Homesteads for Hope Curriculum: Workplace Readiness Training to Develop Social Skills and Independent Living

#### **Program Overview**

This program is designed to equip students with disabilities (SWDs) with the soft skills, social awareness, and job readiness necessary to thrive in the workplace. Using Homesteads for Hope’s inclusive farm as a practical and supportive environment, participants will engage in hands-on activities, discussions, and real-world scenarios to develop the foundational skills needed to succeed in employment and independent living.

### **Curriculum Objectives**

1. Develop essential workplace behaviors such as punctuality, teamwork, and effective communication.
2. Enhance social and interpersonal skills for professional interactions with supervisors, coworkers, and customers.
3. Teach job-seeking skills, including resume writing, application completion, and interview preparation.
4. Foster financial literacy and self-awareness to support independent living and workplace success.
5. Promote self-confidence and self-management in workplace settings.

### **Program Components**

#### **1. Financial Literacy**

4 sessions

* **Activities:**
  + Budgeting exercises using real-life examples (e.g., calculating income and expenses).
  + Lessons on managing paychecks, banking, and savings.
  + Introduction to taxes, employee benefits, and financial planning.
* **Outcome:**
  + SWDs understand basic financial concepts and can manage their finances effectively.

\*We have partnered with Canandaigua National Bank in the past to host similar sessions

#### **2. Workplace Etiquette and Professionalism**

4 sessions

* **Activities:**
  + Workshops on employer expectations, including punctuality, reliability, and trustworthiness.
  + Group role-playing activities on appropriate workplace interactions with supervisors and coworkers.
  + Practice in identifying and adhering to workplace policies, such as sick leave, time off requests, and attendance.
* **Outcome:**
  + Participants demonstrate professional behavior and understand the importance of workplace policies.

#### **3. Social and Interpersonal Skills Development**

2 sessions

* **Activities:**
  + Interactive exercises on effective communication, teamwork, and conflict resolution.
  + Practicing appropriate workplace greetings, tone of voice, and body language.
  + Peer-led discussions on self-awareness and perception in the workplace.
* **Outcome:**
  + SWDs enhance their social skills and build confidence in workplace interactions.

#### **4. Job-Seeking Skills**

6 sessions

* **Activities:**
  + Hands-on workshops to create resumes and cover letters.
  + Guided practice completing job applications (both paper and electronic).
  + Mock interviews with constructive feedback on responses and professionalism.
  + Assistance in setting up professional email addresses and voicemail greetings.
* **Outcome:**
  + Participants are prepared to apply for jobs, attend interviews, and communicate professionally.
  + Each participant will have a resume and cover letter they can submit to employers.

#### **5. Workplace Soft Skills**

2 sessions

* **Activities:**
  + Training on troubleshooting common workplace challenges (e.g., handling mistakes or addressing misunderstandings).
  + Lessons on workplace cultures and adapting to varying environments.
  + Emphasis on the importance of soft skills such as adaptability, teamwork, and problem-solving.
* **Outcome:**
  + SWDs understand and can apply soft skills to succeed in diverse workplace settings.

#### **6. Professional Appearance and Grooming**

2 sessions

* **Activities:**
  + Workshops on personal hygiene and grooming expectations for the workplace.
  + Lessons on appropriate attire for interviews and different workplace environments.
  + Discussions on the importance of first impressions and maintaining a professional image.
* **Outcome:**
  + Participants are equipped to present themselves professionally in workplace and interview settings.

#### **7. Technology and Social Media Awareness**

2 sessions

* **Activities:**
  + Instruction on the impact of social media on employment and how to maintain a positive online presence.
  + Training on creating professional profiles on LinkedIn or similar platforms.
  + Safe and responsible use of workplace technology, including email and communication platforms.
* **Outcome:**
  + SWDs develop digital literacy and an understanding of how online behavior impacts employment opportunities.

#### **8. Career Exploration and Community Engagement**

4 sessions

* **Activities:**
  + Do some job searching online using sites like Indeed and LinkedIn to explore opportunities.
  + Engage in discussions with a panel of community members who can share their job/work experience.
  + Attend a job fair/ set up shadowing experience for participants.
* **Outcome:**
  + Participants gain exposure to potential career pathways and build connections within their community.

### **Program Format**

* **Unit of Service:** 30-45 minute sessions delivered in small groups of 3-5 individuals.
* **Duration:** 8–12 weeks, with flexibility based on participant needs and the number of sessions offered each week.
* **Delivery Method:** A combination of classroom-style instruction, hands-on learning at Homesteads for Hope’s farm, and community-based experiences.
* **Location:** Homesteads for Hope campus and external community settings for job exploration and engagement.

### **Evaluation and Outcomes**

1. Participants demonstrate improved workplace readiness skills, including punctuality, communication, and professionalism.
2. SWDs develop confidence and competence in job-seeking activities, including interviews and applications.
3. Participants gain an understanding of financial literacy and independent living skills.
4. SWDs successfully adapt to and interact within workplace environments.

This curriculum will ensure that participants are well-prepared for employment opportunities, fostering independence, professionalism, and social confidence.