



Work Readiness Bootcamp 2020

The Lake County Board has sponsored a Summer Youth Employment Program for many years. The pandemic, however, made it difficult to place young people at work sites. In lieu of this popular program, Lake County Workforce Development designed a two-week Work Readiness Bootcamp. This online course ran for two weeks from July 27th to August 7th. More than 80 high school students participated. Students could earn a stipend of up to \$500 for their active participation. The Bootcamp covered:

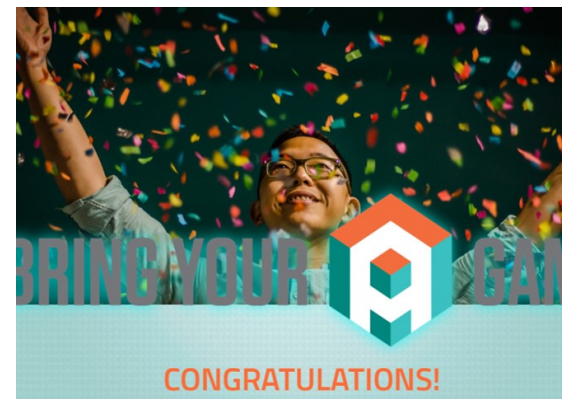
- Qualities that will make an employee stand out at work
- Common expectations from employers
- Tools that will help individuals land a job
- An introduction to labor market information

For many of the participants, this was their first exposure to work expectations. The interactive format included activities and games that encouraged students to express their opinions and to practice discussing their skills in front of an online group. A few students were asked to introduce themselves to the group each day. Workforce Instructors focused on one core work value daily, following the *Bring Your 'A' Game Anywhere* curriculum. At the end of the two weeks, students took an exam to earn a Certificate of Work Ethic Proficiency from the Center for Workforce Ethic Development.

Guest speakers were a highlight of the event. Andre Harris, a local high school teacher, spoke about financial literacy. Workforce Board members and local business leaders including Andrew Warrington, Carlotta Roman, and Jennifer Harris also spoke to the students, sharing stories about how they grew their careers. Dan Ortego from the College of Lake County spoke about apprenticeships.

Jennifer Everett, Program Manager, explained that the intention of the program was to help young people develop the soft skills needed to land and keep a job. One of the youth participants summarized the value of the event. *"When I apply to a job I already have the steps to get hired, and thanks to the Bootcamp I will get hired."*

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