

GreenWays



JOBS FOR THE FUTURE

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT | TOOL 2.2

# RECRUITING YOUR EMPLOYER LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

## TOOL 2.2

Employer leadership committees can play a critical role in developing effective partnerships with a job training or workforce development program, but they are often ineffective when they are not engaged in the most helpful way or lack the right members. Rather than ask only who is willing to serve, your organization should invite employer leaders that support your program needs and that have workforce needs that align with your program. This guide helps you select employers that can best serve on a leadership committee. Once you have your leadership committee in place, you should follow up by making sure that they maintain an active role in the program through activities that provide the significant benefits to the program as well as the employers themselves. These activities should evolve over time, as you demonstrate the value of the partnership to each member of your leadership committee.

### WHO SHOULD USE THIS TOOL

Executive directors, senior program managers, board members, and others who select members for leadership/ advisory boards and committees and/or manage them.

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## AN ACTIVE EMPLOYER COMMITTEE

Set the tone for your employer committee by removing “advisory” from its name. Employer committee, employer action committee, and employer leadership committee all imply an active role for members. Make this expectation explicit and ask for leadership—not advice. Advice is usually not the only priority for programs, and you can get it without forming a committee. It is better to have a small number of employers who make serious commitments than to have a larger group that offers advice and attends meetings.

Active employers benefit your program by helping you achieve your goals and by improving the external perception of your organization. Participating on the committee will help them by maximizing the program’s ability to meet their workforce needs. Their commitment is a signal to others that your program has value.

## KEY ROLES FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Articulate to committee members how engagement can benefit them. Members can address their workforce needs by training and retaining their workers through the program, hiring program graduates, or connecting to other training expertise from the organization. They may also benefit if you provide them with your own labor market information, as well the opportunity to meet with other employers and identify common concerns.

Build relationships with each member of the employer leadership committee. As you demonstrate your value to them, you can also seek more active support. In general, the continuum of employer engagement will evolve from informal and formal advising to intensive involvement that is integrated into your program design and delivery. In [A Resource Guide to Engaging Employers](#), Randall Wilson defines the ladder of employer engagement as:

- > Advising (less intensive)
- > Capacity-building
- > Co-designing
- > Convening
- > Leading (most intensive)

Not all of these activities have to occur within the context of the leadership committee. For example, an employer can help build program capacity through job site tours or mock interviews without committing to an ongoing leadership role. Make sure that you define the roles of committee members to most help your program, while still drawing on all of your employer partners at the appropriate level of engagement. The two most important roles for committee members are generally:

- > **Employing your graduates.** This is a direct benefit to your program, and also boosts other businesses’ perception of your program and its participants.
- > **Actively promoting your program to other employers.**

Five other activities can also be valuable roles for committee members:

- > **Involving themselves, and their employees, in the life of your trainees through program activities such as mentoring, internships, class presentations, mock interviews, and curriculum review.**
- > **Endorsing or recognizing your training program and associated credentials.**
- > **Guaranteeing interviews for program graduates.**

- > **Assisting financially. This can be direct assistance through cash and in-kind contributions or by encouraging other industry firms to become involved.**
- > **Sharing actionable information about trends and issues in the local industry that program staff are unlikely to find on their own.**

If you would like committee members to play other roles critical to the success of your program, list it here:

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## CREATING YOUR EMPLOYER COMMITTEE CRITERIA

Once you have defined your employer committee’s role, establish a set of criteria to guide how you recruit and engage employers to ensure your committee has a successful balance of member roles. Seek criteria that not only reflect your needs but also offer benefits to committee members. This will help employers stay engaged because they benefit from their involvement. These criteria are organized along the employer engagement ladder, so that the roles of members of the employer committee can progress and you develop a deeper relationship with them. You can decide whether any criteria are essential, employers must meet a certain number of criteria, or at least one committee member must meet each criterion.

Remember that some employers that know you best might not meet your criteria, and they might not be the best choice for your committee. Your closest partners are likely to already be supportive even without a committee role. Other employers that best fit your selected criteria might not have heard of you yet. Recruit them using Tool 2.3.

POTENTIAL CRITERIA	YES	NO	DISCUSS
<b>Advising</b>			
Attends quarterly meetings			
Shares information about industry trends and issues			
Provides management advice to executive director			
<b>Building Program Capacity</b>			
Hiring now or likely to be hiring soon			
Has hired one of our graduates			
Has hired more than one of our graduates			
Connects to the program to help retain workers			

POTENTIAL CRITERIA	YES	NO	DISCUSS
Agrees to share openings and interview referred candidates			
Provides paid internship for trainees			
Provides unpaid internships for trainees			
Provides employees for mock interviews			
Offers facilities and a guide for company tours			
Contributes in-kind support (space or equipment)			
Contributes at least \$_____			
<b>Co-Designing Curricula and Career Pathways</b>			
Reviews and comments on curriculum, if requested			
Provides an engaged mentor to at least one trainee			
Validate the skills and qualifications of graduates			
Offers employees to serve as instructors/presenters			
<b>Convening Workforce Partnerships</b>			
Identifies common needs with other employers			
Jointly develops workforce strategies and program designs with other employers			
Signs support letters for grant proposal requests			
<b>Leading and Sustaining Partnerships</b>			
Considered a knowledgeable and successful business in the employer community			
Provides introductions and referrals to industry leaders			
Recruits a minimum of __ companies/year to join committee			
Supports funding for the program in political campaigns and advocates with public officials and legislators			