

GreenWays



JOBS FOR THE FUTURE

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT | TOOL 2.1

IDENTIFYING EMPLOYERS IN YOUR INDUSTRY

TOOL 2.1

Rather than using a pre-existing contact list of employers in your industry, take the time to develop your own. This will help you get to know the industry you've targeted at a detailed level. This tool provides tips on using both your existing partners and external sources to identify appropriate companies. Use the table to collect your contacts in a single place for easy reference. As a key first step, use the data that you compiled on your existing employer partnerships through Tool 1.2, then identify additional employers from other sources as well.

WHO SHOULD USE THIS TOOL

Program directors, grant managers

USING YOUR EMPLOYER DATABASE

Your organization can use a database of employers in your primary and related industries in a variety of ways. Use these ideas as a guide to help you determine if you are collecting information about the right companies.

You can use your contact database as:

- > A source of outreach to potential partners with your training programs
- > An invitation list for industry briefings and other networking events
- > A conversation starter when reaching out to new businesses, by asking for their advice about whether you're reaching everyone you should
- > A mailing list for workforce needs surveys that can increase your visibility and credibility

LEVERAGE YOUR PARTNERS

The first names in your employer database will be your existing partners. Incorporate those partners that you identified through Tool 1.2 into your database. These employers are also a great source of additional names and advice for identifying more companies, and may be able to directly connect you with new employer partners.

Leverage who you know by having them:

- > **Request the membership lists of the industry groups of which they are members.** These could be trade associations or local chapters of national organizations. These membership lists are occasionally also available on an association's website.
- > **Recommend other employers for you to contact.** You can help prompt your partners for suggestions by reviewing their LinkedIn connections for ideas.
- > **Recruit their peers to explore a workforce collaboration with you.** Identifying and cultivating employer champions who will work with you to recruit new employer partners can be a powerful employer engagement tactic.

TAP INTO LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

Reach beyond your partner network to access other resources in your community that can help you identify potential employer partners. This can provide an extensive list of businesses that includes specific knowledge of each business referenced.

- > **Local chambers of commerce, Workforce Development Boards, and economic development agencies** work with a large number of businesses and often seek the opportunity to build connections across the industry.
- > **Real-time labor market information tools**, such as Burning Glass, can identify the local businesses with job openings in your sector that align with the skills taught in your training program.

PURCHASE A MARKETING LIST

Complement your outreach with third-party information. Because the majority of jobs—particularly in hard-to-define clusters such as green, biotech, and IT—are with companies that do not associate with any industry-affiliated groups, look to resources that maximize your ability to find firms that operate under the radar.

Marketing lists are an easy source of detailed information about businesses in your targeted industries. Be sure to purchase a marketing list from a reputable vendor such as InfoUSA, Melissa Data, or Dun & Bradstreet. Marketing databases cost between \$.07 and \$.18 per record, but save your staff many hours of learning just how many relevant businesses are out there. You can focus the scope of records that you buy by searching for firms with the same NAICS codes as your employer partners. Including the NAICS codes in your employer database also allows you to sort it into clusters of businesses most likely to have similar training needs.

What is a NAICS code?

The North American Industry Classification System is the federal system for categorizing businesses by industry. The first two digits of a NAICS code indicate a firm's broad industry, and the full six-digit code defines a more detailed industry cluster. Because it is used by many federal agencies, the NAICS code is a popular classification used by many private organizations as well.

BUILDING YOUR EMPLOYER DATABASE

Maintain a simple database so you can track your employer partners and outreach efforts. You can use this table or create your own database. Be sure to include three basic types of information:

- > **Contact information:** This includes the company's address and the details of the person within the company who serves as your primary contact.
- > **Industry information:** Your description of the industry and its NAICS code are useful for organizing employers into related groups. Fill in as much detail about the industry as helps you, and be consistent so you can sort using these descriptions.
- > **Connection to your organization:** Keep track of each company's primary contact within your organization so that a single employer doesn't hear from several staff members who have not coordinated. Add any short additional notes that are important for you to know at a glance, such as whether the company has responded to your outreach efforts.
- > **Connection to your organization:** Keep track of each company's primary contact within your organization so that a single employer doesn't hear from several staff members who have not coordinated. Add any short additional notes that are important for you to know at a glance, such as whether the company has responded to your outreach efforts.

