

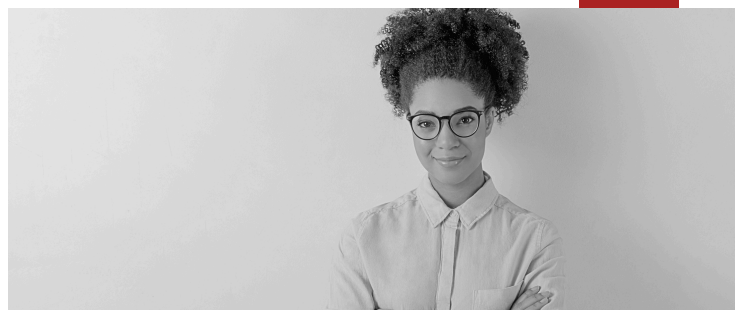
Image Coach Training Manual

Last Revised: 2024

Office Phone Number: (563) 322-1010

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Our Mission

The mission of Dress for Success Quad Cities is to empower women to achieve economic independence by providing a network of support, professional attire, and the development tools to help women thrive in work and in life.

Primary Responsibilities of Image Coaches

- Create a comfortable, safe, and inclusive environment that enhances the client's self-confidence and increases her readiness for an interview or new employment.
- As a personal style consultant, guide the client, helping her to select clothing and accessories that fit well, look attractive, and are work-appropriate.
- Work with the staff to ensure all client paperwork is thoroughly completed.
- Communicate the other services available to your client through DFSQC, such as the career coaching available through our Career Success Center.
- **Alert** us to any inventory issues (size shortages, damaged items, etc.) and help keep the boutique tidy and organized.

Qualifications:

- Have great fashion sense and passion for staying up to date on styles, trends and colors.
- Have good listening skills; be encouraging, upbeat, and honest.
- Have a sense of how to dress appropriately for different types of jobs and/or industries.
- Enjoy working with a variety of personality types and communication styles.
- Be willing to be flexible and adaptable, since the number and types of client suitings may vary from week to week.
- Be comfortable with providing guidance, support, and clothing to help our clients conquer the workplace!

Training Requirements:

- Attend our Volunteer Orientation to understand the programs we offer, our clients, and our volunteer positions, including the Image Coach role.
- Shadow several client suitings with a variety of experienced Image Coaches.
- Participate in ongoing Image Coaches training sessions each year to stay current on policy and procedure changes, upcoming sales and special events, and fashion updates and fitting techniques.



Dress Code

The dress code for Image Coaches is business casual. We encourage you to dress to reflect your personal sense of style and have fun with fashion. Our goal is to provide a **relaxed but still professional and polished** image to our clients.

Image Coaches will be on their feet for most of the suiting, so we encourage you to **wear comfortable footwear** and clothing that is easy to move in. However, we ask that all Image Coaches avoid wearing casual t-shirts, sweatshirts/workout attire, faded/distressed jeans, flip-flops, and/or athletic shoes (unless medically necessary).



Time Commitment

We currently schedule up to a maximum of 24 suiting appointments each week. Suiting appointments primarily take place in the morning and early afternoon Monday through Thursday. **We also offer an evening suiting appointment on Tuesday at 5:30 pm.** This appointment time is almost always booked. Please check your calendar frequently.

We ask that Image Coaches schedule themselves for **one to two appointments each month.** Suiting appointments are scheduled in 60 minutes shifts; however, they may run up to a maximum of 90 minutes. Suiting on a regular basis helps you become comfortable with the suiting process and our boutique inventory, as well as ensuring that the suiting runs more efficiently.

Since interview opportunities can come up at the last minute, scheduling Image Coaches proactively helps us accommodate as many interview suiting requests as possible.



Scheduling Yourself for a Suiting

Please proactively schedule yourself for a suiting by going to our sign-up page. Staff sends out a reminder with the website link to Image Coaches twice a month. Please feel free to save the link and access the sign-up anytime during the year. Each suiting appointment has a maximum of two Image Coach openings available. After you sign up for a suiting appointment, you will receive a system generated reminder of your suiting appointment two days before your scheduled appointment.



We sometimes have last minute suiting requests, double suiting appointments (two suitings scheduled within the same time slot) or an additional appointment that needs to be added outside of our regular suiting schedule. In those situations, we will send out a general email request for help or text you privately based on the days you have indicated you are available to volunteer. It is extremely helpful if you are able to let us know whether or not you can help. Please know we do our best to minimize last minute appointment requests.

Canceled Suiting Appointments

There are instances when we have a suiting appointment cancel or we are unable to book a suiting for the day/time you have signed up for. If a suiting cancels or is not booked for your suiting time, staff will contact you by the end of the day, the day before your scheduled appointment, to let you know. This notification will come to you via text. This same process will apply if we need to cancel a suiting due to inclement weather or an emergency.

If You Need To Cancel

If you need to cancel yourself from a suiting appointment, please go to our scheduling website and remove (delete) yourself from the shift.

However, if you have to cancel the same day of your shift, please call our our office phone at (563)-322-1010 as soon as possible.



Personal Leave

We understand that you may need to be away from the boutique for an extended period of time due to family, work, vacation, etc. Please email staff at careersuccesscenter@dressforsuccessqc.org, or call us at (563)-322-1010 if you wish to be placed on personal leave and provide, if possible, your return date. Once you are placed on personal leave, we will discontinue sending any emails regarding suitings or other Image Coach events until your return date, unless otherwise requested.



Image Coach

Our goal is to have one image coaches for each suiting. We greatly value your time and the time of our clients. We believe that one Image Coach can help the suiting go more effectively. Some tips to keep in mind:

- Remember this is a creative process and all ideas/suggestions are valid.
- Keep the conversation going with the client and minimize any private, non-suiting related conversation between you and other Image Coaches or clients.
- For double suitings, please do not comment on another suiting unless asked. Enjoy the process!
- *Please do not make any negative comments about a client's physical appearance. A good rule of thumb is **if they can't change it in five seconds it doesn't need to be mentioned**.* Please alert staff if you have any questions or if you hear any negative conversations about physical appearances.

If you are new to the suiting program or have any concerns/issues with a client, a staff member is happy to jump in and help.



Parking Your Car

Parking is available in our parking lot behind our facility at 423 E. 32nd Street in Davenport. If you park behind the building, please enter through the door marked “**Volunteer Entrance.**” There is also free parking available on 32nd Street in front and across from our building.



When You Arrive

We recommend Image Coaches arrive at the boutique **15-20 minutes early** to store your personal items, put on your name tag, and silence your cell phone (unless expecting an important phone call). Your client’s style questionnaire will be on the top of the clipboard, providing the following information:

- Client name
- Type of suiting (see laminated suiting guide for details)
- Age
- Company and job position
- Clothing and shoe sizes
- Height
- Body type
- Style preferences

Start by pulling a small selection of clothing from the boutique based on the style questionnaire and place it on the rack for the client to review.

Clients may be unsure of their sizing and may leave style notes to that effect. You may want to pull a couple of pieces in the **next size up** to have them on hand.

Important Note: Our inventory is based on the donations we receive, meeting a client's exact style preferences is not necessary it's always good to pull a variety (clients may be surprised at what they gravitate toward).



Our Clients

The clients you work with will come from a diverse cross section of our community. Working directly with our clients is a wonderful way to see the immediate transformation take place when a client sees herself dressed professionally for the first time. To qualify for our program clients must have no major barriers to employment and be actively looking for a full-time job. Approximately 45% live below the U.S. poverty level.

It's also important to understand that clients may walk in our door feeling fearful of being judged or embarrassed to be asking for help. As one of the first representatives of DFSQC clients will meet, we rely on you to help the client feel at ease and welcome. *Please let staff know if you are ever uncomfortable working with a client for any reason whatsoever.*



If the Client Does Not Arrive Alone

Prior to her appointment, the client will be reminded by both her referral agent and by staff that she must come to her suiting appointment alone. If the client arrives at her suiting with a guest (i.e. significant other, family member, friend, etc.) her guest(s) will be asked to leave while she is being suited. If the guest is a young child, you and staff will determine whether or not it is possible to suit her.

The exception to the "no guest" rule will be 1) community partners who attend the suiting based on a client request or 2) a new volunteer who is observing a suiting as part of the volunteer onboarding process. In either case, the guest will not be involved in the actual suiting process unless their help is requested. 3) any person described as a mobility aid or caregiver that has proven the client needs them for dressing purposes.



If Your Client is Early or Late

The client is expected to arrive on time. **If the client arrives early**, staff will ask her to wait until her Image Coach (or Coaches) has arrived and are ready to work with her. **If the client arrives more than 15 minutes late**, you and staff will decide whether or not you have the time flexibility to suit the client. If not, the client will be rescheduled.



If the Client Cancels

Clients are reminded that they must confirm their suiting with us the day before their appointment. If the client does not call us and we are unable to reach her, her suiting will be automatically canceled and you will be notified. However, even when the appointment is confirmed, the client may not make it to her suiting.

Cancelations: If the client calls us any time before her suiting to let us know she will be unable to make it, the suiting is considered “canceled”. Staff will reach out to the client and try to reschedule the suiting.

If the client cancels an appointment for a second time, a six-month waiting period will be enforced before the client can access our StyleHER programming.

No Shows: If the client confirms the suiting the day before and then never calls or comes to the suiting, she is considered a “no show.” Staff will notify the client and the client will have a six-month wait for before she can access our StyleHER services again.



When Your Client Arrives

- Upon arrival, warmly greet the client by her first name. Introduce yourself, and your fellow Image Coach (if you are working with another coach), by first name as well. Help the client get settled (hang up coat, offer water or hot beverage) and feel comfortable.
- Once you are ready, begin the suiting.
- After final outfit(s) have been chosen take the "After Photo" and help your client choose a purse and accessories.
- After the suiting has concluded take the 'Before Photo' grab a staff member so that they can take the photo.
- Help the client feel special. Remind her that this suiting is all about her and we want her to enjoy the process.



Beginning the Suiting Process

Once you've introduced yourself, the client has settled in, and you're feeling comfortable, it's time to start the suiting.

- It's always good to have a client begin with trying on pants to make sure the sizing "fit" is good, so you will know quickly if you have to move up or down a size. You can always repeat this with tops too.
- Once you've got the sizing fit down, you can show the client the clothing options you have pulled with her in mind.
- Encourage her to express her opinion and to let you know if she doesn't like something. Remind her she always makes the final decision on the clothing selected.
- Do not ask the client personal questions, but do ask her about her job search, upcoming interview or new job, as well as her professional experience or career goals.
 - **Remember** - we have career services available too (including 1:1 career coaching and workshops). If the client is searching for a job, encourage her to access our 1:1 career coaching and/or workshops.
- Ask her to step out of the dressing room after trying on clothing to help you determine fit and style.

Types of Suitings

The primary goal of the suiting process is to ensure the client has the clothing they need to look professional and feel confident/powerful for a job opportunity. Please keep in mind that we strive to put together professional looks for all clients that include matching accessories such as shoes, handbags, jewelry, etc. ***However, we only guarantee the client will receive clothing.*** In general, there are two basic types of suitings:

- **Interview Suiting**, which means one complete outfit. An interview suiting could include a suit and shell/blouse, a dress, or three separates. *If available*, we also provide a pair of shoes, handbag, a bra, and accessories to complete the client's professional look. **Although we refer to this type of suiting as an interview suiting, it can be requested for several different reasons, including:**
 - *Client is Job Searching (i.e., searching for employment)*
 - *Preparation to begin the interview process*
 - *Attending a job fair or mock interview workshop*
 - *A court ordered appearance*
- **Employment Suitings**, which means a wardrobe of clothing. **Clients must first receive an interview suiting in order to be eligible for an employment suiting.** There are three different types of employment suitings, which will determine the type and amount of clothing that a client will receive.
 - ***Business Casual Suiting***: The majority of our employment suitings are business casual. The client will receive between 10-12 clothing items for their new job (you can be more generous if we have abundant inventory in her size). If available, we would also provide another pair of shoes, handbag, and matching accessories.
 - ***Scrub Suiting (subject to inventory)***: The client may receive a new set of scrubs as well as several pairs of gently used scrubs, if available in her size and needed color. During the scrub suiting, the client will receive a new pair of non-skid shoes in black or white and two pairs of new crew socks in coordinating colors, again if available. Staff will confirm inventory prior to the client arriving. The client also receives a business casual outfit for training or meeting purposes along with coordinating accessories (also subject to inventory). The client must first attend an Interview suiting. (Not an optional step).
 - ***Workwear Suiting (subject to inventory)***: A workwear suiting refers to a job where the client needs basic slacks and shirt (i.e. Walmart, Hy-Vee, Home Depot). The client will receive 2-3 pairs of pants (normally black, khaki, and/or jeans) as well as non-skid shoes and two pairs of coordinating crew socks, if available. The client also receives a business casual outfit for training or meeting purposes along with coordinating accessories (also subject to inventory).



Other Types of Suitings

Although the majority of the suitings we schedule are either interview or employment related, you may occasionally be asked to help with a different type of suiting. These different suitings will still follow the same structure of being a either a ***one outfit*** or a ***wardrobe*** (10-15 pieces) type of suiting.

- **Staff or Intern Suiting:** We may offer an employment suiting to a new staff member or intern who is in need of professional attire in their new role at Dress for Success Quad Cities. She is eligible to receive 10-12 pieces of clothing, as well as available accessories, similar to an employment suiting.
- **Client Special Suiting:** In general, a client may not have more than two suitings every 24 months. Examples of when an exception may be made are:
 - The client has had a significant weight change and can no longer wear the clothing she originally received.
 - The client changed jobs and now requires a different wardrobe (i.e. moving from a medical provider where scrubs were required to a business casual office job).
- **Internship/externship:**
 - This will include half an employment suiting or 5-8 pieces of clothes the results in a half week of clothing.
 - Encourage the client to shop the sale or show them how they can create a small capsule wardrobe with these simple pieces.
- **Additional Other Suitings:** We may also complete suitings for special circumstances, such as a client attending a gala or a community fashion show. These types of suitings require one outfit and any specific clothing needs will be indicated on the referral form.



During the Suitings

As the client begins trying on clothes and you begin to understand her preferences and personal style, please keep the following tips in mind:

- Please make sure your client is first fitted with a bra (if available in their size). Ask the client for her size and if she is unsure, ask an experienced Image Coach or staff to help you determine her size. Staff can confirm the available bra inventory.
- Please make sure someone is monitoring the client and is available to help her with the clothing and give her kind, honest feedback. With rare exception, the client is not allowed to “shop” the boutique on her own.
- Since we work with a diverse group of sizes and shapes, it is important to be sensitive to our client’s body image. Please replace “I need to get a bigger size” with “let’s try something different” to avoid alienating the client in any way. It can also help to share with the client that we suit all shapes – and there is no “right size”. Our one goal is to **help her look and feel fabulous!**
- You are also welcome to take clothing and accessories off of displays. However, please replace any items you give away to help the boutique look great and stay organized.
- Reach out to staff if you have any issues finding the items you need or have any questions about inventory.
- Although we do not offer clothing alterations, we do stock hemming tape that can be ironed on by the client.
- Provide her with any free giveaways we may have available (at staff discretion).
- When you're ready to have the 'after' photo taken of the client in her final selection, favorite outfit, grab a staff member to snap the photo.





If the Suiting Runs Long

Occasionally, you might have a client who is so enjoying the suiting process – or having difficulty making final decisions – that the suiting is exceeding the 60-minute time limit (or *90-minutes for an employment suiting*). We want you to feel comfortable reminding the client that we will need to finish the suiting in “X” number of minutes. You are also welcome to alert staff and we will step in to help to close out the appointment.



After the Suiting

Please follow the steps below to ensure the client has everything she needs, all paperwork is completed and the boutique is left in good order:

- Gather all of the selected clothing on the rack. Recheck with the client in the dressing room to make sure all of her clothing has been included on the rack.
- Count the clothing and accessories to be given away and document those numbers on your paperwork.
- Check with the client to determine if she would prefer her clothing on hangers or folded into bags. Take home hangers and bags are located in the supply room off of the main boutique lobby.
 - ***If the client prefers hangers:*** Switch out hangers and cover with clear plastic dry cleaning bags. Tie the bottom of the bags together to ensure the clothing will not drag on the ground. Any small accessories can be given to the client or boxed and placed in an additional shopping bag.
 - ***If the client prefers bags:*** Take all clothing off of hangers and fold carefully into large shopping bags. Try to consolidate as many of the items as possible so the client’s bags are manageable.



After the Suiting (continued)

- Return all unused hangers, unwanted clothing to the racks. This includes any clothing left in the dressing room. Also, check to make sure that any unwanted shoes and accessories are returned to their correct area. Replace any displays that were taken down (or alert staff if you need help).
- *Remind the client of our available career services, including the professional/career development workshops and one-on-one career coaching. These services are free and available.* Feel free to grab a staff member if the client would like more information about these services or would like to take advantage of additional career services.
- After you are finished working with the client and she has left the boutique, please write a short thank you note to her. The note can include thanking the client for coming in, letting her know you enjoyed working with her, wishing her luck on her upcoming interview, and reminding her how great/professional she looks in her outfit.
- Return the clipboard to staff and alert them to any inventory needs or concerns, and return your name badge to the metal cabinet in the kitchen.

Client Transportation

One of the key eligibility requirements of the suiting program is that the client has access to transportation to and from appointments—whether that is a private car or public transportation. **All volunteers, including Image Coaches, are strictly prohibited from giving rides or money for transportation to clients.** Please notify staff if your client will need a ride home after their suiting. DFSQC has set up an account with a transportation service to provide clients with rides home after an employment suiting or during inclement weather.

Thank You!

Thank you for your participation in our StyleHER Suiting program. We hope that you will have a fulfilling experience volunteering for our affiliate. We know that the fashion sense and business acumen you share with our clients makes a huge difference in their lives. Many Image Coaches describe the transformation that takes place as a client sees herself as an empowered, professional woman – maybe for the very first time in her life.

We do our best to have the resources you need to be successful during the suiting process, but also welcome your suggestions for improvement. We also appreciate your help in encouraging donations and referring new Image Coaches into our organization! Great volunteers make great referrals! **Thank YOU** for being a critical part of our volunteer team.