INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

INDIANA ADULT EDUCATION

Workforce Education Initiatives

QUICK START GUIDE

Getting Started

Making Connections: **Who can help you connect with employers?**

Regional Workforce Boards– Employers are members of regional workforce boards. They often come to these meetings with training needs. If there is not an adult education representative on your workforce board, see if you connect to talk about the services adult education can provide. If there is already an adult education representative, find out "who" so you can make a connection.

Present to a regional or local workforce board so that employers know what we do or how we can serve them.

- **WorkOne**– WorkOnes have business services representatives (BSR) who can make the right connection for you with a company.
- **Local and Regional Chamber of Commerce**– Consider presenting at a meeting or joining a local chamber to make connections.
- **Local and Regional Economic Development Corporation**– Many cities and counties have a local economic development agency or corporation that works directly with employers.
- **Students**– Find out where your students work and what training they need. Locate their employers on the demographics tab in InTERS.
- **Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)**– SHRM, a human resource association, and similar organizations like the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) meet regularly. Consider presenting at these meetings or asking for a seat at the table.
- **Cold Calling**– Ask for a plant tour or sometimes just stopping in can lead to a meeting.

Don't overlook the obvious. Businesses with billboards recruiting job applicants are a good starting point. Look for company websites with employment or career pages to see if there are multiple posts for positions like medical assistants or welders.

Don't get discouraged by rejection. It happens quite often.

Getting a couple of employers engaged at first is a win. Use these successes as a marketing pitch going forward when meeting with new partners. Often if a new employer hears about a successful project, company representatives are more likely to buy-in, especially if they know the other employer.

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First Meeting

So, you got a first meeting. Congratulations Now what?

Ask the right questions. It is very important to listen to the employer to find out training needs and challenges they face with their workforce.

Speak in "business language" not in adult education jargon. Avoid words like "measurable skill gains" and "educational functioning levels."

How are our services valuable to the employer? **How can you help solve a problem?** What impact can you make?

Consider a needs assessment.

There are plenty of questions to start the conversation.

- What are top challenges facing your workforce?
- What are your greatest training needs?
- What training needs or challenges do you hear from supervisors?
- How do employees advance?
- What are the entry level positions?
- Are there issues with safety?
- What are the English levels of your employees?
- Is there a high turnover?
- What onboarding takes place?
- Is employee turnover high?
- What are the characteristics of employees who are long-term?

Next Steps

Once you have determined the training needs of the employer, the real work begins.

Questions to Ask

On-Site or Off-Site?– Does the company have training space and technology?

Work-Related Curriculum? Many employers with English language training needs just want to be able to get to know their employees and improve communication. Sometimes customization comes later. Determine this before starting classes.

Company Incentives? Paid time in class, gift cards, time off, pay increase, stipend for attendance, learning gains, or other incentive?

Class Days and Times? In-between shifts or after shifts? Determine what **works best for the employer**.

Moving Ahead

Create a Memorandum of Understanding – Outline the specifics of the class, include days and times, company incentives, and adult education responsibilities.

Find the right teacher. Don't put an "untested" or inexperienced teacher in a position where he or she represents the face of the program. And provide your teacher with the resources needed to do the job well.

Tour the facility, talk to the employees, and supervisors. Get their feedback on training needs.

Prepare materials promoting the class along with the employer. Determine how the class will be marketed.

Have a call out meeting after employees sign-up to explain the classes and make them feel welcome.

Schedule the Orientation

Determine student levels and plan for differentiated instruction for multi-level classes. What resources both instructional and staffing will you need?

After Classes Begin

Monitor progress regularly. **Check-in often.** You don't want surprises.

Form an advisory committee with your key employer contact as well as supervisors. Schedule pre-determined times to have formal reviews of the course, student progress, and employer evaluation of the course progress.

Monitor attendance patterns and readjust if attendance drops.

Sometimes minor changes are needed if there is a shift in production schedules and employees are working longer hours. Adjusting class schedules or making sure supervisors can release employees for class may need to be discussed. The goals of the class should not change from what the employer has determined as deliverables though you may have to readjust to allow employees to participate when there are natural shifts due to labor market changes (such as meeting production deadlines). It happens all too often.

After the First Class

Evaluate progress and survey the employer key stakeholders and students. What went well, what challenges and barriers did you face, and how can you make changes and adjustments moving forward so you can continue to offer classes in the future?

Evaluate class performance and educational gains. Adjust classroom instruction if needed.

Determine whether classes will continue after the first cohort and determine dates and times for new classes.