

Employer Strategic Engagement Plan

This plan will help you create a stronger Registered Apprenticeship (RA) employer engagement plan focused on targeted, personalized strategies that emphasize the business benefits for employers. A robust plan moves beyond a generic sales pitch and instead frames apprenticeship as a strategic talent solution.

Market Research and Targeting

Labor Market Analysis - Identify industries experiencing skills gaps and projected growth, and determine what skills are in demand. Gather information from state and federal resources like the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) (using LAUS and CES data) and [Illinois workNet](#) to understand unemployment rates, employment by industry, job growth projections, and occupational demand. Organize and interpret the raw data to draw meaningful conclusions.

Supply and Demand for an Occupation(s)

Unemployment rate	<i>Analyze historical trends and compare statewide rates to those of the U.S. and neighboring states.</i>	
Labor force size	<i>Look at the total number of employed and unemployed people and the labor force participation rate.</i>	
Job posting data	<i>Use private-sector sources or specialized government tools to see real-time demand and the number of job openings.</i>	
Occupational trends	<i>Determine high-demand occupations, including specific jobs experiencing growth or decline. Analyze job requirements, such as required education and experience.</i>	

Prospecting - Use labor market data and other sources to create targeted lists of employers to contact.

How are you determining which employers to include in your engagement efforts?

Value Proposition Development

Value Proposition - To create a compelling value proposition for a Registered Apprenticeship Program you need to define the unique benefits for the employers. A strong value proposition communicates how the program solves their problems and sets your organization apart from competitors.

Personalize the message	<i>Tailor pitches to each employer's specific needs rather than using a one-size-fits-all approach.</i>	
Highlight key benefits	<i>Emphasize how RA solves specific business problems, such as:</i> • <i>Creating a pipeline of skilled, loyal employees.</i> • <i>Lowering turnover rates.</i> • <i>Improving employee morale and productivity.</i> • <i>Ensuring talent meets specific business needs through customized training.</i> • <i>Allowing employers to influence curriculum to align with their skill requirements.</i>	
Address concerns	<i>Proactively alleviate common employer hesitations, such as concerns about paperwork and administrative burden.</i>	

What is your current value proposition?

How was it vetted and is it providing the anticipated results?

Outreach and Recruitment

Multi-channel marketing and communications - Use multiple, distinct communication channels to interact with employers and deliver a cohesive brand message across various touchpoints. This strategy focuses on increasing brand visibility, reaching a broader audience, and providing employers with the flexibility to engage with you on their preferred platforms.

Leverage apprentices and current employer partners as advocates	<i>Use success stories and testimonials from apprentices and employers to show the program's real-world impact.</i>	
"Drip marketing"	<i>Consistently provide biweekly tidbits, data, and success stories to interested employers to stay on their radar.</i>	
Strategic events	<i>Host and attend industry-specific meetings, "lunch-and-learns," and roundtables to engage targeted businesses.</i>	
Online presence	<i>Create and maintain a strong online presence for the apprenticeship program, including social media, job boards, and industry-specific websites.</i>	

What is your marketing and communications strategy?

How are you evaluating strategies to determine if they are effective?

Building Partnerships and Collaboration

From strategic planning to recruitment and support partners are a critical component to the success of any program.

Intermediary support	<i>Work with organizations like industry associations, community colleges, or workforce boards that can help ease the administrative burden for small and medium-sized businesses.</i>	
Industry advisory boards	<i>Involve employers on advisory boards to give them direct influence over program design and content, strengthening alignment with industry needs.</i>	
Sector strategies	<i>Proactively alleviate common employer hesitations, such as concerns about paperwork and administrative burden.</i>	
Community stakeholders	<i>Partner with local civic clubs, chambers of commerce, and economic development entities to expand employer networks.</i>	

Are there any other partners or stakeholders with whom you should engage to enhance the success of your RA program?

How are you expanding engagement opportunities with employers or networks?

Program Support and Retention

Streamlining the administrative process for registered apprenticeships is important because it reduces barriers for employers and apprentices, making the programs more efficient, accessible, and successful. By minimizing administrative burdens programs can improve outcomes.

Sponsor services	<i>Offer to serve as the program sponsor to handle the administrative requirements of registration and compliance.</i>	
Toolkits and guides	<i>Develop employer handbooks, checklists, and guides to simplify the process and show support.</i>	
Provide continuous support	<i>Designate specific staff roles to provide ongoing assistance to employers, helping them with program administration and mentorship.</i>	

What are some best practices for streamlining the administrative process?

What resources or program support do you offer?

Mentorship and Training

Support strong mentors	<i>Help employers identify and train effective in-house mentors and trainers to ensure apprentice success.</i>	
Onboarding assistance	<i>Provide guidance on best practices for onboarding new apprentices.</i>	

Do you offer mentorship training or provide partners with any resources?

Measurement and Continuous Improvement

Measuring success and continuously improving a registered apprenticeship program is important because it ensures the program remains effective for apprentices, benefits the organization, and meets all regulatory requirements. Regular evaluation helps programs adapt to changing industry needs, address problems, and ultimately deliver a high return on investment (ROI).

Track outcomes: Measure key metrics like employer satisfaction, apprentice completion rates, and retention post-apprenticeship.

Solicit feedback: Regularly collect feedback from both employers and apprentices to continuously improve the program.

Completion data	<i>Track the number of apprentices who successfully complete their training and receive their nationally recognized "Certificate of Completion".</i>	
Retention rates	<i>Measure how many apprentices remain employed with the sponsoring company after they complete the program. High retention is a key indicator of success for both the apprentice and the employer.</i>	
Return on Investment (ROI)	<i>For employers, success is measured by the program's ROI, analyzing factors like productivity gains, reduced turnover, and the cost of training versus the benefits.</i>	
Surveys and interviews	<i>Create and maintain a strong online presence for the apprenticeship program, including social media, job boards, and industry-specific websites.</i>	
Alumni networks	<i>Creating networks for program graduates helps sponsors stay in touch with former apprentices, collect long-term data, and recruit new partners.</i>	

What methods are you using to collect data and feedback from apprentices/employers to continually improve the program?

Recognition and Publicity

Recognizing and publicizing registered apprenticeship success is crucial for demonstrating the tangible benefits of these programs to attract new talent, upskill existing talent, and promote continued investment in workforce development. Sharing success stories creates a powerful feedback loop that reinforces the value of "earn and learn" model.

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Showcase success stories	<i>Publicize and recognize participating employers for their commitment and positive outcomes.</i>	
Highlight achievements	<i>Share stories about the impact apprentices have had on a business to attract other potential employers.</i>	

How are you promoting your program's success?

Other thoughts and observations from the session.

