

The Community Support Program provides work experience for Hennepin County Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) clients who are referred by their employment service providers. Participants choose an unpaid, part-time position at a non-profit organization in areas such as:

- Office Work
- Child Care
- Adult Care
- Food Service
- Indoor and outdoor maintenance
- Tutoring
- Warehouse work
- Janitorial

### ***Program Benefits***

- Increase your employable skills.
- Expand your resume by adding this experience.
- Obtain a great reference from a supervisor.
- Maintain your eligibility for employment services by meeting the goals and hours listed in your employment plan.

### ***How It Works***

#### **STEP 1: Orientation**

- Meet with a Tree Trust Placement Counselor to learn about the program.
- Explore basic interests and skills.
- Fill out paperwork.
- Schedule a time for Placement Counselor to call you to discuss positions.

#### **STEP 2: Work with Tree Trust to find a Position**

- Your Placement Counselor will call you at the time and date you have agreed upon.
- Together you will discuss available positions and choose one you would like to pursue.
- You will be given the name and phone number of the site supervisor.

#### **STEP 3: Call Your Site**

- You must contact the supervisor within two days to arrange an interview.
- If you do not call within this time the position may no longer be available.

#### **STEP 4: Interview for the Position**

- The site supervisor will conduct an interview and obtain background information if needed.
- If you are accepted for the position, you and your new supervisor will arrange your schedule and start date.
- Tree Trust staff will notify your MFIP Employment Counselor that you have been accepted for a position.

#### **STEP 5: Begin your position!**

- Fill out the Placement Verification Form and have your supervisor send it to Tree Trust
- Be sure to sign in and out on your timesheet each day you are at your site. Your site supervisor will be responsible for submitting your timesheet to Tree Trust on a weekly basis.
- You may earn gift cards for consistent attendance and meeting the hours required by your employment plan. Gift cards will be mailed after:
  - \$20 Target card for Resume
  - \$20 Target card after 4 weeks for Elevator Speech and/or Professional Reference
  - \$30 Target card after verification on your first day; every 2 weeks attendance as scheduled
  - \$50 Target card after 4 weeks for obtaining competitive employment

You will be expected to follow all rules of Tree Trust and your site. If a situation arises that you are unfamiliar with, please talk to your supervisor or contact your Tree Trust Placement Counselor.

## **Program Expectations**

- Remember to treat your position as you would a job.
- Please schedule your personal appointments and job interviews around your scheduled shifts.
- Do not call your site to set up an interview unless you plan to attend! If unforeseen circumstances arise and you cannot attend, call your site to reschedule. If you reschedule more than once, expect that the site might not accept you for the position any longer.
- If you do find employment, please notify your site supervisor and Tree Trust as soon as possible.
- The length of placement varies for each participant, but may last until you find paid employment or your employment plan is updated.

## **Additional Information**

### **Tips for calling your site:**

- Call from a quiet room. Don't call from the same room your kids are playing in. Turn off the TV and radio. Make sure you can focus all of your attention on the phone call.
- Have a pen and paper handy. Write down details, including names, phone numbers, addresses, and directions.
- Introduce yourself and state the reason why you are calling. Consider using the following script:

**Good Morning/Afternoon, may I please speak with \_\_\_\_\_ (supervisor's name)?**

**Good Morning/Afternoon, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I have recently been referred for your \_\_\_\_\_ position through Tree Trust's Community Support Program. I am interested in this position and would like to set up a time to meet with you. When is convenient for you?**

- When leaving a message or voicemail, speak clearly. Be sure to leave your name, reason for calling, and a phone number at which you can be reached.

### **Interviewing Tips:**

- Show up and be on time! Being dependable and reliable will gain the trust and respect of your supervisor.
- Non-verbal communication is important. Offer a handshake, have proper posture during the interview, and remember to make eye contact.
- Have a professional appearance. Dress in an appropriate manner, be well-groomed, and have good personal hygiene.
- Have a positive attitude. Making a good first impression is important!

Below are some typical questions you may be asked at an interview:

1. Why have you chosen to contribute your time to this organization?
2. What are your feelings about the work this agency does?
3. What will you bring to the organization? What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses?
4. How will you benefit from contributing time at this site?
5. What are your hobbies or interests?
6. Have you ever been convicted of a crime? If yes, please describe.

### **How to avoid a crisis:**

- Always arrange for childcare and transportation. Have a backup plan for emergencies. If you drive, know the bus route in case you have car troubles. If you take the bus, learn about alternate routes that are available. Arrange childcare in advance.
- **ALWAYS let your supervisor know when you are late or not able to make it in to work.**

**Contact Community Support Program staff for more information at 952-767-3888.**