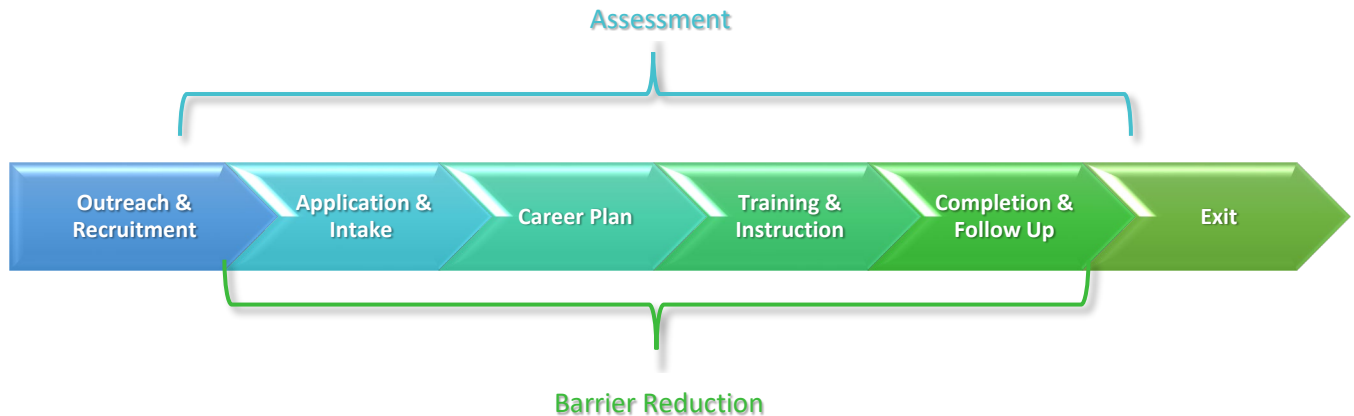


## Chapter 4: Outreach and Recruitment

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### Chapter Overview

By the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

- Describe the role of outreach and recruitment in the success of the JTED Program.
- Leverage outreach and recruitment resources, methods, templates, and tools to create a pipeline into the JTED Program.
- Integrate and uphold the six core equity values (diversity, inclusion, welcoming, accessibility, belonging, and equity) in the program's outreach and recruitment strategy.

## Outreach and Recruitment Basics

**Outreach** and **recruitment** efforts signify the first level of connection between potential customers, the JTED program, and respective grantees. It is essential that during these efforts, grantees can articulate not only the program requirements and curriculum but also the opportunities the program offers. For many potential customers, this may be the first time they have heard about the JTED program. They may need to learn the benefits of certain career opportunities. Through outreach and recruitment activities and materials, grantees can highlight program goals, components, and core values.

**Outreach activities and strategies** are focused on a comprehensive communication strategy that raises general program awareness geared to widen participation. Effective outreach can be supported by marketing. Establishing a marketing plan allows grantees to set goals, dedicate resources, and track progress. All grantees should have a marketing plan and allocated resources in their budget. Additionally, all marketing materials should include representation from targeted groups.

Outreach and recruitment are critical to the success of the program. JTED grantees will be responsible for providing outreach and recruitment. Grantees should engage in ongoing coordinate and collaborate with the communities they serve to best leverage their efforts.

***Note:** For more about this see Outreach and Recruitment Tools below.*

A marketing plan should include a comprehensive communication strategy that raises general program awareness to widen participation. This strategy should include program awareness, active listening, community engagement, partnership development, and trust building.

When conducting outreach activities, try to establish mutually beneficial relationships. Often, this involves identifying partners to share information about upcoming programming and community events with other service-oriented organizations, neighborhood clubs, places of worship, schools, and community leaders, among others. Building these kinds of partnerships helps to mitigate the skepticism of government that may exist in many underserved communities. Creating trust will be crucial to enrolling customers in the program.

An effective marketing plan allows grantees to set goals, dedicate resources, and track progress. Marketing plans and materials are discussed in greater detail in the following subsection. Marketing materials must reflect the six core equity values addressed in Chapter 2, and materials must not exclude—explicitly or implicitly—anyone.

The goal of outreach is not just to raise awareness and build trust, but to recruit customers, help them complete the pre-screen assessment, and ultimately enroll in the program.

***Note:** Implicit bias training is recommended for all Outreach and Recruitment staff to increase knowledge and insight before actively participating in outreach and recruitment activities.*

## Assessment Tools

To gauge a customers' interest in a program, the following tools are available to assess skills and interests. These tools help ensure that the training program and participants' needs are aligned. The following are recommended assessment tools, however there are other assessment tools you are welcomed to use to support your outreach and recruitment efforts.

### Illinois WorkNet Screening Assessments

| Assessment Name                     | Summary of Assessment                                                                                                 | Link                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Quick Start Guide                   | Use the Quick Start guide to learn how to use assessments for your customers to achieve employment & training goals.  | <a href="https://www.illinoisworknet.com/partners/Pages/AssessGetStarted.aspx">https://www.illinoisworknet.com/partners/Pages/AssessGetStarted.aspx</a> |
| Skills & Interest Survey            | These surveys help a user determine career paths based upon existing skills and personal interests.                   | <a href="https://www.illinoisworknet.com/pages/article.aspx?articleID=394">https://www.illinoisworknet.com/pages/article.aspx?articleID=394</a>         |
| Employment 101                      | This tool helps the user learn about career plans, job search plans, and achieving success in the workplace.          | <a href="https://www.illinoisworknet.com/pages/article.aspx?articleID=395">https://www.illinoisworknet.com/pages/article.aspx?articleID=395</a>         |
| Self-Evaluation of Essential Skills | This self-assessment helps the user rank their strengths and weaknesses on 10 essential employability skills.         | <a href="https://www.illinoisworknet.com/pages/article.aspx?articleID=397">https://www.illinoisworknet.com/pages/article.aspx?articleID=397</a>         |
| Observational Evaluation            | Use this assessment with participants who are in your workshops to observe rate their essential employability skills. | <a href="https://www.illinoisworknet.com/pages/article.aspx?articleID=398">https://www.illinoisworknet.com/pages/article.aspx?articleID=398</a>         |
| Worksite Evaluation                 | This evaluation assesses the essential employability skills of participants in a guided worksite placement.           | <a href="https://www.illinoisworknet.com/pages/article.aspx?articleID=399">https://www.illinoisworknet.com/pages/article.aspx?articleID=399</a>         |
| Other Evaluation                    | These evaluations list several assessments that can be tracked in a participant's career plan.                        | <a href="https://www.illinoisworknet.com/pages/article.aspx?articleID=400">https://www.illinoisworknet.com/pages/article.aspx?articleID=400</a>         |

### Target populations

Outreach and recruitment strategies must be holistic and inclusive of all Illinoisans, including JTED's specific targeted populations:

- Unemployed
- Underemployed
- Underrepresented living in Qualified Census Tract (QCT) and Disproportionately Impacted Area (DIA)
- Adults and youth with one or more risk factors

## Outreach and Recruitment Tools

Outreach and recruitment tools aid in creating and implementing strategies that generate customer leads, resulting in the submission of applications and enrollment of eligible and qualified candidates into the JTED Program.

The following recruitment and outreach tools can help support your recruitment goals.

### Marketing Plan

A marketing plan is a critical tool for successful outreach. A **marketing plan** must outline:

- The target audience
- Communication channels that will be utilized
- Timeline for when marketing and communications will be distributed
- Accountable staff persons

The marketing plan should appeal to target populations. This includes diverse representation based on the target population.

***Note:** See the JTED Partner Guide for a marketing plan template.*

### JTED Marketing Materials

Grantees must adhere to marketing and branding requirements.

***Note:** Use of Grant Funds for promotions is subject to the prohibitions for advertising or public relations costs in 2 CFR 200.421(e). 19.2.*

This includes, but may not be limited to the following marketing pieces:

- Written publications
- Announcements
- Reports
- Flyers
- Brochures
- Other written materials

### Promotional Materials

Use of grant funds for **promotional** and **written materials** is subject to the prohibitions for advertising or public relations costs in 2 CFR 200.421(e). In the event that grant funds are used in whole or in part to produce any written publications, announcements, reports, flyers, brochures or other written materials, Grantee must obtain prior approval for the use of those funds (2 CFR 200.467) and must include in these publications, announcements, reports, flyers, brochures and all other such material, the phrase “Funding provided in whole or in part by the [Grantor].” 2 CFR 200.467. Exceptions to this requirement must be requested, in writing, from Grantor and will be considered authorized only upon written notice thereof to Grantee.

Grantee must notify Grantor ten (10) days prior to issuing public announcements or press releases concerning work performed pursuant to this Agreement or funded in whole or in part by this Agreement and must cooperate with Grantor in joint or coordinated releases of information.

### Using the JTED Logo

Grantees may only use the approved JTED logo to represent their involvement in the JTED Illinois programs. Use of any other JTED or DCEO logo is strictly prohibited. The approved JTED logo is available in English and can be found in the JTED Partner Guide, under the resource section.

## Outreach and Recruitment Methods

The following best practices have been collected from academic sources, interviews with local workforce representatives, recruiting toolkits, and other resources. Outreach and recruitment methods must be coordinated with the Energy Transition Navigators Program to avoid inefficiencies and to promote greater information sharing, community outreach, community engagement, and ultimately program interest among potential customers.

### Outreach Team

To continue upholding the six core **equity values** defined in Chapter 2, include people on the outreach and recruitment team that are committed to these ideals. Consider including staff and employees from underserved groups (e.g., women, people of color, and veterans). When potential customers can relate to and identify with recruiters, they may feel more comfortable applying for the pre-apprenticeship program.

### Community Organization Partnerships

Build partnerships with organizations have access to targeted underserved populations. Partners may provide informal benefits like mutual information sharing, introductions to trusted contacts, event marketing, or hosting. Entities expected to play a partnership role throughout the program should begin by supporting the recruitment process in whatever is appropriate. Examples of partnering organizations and agencies include the Department of Human Services, workforce centers, high schools, community colleges, community centers, nonprofit organizations, community organizing groups, local housing authorities, Head Start programs, faith-based organizations, and advocacy organizations. Engaging with high school counselors will be vital to providing seniors with viable career exploration and work opportunities before or after graduation. Work with the staff of these various entities to introduce the pre-apprenticeship program during regularly scheduled meetings in which potential candidates will be present.

To reach returning residents, consider contacting transition houses or reentry organizations, such as Safer Foundation or TASC. [Reentryillinois.net](https://reentryillinois.net) provides a searchable directory of reentry and housing organizations throughout the State. Also, consider contacting family advocacy centers to reach foster care alums. Veterans' organizations are an excellent resource for recruiting veterans and transitioning service members.

### Diverse, Easy-to-Read, and Multilingual Marketing Material

Language is the primary medium through which people communicate. Marketing is all about **effective communication**. Therefore, marketing materials must be easy to read and understand. Highly technical

and complex jargon must not be used. Also, information must be shared in languages other than English to recruit members from underserved groups with limited English proficiency.

Photos and images should feature diversity in terms of race and ethnicity, gender, and age. When marketing materials feature people who look like them, customers can visualize themselves in the program and look forward to doing that work.

Grantees may use the pre-designed JTED marketing materials, which feature diverse customers and easy-to-read material in both English and Spanish, or they may create their own. Any custom-designed marketing materials must be co-branded (must be in alignment with the NOFO).

### Landing Page on Organization Website

Organization websites will be one of the first locations from which potential customers will seek program information. A **dedicated landing page** for the JTED Program should clearly outline program goals, requirements, application processes, downloadable information sheets, and other essential information. This page should be included in social media posts or other outreach and recruitment materials. Grantees' dedicated landing pages must be co-branded with the JTED Illinois Logo.

### Career Fairs

Career Fairs often occur at high schools, community colleges, or community centers and offer a prime opportunity to access a group of individuals seeking to start or change careers. Some career fairs may charge a small fee or offer registration at no cost. Contact local partners and request to be included in upcoming or annual career fairs. Often, these fairs coincide with graduation dates in late spring/early summer.

### Information Session

Host an open house event and invite potential customers, partners, and staff from other community or training organizations and local government representatives. These events create an ideal opportunity to discuss the program offerings, inform potential applicants about the career opportunities provided by the potential participant with information for future follow-up. Inviting program alumni to share their experiences may create a sense of belonging and inclusion for potential customers.

At a minimum, the open house agenda should include:

- Suggested times.
- An outline of the program.
- Contact information for the program coordinator.

For more information on how to run a successful open house, see the sample open house agenda and tips in our JTED Partner Guide.

### Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

Many local television, radio, and print media outlets will air information for free, as a public service announcement, about the program and how to apply. Contact local media outlets to ask about this service.

## Social Media Platforms

**Advertise** and **market** on social media platforms based on potential customers’ and target populations’ platform usage. Remember that social media requires substantial staff time and continuous monitoring and posting to yield results. Grantees should carefully determine their staffing and organizational capacity before launching a social media marketing campaign. Social media can be effective when executed thoughtfully.

Among the most popular social media platforms are Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, TikTok, X (formerly Twitter), LinkedIn, and Instagram. Each of these creates an opportunity to connect with your target population.

Several pre-approved social media messages and graphics are included in the JTED Partner Guide. Any additional social media messaging must be approved by your Grant Manager.

**Table 1: Social Media Marketing**

|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Facebook</b>           | Facebook is the most popular social network but mostly used by older users. It has a user-friendly interface in which organizations can track page statistics and engagement. The platform allows contests and competitions, marketing of upcoming events, and fundraising, among other business-related tasks.                                                                   |
| <b>YouTube and TikTok</b> | YouTube and TikTok are great ways to interact given that videos garner higher engagement than text or photos. These platforms can be ideal places to post short fundraising videos featuring customers and stakeholders. Organizations can track views and subscribers to determine effectiveness.                                                                                |
| <b>X (Twitter)</b>        | X (formerly Twitter) remains a popular platform. All updates are posted in real-time, and you can post new content frequently. Send and respond to messages privately to address complaints or questions. Bear in mind that you are only allowed 280 characters per message, and everything is shared chronologically, meaning older posts can easily be missed by your audience. |
| <b>LinkedIn</b>           | LinkedIn promotes professional engagement, networking, and career development. It allows job seekers to post their CVs, potential employers to see their individual profiles, and apply to job listings.                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Instagram</b>          | Instagram is a photo and video sharing social networking service. It allows users to edit and upload photos and short videos through a mobile app. Note that sharing must be done from a mobile device, though messaging and comments can take place on a desktop.                                                                                                                |

## Word of Mouth Recruitment

This form of marketing is one of the **most effective** ways of recruiting potential customers to the programs. Encourage word-of-mouth marketing among individuals (i.e. networking, collaborating, etc.).

## On-the-ground Street Outreach

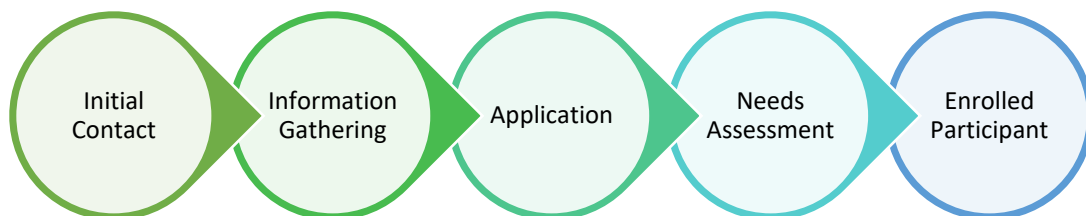
Create a recruitment team that literally “meets potential customers where they are.” The team must consider visiting equity investment eligible communities to recruit potential customers. This practice is especially beneficial for customers who experience transportation and childcare barriers to employment. This type of outreach method creates a window of opportunity to serve individuals who may be interested in pre-apprenticeship programs but have obstacles that may impede their ability to visit program centers. Obstacles can be addressed with specified wrap-around services once they participate in the program. Outreach and Recruitment staff conducting street outreach should partner with their supervisors to plan for safety during scheduled activities.

Develop **safety guidelines** for street outreach, which may include the following recommendations:

- Always use the buddy system. Staff members should conduct street outreach activities in groups of two to four and never alone.
- Always identify yourself and your employer, introduce the team, and inform community members about your work.
- Always inform on-call supervisors and/or other staff members of your exact location.
- Alert the on-call supervisor and/or other staff members at the beginning and end of each shift.
- Always remain in well-lit and designated areas.
- Become familiar with and surveil the area before conducting activities.
- Avoid confrontation or debate of any kind.
- Inform the supervisor of any unusual developments, questions, or concerns.
- In case of an emergency, call or have another person call 9-1-1.

## Moving Contacts from Outreach to Enrollment

JTED outreach staff are responsible for helping people who express interest in the program eventually enroll in JTED. There are several steps that must be taken on the path from outreach to enrollment. Potential applicants are at different stages in the process depending on where they are along this path. The action steps, dictate the pace of the process, and the amount of outreach necessary.



**Initial contact:** Individuals who have shown interest in being a participant. They might have responded to social media marketing or other recruitment and outreach activities, and program staff have had some contact with them.

**Information Gathering:** Individuals who have express an interest in the program can take the next step. This may be an informational session or a conversation with the outreach and recruitment staff.

**Applicant:** Individuals who have started or completed the application and assessments (service needs assessment).

**Referral Opportunity:** Individuals who have definitively expressed a lack of interest in being a participant or not eligibility. This participant may be referred to other programs.

**Enrolled participant:** An individual who has completed the application and intake assessments and has started receiving services (see Chapter 5).

Moving individuals from initial contacts to enrolled customers takes consistent, strategic communication with potential applicants, referred to as touches. A **touch** is any communication opportunity that motivates qualified individuals to apply. Most outreach and recruitment activities are a touch, including:

- a grantee presentation/webinar
- phone call or text
- flyer or newsletter
- email
- postcard
- social media post
- face-to-face conversation

Though the data varies, converting an initial contact into an enrolled participant can take between six to eight touches. However, nearly 90 percent of organizations and businesses stop trying by the third or fourth touch. Grantees should not view the third or fourth touch as a failed attempt. Instead, these touches should be considered a “countdown” to the application process.

## Additional Resources

Please see the JTED Partner Guide for:

- Sample Marketing Plan and Budget Template
- JTED fliers and fact sheets (templates and pdfs in English and Spanish)
- JTED posters and fliers (templates and pdfs in English and Spanish)
- Sample agenda and tips for JTED Open House
- High-resolution JTED logo
- ***Note:** For materials in a language other than English, please contact your Grant Manager.*
- Supporting Individuals Experiencing Homelessness: [Homeless Recruitment-min.pdf \(illinoisstate.edu\)](#)
- Super Strategies for Supporting Out of Work Individuals: [Out of Workforce-min-min.pdf \(illinoisstate.edu\)](#)
- Super Strategies for Supporting Foster Care Involved Youth: [Foster Care Recruitment-min.pdf \(illinoisstate.edu\)](#)

