

GreenWays



JOBS FOR THE FUTURE

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT | TOOL 4.1

EMPLOYER VOICE IN PARTICIPANT SELECTION

TOOL 4.1

Employer voice should be strong in each program area, from participant selection, through training, and ultimately, placement. This tool explores participant selection as the first element in that program sequence, providing an example of the robust role that employers can play in a program area. Including employers in the participant selection process creates a feeling of co-ownership and investment in the program while teaching the employers about the population you serve. Use this table to consider multiple strategies for incorporating employer partners into your participant intake process and to determine which works best for your program. Remember that employer commitment is not easy to secure. Find out what level of involvement they are willing to take on.

WHO SHOULD USE THIS TOOL

Program directors, staff responsible for candidate review and selection

BENEFITS TO YOUR PROGRAM

Training programs often engage employers in the latter stages of program delivery, when participants have already learned the skills they need to enter the workplace as an intern or employee. Getting employers to connect to your program even before training has begun can help you and your participants in several key ways:

- > When employers have reviewed and helped select participants, they establish a connection to them that inspires more extensive involvement. They may want to mentor, host interns, or hire participants they have met and liked.
- > Employers sometimes determine that programs aren't starting with the "right kind" of participants, or that too much remediation is required. By helping select participants, employers can make sure they feel comfortable with them as job candidates. This might mean that you have to adjust your entry requirements, because employers often push for more restrictive criteria, with more basic skill, experience, and language requirements.
- > This is an opportunity to share information about the goals of your program. Meeting candidates and learning their back stories allows employers to put a face to what you've said about your mission and to gain an appreciation for the obstacles students are overcoming just to participate in the program.

BENEFITS TO EMPLOYERS

The benefits from these activities do not only extend to training programs. Employers also gain from being involved in participant selection. Major advantages of being involved at this early stage include:

- > Employers have the opportunity to make sure that the program will meet their needs, because they can help align the attributes of participants with what they need in their workforce.
- > If they participate in the selection process of each cohort, employers have the opportunity to identify specific candidates who are well-suited to their business and current labor needs.
- > In meeting potential participants prior to the start of a training program, employers have the opportunity to attract the strongest candidates to their company before their competitors.

OPTIONS FOR EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

This table offers several roles that employers can play in the participant selection process. Feel free to define your own role for employers. These strategies are not mutually exclusive, as long as you have enough employer partners who are interested in getting involved at each step. Each of these activities requires time and effort from both employers and your staff.

For any activity that you select, establish your next steps to make it happen. This might require a culture shift within your organization. Make sure that all relevant staff members are open to incorporating employer input before you bring employers to the table. Be clear with employers about what is expected of them and what impact their participation will have. Also, if the engagement needs to happen with each cohort, create a timeline that reflects the repeated commitment prior to each new course.

SELECTION OPTION	EMPLOYER ROLE	HOW IT HELPS EMPLOYERS	EMPLOYER TIME COMMITMENT	EMPLOYERS INTERESTED	STAFF RESPONSIBLE
Intake criteria creation	Employers work with program staff in creating intake criteria against which potential participants will be assessed for acceptance into the program.	Criteria reflect employer concerns and create greater legitimacy in final selection.	1 day commitment up front (not per cohort)		
Resume and application review	Employers review applications and resumes from potential trainees and score each applicant based on weighted criteria provided by the program staff. Employer scores are incorporated with other selection criteria.	Provides an early read on who the trainees are and where they are coming from. Intake mirrors the job application process they are familiar with.	1/2 day per cohort—can reduce by distributing applications instead of having all employers review all applications		
Finalist interviews	Employers interview finalists with program staff for final stage of selection. This may also serve as a place for employers to welcome incoming participants.	Opportunity to find out more about who the trainees are and what motivates them. Provides a sense of true partnership.	1-2 days per cohort		