



Grantee Emerging Practices

January, February, and March 2021

Scaling Apprenticeship (SA) grantees entered the first quarter of year two with a combination of in-person and online training for apprentices and a growing number of successful employer partnership strategies leading to apprenticeship placements. Grantees are aware, now more than ever, of the importance of effective communication with internal grant staff, subgrantees, and external stakeholders to ensure that apprentices are enrolled, retained, and employed. This awareness is evident in the number of emerging innovative and effective communication practices identified by the SA Technical Assistance (TA) team this quarter. This is particularly true of the practices many grantees are using to remain engaged with their existing employer partners.

The SA TA team used information gathered from coach-grantee monthly notes, monthly affinity group calls, and grantee-submitted quarterly narrative reports (QNRs) (December 2020) to identify this quarter's emerging practices. We organized the practices into four categories:

- Employer Recruitment/Engagement
- Program Design
- Student Engagement/Support
- Grant Management/Operation

This report seeks to inspire current and future grantees to adopt and improve strategies to address similar challenges.

Employer Recruitment and Engagement

Grantee	Practice
Pennsylvania College of Technology (PCT)	PCT's program is driven by their workforce department's company outreach team. This team acts as the main employer engagement arm of the grant, establishing new contacts with potential employers, educating employers on the benefits of the SA program, and ensuring interested employers are securely connected to SA team members for onboarding. This team regularly meets to provide information about the SA grant, emphasize current employer needs, and process referrals.
Dallas College	In order to better receive and understand feedback from employer partners, Dallas College developed and distributed its first bi-annual program evaluation to its partner employers. This evaluation will allow the program to effectively measure and evaluate data processing efficiency, program integrity/efficacy, and return on investment. The college conducted its first analysis of data gathered as a result of the evaluation and learned that employers valued



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communicating with one another in the project and appreciated the streamlined documentation and data collection processes that the college was using. Dallas College is also using the responses they received to refine future evaluations. This data will serve as a baseline against which future program performance, challenges, and strategies can be measured.

Colorado Department of Higher Education

Colorado Department of Higher Education is effectively engaging businesses by identifying employers' needs through communication that is tailored to the recipients and that leverages existing networks and communication channels across state and local agencies including: regional sector partnerships; state workforce board updates; Governor's office and Secretary of State business license office; regional workforce board; COVID-19 business engagement channels; existing college contacts; and industry organizations, such as the Colorado Hospital Association. The college also disseminates pertinent information through multiple venues including the grant website, project-developed toolkits, and customized packages for existing employer partners.

Employer Recruitment and Engagement Highlight: Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU)'s Approach to Stronger Industry Partnerships

CSCU's combined three practices to build stronger partnerships:

1. **Leverage of effective existing programs.** CSCU has a very effective operational arrangement with their business and public sector partners. Prior to receiving the grant, Connecticut manufacturers had coalesced around the Connecticut Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative, which provided a set of common values and objectives to those looking to support the industry sector. When the SA grant came along, CSCU was already poised to take advantage of it.
2. **CSCU hired from within industry to staff its grant administration.** The grant manager and a few members of his staff had spent years inside the industry sector before coming to CSCU. They brought their expertise, perspectives, and relationships with them.
3. **Focus on the needs of business.** CSCU begins every conversation with the employer partners by asking what they can do to address their operational and strategic workforce needs. They listen closely to the "demand signal" and do their best to respond to those needs. At the same time, their strong relationships with employers enable them to be clear with their industry partners about the imperatives of the grant, ensuring a "win/win" for all parties.

Program Design

Grantee	Practice
Pennsylvania College of Technology	Pennsylvania College of Technology (PCT) designed their training to be effectively delivered both in person and virtually. Remote participants in this incumbent worker apprenticeship program receive fully interactive, real-time



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instruction at employer sites. If they are unable to access the class onsite because of work conflicts, sickness or emergency, they may pull down the content from PCT's online training management system. This program feature has been integral in maintaining student engagement, especially when the program faced challenges related to COVID-19 safety protocol restrictions. It has also been helpful with the scaling portion of the grant as participants in different states can simultaneously attend RTI from their remote locations. The design has been so successful that employers are requesting it be replicated for new apprenticeship programs.

Lorain County Community College

To ensure that students are prepared to be hired and work in a professional setting, the Lorain County Community College Employer Engagement & Experiential Learning (EEEL) office expanded their existing model for Modern Manufacturing Work-study. The model focuses on helping students develop skills in resume-building, interviewing, and professional communication. Since its implementation, employer partners have reported that students who have received this training prior to the start of an apprenticeship are better prepared for work in a corporate environment.

Community College of Baltimore County

To address the unique challenges of online training delivery, the Community College of Baltimore County is utilizing the CASAS reading assessment, which allows for remote testing capability and determines the applicant's comfort with technology. This determination is important both for ensuring an applicant's potential for success in the program and their later comfort with utilizing technology in the healthcare field.

Relatedly, the program has developed a linear course model emphasizing the ability for asynchronous delivery in most courses while establishing more structure through synchronous instruction in early courses and courses that have been the biggest barrier to student success in the past.

Pima County Community College District

Pima County Community College District is interested in ensuring students are as prepared as possible for earning national credentials. To accomplish this, faculty and Academic Deans from Pima Community College, Maricopa Community College, Central Arizona College, and Estrella Mountain Community College have been meeting monthly to review Automated Industrial Technology academic courses to identify potential alignment with NIMS credentials. Specifically, they are examining if changes need to be made to course outcomes to ensure students are prepared to take the NIMS certifications. They are also identifying additional credentials the program could provide to prepare students.

Program Design Highlight: West Los Angeles College's Transition to Virtual Instruction

Four practices were integral to the successful implementation of their new training delivery approach:

1. **System wide acceptance of the need to find a solution to a universal problem.** The higher education district under which West LA College mandated virtual RTI delivery and



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did not leave individual institutions to solve the problem on their own. The District provided resources, technology, and technical support; and they continued to support the institutions after implementation.

2. **Input from students, employers, and training providers.** The District and its institutions listened to students, employers, and training providers to discern their needs and concerns before implementation. They also allowed for flexibility in instruction and participation options to find an optimal solution for most of the participants.
3. **Synergy with existing RTI and OJT delivery systems.** West LA (and the District) took great pains to align virtual delivery of RTI with existing modes. Care was taken to ensure that virtual learning led to competencies and outcomes participants would need on shop floors, and there was a focus on demonstrations and interactions that approximated "hands-on" instruction to the greatest extent possible.
4. **Technology integration.** West LA began by ensuring that (to the greatest extent possible) virtual technology at the college would interact seamlessly with technology used by employers and training providers.

Student Engagement/Support

Grantee	Practice
Lorain County Community College	In response to some of the challenges presented by COVID-19 and the related need for online instruction in secondary schools, Dayton Region Manufacturer's Association launched their Virtual Outreach sub-committee and successfully produced The Teacher's Guide in partnership with Junior Achievement. The Guide is a resource for teachers to help students become more career aware and begin career exploration in a remote learning environment. While the Dayton Region Manufacturer's Association's primary audience is middle/high school students, the career exploration materials they've produced has been applicable to all their career awareness programs, including those used for outreach to the grant's target populations and recent graduates who may be interested in beginning an apprenticeship.
Columbus State Community College	Columbus State Community College (CSCC) wanted to provide an on-ramp to student participants in the early stages of their experiences in the IT industry. To accomplish this, Collin College, a subgrantee of CSCC, established a relationship with the Continuing Education Google IT Certificate program. The SA program offers seamless, uninterrupted support to students who want to transition from this noncredit program into the apprenticeship itself. Collin College IT Workforce division has also initiated a new student orientation that includes information for the FLEXTech program, following the lead of CSCC and their efforts to start the intake process for FLEXTech as early as possible.
Weber State University	Weber State University has developed several partnerships with local organizations to reach and recruit more underrepresented populations into their program. They have partnered with TechMoms (formerly MotherCoders) to reach women entering or re-entering the workforce, Women's Technology Council, OgdenCAN, which offers education and housing for Hispanic and



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Colorado Department of Higher Education

underrepresented minorities, and Latinos in Tech. Additionally, Weber is exploring strategies to connect to Native American populations in Utah.

Colorado Department of Higher Education is collaborating with Careerwise Colorado to conduct marketing and partnership development. They are also collaborating to conduct participant outreach activities such as joint presentations to potential participants.



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Grant Management/Operation

Grantee	Practice
Bergen Community College	Bergen Community College has hired a Business Liaison who works with local employers to customize the curriculum using existing courses and course outcomes. To accomplish this goal, it is imperative that the Liaison understand the developing, current, and past course offerings from its consortium partners, so the grant has collected this information and consolidated it into one spreadsheet. The document also provides a snapshot of which activities partners are working on, as well as when courses are expected to be run and how they will be delivered.
Alabama Community College System	To better understand each program involved and to systematize the approval process for inclusion in the grant, the Project Director has developed a program approval process which outlines how each subgrantee college can submit additional apprenticeship programs to be considered for inclusion in the ALAMAP Project. The college provides detailed information and documentation to Alabama Community College System's Project Director about how their current or new program meets the five quality hallmarks established by DOL, so grant staff can verify the program's fit within the grant.
St. Louis Community College	To leverage the expertise and knowledge of the grantee and subgrantee staff, each month the St. Louis Community College grant staff identifies one school with experience or success in one aspect of the grant to present to the other partner schools. For example, one presentation focused on the success consortium members have had using LinkedIn Sales Navigator and another shared a process for file management and records retention. As the grant continues to operate in a virtual environment, St. Louis will continue to encourage peer-to-peer interactions like this wherever possible.
Trustees of Clark University	Clark University is using technology to make both local and national resources more accessible. The grant team customized pages for each partner's Local Workforce Development Board and added the pages to the TQAClark.com website. In addition to disseminating broader national resources, these customized landing pages allow local employers, job seekers and program staff to access their local resources.
Columbus State Community College	Columbus State Community College faced the challenge of making sure there would be seats in the classes their participants needed to take to be ready to begin their apprenticeships on time. The project team implemented a system of reserving course seats in specific apprenticeship-required technical courses. The program also instituted pre-apprentice batch enrolling into these courses. This approach ensures that students have access to the required technical coursework so they may complete the course on time and participate in the program's scheduled apprenticeship hiring events.



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