Texan Shadow Tips for Employers

***Some of these suggestions may not be appropriate at your work setting. Feel free to adapt, modify or abandon any of the tips depending on the environment.***

OVERVIEW:

- Students should spend the day visiting your organization, investigating a career field and experiencing a typical day on the job.
- Introduce the student to the mission of the workplace, policies and procedures
- Present information about the organization, products or services, and the types of markets in which these products are used.
- Talk about safety considerations, if applicable, as students may be unaware of workplace danger.
- Students should have an opportunity to tour the site, “shadow” an employee(s), and participate in workplace activities.
- Employers can provide an overview of the organization and share career advice and tips on work/life balance.
- Students should be encouraged to talk about their interests and abilities and incorporate that information into discussions regarding career or industry employment choices.
- Students will ask questions to better understand the work and environment and types of skills required for the occupation.
- Employers might want to share their individual career path and how their career decisions were made.
- Employers could share hiring policies and what they look for in an employee.
- Talk to students about professional demeanor, dress, language, or interpersonal skills that are appropriate to your organization.

IDEAS FOR STRUCTURING YOUR DAY:

- **Start the day with an orientation & introductions**
  Tell student(s) a little about yourself and ask them some questions as well. Talk about:
  - Your professional background
  - Interests/hobbies – what do you do for fun?
  - Describe your “typical” day and be prepared to field questions regarding salaries, promotions, schooling, etc.
  - Talk about your career path and why you chose to pursue it.
  - If possible, introduce your guest to someone at the partner/manager level
  - Anything you can do to “break the ice” and make the student feel welcome and at ease with you and your colleagues – this way they are more likely to ask questions.
  - Give a tour
  - Give the student a tour of your office or business and explain the roles of each person to which they are introduced.
  - Try to interact with your co-workers on all levels to give the student a good overview of how your firm runs (firm/company culture).
  - Give an overview of what your firm/business does and how it affects the local or regional community.

- **Suggested activities**
  - Plan to allow the student to do some limited, hands-on tasks (make sure you closely supervise) and try to invoke conversation that will let he/she participate.
- Plan to review a small job with someone who reviews your work or whose work you supervise
- Call a client – Either answer your phone calls while the student(s) are at your desk or set aside a phone call you need to make.
- Show off your computer programs and let the student(s) drive
- Help your student visitor learn as he/she observes. Don’t assume that they know.
- Use language that the student can understand and try to avoid technical jargon.
- Stress the importance of promptness, attendance, appropriate personal appearance and attire and a positive work ethic.
- Take the student with lunch -- Invite a co-worker to lunch along with the student.

**Some other ways to help you relate to students:**
- Explain how your work relates to classes they might be taking in school such as math, accounting, and business courses.
- Share examples of your daily routine that incorporates skills they are learning such as communication, logic, computers, or writing.
- Tell the student about yourself, where you went to school, some work and college experiences (internships, your first job, etc.) and why you chose your career.
- Explain the important aspects of your work and how they relate to other jobs within the firm or company.
- Explain what you like about your job as well as some of the disadvantages to your career.
- Keep in mind these are only suggested guidelines. Each job shadow experience is unique.
- Plan a day that works for you and your firm or company.

**OTHER AREAS THAT YOU COULD ADDRESS:**

- How has the field evolved—past, present, and looking into the future?
- What kind of personal traits, interests, and styles match this job?
- What does the career ladder in your field look like from entry jobs to professional levels?
- What is the basic education and training required for entry to professional levels?
- What education or training is needed or available to advance and grow in the field?
- How does technology impact and serve as a tool in your job and in the field in general?
- What other jobs and careers could you go into?
- What other industries or fields could you work in?
- What volunteer or work experience would help youth learn more?
- What studies, classes, degrees, and training programs are suggested?
- What hobbies, books, college visits, or company tours would be helpful?
- What do you value and enjoy about your job or career?
- How does job or career impact being a parent or family member?
- Has the job or career helped you make a difference in your community?
- Be ready to answer questions about how much money you make. Some may want information on how you financed college and further education.
- Sometimes students ask other personal questions. Be ready to make a quick decision on what is okay to share and how to say something is not, in your mind, appropriate to share.