Competency-Based Workforce Intelligence Training Program

Industry Partner Interview Protocol

Objective
Use labor market intelligence to facilitate interviews with industry partners.

Overview
The purpose of the Interview Protocol is to provide you with a set of questions that you can use in conversations with your industry partners. These questions will begin to allow you to gauge the most in-demand occupations and skills, employers’ current relationship(s) with community college training programs, and how your office can best connect employers with graduates in the future.

For many of these questions, additional data can be used to prepare you for the interview or place the answers into some kind of broader context. Additional data and information can therefore help you to determine whether the company follows broader trends within your region or their industry, or has more unique characteristics.

Interview Questions

About your company/industry:

1. Please provide a brief overview of your company:
   • Data sources: D&B, Hoovers, RefUSA
     a. Primary products and services
     b. Size (# of employees)
     c. Location(s) in state; headquarters location
     d. Other
     e. For company information, see business directories such as Hoovers and RefUSA.

2. What were some of the key decision-making factors in deciding to locate in [PLACE]?

3. What, if any, obstacles have you encountered by locating in [PLACE]?
4. How has your business changed over the past 3 to 5 years?
   - Data sources: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)
     a. Growth? Decline?
     b. New products or services?

5. What other changes in your company and/or industry do you anticipate moving forward?

About your workforce:

Occupations and Skills

6. What jobs has your company hired for recently?
   - Data sources: Industry-occupation matrix data by industry, Occupational Employment Statistics (OES)
     a. Where does your company recruit workers with the skills that it needs most (i.e. community colleges, one-stop career centers, etc.)?

7. What specific technical skills are particularly difficult to find?
   - Data sources: O*NET

8. What, if any, certifications or industry-recognized credentials are important to your company when hiring new workers?
   - Data sources: ACT National Career Readiness Certificate, ETA Industry Competency Models, CareerOneStop
     a. Are there general certifications you look prefer or require (e.g., National Career Readiness Certificate?)
     b. Are there specific certifications that you require for certain occupations (e.g., NIMS—National Institute for Metalworking Skills)
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9. What are some of the occupations/skills that are difficult for your company to retain? Which jobs have the highest turnover? Please explain.
   • Data sources: State occupational projections
     a. What strategies has your company employed to keep or attract your best and most skilled workers?

10. What types of jobs do you see your company looking to add at a growing rate over the next 2-3 years?
    • Data sources: BLS Employment Projections
     a. Does your increased demand for these jobs mirror that of other companies in your industry?

Training

11. What skills does your company teach in house?

12. What skills require your company to find an outside training provider?

13. Has your company worked collaboratively with area colleges and other training providers to develop specific programs or to meet specific skill needs?

14. What is your preferred method for training your workers (e.g., in-house, night classes, short courses, online, etc)?
   a. How does this differ by job?

Workforce Development support:
15. How has your company utilized the financial or technical assistance services offered by organizations designed to support business or workforce development (e.g. local, regional, or state workforce programs, economic development organizations, area colleges, etc.)?

16. What has been your company’s experience with these services?

17. Do you have any other ideas, suggestions, or comments that would contribute to our understanding of your company, industry, or the area’s challenges or opportunities?
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