

Employer Engagement Tip Sheet #1: Why Partner with Employers?

This is the first of five employer engagement tip sheets which feature highlights from the [Youth CareerConnect \(YCC\) Employer Engagement Handbook](#), first released in December 2015. All employer engagement tip sheets can be found on the [YCC Community of Practice](#).

Employer Relationships are Vital

Strong business alliances are crucial to achieving the ultimate goal of preparing young people for the workforce. Not only do you want to create a network of connections that lead to jobs for your program participants, you also want to ensure that you are providing the education and training they need for those jobs.

How a committed employer can enhance your program:

General Program & Faculty Guidance

- Help to define program strategies and goals.
- Provide on-going technical assistance including participation on an advisory board.
- Validate labor market research and recommend target industries.
- Enlighten your staff about credentialing and certification access.
- Give your faculty and counselors an understanding of the industry with externships and other professional development.

Resources

- Provide trainers and subject experts.
- Allow access to space, labs, production facilities, tools, machines, and supplies.
- Offer direct financial support or scholarships for education and training.
- Make in-kind contributions that may count toward matching grant requirements.

Career-Focused Academics

- Confirm the skills and credentials required for targeted occupations and verify that students meet the knowledge and performance requirements.
- Identify the principles and courses that are most applicable to their industries.
- Suggest educational and training strategies that best employ business perspectives.
- Provide guidance to align curricula with employer needs and integrate technical and skills-based learning with academics.

Student Career Exposure

- Host student site visits and participate in career fairs.
- Offer guest speakers for classes and provide students with networking opportunities.
- Act as mentors and provide professional and leadership coaching.

Student Training

- Offer job training opportunities and work experience such as: internships, apprenticeships, shadowing, cooperative work projects, and competition-based activities.
- Provide job preparation assistance including job search help and interview practice.
- Give hiring preference to qualified YCC participants.

Program Outreach

- Promote the value of your program to the greater community.
- Act as champions to help you recruit other employer partners with testimonials, referrals, notes of endorsement, and presentations to business groups.
- Vouch for the success of your program when you are seeking additional funding.

For additional tips on how to enlist dedicated employers to communicate the benefits of your program to their associates in other companies and business organizations and provide you with testimonials for your outreach efforts, see the [Enlist Employer Partners to Expand Your Outreach](#) toolkit.

Expanding Local Economies Together

Youth Career Pathways programs, like YCC, have proven to be effective vehicles for workforce development among the nation's youth. Employer partners bolster these programs with guidance, resources, and career experience, enabling participants to match new skills and knowledge to jobs and careers. Your relationship with local businesses is a two-way street that brings training and opportunities to your participants and that, in turn, sends qualified job candidates back to those businesses. Together, you and your employer partners are creating a robust talent pipeline and contributing in a critical way to the economic vitality of your community.