

November TA Peer-to-Peer Call Notes

Fostering Meaningful and Sustained Employer Partnerships to Achieve Grant Success



DATE: November 28, 2023

TIME: 3:00-4:30 P.M. EDT

GRANTEES IN ATTENDANCE

- Total Attendees: 28

PROMISING PRACTICES DISCUSSION I

Identifying the Right Employers and Occupations

How have you identified the right employers for partnership in your grant activities? The right occupations of focus?

- One grantee gave insights into their approach, focusing on supporting nurses and overcoming capacity challenges. The grantee emphasized the importance of readiness and the journey of starting small and expanding based on capacity.

Have you had to make any adjustments in employer partnerships or roles of focus to meet grant goals?

- One grantee discussed making adjustments in delivery methods, moving from paper to online tracking to simplify processes.
 - The grantee also shared that they conduct regular meetings with partners to assess effectiveness and make necessary tweaks.
 - The grantee acknowledged that employer engagement is an ongoing learning process despite having several years of experience.
- The facilitator shared that it is important to recognize the importance of starting small and growing in collaboration with employers.
 - The facilitator also shared that it is important to nurture relationships and being adaptable to employer needs.

STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING AND SUSTAINING EMPLOYER PARTNERSHIPS DISCUSSION

- One grantee shared a unique approach where their grant covered a significant portion of the state, focusing on various occupations across the healthcare pathway grantee shared a unique approach where their grant covered a significant portion of the state, focusing on various occupations across the healthcare pathway.
- The grantee also indicated that adjustments were made due to training provider availability and shifts toward incumbent worker training.

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BUILDING CREDIBILITY AND STRONG EMPLOYER PARTNERSHIPS DISCUSSION

- Having credibility is important for building strong employer partnerships. Grantees should start with obtaining industry knowledge and understanding local challenges.
- It is important for participants to be conversant in industry-specific language to resonate with employers.
- Recognize the significance of building relationships at the individual level and between organizations while acknowledging the potential impact of personnel changes within organizations.
- Leadership buy-in is necessary for building strong employer partnerships. It is also important to discuss the business's needs before offering solutions to perceived issues.
- Communication must be clear and consistent to build strong employer partnerships.
- Establish a single point of contact for employers to enhance communication.
- Set up regular meeting times and check-ins to facilitate ongoing communication.
- Create structured ways for employers to provide feedback, whether it's praise or concerns.

REGULAR ENGAGEMENT AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING DISCUSSION

- When issues arise, address them promptly and with clear communication.
- Commitment is needed on both sides to strengthen the relationship.
 - One grantee shared that they have regular meetings with their employer partners every two weeks, and strategic meetings every 9 to 12 months.
 - The grantee also shared their challenges with turnover and the importance of integrating new personnel into the partnership.
 - It is important to adapt to changes in employer needs. The grantee found value in having a longstanding relationship with an employer since 2017. This relationship has contributed to the success of their grant.
 - The grantee also mentioned the significance of having trust and prior relationships in building effective partnerships.

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT & SUSTAINABILITY DISCUSSION

- The facilitator shared a reflection of a grantee and highlighted how staff turnover led to a reevaluation of employer relationships and strategies.
- A grantee shared insights into employers offering scholarships for sustained support and transitioning to workforce development departments.
- Another grantee emphasized the importance of employer relationships for sustained training opportunities.
 - The grantee also highlighted a case where employers collaborated with training providers to offer non-credit classes to address specific training needs. The employer demand influenced the creation of non-traditional training programs.

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- A grantee shared a notable example related to a nurse residency apprenticeship. In their initiative, nurse resident apprentices are paired with mentors, who are experienced nurses. When a new employer joined, they faced a challenge: the mentors were not yet trained. In response, the grantee offered mentoring from their trained staff until the mentors were ready. This pivot proved crucial as one new nurse apprentice, initially considering quitting, experienced a positive shift with the support of a trained mentor.
 - The grantee emphasized the importance of considering the needs of both employers and individual participants, which underscores the significance of flexibility and responsiveness in program implementation.

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS AND IMPACTS DISCUSSION

Agreements

- Grantees discussed the importance of agreements so that everyone's expectations and responsibilities are clear, and it helps to manage the relationship long-term.
- Be flexible and adaptable with partnership agreements.
- One grantee shared that they do not have a formal partnership agreement; however, they have developed trust and personal relationships that allow them to communicate issues with funding or enrollment. When challenges arise, the partners are willing to help each other out because of the relationship that they have developed.
- Formal agreements can be important when there are one-on-one relationships. When turnover occurs in one of these roles, a formal agreement can help maintain the relationship with the organization and not just the person.

Impacts

- An easy way to track the impact of a partnership is to use the QNR to "tell the story" of the partnership's evolution and show the progress that has been made over time.
- One grantee shared that for other grants they have managed, they have conducted an exit interview with their partners that consists of a survey and a face-to-face meeting. This grantee also conducts ongoing check-ins with their employer partners. Additionally, the grantee collects testimonials and shares them at conferences so that attendees can better understand the program and its impacts.