



Scaling Apprenticeship

Issue #3

Emerging Practice Spotlight

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

H-1B Scaling Apprenticeship Through Sector-Based Strategies

Dallas College
Healthcare Industry



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Business Engagement

Dallas College strengthens workforce and economic development with programs, services, and relationships that align with the specific needs of its business and community partners. Using its Scaling Apprenticeship (SA) grant, Dallas College is building on established partnerships to source and train apprentices to support the healthcare industry. Dallas College acts as a U.S. Department of Labor apprenticeship sponsor and intermediary while assisting with the administration and bureaucratic functions of the program. The apprenticeship initiative is focusing on the greater Dallas-Fort Worth healthcare community and has expanded to multiple states nationally.

Evolution

Dallas College serves more than 70,000 students annually across seven campuses in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Workforce development has been a priority for Dallas College consistently over multiple changes in college administration. Over the last decade specifically, workforce development has grown due to a focus on providing programs that directly impact the community.

Dallas College's SA initiative includes staff dedicated to employer engagement. The employer engagement staff act as a liaison with the employer community, identifying, recruiting, and supporting employers with hiring challenges and needs, introducing them to the opportunity of apprenticeship, and supporting them through the establishment of apprenticeship programs. By presenting the opportunity of apprenticeship as "the gold standard," Dallas College is using its relationships with the employer community to make an impact on the skilled healthcare pipeline and develop new sources of employees for hospitals in the Dallas-Fort Worth healthcare sector.

Dallas College's SA initiative builds on its long-standing relationship with the [Dallas-Fort Worth Hospital Council](#) Foundation (DFWHC). DFWHC is a local trade organization representing approximately 120 hospitals and healthcare facilities. DFWHC works to address the workforce skills gap and the shortage of skilled healthcare staff. All nine major hospitals participating in this grant are DFWHC members. These partnerships have led to 48 individual locations running apprenticeships. As partner employers, DFWHC members participated in surveys and interviews that informed the development of the grant. Three



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of the nine partners are working to scale Registered Apprenticeship Programs nationally, with the assistance of Dallas' U.S. Department of Labor representative.

Benefits

Dallas College's established relationship with DFWHC and its member employers enabled it to perform much of its SA grant preparation work before the award of its grant. This included identifying and differentiating apprenticeable healthcare occupations and defining the necessary qualifications and competencies for each. This, along with the established relationships with the regional healthcare community, provided Dallas College with a framework that enabled rapid start-up and expansion among the partners.

"One of the great things about working with Dallas is their responsiveness and willingness to customize for us. You don't have to start anything from scratch unless you really want to."

Candy Baptist, Texas Health Resources

Essential Components

"[Apprenticeship is a] great way to bring diverse talent into the organization."

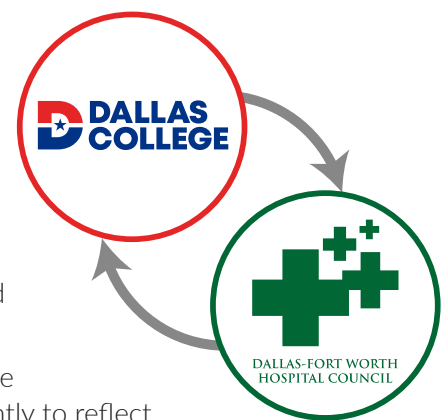
Jesus Vazquez-Alvarez,
Children's Health

Dallas College created a dedicated employer engagement team to support the apprenticeship program. Initially focused on the Dallas-Fort Worth community, the program has begun to establish partnerships in additional communities. The employer engagement team focuses on the development, sustainability, and replicability of the SA initiative. From planning through implementation, the employer engagement team works with the business community and local organizations to reach targeted communities and ensure their apprenticeship

programs appeal to both employers and apprentices. Outreach to the employer engagement team is reciprocal, with employers contacting Dallas College with their staffing needs and the college approaching employers with how apprenticeship offerings can develop current and future staff. Dallas College is also now engaging with national professional associations, such as the [American Society for Health Care Human Resources Administration \(ASHHRA\)](#), that act as intermediaries with healthcare employers outside the Dallas-Fort Worth metro area.

When healthcare employers commit to participating in the SA initiative, the employer engagement team coordinates with employers and the programs in the Dallas College system to assess their occupational needs and establish the curriculum and on-the-job training needed for the apprenticeship program. The employer engagement team works closely with employers to understand their needs to define the standards and expectations for occupations in the healthcare industry that would benefit from the apprenticeship model. The team shares resources and tools with employers as they implement the apprenticeship program and collects the necessary documentation for state and federal reporting.

The Dallas College team developed a playbook to collect, document, and update processes used to implement the SA initiative. The playbook is updated frequently to reflect best practices and the lessons learned from the SA initiative. The playbook is a resource that is centralized and duplicable. It is a record of the history, structure, and process of the initiative that can be used to train new staff and provide information to new employer partners.



Next Steps

Dallas College is now focused on identifying funding sources to sustain the apprenticeship program after completion of its SA grant, including the possibility of braiding resources from various funders. Discussions are focusing on the occupations to scale and what role each individual employer plans to play in terms of funding future apprenticeship activities. Many have stated that they would like Dallas College to continue funding apprenticeship

training costs, while others are discussing using their own funds to sustain apprenticeship programs. Dallas College is using this input to develop a sustainability plan that is applicable across its partner network.

The SA team is also exploring the expansion and replication of its healthcare apprenticeship initiative with additional healthcare systems in the greater Dallas community and expanding apprenticeship programs with healthcare systems affiliated with its current partners in other areas of the country.

Business Engagement in Action

Developing Internal Capacity

The Dallas College employer engagement team is focused on both external and internal business engagement. The business engagement team works internally to marshal college resources to develop and sustain its SA initiative. The team works closely with the vice provost and the staff of the School of Health Sciences to identify opportunities and resources for current program activities and secure support for future activities. The business engagement team also leads efforts at the college to identify grant funding to expand programs like apprenticeship-based training. This includes advocating for college funding to braid with resources from other sources.

Supporting Employer Success

Though Dallas College possesses a long-term relationship with DFWHC, its relationships and SA activities vary by individual healthcare employer member. For example, the college is assisting some employers with their apprentice hiring processes. In some cases, the college assists in the assessment of applicants before referring them to the employer for consideration. In other cases, the college assists employers by performing competency assessments before hiring. In all cases, Dallas College is a partner during the initial hiring, onboarding, and training of the SA apprentices.

Elements of Success

- Apprenticeship programs are viewed as an investment by the Dallas College administration.
- Dallas College supports apprenticeship programs with institutional capacity to develop sustainable processes.
- The apprenticeship program has the authority to make decisions and has the support of the administration to be innovative and break down barriers.
- The consortium partnership with DFWHC and ASHHRA presents apprenticeships as a regional solution rather than just a solution for individual employers.
- Dallas College has a well-established and collaborative relationship with DFWHC and its component members. This allows a free flow of needed information between all entities.

Tips and Strategies

- Establish processes and procedures to guide the engagement strategy with employers and ensure consistency and maintain relationships with partners.
- Establish weekly meetings with the continuing education instructors, coordinators, and statewide adult education programs to build relationships.
- Be intentional about employer relationship building and maintenance by responding to employer training needs and understanding the key competencies required for occupations.
- Recognize the commonalities among employer partners while acknowledging the unique organizational culture and apprenticeship needs and interests.
- Take a leadership role in consortia meetings by coordinating agendas, sending invitations, and assembling progress reports.

More Information

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