

**Challenge Industries, Inc.
Trainee Handbook**

INTRODUCTION TO HANDBOOK

This handbook serves as your guide to employment services and participation in Challenge's work center and supervised community worksites. You will find it to be a good reference that explains the services, policies and procedures practiced here at Challenge. The Table of Contents on pages 2-4 can help you quickly find specific policies and procedures – it lists both the main section that addresses that policy or procedure and related section (in italics that also have information about that topic).

While the handbook has many similarities with those found in other employment environments, you will also find it includes unusual features. That is because Challenge is a dual purpose work site. Challenge is first an employment program that provides training and services to assist participants in gaining the skills and experience to work successfully in the community. This handbook gives an overview of the many services available through Challenge, the expectations for trainees receiving services, and the many state funding regulations and requirements that Challenge must follow.

Challenge is also a workplace with the same needs and deadlines found in other businesses. This handbook also includes information about the work center, community worksites and Challenge businesses, work policies and expectations, and procedures and regulations re. wages, benefits and Department of Labor regulations.

Challenge staff and administration welcome you to Challenge and are here to assist you as you explore your work interests, build skills, and work toward a job in the community.

**Challenge Industries, Inc.
Trainee Handbook**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE	RELATED SECTIONS/PAGE
I. Vision and Goals of Challenge (pg. 5)	
II. Employment Services (pg. 5-13)	
5	Overview of Services for Work Center Trainees <i>Transitional Assessment/Activities (10)</i>
5-6	Eligibility for Services
6	Application Process:
6	Funding:
6-7	General Expectations of All Trainees <i>Attendance Policy & Expectations (20-24)</i>
7-8	Employment Services (available to all trainees)
8	Clinical Services
8-9	Peer Leaders Opportunities <i>Peer Leaders Wage Rate (38)</i>
9	Working with Your Employment Advisor
9-10	Employment Services Goal Planning Process
10-12	Transition to Community Employment: Assessment & Activities
12-13	Finding an Individual Job in the Community
III. General Information on the Work Center and Community Worksites (pg. 13-19)	
13	Work Hours <i>Attendance Expectations: Limited or No Work (23)</i>
13	Starting and Ending Work
14	Access to Building <i>Security/Visitors (15)</i>
14-15	Cafeteria/Break Areas
15	Security/Visitors
15	Visitation Policy for Community Worksites
15-16	Smoking
16	Personal Property
16	Phone Calls
16	Contacting Challenge after Administrative Business Hours
16-17	Dress Code
17	Transportation
18	Parking
18	Fire Drills
18	Borrowing and Selling
18-19	Early Closing Procedure
19	Emergency Closing

**Challenge Industries, Inc.
Trainee Handbook**

TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont.)

PAGE	RELATED SECTIONS/PAGE	
IV. Attendance Policy and Expectations (pg. 20-24)		
20	Developing Your Work Schedule	<i>Attendance Expectations (20-21)</i>
20-21	Attendance Expectations	<i>General Expectations for all Trainees (6-7)</i>
21-22	Requesting Time Off	
22	Unapproved Absences	
22	Notifying Challenge Re: Illness or Other Unexpected Absences	
22-23	Return to Work Policy after Absences Due to Illness or Injury	
23	Attendance Expectations during Times of Limited or No Work in the Work Center	
23-24	Extended Leave Of Absence (Services Interrupted)	
24	Holiday Schedule	
V. Work Policies and Expectations (pg. 24-32)		
24-26	Work and Professional Conduct	
26	Working with Your Supervisor	
26	Staff/Trainee Relationships	
26-27	Steps to Follow for Addressing Conflicts with Challenge Staff	<i>Trainee Rights (32-34)</i>
27	Co-Worker (Trainee) Relationships	
27	Work Assignments	
27-28	Work Try-Outs and Trial Periods in Community Worksites	
28	Work Schedule and Assignments in Community Worksites	
28	If a Trainee Refuses a Work Assignment	<i>Loss of Pay (42-43)</i>
29	Commitment to Quality Work	
29-32	When Work and Professional Conduct Expectations Are Not Met	<i>Medicaid Waiver Services (35-36)</i> <i>Trainee Rights (32-34)</i>
VI. Trainees Rights (pg. 32-36)		
32-34	Statement of Trainees Rights	
34-35	Privacy, Confidentiality, and HIPPA Compliance	
35-36	Decrease, Suspension or Termination of Medicaid Waiver Services	
VII. Health and Safety in the Workplace (pg. 36-40)		
36	Safety Orientation	
36	Medical Information and Medications	
37	Physical Exam and Work Restriction Policy	
37-38	Emergency and Accident Procedure	
38	Community Access and Protective Oversight	
38-39	Dietary Restrictions	
39	Health Precautions for Prevention of Spread of Infectious Diseases	
39	Tuberculosis Control Plan	
40	Incident and Accident Reporting and Investigations	

**Challenge Industries, Inc.
Trainee Handbook**

TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont.)

PAGE	RELATED SECTIONS/PAGE	
IX. Wages, Benefits, and Department Of Labor Regulations (pg. 40-46)		
340-42	Wage Determination: Piece and Hourly Rates	
42	Peer Leaders Wage Rate	
42	Maximum Rate in Work Center	
42	Overtime Pay	
42	Breaks	
42-43	Loss of Pay for Refusal to Work or Disruption of Work	<i>Refusal of Work Assignment (28)</i>
43	Benefits	<i>Holiday Schedule (24)</i>
43	Pay Checks	
43	Direct Deposit	
43-44	Income Taxes	
44	Unemployment Insurance	
44	Workers' Compensation	
44	Social Security	
44	Deductions for Transportation, Meals, and Non-Skid Footwear	
44	Emergency Payroll Advances	
45	Work Delays (Downtime)	
45-46	Notifications and Wages during Periods of Limited or No Work	
46	Wage Reimbursement for Employment Services and Other Training Activities	
X. Policy Review (pg. 46)		

Challenge Industries, Inc. Trainee Handbook

I. VISION AND GOALS OF CHALLENGE

Over the past several decades, there has been a significant national shift in philosophy and practices for employment programs that serve individuals with disabilities. When Challenge started in the late 1960's, the widespread belief was that people with disabilities needed a safe (sheltered) place to work, apart from the community. With the closing of institutions, mainstreaming in public schools, development of supported employment, passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and development of new medications and technology, the potential for individuals with a variety of disabilities to live and work in the community has increased dramatically. Today, most individuals with disabilities, given preparation, accommodations and ongoing support, can be successfully employed in community jobs. The business community has become much more familiar and supportive of employing workers with disabilities. Nationally, over 200,000 individuals with severe disabilities are working in community employment through supported employment programs. In New York State, the primary agencies serving individuals with disabilities - Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD), Office of Mental Health (OMH), and Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID) - have shifted emphasis and resources to supporting individuals with disabilities working and participating in their local communities.

This shift in philosophy is reflected in the many changes that Challenge has made (and continues to make) to improve the training, work experience, and supports that enable Challenge trainees to transition from the work center to community-based employment.

II. EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Overview of Services for Work Center Trainees

For Trainees in the Work Center, Employment Services at Challenge Industries offers a variety of training, work experience, and support services that assist individuals with disabilities to explore work interests, build skills, identify and work on career goals. Trainees are encouraged and supported to explore and try out a variety of employment options that can facilitate the transition to community employment. Working in the community can take a variety of forms. For many trainees, this will mean being hired by a local business, with ongoing training and support through Challenge's Supported Employment services. For other trainees, community employment may take the form of working with a group of Challenge workers and a supervisor from Challenge on a long-term basis (Enclaves) or working in a Challenge-run business that offers opportunities for employment alongside workers with and without disabilities. Community-based employment may be part-time or full-time employment. Those involved in part-time work in the community for a period of time may continue participating in training and other services in the work center. See *Transition to Community Employment* section on page ___ for more details.

Eligibility for Services

To be eligible for employment services and participation in the work center and supervised community worksites, individuals must meet the following criteria at time of admissions:

Challenge Industries, Inc. Trainee Handbook

- A disability(s) that impedes the ability to work more independently in the community
- An interest in work with a goal of community employment
- A need for more intensive training and supports than is available through supported employment services or other individual community placement programs
- A willingness to address & work on vocational skills & other barriers to employment
- An ability to conduct oneself in a manner that is safe to oneself and others, and does not create a hostile work environment for others
- A commitment to work a minimum of ten hours per week
- The ability to attend to or work on a task for 20 minutes at a time without significant support
- Ability & willingness to accept and adhere to the structure inherent in a work environment (such as structured breaks, supervisory direction, social norms)
- Ability to evacuate the work center or other worksite in a timely and safe manner, with minimal support
- Ability to attend independently to personal care needs (hygiene, eating, use of bathrooms, etc.)
- Agreement from a trainee's support team (family, residence, MSC, etc.) to support the activities related to achievement of employment goals and transition to community employment
- Willingness to assist with obtaining any documentation, reports & other information needed by Challenge to complete funding or program enrollment
- Must be at least 16 years old

Application Process:

The individual, family or referral source completes the Challenge application. The individual, family or referral source must provide Challenge with documentation of disability. Challenge then makes a determination as to whether the applicant can benefit from services and whether Challenge's Employment Services can provide the required training, supervision and supports. In some instances, application to funding agencies may be a prerequisite to admission, and availability of some services is dependent on meeting eligibility criteria. Challenge staff work with referrals to determine their eligibility for funding and access to funding sources that support their participation in Challenge services. Receipt of documentation of disability and completion of the application form and other admissions requirements are necessary before a trainee can participate in the work center.

Funding:

Challenge's Employment Services receives funding from a variety of county, state and federal agencies including OMH, OMRDD, VESID, Medicaid, contract income, and private foundations. All trainees receive many of the same services, independent of diagnosis or eligibility for funding. However, some services are restricted to a specific population or funding source, and may not be available to all trainees.

General Expectations of All Trainees

These are general expectations for all Challenge trainees participating in the work center and other Challenge supervised community worksites. We realize that you may not be able to fulfill all of these expectations when you first start. However, we do expect that you will be willing to work with Employment Services staff to progress toward meeting these expectations.

Challenge Industries, Inc. Trainee Handbook

- Work with Employment Services to explore eligibility for necessary funding to support participation in Challenge services
- Consent to share information related to employment services with other service providers
- Work cooperatively with your Employment Advisor and other Employment Services staff to develop individual employment goals and work toward employment in the community
- Commit to participate in a work schedule that is a minimum of 2 days a week (or 10 hours), with the expectation to further increase your work schedule over time
- Provide your own transportation and/or have resources to arrange transportation
- Report to work on time as scheduled and follow attendance policy - see *Attendance Policy & Expectations* section on page ___ for more details
- Schedule doctor, therapist and other appointments during non-work times
- Explore all possible work opportunities so that you may learn new job skills and make more-informed choices about your career options
- Have the ability to take prescribed medications independently, or with assistance from resources outside of Challenge
- Interact respectfully and safely with other trainees and Employment Services staff
- Follow directions given by supervisors regarding work assignments and proper procedures for completion of assigned work
- Have ability to tend to personal care needs with minimal assistance, unless additional supports have been developed as part of placement at Challenge
- Demonstrate ability to follow program guidelines, with a reasonable level of support if needed.
- Work with Employment Services staff to achieve goal of community employment within a one to two year timeframe

Employment Services (available to all trainees)

- Explore career interests and skills through a variety of work experiences in the work center and in the community
- Develop career goals and an individualized plan of services to facilitate the transition to community-based employment
- Develop generic work skills and attributes (attendance, punctuality, working with co-workers and supervisors, etc.) that are necessary to be successful in employment
- Provide training and supports (or referral to other community agencies) to assist you to gain needed skills in areas of personal care, social/interpersonal skills, conflict management and other areas that impact employment
- Identify and develop job accommodation and training strategies that optimize your productivity, work quality and variety of employment options
- Work in collaboration with your support team (family, case manager, residential staff, therapist, etc.) to integrate employment services with other support services
- Provide referral to ancillary support services as identified and needed
- Provide benefits counseling re: Social Security or other public benefits to assist you in managing your benefits while working and provide current information about available work incentives through the Social Security Administration

Challenge Industries, Inc. Trainee Handbook

- Provide assistance to obtain placement in an individual job in the community, a supervised community worksite or in businesses run by Challenge, with ongoing support services as needed
- Provide an opportunity to earn money while working toward achievement of employment goals

Clinical Services

These services are available to trainees funded through OMRDD's Home and Community-Based Waiver Program and enrolled in either Pre-Vocational Services or Opportunities for People through Services (OPTS) Pilot Projects.

- ***Occupational Therapy Services:*** Occupational therapy (OT) is a licensed health care profession that helps individuals with disabilities maximize their independence and quality of life. The OT program at Challenge provides services to trainees in the following areas: physical skills, cognitive skills, social skills, vocational skills, community skills, adaptive equipment, ergonomics and injury prevention. OT services include: evaluation; treatment; consultation; and education. Services can be provided at Challenge or in the community.
- ***Rehabilitation Counseling:*** Rehabilitation Counseling is a clinical support service offered to trainees with developmental and mental health disabilities to assist them to develop strategies and support systems to successfully manage their disability while maintaining employment. Services include both individual and group counseling, and assistance to implement strategies for problem solving at work and in the community.
- ***Speech Therapy (OPTS Pilot Projects only):*** Speech Therapy is a licensed health care profession that helps a trainee improve his or her ability to communicate. This includes both speech, which is how sounds are made, and language, which involves understanding and choosing the correct words to use. Speech therapy services address areas including clarity of speech, expression of ideas, verbal and non-verbal language, and cognitive and organizational skills. Reading and writing, in addition to verbal skills, may also be addressed. As with OT and Rehab Counseling, Speech Therapy services include both individual and group counseling, and assist trainees to use new communication skills and strategies in the workplace and the community
- ***Psychological Assessment & Supports (OPTS Pilot Projects only):*** A Psychologist will be available to assist a trainee and his/her support team at Challenge when behavioral or emotional issues are interfering with a trainee's success at work and/or in the community. Psychological services can include assessments, short-term individual or group counseling, and development of new strategies to use at work and in the community. The psychologist will work closely with other Challenge staff, family and other service providers in developing support plans and monitoring progress.

Peer Leaders: Developing Skills and Leadership Opportunities

The Peer Leader is a temporary position that provides a trainee with the opportunity to develop the skills and self-confidence to transition to work opportunities beyond the work center. Placement in a peer leader position is time-limited; it serves as a stepping stone to employment in the community. Peer leaders work directly under the direction of work center supervisors. Peer leaders are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner and serve as a role model for other trainees. Peer leaders assist in set-up of production work, distribute materials to other workers, and assist with quality control and shipment of the completed work. Peer leaders also work one-on-one with other trainees to provide

Challenge Industries, Inc. Trainee Handbook

training and support with new work tasks and serve as lead workers for small work groups. Peer leaders meet daily with Operations and Employment Services staff to set up the production schedule for the day. Peer leaders work in both the work center and supervised enclaves as needed, and are expected to work with a greater degree of independence and initiative than other workers. Peer leaders work a longer work day than other participants. Peer leaders are paid minimum wage for work tasks performed as a peer leader – for more specifics about wages, see the *Wage and Benefits* section starting on page ___.

Working with Your Employment Advisor

Each trainee is assigned an Employment Advisor who will help you find your way around Challenge, meet other trainees and staff, find out about work opportunities, and the various services and supports that are available at Challenge. Your Employment Advisor is the person you should go to first if you have any questions, concerns or problems about work or services at Challenge. Your Employment Advisor also serves as the primary contact with other members of your support team, and will periodically keep them informed about your progress at Challenge.

During your first 30-45 days at Challenge, your Employment Advisor will have you try out a number of different job tasks within the work center. In addition, you will have the opportunity to tour and try out available jobs in Challenge's supervised community worksites.

Your Employment Advisor will work with you and Challenge's Benefits Advisor to answer any questions or concerns you may have about social security, public assistance, insurance, and the impact of working on your benefits. Your Employment Advisor will also work with you and your support team to assist you to find other services and supports you may need that are not available at Challenge.

Employment Services Goal Planning Process

Your Employment Advisor will work closely with you (and your support team) to identify your interests, assess your skills, and develop a plan to assist you in progressing along your career path. This may include visits and job try-outs in different work areas within the work center and supervised community worksites, individual meetings with your Employment Advisor, completion of formalized assessment tools, and participation in skills training groups. Through these activities, you and your Employment Advisor will discover how you best learn new tasks, your preferences and support needs with different work tasks and work environments, and other factors that affect your success at work.

Toward the end of your first month at Challenge, you, your Employment Advisor and other Challenge staff you work closely with will get together to review your first month at Challenge. If you wish, a member(s) of your support team can be included in this meeting. Together, you will review the various jobs you have done, identifying what you liked and disliked, what you were good at, and what skills you need to learn. This will include looking at both the skills it takes complete a task (such as accuracy of work) as well as the skills and attributes necessary to be a successful worker (such as working cooperatively with co-workers).

With assistance and input from Challenge staff, you will be asked to identify your employment goals, including where you want to be working in the next year to two years, and what skills and experiences you need to develop to get there. A formal Employment Plan will be developed that

Challenge Industries, Inc. Trainee Handbook

will include your career goal(s), specific skills/areas you will work on over the next six months, and specific steps or activities that you and staff will engage in to help you meet your goals. Remember, the focus of this plan is to help you develop the skills and confidence that will contribute to your progress toward successful work in the community. This employment plan will be shared with your support team at your ISP or Service Utilization meeting so other members of your support team can assist you in achieving your career goals.

Below are some examples of an overall career goal with specific skill areas to be developed to achieve the career goal:

Career Goal: I want to find a job that I can do well and earn money to take vacations.

Specific Skills to Develop:

- A. Increase productivity by focusing on job tasks
- B. Independently get work supplies as needed
- C. Complete work try-outs at Hydroponics and Ithaca College
- D. Increase my work endurance by gradually expanding my work schedule from 3 to 5 days a week

Career Goal: I want to learn to get along with others so I can be successful at work

Specific Goals:

- A. Inform staff before the beginning of a work shift about personal concerns that might impact my ability to focus on work
- B. Come to work in clean clothes daily
- C. Develop strategies to work out conflicts with co-workers
- D. Work 2 days a week at Hydroponics as part of packaging work team

You and your Employment Advisor will meet on a regular basis, usually every week or two, to review your progress on your goals, and make any needed adjustments to your employment plan. Every six months, you will formally review your goal plan, the progress you have made, and change or modify your overall career goal as well as specific skills/areas you are working on.

Transition to Community Employment

The work center is designed to serve as a place for trainees to gain work experience and build skills, but not as a permanent employment site. Though each trainee will come to Challenge with different goals, range of work experience, and support needs, Challenge expects that all trainees will be working toward eventual employment in the community within a general timeframe of one to two years. The specific steps you take and the timetable for making the transition to working in the community will be worked out in collaboration with you, your Employment Advisor, and your support team.

Participation in some work center services and activities may be continued after the transitional period if there has been progress made toward community employment, and these services support the continued transition to community employment. This will be determined on an individual basis through the transitional assessment process (see below).

Challenge Industries, Inc. Trainee Handbook

Transitional Assessment Process

After a trainee has been attending Challenge for approximately one month (and prior to the development of the first employment plan), a transition team of Challenge staff will meet with the trainee and his or her Employment Advisor to discuss employment interests, training and support needs, and barriers that need to be addressed for the trainee to successfully transition from the work center to community employment. The transition team will offer recommendations for goals, activities, and further assessments that can be incorporated into the trainee's employment plan, as well as suggestions for services or activities outside of Challenge that can be of assistance to the trainee in achieving his or her employment goals. The transition team will be comprised of an Employment Services Manager or Coordinator, two Employment Advisors (the Employment Advisor working with the trainee and another Employment Advisor working with community placements), a Training Specialist, a Job Developer, and other Challenge staff as needed. Several transition teams will be developed, with the same team following the progress of the trainee throughout their participation in the work center.

After a trainee has completed his or her first six months at Challenge, the trainee, the trainee's Employment Advisor and other staff working closely with the trainee will sit down to review the progress the trainee has made in achieving goals in his or her employment plan. Goals, services and activities specified in the plan will be modified as needed, and a written summary of the progress will be prepared by the Employment Advisor. Transition team members will review the trainee's six month progress report and employment plan. The transition team may meet separately, or with the trainee and his or her Employment Advisor, if either the transition team members or the trainee's Employment Advisor feels that there has not been reasonable efforts or progress made toward transition to community employment. The trainee, his/her Employment Advisor and other Challenge staff working with the trainee can also request that the transition team meet with them to offer ideas for further training or work experience, and/or strategies for overcoming barriers to employment.

Prior to the development of the annual employment plan after one year at Challenge, the transition team will formally convene to assess progress made toward transition to community employment, discuss further training and activities that are needed, and offer recommendations of goals and time frames for the transition to community employment. The transition team will also discuss alternative recommendations for placement and services if significant steps toward community employment are unlikely within the next six to 12 months. This process will continue every three to six months, with the time frame to be determined by the transition team. Continuation of a trainee in work center services after a two year time frame must be approved by the Director of Services.

Transitional Assessment Process for Current Participants in the Work Center

Current trainees in the work center will take part in this assessment process. This will be phased in over a two year period, with five trainees going through the team assessment every three months. All current work center participants over the age of sixty-two, or who have significant and declining disability or medical conditions will be excluded from this process. Current trainees in the OPTS Pilot Projects will not be included in this first round of assessments, since there is already a built in focus on transition to community employment. However, all current

Challenge Industries, Inc. Trainee Handbook

trainees in the OPTS pilot projects will be included at a later date, utilizing this process to ensure that adequate progress is being made toward transition to community employment as well as to assess if the trainee is still benefiting from, and requiring the level of enhanced services provided through the OPTS projects.

While all current trainees will be strongly encouraged to transition to community employment within a two year time frame, current trainees and their advocates will be able to negotiate individualized long-term employment goals and time frames. However, all trainees not excluded by age or medical condition will be expected to take part in transitional activities that will provide them with the opportunity to explore their interests and possibilities for employment in the community. As with new admissions, continuation of a current trainee in the work center after a two year time frame (starting with the initial transition team assessment process) must be approved by the Director of Services.

Transitional Activities

Trainees involved in work center services will take part in a variety of transitional activities to explore interests and skills, find out about opportunities available for work in the community, gain work and work-related skills that are needed to succeed in employment, and gain confidence and experience as a worker. These activities will take place in the work center and in the community, and include paid work and unpaid volunteer work and skills training activities. Trainees are expected to participate in these activities as part of their services, as these activities are a critical part of preparing for and successfully transitioning to community employment. Each trainee will work with their Employer Advisor to develop an employment plan that includes a variety of transitional services that matches their individual interests and needs. Below is a sample list of some of the activities that trainees may be involved in as part of their services and work experience:

- Volunteer placements
- Job shadowing
- Job try outs/situational assessments
- Work rotations within work center and supervised community worksites
- Job seeking skills groups
- Employment preparation groups
- Standardized vocational assessments
- Career counseling and exploratory activities
- Individualized employment plan
- Occupational Therapy and other clinical assessments
- Academic skills assessment
- Travel training
- Community safety and integration assessments/training
- Social skills training, both individual and group

Finding an Individual Job in the Community

Challenge offers a variety of services to assist you in finding a more independent job in the community. Your Employment Advisor will inform you and your support team about the different services and work closely with you (and your support team) as you begin your job search. Your Employment Advisor will work with you and your support team to assist you in

Challenge Industries, Inc. Trainee Handbook

applying for funding to support a job search. Your Employment Advisor and one of Challenge's Job Developers will help you explore job options, further define your interests and skills, develop job-seeking skills, and assist you with job applications and interviews. While you are involved in your job search, you will be able to remain working in the work center or other community worksite, and continue to receive other employment services, however, your priority focus should be on job search activities.

III. GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE WORK CENTER & COMMUNITY WORKSITES

The general expectations, policies and information contained in this handbook apply to both the work center and community worksites, unless otherwise stated. In addition, each community worksite will have its own set of policies and procedures that cover such areas as hours of operation, transportation, safety, break and lunch times, etc. This will be explained by the supervisor and your Employment Advisor as part of your initial training at that worksite.

Work Hours

The **Work Center** hours are generally 8:45 – 3:00 with a fifteen minute break in the morning and a half hour break for lunch. Your supervisor will let you know when you are assigned to take your break and lunch. These hours are flexible dependent on the amount of work and specific work department. These work hours may be extended during times of increased work in the work center. Trainees and their families/residential programs will be notified if there are opportunities for increased work hours. Increased hours are offered on a voluntary basis, and trainees are responsible for making arrangements for their own transportation to and from Challenge. There will also be times of a reduced work schedule due to low work demands. During these times, trainees can attend Challenge and participate in skill training groups and other services, but will not receive pay for their time at Challenge. You, your Employment Advisor and support team will work together to determine your schedule during times of reduced work (see ***Attendance Expectations during Times of Limited or No Work in the Work Center*** on page ____ for more information and policies regarding periods of limited or no work).

Community Worksite and Challenge Businesses: Work hours differ from worksite to worksite. You and your Employment Advisor will work together with the worksite supervisor to develop your work schedule and make arrangements for transportation to and from the worksite. For some worksites, you will first come to the work center in the morning, go to the community worksite, then return to the work center at the end of the day before going home. With other worksites, you may go directly from home to the worksite without coming to the work center (on the days you are scheduled to work at that worksite).

Starting and Ending Work

Each trainee will be given a time card to use to record the time you start work at the beginning of the work day, and end work at the end of your work shift. It is very important that you clock in at the time clock using your designated time card at the beginning and end of every work day so that you are paid accurately for your time at work. Staff will be available to explain this procedure to you, and provide you with training and assistance if needed.

Challenge Industries, Inc. Trainee Handbook

Access to Building at 402 E. State Street

The administrative and program offices at 402 E. State Street are open for business during the hours of 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM Monday through Friday. The work center is open from 8:45 to 3:00 Monday through Friday (unless hours are extended to complete contract work).

Trainees can access the building starting at 7:30 AM. However, from 7:30 – 8:00, there are no staff available to provide supervision or oversight. Trainees requiring staff supports or oversight should not arrive before 8 AM. Employment Advisors and other Employment Services staff will be available for individual meetings with trainees after 8 AM. These meetings should be scheduled beforehand whenever possible as the staff member you work with will not always be available.

Trainees have access to the cafeteria starting at 7:30 AM. Trainees should stay in the cafeteria until 8:45 (when work starts) unless you have been asked by a supervisor to begin work early, you have an appointment with your Employment Advisor or other Challenge staff, or you are participating in an exercise or other scheduled activity. Trainees have access to the restrooms and lockers from 7:30 to the start of work.

The Challenge Work Center and offices are fully accessible. All trainees should enter and exit the building through the front door due to security concerns (see ***Security Section*** below). Accommodations to use the downstairs garage entrance will be made on an individual basis.

Cafeteria/Break Areas

The cafeteria located on the second floor serves as the primary break area for trainees and Challenge staff. As such, we ask everyone who uses this area to help make this a pleasant and relaxing place. This requires everyone to conduct themselves in a professional manner while in the cafeteria; to be respectful of each other and their physical property; and for each person to assist in keeping the cafeteria clean by removing any trash, and keeping the tables, counters and equipment clean.

The cafeteria is equipped with vending machines that have hot and cold drinks, snacks, and fresh and frozen meals. There is a refrigerator available to store lunches and drinks (please be sure to label your container or bag), several microwaves to heat food, an ice machine, and hot water available for tea (please bring your own tea bag or other beverages). Staff, Peer Leaders and other trainees are available during lunch and breaks to provide training and assistance in using the vending machines and other equipment in the cafeteria.

If a trainee is unable or uncomfortable carrying money (or forgets to bring cash to work), he or she can obtain cash from the cashier on duty to make purchases from the vending machines (available during morning break and lunch only). Initial approval to advance cash must be obtained from your Employment Advisor. The amount received will be deducted from your next paycheck. Ongoing restrictions and/or oversight on obtaining cash can be put into place on an individual basis for those trainees who want or need extra assistance.

Challenge Industries, Inc. Trainee Handbook

Staff are present in the cafeteria during trainees' scheduled morning break and lunch times, however, this area is unsupervised during the rest of the scheduled work (8:45 to 3:00) as well as before 8:45 and after 3:00.

Security/Visitors

Challenge relies on staff and trainees to support the security policy for the safety of all who use the building.

- All visitors (individuals who are not employed or served by Challenge) must enter the building through the main entrance, sign in at the front desk, wear a visitor badge at all times, and be escorted by a Challenge staff or trainee throughout the building.
- All outside doors (except the doors off the front lobby, at the bottom of the stairs, and at the front break area) can not be used for access to or exit from the Challenge building unless other arrangements have been made to accommodate individual needs.
- Visitors must observe all agency rules while visiting. Any visitor who violates agency rules will be asked to leave the premises. Visitors are not allowed in the production, warehouse or shipping areas for any reason other than business. Visitors under the age of sixteen (16) are not allowed in any production area. Any visitor who is not authorized to be in the building should be escorted to the front desk by a staff member. Visitors are not allowed on the premises outside of normal working hours without prior management approval.

Visitation Policy for Community Worksites

Challenge is contracted to staff and manage the operations at community worksites. Each community worksite has its own visitor policy that limits accessibility to its own and contracted employees (which includes Challenge staff and trainees). Challenge is responsible to community employers to ensure compliance with their visitor policy that any necessary visitors are escorted on their premises, and visits are scheduled at times that do not interfere with the work schedule.

Any visits to community worksites must be scheduled with the trainee's Employment Advisor. We ask that visits be arranged with at least 24-hour notice so that we can inform community worksite supervisors and the host employer about scheduled visits. An Employment Advisor or another Employment Services staff must accompany the individual wishing to visit. Visits will be scheduled during non-peak work hours.

Having Service Coordinators, residential and other staff, and family members visit community worksites is important for both understanding of the job duties and work environment, and the opportunity for trainees to share an important part of their lives. Challenge remains committed to continuing this practice, but must ensure that it is done in a way that respects the policies and work demands at each worksite.

Smoking

Smoking and use of any tobacco products, including chewing tobacco, are prohibited on Challenge property and in all Challenge vehicles. Smoking is restricted to before and after work, and during break and lunch times. Smoking is also not permitted on neighboring property (Unity House and True Insurance). Smokers are asked to be respectful and use the receptacle at the bottom of the front stairway to dispose of cigarette butts or other tobacco waste.

Challenge Industries, Inc. Trainee Handbook

Personal Property

Trainees are expected to exercise reasonable care to safeguard personal items of value brought to work. Such items should never be left unattended or in plain view. Challenge does not assume responsibility for the loss or theft of personal belongings. Trainees are advised not to carry unnecessary amounts of cash or other valuables when they come to work. Lockers located outside the cafeteria are available to store personal items during the workday. The lockers require \$.25 to use, with money refunded when you remove your belongings. Change is available in the cafeteria prior to the start of the work day. Challenge will work with all trainees to assist them in safeguarding their personal property while at work.

Phone Calls

Phones are available for use by trainees, but calls must be limited to communication that can not be conducted outside of work hours, such as making transportation arrangements, confirming a doctor's appointment, etc. Trainees should ask an Employment Advisor, supervisor or other Employment Services staff to use the phone. Do not enter staff offices without prior approval to use the phone. Phone usage should be limited to before and after work, or during break and lunch times. Trainees should limit incoming phone calls to essential matters that can not be handled during non-work hours, such as calls from your doctor, service coordinator or case manager. Cell phones should be turned off during work hours (they can be used during break and lunch times), unless a family or other emergency requires you to be accessible.

Contacting Challenge after Administrative Business Hours

Challenge's Administrative offices are open between 7:30-4:00 Monday through Friday excluding holidays (see ***Holiday Schedule***). If you call Challenge's main number (272-8990) when Challenge's administrative offices are closed, you can leave a message for a particular staff by dialing their extension, or leave a general message and the message will be forwarded to that staff member the next business day. If you do not know a staff's extension, the voice mail system will guide you through use of the staff directory to locate a particular staff's extension.

If you are not coming in to work the next day, you can use the voice mail system to leave a message for a particular staff or a general message for your work supervisor. Challenge community worksites including Ithaca College Dish rooms, Hydroponics and Janitorial Services (or other business operations that have work hours different than the Challenge's main office) will each have their own reporting systems and numbers to call if you are unable to come to work for an early morning, evening, week-end or holiday work shift. This information will be given to you as part of your orientation at that worksite. In addition to calling that worksite, you also should call and leave a message at the Challenge's administrative office (272-8990) that you will be out.

If it is an emergency, dial 911 or contact the emergency room at Cayuga Medical Center at 274-4411 (or your closest local hospital emergency room).

Dress Code

Trainees represent the agency in their appearance and actions. Therefore, all trainees are expected to dress in a manner that is acceptable in a work environment. Participation in the work

Challenge Industries, Inc. Trainee Handbook

center is preparation for work in the community, providing the opportunity for participants to learn and get into the habit of dressing in proper work attire. Challenge has adopted a casual business dress code. The dress of all trainees must be neat, clean and appropriate for the work being performed. Short shorts, low cut or halter-tops, inappropriate logo t-shirts, ripped pants, and provocative or revealing clothing are not acceptable work attire. This list is not all-inclusive; Employment Advisors and supervisors will work with each trainee to assist him or her to determine professional attire. You may want to consider bringing in spare clothing or shoes to keep at Challenge to assist you in maintaining a professional appearance at work.

All trainees must dress appropriately and safely for their work area. Specific personal protective equipment or attire may be required depending on the trainee's worksite and job responsibilities. In some of the community worksites, temperature and humidity will vary. Please be sure to wear clothing that allows you to be comfortable throughout the day.

Close-toed shoes are required in all work areas, and non-skid shoes are required in some community worksites. Non-skid shoes are available for purchase through Challenge, or can be purchased at a local store. Challenge will pay \$20.00 toward the cost of non-skid shoes, with the remainder taken out the trainee's paycheck through payroll deductions, if the shoes are purchased through Challenge's collaboration with a shoe retailer. ***You must get prior approval from your Employment Advisor, and together you and your Employment Advisor will place the order for shoes from Challenge.***

Transportation to the Challenge Work Center

There are several ways of traveling to the work center at Challenge. The agency is conveniently located on many public transportation routes. Challenge strongly encourages trainees to walk to work or make use of public transportation. Public transportation options include: TCAT, Tioga Transit, Gadabout and Chemung County Transit. Trainees can purchase individual tokens or monthly passes from the Finance Office at Challenge. Payments can be made in cash or through payroll deduction.

Challenge contracts with Gadabout to provide transportation to a limited number of trainees who reside in Trumansburg, Interlaken and Watkins Glen. Seats on this bus are assigned based on individual needs and the availability of space.

Many trainees rely on rides from their residential service provider or family for transportation to and from Challenge or Challenge's community worksites.

Transportation to Challenge Community Worksites

Trainees who work in community worksites will be assisted by Employment Advisors in setting up transportation to and from the worksite. Challenge provides transportation in Challenge vehicles to community worksites operated by Challenge that are not easily accessible by public transportation and those requiring evening work. Employment Advisors will work with trainees to provide travel training to use Gadabout or other public transportation to those worksites accessible by public transportation.

Challenge Industries, Inc. Trainee Handbook

Parking

Trainees who require a parking space for their vehicle should speak with their Employment Advisor who can assist with the application. Because of space limitations, Challenge may not be able to accommodate everyone who requests parking. Trainees who meet the stated criteria for an accessible parking space in the Challenge parking lot and can not be accommodated due to lack of space will be put on a waiting list and will be given a parking space, when space becomes available.

Challenge reserves the right to request updated information periodically to verify the continuation of parking privileges to those individuals who are parking on our property because of a disability or medical condition. Refusal to comply with any of the requirements stated in this policy may result in the loss of parking privileges. We reserve the right to take away parking privileges from any trainee if they do not cooperate with fellow Challenge personnel or abuse the privilege of parking at Challenge.

Fire Drills

Fire drills are held every month. When the fire alarm sounds, supervisors or other Challenge staff will direct you to the nearest exit. There are also emergency exit maps in every room in the building. It is important that everyone remain calm, listen and follow instructions, and leave the building in an orderly fashion. In case of an emergency, Challenge will provide instructions for you to follow. Being able to evacuate the building during a fire drill in a timely and safe manner is a requirement of participation in the work center, supervised community worksites and other businesses operated by Challenge. Trainees who, after additional training and support, cannot evacuate the building safely within a reasonable time frame will be unable to continue participating in training and services through the work center.

Borrowing and Selling

No selling or solicitations are permitted at Challenge. Requests to sell food or items for fundraising purposes only must be submitted to the Director of Employment Services and will be reviewed on an individual basis. Challenge can not be responsible for purchases by trainees of such items, or for the security of the money or inventory.

Borrowing money from staff or other trainees is strongly discouraged. Please be aware that some trainees are on restricted budgets or diets and are specifically prohibited from purchasing or eating additional food other than that which they bring to work each day.

Employment Services staff are not allowed to accept gifts (unless they are of minimal monetary value) or money from trainees. Trainees and staff can not engage in any transactions of goods or services (other than approved sales of goods for fundraising purposes). These types of financial interactions can be a conflict of interest and disrupt the quality and impartiality of services.

Early Closing Procedure

In cases of inclement weather, power outages or other factors that may necessitate early closing, administration will notify trainees and staff who should leave early. Parts of the agency may close, while other parts stay open. If a part or the full agency closes early, residential agencies and trainees who haven't yet arrived will be contacted. Challenge will contact Gadabout to confirm an early departure time. Whenever possible, Challenge will plan for a 2-hour time period

Challenge Industries, Inc.
Trainee Handbook

(before an early departure) to contact residences and families regarding early closure. A written statement will be posted with the front desk that includes plans for evening shifts (Ithaca College dish rooms and janitorial services) and available transportation for community worksites. Phone access to the building will be kept open until all trainees have left the building. Employment Services staff are responsible for communication with residential programs and families regarding early closing.

Occasionally, Challenge may need to close the work center early to accommodate agency wide meetings or special events. Written notices about the time and date of the closing will be attached to paychecks or distributed to trainees during the workday at least two weeks ahead of time whenever possible. Notices will also be faxed to Gadabout, residential agencies, service coordinators and other community agencies that may be impacted by the change in schedule. The notice will specify if the early closing affects the work schedule for community worksites. Trainees who are picked up at the end of the workday at Challenge by Gadabout will automatically be picked up and transported home at the earlier time. Those trainees who are transported directly home from a community worksite will need to confirm arrangements with Gadabout for days when the work center closes early. Please direct questions and special circumstances directly to your Employment Advisor.

Emergency Closing

When severe weather conditions make driving dangerous or when other emergency conditions develop, you should listen to one of the following radio stations for agency closing or delayed openings for the Challenge Work Center.

WTKO 1470 AM
WQNY 103.7 FM
WHCU 870 AM
WYXL 97.3 FM
WVBR 93.5 FM
WKRT 100.3 FM
WSKG 90.3 FM
WPCK 106.7 FM
WHWK 98.1 FM
WNBF 1290 AM
WAAL 99.1 FM
WWYL 104.1 FM

Trainees who reside outside Tompkins County, live independently, or have difficulty accessing emergency closing public announcements should make a request to their Employment Advisor to be added to a call list to be notified at home in the event of an emergency closing.

Individuals who work at Ithaca College dish rooms, Hydroponics and janitorial services are expected to report to work unless public transportation is not running. You should call your supervisor at the Ithaca College dish rooms, Hydroponics or other community worksites directly to find out more information.

Challenge Industries, Inc.
Trainee Handbook

IV. ATTENDANCE POLICY AND EXPECTATIONS

Developing Your Work Schedule

All trainees are expected to participate in a work schedule that is a minimum of 10 hours a week, with the expectation to increase the number of hours worked each week over time. An initial work schedule will be set up before you begin at Challenge. Your work schedule will be reviewed and finalized with your Employment Advisor and support team after your first month at Challenge (when you develop your employment plan). Requests for limiting a work schedule to 10 hours a week will be considered on a case by case basis due to significant clinical or medical issues.

In developing your work schedule, please take into account when you have regularly scheduled appointments with doctors, therapists, other service providers and community activities with which you are involved. In making a commitment to work, Challenge (like any employer) expects you to schedule doctor, therapist and other appointments during non-work times. You, your Employment Advisor and support team may want to consider making changes in your schedule to allow you to work to your full capacity.

Benefits advisement is available through Challenge to assist you in planning for the effect of increased earnings on your benefits (advisement is also available through your local Social Security Office). Information about how earnings will affect your Social Security and other benefits should be obtained before committing to a work schedule. Once your work schedule is set, Challenge expects you to work on all days scheduled (see ***Attendance Expectations*** below).

Your Employment Advisor will work with you to develop a work schedule that accommodates your transportation arrangements, physical endurance and health needs, and other individual factors. The aim is to create a schedule that will help prepare you for eventual work in the community. Standard start and end times to the day, and length of the work day can be modified, as long as the schedule is consistent. The minimum length of a work day is two hours, excluding break or lunch. Please be aware, however, that coming in later, leaving early or working half days may limit your ability to participate in Challenge's community worksites and other opportunities for work in the community.

If you want or need to make a change in your work schedule, (i.e. increase or decrease hours or days), you should discuss the matter first with your Employment Advisor to see if changes in your work schedule should be made based on your stated goals. For trainees who live in residential programs or with family, you and your Employment Advisor will consult with your support team to make sure the changes can be accommodated in your living situation. If you and your Employment Advisor (and support team) decide to reduce the number of hours or days you work, Challenge expects you to give two weeks notice. During that time, you are expected to work your regularly scheduled hours, unless the reduction of hours is requested by your doctor or other medical personnel.

Attendance Expectations

Attendance expectations for trainees in the work center, supervised community worksites, and other businesses operated by Challenge are the same as for any other employee. It is important

Challenge Industries, Inc.
Trainee Handbook

that all trainees adhere to the procedures below regarding attendance and punctuality. Excessive absenteeism and tardiness is detrimental to the achievement of your personal goals and has a negative effect on fellow trainees, staff and business customers.

Understanding and following these expectations and procedures will assist you in developing greater reliability, independence and assertiveness. These expectations are consistent with those of other employers in the community and have been developed to set a standard that will prepare you for eventual employment in the community.

As stated in the section on *General Expectations for all Trainees* on page _____, Challenge expects a commitment to participate in a work schedule that is a minimum of ten hours a week, with each work day being no less than two hours, excluding break or lunch. It is expected that you will increase the hours you work each week over time.

Requesting Time Off

Prior to taking time off, it is your responsibility to fill out a **TIME OFF REQUEST** form. The form should be filled out at least one week (or 5 working days) before you will be absent from work (for planned days off). Challenge staff can assist you in filling out this request.

TIME OFF REQUEST forms should be completed for any time you are planning to miss work during your regular work schedule. These times may include:

- Doctor's Appointment (that can not be scheduled during non-work hours)
- Dentist Appointment (that can not be scheduled during non-work hours)
- ISP meetings
- Vacations
- Bereavement
- Family Leave
- Jury Duty
- Other Personal Appointments (that can not be scheduled during non-work hours)

After you have completed the **TIME OFF REQUEST** form, please give the form to your supervisor to sign. The form is then given to your Employment Advisor for final approval.

Copies of these procedures and **TIME OFF REQUEST** forms will be distributed to all trainees and their residences/families. **TIME OFF REQUEST** forms are also available from Employment Services staff, supervisors, and copies are kept in the work center next to the time clock on the second floor production area.

Prior to your absence, you should also reschedule any meetings with Challenge Employment Services staff.

Directions for Completing Time off Request Form:

Write in the date for today

Name: _____ Write in your name

**Challenge Industries, Inc.
Trainee Handbook**

Example #1: Vacation

Dates Requested: Friday 1/20/06 to Wednesday 1/25/06

Days Requesting 4 days

Check reason for time off:

Medical ___ Personal/Vacation X

Example #2; Doctor's Appointment

Dates Requested: Friday 1/120/06

Hours Requested: 3 hours

Check reason for time off:

Medical X Personal/Vacation ___

Note: Trainees are not paid for absences from work for illness, personal appointments, or vacation (see **Benefits** section on page ___ for more information).

Unapproved Absences

If the form is not completed prior to a planned absence, you will be requested to meet with your Employment Advisor or Manager of Employment Planning prior to starting work when you return. The attendance expectations and procedures will be reviewed with you, and if needed, with your family or residential staff. If there are repeated instances of unapproved time off, you and your Employment Advisor will set up a more formal protocol for you to follow to assist you with taking greater responsibility for maintaining attendance. This may also include convening a meeting of those who work with and provide supports to you i.e. service coordinator or case manager, residence staff, or family.

Notifying Challenge Re: Illness or Other Unexpected Absences

All trainees are expected to call in to Challenge by 8:15 am if they are not coming in to work due to personal or family illness, injury or unanticipated occurrence such as transportation problems. This can be done by leaving a message with staff at the front desk or in the general voice mailbox, unless you and your Employment Advisor have worked out another protocol for you to follow. Please let the receptionist know when you expect to return to work.

Return to Work Policy after Absences Due to Illness or Injury

If you miss work due to a minor illness (i.e. a cold or virus) or minor injury that requires no more than medical attention in your local physician's office and are absent from work for no more than 5 working days, Challenge does not require any physician's statement or other documentation for you to return to work at Challenge.

After serious illness or injury, the Employment Services Department does require a written release from your physician, emergency room personnel, or community health nurse before you

Challenge Industries, Inc. Trainee Handbook

can return to work. This includes medical care for the following situations (regardless of length of absence from work):

- Actual or Suspected Respiratory or Cardiac Abnormalities
- Actual or Suspected Broken Bone/Fracture
- Any physical illness or injury that requires an overnight stay in a hospital

The written release from your physician/nurse or other medical professional to return to work must include any work restrictions (such as no heavy lifting), how long those restrictions need to stay in place, medication you are taking, and known side effects.

If you are absent from work for more than 5 working days due to injury or physical illness, and have either not been seen by a physician or do not have a physician's release, you will need to meet with your Employment Advisor or Manager of Employment Planning to determine if you can return to work, and/or if you need to get medical clearance to return to work. This meeting must occur before you can begin work in the work center or community worksite. For trainees who live in supervised residential programs or who receive oversight with regards to medical care, the family, residential staff or service coordinator/case manager must contact the trainee's Employment Advisor or Manager of Employment Planning prior to return to work.

Attendance Expectations during Times of Limited or No Work in the Work Center

During times of limited or no work in the work center, trainees are not required to notify Challenge that they are not coming to work. The exception is if a trainee has a special protocol to follow regarding attendance that has been developed with their Employment Advisor. During times of limited or no work in the work center, trainees who are scheduled to work outside of the work center (i.e. Ithaca College, Hydroponics, microfilm/digital processing etc.) are expected to report to work.

Whenever possible, notices will be distributed the day before in the work center informing trainees that limited or no work is expected (this notification may pertain to one particular work area, such as mail, or the entire work center). If Challenge expects there will be limited or no work for several days at a time, notices will also be faxed to residential service agencies.

To receive the most up to date information regarding the availability of work, trainees should call the front desk at the end of the day (between 3-4 p.m.) or call in the morning after 7:30 am. It is the responsibility of all trainees to keep in daily touch with Challenge during times of limited or no work. Once work is available, all trainees are expected to return to work on their regular schedule.

Extended Leave Of Absence (Services Interrupted)

It is the policy of Employment Services to allow trainees to take an extended leave of absence under certain circumstances (personal or family crisis, illness, etc.). The duration of a leave of absence shall be worked out with your Employment Advisor and the Manager of Employment Planning. During that time, your affiliation with Challenge will continue, but you will not attend the work center or other worksite, or receive any employment services. Prior to returning from a leave of absence, you will need to speak directly with your Employment Advisor to get a date to return. Your Employment Advisor may request that there be a face-to-face meeting with you,

Challenge Industries, Inc.
Trainee Handbook

and perhaps your family, residential staff and/or service coordinator/case manager prior to your return.

A Leave of Absence will not be granted beyond a three (3) month period.

If any trainee fails to return to work following the conclusion of an approved leave of absence (services interrupted), the trainee and his or her family, residential staff and/or service coordinator/case manager will be contacted first by phone, then by mail. The trainee will be considered to have withdrawn from services at Challenge if no contact has occurred, or the trainee has not returned to Challenge within 30 days of the end of the leave of absence (unless a further extension of the leave of absence has been agreed upon by all parties). At any time in the future, the trainee can request re-admission into services at Challenge.

Holiday Schedule

It is the policy of Challenge to designate and observe certain days each year as holidays. Trainees will be given a day off with pay for each holiday observed.

The following holidays will be observed*:

New Year's Day	Thanksgiving Day
Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday	Day after Thanksgiving
President's Day	Two weekdays between Christmas and
Memorial Day	New Year's to be scheduled by the
Independence Day	President in consultation with the Dept. Heads
Labor Day	Christmas Day

*Refer to the schedule of holidays and other organizational closings for the current year.

If a holiday falls on Saturday, the holiday will be taken on the preceding Friday. If a holiday falls on a Sunday, the holiday will be taken on the following Monday. If a trainee is required to work on a holiday, the trainee will be paid for the holiday plus any hours worked.

When Christmas and New Year's fall on the weekend, Challenge administration will decide which dates will be observed.

The work center generally closes for the week between Christmas and New Year's. During that week, trainees will be paid for holidays; trainees will not be paid for any additional days off that week that are not listed on the ***Holiday Schedule*** above.

V. WORK POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

Work and Professional Conduct

Whether one works in Challenge's Work Center, in one of Challenge's community worksites or in an individual job in the community, certain standards of performance and conduct must be maintained in any work group. A major focus of the services and work experience provided through Employment Services is to assist each trainee to understand and demonstrate the work

Challenge Industries, Inc. Trainee Handbook

skills and attitude that are needed to become a successful and productive worker at Challenge and in the community. Here at Challenge, trainees are expected to:

- Maintain good attendance
- Arrive at work on time
- Punch in on the time clock prior to starting work, and out at the end of the day
- Indicate willingness to work at an assigned job
- Return from breaks and lunch on time
- Work consistently to the end of the work shift
- Accept training and feedback from supervisors
- Listen carefully to instructions
- Ask questions if you don't understand, are unsure about instructions, or need assistance
- Follow supervisor's suggestions for improving work quality
- Maintain focus on your work
- Be flexible with accepting different work assignments
- Initiate requests for work assignments or materials
- Focus on producing quality work, including checking your own work
- Work cooperatively and show respect to your fellow trainees, supervisors and business customers
- Be willing to resolve conflicts with co-workers and staff, with support
- Wait to speak with a supervisor when he/she is busy with another trainee or other task
- Inform supervisors if you need to leave the work area
- Follow safety procedures
- Follow specific work policies and procedures for work area and assignment
- Assist in clean-up of the work area at the end of the work day
- Maintain professional appearance and hygiene

The behaviors listed below are considered unacceptable in a work setting, and may jeopardize a trainee's participation in work and services at the Challenge work center and community worksites. These include:

Use of Alcohol/Drugs – possession, use, sale, or distribution of alcoholic beverages or unauthorized drugs

Theft - theft of agency-owned property or property belonging to other trainees or Challenge staff

Property Damage Or Unauthorized Use - Willful damage or unauthorized use of agency or personal property of other trainees or Challenge staff

Physical, Fights, Assault, Or Harassment - Fighting, purposely causing injury to self or others, physical or verbal harassment, or threats toward other trainees, Challenge staff, business customers or community members

Possession of Firearms/Weapons - Possession of firearms or other weapons on agency property or other worksites

Challenge Industries, Inc. Trainee Handbook

Gambling on agency property or other work sites

Sexual Harassment including any unwelcome sexual advances, display of obscene materials, request for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that interferes with a trainee's work performance or simply creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment

Any Other Actions Taken That Endanger oneself or others

Professional Relationships at Work

Learning to be a successful worker is more than just completing a job task. Being a successful worker includes getting along with your supervisors and co-workers. Below are expectations and guidelines to assist you in developing positive working relationships at Challenge and in the community.

Working with Your Supervisor

Each work area has one or more work supervisors. Trainees are expected to follow their supervisors' instructions. The supervisor gives out work assignments, provides instruction in how to complete each work task, provides work supplies and equipment needed to do the job, and is responsible for making sure the job is done well and on time. The supervisor may need to change your work assignment at times, or may request that you change the way you are working on a job. Supervisors are also responsible for assuring that all trainees follow required health and safety practices, and that trainees are treated with respect at all times.

Supervisors may request that you help with initial cleaning, getting work supplies, or set-up of the work area at the beginning of a work shift. In addition, trainees are expected to help straighten and clean up the work area at the end of the work shift.

Staff/Trainee Relationships

Relationships between trainees and Challenge staff, while supportive and friendly, need to be limited to professional work relationships. Challenge's policy states that Challenge staff are strongly discouraged from developing close personal relationships with trainees outside of work. Such relationships could influence a Challenge staff member's ability to deal fairly with all trainees and may give the impression of favoritism. In addition, Challenge supervisors and other staff members have authority and influence in relationships with trainees, and personal relationships between Challenge staff and trainees have the potential for abuse of that authority.

Steps to Follow for Addressing Conflicts with Challenge Staff

The following steps should be followed by a trainee who needs help in resolving non-emergency work-related problems with a Challenge staff member. ***Any problem that is serious in nature (violation of trainee's rights, injury/ accident, health and safety issues, or other emergency situation) should be reported to an Employment Advisor and to the Director of Services immediately.***

1. The trainee should first address the problem with the staff member most directly involved in the issue. The trainee and staff together will attempt to resolve the issue and then one or both

Challenge Industries, Inc. Trainee Handbook

should update the trainee's Employment Advisor. If issue is not resolved or the trainee is uncomfortable with addressing the staff directly, the trainee should contact his/her Employment Advisor who will then follow the procedure outlined in #2 below.

2. The trainee should notify their Employment Advisor. If the conflict is with the trainee's Employment Advisor, the trainee should directly contact the Manager of Employment Planning. The Employment Advisor or Manager of Employment Planning will make a determination if this situation requires to be dealt with as a formal reportable incident or an internal reportable incident, and will complete the appropriate form, and follow the procedures for these types of incidents (see section on ***Incident Reporting*** on page ___ for further information). The trainee may request a meeting with her/ his Employment Advisor and other people involved. If the situation can be resolved through this meeting or other venues, the Employment Advisor should summarize the outcome and events that led to the conflict in a note in the trainee's file, and forward a copy of this to the Manager of Employment Planning.
3. If the issue is still not resolved, the trainee should notify the Manager of Employment Planning, or may ask her/his Employment Advisor to do so. Further actions may include one or more of the following: schedule a meeting of involved people, review documentation, and/or make suggestions for additional resources for resolving the issue. Any steps taken must be documented by the Employment Advisor in the trainee's file and forward a copy of this to the Director of Services.
4. If the issue is still not resolved, the trainee should notify the Director of Services, or may ask her/his Employment Advisor to do so. The Director of Services will review all documentation and schedule a meeting of involved people to address the problem. Any steps taken must be documented by the Employment Advisor.
5. If no resolution is reached, the trainee should notify the President of Challenge, or may ask her/his Employment Advisor or other advocate to do so. Any steps taken must be documented by the Employment Advisor.
6. If the trainee is not satisfied after following the above steps, he/she will be provided with further information about legal rights and options. The trainee may also choose to present concerns to any of the agencies listed above in the ***Trainee's Rights*** section on page ____.

Working with your Co-Workers

Being a successful worker means working cooperatively with your co-workers as a team. You will need to be able to interact in a friendly and professional manner with other trainees. This means being supportive of other trainees' efforts to perform their job duties; encouraging other trainees to do their best and to try new work opportunities. It also means being patient and tolerant if another trainee has difficulty. We encourage trainees to be supportive of other trainees. Please keep in mind that the best assistance you can offer is helping another trainee to become as independent as he or she can be. While working at Challenge, you will work with trainees who have a wide variety of abilities and interests, some which may be very dissimilar to your own. As a team member, it is important that you are respectful of the beliefs, values, differing abilities and disabilities of other trainees.

Challenge Industries, Inc. Trainee Handbook

Co-Worker (Trainee) Relationships

The workplace is a common place to meet people and develop new friendships. However, during work hours, relationships at work need to be professional and conducted in a manner that is appropriate to the workplace. This includes:

- Using respectful and professional verbal language
- Limiting physical interactions to those that are appropriate to a workplace
- Being respectful of physical space and boundaries
- Maintaining a cordial working relationship with all trainees and other co-workers
- Limiting personal interactions (such as personal disagreements not related to work) to time outside of work hours
- Limiting the level of friendship to that which is mutually agreeable to both individuals
- Conducting oneself in a way that is not disruptive or upsetting to other trainees

In addition, the Challenge workforce includes trainees with a wide variability of abilities and disabilities. All trainees need to be aware and respectful of these differences. If needed, Challenge staff may intervene when unequal levels of abilities between trainees may pose a risk to one or both trainees. Challenge supervisors and other Employment Services staff are available to assist you in developing and maintaining positive work relationships with your co-workers.

Trainees who have difficulty in developing or maintaining professional work relationships with other trainees or co-workers will have these areas addressed in his or her employment plan, and will receive training, support and needed oversight from Challenge staff.

Work Assignments

As stated above, the supervisor is responsible for giving you your work assignment. The supervisor may need to change your work assignment at times. Some of the work assignments will be done in the work center, either in the main production area or in other parts of the building. Other work assignments will require you to work in one of Challenge's worksites in the community. All trainees are expected to be flexible in accepting work assignments. Supervisors and other staff will make sure there is adequate training, supervision and support to assist you to be comfortable and safe in any assigned work area.

Work Try-Outs and Trial Periods in Community Worksites

Your Employment Advisor will keep you informed about opportunities for work outside Challenge in temporary and permanent community worksites. You and your family/advocate will have the opportunity to tour the worksite and try out the work prior to making a commitment to a work schedule. Challenge staff will work with you to ensure that work opportunities provide you with a chance to learn new skills, but also adhere to any documented work or other medical/health restrictions.

Once you have completed a tour and you and your Employment Advisor have determined that this may be a good work match for you, a trial or training period of time will be set for you to receive training at the community worksite. The trial period will be determined on an individual basis, but usually will range from a few days to a few weeks. During the trial period, your supervisor and Employment Advisor will work closely with you to train you in all aspects of the job. The trial period may be shortened or extended, based on your work performance and

Challenge Industries, Inc. Trainee Handbook

learning needs. Once you have agreed to the trial period, we expect that you complete the full trial period, unless you are physically or otherwise unable to complete the work or the work or work environment is detrimental to your health.

At the end of the trial period, you, your Employment Advisor and the supervisor will make a decision if this will continue to be a work placement for you. This decision will be based on several factors including your interests and stated goals, your work performance and ability to do the job, your ability to get along with others at the worksite, your health and safety, and the work demands and availability of work at the worksite. If the decision is made for you to continue working in the community worksite, a formal work schedule will be set. Challenge expects that you will maintain that work schedule. Refer back to sections on Attendance Expectations and Work Schedules on page ___ information.

Work Schedule and Assignments in Community Worksites

If you want or need to change your work schedule at a community worksite (i.e. increase or decrease hours or days), you should discuss the matter first with your Employment Advisor. You and your Employment Advisor will meet with your supervisor and see if changes in your work schedule can and should be made, based on your stated goals and the work demands of the worksite. If you want to end the work assignment entirely, you should first meet with your Employment Advisor to discuss the matter, and see if there are problems or issues that can be resolved to make this work assignment better for you. If you decide to end the work assignment, Challenge expects you to give two weeks notice. During that time, you are expected to work your regularly scheduled hours.

If you have been trained for a particular community worksite, you may be asked to fill-in on days you are not scheduled at that worksite when other workers are absent or a larger group of workers is required to complete the work. Challenge expects that you will follow through with back-up work assignments in community worksites (your schedule and health permitting), just as you are expected to follow-through with work assignments given to you in the work center.

If a Trainee Refuses a Work Assignment

If a trainee refuses to work at an assigned job, the trainee will be given a **brief** period of time (not to exceed **15 minutes**) in which he or she is given time to discuss and receive supports from supervisors or Employment Services staff. After **15 minutes or less**, the trainee will **be asked to clock out** and leave the production area, and staff should record the time as non-work time, making a notation on the production sheet that the individual refused to work. The trainee has the option to go home (if possible), or remain at Challenge in an area outside the production floor. If the trainee remains at Challenge, he or she will be encouraged to return to work at the assigned job throughout the day. Trainees in community worksites will follow the above procedures, with the exception that after the initial period up to **15 minutes**, the trainee will be re-assigned to the work center for the remainder of the day. If needed, Challenge will provide transportation for the trainee to the work center. This procedure will be followed with all trainees, unless there is a specific work support plan developed in conjunction with that trainee's service team that has put other procedures in place.

Challenge Industries, Inc. Trainee Handbook

Commitment to Quality Work

The quality of work in the work center and community worksites is very important. In all work areas, Challenge needs to ensure that we meet our business customers' requirements. This helps Challenge stay competitive and attract new business customers, thus expanding employment opportunities for trainees. It is important that all trainees follow supervisors' instructions on how to do each work assignment, and follow procedures for assuring accuracy and quality for each job. To assure quality, it is also important that all trainees maintain the highest standards of cleanliness and personal hygiene.

Challenge staff will work with each trainee to develop training strategies and work accommodations to assist each worker to perform quality work. If after a period of time, the trainee can not perform the work assignment at the needed standard, the trainee will be transferred to other work assignments as available.

When Work and Professional Conduct Expectations Are Not Met

Challenge understands that trainees may not be able to meet all the stated expectations outlined above. However, it is important that trainees and their support teams accept these expectations as goals which all trainees will work toward achieving. Employment Services staff will work with trainees to identify areas that need to be addressed and develop training and support plans to assist the worker in developing their work skills. It is necessary that trainees are willing to work with Challenge staff to address any of the areas stated above and make changes that will allow them to become successful workers in the community.

When supervisors, Employment Services staff or the trainee themselves identifies an area where work or professional conduct areas are not being met, or Challenge policies are not being followed, the trainee and his/her Employment Advisor will meet to discuss this and come up with ways to address the issue. Often the supervisor or other Employment Services staff working most closely with the trainee will be a part of these discussions. If this issue continues to be problematic over time, the Employment Advisor and trainee will set clear expectations for areas of improvement. This will be incorporated into the trainee's employment plan, and specific strategies to provide training, supports and/or oversight will be developed.

It is important for trainees (and their support teams) to realize that there may be negative financial or programmatic effects for a trainee for not following the work and professional conduct expectations or other Challenge policies. Trainees who can not follow work and professional conduct expectations and who refuse to work toward improving their work performance will be subject to corrective actions that may include job reassignments, loss of work time, and other measures. Eventually, this could result in suspension or termination of services. The consequences of the failure to meet work and professional conduct expectations will vary depending on the impact on other trainees, the agency, and business customers.

Challenge staff will make every effort to support a trainee in maintaining his or her work placement and services. This may include consultation with other service providers, development of specific support plans to address problematic behavior, and referral to outside resources. Any proposed suspension or termination of services will be done in accordance with the provisions of

Challenge Industries, Inc. **Trainee Handbook**

the individual's support plan (developed and agreed upon by the trainee and their support team) and will follow the funding source regulations regarding suspension and termination of services.

Below are the typical steps that will be followed if work or professional conduct worsens over time, or this issue starts to interfere with the ability of the trainee or others to successfully participate in work or services at Challenge. However, if a trainee's conduct poses a danger to him/her self or others or significantly interferes with Challenge's ability to complete work contracts, more immediate actions may need to occur.

1. The trainee meets with his/her Employment Advisor, Supervisor, and Manager of Employment Planning to discuss the issue, identify why this is occurring, and come up with additional training and/or supports to address the issue. A time frame for needed improvements and review will be set.
2. If the issue is not resolved, the Employment Advisor will request a meeting with the trainee's support team to further discuss the issue and develop additional strategies to address the problem. Again, a time frame for needed improvements and review will be set. These strategies may include changes in work schedule and work area.
3. The Employment Advisor will work with the trainee's support team to make a referral for additional support services outside of Challenge to assist the trainee in addressing the issue, if needed.
4. Either as a separate step (or as part of step 2), the support team will develop a written support plan with contingencies for specific behaviors. Contingencies may include having to discontinue a specific job, leave the work area, leave work early, and/or miss one or more days of work. A time frame for review with the support team will be set. All new support plans will be reviewed within 30 days. If actions being considered include any reduction or suspension of services for a trainee who receives OMRDD Medicaid Waiver Services (Pre-Vocational, Supported Employment or services provided through a NYS OPTS Contract), the procedures detailed in the section *Decrease, Suspension or Termination of Medicaid Waiver Services* on page ____ will be followed.
5. If none of the above steps are effective, the trainee, Employment Services staff and the worker's support team will discuss setting a period of time (not to exceed 90 days) during which the trainee does not work or receive services at Challenge. The procedures detailed in the section *Decrease, Suspension or Termination of Medicaid Waiver Services* on page ____ will be followed for any trainee who receives OMRDD Medicaid Waiver Services (Pre-Vocational, Supported Employment or services provided through a NYS OPTS Contract). Challenge staff will work with the trainee's support team to identify other services or supports to assist the worker to address the issues during this period of services interrupted, as well as to explore other vocational or day program options. The Employment Advisor will keep in touch with the trainee and his/her support team to assess progress and readiness to return to work and services at Challenge.
6. If none of the above steps are successful, services will be terminated. The procedures detailed in the section *Decrease, Suspension or Termination of Medicaid Waiver Services* on page ____ will be followed for any trainee who receives OMRDD Medicaid Waiver Services (Pre-Vocational, Supported Employment or services provided through a NYS OPTS Contract). All former trainees are welcome to re-apply for services at any time. Re-admission to services will be based in part on whether the individual has made demonstrable progress in addressing the issue that led to termination of services.

Challenge Industries, Inc. Trainee Handbook

If a trainee or any member of their support team does not agree with decisions made during the process outlined above, the following individuals should be contacted in the following order: Manager of Employment Planning, Director of Services, and then President of Challenge. If the trainee is not satisfied after following the above steps, he/she will be provided with further information about legal rights and options. The Trainee may also choose to present concerns to any of the agencies listed below in *Trainees Rights* section below.

VI. TRAINEES RIGHTS

Statement of Trainees Rights

Each trainee has a set of rights and protections that must be followed by all agency staff and volunteers, and must be reflected in Challenge's policies and practices. This statement of rights and protections is in accordance with Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD) regulations, but are extended to all trainees who are served by Challenge. These rights and protections are reviewed with each trainee either during the admissions process and/or by their Employment Advisor during their first week at Challenge. Each trainee (or their legal guardian) will be asked to sign the statement of rights and protections, acknowledging that he or she has reviewed and understands what is contained in this statement. If a trainee can not read the policy, staff will offer to read and explain the policy to him or her. Below is an abbreviated copy of the Statement of Rights that contains the protections that apply to work settings, along with a number of contacts who can provide assistance if you feel your rights have been violated. A complete statement of rights is available from your Employment Advisor.

Prior to or at the time of admission, you have the right to:

1. Be fully informed of your rights, now or if changes occur; you will not be deprived of any civil or legal right solely because of a diagnosis of a disability;
2. Receive information on supplies and services provided by Challenge;
3. Be informed in writing of all fees related to care and service;
4. Be treated with the consideration, respect, dignity and individuality that is extended to each person regardless of race, religion, national origin, creed, age, gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, developmental disability, or other handicap, or health condition;
5. Participate in the planning of services; be afforded the opportunity to object to any provision within an individualized plan of service and the opportunity to appeal to any decision with which you disagree in relation to the objection to the plan;
6. A written individual plan of services which encourages self determination and enhances independence in living skills; which provides for meaningful and productive activities consistent with each individual's capacity (which takes in account individual interests);
7. Use your personal money and property: you will receive regular notice of your financial status and you may request assistance in the use of your resources;
8. A safe and sanitary environment;

Challenge Industries, Inc.
Trainee Handbook

9. Freedom from physical psychological or sexual abuse or punishment, or use of physical restraints;
10. Protection from commercial or other exploitation;
11. Confidentiality with all information contained in your records;
12. Privacy and respect for cultural identity in treatment and in care for your personal needs;
13. Be ensured privacy for personal care activities;
14. Not be required to perform work for the facility without compensation;
15. Access to telephones with privacy for incoming and outgoing calls;
16. Communicate freely with anyone in or outside the facility, and to receive visitors at reasonable times;
17. Privacy when visited, unless to do so would infringe upon your safety or the rights of other individuals;
18. Observance and participation, including the right not to participate, in social and recreational activities that are offered to participants in Challenge's Employment Services and work center;
19. Individually accessible storage space for clothing and other personal belongings used on a day-to-day basis;
20. Training and support with following a diet plan. Access to food will not be altered or totally denied for behavioral management or disciplinary (punishment) purposes;
21. Your rights will not be arbitrarily denied. None of you rights shall be limited for the disciplinary (punishment) purposes, retribution, or for the convenience of staff. Limitations of your rights must be on an individual basis and for clinical purposes. The clinical justification and specific period of time the limitation is to remain in effect shall be contained in the individual's plan of services;
22. If you have any issues or concerns regarding your rights, you will not be denied the opportunity either personally or through parents, guardians, or correspondents to express, without fear of reprisal, grievances, concerns any suggestions to the following:

Facility Director
Broome DDSO
Glenwood Rd.
Binghamton, NY 13905
(607) 770-0255

President, Board of Visitors
Broome DDSO
Glenwood Rd.
Binghamton, NY 13905

**Challenge Industries, Inc.
Trainee Handbook**

Mental Hygiene Legal Services
Floor #16
44 Hawley Street
Binghamton, NY 13901- 4435
(607)721-8440

Commission on Quality of Care &
Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities
401 State St.
Schenectady, NY 12305-2397
Tel#: (518) 388-1281

Commissioner, Office of Mental
Retardation and Developmental Disabilities
44 Holland Avenue
Albany, NY 12229
(518) 473-1997

Privacy, Confidentiality, and HIPPA Compliance (Health Information and Privacy Portability Act)

All information pertaining to individuals served by Challenge is strictly confidential. This information includes name, address, nature of disability, nature of services, etc. Such information is to be discussed only on an as needed basis, and then only with Challenge personnel and professional personnel of other organizations directly involved with those individuals and their families. All staff are provided with HIPPA training and are required to read and sign a confidentiality agreement. Challenge complies fully with all Federal and State privacy protection laws and regulations.

Each trainee will be given information about Challenge's privacy policy during the admissions process and/or by their Employment Advisor during their first week at Challenge. A copy of the policy itself is available, and if you can not read the policy, staff will offer to read and explain the policy to you. You will be asked to sign the top half of the form acknowledging that you have received notification about the policy, and staff should sign as well. If you refuse to sign the form, Challenge will still follow all provisions contained in the privacy policy. If a trainee is not his or her own legal guardian, staff should contact the legal guardian to have the legal guardian complete the form.

The bottom half of the acknowledgment is for you to authorize disclosure of confidential information to selected individuals. In this section, you can designate particular family members and others with who Challenge can share information. Only *full* disclosure can be authorized on this form. If you wish to allow some information shared, but not other information, then a separate authorization will need to be drawn up allowing only the specific disclosure.

No authorization for disclosure is needed for the following organizations or individuals:

- Funding agencies i.e. VESID, OMRDD, OMH, CBVH, DOL, etc.

Challenge Industries, Inc. Trainee Handbook

- Service coordinators, CSS/DSS Case Managers, Guidance Counselors, etc.
- Residential Service organizations and staff
- School personnel
- Other day program staff (i.e. Skylight, Broome Day Services, Youth Bureau, TC MH Clinic, etc.)

Challenge does need specific authorization to talk directly with a private therapist, physician, or other medical professional.

Written or verbal information about a trainee will not be released to anyone outside of the agencies noted above without written consent, except in case of emergency.

For further information, please refer to the "Challenge Privacy Policy Statement" or the "Challenge Notice of Privacy Practices."

Decrease, Suspension or Termination of Medicaid Waiver Services

Any proposed suspension or termination of services for a trainee who receives OMRDD Medicaid Waiver Services (Pre-Vocational, Supported Employment or services provided through a NYS OPTS Contract) are required by OMRDD regulations to adhere to the following procedures. These procedures apply only if the trainee and his/her family, advocate or service team are not in agreement with decrease, suspension or termination of services.

1. Initial written notification of proposed decrease, suspension or termination of services will be given to the trainee, family/advocate, and service coordinator.
Note: If the proposed decrease, suspension or termination of services is to be discussed during the annual review of the ISP, notice must be given to trainee, family/advocate, and service coordinator prior to the meeting.
2. Unless agreed to by all parties, services will continue as described in the ISP and service plan while the proposed decrease, suspension or termination of services is under review.
3. The trainee, family/advocate, and service coordinator will then schedule a meeting with the Director of Services to discuss this matter and see if all parties can come to a resolution (the trainee's Employment Advisor and other Challenge staff who work closely with him or her will also attend the meeting).
4. If the parties are unable to come to agreement, Challenge will give the trainee, family/advocate, and service coordinator a second written notification advising him or her of the right to request an administrative review. The trainee, family/advocate, and service coordinator has 14 days from receipt of the notification to request a review. During this time, services continue as described in the ISP and service plan. If no review is requested, services can be decreased, suspended or terminated at the end of the 14 day period.
5. If an administrative review is requested, there are designated time frames for the review to occur by the Developmental Disabilities Service Office (DDSO), and a decision to be reached as to whether services can be decreased, suspended or terminated. During the time of the review by the DDSO, services continue as described in the ISP and service plan.

There is a process for requesting an expedited review (within 7 days) from the DDSO when the decrease, suspension or termination of services is proposed to prevent immediate risk to the

Challenge Industries, Inc. Trainee Handbook

health or safety of the trainee or others. In this instance, Challenge will request that the trainee not return to Challenge until the rehabilitation trainee's support team can meet with Challenge staff to try to come up with a temporary plan that can assure the health and safety of the trainee and others.

VII. Health and Safety in the Workplace

Challenge places great importance on prevention of accidents and illness in the workplace. Some of the policies and practices already mentioned in this handbook that contribute to maintaining health and safety in the workplace include provisions in the dress code to assure safety, yearly training for staff on control of infectious diseases, incident and accident reporting, and monthly fire drills to assure that all trainees and staff can evacuate the building quickly and safely in case of an emergency. Challenge also reviews safety issues relating to specific job tasks or worksites and provides training to trainees as part of their orientation to that job task.

Below are a number of other policies and practices that promote health and safety in the workplace.

Safety Orientation

All new trainees will receive an orientation that includes a tour of the building, location of all safety equipment, safety and sanitation policies and procedures, proper use of equipment, chemicals and cleaning supplies, and evacuation procedures in the event of a fire or other emergency situation. At the completion of this safety orientation, both the trainee and the Challenge staff who conducted the orientation will sign and date the checklist form, and this will be kept in the trainee's file. As needed, trainees may be required to take part in additional orientation sessions if the trainee experiences difficulties in understanding and following safety policies and procedures. A similar process will be followed as part of the orientation to working in one of Challenge's supervised community worksites.

Medical Information and Medications

Before you start at Challenge, you will need to provide information about your medical history, doctors and other health providers you use, current medical conditions, and medications you take. Challenge also requires information on who to contact in case of an emergency. To ensure your health and safety, trainees are asked to keep their Employment Advisor updated if there are major changes in your medical condition and/or medications.

Challenge staff can not assist in medication administration. If you require assistance to take medication during the workday, your Employment Advisor will work with your family or residential program to either adjust your work schedule or have a certified health care provider visit the worksite to assist you with medication.

To ensure everyone's safety, all medications (including non-prescription medications) must be kept in a secure location at all times, either in possession of the trainee or in a locker/locked container.

Challenge does not dispense non-prescription medications to trainees.

Challenge Industries, Inc. Trainee Handbook

Physical Exam and Work Restriction Policy

To ensure the health, safety, and welfare of trainees, Challenge needs to be aware of any disability or medical condition that places restrictions on the type of work that trainees can engage in safely.

Starting March 1, 2003, Challenge required that all new admissions to the work center provide the results of a physical examination (completed within a year of admission). To ensure that Challenge receives adequate medical information needed to provide appropriate work opportunities and services for trainees, applicants who do not receive Medicaid Waiver Service Coordination will be required to have their physician use Challenge's physical exam form. Those applicants who receive Medicaid Waiver Service Coordination can furnish a copy of the most recent physical exam, along with medical information in the Individual Service Plan and Plan of Protective Oversight. In addition, Challenge requires applicant to have their physician complete the Work Restrictions Form and return it to Challenge. Challenge needs to receive this information prior to a trainee's first day of services. As is already the policy, applicants must provide Challenge with the results of PPD testing done within a year of admission.

If a current trainee does not have a primary physician who sees them on a regular basis, Challenge will assist the trainee to make an appointment for a physical examination, and will pay for this initial examination if the participant lacks health insurance and has no other resources available for payment.

For those trainees who have documented work restrictions, Challenge requires that trainees have a physical examination done annually, and a copy of the physical exam with an updated work restrictions form be forwarded to Challenge. Review of this information will be incorporated into the annual employment plan process.

If a trainee's disability or medical condition changes over time, Challenge may request that the trainee be examined by their primary physician to assess the need for work restrictions.

Before Employment Services staff assists a worker to apply to VESID for funding for training or employment services, Challenge will request the worker to furnish a copy of the most recent physical exam from their physician, and have the physician complete the Work Restrictions Form. This information will be shared with VESID as part of the eligibility determination process. If the trainee does not have health insurance that will pay for the exam, VESID can pay for the cost of the physical exam or other required medical examinations or testing.

It will be the responsibility of the applicant/trainee to provide Challenge with this medical information, with needed assistance from service coordinators, case managers, family members, or other service providers/advocates. Challenge will provide the applicant, trainee or advocate with the needed form(s) at admissions, and at annual employment plan reviews (as required).

Emergency and Accident Procedure

Designated Employment Services staff will be provided yearly training in first aid and CPR. In the event of an illness, accident, or other medical emergency that requires more than first aid, the

Challenge Industries, Inc. Trainee Handbook

following guidelines will be followed. These guidelines apply to both accidents and medical emergencies that occur on the premises of Challenge and in community worksites.

Minor Injury or Illness: Staff trained in first aid will provide minor first aid for trainees for cuts, scrapes, and other minor injuries during work time. First aid supplies are located in first aid room off the production floor at Challenge, and first aid kits are provided at all supervised community worksites and in Challenge vehicles. If the injury occurs at work, an accident report will be filled out by staff with a copy forwarded to Human Resources. Staff who work directly with the trainee will determine if there needs to any follow-up with other supports outside Challenge. All trainees with minor injuries or health care needs that require more than first aid will be referred to their own physician.

Emergency Procedures: If an emergency occurs within Challenge's main building, the Receptionist will send a full page throughout the building. Staff trained in first aid and CPR and other necessary personnel will go to the location of the emergency. Assessment by trained staff responding to the page will determine the need to contact emergency personnel. Staff will accompany a trainee to Cayuga Medical Center and remain there until family, residential staff or other advocate arrive. A copy of the trainee's face sheet and other pertinent medical information from the trainee's file will be given to the emergency medical technician to bring up to the emergency room. If emergency care is not required, staff will assist the trainee to make necessary arrangements for any follow-up assessment or medical care with their own physician.

For community worksites, assistance should be sought immediately through Security, medical site personnel or 911.

The physician must release trainees who have had medical care related to an injury or lost work time before they return to work.

Community Access and Protective Oversight

Trainees who participate in Challenge services vary in their independence and need for support and supervision from Challenge staff. At the time of admission, the applicant, his or her support team, and Employment Services staff will determine if there will be any restrictions regarding the applicant's participation and/or independence in the community and requirements for protective oversight both at Challenge and in the community. The level of protective oversight and supervision needed to ensure the health and safety of the trainee along with Challenge's ability to provide this based on staffing resources will be factors in determining initial admission to Challenge, and ongoing participation in Challenge's services. Trainees are required to adhere to any documented restrictions during participation in any Challenge work or other activity to ensure their health and safety at Challenge. Community access and required protective oversight will be reviewed during the annual and semi-annual employment plan process.

Dietary Restrictions

Challenge staff will provide trainees support and encouragement to adhere to the dietary recommendations or plan proposed by their physician or support team. Specific skill development and support related to nutrition, food choices or portions, and exercise may be incorporated into a Trainee's employment plan.

Challenge Industries, Inc. Trainee Handbook

Trainees who are on restricted diets are encouraged to bring their own food for both lunch and break time. There is a refrigerator available to store lunches and drinks (please be sure to label your container or bag), several microwaves to heat food, an ice machine, and hot water available for tea (please bring your own tea bag or other beverages). Vending machines are available for trainee and staff use. Access to obtaining cash in the cafeteria can be restricted on an individual basis for those trainees who want or need extra assistance.

Challenge does not have the resources to provide protective oversight re. monitoring or restricting access to food, or observing consumption of food.

Health Precautions for Prevention of Spread of Infectious Diseases

In order to prevent the spread of the flu and other infectious diseases, please follow these guidelines:

1. Get a Flu Shot
2. Wash Your Hands Before and After Breaks, Lunch, and After Using the Restroom
3. Cover Your Nose and Mouth While Coughing or Sneezing
4. Get Enough Sleep, Especially During Flu Season
5. If You Feel Sick, Stay Home and See Your Doctor

Common flu symptoms are: fever, headache, tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose and/or muscle aches. Trainees who are ill, particularly those with upper respiratory infections, are encouraged to stay home from work. Trainees who come to work while ill will be asked to leave and not return until they are recovered. If a trainee is receiving medical care for an infectious disease, he or she can not return to work until receiving medical clearance from their doctor to do so. Challenge requires a written release from the doctor saying that it is safe for the worker to return, with any needed restrictions or precautions. The trainee must be able to follow the prescribed restrictions or precautions to return to work.

Tuberculosis Control Plan

Challenge recognizes that Tuberculosis represents a significant health risk to trainees and staff. The Tuberculosis Control Plan is an effort to reduce this risk through education, prevention and screening.

New trainees are required to provide PPD or TB test results prior to beginning employment or services. The test must have been performed within the previous twelve (12) months prior to the individual's start date with Challenge. Results will be kept in the trainee's confidential file.

Starting in 2003, trainees receiving service coordination, residential services, or other supports through Broome DDSO, Franziska Racker Center, Unity House, Finger Lakes DDSO or other OMRDD certified provider are required to receive PPD testing through their local physician, and supply Challenge with a copy of the testing results. Participation in the annual PPD Clinic held at Challenge will be limited to staff and trainees not receiving services from the above agencies, and who act as their own medical advocates.

Challenge Industries, Inc. Trainee Handbook

Incident and Accident Reporting and Investigations

All incidents or accidents which involve trainees are reported, investigated, and reviewed. Incidents are any events or situations which endanger a trainee's well-being. Any injury that requires more than first aid care is a reportable incident. Incident and Accident reports are completed by the staff member who observed or discovered the event. Incident reports involving injuries requiring more than first aid, potential abuse, mistreatment or neglect of trainees are reviewed by Challenge's Special Review Committee comprised of Challenge Board Members, community members, and Challenge staff. All Accident Reports are reviewed by the Challenge Safety Committee comprised of Challenge staff. All reports are reviewed as to the appropriateness of staff's reactions, and the need to make changes to Challenge's policies, procedures, operations or building and equipment to assure the continued health, safety, and well-being of all trainees. An investigation may also result in recommendations to the individual trainee.

Information obtained through investigations of incidents and accidents is confidential, and access to this information is limited to staff investigating the incident, committee members who review the investigations, Challenge administration, and primary staff who work with the trainee. For trainees involved with OMRDD, Challenge is required to share information about accidents and incidents with the local and regional OMRDD offices, with local legal authorities in incidents of allegations of sexual or physical abuse, and with the state Commission on Quality of Care and Mental Health Legal Services for all allegations of abuse.

Challenge is required to report to local authorities any knowledge of abuse of children or individuals with disabilities.

VIII. WAGES, BENEFITS, & DEPARTMENT OF LABOR REGULATIONS

Individuals receiving services through the work center sites are considered trainees rather than employees of Challenge. As trainees, there are specific provisions regarding pay, benefits and tax status that are different than employees. This section outlines those provisions, as well as other regulations and policies that affect compensation.

Wage Determination

Challenge is a qualified work center under the Fair Labor Standards Act and is allowed to pay trainees at a rate less than the Federal minimum wage. Wages must be a "Commensurate Wage" computed on an individual basis. This means that Challenge must pay each trainee based on his or her productivity compared to an average worker in the community, who is not disabled, performing the same kind of work. If Challenge is not able to determine an individual's productivity for a particular job, the trainee will be paid at the Federal minimum wage (or state minimum wage, if it is higher) for that job.

Trainees have the right to question how their wages are determined. If Challenge recognizes that an error has been made, a retroactive correction will be made. If a trainee feels that his or her earnings have not been calculated and paid fairly in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act, the trainee may complain to a supervisor or manager. If the trainee still does not receive a

Challenge Industries, Inc. Trainee Handbook

satisfactory response, a complaint may be made to the United States Department of Labor. Challenge does not engage in reprisals against individuals who file complaints.

How wages are determined: Piece Rate

Most jobs that are performed in the work center by trainees will be paid at piece rate. Piece rates are determined in a two-step process. First, we determine the average hourly pay rate in the surrounding community for people performing similar jobs. Secondly, we divide the average hourly pay rate by the number of units that can be produced by an average worker without a disability in a fifty-minute period. (A fifty-minute period allows for personal, fatigue and delay factors, and results in a higher rate per piece produced.) A trainee will be paid that piece rate for each piece produced.

How wages are determined: Average Hourly Rate for Piece Rate Earners

Trainees who normally earn piece rates are paid at an hourly rate for breaks, holidays, and down time while waiting for work. Each trainee's hourly rate is determined by dividing total earnings at piece rate by hours worked at piece rate. This hourly rate is updated on a quarterly basis.

For new trainees who do not have an established hourly rate, the trainee will be paid at the rate of \$2.50 per hour for times the trainee would receive an hourly rate (i.e. breaks, work delays and holiday pay) for the first 4 weeks at Challenge. At the end of that first month, the trainee's average hourly rate will be calculated and used in subsequent pay.

If the calculated hourly rate after the first month is lower than \$2.50 per hour, no changes will be made to the trainee's wages received. However, if the calculated hourly wage after the first month is higher than \$2.50 per hour, the trainee will be reimbursed for the difference between \$2.50 and their average wage for each hour (or part of) the trainee was paid at an hourly wage for the first 4 weeks of work at Challenge.

How wages are determined: Hourly Rate

There are some jobs performed by trainees that are not measurable by piece. Trainees at these jobs will be paid an hourly rate, which is established by comparing their productivity for a measured time interval to the average productivity of workers who are not disabled for that same time interval. This results in a productivity rating, which is multiplied by the average hourly rate for people performing similar jobs in the surrounding community.

Such jobs typically include two or more different types of work tasks which a worker will need to perform during an average work day. Each work task is measured separately and the productivity rating is pro-rated depending on the amount of time spent in a work day on that task. If it is impossible to measure the productivity of an individual for a specific work task which a trainee will perform, then the trainee will be given credit for 100% productivity at that task.

Here is an example: Joe works in the Ithaca College dish rooms where he spends 50% of his time clearing and stacking trays to be loaded into the dishwasher, 40% of his time clearing silverware, and 10% of his time assisting with cleanup. If he is able to perform in a measured time interval 70% of the production of clearing and stacking as a non-disabled worker can perform, 60% of the production of cleaning silverware, and the average wage in the community for dishwashing is

Challenge Industries, Inc. Trainee Handbook

\$7.02 per hour (2006 Prevailing Wage Rate), Joe's hourly wage will be calculated as follows: 70% productivity X 50% time X \$7.02 per hour, plus 60% productivity X 40% time X \$7.02 per hour, plus 100% productivity X 10% time X \$7.02 per hour, or \$2.46 plus \$1.68 plus \$.70 equals \$4.84 per hour.

Hourly rates are first determined after the trainee has had an opportunity to become familiar with the job. They are updated at least once every six months thereafter.

Peer Leaders Wage Rate

Some trainees who have demonstrated the ability to work with independence and assist other trainees may be asked to serve as peer leaders. When performing that role, peer leaders will be paid at the Federal minimum wage (or state minimum wage, if it is higher). When a peer leader is performing production work only, he or she will be paid on a piece rate or hourly basis, depending on the nature of the job.

Maximum Rate in Work Center

Challenge's mission is not to serve as a permanent workplace (sheltered workshop) for people with disabilities, but to help trainees make the transition to community-based employment (with supports). In accordance with this mission, it is Challenge's policy to avoid any practice that may discourage trainees from seeking community-based employment. Therefore, the maximum rate of pay for trainees working in the work center is the Federal minimum wage (or state minimum wage, if it is higher).

Overtime Pay

Trainees will be paid time and a half for any hours actually worked in excess of forty hours in a week (Saturday through Friday). Holiday time is not counted toward the forty hours actually worked.

Breaks

Trainees working in the work center and supervised community worksites will receive one paid 15 minute break and a half hour unpaid meal period during the typical work day (4-6 hours).

Loss of Pay for Refusal to Work or Disruption of Work

If a trainee refuses to work at an assigned job, the trainee's actions are severely disruptive to other trainees, or the trainee's actions jeopardize the work itself, a trainee will be given one verbal warning. If the disruptive actions continue, the trainee will be asked to clock out and leave the production area for a period of time. During that time, the trainee will receive supportive counseling to assist them to identify and resolve the issue that caused the refusal or disruption. The amount of time that will elapse between the verbal warning and being asked to clock out is dependent on the severity of the disruptive behavior. For refusal to complete an assigned job, the trainee will be given a **brief** period of time (not to exceed **15 minutes**) in which he or she is given time to discuss and receive supports from supervisors or Employment Advisors prior to being asked to clock out (for section ***If an Trainee Refuses a Work Assignment***).

During the time the trainee is clocked out, he or she will not be paid. During the time the trainee is clocked out, he or she is expected to stay in the designated break or other non-production area

Challenge Industries, Inc. Trainee Handbook

selected by staff. When the trainee has regained composure and is able to follow supervisory instructions, the trainee will clock in and resume work.

If the actions of the trainee pose a danger to himself/herself, other workers or staff, or could result in significant damage to agency property, the trainee will be requested to leave the production area immediately, and will not receive pay for this time.

Benefits

Trainees will receive holiday pay (at their average hourly rate) for the 10 scheduled holidays identified in the ***Holiday Schedule*** section of this handbook if the holiday falls on a day the trainee is scheduled to work. Trainees do not receive pay for time taken for vacations, sick days or other absences from Challenge.

Pay Checks

Paychecks are distributed bi-weekly (every other Friday), or on the last working day, prior to a holiday, if the holiday falls on a payroll Friday. Paychecks can only be picked up on Thursdays after 3:00 if the trainee is not scheduled to work on Fridays, or has a scheduled and approved day off on Friday. If paycheck distribution occurs during a trainee's planned and approved absence from Challenge, their paycheck may be issued in advance of absence, upon the trainee's request to their Employment Advisor, and approval by the Finance Department. The Director of Finance must approve requests for early check distribution. Payroll is calculated from 12:01 a.m. Saturday through midnight Friday.

Direct Deposit

Trainees are encouraged to have their net pay or a portion of their pay deposited directly into a checking or savings account of participating financial institutions. Forms for this process are available in the Human Resources Department or by request from your Employment Advisor. To set up a direct deposit, the trainee will need to bring in a deposit slip from their bank with the account number. Employment Services or Human Resources staff can assist you in completing the form.

Income Taxes

Trainees are exempt from payroll withholding requirements on their earnings at Challenge. However, their earnings are taxable income. Trainees will receive a Form 1099 at the end of the year, rather than a W-2. Questions about whether an individual trainee is required to file an income tax return will depend on his or her own situation, and should be referred to a qualified tax advisor.

Some trainees may have high enough income during the year that they will owe income taxes when they file their income tax returns. Personal income taxes are the liability of the individual and not the responsibility of Challenge.

Many trainees are eligible for an Earned Income Credit when they file their income tax returns. This may mean they will receive a tax refund, even though they have paid no income taxes during the year. Even though their earnings as trainees are not subject to FICA tax or payroll withholding, they do qualify as Earned Income for purposes of calculating the credit.

Challenge Industries, Inc. Trainee Handbook

Challenge welcomes volunteers from RSVP to come in each spring to help trainees and individuals receiving Challenge services file their income tax returns. The volunteers do not require a fee for this assistance, and can not be liable for any errors or unanticipated tax liabilities.

Unemployment Insurance

Trainees are not eligible for New York State unemployment benefits.

Workers' Compensation

Challenge provides benefits to trainees under the Workers' Compensation Laws of New York State. Benefits cover trainees for accidental injury or illness proven to be job related. The policy reimburses trainees for eligible medical expenses and replacement of lost wages within limits of New York State Law. The organization pays the full cost for this insurance.

Social Security

Trainees are not considered employees and their work experience is not included in the Social Security system. Therefore, trainees are exempt from FICA taxes on their earnings at Challenge, either through payroll withholding or due to Self-Employment Tax. Trainees who experience a tax problem due to a misunderstanding of FICA tax may ask the Finance Department for a copy of the Determination Letter from the IRS which documents this exemption.

Deductions for Transportation, Meals, and Non-Skid Footwear

Trainees may arrange for payroll deductions to reimburse Challenge for bus tickets they purchase through Challenge, meal advances from Challenge to purchase items from the cafeteria vending machines, and/or purchase of non-skid shoes if required by current worksite. Challenge pays \$20.00 toward the purchase of shoes annually, and the remainder will be deducted in installments through payroll deductions. These advances are the responsibility of the individual worker to pay back. They are not a fringe benefit or the responsibility of Challenge.

Emergency Payroll Advances

Challenge does not make loans to trainees. Likewise, Challenge does not have a commitment or responsibility to make advances before payday of pay already earned. However, at the discretion of the Controller, Challenge may make a limited payroll advance in the case of a sudden, one-time emergency. To request an advance, the trainee must first speak with his or her Employment Advisor (or Manager of Employment Planning if his or her Employment Advisor is unavailable) who will forward the request to the Director of Finance. The advance may not exceed what the worker has already earned, and will be expected to be paid back at the next payday. Payroll deductions are the most convenient form of repayment both for most trainees and for Challenge. The Director of Finance will not make a payroll advance unless the trainee signs an authorization for the repayment to be withheld from the next paycheck.

Work Center Paid and Un-Paid Guidelines

The following guidelines are used to determine in what situations trainees are paid or not paid. These guidelines are developed in accordance with both Department of Labor and Home and Community Based Waiver (OMRDD) regulations.

Challenge Industries, Inc. Trainee Handbook

Work Delays (Downtime)

Trainees will be paid at their quarterly average hourly rate in the following situations. The trainee reports for a normal workday expecting work and there is a delay of over 7 minutes in work starting due to any of the following:

- job set-up including materials distribution
- job materials not available
- job quality control paperwork set-up or quality control issues
- job transitioning from one job and another.
- Challenge staff decides to delay the start of a job until after break time or until the following workday
- lack of available work for up to 3-hour period

Challenge staff will inform trainees in the event of a long delay or unexpected lack of work for the day. Trainees will be offered the option to stay and participate in limited program activities or leave. Trainees who opt to stay will only be paid for 3 hours even if there is no work for the entire day. Challenge staff will assist trainees in notifying residences or family to make arrangements to go home early when feasible.

In the above instances, trainees may remain on the work floor or in designated break areas (cafeteria or other break areas). Trainees who require protective oversight need to stay in designated staff supervised areas.

Notifications and Wages during Periods of Limited or No Work

Trainees will not be paid during times trainees are not working if trainees come to Challenge after being given notice of limited or no work as described in the sections below.

Limited program services are available for all trainees when there is no work or limited work available. Notices of no work or limited work are given so that trainees, their families, and/or advocates can make an informed decision as to what is the best option for the trainee.

Notice of Limited Work

When necessary, trainees will be given a general notice at the end of the workday that there is expected to be limited work available the following day. This notice will also be faxed to service coordinators, residences, and/or families as time allows. The information on limited work available can also be obtained by calling the reception desk at Challenge between the hours of 8:00 am – 4:00 pm. When possible (based upon skills needed), available work will be assigned so as to give all trainees an opportunity to work during part of the day. A trainee will receive pay only during times when work is available for him or her.

During times when no work is available, the trainee can participate in limited program services, but will not receive pay during this time. During times of no available work, the trainee will be re-located from the work area to a designated break/non-production area.

Notice of No Work

Challenge Industries, Inc.
Trainee Handbook

When necessary, trainees will be given a general notice at the end of the workday that there is expected to be no work available the following day(s). This notice will also be faxed to families, service coordinators, and/or residences as time allows. The information on no work available can also be obtained by calling the reception desk at Challenge between the hours of 8:00 am – 4:00 pm. If there is no work for a trainee, he or she can choose to attend Challenge and participate in limited program services. The trainee will receive no pay for the day while participating in program services.

Wage Reimbursement for Employment Services and Other Training Activities

Trainees will be paid at their average hourly rate for time spent in employment training, career exploration, official meetings, or other skill enhancement activities related to the trainee's employment goals and services. Prior approval from the trainee's Employment Advisor must be obtained to be paid for the above activities. If the above activities occur during times of no work when the trainee would not be receiving pay, the trainee will not be reimbursed for participating in the activity.

IX. POLICY REVIEW

In order to retain necessary flexibility in the administration of policies and procedures, Challenge reserves the right to change, revise or delete the plans, policies, benefits and procedures described in this manual at any time. If there is a change to the Trainee Handbook, a copy of the change will be provided to each trainee.