

Employer Engagement Tip Sheet #2:

Finding Employer Partners

This is the second 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](#).

Strong business relationships, whether direct employer partnerships or business advisory groups, play a crucial role in youth employment and training programs. One of the first steps in enlisting businesses in these alliances is identifying potentially compatible partners to begin with.

Expand Your Scope

As you begin to plan your employer engagement outreach, aim for as wide a range of employers and organizations as possible. Partnership opportunities may appear in unexpected places, and exposing your workforce trainees to a broad array of jobs and industries gives them a broader choice of career options. If you are assembling an employer advisory group, representatives from different industries and business groups will provide you with a balanced range of experiences and perspectives on employees, hiring, training, and more. Your workforce development efforts will be more effective in the long run if you remain open to all possibilities.

Review Your Knowledge of Local Businesses

Chances are, you and your team already have a certain amount of information about local employers, industry sector organizations and partnerships, labor-management organizations, Registered Apprenticeship sponsors, and/or regional innovation clusters. Make a comprehensive list of these. Discuss each one with your team and annotate your list to indicate which may have potential as workforce partners. Is it a large company? Will it be hiring soon? Does one of your staff have a contact there? This exercise will point you toward your first potential business partnerships.

Acme Industrial Packaging

- ✓ Large company
- ✓ Training program
- ✓ Expanding
- ✓ John knows the VP

Build on Current Employer Partnerships

If you already have a connection to one or more members of the business community, build on those relationships. Not only may they be able to help you establish or strengthen a working partnership with their own company or employer, they may also be willing to act as a champion to *other* businesses. So, enlist existing contacts or partners as advocates. They can be highly productive allies in your efforts to bring new employers on board.

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.

Research Labor Market Information

Labor market information (LMI) provides valuable statistics – real employment data, job forecasts, wages, demographics, and other relevant information such as:

- The industries that are hiring in your region.
- The jobs they need to fill and skills they require.
- The occupational sectors that are projected to grow.
- The education and training needed for future jobs.

Exploring LMI for your town, county, and state will help you add to and refine your initial list of employers. The best-known source of LMI is the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#). The Department of Labor also operates a [community of practice site](#) with a wealth of information. States have LMI sites that provide more localized data. A list of state-level resources can be found on the [CareerOneStop website](#).

Consult Local Business Organizations

Tap into local business groups such as chambers of commerce, employer associations, workforce development boards, and economic development agencies. Their leaders may be able to offer advice on your list, identify additional prospects, and connect you with potential partners. Besides being a good source of information about local businesses and industries, they may be prime partnership candidates themselves.

Don't forget to consult your local your American Job Center (CareerOneStop Center). They can be of great help at every step of your employer engagement process.