HOST OUTREACH

Host Engagement

Forming Host Partnerships

Host Information and Assessment
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?
  Consider your own staff as well – have any of them 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 Organizations to offer a Career Development Experience opportunity include:

- Positive recognition from community
- Develop a diverse and skilled pipeline
- Customized recruitment and training of Participants
- Retention of employees with opportunities for leadership through supervision
- Gain valuable insights and a fresh perspective
- Promote career advancement into their industry

TOOLKIT TERMINOLOGY
The terms “Participant,” “Managing Organization,” “Organization,” and “Host” used throughout this section address the audiences included in the Introduction.
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 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 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

Job Fair Conversations
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.

Alignment Rockford
Alignment Rockford As an intermediary for Rockford Public Schools (RPS), Alignment Rockford engages Hosts directly through a Career Pathways Sponsorship to connect RPS needs for work-based learning and Host opportunities to provide these.

Manufacturing Breakfast and Tour
District 211 and District 214 hosted thirty-five 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.
CDE ONLINE TOOLKIT RESOURCES

1 📚 Article – “5 Myths about High School Interns and Why Your Business Should Hire Them”

2 📚 Participant Task Examples by Pathway Endorsement Area

3 📚 YouthBuild – Partnering with Employers

4 📚 Reimagine Retail Chicagoland – Reimagining Employer Engagement Toolkit

5 📚 JFF - Employer Engagement Toolkit: From Placement to Partners

6 📚 Host Site Request Email Template
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 Organization:

### Why does your 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
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\(^5\) to inform your approach:

Since they have experience with your 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 phase, 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.

5 Employer Continuum adapted from the Reimagine Retail Chicagoland – Reimagining Employer Engagement Toolkit
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Host Expectations</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Organizational Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Outline of roles and responsibilities</td>
<td>• Background on the youth your Organization serves</td>
<td>• Supportive services and resources provided for both Hosts and Participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Timeline of the CDE program</td>
<td>• Qualities and strengths of Participants</td>
<td>• Process for feedback and collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Activities expected to complete (site visits, assessments, etc)</td>
<td>• Typical areas of growth and development</td>
<td>• The “why” for CDEs as it relates to mission and goals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FORMING HOST PARTNERSHIPS

CDE ONLINE TOOLKIT RESOURCES

1
Chicago Public Schools Early College STEM Schools “Hire an Intern” Flyer

2
Alignment Rockford Pathway Sponsorship Program

3
Host Site Request Email Template

4
Tennessee Department of Education Activity: Prep to Elevator Pitch

5
Pathways to Prosperity: What Employers Need to Know

6
Illinois workNet Employer Outreach and Marketing
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 program.

Information on Hosts should include the following at minimum:

- Address and phone number of Host site (confirm especially if a Host has multiple sites)
- Brief description of the Host’s work and mission
- Standard business hours as well 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 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 Organizations will distribute and collect a paper form, while others have created online forms that can be uploaded automatically to a database management system. This information collected from Hosts is vital for an Organizational understanding of the Host 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 (information on Participant pre-CDE research in the “Onboarding” section of this toolkit).
ASSESSING POTENTIAL HOSTS

Once you have completed your initial outreach and collected the Host information, your 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:

- **What opportunities are they willing to provide for Participants to develop essential employability and technical competencies?**
- **How hands-on are Hosts to support and train Participants?**
- **Is the location of the Host site reasonably accessible to Participants?**
- **Does the Host have the capacity to engage in the required activities of the CDE?**
- **Is the Host able to provide a safe environment that complies with federal and state regulations?**
- **Is the Host open to Participants of different racial, ethnic, and socio-economic status?**
- **Are there any gaps in the ability of a Host to meet the expectations of the program?**
- **What are their potential employment and training resources for postprogram options?**

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 Organization’s 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

1
Host Profile Template

2
Host Assessment Template

3
Illinois workNet Customer Support Center: Worksite Placement Tool