

STRATEGIES AND TIPS FOR EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT IN CAREER PATHWAYS

- **Learn the language of business and their needs.**
 - ✓ Translate the value-add our programs bring to a business's bottom-line in a manner that uses consistent language systemwide.
 - ✓ Research the needs of local employers with respect to hiring needs and skills gaps.
 - ✓ Identify potential partners based on industry needs and standing employer relationships through existing programs, local workforce investment boards, Chambers of Commerce, economic development organizations, trade associations, and non-profits.
 - ✓ Gauge the willingness of employers who need to address skill deficiencies to enter partnerships with adult education programs.

- **Reach out to champions in businesses where there potential for partnership.**
 - ✓ Engage individuals passionate about education with the corporate authority to commit company resources to the partnership.
 - ✓ Build on existing relationships and establish parameters for the partnership that will enable toe group to accomplish mutual goals.
 - ✓ Schedule an initial meeting of employer interested in pursuing a partnership. Bring preliminary research data or industry analyses to the meeting to demonstrate youth understanding of a commitment to addressing the hiring needs of your potential new business partners(s).
 - ✓ Create a single-point of contact at the one-stops to facilitate the creation and cultivation of partnerships between the workforce system and the business community.

- **Engage employers in program design, curriculum development, and work-based learning, for both adults and youth.**
 - ✓ Select a career pathway for program development based on market demands.
 - ✓ Ask employers to identify basic skill requirements, technical/occupational skill requirements, and soft skill/employability competencies of entry-level and incumbent workers in the chosen pathway(s).
 - ✓ Work alongside employers to review and align existing or develop new curriculum that meets national/state standards to support local job market needs.
 - ✓ Request authentic workplace materials, scenarios, and examples from employers to assist in contextualizing the instruction.
 - ✓ Ask employers to identify the credentials they value for occupations in the chosen pathway(s).

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- ✓ Ask employers to provide work-based learning experiences for participants (e.g. job shadowing, internships).
- ✓ Educate employers on customized training resources available in our system.
- ✓ Develop a marketing strategy that familiarizes the business community with the system's component parts and program design.

- **Invite feedback and other support as the program develops, and build long-term relationships with employers.**
 - ✓ Enlist employer partners to participate in the job placement process (e.g., conducting mock and actual interviews, hiring graduates, assisting with job placement at other businesses).
 - ✓ Ask employers to provide feedback about the success of program participants once they are hired.
 - ✓ Establish a program revision/evaluation schedule to ensure program content continues to be responsive to changes in the industry.
 - ✓ Approach employers about providing funding, equipment, or other resources to help reduce barriers to student persistence and completion.

- **Maintain regular communications.**
 - ✓ Keep employer partners informed about the development of new curricula and programs design.
 - ✓ Promptly respond to correspondence from employer partners and follow through on action items agreed upon by the partnership.
 - ✓ Recognize employers for their input, support, and guidance as the program matures.
 - ✓ Collect data to ensure all partners' needs are being met.
 - ✓ Develop a database of employee and community contacts to maintain institutional memory.