman, Navarro, Palo Pinto, Parker, Rockwell, Somervell and Wise counties). Internships were provided through Marshall’s Department stores in 2018 and 2019 and CVS Pharmacy in 2019.

Additionally, Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas found an internship opportunity with Hoffman Auto in Waxahachie, Texas for one of the youth to better meet their career assessment interests. All internships provided were a minimum of six weeks but could be extended up to 17 weeks or a total of 510 hours, depending on youth interest and performance.

The participants were paid through Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds to incentivize participation at \$8.00 an hour for the 2018 summer internship and \$9.00 an hour for the 2019 spring and summer 2019 internships. The increase was a result of feedback received from youth and young adults during internship recruitment efforts to better match what other youth and young adults were being paid in the area the area of the internships for similar types of employment. In addition, the Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas provided supportive financial services to youth participating in the internship to include child care, transportation (gas or bus pass) or work clothing. To utilize the Workforce Innovation and

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Opportunity Act funds, Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas required most of the youth in the internship not be in school.

The need to further define DFPS, Workforce Solutions and employer roles was determined after the first summer internship. As a result, it was determined Workforce Solutions office staff would be the liaison to the employer and DFPS staff. The internship worked best with regular and frequent communication between all parties about internship progress, which helped to increase youth participation.

Internships Outside of Pilot Site for Youth Currently or Formerly in Foster Care

The Houston and Alumni Youth (HAY) Center

The Houston and Alumni Youth (HAY) Center has provided summer internships for youth currently or formerly in foster care for nine years. Youth participating in the internship are employed through a temporary agency contracted by Harris County. This is a paid internship with DFPS Preparation for Adult Living (PAL), Workforce Solutions and HAY Center Foundation funds. The internship is for 8-10 weeks for 32 hours a week.

In 2018, 31 youth participated with 15 completing the internship. In 2019, 26 youth participated with 18 completing six or more weeks of the internship. Youth not selected for the internship were referred to other local area summer internship programs offered through the Hire Houston Youth program with the City of Houston for youth ages 16-24, offering at least \$8 an hour for approximately 32 hours a week, or Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast. Summer 2020 will be the 10th year for this internship with approximately the same number of youth participating.

Project Future

Project Future, located in El Paso, Texas has provided a summer internship for youth currently or formerly in foster care for seven years. Youth participating in the internship are employed through the El Paso County Courthouse. This is a paid internship with the El Paso Woman's Bar Association, El Paso County and Workforce Solutions Borderplex funds. The internship is six weeks for 20 hours per week. In 2018, 12 youth completed the internship. In 2019, 10 youth completed the internship. The summer of 2020 will be the 8th year for this internship.

Superior Health Plan

Superior Health Plan, contractor for Star Health, provided an internship for one youth currently or formerly in foster care ages 18-20 years old in Austin. This internship pays \$14.00 an hour for 8 hours a day or 40 hours a week (less if someone is in school) for a 6-month period. This internship is available anytime of the year. This internship provides a young adult currently or formerly in foster care an opportunity to explore a career through practical work which includes general administrative tasks, social networking, community outreach events and assisting in implementation of activities and special projects. The intern has an opportunity to

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apply, evaluate and test concepts learned in the work place. From November 2019 to December 2019, one young adult participated in the internship. This young adult ended the internship early, as they decided they were not interested. The internship position will be available again in March 2020.

Conclusion

Summer internships benefit youth currently or formerly in foster care or young adults participating in extended foster care as basic job skills and work experience are important to a successful transition to adulthood. The skills and experience gained through the internship pilot was beneficial and allowed participating youth to gain confidence in their work skills and become more marketable when seeking employment. Successful transition of youth and young adults is dependent upon internships and employers willing to provide these experiences to increase the likelihood of youth securing and maintaining employment to meet their personal needs such as food and housing upon living care.

While the number of participants was small in the pilot, it provided valuable information to DFPS and Workforce Solutions to prepare and assist youth in the future for participation in internship programs. Employers who participated in the pilot will continue to and possibly expand additional employment opportunities for youth in preparing them for employment.

DFPS and Texas Workforce Commission will continue to collaborate at the state and local level to establish additional internship programs to support youth currently and formerly in foster care build the necessary employment skills and experiences for self-sufficiency.