



GETTING  
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# CAREER DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE TOOLKIT

August 2024



**EdSystems**

EDUCATION SYSTEMS CENTER at  
NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

This document has been created by Education Systems Center at NIU in partnership with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and the Illinois State Board of Education.



## ABOUT EDUCATION SYSTEMS CENTER

Education Systems Center at Northern Illinois University (EdSystems) is a mission-driven policy development and program implementation center. We foster collaborative partnerships to design, implement, and evaluate policies and practices that ensure successful transitions to and through postsecondary and career opportunities for students, with a particular emphasis on historically marginalized populations.

Learn more at [edsystemsniu.org](http://edsystemsniu.org).



## ABOUT THE ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

DCEO's mission is to provide economic opportunities for businesses, entrepreneurs, and residents that improve the quality of life for all Illinoisans. They are laser-focused on improving transparency and accountability, enhancing customer service, increasing Illinois' competitiveness, advancing minority empowerment, modernizing Illinois' workforce, and elevating the state's promotional efforts.

Learn more [here](#).



## ABOUT THE ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

College and Career Readiness (CCR) is a dedicated team of education professionals working to provide high-quality educational programs, resources, and training for all Illinois students, teachers, and administrators. To support and enhance the development of college and career ready students, the CCR division provides a blend of academic and career and technical educational guidance, leadership, and technical assistance to local districts and regional staff. Learn more [here](#).

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# INTRODUCTION

## TOOLKIT PRIMARY PURPOSES



Establish expectations for implementing high-quality, rigorous work-based learning experiences that prepare young people to be college and career ready through the development of essential, entrepreneurial, and technical employability skills.



Provide guidance, tools, and frameworks to offer a career development experience, which is a required component of the College and Career Pathway Endorsement framework and in the State's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) as a College and Career Readiness Indicator.



Highlight best practice examples of how organizations are accomplishing this on-the-ground and spark thinking for other communities on how these examples might be modified to fit into their own unique contexts.

## BACKGROUND & MATERIALS PROVIDED WITHIN

The Career Development Experience Toolkit and associated resources adhere to the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR) Act framework for College and Career Pathway Endorsements. While these materials adhere to the endorsement framework (Figure 1) for high school students, they are also meant to serve any organization who seeks to provide rigorous work-based learning opportunities to youth.

Resources and best practices from communities included in this toolkit have been developed as a result of active engagement and continuous learning through implementation of innovative ideas and methods to best serve the needs of their local region. These communities have encountered both successes and setbacks that have further informed their practices, allowing them to influence and teach others through their lessons learned. It is no small feat to establish all of the components of a career development experience and create an opportunity that ultimately shapes life trajectories and strengthens communities.

The materials and information within this toolkit serve to provide guidance regardless of where an organization is at in terms of establishing and running a career development experience program. Each section of the toolkit can be referred to separately or as a whole to inform current practices. This toolkit is meant to enhance, rather than supplant, any current practices to ensure that they are meeting the requirements of state frameworks and providing high-quality, rigorous, work-based learning experiences.



A career development experience is statutorily defined in the PWR Act and is included in Illinois' Career Pathways Dictionary as part of Illinois' broader work-based learning continuum. Guidance provided in this document is applicable to any supervised work experience regardless of whether it is applicable toward a College and Career Pathway Endorsement or as a College and Career Readiness Indicator. Typical terms associated with a career development experience include internships, school-based enterprises, supervised agricultural experiences, and youth apprenticeships.

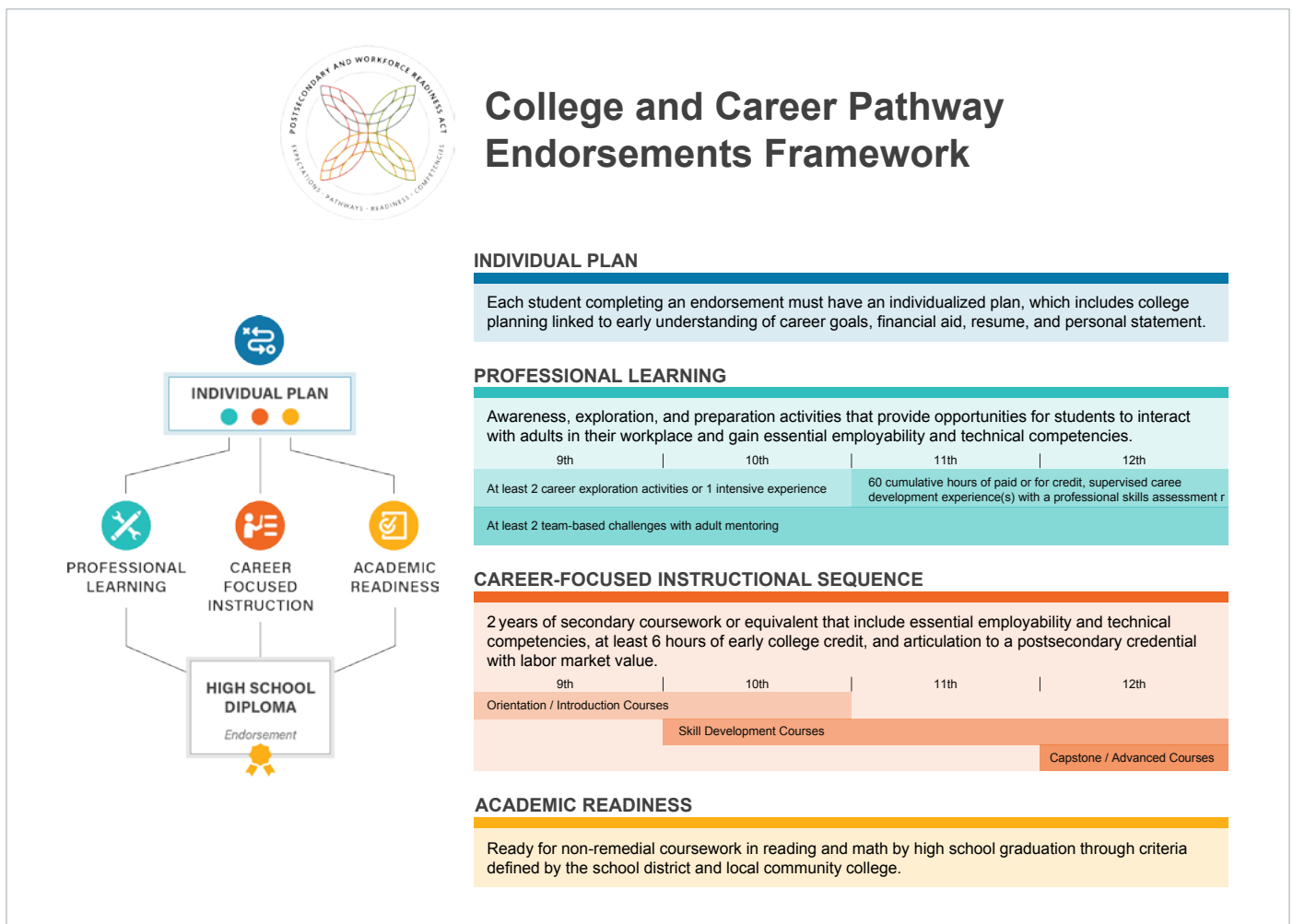
# OVERVIEW: COLLEGE AND CAREER PATHWAY ENDORSEMENTS

The PWR Act, signed into law in 2016, takes a student-centered and competency-based approach to helping students achieve college and career readiness. The legislation identified four components to improve the alignment and transition from high school to-and-through-college and into careers. One of those components is the College and Career Pathway Endorsement, which provides an innovative way for school districts to validate the hard work of students preparing for life after high school.

The PWR Act establishes a voluntary system for school districts to award College and Career Pathway Endorsements on high school diplomas to demonstrate students' readiness for college and careers through completion of instruction and professional learning experiences in a selected career interest area, including career exploration and development. The endorsements require an individualized learning plan, career-focused instruction, career exploration activities, and 60 hours of internships or career development experiences as defined in the PWR Act (as outlined in Figure 1).

**FIGURE 1**

College and Career Pathway Endorsement Framework





OVERVIEW: COLLEGE AND CAREER PATHWAY ENDORSEMENTS

To support the College and Career Pathway Endorsement framework, Illinois state agencies adopted seven endorsement areas that organize the national career cluster framework into the following industry sector-based groupings:

- Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources
- Arts and Communications
- Finance and Business Services
- Human and Public Services
- Health Sciences and Technology
- Information Technology
- Manufacturing, Engineering, Technology, and Trades

EdSystems and JFF collaborated with industry leaders to define key technical, essential employability, and entrepreneurial competencies that should be developed through coursework and professional learning experiences in each area, available in the Recommended Technical and Essential Employability Competencies document. College and Career Pathway Endorsements denote that a participant has, through their coursework and professional learning, developed the technical, essential, and entrepreneurial competencies in their relevant area.

 <b>TOP 8 TECHNICAL COMPETENCY STATEMENTS FOR AGRICULTURE, FOOD, &amp; NATURAL RESOURCES</b>	
<b>AFNR Systems &amp; Integration</b>	Students can identify and analyze the breadth, depth, and interconnectivity of AFNR systems in order to make sustainable and innovative management decisions.
<b>Technology</b>	Students can apply their understanding of relevant technology and tools to collect information and execute effective practices across AFNR systems.
<b>Policy &amp; Regulations</b>	Students can seek out, analyze, and apply information about relevant public policy and regulations to manage their impact on AFNR production, processing, distribution, and management practices.
<b>Society &amp; Culture</b>	Students can use their understanding of the local natural and cultural resources, food, and economic context to steward consumer education and connections to AFNR stakeholders.
<b>Resource Stewardship</b>	Students can identify and analyze essential resources in order to steward them and implement sustainable management practices.
<b>Ethical Production</b>	Students can apply their understanding of ethical standards and practices in order to produce, process, and distribute AFNR goods and services with integrity.
<b>Research &amp; Innovation</b>	Students can apply research and critical thinking skills to design innovative practices that address complex challenges in AFNR operations and industries.
<b>Health, Safety, &amp; Compliance</b>	Students can use their understanding of personal safety and environmental regulations to comply with health and safety requirements as well as maintain safe and proper use of AFNR tools and equipment.

 <b>TOP 10 TECHNICAL COMPETENCY STATEMENTS FOR ADVANCED MANUFACTURING &amp; ENGINEERING</b>	
<b>Equipment Safety</b>	Students can use their understanding of equipment usage, practices, and procedures to maintain a healthy, safe, and secure work environment.
<b>Manufacturing Environment</b>	Students can use their understanding of workstations, tools, and equipment operations to safely navigate a manufacturing environment.
<b>Personal Health &amp; Safety</b>	Students can use their understanding of personal safety and environmental regulations to comply with local, federal, and company health/safety demands.
<b>Spatial Reasoning</b>	Students can use their understanding of objects in relation to one another to understand three-dimensional imaging.
<b>Process, Design, &amp; Development</b>	Students can use their understanding of technical drawings and schematics to complete the design and development process.
<b>Installation</b>	Students can use their understanding of tools to assemble and disassemble simple tools.
<b>Customer Focus</b>	Students can use their understanding of communication and project management to understand client needs and complete project accordingly.
<b>Quality Assurance &amp; Continuous Improvement</b>	Students can use their understanding of product and process to meet quality systems requirements as defined by customer specifications.
<b>Digital Manufacturing</b>	Students can use their understanding of digital manufacturing tools and computer-based programs to complete the design and develop implementation process.
<b>Supply Chain Logistics</b>	Students can use their understanding of materials, suppliers, and internal systems to plan and monitor movement and storage of materials and products.

**FIGURE 2**

Excerpts from Recommended Technical and Essential Employability Competencies



# WHAT IS A CAREER DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE?

This toolkit focuses on the career development experience as articulated in the PWR Act and which are part of Illinois' broader work-based learning continuum:



These work-based learning continuum elements have statutory definitions that are included in the [Career Pathways Dictionary](#). It also defines “career pathways” and terms essential to career pathway program and system elements. These definitions have been developed and refined through research, stakeholder engagement, and thoughtful alignment to a variety of efforts—especially the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Illinois Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) State Plan, and the Illinois Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR) Act.

The term “career development experience” can refer to a broad array of experiential learning. However, to count towards a student’s College and Career Pathway Endorsement, it must include the components included in the statutory definition:



## CAREER DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE (CDE)

A supervised career development experience must include the following:

1. A course transcription and corresponding school credit for the experience or compensation of the student’s work hours for the career development experience, or both.
2. A workplace with authentic working conditions and tasks that include, but are not limited to, timekeeping, evaluation of work, responsibility to adhere to safety protocols, or adherence to the standard operating procedures of the organization. The workplace experience must reinforce the relevant technical and essential employability competencies.
3. Collaboration between the school district and the community or business partners in developing and monitoring the experiences.
4. Feedback given to the student.
5. At least 60 hours of participation completed by the student through a single experience or across two experiences; however, no individual experience may be less than 20 hours.

In addition to workplace settings in business or community partner locations, a supervised career development experience may include a workplace setting that is (a) based in the school district if the setting is authentic and the district employee serving as a supervisor is fulfilling the role of an industry mentor or supervisor rather than the role of a classroom teacher; or (b) virtual if it includes authentic virtual, remote, or hybrid working conditions and a mentor or supervisor who is an employee of the workplace’s organization.

## IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE

Career development experiences may include any of the following examples, provided the experience meets the definitional criteria described in the previous page:

- Internship
- School-based enterprise
- Supervised agricultural experience
- Cooperative education
- Research-based internship
- Remote work for a client or employer
- Student-led enterprise
- Youth apprenticeship

However, a career development experience may not consist solely of technical training by an education provider.

## TECHNICAL & ESSENTIAL EMPLOYABILITY COMPETENCIES

The career development experience should relate to a participant's career area of interest and help them develop the related technical competencies as well as the essential employability and entrepreneurial competencies. Illinois' [Recommended Technical and Essential Employability Competencies](#) for College and Career Pathway Endorsements serve as quality indicators of an individual's readiness to enter an industry or to pursue further education. Competency statements apply to industry needs, contain employability and technical skills, and allow for specialized training and career advancement. For further guidance, please refer to the [Illinois State Board of Education's competency-based education resources](#).

Competencies are organized into two broad categories: essential employability and technical. Essential employability competencies, often called employability or soft skills, are workplace dispositions and attitudes connected to often-performed work tasks and behaviors. Applicable across many industries and relevant to the career development experience, employability competencies include the ability to connect industry knowledge to one's personal efficacy in the workplace. A core element of essential employability competencies also includes entrepreneurial skillsets focused on growth mindset and the ability to innovate in the workplace for both personal and professional pursuits. Technical competencies relate to specific industry knowledge and skills and the ability to apply that learning in a workplace environment. Taken together, the universal employability competencies and sector-specific technical competencies will inform how professional learning experiences, including the career development experience, are designed.



The required 60 hours for the career development experience can be completed using a variety of models. Currently, ISBE rules state each experience should be no less than 20 hours. Below are some examples of the ways students accumulate CDE hours:

### Micro-Internships

30 hours over a  
1–4 week period

### Semester-Long

5–10 hours per week  
for 16 weeks

### Summer

10–15 hours per week  
for 6 weeks

See "[Getting Started](#)" for more information on how communities throughout the state are implementing CDE models.

# HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

**GETTING  
STARTED**



**ORGANIZATIONAL  
STRUCTURE**



**HOST  
OUTREACH**



**ONBOARDING**



**DURING**



**WRAPPING  
UP**

This toolkit is meant to serve multiple audiences – from organizations and communities just beginning to develop career development experiences to those who are looking to enhance their offerings and ensure they are tied to real-world skills and opportunities for participants.

The toolkit is organized from early implementation stages through each critical moment of the career development experience, highlights best practices and resources from across Illinois as well as nationally. Each toolkit section is applicable whether a career development experience is well developed or barely getting off the ground. This toolkit also includes references to supporting special groups, modifying for out-of-school youth, and recommendations to ensure equity in the experiences provided.

This document is not intended to be exhaustive; instead it is a gathering of best practices and resource sharing from communities doing incredible work throughout the state of Illinois and nationally. We hope communities will apply, repurpose, and utilize these resources to provide meaningful and robust career development experiences that ultimately prepare youth to be college and career ready.

## TOOLKIT TERMINOLOGY

### **PARTICIPANT**

The individual who will participate in the career development experience: high school student, opportunity youth, participant in a non-profit/community-based youth development program, etc.

### **MANAGING ORGANIZATION**

Lead entity working to organize and coordinate the delivery of career development experiences to participants: school, non-profit or community-based organization, chamber of commerce, other public/private institutions, religious organization, etc. May also be a convening organization or intermediary in a community.

### **HOST**

Typically thought of as the employer, the company, or organization providing the workplace or authentic working conditions for a participant to complete the career development experience.



# THE “WHYS” FOR A CAREER DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE

Before you begin diving in to the content of this toolkit, consider the reasons for participating in a career development experience. The experiences are no easy task to implement in a quality manner that lead to rewarding and successful results for both participants and hosts. Managing organizations take on a necessary challenge in offering these opportunities, and need to have a plan for how to meaningfully engage participants and hosts. The following “whys” are common motives for participation in a career development experience. Managing organizations should consider their unique contexts and provide additional detail to further communicate the impact of their career development experience on participants and hosts, as well as how the larger community is affected.

## **PARTICIPANTS**

### **Why should participants complete a career development experience?**

- Engage in authentic, hands-on tasks related to their career interest area
- Receive one-on-one mentorship and guidance from industry experts
- Discover the various pathways and requirements to obtain employment in their career interest area
- Determine whether their career interest area is a good fit for them (a successful CDE also includes those that redirects a participant’s career pathway!)
- Develop a network of professionals and industry experts that can lead to accessing future opportunities

## **HOSTS**

### **Why should hosts provide a career development experience?**

- Provide training and supports tailored to their workforce needs to build highly skilled individuals
- Gain new perspectives and insights on current practices from an individual who has typically completed work-based learning in other related industry area spaces beforehand
- Enhance or develop a collaborative relationship with managing organizations to ensure that systems and needs are aligned
- Influence the pathways of individuals interested in pursuing careers in their industry
- Serve as a steward for continued economic growth and access to opportunities for meaningful employment in their region

Throughout, participants and hosts should spend intentional time reflecting on the above items to ensure continued engagement that leads to the intended benefits of the career development experience. This toolkit will outline multiple ways that these reflection moments can occur before, during, and after the experience.

Ultimately, a career development experience should be enjoyable and rewarding for participants and hosts. Consider ways for participants and hosts to have some fun along the way.

# BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

One of the most productive and inventive spaces to ensure that managing organizations are delivering quality career development experience is through a community of practice. A community of practice is often defined as a network or group of peers who share an interest and, through regular interaction, seek to learn from one another how to do it better through sharing information and experiences.

The information, resources and best practices shared within this toolkit are a result of collaboration among managing organizations, hosts, and community members. Practitioners are encouraged to consider how to form regional communities of practice with similar collaborations. Bringing together different perspectives and experiences allows for learning and the evolution of policies and practices. Managing organizations will be able to accelerate the work in unimaginable ways through consistent conversations and collaborations with similar organizations and with hosts. Peer-to-peer learning is needed to develop best practices and solutions to common obstacles.

In keeping with the tradition of learning and growing, this toolkit and its related resources are dynamic and open to feedback about whether the information was useful and/or if there are any areas that could be enhanced.

## **CDE TOOLKIT WEBSITE**

Visit [EdSystemsNIU.org/CDE-Toolkit](https://EdSystemsNIU.org/CDE-Toolkit)



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# GETTING STARTED

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# CREATING A QUALITY CAREER DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE

## ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS

For a career development experience (CDE) to have impact and contribute to meaningful competency development for participants, the components and learning outcomes need to be explicit. The CDE should be a carefully monitored work experience in which participants have personal and career-related goals and the opportunity to reflect throughout the experience. A quality CDE, at minimum, will include the following features and outcomes:



### Opportunity to Reflect

Time is provided throughout the CDE for participants to examine both how and what they have learned – specifically their development and attainment of essential employability and technical competencies.

### Support from an Industry Expert

Host staff are consistently available and work one-on-one with participants. Along with providing tasks, they coach participants through best practices and are the primary provider of feedback on a participant's professional skills assessment (see "During" for more details).

### Tasks that Reinforce Competencies

Participants are provided a variety of tasks that are meaningful and reflective of authentic working conditions. Competencies developed through completion of these tasks are transferable and applicable to multiple career and postsecondary options.

### Participant and Host Support

Opportunities are available for the participant and host to submit feedback directly to the managing organization to address successes and challenges of the CDE. The managing organization is also available throughout the CDE to address needs in real time for both the host and participant.

### Assets- and Needs-Based Approach

Participants are valued as resources of talent with background knowledge and lived experiences that are recognized as a benefit to the host. CDEs will provide a framework to build on the potential of all participants and provide needs-based support for participant's areas of growth and development.

### Relevant and Rewarding

The CDE is applicable to a career pathway that a participant is pursuing and engages them in a network of industry professionals for future advising and contact purposes. Participants are recognized for their work through some form of credit, compensation, or both.



### TOOLKIT TERMINOLOGY

Definitions for the terms "participant," "managing organization," and "host" are given in the [Introduction](#).

## CREATING A QUALITY CAREER DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE

### PLANNING THE CDE

With the essential components of a quality CDE in mind, your managing organization can begin to build out a timeline of events and action items for your program. Each of these components and their related items should always refer back to the type and rigor of CDE that you want to offer both participants and hosts. This quality check at multiple points along the planning process will ensure that CDEs result in successful experiences for all parties involved.

A summary of CDE components and related action items to consider includes:

#### HOST OUTREACH

Recruit and secure host sites for participant CDE placements.

Collect information on host sites and determine capacity for offering CDEs.

Train staff as needed if participants are completing CDE in-house.

#### ONBOARDING FOR HOSTS

Review and confirm expectations for host responsibilities and experience for participants.

Determine any specific onboarding needs for participants to complete before their first day.

Establish your managing organization as a support and resource provider throughout the CDE process.

#### ONBOARDING FOR PARTICIPANTS

Complete any needed pre-assessments to determine participant readiness and any unique needs or accommodations.

Collect participant interest and permission forms to determine placement site and approval to participate.

Prepare participants for a professional environment through training and resources.

#### DURING

Develop professional skills assessment(s) relevant to current CDE offerings for participants.

Determine a timeline and process for collecting host and participant feedback (site visits, surveys, phone calls, etc.).

Prepare a plan and resources for situations where hosts and/or participants may experience challenges.



#### STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Consider the ways other stakeholders can be involved in the development and implementation process of a CDE program. It will be important to maintain open lines of communication and solicit input/feedback from those stakeholders directly affected outside of hosts and participants. Families, principals, teachers, youth workforce development professionals, and intermediary organizations are a few examples of stakeholders capable of providing leverage and engagement to develop a strong CDE program.

#### WRAPPING UP

Determine how this data and information will be collected and where it will be housed within your managing organization.

Outline the process and provide any necessary materials for participants and hosts to complete to close-out the CDE.

## CREATING A QUALITY CAREER DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE

## ACCESS &amp; EQUITY

All participants – regardless of race, socioeconomic status, gender, prior academic achievement, or special learning needs – should have equitable access to and opportunity for full participation in CDEs. Managing organizations play a critical role in ensuring access and opportunity for participants. Some items to consider to determine whether a CDE is providing equitable access are:

**Location of CDEs**

- Are they strategically located to provide a variety of accessible sites for all participants?
- How will participants be supported to meet the transportation needs of getting to host site?

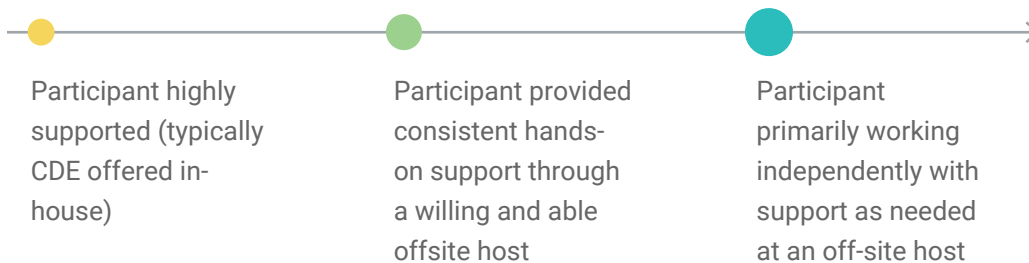
**Access to Information**

- Have all participants been provided the same information and options regarding CDE opportunities?
- How and where is information being delivered so that all potential participants are aware of CDEs?

**Supports to Succeed**

- What tailored supports are available for each special group represented by participants?
- How are participants assessed to determine any specific needs and/or supports to complete the CDE?

It will be necessary at times to customize and modify the experience on a case-by-case basis, but a general diverse selection of CDE models can be helpful to provide a continuum of levels of support and placement site options. One great example of a diverse continuum is the tiered system High School District 214 has implemented to accommodate various levels of support and supervision needed for student CDE participants. This structure considers whether a participant is prepared to go off-site for their CDE and the ability of an off-site host to provide the needed level of hands-on support and guidance throughout.

**ENGAGING DIVERSE POPULATIONS**

Successful engagement of a diverse population of participants may involve adjusting your CDE program's terminology, group norms, and personal interactions. These adjustments should be incorporated into the design, delivery, and implementation of your CDE program. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Adolescent Health, has compiled [resources and information](#) on designing services and materials to fit the needs of diverse youth.

**EXEMPLAR**

See the [D214 Career Pathways Guide](#) for more detail on their tiered system.

# MODELS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

There are several models for CDEs, and each of these might entail a range of total hours for the participant. However, for a CDE to count toward a College and Career Pathway Endorsement or as a College and Career Readiness Indicator for ESSA, it must total 60 cumulative hours through a single experience or across two experiences.

Note: No individual experience may be less than 20 hours. This means a CDE can be one 60-hour experience, two 30-hour experiences, or one 20-hour experience plus one 40-hour experience.

Models may include any of the following examples:

- Internship
- School-based enterprise
- Supervised agricultural experience
- Cooperative education
- Research-based internship
- Remote work for a client or employer
- Student-led enterprise
- Youth apprenticeship

Following are descriptions of each model and community examples.



## MODELS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

TYPE OF CDE	INTERNSHIP	MICRO-INTERNSHIP
DESCRIPTION OF MODEL	Typically defined as a period of work experience offered for a set period of time and refers to a wide range of job placement opportunities	Short-term professional assignments that can take place year-round and typically range from 5–40 total hours of work to accommodate participant schedules
COMMUNITY EXAMPLE	RUSH University Medical Center – REACH MedSTEM Pathways	Streamwood Career Exploration Program
SCHEDULE & LENGTH OF PROGRAM	6 weeks, occurring in the summer	5 days, occurring over participant's spring break
TOTAL # OF HOURS	120	32.5
HOST COMMITMENT	Hospital staff volunteer based on schedule availability, rotated to provide hands-on support to participants	Staff member assigns project deliverables and consults on participant project development process
TYPICAL PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants explore several departments and units in the hospital setting through hands-on learning</li> <li>Participants take courses in college and career readiness, life and workforce skills development</li> <li>Participants network with other students and healthcare professionals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants are placed with local organizations to learn about business, with an emphasis on work ethic, management, and career opportunities</li> <li>Participants work on industry-based projects to produce a business proposal with the potential for implementation that solves an host-identified challenge</li> </ul>
LOCATION	Hospital site; placement varies by departmental needs	Participants are placed with a range of local organizations
CREDIT VS. COMPENSATION	Paid	Paid
LINK(S) FOR MORE INFORMATION	<a href="#">MedSTEM Internship</a>	<a href="#">U-46 School District: Streamwood High School Students Explore Career Pathways on Spring Break</a>  <a href="#">Video: Streamwood High School Career Exploration Program 2019</a>

## MODELS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

TYPE OF CDE	<b>SCHOOL-BASED ENTERPRISE (SBE)</b>	<b>SUPERVISED AGRICULTURAL EXPERIENCE</b>
<b>DESCRIPTION OF MODEL</b>	An entrepreneurial operation in a school setting that provides goods/ services to meet the needs of the market, managed and operated by students as hands-on learning laboratories that integrate National Curriculum Standards in marketing, finance, hospitality or management	Experiential and work-based learning as an integral component of academic course work to extend beyond the classroom and into the community, providing participants with opportunities to apply academic and occupational skills in the workplace or a simulated workplace environment
<b>COMMUNITY EXAMPLE</b>	District 211 Family and Consumer Sciences, Practices in Entrepreneurship	SAEs are a required component of an agriculture education program and intended for every student
<b>SCHEDULE &amp; LENGTH OF PROGRAM</b>	One semester, two-period course	Varies depending on program model; typically occurring outside of classroom hours
<b>TOTAL # OF HOURS</b>	2–5 hours/week	Varies depending on program model
<b>HOST COMMITMENT</b>	Participants are supervised by their course instructor(s)	Formulated by the participant with the support of parent/guardians, hosts, and the agricultural instructor
<b>TYPICAL PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants take on increased responsibility in the management of a bakery/coffee shop with items available for purchase weekly by school staff and their peers</li> <li>• Participants are trained in advanced culinary techniques and production management for running a successful business</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Own and operate a business by planning, implementing, operating, managing finances, and assuming risk for an enterprise</li> <li>• Work, volunteer, and/or serve in an workplace setting</li> <li>• Choose an agricultural problem and design a plan to investigate and analyze</li> <li>• Keep records of business related and personal time and finances for personal growth and literacy</li> </ul>
<b>LOCATION</b>	In school	Varies depending on program model
<b>CREDIT VS. COMPENSATION</b>	College credit with local community college	Can receive educational credit, service credit, and/or compensation
<b>LINK(S) FOR MORE INFORMATION</b>	<a href="#">District 211 Curriculum Guide</a>	<a href="#">The National Council for Agricultural Education</a> <a href="#">Explore SAE</a>

## MODELS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

TYPE OF CDE	<b>COOPERATIVE EDUCATION</b>	<b>RESEARCH INTERNSHIP</b>
<b>DESCRIPTION OF MODEL</b>	A structured method of combining classroom-based education with practical work experience, providing academic credit for structured job experience and related class includes units in skills required for successful employment	Participants are hired for specific tasks within an established project and receive basic training in research skills and data collection methods that can be incorporated in all aspects of research, providing for greater decision-making authority and leadership development
<b>COMMUNITY EXAMPLE</b>	Lake Park High School District Cooperative Marketing Education	Field Museum Digital Learning Internship
<b>SCHEDULE &amp; LENGTH OF PROGRAM</b>	2-semester long program, one class period with early release last period of the day to complete hours at host site	Monday to Friday for 6-weeks, 6.5 hours per day, occurring in the summer
<b>TOTAL # OF HOURS</b>	Up to 540 hours	195
<b>HOST COMMITMENT</b>	Provide at least 15 hours of work per week, pay students, and participate in an evaluation meeting twice per semester	Provide training and coaching on items as needed for participant's projects and tasks
<b>TYPICAL PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-school study of life skills such as communication, interviewing, and preparation for college and careers</li> <li>• Early release for students to work real jobs in the community</li> <li>• Students are matched to jobs through school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants work with museum plant specimens through research and the creation of a digital media interactive to showcase their work through installments available for public view</li> <li>• Participants rotate among departments and collaborate with scientists, digital learning specialists, and designers</li> </ul>
<b>LOCATION</b>	Hybrid: In school and at host site	Field Museum, Chicago, IL
<b>CREDIT VS. COMPENSATION</b>	0.5 credit/semester for the class component, 1 credit/semester for the job component	Paid
<b>LINK(S) FOR MORE INFORMATION</b>	<a href="#">LPS – Cooperative Education</a>	<a href="#">Field Museum High School Science and Digital Learning Program</a>

## MODELS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

TYPE OF CDE	<b>REMOTE WORK FOR A CLIENT OR HOST</b>	<b>STUDENT-LED ENTERPRISE</b>
<b>DESCRIPTION OF MODEL</b>	A work experience program in which the participant gains experience while working in a remote, online professional setting and is not physically present at the job location	Voluntarily formed groups who join together to raise awareness, support and engage in entrepreneurial activity that introduces learners to the possibility of different pathways into employment, such as entrepreneurialism
<b>COMMUNITY EXAMPLE</b>	Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce Foundation STEM Internship Program	INCubatoredu
<b>SCHEDULE &amp; LENGTH OF PROGRAM</b>	Monday to Friday, 7-weeks, 20–25 hours per week in the summer	2-semester course
<b>TOTAL # OF HOURS</b>	140–175	Follows course hours and schedule
<b>HOST COMMITMENT</b>	Clients of the Illinois Small Business Development Center who have an expressed need for help with their website, social media strategies and/or online marketing programs provide parameters for the work and are available for consultation as needed	Entrepreneurs and industry experts serve as volunteer coaches and mentors guiding student teams through the processes of developing hypotheses about a business concept, testing those hypotheses, adapting, and continually learning and improving
<b>TYPICAL PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE</b>	Participants build websites, create digital multimedia presentations, and develop social media platforms	Participants define the opportunity, create solutions, and embrace the outcome, even if they cannot succeed
<b>LOCATION</b>	Students work remotely at the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce	Location where the course is offered
<b>CREDIT VS. COMPENSATION</b>	Credit	Credit
<b>LINK(S) FOR MORE INFORMATION</b>	<a href="#">Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce Foundation</a>	<a href="#">INCubatoredu</a>

## MODELS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

<b>TYPE OF CDE</b>	<b>REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP</b>
<b>DESCRIPTION OF MODEL</b>	Provides an opportunity for youth to finish high school and continue on a pathway toward multiple career and educational opportunities, such as entering a registered apprenticeship program, earning an associate and/or a bachelor's degree, and obtaining sustainable employment; seeks to enhance the competitiveness of businesses by connecting youth to work-based learning and developing in-demand skills and competencies
<b>COMMUNITY EXAMPLE</b>	District 214 Department of Labor (DOL) Registered Youth Apprenticeships: Cybersecurity, Automotive Technology and HVAC
<b>SCHEDULE &amp; LENGTH OF PROGRAM</b>	Two academic calendar years including the summer between
<b>TOTAL # OF HOURS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• November - May (Junior Year): 20–30 hours/month</li> <li>• Summer: 28 hours/week</li> <li>• August - May (Senior Year): 15–20 hours/week</li> </ul>
<b>HOST COMMITMENT</b>	Participate in training sessions, interview and hire youth, provide on-the-job training, pay youth wages, participate in regular progress reviews, worksite training/work hours, and comply with child labor laws
<b>TYPICAL PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE</b>	In-school youth, at least 16 years old, work alongside hosts to receive an authentic experience to qualify and prepare them for furthering training and employment upon graduation from high school
<b>LOCATION</b>	Host site with related instruction inside classroom
<b>CREDIT VS. COMPENSATION</b>	Participants receive escalating wages as they progress from junior to senior year of high school
<b>LINK(S) FOR MORE INFORMATION</b>	<a href="#">D214 Program Framework</a> <a href="#">Department of Labor: Youth Apprenticeship Tools</a> <a href="#">Department of Labor: Apprenticeship Policy, Investments, and Data and Statistics</a>



### WORK-BASED LEARNING RESOURCES FOR IT

The Illinois Science and Technology Coalition partnered with EdSystems and the Illinois Education and Career Success Network to develop the [Guidebook of Professional Learning Experiences within Information Technology](#), organized by team-based challenges and career development experiences. Each example includes a summary of the program/experience, timeline for implementation, funding model, impact, and case study examples of successful activity.

# NEEDS OF THE LOCAL LABOR MARKET

To provide a CDE that translates into real access toward meaningful employment for participants upon program completion, it is important to understand and consider the needs of the local labor market. Managing organizations should consider the information you already compiled to determine your pathway programs, specifically:

- What industries are growing and will have future demand for employees?
- Which occupations within these industries have stable or increasing demand?
- Are there jobs that require a particular skillset hosts struggle to find?
- How can the technical competencies be used to validate the needs of hosts?



## COMMUNITY EXAMPLES OF DETERMINING LOCAL LABOR MARKET NEEDS



Belvidere School District 100 collaborates with local employers to determine the professional characteristics and skills they feel are necessary for high school students to be successful in their space. District 100 leadership parallels these responses to those outlined in the PWR Act Essential Employability and Technical Competencies to validate how their student programs meet local needs.



The Greater Peoria Economic Development Council identifies the most critical job needs in the Peoria region and determines learning pathways for those jobs. These opportunities are communicated through learning exchange programs and marketing efforts to youth, parents, and educators in the region.



Vermilion Advantage leads economic and workforce development by determining needs and opportunities from both employers and workforce education programs. Through established and trusting relationships, they serve as a liaison to connect employers with participants to help prepare youth to best access future local career opportunities.



### THE ROLE OF AN INTERMEDIARY

An intermediary who already has a trusting relationship with hosts in the community can be especially helpful. They may be a local chamber of commerce, local workforce innovation board, or an economic development agency in the region. Intermediaries can be responsible for operational functions and for both daily thinking about next steps to move career pathway system development forward and acting as the effort's champion. It is likely that they already have data and information gathered that can best inform the types of CDEs a managing organization offers as well as which hosts would be most willing to work directly with participants.

# CDE ONLINE TOOLKIT RESOURCES

## CREATING A QUALITY CAREER DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE

**TEMPLATE** | Planning Timeline: [PDF](#) // [Word](#)

**RESOURCE** | Race Forward: [Racial Equity Impact Assessment](#) from

**RESOURCE** | U.S. Department of Health & Human Services: [Positive Youth Development Resources](#)

## MODELS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

**EXEMPLAR** | Young Invincibles Report: [“Making Youth Apprenticeships Work for Illinois’ Young Adults”](#)

**EXEMPLAR** | Illinois Science and Technology Coalition: [Guidebook of Professional Learning Experiences within Information Technology](#)

**EXEMPLAR** | District 214: [Apprenticeship Framework](#)

**EXEMPLAR** | Supervised Agricultural Experience: [SAE for All Student Guide](#)

**EXEMPLAR** | Supervised Agricultural Experience: [SAE for All Teacher’s Guide](#)

## NEEDS OF THE LOCAL LABOR MARKET

**RESOURCE** | Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity: [WIOA Regional Planning](#)

**RESOURCE** | Illinois Department of Employment Security: [Labor Market Information](#)

**RESOURCE** | Illinois workNet: [Labor Market Information: Step-by-Step Guide](#)

**RESOURCE** | Illinois workNet: [Career, Wages, and Trends Search](#)

**RESOURCE** | Illinois workNet: [Demand Occupations](#)

**RESOURCE** | Illinois workNet: [Detailed Information on National Career Clusters and Related Programs of Study](#)

**RESOURCE** | JFF Pathways to Prosperity: [Work-Based Learning Intermediaries](#)

**RESOURCE** | JFF: [Work-Based Learning Delivery Systems, Intermediary Design, Diagnosis, and Improvement](#)



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# STAFFING CONSIDERATIONS

Before officially starting a CDE, the managing organization should examine the division of roles and responsibilities among their current staff. Depending on your previous programming or approach, your managing organization may begin to engage with new stakeholders in the community through the CDE, which might have implications for the skills you need from staff. While you may have a strong approach to your participant supports, deeper engagement with hosts and local community organizations might require different skills and relationships for a successful partnership.



## TOOLKIT TERMINOLOGY

Definitions for the terms “participant,” “managing organization,” and “host” are given in the [Introduction](#).

## ITEMS TO CONSIDER

The following responsibilities can be divided among current or new staff roles within a managing organization:

	<b>Serving Participants</b>	<b>Serving Hosts</b>
<b>OUTREACH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Form a cohort of participants</li> <li>Determine needs of participants:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supports/accommodations</li> <li>Competency mastery levels</li> <li>Pathway/career interests</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Present the CDE program and establish expectations</li> <li>Conduct initial site assessment to determine capability of offering CDE</li> </ul>
<b>ONBOARDING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete required forms and/or HR procedures as required by host</li> <li>Set professional expectations through pre-CDE training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review CDE Agreement</li> <li>Train host staff working directly with participant(s)</li> <li>Identify HR requirements for participants</li> </ul>
<b>DURING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor and assess growth in essential employability and technical competencies</li> <li>Troubleshoot issues/concerns</li> <li>Conduct site visits to check-in on experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure meeting expectations of CDE and participant supports</li> <li>Troubleshoot challenges</li> <li>Conduct site visits to check-in on experience</li> </ul>
<b>WRAPPING UP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data collection</li> <li>Discuss feedback and assessments</li> <li>Incorporate CDE into portfolio and/or resume</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data collection</li> <li>Obtain feedback and evaluations for future CDE improvements</li> <li>Determine renewal for subsequent CDEs</li> </ul>

## STAFFING CONSIDERATIONS

## POINTS OF CONTACT

Establishing points of contact for participants and hosts provides clear lines of communication, ensuring that all needs and questions are addressed. The ability to respond in a timely and accurate manner is crucial to forming and building trusting relationships. Points of contact should be knowledgeable of all facets of the CDE program and creative in their ability to address the unique needs of participants and hosts. This will ensure successful and sustainable CDE partnerships.

Before a participant begins their CDE, typically all communication between the host and the participant are delivered to and filtered through the managing organization. Once a CDE has started, a direct communication line will likely build between the participant and their host. However, there will still need to be a constant point of contact from the managing organization to ensure that expectations are being met and that a consistent managing organization staff member is available to support throughout the duration of the program.

Points of contact at the managing organization may be an individual staff member or a set of well-coordinated team members for the host to connect with directly. There should be clear lines of communication among the points of contact; while they may specialize in serving either participants or hosts, the managing organization staff's ability to understand the needs and lens of one another will result in action that benefits all parties involved.



## COMMUNITY EXAMPLES OF POINTS OF CONTACT

**Instructor of Record**

- Manages and records grades for classroom experience for students participating in CDEs
- Communicates most frequently with participants and managing organization to relay school specific needs

**Partnership Manager**

- Develops and support host relationships
- Keeps records of communication and history working with hosts

**Program Coordinator**

- Promotes CDE and assists participants with form completion along with needs such as transportation
- Supervises CDE and works directly with hosts to troubleshoot issues

# STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

All managing organization staff who work with the CDE program should understand the value of a participant's engagement in a CDE and how it will develop essential employability and technical competences and connect participants to future opportunities along their career pathway. It is also helpful for managing organization staff to have a general understanding of the labor market and which occupations have growth potential in their local community. All managing organization staff should be able to have informed conversations with any participant, host, or interested stakeholder regarding the CDE program.

## ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### LEARNING LIKE A PARTICIPANT

- Working with local community colleges to engage directly in technical competencies through courses or workshops.
- Attending employer- or community- sponsored activities to gain a deeper understanding of a particular industry area.

### INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC

- Engaging with curriculum and outreach materials developed by hosts for their work-based learning programs.
- Taking a tour of hosts' sites and participating in conversations with host employees to see what it is like to work there.

### PREPARING PARTICIPANTS

- Determining how they model and reflect essential employability competencies to participants.
- Participating in workshops and training with local community organizations in workforce development.

Any individual directly engaged in advising participants on work-based learning opportunities and/or postsecondary options will need specific training and resources to ensure they are equipped to perform these tasks.



### WORKFORCE GPS

Sponsored by the Employment and Training Administration of the U.S. Department of Labor, [Workforce GPS](#) provides workforce professionals, educators, and business leaders two curated communities of interest, useful training resources, promising practices, and evidence-based research:

#### Summer Jobs

Space to share promising practices and expertise for summer programming.

#### Youth Connections

Learning destination for public workforce system staff who connect youth to employment, training, and educational opportunities.



### CAREER ADVISING OR COACHING MODEL

The Chicagoland Workforce Funder Alliance and the Post-Secondary Counseling Working Group produced a [document](#) to identify and articulate a set of competencies and skills for effective practices to prepare students for success along multiple postsecondary pathways.

## STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



## COMMUNITY EXAMPLES OF STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



The HOPE (Health Occupations and Professions Exploration) Program is a one-day seminar offered to high school students. During the summer, educators can receive facilitation training to support students the following year.



Valley Industrial Association (VIA) hosts educator training on the manufacturing industry through engagement with employers to offer bus tours of manufacturing plants in the region.



Brighton Park Neighborhood Council offers training to provide educators with tools and resources for coaching youth on intrinsic motivation and productive behavior changes to reach their personal goals.

## DEEPENING HOST ENGAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

Ultimately, a CDE should reinforce that a host is taking on a larger role in the growth and development of essential and technical employability competencies for participants along the continuum of work-based learning experiences. Your managing organization and host partners need to develop strong trusting relationships to collaborate and ensure the preparedness and subsequent competency development of participants in their CDE. The larger role of a host shifts away from the traditional model of learning and actively engages participants in the professional world. Hosts take on a vital role of supporting participant learning through doing rather than studying. In the case of the CDE, hosts become the main individuals responsible for coaching and assessing participant performance.

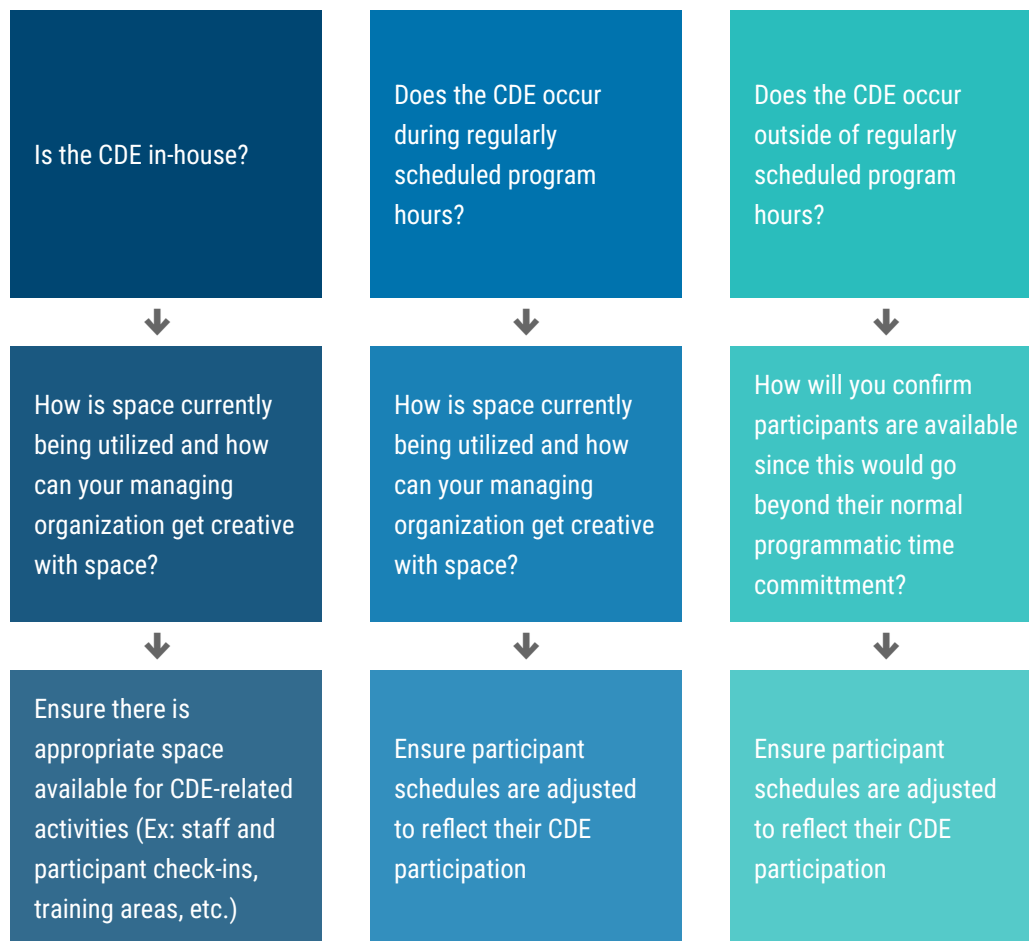
*Work-Based Learning Continuum**Host Engagement Continuum*ILLINOIS WORKNET  
CUSTOMER SUPPORT

Illinois workNet offers a [Customer Support Center](#) with online tools and guides to support managing organizations. Materials include free [assessments](#) for participants and [outreach materials](#) to engage hosts.

# SPACE USAGE & SCHEDULING

Space usage and scheduling are important components for accommodating a participant's involvement in a CDE. Depending on the format of your CDE program, multiple individuals may need to be notified of a participant's decision to participate in a CDE. It is also important that participants are made explicitly aware of any time commitments beyond what they are typically used to with your program and their ability to meet those.

Below are some examples of items to consider:



# TRANSPORTATION

If a participant's CDE is off-site, arrangements will need to be made to ensure they are able to get to their host site each day they are expected to attend. In general, communities are working with participants on a case-by-case basis for their transportation needs. As much as possible, consider the ways your managing organization can get creative to streamline and organize transportation resources for participants. Be aware of any local transportation policies and compliant with any required items such as transportation waivers or parent/guardian approval forms.

## CONSIDERATIONS FOR CDE TRANSPORTATION

- Where do participants live in relation to the host site, particularly if they are traveling to or from their residence for their CDE?
- How can the distance a participant must travel be minimized to the greatest extent possible?
- If using transportation through the managing organization, how can participants' routes be coordinated to maximize pick-up and drop-off times?
- How can all students be provided access and support getting to their CDEs based on their unique transportation needs?



## COMMUNITY EXAMPLES OF ADDRESSING TRANSPORTATION BARRIERS



North Chicago Community High School works together with Cristo Rey High School to coordinate use of shared buses to accommodate their CDE schedules and provide free transportation for students. This has proven a valuable relationship to support their health sciences pathway students.



Denver Public Schools (DPS) prioritized scheduling demands and worked to restructure school schedules to align bus transportation with during and after school needs. DPS raised revenue to offset costs through advertising on the sides of buses.



REACH raises funds to provide public transit cards for ~50% of participants for the first two weeks and then on a case-by-case basis. After two weeks, participants should have received their first paycheck to begin funding their transportation. In some instances, participants are able to take the Rush shuttle from major hubs to the Rush campus.



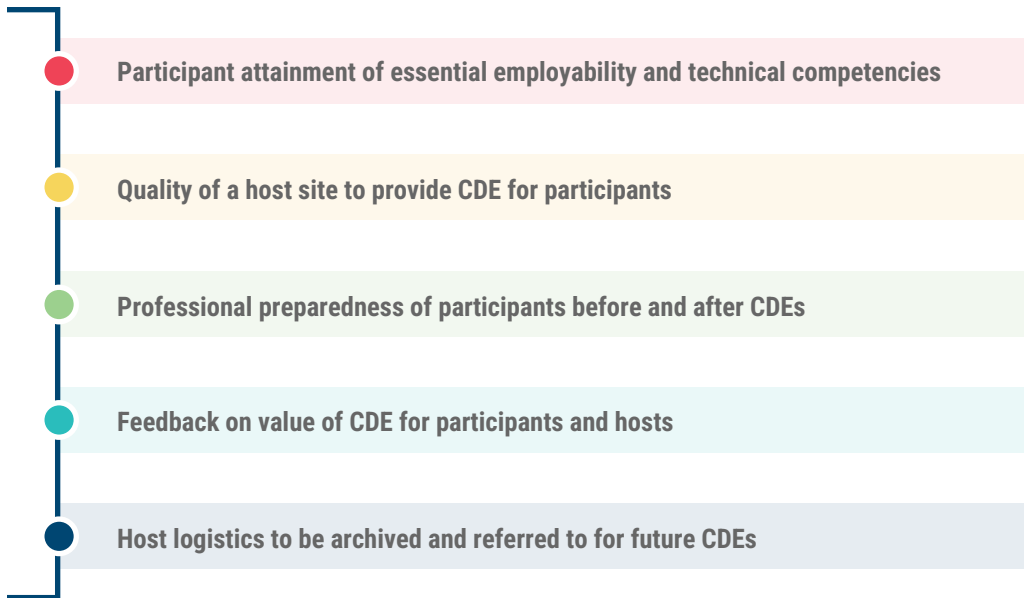
## PLANNING WITH PARTICIPANTS

Access to transportation can be a major barrier and a source of stress for participants. Sometimes there are opportunities they are not aware of or unsure of how to access. Managing organizations need to work closely with participants to resolve any transportation issues or concerns. It is important for managing organizations to develop a transportation plan with participants that is consistent and reliable to ensure strong attendance at their CDE. Make sure participants also have a back-up plan in place and are aware of who to contact in the event of any transportation issues.

# DATA COLLECTION

## THE VALUE OF DATA

Data provide the opportunity to tell the story of your managing organization's CDE program and the impact it has on both participants and hosts as well as the community at large. Data displays should be made widely available and user-friendly to engage a wide variety of audiences to communicate your stories and collaboration efforts in the community. Data for CDEs can provide insights into:



This information is important for:

**Participants:** To prompt learning and reflection of their experiences and what they have gained that can be applied in their current/future career pathways.

**Hosts:** To consider how equipped they are to coach, train, and support their future workforce.

**Community:** To recognize the value of hands-on experience early in an individual's career path.

## DATA COLLECTION

**POLICY BACKGROUND**

Key pieces of legislation that your managing organization will need to keep in mind as they affect the data you will collect and measure for a CDE include:

**Public Act 101–0012 (SB 0028)**

Amends the school code. With regard to daily pupil attendance, provides that pupil participation in any of the following activities shall be counted toward the calculation of clock hours of school work per day: (i) instruction in a college course in which a student is dually enrolled for both high school credit and college credit, (ii) participation in a supervised career development experience in which student participation and learning outcomes are supervised by an educator licensed under the School Code, (iii) participation in a youth apprenticeship in which student participation and outcomes are supervised by an educator licensed under the School Code, or (iv) participation in a blended learning program in which course content, student evaluation, and instructional methods are supervised by an educator licensed under the School Code.

**Effective July 1, 2019**

**What does this mean for your managing organization?**

You must track student attendance and number of hours spent at their CDE in order for that time to count towards school attendance.

**Resource**

[ISBE Fact Sheet](#)

**Public Act 101–0068 (HB 2822)**

Amends the School Code. Provides that the State Board of Education’s school report cards must include the most current data on the percentage of students who participated in job shadowing, the percentage of students who have completed an internship, and whether a school offered its students vocational training opportunities. Makes a related change for the State report card.

**Effective July 1, 2020**

**What does this mean for your managing organization?**

You must track the number of students who have completed a CDE.


**STRENGTHENING  
CAREER AND TECHNICAL  
EDUCATION FOR THE 21ST  
CENTURY ACT (PERKINS V)**

Legislation reauthorizing the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education (Perkins IV) Act of 2006 called Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act now known as Perkins V is effective as of July 1, 2019. Provisions in Perkins V allow for more flexibility and create opportunities for states to meet the needs of their learners, educators, and employers. Schools districts will be able to use federal funds to provide all students, regardless of enrollment in career and technical education, career exploration and development activities. Perkins V also expands the definition of “special populations” and increases the amount spent on students in state correctional systems and the amount states may set aside in a “reserve” fund to focus on rural areas, areas with high numbers or percentages of CTE concentrators / participants, or areas with gaps or disparities in performance. For more information, contact [cte@isbe.net](mailto:cte@isbe.net).



## DATA COLLECTION

**DETERMINING WHAT TO MEASURE**

When designing a CDE, consider your managing organization's reporting needs and identify all of the information you will need to collect to create your reports. The best data will tell a story of the successes and areas of need for your managing organization to implement a quality CDE. Consider how this information should be communicated to participants, hosts (both present and future), and community members. Your data collection should include a mix of qualitative and quantitative data in order to tell the meaningful stories and provide a comprehensive data set.

**Qualitative Data**

Information that is measured through descriptions typically based on observation and testimonials. This data is more unstructured and open to interpretation of information. This type of data is more difficult to analyze but can dig deeper into the why of an individual's motivation and thinking.

**Quantitative Data**

Information that is measured through numbers and tends to be more rigid and defined. Due to its structured nature, quantitative data are typically more suitable for data analysis. This type of data answers the how many or how much of something and can help draw general conclusions.

Provided are some examples to consider as you determine your data collection needs:

	<b>Qualitative</b>	<b>Quantitative</b>
<b>HOSTS ONLY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outreach efforts</li> <li>• Communication records</li> <li>• Profiles, questionnaires</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # participating/retention</li> <li>• # of participants hosted</li> <li>• Endorsement area(s) they support</li> </ul>
<b>PARTICIPANTS ONLY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-assessments</li> <li>• Career surveys</li> <li>• How CDE informed career/pathway</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of placements/retention</li> <li>• Attendance/# hours completed</li> <li>• Endorsement area</li> <li>• Industry-recognized certifications earned</li> </ul>
<b>HOSTS &amp; PARTICIPANTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional skills assessments</li> <li>• Feedback on CDE</li> <li>• Tracking of successes and challenges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional skills assessments</li> </ul>

**DISAGGREGATING DATA**

Disaggregating data is the process of breaking down cumulative data by certain characteristics, including race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or gender. This process allows managing organizations to plan appropriate programs, determine any needed interventions or supports, use limited resources where they are most needed, and see important trends in behavior and achievement. Disaggregated data are incredibly valuable for measuring the effectiveness and equity of a program and uncovering any disparities across subpopulations.

Common participant areas to disaggregate for a CDE program include:

- Race/ethnicity (country of origin)
- Generation status
- Gender
- Grade level
- Geography
- Free or reduced lunch status (as a proxy for low-income)
- Special Population Groups
- Perkins V Subgroups

## DATA COLLECTION

## PLATFORMS FOR CDE DATA COLLECTION

Once you have decided *what* to track, it now becomes a matter of *where* and *how* this information will be entered and stored as well as by *whom*. Communities throughout the state are using a variety of options depending on their current organizational structure. Specifically, your managing organization will need to consider bandwidth capabilities of staff and budget constraints. Investing in an entirely new platform to store information may not be necessary; first determine if your current information system has the capabilities needed to address your data collection needs.



## COMMUNITY EXAMPLES OF CDE DATA COLLECTION



Rockford Public Schools uses a collaborative Google spreadsheet for Academy Coaches to submit dates and hours related to student CDE attendance. Academy Coaches also submit needs for work-based learning opportunities to Alignment Rockford, their intermediary organization, which then disseminates to community partners.



District 214 uses the platform Schoology for their credit-bearing 16-week internship program. Students submit reflection papers and evaluations through this portal. The course instructor and students are responsible for verifying and submitting information through the Schoology platform.



REACH uses Smartsheet with FERPA controls to track longitudinal demographic data about participants. Smartsheet can integrate with Microsoft and Google platforms. Participants may complete surveys in Google and that information is transferred to Smartsheet. This allows for flexibility and ease of administering surveys in a familiar form to participants and maintaining privacy controls.

## CREDIT & PAID HOURS VERIFICATION

Examples of verifying completion of required CDE hours include:

- **Credit:** Participants receiving credit should be expected to submit hourly logs signed by their host as a regular assignment. Verification through grades of these assignments confirms their completion of hours.
- **Payroll:** For participants receiving payment for CDE hours, payroll stubs and time sheets signed by their host confirms their completion of hours.



### VERIFYING A CDE

For a CDE to count toward a College and Career Pathway Endorsement or a College and Career Readiness Indicator, the managing organization must verify that a participant has completed 60 hours of CDEs. The data collection process for this requirement should be considered carefully to ensure that it is verifiable, accurate, and timely.



### AGRICULTURE EXPERIENCE TRACKER

The [Agriculture Experience Tracker](#) is utilized by more than 276,000 students in more than 5,400 high schools across the country, including more than 300 high schools in Illinois. Students keep journal records of time and activities along with full financial records of individual Supervised Agriculture Experience projects. Students are also able to create plans, goals, and budgets, and reflect upon projects. Student accounts are linked to school accounts, empowering advisers to assist.

# LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is vital that your managing organization works closely with your legal team to determine any needs specific to your context. Participants will typically be traveling off-site for their CDE and working closely with an adult who is not a staff member of your managing organization. Due to factors such as these, spend time consulting locally to determine any responsibilities and action items related to ensuring a safe and productive CDE. The following are suggestions for consideration:

## Hosting Youth at CDE Site

Do hosts have any internal policies beyond child labor laws regarding the tasks youth can participate in on site?

Are there any managing organization policies for host and participant communication?

## Transportation

Are there any waivers that participants and/or parent/guardians need to sign?

What is the protocol if Participants need to travel off-site with their Hosts for a related CDE activity?

## HR Forms/Trainings

Are there any HR requirements a Participant has to complete (background checks, health screenings, fingerprinting, etc.)?

Are there any policies regarding background checks for those working directly with a participant?

## CASE STUDIES

**Temp Service to Onboard Manufacturing Students:** Delaware Technical Community College (DTCC) continued to run into an 18+ age requirement obstacle with their manufacturing employers. The Department of Labor allows for 16–17 year olds to work in manufacturing spaces, but some companies have internal policies precluding due to risk. DTCC found an avenue through Goodwill to onboard and hire participants as contract workers to be placed at manufacturing host sites. In this arrangement, Goodwill took on any risk since the participants were not hired directly by the host.

*Note: on the plant floor, participants worked with non-union members.*

**HIPAA Training for Health Sciences Students:** Participants who are interested in a CDE in the health industry typically have to complete HIPAA training to engage in any tasks dealing with patient rights and privacy issues. Westside United in Chicago, Illinois, has worked closely with all of their hospital partners to support 16+ year olds to participate in their internship programs. Volunteer/intern directors or the business integrity teams lead a HIPAA training during orientation and participants sign off on a confidentiality agreement. Participants also complete a fingerprint background check and health screening. Westside United has worked closely with hospital staff to educate them on incorporating youth participants into their daily tasks.



### YOUTHRULES!

[This website](#) distributes informational materials on the Federal and State rules governing young workers to increase awareness and compliance with Federal and State laws.



### YOUTH EMPLOYMENT COMPLIANCE ASSISTANCE TOOLKIT

[This resource](#) contains:

#### Host's Pocket Guide on Youth Employment

A guide to the additional conditions that apply to the employment of minors between 14–17 in most nonfarm jobs.

#### Child Labor 101

Information on the Fair Labor Standards Act youth provisions, minimum age and wage standards, and hazardous conditions in which youth under 18 cannot be employed.

#### Equipment Safety Stickers

Reminder stickers for equipment with age-related operating restrictions.

# CDE ONLINE TOOLKIT RESOURCES

## STAFFING CONSIDERATIONS

**EXEMPLAR** | [Partnership Manager Role Description from District 214](#)

## STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**EXEMPLAR** | [Health Occupations and Professions Exploration \(HOPE\) Program from UW Health](#)

**RESOURCE** | [Post-Secondary Counseling Working Group Counselor Skills and Competencies Recommendations from Chicagoland Workforce Funder Alliance](#)

**RESOURCE BANK** | [Motivational Interviewing for Schools](#)

**RESOURCE BANK** | [Community Resources from Workforce GPS](#)

**RESOURCE BANK** | [Global Partner Tools from Illinois workNet](#)

## DATA COLLECTION

**TEMPLATE** | Pre-Assessment Participant Interview: [PDF](#) // [Word](#)

**RESOURCE** | [Rethink CTE: Fact Sheet from Illinois State Board of Education and Illinois Community College Board](#)

**RESOURCE** | [The Importance of Disaggregating Student Data from Safe Schools Healthy Students](#)

**RESOURCE** | [Roadmap to Success: Rural Transportation Connections from the National Farmworker Jobs Program](#)

**ARTICLE** | ["Ways of Getting to Work" from Illinois workNet](#)

**WEBSITE** | [The Agriculture Experience Tracker \(AET\)](#)

## LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

**RESOURCE** | [Not As Hard As You Think: Engaging High School Students in Work-Based Learning from JFF](#)

**RESOURCE** | [Fact Sheet #71: Internship Programs Under the Fair Labor Standards Act from U.S. Department of Labor](#)

**RESOURCE** | [Youth Employment Compliance Assistance Toolkit from U.S. Department of Labor](#)

**WEBSITE** | [YouthRules! from U.S. Department of Labor](#)



# HOST OUTREACH

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# HOST ENGAGEMENT

Depending on the context and needs of hosts, there may be multiple angles to recruit hosts to support your career development experience (CDE) program. Initially, consider the hosts with whom you have existing relationships:

- Are there any hosts or even individual employees of a host who have expressed interest in being more involved with participants?
  - Has any of your own staff expressed interest in working more directly with participants for an in-house CDE?
- Which hosts are working well with your participants and providing intentional supports and guidance within the currently operating work-based learning experiences?

Common motives for hosts to engage with managing organizations to offer a career development experience opportunity include:



## TOOLKIT TERMINOLOGY

Definitions for the terms “participant,” “managing organization,” and “host” are given in the [Introduction](#).

## HOST ENGAGEMENT

### CONNECTING WITH HOSTS

Host engagement and the development of CDE partnerships is a continuous process that requires devoted staff time. Every encounter with a host is an opportunity to promote your CDE program and develop a relationship. Successful managing organizations regularly participate in events and conversations with hosts to cultivate ongoing and sustainable partnerships.

Opportunities for host engagement can take many forms. Structured events provide a targeted topic and reason for why individuals are in the room. More unstructured networking type events are useful for having more informal conversations about your managing organization's CDE program and creating the flexibility for you to present specific talking points.

Strategies for host engagement include:

- Peer-to-Peer outreach using existing host partners to advocate on your behalf
- Representatives from your managing organization participating in host and civic organizations
- Engaging hosts in initial activities such as speaking with or hosting a tour for participants
- Attending events where large numbers of hosts are present (job fairs, conferences, etc.)
- Invite hosts to tour space within the managing organization and participate in/observe an activity with participants



### COMMUNITY EXAMPLES OF HOST ENGAGEMENT



Staff members of Goodwill Industries have attended job fairs to meet employers and learn about their company. By sending a follow-up call within a week of the event, staff have been able to schedule meetings and establish potential CDE partnerships



As an intermediary for Rockford Public Schools (RPS), Alignment Rockford engages hosts directly through a career pathways sponsorship, connecting organizations, businesses, and individuals to RPS goals and identified areas of community need.



District 211 and District 214 hosted 35 manufacturers for breakfast presentations by advocate employers and a student guided tour of a high school to showcase the advanced equipment and curriculum used to ensure student preparedness.

# FORMING HOST PARTNERSHIPS

## PROMOTING THE CDE

Before reaching out to a host about offering a CDE, make sure you have your message prepared to promote and describe your CDE program. Be prepared for host questions and develop a pitch that focuses on your collaboration and joint efforts in this work rather than focusing solely on what the host can do to provide opportunities for participants. It is important that your relationship with hosts starts as a partnership to demonstrate how you will work together continuously in the future.

Consider the following to develop a message for why a host should offer a CDE with your managing organization:

### Why does your managing organization value CDEs for participants?

- Passion for the program and how it aligns to your mission
- The effect it has on participant's career trajectory

### Why should a host value CDEs for participants?

- Investment in the health and growth of their community
- Training the future workforce to meet their talent needs

### What do you expect from hosts?

- Ability to participate in activities of the CDE
- Authentic work-based learning experience for participants

### What can hosts expect from you?

- Intentional services and supports
- Willingness to collaborate and receive feedback

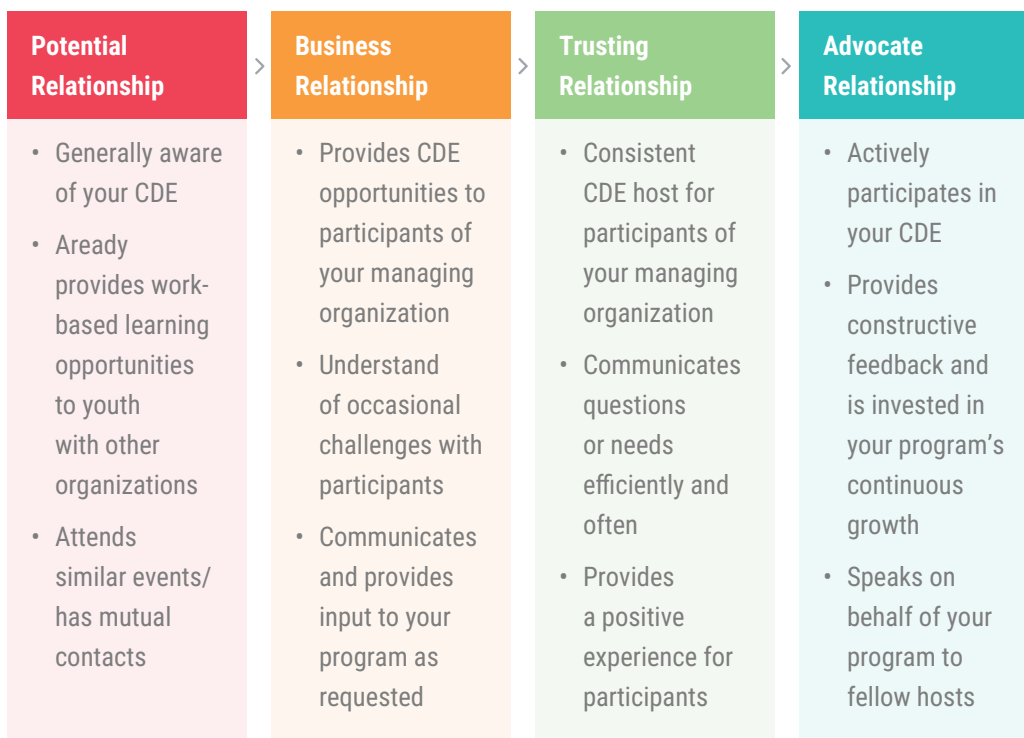


## FORMING HOST PARTNERSHIPS

## RECRUITING HOSTS

Your approach with hosts should take into account whether you already have a strong and/or established relationship or if this is the first time you are engaging with them. Typically, it is best to engage hosts to support lighter-lift experiences initially rather than asking them to provide a CDE as their first experience working with your participants. In some cases, however, hosts might be particularly motivated or capable of offering a CDE right away. An important component of your initial message is clarifying mutual expectations and working with them in a collaborative manner to remove any unnecessary barriers to work-based learning.

Consider how each host relationship falls on the following continuum\* to inform your approach:



Since they have experience with your managing organization and participants, hosts who are farther along on the continuum are able to have a more candid conversation with you in terms of their ability and interest in hosting participants for a CDE. While it is important and tempting to focus on enhancing your relationships with those hosts who are still in the potential or business phases, do not forget about supporting those you have a trusting or advocate relationship with to continue to nurture that partnership. You will have different messaging and approaches depending on your relationship, but all of your hosts need continuous reminders of how you collaborate together to support participants and the community.



### PARTICIPANTS AS CDE PROGRAM AMBASSADORS

Consider the ways participants who have completed a CDE can serve as champions to promote the program. Participants can most directly tell stories of the impact and effect a CDE has on an individual, which is compelling for your target audiences. Participants can be an asset for recruiting by engaging directly in conversations with hosts to discuss their experience.

\* Employer Continuum adapted from Reimagine Retail Chicagoland's [Reimagining Employer Engagement](#) toolkit

## FORMING HOST PARTNERSHIPS

### MAKING THE ASK

Once you have built connections through new or strengthened relationships with hosts, it is time to make the request for them to offer a CDE for your participants. This request might come naturally during a networking conversation, but eventually, there may be a formal process for this request as you determine who the right host contact is for approval to provide CDEs for participants.

Before you make your formal request of them, have the following information prepared:

Host Expectations	Participants	Organizational Role
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Outline of roles and responsibilities</li><li>• Timeline of the CDE</li><li>• Activities expected to complete (site visits, assessments, etc)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Background on the youth your managing organization serves</li><li>• Qualities and strengths of participants</li><li>• Typical areas of growth and development</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Supportive services and resources provided for both hosts and participants</li><li>• Process for feedback and collaboration</li><li>• The “why” for CDEs as it relates to mission and goals</li></ul>

# HOST INFORMATION & ASSESSMENT

## COLLECTING HOST INFORMATION

Once a host has confirmed they are interested and willing to host a participant, the next step is to collect information on the host site and assess whether it is the right fit for your participants and CDE program. This is a time to gain a more detailed understanding of a host's capacity to meet expectations and provide the required components of your CDE.

Information on hosts should include the following at minimum:

- Address and phone number of host site (especially if host has multiple sites)
- Brief description of the host's work and mission
- Standard business hours as well as specific hours for participants as applicable (determine as well if there is any flexibility in the work hours)
- Dress code
- Office environment (casual, conservative, extremely busy, quiet, etc.)
- Primary contact information (if not known at the time, needs to be collected during onboarding)
- Typical tasks a participant can expect to engage in
- The level of supervision a participant can expect
- Any specific requirements before participant starts (background checks, health screenings, etc.)
- Any previous experience working with your managing organization

Additional helpful items to know include

- Credentials/experience needed to be eligible for employment with host
- Skills they are most interested in coaching and developing in participants
- Successes/challenges they may have had with other CDE programs

To gather this information, some managing organizations will distribute and collect a paper form, while others have created online forms that can be uploaded automatically to a database management system. The information collected from a host is vital for managing organizations to understand the job site and experience. Participants can also review this information before starting their CDE to gain an understanding of what to expect and prepare for (learn more in the "Onboarding: Demonstrating Readiness" section of this toolkit).



### ROLE OF THE PRIMARY CONTACT

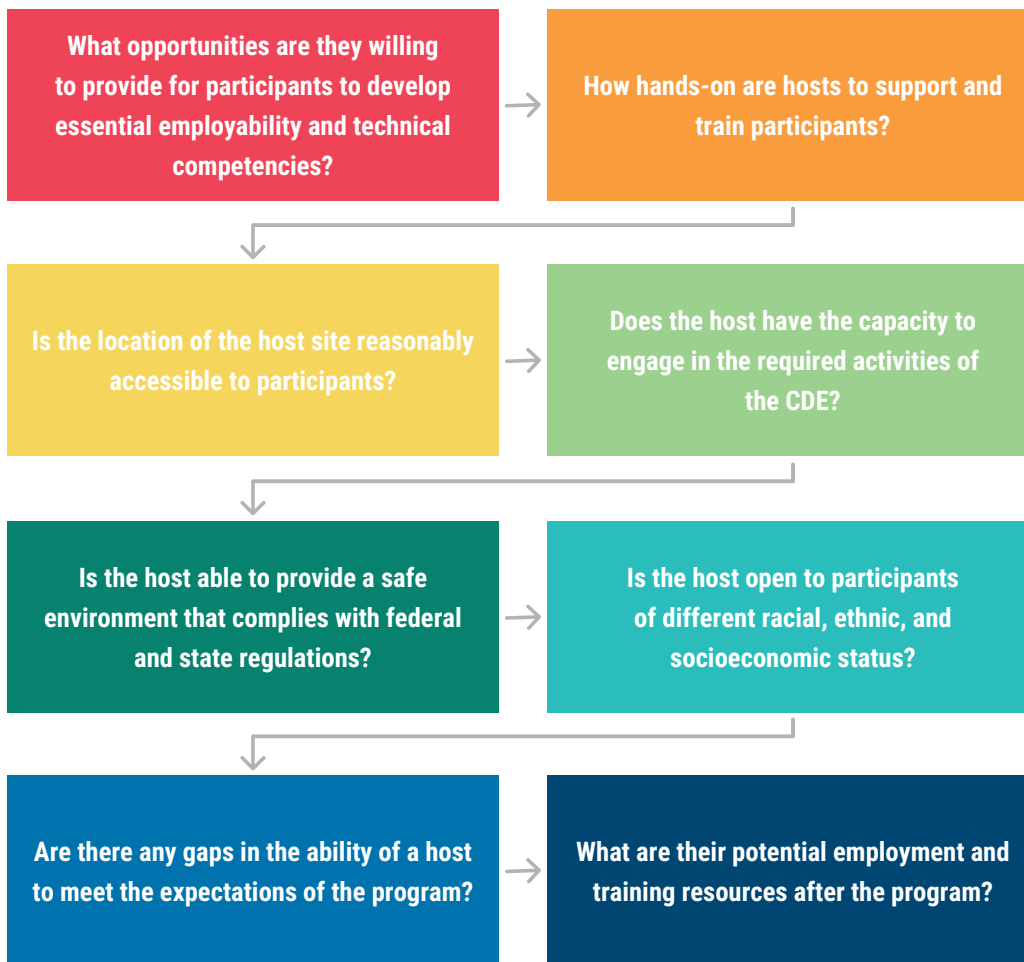
The individual marked as the primary contact at the host is typically the person working directly with the participant(s). As you are gathering this information, have a conversation with the host about the expectations for this person in their day-to-day interactions and supports provided for participants. It is possible that a host may provide a primary contact who is solely the person responsible for recording a participant's attendance at the host site, but it is important that a host considers who would be a good fit to provide daily tasks and guidance for participants. This information may not be known at this time, but should be confirmed during onboarding.

## HOST INFORMATION AND ASSESSMENT

## ASSESSING POTENTIAL HOSTS

Once you have completed your initial outreach and collected the host information, your managing organization should assess whether the host is a good fit for your program and participants. If there are any items of concern, consider whether these issues might be potentially addressed and resolved with the host, or if it might mean that the host is not the right fit for a CDE with your participants. If you determine that a host is not a good fit for a CDE, consider whether they might have potential to engage in other work-based learning experiences along the continuum.

Consider the following as you are determining whether a host is a good fit:



### COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION AS HOST

Consider the ways that nonprofits and other local youth-serving organizations might provide a CDE. There are a wide variety of available programs that can be incorporated into your CDE offerings. These organizations have typically worked with youth extensively and are great resources for those participants who might need a more supportive, hands-on host site.



### HOST NOT READY TO OFFER A CDE?

If a host has been assessed and is missing some key components to providing a quality CDE, consider how you can sustain your partnership and engage them in other opportunities to build towards offering a CDE:

- Site Visits
- Career Fair
- Guest Speaking
- Job Shadow
- Mock Interviews

# CDE ONLINE TOOLKIT RESOURCES

## HOST ENGAGEMENT

**ARTICLE** | [“5 Myths about High School Interns and Why Your Business Should Hire Them”](#)

**RESOURCE** | [Participant Task Examples by Pathway Endorsement Area](#)

**RESOURCE** | [Partnering with Employers](#) from YouthBuild

**RESOURCE** | [Reimagining Employer Engagement: A Toolkit for Providers](#) from Reimagine Retail Chicagoland

**RESOURCE** | [Employer Engagement Toolkit: From Placement to Partners](#) from JFF

**TEMPLATE** | Host Site Request Email: [PDF](#) // [Word](#)

## FORMING HOST PARTNERSHIPS

**EXEMPLAR** | [Early College STEM Schools “Hire an Intern” Flyer](#) from Chicago Public Schools

**EXEMPLAR** | [Pathway Sponsorship Program](#) from Alignment Rockford

**TEMPLATE** | Host Site Request Email: [PDF](#) // [Word](#)

**TEMPLATE** | [Prep to Elevator Pitch](#) from Tennessee Department of Education

**RESOURCE** | [Pathways to Prosperity: What Employers Need to Know](#) from JFF

**RESOURCE** | [Employer Outreach and Marketing](#) from Illinois workNet

## HOST INFORMATION & ASSESSMENT

**TEMPLATE** | Host Profile: [PDF](#) // [Word](#)

**TEMPLATE** | Host Site Assessment: [PDF](#) // [Word](#)

**RESOURCE** | [Worksite Placement Tool](#) from Illinois workNet



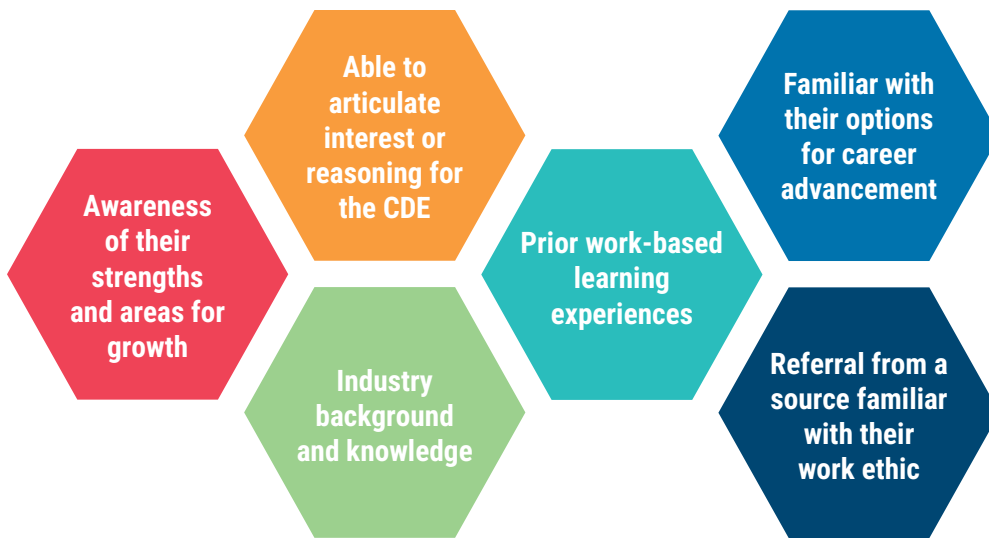
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# DEMONSTRATING READINESS

To ensure a successful experience for both participants and hosts, it is important to assess participants' preparedness for a career development experience (CDE). Participants should be capable of taking advantage of the learning opportunities in a workplace and conduct themselves appropriately in a professional setting.

Participants can demonstrate readiness in several ways, including:



## PRE-PROGRAM ASSESSMENTS

As your managing organization is determining participants who are prepared and ready for placement, it can be helpful to collect information on how participants currently assess themselves and the careers that they are most interested in. This is also an opportunity to gather information about the unique needs and interests of participants that may inform their CDE placement. This information can begin the groundwork for building and organizing CDE participant records. The following information about participants should be gathered before they are placed in a CDE:

- Schedule availability that includes reasonable participation accommodation
- Attendance history (provided from a school counselor or other reliable provider)
- Careers or industry areas they are considering for the future
- Post-program plans (part/full-time work, postsecondary education, military service, trade school, etc.)
- Self-assessment of strengths and areas for development as it relates to essential employability and technical competencies
- Previous work-based learning experiences or employment
- Extracurricular activities they are involved in (sports, activities, volunteering, etc.)



### TOOLKIT TERMINOLOGY

Definitions for the terms “participant,” “managing organization,” and “host” are given in the [Introduction](#).



### ATTENDANCE RECORDS

A participant's previous attendance records can provide information about their ability to remain committed to a CDE. A record of poor attendance does not mean a participant is not qualified for a CDE, but there should be an intentional conversation with them to understand and address any obstacles and/or determine resources to best meet their needs to ensure they are able to regularly attend their CDE. The best way for participants to make a good impression with their host is to consistently arrive on time and on the days as scheduled for their CDE.

## DEMONSTRATING READINESS

A best practice for understanding participant needs is through one-on-one participant interviews, which can build trust between your managing organization and participants. A deeper understanding of participants will allow you to be more intentional in their CDE placement and ensure a successful experience.

## CDE PLACEMENT

Along with considering the career interests of participants, it is also important to consider the type of environment and supports that best match a participant's characteristics and needs. Matching participants to the ideal placement may require some flexibility – in some cases, hosts outside of the participant's career interest area may be a better fit. Ultimately, what is most important is that the host is able to provide an authentic learning experience in which the participant develops the essential employability and technical competencies necessary for their career.

## COMMITMENT & PERMISSION FORMS

Once a participant has been deemed ready and you have identified the best fitting CDE host site, you may begin to formalize the participant's commitment to the CDE. The agreement to participate should reflect the previously communicated expectations to both hosts and participants.

In addition to the participant's signed agreement, parents/guardians must be informed of the participant's agreement to participate in a CDE and made aware of the expectations and level of commitment as well. To obtain formal parental/guardian permission, it is recommended to provide the necessary materials in both email and paper form to ensure that participants and their families can access them easily.



### PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

One of the keys to a successful CDE program is building strong relationships with participant's parents/guardians and families. The [Parent Engagement Tip Sheet](#) from Youth CareerConnect provides practical tips and additional resources for engaging parents/guardians and families in your CDE program. It is important that parents/guardians and families understand the expectations of the program and ways they can stay informed and communicate with your managing organization.



# PREPARING FOR THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE

## SETTING EXPECTATIONS OF THE CDE PROGRAM

As it pertains to a CDE, participants should have a clear understanding of the expectations of your organization. Your managing organization might consider developing a document similar to that of a class syllabus outlining the expectations of your CDE program. Before communicating expectations to participants, make sure the CDE materials have been widely reviewed and validated by organizational staff. At a minimum, your managing organization should clearly articulate the following information for participants:

<b>Program Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mission of your organization and outline of CDE program</li> <li>• Participant commitment: required events and activities</li> </ul>
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employability and technical competencies that will be reinforced</li> <li>• Intended learning outcomes of the CDE</li> </ul>
<b>Compensation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic credit and/or financial compensation provided</li> <li>• Grading policies (as applicable)</li> </ul>
<b>Placement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information on any pre-assessments/training required</li> <li>• How host sites are determined for participants</li> </ul>
<b>Attendance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verification process for completed CDE hours</li> <li>• Policies and procedures for being late or absent</li> </ul>
<b>Professionalism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verification process for completed CDE hours</li> <li>• Policies and procedures for being late or absent</li> </ul>
<b>Assessment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tool(s) to be used to assess competency development</li> <li>• On-site supervision and feedback process</li> </ul>



### PARTICIPANT-MANAGING ORGANIZATION RELATIONSHIPS

Along with understanding expectations for their performance, participants should also know what they can expect from your managing organization and staff. Establishing a trusting relationship in which both participants and organizational staff feel they can discuss and grapple with sometimes difficult topics can avoid any drawbacks during the CDE as much as possible. Participants should know what supports are in place for them and how you will work together with them to successfully complete their CDE.

## PREPARING FOR THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE

### PRE-CDE TRAINING

Before a participant begins their CDE, it is important that they are introduced to the general etiquette of professional environments and are prepared to start off on the right foot on their first day. These trainings can take a variety of forms depending on the context and needs of your participants and your organization. Common practices include in-person workshops, online tutorials, and one-on-one coaching sessions.

Regardless of delivery format, it is important that participants have a basic understanding of common host expectations for professional behavior:

#### First Impressions

- Introductions and greetings
- 30 second elevator pitch
- Background knowledge of the host

#### Professional Communication

- Writing an email
- Asking for help/clarification
- Customer service skills

#### Appropriate Attire

- Business casual vs. business professional
- General dos and don'ts of clothing
- Resources for professional wear

#### Teamwork and Conflict Resolution

- Building on strengths of others
- Being a productive team member
- How to manage issues and frustrations

#### Reliability and Accountability

- Timeliness
- Communicating when late or absent
- Following through

### CAPITALIZING ON FORMER CDE PARTICIPANTS

Previous CDE participants can serve as valuable guides by sharing their experiences with an incoming group of participants. The ability to hear from their peers can help address more directly any questions or concerns they are having as they prepare for their CDE placement. Prepare questions for former participants to discuss common helpful items and have conversations with them about providing honest responses while also remaining professional in their statements.



#### ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONAL STAFF VS. HOST

Participants need to know the different roles your managing organization plays compared to that of the host, particularly regarding challenges or personal issues your participants might face. Your organization should be the primary point of contact in the event that something is happening within or outside of the CDE that affects a participant's ability to be successful in the program, such as financial or safety concerns.

Participant safety is of utmost importance, and they should know how to report any sexual or otherwise discriminatory harassment occurring at either your managing organization or the host site. To ensure participant safety, establish and clearly communicate the process by which participants can address these challenges with a trusted adult within your organization, regardless if the harassment is coming from an adult or a fellow participant.

## PREPARING FOR THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE



### COMMUNITY EXAMPLES OF PRE-CDE TRAINING



Through their Career Center for Discovery, District 214 developed digital modules on their Learning Management System for students to complete prior to participation in a CDE. In-person workshop sessions are available for those participants in need of more direct guidance



Vermilion County Works (VCW) operates several special training programs for youth ages 16–24. VCW contracts with youth-serving agencies to provide pre-employment skills training prior to youth being placed in work experiences, limited internships, or employment with local employers.



REACH has career readiness workshops in partner schools for interested applicants to the internship program. Students are able to participate in resume writing, interview prep, and networking events to strengthen their readiness for the work world.

### PWR ACT: ESSENTIAL EMPLOYABILITY AND TECHNICAL COMPETENCIES

Refer to the [Essential Employability and Technical Competencies](#) as outlined in the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR) Act to enhance your participant preparation activities. These competencies serve as quality indicators of an individual's readiness to enter an industry or to pursue further education in that field. These competencies were developed in consultation with state agencies and key industry experts including hiring professionals, education and training professionals, and industry associations.

# FIRST DAY NEEDS & CONSIDERATIONS

## GETTING PARTICIPANTS READY

Before participants start at their host site, they should complete the following activities:

### Host Research

Learn some general background about their host, through desk research and/or host information submitted to your managing organization.

### Getting to the CDE

Plan for the logistics of getting to/from their CDE, mapping out their route.

Practice their commute before their first day to proactively address any confusion regarding their route.

### CDE Placement Requirements

Participate in any required background or screening processes.

Identify any challenges that might impact the start date.



### "ABOUT ME" PROFILES

One way to ensure the host is ready to welcome participants is to have participants prepare a profile with some background information and a photo of themselves. Hosts can then send this information to their team before a participant's start date so their staff is aware of who the participant is and is able to welcome and support them on their first day. This information can include:

- Career goals and interests
- Fun facts like favorite food, movie, or book
- What they are most excited to learn during their CDE

Certain industries may have more extensive onboarding requirements before a participant is able to begin work. As you are determining participant placements, make sure that you are having open and honest conversations with them about any of the required onboarding needs. If a participant expresses concern about passing any of the onboarding processes (background checks, drug tests), consider whether they are still eligible for a CDE and can be placed at a different site that does not have the same requirements.

Some of the onboarding requirements can be costly. Typically, hosts will take on this cost, but this is not guaranteed. Work within your managing organization and among community partners to determine affordable means for participants to complete onboarding needs if the host is unable or unwilling to pay. Examples of industry-specific onboarding requirements include:

### Health Care

- Health and drug screening (Physical, TB test)
- HIPAA training

### Finance & Business

- Name-based background check
- Fingerprinting background check

### Human and Public Services

- Background check
- Drug test

## FIRST DAY NEEDS & CONSIDERATIONS

### GETTING A GOVERNMENT ISSUED ID

Hosts might require that individuals check in through security with a government issued ID. There may be flexibility for participants to use a school photo ID, but it is helpful as participants are entering the professional space to have a government issued ID. Work closely with your participants to collect the required materials and direct them to the appropriate locations in your region to get their ID.

If a participant is unable to provide or obtain a government issued ID based on theirs or their family's legal status, it is important to speak one-on-one with them to determine their options to complete a CDE.

### PAYING PARTICIPANTS

If participants are receiving any earnings for their CDE, they should have a bank account set up before their first paycheck. If participants do not currently have a bank account, work with them to open harm-free checking accounts to avoid any penalties or late fees.

## PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES

Generally, it is important to help participants build a professional portfolio to showcase their competencies and experiences. These materials may be developed before the start of their CDE but should be refreshed and edited throughout and after their CDE to incorporate their experience.

A few suggestions are:



#### Building a LinkedIn Profile

Participants should upload some general information about their education and work experience to start connecting with hosts. At the end of their CDE, if agreeable, have hosts write a reference!



#### Resume & Cover Letter

Participants may already have some form of both or one of these, but as they are beginning to be more active onsite with hosts, these materials should be more robust and detailed to reflect their experiences.



#### Business Cards

Having a business card is a great confidence booster for participants and encourages them to network with others. Consider creating business cards with your managing organization's logo and participant information.



#### SUPPORTING FINANCIAL LITERACY

The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation's [Money Smart](#) education program has been developed for people of all ages to enhance their financial skills and create positive banking relationships. Tools and strategies can be used to teach others, or for independent use.



#### GETMYFUTURE

Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration, the [GetMyFuture website](#) connects youth to career, education, and job search resources.

# CDE ONLINE TOOLKIT RESOURCES

## DEMONSTRATING READINESS

**TEMPLATE** | Participant Profile: [PDF](#) // [Word](#)

**TEMPLATE** | Pre-Assessment Participant Interview: [PDF](#) // [Word](#)

**TEMPLATE** | Participant Placement Email/Letter: [PDF](#) // [Word](#)

**TEMPLATE** | Participant Self-Assessment of Essential Employability Competencies: [PDF](#) // [Word](#)

**RESOURCE** | [Career Guide](#) from Illinois State Board of Education

**RESOURCE** | [Parent Engagement Tip Sheet](#) from Youth CareerConnect

**RESOURCE** | [Skill & Interest Surveys](#) from Illinois workNet

## PREPARING FOR THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE

**TEMPLATE** | Participants Program Outline & Expectations: [PDF](#) // [Word](#)

**RESOURCE** | [Pre-assessment/Career Surveys](#) from Illinois workNet

**RESOURCE** | [Skills to Pay the Bills: Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success](#) from the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy

**RESOURCE** | [Supporting In-School and Out-of-School Youth Experiencing Homelessness Through Education and Workforce Partnership](#) from the National Center for Homeless Education

**RESOURCE** | [Employment 101](#) from Illinois workNet

**TEMPLATE** | Participant Orientation at Host Site: [PDF](#) // [Word](#)

**TEMPLATE** | Participant Host Site Background Research: [PDF](#) // [Word](#)

**TEMPLATE** | Participant "About Me" Profile: [PDF](#) // [Word](#)

**EXEMPLAR** | [Teen Volunteer Application](#) from Cancer Treatment Centers of America

**RESOURCE** | [State-by-State Non-Drive Identification Requirements](#) from National Network for Youth

**RESOURCE** | [Money Smart: Youth Employment Resource Center](#) from FDIC

## PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES

**TEMPLATE** | [Participant Business Card](#)

**RESOURCE** | [GetMyFuture Website](#) from CareerOneStop

**RESOURCE** | [Job Skills Guides](#) from Illinois workNet

**RESOURCE** | [Employment 101](#) from Illinois workNet

## FIRST DAY NEEDS & CONSIDERATIONS



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# CLARIFYING EXPECTATIONS

## REVIEWING THE CDE PROGRAM PLAN

While host expectations for your CDE program were communicated during your initial outreach, onboarding is an important time to review and reiterate. There might be a new host contact you are working with, and it is always helpful to review your expectations to ensure that your managing organization and hosts are on the same page. The more informed your hosts are, the more equipped they will be to provide mentorship and an authentic learning experience for participants.

Most importantly, you should review the following:

- Schedule of CDE events and required activities
- Checklist of the essential employability and technical skills participants should work on
- Start date and location for participants to report to
- Any onboarding needs before participant starts
- Confirming assigned host staff that will work directly with participant

## FORMALIZING THEIR PARTICIPATION

Similar to the agreement participants had to complete to meet the expectations of your CDE program, hosts should complete an agreement form. This form should have already been completed when a host officially signed on to provide a CDE, but it is helpful to review during onboarding. It is also a best practice to send a confirmation email 2–4 weeks before a participant starts to address any confusion or onboarding needs to ensure participants can start on time.

## WELCOME LETTER

Hosts should be continuously encouraged about the role they play in supporting participants in their professional growth. Along with confirming the agreement and logistics of the CDE, it is helpful to send a welcome letter from your managing organization's leadership describing the CDE program and expressing the value of host involvement in the experience.

## ENGAGING OTHER HOST STAFF

Regardless of whether host staff will be working directly with participants, the host point of contact should proactively communicate with their staff to set the expectations around the CDE and the participant's experience. Encourage hosts to share the participant's "About Me" profile with their staff (more information on this in the "Onboarding for Participants" section of the toolkit).



### TOOLKIT TERMINOLOGY

Definitions for the terms "participant," "managing organization," and "host" are given in the [Introduction](#).



### HOST STAFF AS MENTORS FOR TALENT DEVELOPMENT

As you are working with a host to determine who will be the main point of contact for the participant at a CDE site have an intentional conversation about the host staff's role as a mentor for participants. This person should be responsible for the assigning and training of tasks, with an understanding they are also a coach for a developing young professional. It might be best to have two different assigned staff for participants: one who assigns and trains on the tasks and another who can serve as a mentor removed from the daily work to chat through how things are going.



# ORIENTATION

## REVIEWING THE CDE PROGRAM PLAN

Before the first day of the CDE, managing organizations should set aside time to meet with hosts either in-person or remotely. Along with discussing the expectations previously mentioned in this section, you will also need to get into specific details about what the CDE will look like on a day-to-day basis and the supports provided by the managing organization.

If you have multiple hosts starting at the same time, consider hosting a webinar or similar group setting where they can all dial-in or attend in-person. Being able to speak to multiple hosts at once ensures that a consistent message is being communicated. If you are speaking to hosts one-on-one, make sure that your organizational staff are trained and prepared to deliver a uniform message.

## CDE GUIDEBOOK FOR HOSTS

A CDE agreement outlines the general expectations and schedule of events for hosts, but there should be an additional resource that goes into more detail about the day-to-day work with a participant. A CDE guidebook for hosts should be a resource that hosts refer to independently throughout the CDE experience. At minimum, the guidebook should include:

- CDE program overview and timeline of events and activities
- Characteristics of a strong host partner
- Role of and supports provided by your managing organization
- Any applicable policies and procedures
- Liability, travel and other concerns addressed
- Orienting the participant to their CDE placement site
- Participant assessments and supplemental resources

## DEVELOPING A PLAN FOR PARTICIPANTS

Along with providing clear expectations and information about your CDE, collaborate with your hosts to determine a plan for working with participants. Consider:

### CDE Program Basics

- Participants' day-to-day tasks or projects
- Participants' learning objectives, goals, and related employability and technical competencies

### Internal Leadership

- Departments that are in need of utilizing and managing a participant
- Assigned host staff to provide ongoing supervision and support for participant



## CREATING AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT

It is important that your managing organization engages in a discussion with hosts early in the onboarding process to identify any accommodations needed to establish a quality CDE. Accommodations should be individualized and based on the expressed and/or documented needs of participants rather than based on any assumptions.

Accommodations may include:

- Allowing for a flexible schedule or hours
- Providing modified equipment or assistive technology
- Giving written and recorded instructions

## ORIENTATION

### Communications

- The flow of communication within a host to contact your organization as needed
- Directives for participants if they are working in multiple departments/staff

### SUPERVISING HOST STAFF

Host staff who will work primarily with participants should understand their responsibility as more than an on-the-job supervisor. Throughout the CDE, they will play a crucial role in the personal and professional development of participants. While they will be assigning tasks to participants, they should also make intentional efforts to incorporate participants into the host culture and guide them through the successes and challenges of this professional learning experience. Managing organizations should communicate the resources and coaching they provide to host staff through their role as a supervisor for participants.

Encourage supervising host staff to provide opportunities for participants to both reflect and provide feedback on the experience. Through these open conversations, both participants and host staff can gain a better understanding of themselves in a professional space. One of the most valuable resources a participant can leave a CDE with is a professional relationship they are able to use for future networking and guidance in their career pathway.



### MANDATED REPORTING

As an organization who works directly with youth, you are familiar with your role as a mandated reporter if a participant expresses any form of abuse or neglect.

Make it clear to hosts that they should contact you as soon as possible if a participant shares any concerning information and that you will work directly with participants to navigate the situation. Some hosts will want to be heavily involved in this process, while others will want to be completely removed, but it is important that you clarify upfront your direct role in handling any personal participant issues.

# FIRST DAY NEEDS & CONSIDERATIONS

## WELCOMING PARTICIPANTS

Encourage hosts to proactively welcome CDE participants, as this might be the first time a participant is going to work in a professional space. Participants may have previous work-based learning experiences or visited a workplace, but the newness of the host site and the responsibilities they will have as CDE participants can be daunting during their first days. Participants will likely be anxious, especially if they do not see themselves reflected in that space.

Encourage hosts to welcome participants through a staff meeting, introduction email, or another intentional manner. If hosts expect participants to perform at the same standards as their employees, then it is important that participants feel valued and respected in the host environment.

## ORIENTING PARTICIPANTS TO THE WORKPLACE

Help hosts develop a plan to introduce participants to their work site and establish guidelines and expectations. Participants should have also received similar information during their onboarding process with your managing organization, but this is the time for them to see it in action and learn from their host firsthand.

A host's orientation plan should include:

Welcome and Introductions	Plan for Participant	Expectations of Behavior
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A tour of the space and any materials and equipment the participant might use</li> <li>• Introduction of participants to staff and explanation of department roles</li> <li>• Basic information and background of the host</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Description of tasks to be completed daily, weekly, and overall, including any deadlines</li> <li>• Process for professional skills assessments</li> <li>• Schedule check-ins and determine preferred modes of communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any applicable safety rules and emergency procedures</li> <li>• Any nondisclosure/confidentiality</li> <li>• Quirks of the culture and unwritten rules of the workplace that may affect participant</li> </ul>



### CHECK-INS

Regular check-ins between a participant and their direct supervisor at the host ensure that questions and concerns can be addressed in a timely fashion. Regular check-ins provide an opportunity for continuous feedback for both participants and hosts as well as an opportunity for relationship building by providing a space for participants who may still be hesitant to ask questions. These meetings can be brief (15 minutes or less) as long as they have an intentional structure and are productive.

# YOUTH DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

## CREATING A YOUTH FRIENDLY WORKPLACE

There will be a spectrum of willingness by hosts in terms of how they might modify tasks to suit youth as they develop their essential employability and technical competencies. Some hosts will modify tasks significantly at the outset of the program, while others will expect participants to be ready to jump in without adjusting the tasks. Encourage the host's role in the talent development of the future workforce, taking into account the capability and willingness of a host to modify the workplace to fit the needs of youth as developing professionals. With this understanding in mind, consider the best practices for creating a youth friendly environment a host can incorporate and provide support for implementation. Creating a youth-friendly workplace should not be left entirely to the host, but it should be a collaborative responsibility between the host and managing organization.

## COMPONENTS OF CREATING A YOUTH-FRIENDLY WORKPLACE INCLUDE



### Emotional and Physical Safety

- Participant's basic needs are met
- Participants feel trusted and respected by host staff



### Youth Participation

- Participants are given opportunities to have a voice and choices
- Participants are provided opportunities to demonstrate leadership



### Engaging in Skill Building

- Participants engage in activities to strengthen their career interests
- Participants build new capacities through authentic learning experiences



### Caring Relationships

- Participants have at least one adult who listens and provides guidance
- Participants have positive relationships with their peers



### Community Involvement

- Participants understand the local and global impact of their work
- Participants are provided opportunities to engage with the community



### PROMOTING TAKING INITIATIVE

If participants are not clear about what projects or tasks they might be able to undertake if they finish their assigned tasks, they might not feel comfortable beginning other work. In this scenario, the host might feel as though the participant is not taking initiative. To avoid these challenges, suggest to hosts that they mix short and long-term projects when delegating tasks to participants. This allows a participant to be aware of any long-term projects they can continuously circle back to and work on to show initiative.

## YOUTH DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

If a host has agreed to support participants for a CDE, they may be interested in understanding best practices to support youth development. They may rely on your managing organization to provide resources and training for them to continue to grow in their capacity to provide a positive CDE experience for your participants in a youth development model. There are a variety of readings and online resources for hosts, but it will be more effective if your organization finds intentional ways to offer opportunities that bring hosts together to discuss supporting youth in their environment.

Suggestions for professional development resources and training for your managing organization to provide include:

### Setting Expectations

- Balancing the needs of the host with participant skillbuilding
- Ensuring that the participant is able to thrive in the host company culture

### Providing Feedback

- Tools for strengths-based conversations regarding areas of improvement for participants
- Supporting the host to navigate when a participant is not meeting expectations

### Mentoring

- Practices and resources to support and advise on participant's career pathway
- Suggestions for opening up space to develop a supportive and collaborative relationship



### MANDATED REPORTING

As an organization who works directly with youth, you are familiar with your role as a mandated reporter if a participant expresses any form of abuse or neglect.

Make it clear to hosts that they should contact you as soon as possible if a participant shares any concerning information and that you will work directly with participants to navigate the situation. Some hosts will want to be heavily involved in this process, while others will want to be completely removed, but it is important that you clarify upfront your direct role in handling any personal participant issues.

# CDE ONLINE TOOLKIT RESOURCES

## CLARIFYING EXPECTATIONS

**TEMPLATE** | Host Confirmation and Participant Introduction Email/Letter: [PDF](#) // [Word](#)

**TEMPLATE** | Participant “About Me” Profile: [PDF](#) // [Word](#)

## ORIENTATION

**TEMPLATE** | Host Orientation Presentation: [PowerPoint](#)

**TEMPLATE** | Guidebook for Hosts: [PDF](#) // [Word](#)

**RESOURCE** | [Participant Tasks Examples by Pathway Endorsement Area](#)

**RESOURCE** | [Questions for Experienced Hosts](#)

**RESOURCE** | [Workplace Accommodation Toolkit from the Job Accommodation Network \(JAN\)](#)

**RESOURCE** | [Inclusive Internship Programs: A How-to Guide for Employers](#) from the U.S. Department of Labor

## FIRST DAY NEEDS & CONSIDERATIONS

**TEMPLATE** | Participant Orientation at Host Site: [PDF](#) // [Word](#)

**RESOURCE** | [Host & Participant Check-In Meetings](#)

## YOUTH DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

**RESOURCE** | [A Mentor’s Guide to Youth Development](#) from the U.S. Department of Education

**RESOURCE** | [Ladder of Young People’s Participation](#) by Roger Hart

**RESOURCE** | [Creating a Youth-Friendly Workplace: An Employer’s Guide to Building a Quality Internship](#) from the Sacramento Employment and Training Agency

**RESOURCE** | [Social, and Emotional Learning Framework](#) from CASEL



# DURING

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# PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

The official start of a participant’s career development experience (CDE) is an exciting moment filled with expectation and curiosity about the experience from both participants and hosts. As participants and hosts become more familiar with one another and the related tasks, they may be in need of support and resources to ensure a successful experience. It is crucial that the managing organization is checking in on both participants and hosts throughout the CDE to ensure active engagement and addressing any concerns or questions as they arise.

## INITIAL CHECK-IN

Taking into account the timeline of a participant’s CDE, the points of contact from your managing organization should check in with both participants and hosts shortly after the first day to learn how everything is going so far. It is important to do this initial check-in early in the CDE to demonstrate your availability to support and interest in feedback from participants and hosts.

The initial check-in should be open-ended and brief. Later on in the CDE, you will conduct more formal assessments in which you will have the opportunity to ask more targeted questions. This is simply your time to reaffirm your organization’s commitment of support and openness to feedback from both participants and hosts. They might not have much to say, but listen for cues and determine whether you need to probe to get more honest feedback. If there were any specific items mentioned by either party prior to the CDE, now is a good time to follow up on those particular issues. It is also helpful to provide any friendly reminders for participants and hosts to be aware of such as recording attendance and hours, assessment needs and a general timeline of the CDE.

## RECORD KEEPING

As participants are completing their CDE, ensure that they are meeting your managing organization’s requirements for tracking their attendance and hours. If participants are supposed to log in and out daily on an online portal, monitor it closely to troubleshoot and ensure that they are meeting this requirement. If participants are submitting paper records, ensure that these are submitted with appropriate dates and times. Both online and paper records should be verified by the host.

If participants are receiving academic credit for the CDE, require an hourly log as a course assignment submitted via paper records and/or a learning management system. A participant’s letter grade will verify their completion of hours.

If participants are receiving financial compensation for the CDE, payroll can serve as verification of hours completed, but a time sheet verified by the host should still be completed to validate hours.



### TOOLKIT TERMINOLOGY

Definitions for the terms “participant,” “managing organization,” and “host” are given in the [Introduction](#).



### INITIAL CHECK-IN WITH HOSTS

Make the initial check-in by phone rather than over email so you can hear from the host firsthand. If you cannot reach them quickly by phone, send an email reaching out and letting them know you are available to talk at any time. Direct outreach such as this is important for establishing and maintaining a trusting relationship with hosts.



### ENSURING ACCURATE TIME REPORTING

Timesheet fraud occurs when an individual is paid for hours that they did not work or time spent on activities not related to work. If participants are earning hourly compensation for the CDE, review timesheets with them for accuracy, ensuring they are being paid for their exact hours worked. Remind hosts of their responsibility to review timesheets closely and verify they are only approving actual participant hours worked.



## PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

### MAINTAINING A PRODUCTIVE & MEANINGFUL CDE

There are a variety of tools and options for ways in which you can keep hosts and participants engaged throughout a CDE that are authentic and lead to the development of essential employability and technical competencies. The following are common resources and supports for participants and hosts to reaffirm expectations of the CDE and provide assistance to promote positive engagement:

#### Essential Employability Competency:

##### Planning and Organizing

Participants may need extra support to organize their tasks and meet deadlines. Provide resources that are helpful for participants and can be reinforced by hosts.

##### Host and Participant Communication

As participants are adjusting to their host site, it is important to make sure they are adhering to the communication needs and preferences of their host. Additionally, it is important to make sure that hosts are providing the necessary information and spaces for communication to occur.

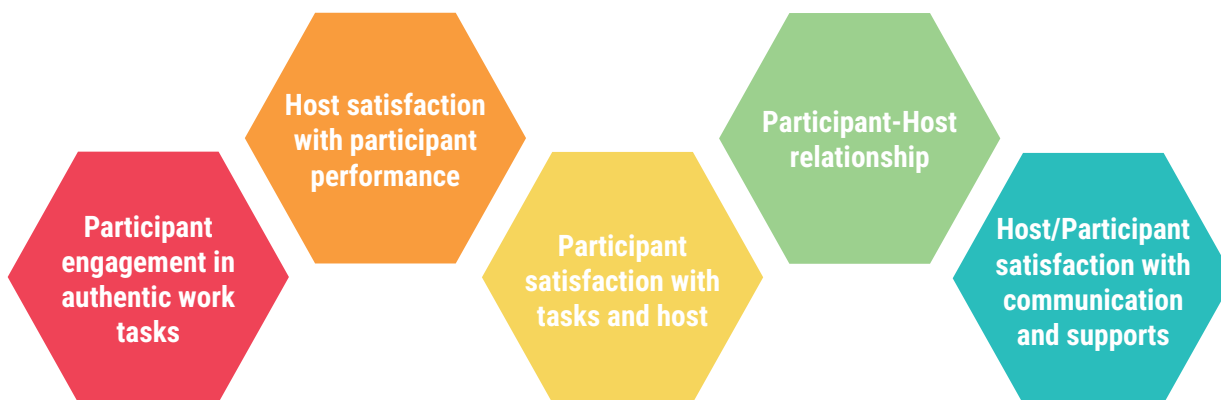
#### Managing Multiple Hosts

If you have a large number of participants completing a CDE at the same time across multiple hosts, consider distributing a weekly email that conveys the same announcements and reminders to participants and hosts.

#### Informational Interviews

CDEs are a perfect time for participants to network and learn from professionals in their career area of interest. Encourage participants to advocate for, and the host to make time for, informational interviews. Interview questions should be reviewed by the host; provide some initial prompts for reference.

### MONITORING IMPORTANT ISSUES



Ensure that potential issues are being monitored by the points of contact within your managing organization (as referred to in the “Organizational Structure” section), particularly if there are personnel changes. Depending on the nature of your program, you may be in frequent contact with your participants. Take advantage of these moments and find out as much as possible about what they are doing at their CDE site and how they feel about the experience. Allowing participants to be as open and honest as possible will help you proactively address any issues or needs that arise.

# PARTICIPANT ASSESSMENT

## TIME FOR REFLECTION

As you are preparing for participants to be formally assessed by the host, provide time for participants to reflect on their CDE and their areas of strength and growth. It is most meaningful if a participant is able to take ownership of their own assessment rather than simply being told what they are good or bad at. This will allow for an assessment that feels more like a collaborative discussion rather than a potentially punitive process. To facilitate the reflection process, participants will need tools and resources to learn how to reflect.

Participant reflection can take on many formats, including:

### Entrance/Exit Slips

If participants are regularly gathered together throughout the CDE, have them jot down responses to 1–2 questions about the day/experience as they are entering or wrapping up the session.

### Survey Forms in Email

If you send any regular communication to participants, include a survey link with 1–2 questions that participants can respond to and will be automatically uploaded for your review.

### One-on-One Meetings

If you meet regularly with participants or if this is an individual support that they need, find time to intentionally ask 1–2 reflective questions for the participant to respond to.



## REFLECTING FOR DEEPER LEARNING

Typically, we think of reflection as a more limited process of simply sharing thoughts and feelings that have occurred as a result of an experience. To encourage deeper learning through reflection, participants should start with an understanding of the competency development and performance expectations of the CDE. Using these, participants can evaluate and recognize where they have exhibited the expected behavior, assess areas of needed improvement, and learn to take constructive feedback.

Specifically, participants should reflect on the following before their formal professional skills assessment:

### Making Connections

How does what they are doing at the CDE host site relate to the expected CDE learning outcomes? How does this experience prepare and inform them in their career pathway?

### Evaluate

Does the quality of their work match the Host's standards and expectations? How have they improved their knowledge and skills over time (specifically what did they do to be successful)?

### Goals

Can they identify their strengths and how they have contributed to the work of their Host? In what areas do they need more support and what steps will they take to advance current knowledge/skills?

If the reflection is not in-person, make sure you review the participant's response as soon as possible and following up on any areas that are unclear or concerning.

## PARTICIPANT ASSESSMENT

### PROFESSIONAL SKILLS ASSESSMENT

As defined in the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act, a professional skills assessment is:

*A tool-based observational assessment of a participant's performance in a career development experience given by an adult supervisor and shared with the participant that addresses foundational professional skills including, at a minimum, those outlined in the Essential Employability Skills framework. The professional skills assessment tool is to be used primarily as a feedback tool and development strategy and not as the sole basis for a grade or credit determination.*

Depending on the length of the CDE, it may only be appropriate to do one professional skills assessment. If the length of the CDE allows (for example, a full semester), it is beneficial to have a baseline, middle, and final assessment with the same questions to evaluate participant's growth over time. Regardless of how many professional skills assessments are completed, it is important they speak to the participant's competency development and capture feedback on performance from the host. **One of the most valuable aspects of a CDE is the ability for a participant to receive feedback on their performance through an assessment completed primarily by their host.**

Managing organizations should provide hosts with guidelines on what is being assessed and parameters for their ratings of participant performance and development of competencies. It is important to put practices in place to ensure consistency among various hosts and avoid participants being assessed more harshly or forgivingly based on their CDE host rather than their actual performance. This assessment should be utilized as a performance review for participants and encourage discussion among participants, hosts, and your organization.

### FOLLOW-UP

Once a professional skills assessment is submitted, it is important that your managing organization follows up with both the participant and host to discuss responses. This can be through a formal in-person meeting (see "Site Visits" below) or through a phone call/email exchange. Both participants and host should be made to feel that the time they spent completing the assessment is recognized and valued. (See "Running into Trouble" at the end of this section for handling issues and concerns that may arise from these conversations.)

If timing allows, schedule the opportunity to sit down in-person with the participant and host to discuss the professional skills assessment. Be prepared to manage the conversation so it remains collaborative and everyone is talking with, rather than at, one another. For youth to truly develop essential employability and technical competencies, they must be treated with respect and provided room for their voice to be heard during these conversations.



### ASSET-BASED APPROACH

An asset-based approach is crucial for participants to see themselves as capable of being successful in a professional space as they progress through their CDE experiences. In summary, this approach focuses on strengths and views diversity in thought, culture, and traits as positive assets. Participants should be valued for what they bring to a host instead of being characterized by what they lack. While areas of growth exist for everyone, too often for youth there is a focus on inadequacies and what they need to gain or change about themselves to be successful.

# GUIDE FOR SITE VISIT AT HOST

Site visits help managing organizations establish and maintain trusting relationships with hosts and participants since they are able to directly see a CDE in action. Depending on the capacity of your organization, this might not be possible for every participant, so consider those hosts and/or participants who are most in need of an in-person visit.

Site visits provide an opportunity for managing organizations to gain a first-hand look at what it is like for a participant to complete their CDE at a particular host. As you consider whether a host is a good fit to continue placing participants, this is a great way to gather more information. Site visits are especially important if a participant has expressed concerns about a host site (staff, working conditions, etc.) so you can assess and address the situation effectively.

Through site visits, you can establish a more human connection between your managing organization and the host to further build a trusting relationship, even if it is only a brief conversation with your host point of contact.

Components of a site visit may include:

Meeting other host staff and departments who work with the participant beyond your normal host contact

Tour of the space and observing a participant interact with equipment and materials to perform tasks

Discussion of accomplishments/challenges and any additional supports your Organization can provide



## SITE VISIT BEST PRACTICES

A combination of one-on-one time with hosts and group time with hosts and participants is an effective format to learn about participants' professional skills assessment and overall performance.

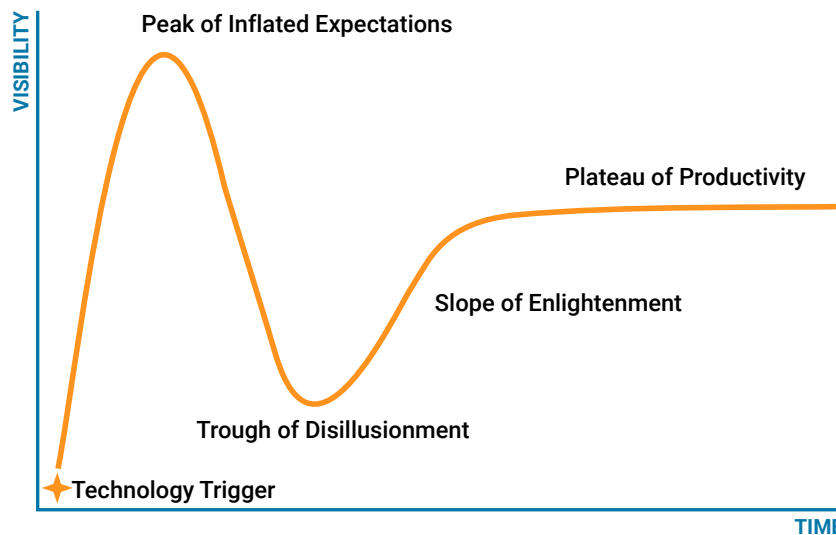
First, meet with the host one-on-one to discuss their feedback and evaluation of the participant and the CDE.

Second, have the participant join the discussion and share their reflection on their own feedback and evaluation of their performance and the CDE.

After they both share, use the remaining time to find a common understanding and discuss any goals or next steps to focus on for the remainder of the CDE.

# NAVIGATING CHALLENGES

CDEs typically get off to a great start, but challenges may emerge as participants and hosts move beyond the initial excitement and anticipation. Through continuous coaching and support, it is possible to navigate challenges and improve the experience through a better understanding of needs and expectations. This is a typical process for anything new and one that should be considered as participants begin their CDE and are encouraged throughout to get to a “steady results” point. If a participant or host reaches a moment of frustration and discontent with the CDE, it is not a sign that the experience is unsuccessful but rather an opportunity to learn and improve.



Consider the above image of the Gartner Hype Cycle that is used to show the graphic representation of the maturity and adoption of new technologies as it relates to a participant’s CDE and may affect their performance:

Gartner Hype Cycle Stage	CDE Related Events
Innovation Trigger	The participant learns that they are eligible for a CDE.
Peak of Inflated Expectations	The participant researches the host they will be placed at for the CDE and tasks they will perform.
Trough of Disillusionment	The participant has started to get used to the CDE tasks and they no longer hold the same appeal.
Slope of Enlightenment	Through reflection, the participant becomes aware of their personal growth and development.
Plateau of Productivity	The participant realizes how they can contribute in a meaningful way to the host and the CDE’s impact on their career pathway.



## SITE VISIT BEST PRACTICES

A combination of one-on-one time with hosts and group time with hosts and participants is an effective format to learn about participants’ professional skills assessment and overall performance.

First, meet with hosts one-on-one to discuss their feedback and evaluation of the participant and CDE.

Second, have the participant join the discussion and share their reflection on the feedback and evaluation of their performance and the CDE.

Use the remaining time to find a common understanding and discuss any goals or next steps to focus on for the remainder of the CDE.

## FIGURE 3

Gartner Hype Cycle



## NAVIGATING CHALLENGES

In general, most issues and concerns that arise during a CDE can be worked through quickly and are typically due to some form of miscommunication or assumptions. Other times, a deep divide has been formed between a participant and their host and you will need to step in and mediate the situation.

First, hear perspectives from both the host and the participant separately so they both feel that they can speak openly and candidly with you about the situation. During this time, feel free to provide insights and suggestions as appropriate, but focus on active listening and taking notes so you can identify where you can start to build a common understanding between participant and host.

When an issue or conflict occurs during the CDE, consider the following:

**What is the problem and what do the participant and host hope to accomplish?**

**Where might your managing organization play a role in the cause and/or resolution?**

**Could it be a result of something happening outside of the CDE?**

**Has any miscommunication occurred or information not been provided?**

**How has the host and participant contributed to the issue?**

If the situation cannot be easily corrected and a formal meeting needs to occur to determine whether a participant can complete their CDE with the host, best practice is to meet in-person but a conference call can work if that is the only workable option. (See “Termination of a CDE” below.)

## PARTICIPANTS DEALING WITH TRAUMA

Participants may experience trauma or difficulties such as a death in their family or friends, loss of income, or housing instability over the course of the CDE. Managing organizations should be equipped to identify and refer participants to resources and services based on their unique needs. Some managing organizations may be able to directly provide some or all of these resources and services, but at minimum, CDE program staff should be trained on and aware of the options for participant referrals. Establishing trusting relationships with participants early will ensure that they feel comfortable expressing needs for support to their managing organization.



### SETTING AND REVISITING GOALS

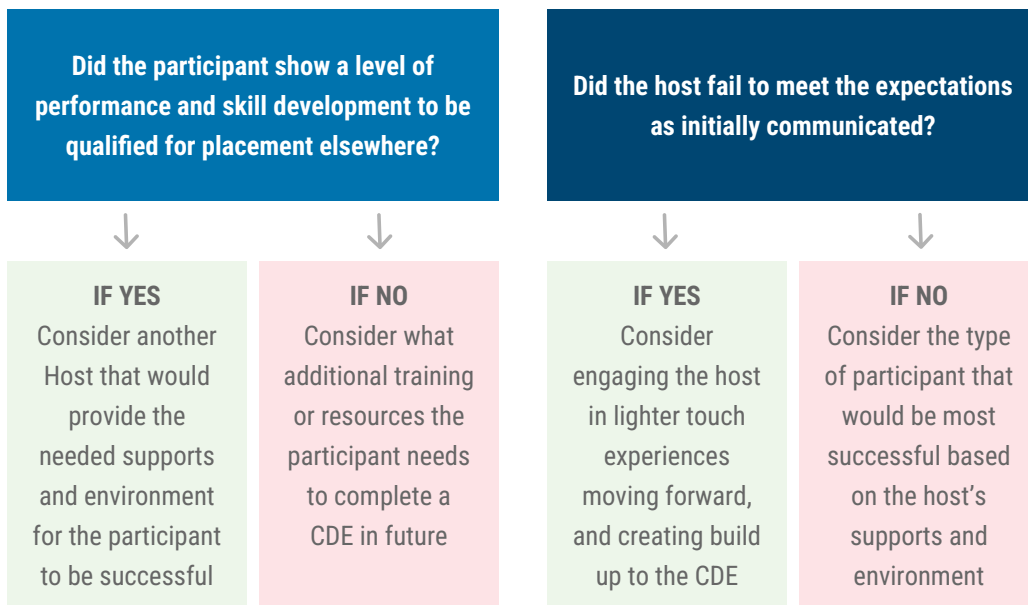
A great way to regroup when challenges have occurred and facilitate a collaborative and asset-based conversation with hosts and participants is to focus on setting goals and positive forward thinking. It is easy to get wrapped up in the current frustrations and associated emotions when something has gone wrong. Your role as a managing organization is to be a liaison between hosts and participants to work through a difficult situation. Have the host and participant discuss what goals they have and what success in those goals would look like. Then spend some time defining the roles and responsibilities of all of you to ensure that those goals are met.

## NAVIGATING CHALLENGES

### TERMINATION OF A CDE

There may come a time when a participant and a host are no longer able to work together to complete the CDE. This decision should not be made lightly, but it should also not be prolonged to create further feelings of frustration by the participant and/or host. If you created an improvement plan for a participant, consider whether expectations were met by the participant and if the host provided the needed support.

While this is an unfortunate circumstance, it may not necessarily have to lead to dissolution of a host relationship or a participant's ability to complete another CDE. Relationships are a key asset to any CDE program, and your organization needs to take the proper steps to follow-up with both participant and host after a termination. As you are debriefing the situation once the CDE has been terminated, consider the following:



### IMPROVEMENT PLANS

An improvement plan is an agreement among a participant, host, and managing organization to improve performance related issues. This improvement plan might be a formal document or a verbal agreement among parties. It should outline in detail the expectations for improvement and a timeline for assessment check points to monitor growth. Improvement plans should be a collaborative document that both hosts and participants determine is agreeable and achievable given the timeline and expectations as outlined.

# CDE ONLINE TOOLKIT RESOURCES

## PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

**TEMPLATE** | Recording CDE Hours: [PDF](#) // [Word](#)

**RESOURCE** | [Host & Participant Check-In Meetings](#)

**RESOURCE** | [Participant Task Examples by Pathway Endorsement Area](#)

## PARTICIPANT ASSESSMENT

**RESOURCE** | [Participant Reflection Questions](#)

**RESOURCE** | [Observational Assessment and Worksite Evaluation](#) from Illinois workNet

**RESOURCE** | [Example Professional Skills Assessment for Education Pathway](#) from Making Opportunities Real for Everyone (MORE) in the Mississippi and Rock River Region

## GUIDE FOR SITE VISIT AT HOST

**RESOURCE** | [A Guide to Providing Feedback to Participants](#)

**RESOURCE** | [Helping Your Customers Stay Motivated and Engaged](#) from Illinois workNet

**RESOURCE** | [Worksite Evaluation](#) from Illinois workNet

**EXEMPLAR** | [Supervised Agricultural Experience: Visit Scheduling Form](#)

**EXEMPLAR** | [Supervised Agricultural Experience: Visit Checklist](#)

**TEMPLATE** | [A Guide for Site Visits at Hosts](#)

## NAVIGATING CHALLENGES

**RESOURCE** | [Hype Cycle](#) from Gartner

**RESOURCE** | [A Guide to Providing Feedback to Participants](#)

**RESOURCE** | [A Guide to Difficult Conversations](#)

**TEMPLATE** | Navigating Challenges Worksheet: [PDF](#) // [Word](#)

**TEMPLATE** | Participant Improvement Plan: [PDF](#) // [Word](#)





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# CDE CLOSE-OUT FOR PARTICIPANTS

## LAST DAY NEEDS

With the support of your managing organization and their host, participants should prepare for their last day of the CDE. Regardless of how long they have been with a host, they should treat their last day of the CDE as if they were a regular employee and follow any protocols and procedures as applicable. Encourage participants and hosts to spend time celebrating and commemorating the experience. Considerations for the last day of a CDE include:

Items Specific to CDE Placement Site	Celebration	Future Communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there any identification badges and/or equipment that need to be returned?</li> <li>• Is there any paperwork that needs to be filled out at the host site?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are hosts commemorating a participant's last day?</li> <li>• How will participants thank their hosts for the experience and support (consider a handwritten note!)?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If desired, how can participants and hosts stay connected post-CDE?</li> <li>• What is the process for participants who would like to work at the host full-time in the future?</li> </ul>



### TOOLKIT TERMINOLOGY

Definitions for the terms "participant," "managing organization," and "host" are given in the [Introduction](#).

## PROFESSIONAL SKILLS ASSESSMENT "REPORT CARD"

If they have not done so already, participants need to complete a professional skills assessment to reflect on learning and performance gained from the CDE (see the "During" section of this toolkit for more information on participant assessment). Participants should receive information on their professional skills assessment that summarizes the feedback and performance evaluation submitted by their host. The feedback from the host should be discussed and compared to a participant's self-assessment of their performance. This is an opportunity to further engage participants in reflection and understanding of their strengths and areas of growth.

## CDE CLOSE-OUT FOR PARTICIPANTS

## HOST ASSESSMENT

At the conclusion of their CDE, participants should be provided the opportunity to evaluate their placement site and any host staff with whom they directly worked. This information is helpful for your managing organization to determine any items that went well and others that need to be addressed for improvement of future CDEs. Items to be addressed on this assessment include:

Task Engagement	Supports	Learning/Reflection
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did they engage in work that they feel will help them in the future?</li> <li>• Do they understand how their work contributed to their host?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do they feel that their host wants to see them succeed and respects them?</li> <li>• Did they feel able to approach their host with questions and get help?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which essential employability and technical competencies did their host focus on?</li> <li>• How has their career pathway been informed by interactions with their host?</li> </ul>

Consider participant's responses and strengths/areas of improvement for the host to provide future CDEs. If it becomes apparent that there are significant issues in terms of their ability to support a participant, consider whether they might be willing to make some adjustments. Some hosts will be interested to hear participant's feedback about the CDE, while others may take some more convincing or not be interested at all. Regardless, it is still important to provide this feedback since hosts play an important role in the youth talent development pipeline.



### ALTERNATIVE OPPORTUNITIES FOR HOSTS

If you determine that a host is not a good fit for your CDE and participants, consider whether they can still provide any other opportunities along the work-based learning continuum. A CDE requires a larger commitment from hosts, and sometimes it is necessary to take a step back with hosts to build their ability to offer a CDE.

## CDE CLOSE-OUT FOR PARTICIPANTS

### PARTICIPANT PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO

If they have not already started to build one, a CDE is a great opportunity for participants to gather any work products and develop a portfolio of accomplishments. Depending on the industry, work products may vary but should always be captured in meaningful ways to recognize the foundational professional skills the participants' gained. A work-based learning portfolio may include:



### WRAP-UP PRESENTATION AND RECOGNITION OF COMPLETION

As a final item to complete their CDE, have participants summarize their experience through a presentation to hosts and/or your managing organization. This is an additional opportunity for participants to both reflect on their learning and share that experience with a larger audience.

Certificates of completion help to recognize the achievement that a participant has exhibited by successfully finishing a CDE. It is no small task to show up consistently and perform authentic work tasks. Participants can also include this certificate in their work-based learning portfolio.



### RESUMES AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

At the conclusion of their CDE, participants should update their resume to reflect any skills and experience gained. Your managing organization and the host can help guide participants develop statements that are concise but powerful and related to their attainment of essential employability and technical competencies. Encourage participants to also practice answering common interview questions and incorporating specific items that were part of their CDE. Writing resume statements and verbalizing their experience through practice interview questions will further help participants reflect on and recognize the value of learning gained through their CDE.

# CDE CLOSE-OUT FOR HOSTS

## PROFESSIONAL SKILLS ASSESSMENT

If they have not done so already, hosts need to complete a professional skills assessment to provide feedback on participant performance during the CDE (see the “During” section of this toolkit for more information on participant assessment).

## ASSESSMENT OF THE CDE

Besides participant performance, hosts should provide feedback on the CDE in general. This feedback should include some self-reflection on their end in terms of meeting the expectations of the CDE as outlined by your managing organization and the supports and resources they received from your organization. This assessment should lead to collaborative and productive discussions that focus on the host offering CDEs in the future and determining any necessary adjustments or additional items that would help to make it more successful. Some general topics to be covered are:

**Did participants meet their goals and expectations?**

**Did the managing organization provide timely communication and resources?**

**What modifications and supports did the host provide for participants?**

**How likely are the host to continue participating in the CDE program?**

**How has the host/ Participant contributed to the issue?**



## EXIT INTERVIEWS WITH PARTICIPANTS

Encourage hosts to find time before or during a participant’s last day of their CDE to gather feedback on the experience. Participants can provide information on what their favorite aspects were as well as the things that were the most challenging during the CDE. Hosts can also ask for suggestions on areas of improvement and growth to provide a CDE that meets participant and organizational expectations.

## CDE CLOSE-OUT FOR HOSTS

## SUSTAINING HOST RELATIONSHIPS

To help sustain relationships, provide opportunities for hosts to share feedback on the CDE and how both your managing organization and participants met their expectations. Hosts should be valued as resources to provide insight on the improvement and quality of your CDE program as it relates to the host's needs. In addition to creating time for their input, consider how you will approach any areas of concern. You should ensure that your expectations are being met as well and work with hosts to communicate any areas of improvement on their end, including ways to better support participants. Best practices for sustaining host relationships include:

#### Treat Them as Unique Partners

Whether they are in the same industry or not, hosts should be approached individually to address their unique needs and contexts for providing a CDE.

#### Have Clear Methods of Communication

Before, during, and after the CDE, hosts should always have a clear understanding of whom to reach out to for various items related to the CDE.

#### Work Together as Professionals

Hosts have as large of a role in the talent development of youth as managing organizations, and should be provided opportunities to work with your team to determine best practices and methods for CDEs.



## COMMUNITY EXAMPLES OF CONTINUOUS HOST ENGAGEMENT



Each year District 211 highlights the partnership of their employers and student completion of work-based learning experiences with a partner breakfast. Employers, school staff, and students come together to celebrate and share their experiences.



To commemorate the end of the school year, Rockford Public Schools brings together faculty, staff, and community partners who support their College and Career Academies to honor their commitments and contributions. Student's academic work is on display for the event.



The Greater Peoria Economic Development Council engages 8th grade students and regional employers in an event with hands-on exhibits to help spark students' career interests. This is an opportunity for employers to meet students early on as they consider their career pathway.



## ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

Consider the ways that your managing organization can engage hosts beyond the CDE:

- Celebration and recognition events for hosts to network and hear from one another.
- Professional development training and host panels on components of the CDE program and working in youth development.
- Inviting hosts to events and activities that current and former participants are attending to encourage interaction among youth and adult professionals.



## ENCOURAGE PARTICIPANT COHORTS

If they are not doing so already, encourage hosts to take on a cohort of participants (two or more) for their next CDE during renewal conversations. Having more than one participant at a host site is beneficial to provide peer-to-peer learning and reflection on shared experiences for both hosts and participants. Participants and host staff are able to navigate the experience together and provided needed support for one another.

# CDE CLOSE-OUT FOR MANAGING ORGANIZATIONS

## REVIEWING PARTICIPANT AND HOST ASSESSMENTS

As a managing organization, it is important to review what participants and hosts had to say about their experience with your CDE program. You should take this moment to be vulnerable and open to what they might have to say about areas of improvement and growth. Follow up with any participants or hosts who appear to have had a more challenging experience than others.

These assessments should inform your goal setting and any alterations you want to make for future CDEs. Depending on the flow of your CDE program, you might continuously have CDEs occurring throughout the year. Set aside time to intentionally consider the ways that you will incorporate feedback from participants and hosts to inform subsequent CDEs.

Determine where this information is going to be housed (see the “Organizational Structure” section for more detailed information on CDE data collection). This feedback is highly valuable to the ability of your managing organization to maintain a CDE that is impactful and relevant.

## GATHER TESTIMONIALS

One of the best ways to tell the story of your CDE and its value is to have it expressed through the lens of those most directly impacted: participants and hosts. They are the voices who can truly speak to the day-to-day experience and how it has informed or changed their outlook. Areas that participants and hosts can speak to include:

### For Participants

- Supports and direct training provided by the host
- Learning how to meet expectations and receive feedback as a professional
- Opportunities for networking and future success in the industry

### For Hosts

- Shifting perspective of the talent and abilities of youth
- Understanding of their role in the professional development of youth
- Bonds formed and involvement with participants post-CDE



## INCORPORATING FEEDBACK

It should be clear to participants and hosts that your managing organization has heard their feedback and incorporated any applicable changes to the CDE. All stakeholders should see that improvements and developments are occurring to keep your program up-to-date and addressing participant, host, and industry needs to stay relevant.

# MEASURING & COMMUNICATING IMPACT

Once you have gathered assessments, feedback and any required data for your CDE program, it is now time to share this information both internally and with the community at large to communicate the impact of the CDE. Consider the following questions as you determine how to share this information:

How is your managing organization collecting and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data for your CDE program?



What are the data points and stories that you want to share with the community-at-large to promote the impact of your CDE program?



Who are the audiences to whom you want to communicate your impact to?

## PARTICIPANT ATTAINMENT OF COMPETENCIES

A major component of measuring the impact of a CDE should include whether participants gained foundational professional skills through the development of essential employability and technical competencies. This information can be gathered in the professional skills assessment completed by hosts and participants.

## PARTICIPANT & HOST SATISFACTION

Another useful component for measuring impact are the stories and data points of the experience for both the participants and hosts. The building of relationships and connections among your managing organization and hosts is an accomplishment that should be highlighted.

## PARTICIPANT & HOST TESTIMONIALS

Record video testimonials of participants and hosts speaking to their experience and how the CDE has influenced them both personally and professionally. This is a great opportunity for the managing organization to provide prompts and have those directly affected by the CDE speak to its impact.



### HIRED PARTICIPANTS

If any participants were hired shortly after, or because of a connection they made during their CDE, this is an incredibly powerful story to share. Typically, opportunities like internships and apprenticeships are a space of privilege for individuals who already have a strong professional network in their inner circle. CDEs can more equitably offer opportunities to all students, particularly traditionally underrepresented students, and stories of how their peers have succeeded are empowering. Highlight participants who accessed employment or another opportunity directed toward their career pathway as a result of their participation in your CDE program.



### COMMUNITY EXAMPLE

Rush Education & Career Hub (REACH) works with their system wide marketing group to place stories, blog posts, and social media content about participants, hosts, and their experience with the CDE. REACH builds connections, awareness, and interest in the program by sharing stories, before, during, and at the end of the CDE.



# CDE ONLINE TOOLKIT RESOURCES

## CDE CLOSE-OUT FOR PARTICIPANTS

**TEMPLATE** | Participant Evaluation of Host & Organization: [PDF](#) // [Word](#)

**TEMPLATE** | Participant Presentation: [PDF](#) // [PowerPoint](#)

**TEMPLATE** | [Certificate of Completion](#)

## CDE CLOSE-OUT FOR HOSTS

**TEMPLATE** | Host Evaluation of Participant & Organization: [PDF](#) // [Word](#)

**RESOURCE** | [Participant Exit Interview with Host](#)

**RESOURCE** | [Principles for Sustaining Employer Partnerships](#) from Tennessee State Government

## MEASURING & COMMUNICATING IMPACT

**ARTICLE** | [Learning Goes Both Ways](#) from Rush Education and Career Hub

**EXEMPLAR** | [District 214 Center for Career Discovery Internship Videos](#)

