

Engaging Community Based Organizations

In order to recruit talented applicants and ensure goals for equity and diversity in the workforce, registered apprenticeship programs may maintain a robust network of partnerships with community service providers and other entities. These organizations have resources and expertise to both locate and provide supports for specific populations that are often underrepresented in apprenticeship. In an effort to ensure that qualified candidates with disabilities are included in apprenticeship opportunities, this document illustrates how active apprenticeship programs, whether nascent or established, can (1) locate entities that specifically serve individuals with disabilities; (2) establish valuable and reciprocal partnerships; and (3) build toward a more strategic partnership.

STEP 1: Identify what you need/want from service provider partners.

Partnership at the outset should fit a discrete need, though these roles may change over time.

Level 1 – Low Intensity: Partnerships might involve making use of subject expertise, referring candidates, connecting to other community partners, or advising. Some CBOs offer subject area training that could be provided to staff or made available to apprentices.

Level 2 – Moderate Intensity: The relationship involves more time-intensive activities such as reoccurring site visits, guest speaking, and job shadowing. There may also be opportunities for program ideation and thought partnership.

Level 3 – High Intensity: The partnership is clearly symbiotic and may offer both financial and reputational benefits. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) or other formal agreement may be necessary, especially where proprietary information is exchanged.

Level 1 – Low Intensity	Level 2 – Moderate Intensity	Level 3 – High Intensity
Communication frequency may vary	Contributions from staff time needed	High degree of collaboration/ frequent communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advising on program/curricula • Training under contract • Candidate referrals • Outreach to targeted community • Referrals to CBOs/organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest speakers • Site visits/ tours • Job program shadowing • Needs assessments • Curriculum and pathway development • Service-for-service exchanges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coalition-building • Co-facilitated program execution • Formalized and shared contracts

STEP 2: Consider the value you offer to the CBO/organization. What are you offering that they might need?

- **Knowledge:** Do you have expertise that could benefit their programs or help their staff?
- **Staff/personnel:** Do you have staff with valued skillsets and are you able to lend their time?
- **Facilities:** Do you have physical space or equipment you can lend or donate?
- **Funding:** Do you have financial resources that you can provide them?
- **Relationships/partners:** Do you have desirable connections you can share?
- **Outcomes:** Are you in a place to help them achieve their outcomes (e.g., job placements)?

Step 3: Identify/Compile list of prospective partners.

1. Leverage existing partners to outreach/ make connections
2. Leverage individual & personal staff network connections
3. Research through public databases

NOTE: The availability of organizations serving people with disabilities vary by state, region and local area. Consistently, the most comprehensive list of organizations may be found through Workforce boards, VR agencies, HHS agencies (e.g. 211/311 service centers), Independent Living Centers, and other government entities that maintain resource lists. Many of these organizations have a stated goal/mandate to provide information and referral services to the community.

STEP 4: Make Contact and assess.

1. Email first, then call
2. Host meetings/conversations/info sessions
 - **Pro tip:** Conduct outreach activities in collaboration with existing partners
3. Prioritize partners using a ranking system that considers key indicators, such as:
 - Organizational responsiveness,
 - Access to quality candidates,
 - Available resources and staffing,
 - Experience with similar programs or partnerships.