NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS PROGRAM

Employee Handbook

2011 – 2012
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Welcome to the Neighborhood Schools Program family!

NSP supports local schools, government offices, and other institutions in order to meet a dual purpose: to help further the impact of service organizations by placing in them one of the University’s greatest assets—its students; and to enable UChicago students to learn firsthand about our urban education and governmental systems.

This unique experience with NSP enables UChicago students to become better prepared to support such systems throughout their lives—through vocation and volunteering.

Your Job Description
NSP offers you more than a job working in a library or a coffee shop; as an NSPer, you engage with the community in a unique way. Working with students, teachers, or ward constituents gives you an opportunity to be dependable, practical, and responsible within your local community. Our partner sites, supervisors, constituents and children will ask a lot of you- and you will be expected to deliver- but the relationships you develop through your work will repay your richly! You will make friends off -campus with the children and adults at your site, find skills you didn’t know you had, and learn to both take initiative for yourself and foster it in others. In all of this great work, we simply ask that you communicate with us regularly, fulfill our compliancy requirements, and always remain professional.

NSP is proud to provide student employees to serve within the community as:

Elementary and High School Teaching Assistants

Elementary and High School Mentors

Elementary and High School Special Programming Assistants

Government Office Interns

CUIP Technology Assistants
**NSP Compliancy Requirements**

All NSP Employees will be evaluated at the end of each quarter on the basis of the following compliancy requirements:

**Web Reporting**

*You must complete three online web reports*—one for each quarter worked. These reports ensure that you are in contact with us regularly, and also provide you with the opportunity to raise questions, vent, or share accomplishments or personal triumphs. To file your report, please go to [https://nsp.uchicago.edu](https://nsp.uchicago.edu) and click the Reports tab. *You must submit a web report by the end of each quarter you work.*

**Teacher Evaluations**

For every quarter you work, you are required to obtain an evaluation from a worksite supervisor—the person with whom you have the most direct contact, most often, a teacher. The evaluation is available on the NSP website as a PDF, or you may pick up a hard copy at the NSP office. *Teacher evaluations must be returned to us in a sealed envelope by the end of the quarter, every quarter you work.*

**Learning Workshops**

You are required to attend at least one Learning Workshop for each quarter you work. We hold trainings multiple times throughout each quarter, both on and off campus that are often paid and ALWAYS count for workshop credit. Learning Workshops improve your professional skills, give you a chance to share best practices and hear other peoples’ concerns, and help integrate you into the NSP community.

**Scheduling Consistency**

You must submit a schedule of your worksite hours within the first two weeks of each quarter in order to be paid for the hours you work. *We expect you to work at least 80 percent of your scheduled hours and communicate with your site coordinator if you are ever absent.* Irregular attendance is grounds for dismissal.

********************************************************************

You are considered COMPLIANT if you regularly complete all four requirements described above. Exemplary compliance results in rewards, often in the form of a salary increase! *If you have more than one quarter out of compliancy, it will result in a meeting with our staff, and possibly termination.*

********************************************************************
Payroll, Pay Rates, and Hourly Limits

Schedules
A work schedule must be on file in the NSP office before any hours you spend at your worksite are eligible as paid time. You are required to submit a new schedule each quarter, before you start work or put in a van request.

UChicago Time (UCT)
Once you are on payroll, you are paid based off an electronic web clock, called UChicago Time (or UCT). When you arrive at your worksite, clock in through the UCT webpage at https://uchicagotime.uchicago.edu. When you leave your worksite, clock out. Any changes to UCT (such as a time change because you forgot to clock out) are noted on your time sheet. You will not be paid for any hours logged in UCT without a time sheet submitted to the office.

Time Sheets
You are required to have your supervisor initial your hours on a time-sheet form for every day you work. The form is available in the office or online. Pick up a time sheet whenever you drop off an old one, and take a time sheet with you every time you go to work. Time sheets are due in the NSP office by 5 pm the second Thursday of the pay period. Sheets can be dropped off in person, faxed to 773-834-2078, or scanned and emailed to nspers@gmail.com.

Pay Schedule and Estimated Hours
Time sheets are turned in on second Thursdays, but pay periods run for two weeks, from Sunday to Saturday. The Friday and Saturday of the second week will not have occurred when you turn in your time sheet. Anticipated hours worked during those last two days of each two-week pay period are placed on the card as “estimated time.” When you fill out your Time Sheet write in the hours you anticipate working on those days. If you work those hours, fine. If you work less or more, please email nspers@gmail.com so that your time can be corrected in UCT.

Check/Direct Deposit Pick-Up
Checks and Direct Deposit slips may be picked up on the Friday following the end of the pay period, after 10 am. Please pick up direct deposit slips regularly—at least as often as you drop off time cards. You can also opt not to have deposit slips printed at all, by going to the Employee Self-Service website. Bring a picture ID (state or school) to pick up a check. All checks not picked up by the time the next batch of checks arrives two weeks later are returned to UChicago Payroll.
Hour Limits
Differently funded employees have different limits placed on their paid weekly time. Any time worked beyond these limits is considered volunteer, and will not be paid.
   a. Work-Study funded undergraduates: 15 hours/week
   b. Work-Study funded graduate students: 19.5 hours/week
   c. Non-Work-Study students: 6 hours/week
   d. GEAR-UP students should consult the GEAR-UP Coordinator for limits

*BREAK TIME: If you work over 5 hours, you have the option to a 30 minute or two 15 minute UNPAID break(s).

Work Study End Date
Work-Study funding is tied to an annual end date, after which the program year terminates and funds can no longer be disbursed or obtained. You are notified of this date when you begin working with us, as part of the Work-Study contract you sign. We will advise you when the end of the Work-Study period is near. But all work performed after that date will be considered volunteer, with no exceptions.

No Call/No Show Policy
While we understand that problems can come up at the spur of the moment, there is no excuse for any absence without notification. Please make every effort to notify your van driver (if applicable) and your worksite supervisor if you will miss a shift. Make sure you have your worksite supervisor/teacher partner’s contact information.

Fall Abroad and Work-Study Funding
Work-Study funding is normally a four-year deal, as eligibility typically changes very little. The one exception is when a student spends a fall quarter abroad. When you return from fall quarter abroad, you will not have Work-Study for the remainder of that year. This may affect our ability to rehire you. Please discuss this with us in the spring of the previous year to ensure you can return to NSP the following winter quarter.

Pay Rates, Pay Increases, and Rehiring
   a. The starting pay rate is $11.25
   b. Merit Increases are given to students who complete at least 95% of their scheduled hours and meet the other three GOOD STANDING performance standards as well.
   c. Rehiring is dependent upon the past year’s performance and is not guaranteed. General compliance with our Good Standing requirements is necessary – although you don’t have to be perfect, you must have been generally diligent.

W-2 Form
Your W-2 will be mailed to the address on your W-4. If you do not receive it, please contact the Payroll Office with W-2 Questions at-  w2forms@uchicago.edu
Communication & Safety

In the event of site or office closings, we will notify all NSP employees via email. Notices about Learning Workshops and Quarterly Reporting will also be sent through email. If you are not receiving email from our office, please contact NSPers@gmail.com to be added to the NSP list serve. Our office hours are 9:30am until 5:30pm daily, and our staff are always open to answering any of your questions or concerns.

Since you have agreed to support local schools and government sites off campus, we ask that you exercise good judgment when it comes to safety and security at your site. NSP offers van transportation to the majority of our sites, and we are glad to escort you to your site for your first visit if needed. If you walk to a site, we ask that you become familiar with the community surroundings and always be alert and aware of your surroundings. If you personally encounter any type of threat or act of violence while at your site, please notify us immediately as we need to be aware and take action of any unsafe happenings as well as alert other students who may be placed at your site!

Please visit the following link for more information regarding safety and campus resources: Common Sense in Urban Living: http://commonsense.uchicago.edu.

NSP Van Service

One-time rides to set up your initial schedule with your site can be arranged with the van driving staff via email at vanservice@lists.uchicago.edu. Once your schedule has been completed, permanent van schedules—both drop-off and pick-up—are set through an automated system, accessed at nsp.uchicago.edu/php. After login, you respond to a series of self-explanatory drop-down menus. Van schedules require 24 hours for approval; once set, you will receive an approval email. If you don’t receive an approval, you cannot expect a ride at that time.

Our capacity is limited and, consequently, some schedules may not be approved. However, we promise to work with you to get as close to your needs as possible.

- **Same-day cancellations must be made by email at** (vanservice@lists.uchicago.edu); cancellations more than 12 hours in advance can be made by either phone or email.
- **Changes to your van schedule can be made at any time** by following the procedures given above.
- **No-Show Policy.** We have a very low tolerance for no-call, no-show on the van. Every incident results in a suspension of van privileges, pending a conference with the van driver, and possibly office staff. Regular unscheduled cancellations will result in permanent suspension of van privileges.
- **Learn your van driver’s name and phone number** which will be given to you at your first van ride. Please use vanservice@lists.uchicago.edu for emails to the driver.

*If van service is not provided to your site, being that it is in very close proximity to campus - We encourage you to use public transportation if you would like, to reach your service destinations. To find the most useful routes and track buses in real time, please visit [http://bus.uchicago.edu](http://bus.uchicago.edu) and [http://uchicago.transloc.com](http://uchicago.transloc.com).*
Summer Employment

NSP has traditionally hired students over the summer for a limited number of positions. These positions require summer Work-Study funding. Please apply early in the spring with the financial aid office for summer Work-Study funds. These positions are dependent on the NSP funding stream, and availability is subject to change.

Employee Responsibilities and Expectations

Congratulations again on your new job with NSP! Please remember to treat this position as a real job. All the norms regarding employee behavior apply to you. Excessive tardiness or absenteeism calls into question your commitment to your job, and if chronic, may lead to termination. Inattention to your work (especially to kids), unprofessional behavior, a failure to make an effort at your worksite, and insubordination are all good reasons for us to have a talk about your future with the organization. Please take your job seriously and communicate well with NSP staff, so that you will never have to worry about this.

You are responsible for knowing when you are not needed at work. This includes knowing changes in your school schedule or special events that will affect your ability to put in hours. We handle numerous worksites. Although we try to take note of school holidays, it is your responsibility to know about general site closings. Talk to your supervisor and keep abreast of goings-on at your worksite.

When working at a school site, we ask that you:

- **Dress appropriately for your place in the classroom, or other NSP site.** Dress for work. If you are uncertain what is appropriate, ask your site supervisor.

- **Take on the authority of an adult.** If you are in a NSP school classroom, kids will look to you for cues and guidance. Remember that no matter how well you get to know the students with whom you are working, they still see you as an adult and will follow your example accordingly.

- **Be responsible & fill in where needed – your NSP placement is for the sites benefit as well as your vocational development.**

What You Can Expect From Your Worksite

1. **A Rough, Evolving Work Outline.** You should have a general idea of your role at the worksite and what is expected of you on a regular workday. As you become more familiar with your site, your role will probably change and grow. We encourage you to try new aspects of your job as your relationship develops with your supervisor.

2. **A Dependable Schedule.** You should be able to show up for a regular number of weekly hours, and be engaged during that time. If you are working two days per week, but one day is always spent hanging out during a lecture, your schedule should be changed. The point is not for you to rack up hours, but to contribute to the advancement of the goals of your worksite.
3. *Engagement with Students (schools only).* Although teachers need help with lots of daily administrative tasks, we don’t want that to be your primary responsibility. We expect that at least 80 percent of your time will be spent as interactions with students. **You should not spend more than 20 percent of your time doing administrative tasks.**

4. *Fulfilling Work.* NSPers should enjoy their jobs, and should feel they are accomplishing something, or at least working towards an accomplishment. You are entitled to work that you find productive. Although we cannot guarantee a perfect placement, you should want to come to work because you are making a productive contribution.

5. *A Communicative Supervisor.* Your supervisor should be reachable. If reaching your supervisor during the day hours is difficult, he or she should be available by email or phone after hours, within a reasonable timeframe.

6. *Professional Development.* We provide workshops and trainings for all NSPers. While some sessions are geared specifically to tutoring or school situations, we also provide training on topics of interest for everyone. Moreover, NSP staff will be available for questions and concerns during business hours, and often after hours by email.

7. *Feedback to and from your supervisor.* Completing web reports gives you a way to make issues clear to us. If your issues are severe, we can talk about ways to address your supervisor. Evaluations from your supervisor are a great way to hear objective commentary about your performance, and are also our best way to hear how you’re doing. In addition to these formal tools, you should also strive to maintain a dialogue with your worksite supervisor. Be sure to check in regularly with your supervisor. Sometimes just opening up the conversation with your supervisor can resolve issues before problems become serious.

8. *Responsive Office Staff.* The NSP staff welcomes visits to the office to discuss issues. Dropping by is often the best way to get an issue handled quickly. If you can’t come in, shoot us an email, and expect a reply within a couple of days. We can set up meetings, talk over the phone, or write back and forth. Finally, you can always expect a reason for why we do—or don’t do—something, so you should always feel free to ask for clarification and explanation.

9. *A Workable Placement.* Sometimes, despite our best efforts, placements just don’t work out. If this is your case, and we’ve tried everything we can to fix it, we will move you to a more productive worksite.

10. *Appreciation.* You are valued! Expect your best efforts to be recognized though payraises and the end-of-the-year awards ceremony.
NSP Policies

Leaves of Absence
We know that the academic life at the University can be challenging, and personal matters can interfere with worksite schedules. If you need to take a quarter or a year off, let us know what is going on, notify your worksite, and come back to us when you’re ready to start back up again. Please be sure to fill out the NSP Exit/Abroad Form before you leave us!

Dress Code
You should dress appropriately for your worksite, which may be more formal than you dress for your University classes. You should dress for work. If you are uncertain, ask your supervisor and/or one of the NSP staff.

Breaks
All NSP Employees are granted a 30 minute (or two 15 minute) breaks after completing 5 hours of work for a day. This time is optional for the student to take, and will be considered an unpaid lunch break if taken.

Fraternization
Fraternization between NSP employees and worksite staff or schoolchildren is prohibited and grounds for immediate dismissal. Be wise when considering working at the same site as a significant other, or when starting a relationship with another NSPer at your worksite. Your personal life should not affect the people with whom you are working.

Harassment
If you feel someone at your worksite is interacting with you inappropriately, please let us know. Resulting actions that you decide to initiate or not to initiate will ultimately be up to you, but it is important that we know what is happening at our worksites.

Child Abuse
If you have concerns about a situation regarding a child, please talk to us before going to a formal authority. These situations have come up from time to time, and NSP has found that internal discussions are very helpful.

Diversity
It is important to realize the similarities and differences between where you grew up and the way you were raised and the way the people you are working with grew up and the way they were raised. There are issues of race, class, and social mobility “ceilings and floors” that may need to be understood. At the same time, we ask that you understand people in terms of particular circumstances, and not as caricatures or stereotypes. Everyone makes unconscious assumptions, but be aware that an assumption is not the same as an observation—and that people will surprise you. Above all, treat everyone with the respect that you expect others to show you.
NSP Open-Door Policy
Feel free to come to NSP staff with any concern regarding your employment with us. We will respect your privacy and try to be as helpful as possible.

Recommendations
We are pleased to write recommendations for NSPers. However, our ability to do this depends on you—and not just on your performance. The presence of web reports, worksite supervisor evaluations, and evidence of the NSP trainings you have attended are the basis upon which we can produce recommendations. How well you reflect on your service, how involved you are in improving your skill set, and how you perform at your worksite all play major roles in our ability to recommend you. Moreover, as we are an employer, your willingness to comply with regulations and fulfill your commitments speaks a great deal about you as well; making an effort to fulfill 100 percent of your committed hours is also important. If you lack any of these components, your recommendation will be less robust, or NSP may not be able to recommend you.

Frequently Asked Questions
1. It's my first day! What should I do?
   a. Introduce yourself to staff, teachers and students.
   b. Remember that it can take a while to accept an outsider, and teachers might feel cautious about a stranger in the classroom.
   c. Are you talking down? Are you dismissive? Are you meeting kids on their own level (which may be higher than you assume it would be) and trying to pursue the sparks of interest you see?

2. Am I a disciplinarian?
   a. Yes. You can’t let kids hang out and fight; you need control of your group. You can’t be walked on or talked over, but... The teacher is the ultimate arbiter in the class, so use common sense to prevent yourself from overstepping your bounds.

3. What if the teacher isn’t giving me work, or I feel underutilized?
   a. Have a conversation. Talk about how you feel, what role you see yourself currently playing in the classroom, how the teacher feels about you, and how the teacher sees your role in the classroom. There might very well be a miscommunication or misunderstanding of expectations that is preventing a productive relationship. Always talk to your teacher if something doesn’t feel right.
   b. On the other hand, remember that different classes have different needs and you can serve those in a multitude of ways. Although you might want to plan lessons and teach classes, it could very well be that you are most productive working one-on-one with an advanced or below-grade-level child.

4. What if I’ve accomplished all my goals/completed all my tasks?
   If you have a project-oriented placement and finish everything you’ve been given, be sure to say something to your supervisor. Your supervisor might not know you are “bored” or finished. See if there are daily tasks
you can do during your hours, to help extend the duration of projects and serve the daily needs of your worksite.

5. **What if I’ve overscheduled myself?**
   Let us know immediately, and work out a new, workable schedule with your supervisor. Plan to work more than eight weeks of the quarter at this rate; you must work eight of eleven weeks to remain in compliancy. Remember that you have to get to and from work, get meals, do homework and hang out with your friends—all things that take away from your time to work. Be reasonable with yourself and don’t over commit.

6. **What if I get to my worksite and there’s no one there?**
   Is it a field trip day? Is there an assembly? Is there a holiday going on that you don’t know about? It is your responsibility to know when your worksite is “off,” when you won’t be needed, or when schedules have changed. Although we will try to get information to you about closures of which we are aware, remember that you work at your site and you should be aware of its schedule. We don’t call to remind you if you’re late for work, and likewise don’t call to let you know you don’t need to come in on any particular day.

7. **What if the van forgets me?**
   a. **If you are getting dropped off**, Come in to the office to check, but give it a couple of minutes; sometimes traffic is bad and the van runs late.
   b. **If you are getting picked up**, Wait five minutes before calling the office. There are multiple sites and multiple students on each run; you are not always the first person to be picked up, so be patient.

8. **What if my van schedule isn’t approved?**
   a. **Did you receive a rejection notice?** This means there isn’t enough space for you on the run as van spaces are very limited. Try moving your work hours up or back a half an hour, or consider taking public transportation. Public transportation is not only a great way to get to know the city, but also a fun way to break the UChicago Bubble that forms around most students.
   b. **Haven’t heard back?** Remember, **we require 24 hours notice** for an electronic schedule request to hit our system. If your need is so immediate that you can’t request with notice, please call and arrange a ride. But don’t be angry if we can’t accommodate you with such short notice.

9. **What if I get sick/can’t go in/need to study?**
   First, let your supervisor know as they are dependant on you and you don’t want to back out of commitment without notice. Then, let the NSP office know via email at nspers@gmail.com

10. **Im assigned to a school, and I can’t control the kids in my classroom?**
    First, you must realize that you are not alone; many teaching assistants—and even many teachers—at times have difficulty controlling classrooms. New people in a classroom particularly have a difficult time establishing legitimacy. Two strategies to bear in mind are:
a. **Set firm limits and stick with them.** If a child won’t be quiet, ignore him and move on to someone who cares enough to respect what you’re doing.

b. **Don’t get too serious.** At the end of the day, kids are, still kids. If it’s 1:30 on a Friday afternoon, it might be best to spend your time getting to know your students, talking and playing, rather than working directly on homework. **Always work at it.** Keep going back, every day, doing your best. The kids will get used to you the more time you spend with them, and the more they know you, the more inclined they will be to listen.

11. **What if I want to resign?**

Have you talked out your problems with anyone on staff, either at your worksite or in our office? Sometimes you just need to get pressure off your chest to feel better and more hopeful about a situation. Be sure to talk to someone before making a decision. If you feel you really do need to stop working, be sure to do so in the appropriate way. Give all parties two weeks notice and be sure to finish off evaluations and reporting so we can give you a fair reference. Keep in mind that many employers check various, if not all, previous employers for references, so the way you leave us could still be a factor for you). Be sure to fill out the *NSP Exit/Abroad Form* before you leave us!

12. **What if something super cool is going on at my site?**

Let us know! Being that our staff doesn’t get to work at the sites, it’s hard for us to know everything that is going on at your site. Are you or another NSPer involved in a cool project? Is an alderman or teacher doing an outstanding job? Are kids there making something work really well? Tell us! We love to recognize people who go the extra mile, and your commentary will never go unnoticed, and might even inspire better work at other sites.

13. **What if my teacher is totally awesome?**

At the end of each year, we present the “Sara Spurlark Award for Excellence in Teaching.” This is a competitive essay contest in which you may promote your teacher. Keep track of all the great things your teacher has done and put him or her up for the opportunity to win valuable recognition and a cash award.

14. **What if my time sheet isn’t signed?**

If you’re going to your worksite again that week, try to get it signed by the end of Thursday or at the very latest, 9 am on Friday. Not going back to your worksite? Although you’re still going to be paid, it looks like it will be delayed until the following payday. The absolute latest a time sheet can be submitted is 9 am Monday. If we don’t have your time sheet by then, your hours will be removed from UCT and you will not be paid on time. You will need to come into the office and fill out special paperwork to be paid, and your pay will be delayed by two weeks. (Note: If it is your first pay period, time cards and time sheets must be submitted no later than 9 am Friday morning.) Need your money on this pay period anyway? Guess you’re going to learn the hard way. . .

15. **What if I’m a CUIP Technology Assistant?**

CUIP has its own reporting requirements and a few special meetings specific to CUIP, but you still must complete the quarterly NSP trainings, web reports and evaluations. (The latter are normally completed by CUIP staff). Your CUIP obligations are in addition to your NSP obligations.
16. What if I’m a GEAR-UP tutor?
GEAR-UP has its own paperwork requirements and a monthly meeting, but you still must complete the quarterly NSP trainings, web reports, and teacher evaluations. Your GEAR-UP meetings and GEAR-UP sheets are parts of your program, in addition to your NSP obligations.

**NSP Staff Contact Information**
The following individuals are your sources of support during the 2010–2011 academic year.

**Shaz Rasul**, NSP Director, [shaz@uchicago.edu](mailto:shaz@uchicago.edu)

**Brandi Snodgrass**, NSP Program Coordinator, [bsnodgrass@uchicago.edu](mailto:bsnodgrass@uchicago.edu) / 773-834-3228

**Michelle Bey-Williams**, NSP Office Manager, [mbeywilliams@uchicago.edu](mailto:mbeywilliams@uchicago.edu) / 773 – 834-1935

**NSP Office Staff**, [nspers@gmail.com](mailto:nspers@gmail.com) / 773-834-1935 (main office number)

**James Montgomery**, Van Driver, [jmontgomery1@uchicago.edu](mailto:jmontgomery1@uchicago.edu) / 773-230-1494

**Charlie Wilson**, Van Driver, [cjwilson@uchicago.edu](mailto:cjwilson@uchicago.edu) / 773-230-0658

**CUIP**
Sara Dennison, [sara@cuip.uchicago.edu](mailto:sara@cuip.uchicago.edu)

**GEAR-UP**
Dagene Brown, [dagenebrown@uchicago.edu](mailto:dagenebrown@uchicago.edu)
Lionette Bursey, [lbursey@uchicago.edu](mailto:lbursey@uchicago.edu)

**Important Forms *ALL reports are updated quarterly***

**Reports.** Go to [http://nsp.uchicago.edu/reports.html](http://nsp.uchicago.edu/reports.html)
**Evaluations.** Go to [http://nsp.uchicago.edu/forms.html](http://nsp.uchicago.edu/forms.html)
**Time Sheets.** Go to [http://nsp.uchicago.edu/forms.html](http://nsp.uchicago.edu/forms.html)

**Timecard.** NSP prints these out for you, so you can find them in your time-card folder in the office foyer.

**W2.** Email [w2form@uchicago.edu](mailto:w2form@uchicago.edu) after Feb 15 with your: name, mailing address, date of birth, and the last four digits of your Social Security number.

**Direct Deposit.** You can sign up for direct deposit online at [https://ess.uchicago.edu](https://ess.uchicago.edu). You can also elect to not have pay stubs printed; view your check three days in advance of payday; and view and download your W2 form in February.