Homesteads for Hope Curriculum: Work-Based Learning Experience (WBLE) Development

#### Program Overview

This program is designed to provide Students with Disabilities (SWDs) the opportunity to explore career pathways and gain hands-on employment experience at Homesteads for Hope. By engaging in various roles on the farm, in the farm store, and during catered events, participants will learn workplace skills and identify their strengths and interests. Activities align with the principles of competitive integrated employment and aim to build confidence, professionalism, and practical experience in real-world settings.

### Curriculum Objectives

1. Expose participants to a variety of career pathways through hands-on learning in agriculture, retail, and hospitality.
2. Foster workplace readiness skills such as teamwork, time management, and professionalism.
3. Provide opportunities for mentorship, job shadowing, and direct workplace experience.
4. Help participants develop independence and self-confidence in a supportive environment.
5. Support SWDs in identifying career interests and potential long-term employment goals.

### Timeline

Week 1: Orientation and Exploration of Work Placement Options around Homesteads for Hope

Week2-4: Work Based Learning in chosen program component

### Program Components

#### 1. Work-Based Learning in the Fields

* **Activities:**
	+ Hands-on learning about planting, harvesting, and maintaining crops.
	+ Training in sustainable farming practices and organic produce cultivation.
	+ Collaborating with staff to manage daily farm operations.
	+ Experiencing a simulated workday, including assigned roles and responsibilities.
* **Skills Developed:**
	+ Physical stamina, attention to detail, and teamwork.
	+ Understanding of agriculture and farm-to-table processes.

#### 2. Work-Based Learning in the Farm Store

* **Activities:**
	+ Stocking shelves with fresh produce and farm-made goods.
	+ Learning to manage inventory and maintain an organized retail space.
	+ Operating the cash register and assisting customers with purchases.
	+ Promoting customer service skills through direct interaction with the public.
* **Skills Developed:**
	+ Customer service, communication, and basic retail operations.
	+ Handling money, tracking sales, and problem-solving in a retail setting.

#### 3. Work-Based Learning in Catering and Events

* **Activities:**
	+ Assisting with event setup, service, and cleanup for farm-hosted events, including weddings, corporate gatherings, and community celebrations.
	+ Learning catering preparation, including assembling farm-to-table meals using Homesteads for Hope’s produce.
	+ Supporting event planning logistics, such as seating arrangements, decorations, and timing.
	+ Collaborating with staff to ensure inclusive and high-quality service.
* **Skills Developed:**
	+ Teamwork, adaptability, and hospitality skills.
	+ Time management and multitasking in high-energy environments.

#### 4. Work-Based Learning at Field Trip Friday Workshop Leadership

* **Activities:**
	+ Participants help plan and lead interactive workshops for community visitors on Field Trip Fridays.
	+ Facilitating tours of the farm, showcasing the greenhouse, gardens, and farm store.
	+ Assisting with educational activities like planting demonstrations, farm animal care, or craft activities.
	+ Learning leadership skills by guiding groups of peers, children, or community members.
* **Skills Developed:**
	+ Leadership, communication, and public speaking.
	+ Planning, organization, and adaptability.
	+ Fostering a sense of responsibility and pride in sharing their work with others.

**5. CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) Work Experience**

* **Activities:**
	+ Packing and organizing weekly CSA shares for members.
	+ Washing, sorting, and packaging fresh produce for distribution.
	+ Managing CSA pickup logistics, assisting members with orders.
	+ Maintaining records of shares, ensuring quality control.
	+ Engaging with CSA members, answering questions about produce and farm practices.
* **Skills Developed:**
	+ Organization, attention to detail, and time management.
	+ Customer service and communication skills.
	+ Inventory management and quality control in food distribution.

**6. Flower U-Pick Work Experience**

* **Activities:**
	+ Supervising the flower fields, ensuring proper care of plants.
	+ Educating customers on flower varieties and proper harvesting techniques.
	+ Assisting guests in selecting and cutting flowers.
	+ Maintaining pathways, signage, and overall presentation of the flower fields.
	+ Managing supplies, such as buckets, scissors, and packaging for bouquets.
* **Skills Developed:**
	+ Customer service and hospitality in an agritourism setting.
	+ Plant care and maintenance for cut flower production.
	+ Sales and marketing skills through guest engagement.

**7. Farmers Market Work Experience**

* **Activities:**
	+ Setting up and managing Homesteads for Hope’s booth at the farmers market.
	+ Engaging with customers, educating them about farm products and CSA memberships.
	+ Handling transactions, weighing produce, and keeping sales records.
	+ Assisting with market logistics, including transport, setup, and breakdown.
	+ Promoting seasonal offerings and farm-based initiatives.
* **Skills Developed:**
	+ Customer service, marketing, and direct-to-consumer sales.
	+ Money handling, transaction processing, and record-keeping.
	+ Communication skills and product knowledge for farm-based retail.

### Additional Work-Based Learning Opportunities

* **Workplace Tours or Field Trips:**
	+ Guided visits to local businesses and industries
* **Job Shadowing:**
	+ Pairing participants with experienced staff members to observe daily tasks and learn by example.
* **Career Mentorship:**
	+ Connecting participants with professionals to discuss career opportunities and challenges.
* **Service Learning and Volunteering:**
	+ Opportunities to give back to the community through volunteer work on the farm or in the local area.
* **Informational Interviews:**
	+ Engaging participants in conversations with employees and employers to learn about career paths and workplace expectations.
* **Simulated Workplace Experience:**
	+ Developing mock work scenarios to practice tasks and skills in a low-pressure environment.

### Program Format

* **Duration:** This will be offered over a 4-week period and allow participants an orientation week and exposure to on-site work opportunities followed by on-site work internship experiences in 1-2 of our selected program components.
* **Delivery Method:** A combination of on-site training, mentorship, and independent work, supervised by Homesteads for Hope staff. Experience can be customized to meet the needs of individuals.
* **Location:** Homesteads for Hope farm, store, and event spaces

### Evaluation and Outcomes

1. Participants develop a portfolio of skills and experiences that can be presented to future employers.
2. Participants identify potential career paths based on their interests and strengths.
3. Participants gain increased confidence and readiness for competitive integrated employment.
4. Homesteads for Hope staff provide feedback and mentorship to ensure continuous improvement and growth for each participant.

This program ensures SWDs gain the practical skills, exposure, and mentorship needed to pursue meaningful careers, helping them transition into the workforce with confidence and purpose.