Purpose of the YCC Handbook

This handbook is a how-to guide designed for YCC grantee staff. It is intended to help YCC grantees build their employer engagement efforts to connect youth to employer partners. The handbook addresses employer engagement and partnership challenges, and proposes ideas, tools, and tips for building, extending, and sustaining employer relationships and advisory groups. Strategies provided in this guide may be used as presented or tailored to address the specific needs of a broad spectrum of workforce youth program grantees interested in improving their relationships with employers.
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Introduction

YCC Requirements for Engaging Employer Partners
The YCC Solicitation for Grant Applications document establishes employer engagement as the program’s second core element and encourages highly integrated partnerships with local and regional employers. Programs are encouraged to collaborate with multiple employers and other organizations representing an industry sector, including existing industry sector partnerships, labor-management organizations, Registered Apprenticeship sponsors, and regional innovation clusters. Ideally programs will include at least one employer or consortium of employers for each selected high-growth H-1B industry or occupation. Effective employer engagement is seen as integral to the design, sustainability, and success of this program. This handbook is designed to help YCC grantees meet the requirements of Core Element 2: Employer Engagement by strengthening existing employer partnerships and developing new ones.

The Value of Strong Employer Relationships
Employer partners include the women and men who lead your region’s economy, manage or work in businesses that provide family-sustaining employment, ensure general economic activity, and pay taxes. Strong partnerships between YCC programs and employers are intended to benefit both parties:

- Employers can verify your students meet the knowledge and performance requirements for successful job performance.
- Employers can represent and speak to the value and success of your program in a way that advances your outreach and sustainability goals.
- Employers can communicate their satisfaction with your YCC program to the larger community, increasing your credibility.
- Employers can provide sound advice as your programs seek to integrate technical and skill-based curricula with critical academics, especially STEM-based academics.
- Employers will be well positioned to identify exactly what science principles, mathematics, and engineering courses will be most applicable to their industry.
- Employers provide your students with work experience and your teachers with externships.
- The YCC program provides an opportunity for employers to exhibit their investment in their community to a larger audience.
- The YCC program acts as a pipeline for young people to stay connected to the local economy by offering them as trained applicants for local jobs.
Potential Contributions Employer Partners Can Make to Your Program

Guidance

- Provide ongoing technical assistance including active participation on an advisory board.
- Help to define the program strategies and goals.
- Validate labor market research.
- Make recommendations during the selection of target industries for the YCC program.
- Facilitate externships and other forms of professional development and training for teachers, faculty, and guidance counselors.
- Confirm the skills and credentials required for the targeted occupations.
- Teach your staff about credentialing and certification access.
- Participate or lead in designing curriculum that assures alignment with employer skill needs.
- Suggest educational and training strategies that best employ business perspectives.

Resources

- Provide resources to support education/training such as funds and scholarships, and funds for training costs.
- Provide trainers and subject experts.
- Provide access to space, labs, real production facilities, tools, machines, classrooms, supplies, and other resources.
- Provide in-kind contributions that may count towards grant matching requirements.

Learning Experience for Students

- Introduce students to the real employment world through field trips, internships, shadowing, on-the-job training, part-time employment, project-based learning opportunities, job-search and interview practice, and summer jobs.
- Provide participants with mentorship opportunities (for at least one year based on a work-based learning model).
- Give hiring preference to qualified participants who complete the grant-funded education and training program.
- Engage populations historically underrepresented in H-1B fields, such as women and minorities.

Networking and Reputation-Building

- Introduce you to additional business leaders and help recruit new partners.
- Speak to other community groups and partner groups on your behalf.
YCC Employer Engagement Handbook

Understanding the Employer Relationship and Employer Needs

Developing Employer Relationships

New employer partners may be cautious and perhaps tentative as they learn about your program and its processes. Longer-serving partners can emerge to take deeper roles and become valued advisors and leaders. Jobs for the Future, a national nonprofit organization, created A Resource Guide to Engaging Employers (Wilson, 2015), which presents what has become a classic model for visualizing how employers emerge as valued partners and trusted friends:

Figure 1: Employer Relationship Stages from A Resource Guide to Engaging Employers

Employer contributions are likely to increase as each partner learns more about the program and becomes comfortable with the YCC staff. A detailed and specific list of contributions employer partners can make to your program is presented on page 2.
Figure 1 presents a diagram of partnership growth and maturity as you and each partner learn how to serve each other.

- **Level One**, the entry level, represents a new and untested relationship where information is exchanged and the employer begins to grasp the processes and potential of your program. At this point a good strategy is to invite the employer to attend meetings and sit in on training.

- **Level Two** represents the growth of employer trust and results in the first real contributions, with invitations for students to visit the job site in various ways. (Please note you should take great care in managing the student visits to prevent any awkwardness or non-professional student behavior.) Further, you should visibly acknowledge any donations for use of equipment or contributed materials through your newsletter, website, and marketing materials. You certainly want the employer to feel your gratitude for helping the program grow.

- At **Levels Three through Five**, you and the employer representatives will become more reliant on each other, trust each other, and will be more valuable to each other. Strategically, it is important for you and your staff to regularly monitor and discuss each relationship as a part of routine business practice. You have the responsibility to care for and build each relationship. Refer to this chart as you envision how your employer partners’ roles will grow as they become more integral to the program (Wilson, 2015).

**Understanding the Needs of Your Employer Partner**

When you work directly with employers, it is useful to understand why they are volunteering for your program. The most critical need you fill for them is as a reliable and long-term source of skilled employees. Some partners also seek to extend the goodwill of their companies and establish a “community partner” image. Some simply enjoy meeting individuals and establishing friendships not associated with their specific businesses, while others are seeking to recruit employees. Many are seeking to do all the above.

**Benefits of Partnering for Employers**

Employers will benefit from:

- Access to a larger pool of skilled job candidates who possess the specific skills, certificates, and credentials required for the current and future labor market.
- Training designed to specifically meet employer needs and which can be evaluated by the job performance of students.
- The opportunity to influence training programs to better align with their skill needs.
- Credential and certification programs that meet industry standards.
Identifying Potential Employer Partners

As you think about creating an employer partnership or assembling an employer advisory group, keep the core element requirements in your planning strategy. Creating a separate employer advisory group from your overall YCC Program Advisory Committee may be a way to assure grant requirements are met and useful connections are created and maintained. Individuals from different employers and organizations will bring different experiences and perspectives about employees, training, hiring practices, and more. To get a wide and balanced range of views on these subjects, it is wise to recruit a group of representatives from multiple local businesses and industries or from more than one industry sector. Additionally, your program is encouraged to collaborate not only with employers but also with organizations representing an industry sector, including existing industry sector partnerships; labor-management organizations; Registered Apprenticeship sponsors; and regional innovation clusters.

To prepare to recruit for an employer advisory group, you will need to determine which businesses are hiring and/or which industry sectors are growing, and then use this information to create an employer outreach strategy to identify the leaders who can best support and guide your program. This strategy is a three-step process. (Note: You can access your American Job Center—also known as CareerOneStop Centers—partners at every one of these steps as a reference.)

1. **Review your general knowledge of the business community.**
   The current members of your YCC team should discuss what they each know about local employers and other organizations representing an industry sector, industry sector partnerships, labor-management organizations, Registered Apprenticeship sponsors, or regional innovation clusters. As you make a comprehensive list of the business people with whom team members are acquainted, add notes explaining why a particular company or organization may be a good choice (is it a large company, or will it be hiring, does someone have a contact at the company, does the company belong to a multi-industry partnership, etc.). After discussion and consensus you should have a list of good potential business partners.

2. **Use labor market analysis and labor market information.**
   Your next step is to review sources of labor market information (LMI) for your town, county, and state. Labor market information gives you a statistically based look at real employment data, job forecasts, wages, demographics, and other relevant information such as:
   - Which local and regional industries are hiring now?
   - What jobs do they hope to fill and what skills are they looking for?
   - Which job areas are projected to grow in the future?
   - What education and training will be needed for those future jobs?
Your LMI search will help you add to and focus your initial list of employers. LMI is widely available; the best-known source is the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The Department of Labor operates a community of practice site with a wealth of LMI. Each state also has an LMI site providing more targeted data for an area. A list of state-level resources for each state can be found on the CareerOnestop website.

3. **Consult local business organizations.**

Leaders of local business organizations, such as Chambers of Commerce, employer associations, workforce investment boards, and economic development agencies are often the best source of information about local businesses and industries. They can help you in three ways. First, they can offer advice on your list and identify other prospects. Second, they can put you in contact with individuals in those businesses and industries. Third, they may themselves also be prime candidates for joining your team.
Meeting With Employers

Preparing to Meet an Employer
Once you have identified a potential employer partner, you should learn as much as possible about the company and, to a lesser degree, the individual you seek to meet. A thorough review of the employer’s own website and other online resources will give you the information you need to speak knowledgeably at the meeting. Be sure to know about:

- The company’s products and services.
- Company size, value, and status (privately owned, publicly owned, family-run, part of a larger corporation, growing/maintaining/downsizing, the company’s competitors, etc.).
- Numbers and types of employees.
- Names/titles of the senior management team and information about your contact person.
- Any recent news concerning the company.

Having completed your research, you are now prepared to reach out to your intended industry contacts. If possible, arrange in advance for an introduction by a friend or colleague so your contact will expect to hear from you. It is usually preferable for the call to be made by your team’s leader, to signify its importance. Be sure to brief your leader about the company prior to the call. The leader should describe the YCC program and explain you are seeking a potential partnership (Dorsey, 2013).

Establishing an Agenda for the Meeting
Plan to take your leader and no more than one or two additional members of your team along. Hold a pre-meeting and develop an agenda for the meeting; see page 8 for a content outline. Take into account the time available for the meeting and the specific role played by your industry contact as well as the people you will be meeting with. You may be meeting, for example, with a human resources director whose expertise is not the company’s financial data but its training and hiring needs. Be sure you know how many people will be participating so you have enough hard-copy materials. You may also want to share the agenda, reports, and promotional materials in advance of the meeting so the employer representatives can prepare for the meeting as well.
Sample Agenda for Initial Meeting With a Potential Employer Partner

Note: An estimated time recommendation is found at the end of each section to help guide the management of the meeting and prevent it from being too long. A good total meeting length is 1¼ hours, but adapt the suggested times as needed.

• Introduce yourself and your colleagues and explain the purpose of your visit (4 minutes).
• Provide a brief description of the Youth CareerConnect Program and its community team process (10 – 15 minutes with questions from the employer).
• Explain your need for the employer’s industry knowledge in developing and managing the YCC program (1 minute).
• Ask questions to help you learn more about the employer (15 minutes).
  – Strengths, market targets, products/services
  – Size of business and number of employees
  – Skill shortages the employer is currently experiencing and future shortages anticipated
  – The employer’s current plans to close employee skill gaps, such as an internal training system and/or industry association training
• Describe the specific benefits of the YCC Program to the employer (10 minutes with questions).
  – Access to a larger pool of skilled job candidates who would possess the specific skills, certificates, and credentials required for current and future job openings
  – Training, credential, and certification programs designed with the employer’s input and for the specific industry and standards involved, and adapted over time to better meet the employer’s needs
• Explain in detail what membership in the YCC team would involve (10 minutes with questions).
  – Estimated time commitment
  – Type and frequency of meetings
  – Type of help and resource assistance the employer might be asked to provide.
• If the employer appears interested in joining the team, clearly explain the next steps toward a commitment (5 minutes).
• General discussion and review (10 minutes).
• As the meeting ends, be sure to thank the attendees from the employer’s side for their time and interest. They may be valuable contacts even if the employee does not establish a partnership with you, and can be a source of other contacts (5 minutes).
Working Toward a Commitment

If your team senses during the meeting there is a good fit between your program and the employer, in closing the meeting your team leader should raise the issue of a commitment. Achieving a commitment likely will only occur after your potential partners (1) believe your program integrates with and benefits the mission and processes of the company; (2) understand clearly the intent and processes of your program; (3) understand in detail what is expected from them (especially the time commitment); and (4) have support from their own senior managers or decision makers.

A commitment may not happen at the first meeting. Regular communications and conversations are critical early in the relationship, and those discussions will reveal how close you are to a commitment. Patience and attention to the employer’s questions, ideas, needs, and circumstances are your major responsibilities. Do not push the issue of a commitment, and welcome gradual as well as rapid progress. The form the relationship takes will be determined by what is best for the employer. When the employer begins suggesting ideas and potential ways to contribute, this is one sign that commitment may be close. At some point you will feel the relationship has developed to a place where discussing a commitment is appropriate.

A commitment from an employer means a new set of tasks for your team. At the outset you will be learning about and communicating with your new partner. Along the way you will clarify the YCC program for the employer, bringing about an understanding of your plans and goals, and explain how the employer can contribute. Further, you will better understand exactly what the employer seeks from the partnership and the depth and intent of the employer’s interest.

Following Up

One or two days after the meeting, send a note thanking the participants for their time, outlining the action items you will be following up on, and stating when they should expect to hear from you. You may also want to include action items the employer agreed to and let them know you are looking forward to hearing from them.
**Growing and Sustaining Long-Term Employer Relationships**

Developing and maintaining reliable and useful partnerships with businesses requires a plan including communications, regular meetings, good use of the employer’s time and resources, and more. Your leadership team may discover that business people have different decision-making expectancies, with faster timetables and with little acceptance of extended discussions.

**The Partnership Growth Process**

As you welcome new employer partners to your program, provide appropriate communication. Start modestly and ask for little more than advice as you build trust. Remember, partnership building is a process of emergence with increasing engagement and responsibilities. Make several visits to the workplace to learn more about the business and its needs. Spend time discussing training and the preparation of your students to fill their jobs. *A Resource Guide to Engaging Employers* describes other means of building the relationship, such as:

- Learning to speak “business” by focusing on solutions, not on your program, and by avoiding education terminology.
- Bringing value to the employer by focusing on courses, plans, and assets you both agree will be relevant to the employer’s challenges (Wilson, 2015).

Help employers understand your program’s needs and goals. Discuss how the employer can appropriately help meet those goals and plan several initial tasks and help from employers. Figure 2, again taken from *A Resource Guide to Engaging Employers* (Wilson, 2015), shows the types of actions and engagements you may plan over the course of a developing relationship.

**Figure 2: Steps to Building an Employer Partnership from A Resource Guide to Engaging Employers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partnership Growing: Steps and Engagement Actions and Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NEW RELATIONSHIP</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss hiring needs, skills, competencies; advise on curricula; contract training; hire graduates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WORKING RELATIONSHIP</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job site tours; speakers; job interviews; internships; needs assessment; loan/donate equipment; recruiting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>STRONGER WORKING RELATIONSHIP</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum and education program development; adjunct faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PARTNERSHIP</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help to build larger employer/YCC sectoral partnerships among other businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help to build better multi-employer partnerships, provide leadership and in-depth resources assistance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Emerging, Developing Employer Relationships](image-url)
As you can see, the “New Relationship” item focuses on learning and communicating. As the employer becomes more familiar and comfortable you can introduce ideas for more involvement such as those described in “Working Relationship” above. As noted earlier, there is no timed or predictable model for relationship-building; the process will differ with each partner. With many, you may not extend past a “working relationship,” while others will expand their roles farther. In all cases, patience and investment in communications will be rewarded.

There are three steps that can help build a longer-lasting relationship: Deepen your knowledge about the business and how your program can help meet its needs; agree with the employer on a set of roles/responsibilities the business will fill; and formalize this discussion with a simple written agreement.

1. **Continue Learning About Each Employer**
   As you learn more about the employer’s staffing and training needs, you will discover opportunities for your students to experience and learn about the business and the skills required to work. It is also useful to know whether the workplace “climate” is supportive of student learning, training, skill-building, and education generally to assure a good experience for your students. Many employers have some system in place for training and up-skilling. Find out the type and extent of training already available, discover what might be good learning opportunities for your students, and arrange for your program to participate. Come to meetings with key managers with a prepared agenda, and seek information such as:

   - What opportunities for job shadowing and internships currently exist? Is the company interested in working together to develop new job shadowing and internship opportunities?
   - What are the entry positions for which you are seeking applicants and the entry-level or minimum skills sets for those jobs?
   - What jobs or occupations are the next levels up from “entry” and what jobs follow those in the company “career ladder”? Usually, there is a well-understood job progression for an employee seeking upward mobility.
   - What are the skill requirements to move up to the next level and how do employees achieve those skills currently? The employer may have a company-based or industry-based certification that authenticates the acquisition of skills. What are the current training systems and how might they be incorporated into your YCC training?

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**Each Relationship Will Differ**

An employer’s initial willingness to become a program partner does not reflect how deep, complex, or useful the relationship may become. Some contacts will become very valuable while others will remain simply a friendly association. Some relationships will develop quickly while others will require more time and work on your part. Regardless of the state of the relationship, treat each employer with attention and patience. You may be pleasantly surprised over time.
2. Establish Employer Roles and Responsibilities

The “Potential Contributions Employer Partners Can Make to Your Program” text box on page 2 lists the many types of contributions possible and the roles a partner can play. Employers making or contemplating a commitment need to know specifically what is expected from them and how they can affect the overall success of the program. Before you begin requesting assistance, help the employer fully understand your program, for example how it works, how it is managed, what type and quality of training is available, and any other relevant information. You may discuss this information with the employer over a series of meetings. Even better, you can invite the employer to your organization to witness the program in action. As new partners’ understanding grows, they increasingly ask for suggestions or make proposals for assistance themselves.

Employer organizations are subject to a host of rules, regulations, and insurance requirements, and must consider government oversight, protection of proprietary resources, and many other issues. Keep these in mind as you define roles and responsibilities. Never place your employer partners in positions which may endanger their systems or controls, or push against legal and process-oriented controls they must honor. In most cases the employer will be very clear about what lines cannot be crossed. When close to these limits you should acknowledge them and seek an acceptable alternative. Underline your intent to shield the employers from any negative issues or events. The box below presents an issue employer partners frequently deal with, minors in the workplace.

![Dealing With Minors in the Workplace](image)

Many YCC programs are based in secondary schools with students who are not yet 18 years of age. Not unexpectedly, businesses may resist allowing minors access to their facilities or their production areas because of legal and safety limits or government regulations. Sometimes learning in the real work environment is simply not possible. The goal then is to create the “next closest thing” for the students. Some high schools have taken approaches such as:

- Creating similar lab or process at the high school with the same skill requirements.
- Using “reverse internships” in which company staff members come to the school with equipment, supplies, projects, and tasks.
- Conducting a series of controlled field trips during nonproduction periods.
- Bringing secondary teachers into the workplace and teaching them the processes and production phases to take back to the school.

3. Negotiate a Written Agreement

Once specific roles and contributions are the focus of the conversation, it will be useful to formalize the employer’s involvement. The value of a written document is it removes much of the potential for misunderstandings and disappointments. Consider developing an agreement or memorandum of understanding (MOU) to describe specific contributions and note limitations, issues, legalities, and the scope of responsibilities of the employer. This document may:

- List the contributions and how they are to be used.
- Describe how/when/where they will be made available.
- Describe the roles of employer individuals who will serve your program (such as a “loaned” instructor).
- Indicate a time frame for the assistance.
- Describe limits or issues on behalf of the employer (such as safety, liability, protection of company proprietary assets, and limits on use of facilities or equipment).
- Note how the employer and the YCC program will monitor and manage the assistance.
- Note how/when communications will occur.
- Describe who will own or control the products/investments (such as a new curriculum) over time.

There will likely be disagreements and differences among individuals in the partnership. Expect these and, as you are entering the formal agreement, discuss how best to confront and manage them. Usually, open discussions held with the goal of maintaining a useful and friendly relationship ensures your team and the employer’s team will find a way to overcome any problems.

Do not rush the employer toward a signed agreement. It is best to wait until you are discussing real contributions and roles, and then ask if you may make notes leading to an MOU. Some individuals will resist a document because they do not want, or are not yet ready, to make a formal agreement. Others will not be able to commit without clearance from a more senior manager. Be flexible and do not rush the process. One useful and nontthreatening approach is to complete a discussion and then send your partner an email reviewing what you discussed and what was promised. As you begin working routinely with an employer, you will come to understand whether a written agreement is needed. A good source of information about memoranda of understanding may be found at FormSwift.

Maintaining strong ties with employer partners should be part of your YCC team’s business plan and should be addressed regularly. Often teams decide to make this an assigned part of one team member’s job. The maintenance tasks usually do not require a lot of time, but must be done regularly.

**Employers as a Unique Kind of Partner**

Employers may be a bit different from other program partners in the expectations they hold for managing business.

First, the highest priority for each employer partner is meeting the demands of the business. The services partners provide to YCC will always be subject to what needs to get done at work. Understand, compensate, and help them keep up.

Second, most business environments are fast, with quick decisions and little lost time. Your business members will appreciate a similar “feel” to your management and decision process. Move wisely, of course, but move with all deliberate speed and stay on point.
Appendix A: Twelve Tips for Maintaining Successful Employer Relationships

Following is a check list of actions your team should consider as you work with business partners. Use it as an agenda for an occasional “employer relationship health checkup” meeting.

Start Early

1. Identify and engage your employers early in the planning of your YCC program. Early connection makes certain your training programs align with local businesses’ employee skills needs.

Stay Connected and Help Employers Help You

2. Involve them in program decisions; work side-by-side with them; visit their firms; respond to their ideas. Involve them as much as possible.

3. Meet individually with each employer, determine what each hopes to accomplish for their company as a part of the YCC program, and help the employer achieve it. And in turn, be very clear about what the employer can do to help YCC.

4. Share and discuss program performance outcomes with all business partners. Include them in revising the program or curriculum based on these outcomes.

Meetings, Deadlines, and Promises

5. Schedule meetings well in advance and maintain a reliable and consistent calendar. Send an agenda. Often, last-minute changes in meeting times, places, or dates will reduce employers’ ability to attend, so you will need to be flexible. In all your dealings, remember time management is especially critical in business.

6. Keep to the tasks and deadlines you established with your employer members. Be predictable and reliable! Keep your promises. Return all phone calls and email inquiries. Listen, listen, and listen!

Communicate, Communicate, and Communicate

7. Build a routine and reliable communication system with employers involving more than a single vehicle such as email, text message, and letters. Develop a regular schedule for use of each vehicle you choose, and give each an easy-to-identify look and feel.

8. Inform and subtly remind the employers of upcoming meetings and times.

9. On a routine basis, have the chair of your career pathway phone or meet with each employer member to chat, provide updates and compliments, and seek opinions.
**Big Thanks and Many Celebrations**

10. Recognize and thank each employer member. Note their individual contributions and impact. Send a copy of recognition statements to the individual’s immediate supervisor or CEO.

11. Invite employers to regular celebrations where the team can note their overall successes and acknowledge special contributions.

12. Use the team’s outreach communication system (bulletins, news releases, and blogs) to regularly highlight the contributions of individuals and their companies.
Appendix B: Resources

A Resource Guide to Engaging Employers
This resource guide, created by Jobs for the Future, presents working models of successful employer engagement and lessons for securing and sustaining partnerships with employers. It was written to help education and training providers fully realize the value of strategic, long-term, and intensive partnerships with employers.

Apprenticeship Business Engagement Tools
This resource page has tools to help you develop and improve your ability to work with employers to expand the use of apprenticeship. The tools will assist you in speaking the language of business, refining your business engagement techniques to get better results, and creating and maintaining a successful collaboration with employers.

Business and Community College Partnerships: A Blueprint
In this 2012 report, Corporate Voices for Working Families offers community colleges and businesses interested in partnering an insider view to each other’s structures, goals, and strengths. It frames the advantages of a business-community college partnership around the imperatives of each group, so the stakeholder initiating a relationship can make the business case for a partnership leading to increased skills for employees and increased college completion rates.

Create a Memorandum of Understanding
This online tool offered by FormSwift provides detailed information on writing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), including an overview, the components, and legal considerations, as well as a tool for creating an MOU.

Employer Engagement Webinar Series: Top 20 “Take Home Now” Strategies for Success
This webinar provides strategies that you can implement right away as well as others that you can integrate into your medium- and long-term employer engagement planning. All strategies have been proven effective in local workforce investment areas.

Employer Engagement and Retention, Developed for Workforce Development Professionals
This 2013 tip sheet offers guidance and strategies for finding, supporting, and retaining employers. While focused on employers who are willing to hire ex-offenders and other hard-to-serve populations, many of the strategies, such as using employer roundtables to support and retain employers, are universal.

Enlist Employer Partners to Expand Your Outreach
This 2018 toolkit, developed for the YCC program, is designed to help you enlist dedicated employers to communicate the benefits of your program to their associates and provide you with testimonials for your outreach efforts. It also provides tips for turning your students’ work-based learning success stories into powerful tools that you can use in your own outreach to potential employer partners.
**Preparation and Outreach Plan for Engaging Employers**

This outline, developed by YouthBuild USA for the DOL YouthBuild program, provides a list of goals for the preparation and outreach phases of employer engagement. Each goal (such as developing an understanding of the labor market, developing a business portfolio, and developing an employer database) has a set of accompanying work plans and recommendations.

**The Labor Market Information (LMI) Community of Practice**

This resource provides advice on using LMI to improve your employment programs and policies. Community members include workforce information experts, producers, and users. The U.S. Department of Labor’s Employment and Training Administration (ETA) operates the site, but data producers and users are free to submit new resources to the community, join a forum conversation, or provide feedback about the site itself.

**The Power of the Education-Industry Partnership: Fostering Innovation in Collaboration Between Community Colleges and Businesses**

This article makes a strong case for business-education partnerships and describes effective partnerships, presents critical success factors, and offers best practices and case studies.

**Tools for Building Employer-Educator Partnerships**

This website was created by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education to introduce employers and educators to the value of partnering; describe best practices and success stories; and disseminate evidence-based tools that contain academic and practical solutions for building partnerships, sustaining collaborations, and creating career pathways.

**Tools to Engage Employers**

These tools, developed by the Franklin Hampshire Regional Employment Board, focus on engaging employers to support youth career development. Tools include an information gathering form, a job shadow guide, a work-based learning plan and a work-based learning matrix. Franklin Hampshire Regional Employment Board is a Career Pathways for Youth (Summer Jobs & Beyond) grantee from Greenfield, Massachusetts.
Appendix C: References
