

MCCWDTA

Strategies for Community College Staff Working to Build/Expand Partnerships/ Relationships with One Stop Career Centers for Job Placement

When developing or improving partnerships/ relationships, it helps to look at issues from your partner's perspective. This document includes the types of questions that college staff may encounter when working to establish stronger working relationships with One-Stop Career Center staff, and suggested responses. Suggestions for meeting prep are included on page 2.

Career Center Staff: How can we help your initiative in a way that makes efficient use of staff time?

College Staff: We want to keep this simple, too, and something that works for both of us. What we have in mind is more about aligning what each of us already does, and communicating better, so we both benefit, along with our customers.

Career Center Staff: What are the benefits to the Career Center and the College of working together on this initiative?

College Staff: We think there can be two significant benefits to the Career Center. We would like to identify how our job seeking graduates can become Career Center customers so you can get credit for placements. They could also then take whatever services you have to offer, and then be connected with you for the future. Our graduates are motivated and have current skills in their fields. Many of them have had internships or clinical experiences, and we have worked with them on job readiness and job seeking skills. Like many job seekers, they need all the help we can get them.

The second benefit is that employers you work with will see an increase in more strong candidate referrals from you, which we know means more business satisfaction with your services. We've had very positive responses from employers who've hired our people, so your employers would be happy to get these qualified applicants.

Career Center Staff: Who would benefit by the Career Center and college collaboration?

College Staff: The people who would benefit are the students in certificate or degree programs who are looking for jobs. The profile of these job seekers is very much like that of the Career Center customers. We have some career services for these graduates, but we think if we work together, we can assist each other to help more people.

Career Center Staff: How prepared are your graduates in terms of job seeking skills?

College Staff: We are preparing our students/ graduates through job seeking preparation activities that are built into many classes, and workshops and coaching for others. We help them

with resumes , interviewing and other job getting skills. Many have participated in internships or co-op opportunities which give them current, on the job experience as well.

Career Center Staff: We've worked hard to build relationships with our employers and we want to maintain our primary role in communicating with them. We don't want to complicate things for our employers by having college staff contacting them for jobs.

College Staff: If our graduating job seekers can find employment through using your employer contacts, that is fine with us. It's more important for us to help them get jobs than it is to develop direct job placement relationships with employers. We do develop relationships with businesses for internships and to help us keep our programs current, but we don't have the staff the Career Center does to work directly with employers and maintain those relationships. It makes sense that we partner so together we can help to meet the needs of our area employers for skilled workers.

Before the meeting, you may want to:

1. Send an email stating your general objectives for the meeting, such as

We'd like to identify ways to work in closer partnership so we can

- *help the Career Center satisfy businesses by bringing them more job ready candidates*
- *help businesses see the value of our program graduates and hire them,*
- *find ways to have more of our program's job seeking students register as Career Center customers, which would allow them to benefit by your services and the Career Center to take credit for their work with our students.*

2. Prepare a brief written summary of the programs you are working with so the One Stop staff can plan for the best ways to assist. The summary should include:

- numbers of trainees per cohort
- number of cohorts per year
- number of weeks in the program
- any demographic (age, race, ethnicity, gender, etc.) information you think relevant
- occupations targeted

Ideally, if you send the summary to the Career Center reps you'll be meeting with prior to the meeting, you will save some time and give them the opportunity to think about employers that logically connect to your programs.

At the meeting:

Again state the purpose and desired outcomes. Address as many of the areas of concern above without the Career Center staff having to raise them.

Reasonable outcomes from the meeting could be:

- Clarification of communication protocols, such as assuring notifications to the Business Service Representatives, or other designated Career Center staff, of cohort graduation dates in time for them to plan assistance.

- Coordinating cohort graduation dates with business recruitment sessions the Career Center could arrange, such as mini-job fairs, to give prepared program participants a chance to connect with several hiring businesses in their field. This could be tried with just a couple specific cohorts to keep it manageable to start.
- Identifying ways to help more of your students/ graduates take Career Center workshops from which they could benefit. This may include a simplified Career Center enrollment process such as completing a basic MOSES registration prior to their visit.

Other potential points you could cover in the meeting:

- Discuss ways you can share information on the labor market with each other, such as employer forums, speaking sessions or other key information that would benefit each partner, and job seekers. This would include changes in what employers are emphasizing in interviews, changing credential demands, technology trends on the job, etc. Electronically share each others' newsletters, if available.
- Offer ways to increase a sense of connection and partnership by inviting the BSR or other Career Center staff to visit particular programs, graduations, etc., or offer for them to meet instructors who are well connected to their labor market.
- Discuss with Career Center staff their experiences or recommendations on keeping in touch with training graduates and obtaining placement information, which everyone knows is difficult. Not every organization uses the same strategies. Sharing your challenges that are similar to those faced by your partner helps build a sense of camaraderie over commonly shared difficulties, even if you don't "solve" the problem!

You may identify other win-win strategies as a result of the discussion to help each other achieve your objectives now and in the future. If old rules that don't seem to make sense are getting in the way at either your institution or your partner's institution, point out what likely benefits are being sacrificed or lost, and seek flexibility to try something new on a small scale to show it can work.

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