

# Program helps younger Workers

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Job seekers ages 16 to 21 have a one-stop place to access help with resumes, applications and other employment essentials.

Next Generation Zone, a youth employment center, will kick off its Wednesday opening with a job fair featuring 12 to 15 employers and a handful of colleges and organizations that offer training programs. The office is located on the second floor of the WorkSource Spokane building, at 130 S. Arthur St.

Dawn Karber, youth involvement coordinator for Spokane Area Workforce Development Council, said WorkSource, a collaboration of state and local government and community-based organizations, created NGZ to address increased need from a younger generation that sometimes lacks the skills to get hired.

Youth employment services formerly offered through Goodwill Industries, Career Path Services and Educational Services District 101 have been consolidated there because of decreased federal funding, she explained.

A number of programs are now offered through the center, including a federally funded program that provides bus tokens and work clothing for the low-income and GED classes offered through the Community Colleges of Spokane. Eligibility is required for some offerings while other programs are open to everyone.

Although unemployment numbers in the region are low, Karber said, some youngsters have trouble finding jobs. Teenagers under age 18 may be prohibited from working for certain companies because of insurance restrictions, she said. Other times, applicants may not be aware that first impressions count.

Karber tells young people to dress up even if they're just stopping by to pick up applications.

Staff also provide tips on appropriate attire, she said, adding that trendy teen fashions that are either too high- or too low-cut don't usually impress interviewers. "They do try, but it's just a different world for them altogether," she said.

If you go

*What:* Next Generation Zone is hosting a job fair with prizes and refreshments.

*When:* 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. Wednesday.

*Where:* Next Generation Zone office on the second floor of the WorkSource building, 130 S. Arthur St.

*Call:* (509) 532-3313.

*Regular hours:* The zone will be open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

When putting together a resume or application, she suggests people with little job experience list volunteer work and any paid work, even if it's as basic as mowing lawns, and list participation in extracurricular activities.

"Even being in a band can demonstrate the ability to work with a team and get along with others," she said, adding that applicants must be able to explain how those skills can help an employer.

Karber encourages employers interested in hiring young adults to contact her office.

"I would love employers to call us if they have any needs and to be willing to give a young person a chance."