



Engaging the Future Workforce

A Guide for Georgia Businesses



Carl Vinson
Institute of Government
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

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Business Engagement

The labor market was tight pre-pandemic, but with Georgia's record-setting economic development success and fast-growing economy since 2021, the pressure is not expected to ease anytime soon. In the longer term, the pool of available workers is also expected to be steady or shrink with larger, older generations aging out and younger generations (which are smaller due to declining fertility rates) stepping in. With fewer people available, companies that take an active approach to workforce development will have the advantage in recruiting and retaining new talent. While automation and technological advances may help improve human efficiency or replace mundane roles, a company's people are still one of its largest assets.

This guide is designed to provide businesses with five potential ways to engage with the future workforce. Taking a proactive, intentional approach to talent development starting with K-12 youth can provide a direct pipeline into the business and can lead to a more committed and better-prepared workforce. While some companies may already be connected to local school districts and youth organizations through sponsorships, charitable events, or other community efforts, this guide is focused on engagement solely for workforce development and building a talent pipeline.

The approaches featured in this guide vary in time, investment, and impact, which will be discussed in detail below, but there should be an option that will work for nearly every company in Georgia. The foundation to all of these engagements is partnership. While deep partnerships can take years to develop, they all start with a conversation. Getting to know your local Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (CTAE) director is a great place to start. CTAE Directors will be able to share valuable information about your local schools, which pathways they offer and how you might be able to help, and should be able to help connect you with instructors or even students. Find your local director on the district website or through the Georgia Department of Education's CTAE website: <https://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/CTAE/Pages/CTAE-Staff-Contact.aspx>.

Another great resource for identifying schools with a relevant pathway for your industry is the Georgia Career Pipeline tool found here: <https://gacareerpipeline.gadoe.org/search>. This resource is particularly helpful if you live in a district with multiple high schools or if you are pursuing a more regional approach to workforce development and want to look into a few schools in an area. If you aren't sure exactly which pathway is most relevant to your workforce or want to learn more about those listed on the Career Pipeline Tool, check out GaDOE's website, which provides more detail about the 17 clusters and hundreds of pathways offered across the state of Georgia. <https://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/CTAE/Pages/cluster-pathway-courses.aspx>.

INTERNAL CONSIDERATIONS

As you begin to develop or expand your workforce development efforts, there are several factors to consider:

Goals

Before launching a new partnership, your organization should understand what kind of workforce challenges it is seeking to address. What are the needs? What is the timeline? Are you focused on a direct workforce pipeline or more philanthropic endeavors?

Capacity

Even the simplest workforce partnerships do not run themselves. As you consider new partnerships, assess your organization's capacity to provide support, resources, mentorship, and supervision to the strategies outlined in this guide. Put simply: don't start a workforce partnership that your organization cannot support effectively.

Most quality workforce partnerships have a point person who dedicates a portion of their work time to the initiative. Additionally, many approaches require some level of student mentoring, so it is important to have employees in a variety of roles and career paths willing to connect and share with students.

Scale

Another consideration is the size of your company's workforce needs. Some engagements are well-suited for smaller, one-off needs while others may help address a pipeline for occupations with many openings. As part of scale, you may choose to work with only one high school or maybe on a multi-school or multi-district partnership. The scale of your workforce partnership may grow or change over time if capacity increases or workforce needs change.



There are a number of ways that businesses can engage with the future workforce and directly shape their pipeline. This guide lays out five engagement strategies. For each strategy, the guide will explain what it is, why it is important, and some basics on how to undertake such activities. Additionally, a case study accompanies each type of engagement strategy.

The five **ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES** in this guide are the following:



Teacher Externships



Supporting CTAE Pathways

Macro: Alignment/Credential Input

Micro: Pathway Support



Student Exploration Experiences



Student Work Experiences



Work Ready Programs

Each engagement strategy has been ranked according to three primary factors most companies consider prior to making a decision: investment, impact, and time. Having more or less in any of these elements is not necessarily good or bad but speaks rather to the potential return on investment. Return on investment for workforce development programs can be difficult to measure, but research on each engagement strategy sheds light on the general investment and impact. Use the ranking at the beginning of each section to better understand the engagement strategy. Below is a brief description of the ranking system.

ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY RANKING SYSTEM

Minimum	ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY		Maximum
Investment			
little to no financial investment; may require some human capital investment	←————→		largest amount of financial and human capital investment
\$	\$ \$	\$ \$ \$	\$ \$ \$ \$
Impact			
limited impact on student or employer	←————→		largest impact on student and employer
👤	👤 👤	👤 👤 👤	👤 👤 👤 👤
Time Horizon			
short term—two months or less for completion	←————→		long term—one year or more for completion
🕒	🕒 🕒	🕒 🕒 🕒	🕒 🕒 🕒 🕒



ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Teacher Externships

investment — \$\$

impact — 👤👤👤

time horizon — ⌚⌚

WHAT ARE TEACHER EXTERNSHIPS?

According to the GaDOE Career, Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE) Educator Externship Guide, an externship is defined as a professional learning opportunity which allows educators to complete a period of service in the workplace. This unique professional learning experience provides educators the opportunity to spend time within a company gaining a real-world learning experience to expand their knowledge on current industry practices.

Externship programs can be modeled in several ways: single-day tours and shadowing, rotating between several participating companies, or weeklong commitments visiting various roles (i.e., entry-level, skilled, administrative) at a single company. The type and extent of the externship varies based on time commitments and goals of the experience for both the employer and educators. In short, teacher externships can be molded to the needs and resources of all participants; there is no “right” way to organize such an experience.

The overall goal of an externship is to gain a deeper look at and understanding of workforce opportunities within the community and/or a specific business. The information obtained through this experience is shared with other educators as well as providing students with the basic skills and understanding to enter the workforce.

As mentioned, externship programs can be managed within a company, or as a group of companies organized by an outside partner such as an economic development organization (EDO). Regardless, a successful teacher externship should expose teachers to positions that exist in their community and help educators understand the skills needed in an organization or industry so they can bring that knowledge back into the classroom. The effectiveness of an externship experience relies on the exposure given by the company. Teachers benefit from seeing firsthand the wide array of opportunities that exist and how their course could effectively prepare students to work in an industry. Participating teachers are also able to share what they have learned with fellow teachers.

Depending on the context and organization of each externship, investment is typically limited. In each case, typical costs include funding teacher time, as most programs run in the summer when teachers are not on contract. Externships also require time from employees, depending on the jobs the program is highlighting and which positions are being shadowed. While in-depth training is not necessary, enough instruction is required from employees to give teachers a full understanding of the skills needed to carry out a position and the requisite training to obtain it. Providing a hands-on experience for educators to work with industry

professionals is what sets teacher externships apart from other options for businesses engaged in workforce development in Georgia. While most programming emphasizes the student experience and exposure to careers, externships allow teachers to gain first-hand knowledge of careers their students may be interested in and why they should encourage students to explore such opportunities.

WHY TEACHER EXTERNSHIPS MATTER

Teacher externships are important because they increase knowledge of career opportunities across the board—from other teachers, to students, to administration. Externships not only increase exposure and understanding of lesser-known industries but also shine a light on the breadth of opportunities available at many companies. Administrative and support roles, skilled labor and technical positions, and financial and office roles all work together to help a company function. Experiencing the inside of an operation is a great way to understand both needs and opportunities.

Not only are educators expanding their instructional knowledge, but they are committed to incorporating the latest workplace practices and skills into their curriculum and conversations with students. An educator's participation in such experiences and engagement with business and industry creates an opportunity for collaboration to build talent for the future workforce. Hosting an externship or collaborating with other entities provides businesses direct access to a trained and diverse workforce.



HOW TO ESTABLISH A TEACHER EXTERNSHIP

While the specific design of your teacher externship will vary based on the institutional capacity of both your company and the schools/school districts you engage with, there are some basic strategies for establishing a new externship:

- ▶ Create partnerships with local schools/school systems to discover opportunities for externship experiences within your company. Building relationships with CTAE Directors is a top priority.
- ▶ If your community has an established program, consider joining and inquire about financial expectations, or if you are to provide lunch/in-kind support.
- ▶ Determine which positions to highlight for teachers.
- ▶ Create a plan for the day. For hands-on learning opportunities, ask: 'What knowledge do we want these teachers to walk away with?'
- ▶ Host teachers and cover skills needs, skill gaps, open positions, and types of training they could incorporate into pathways/courses, entry-level opportunities, etc.
- ▶ Allow teachers to "teach back" what they learn in the externship, encouraging them to think about what they will share with students. Allow employers to both receive feedback and understand what teachers are taking away from their time.
- ▶ Continue to connect with participating schools and educators (e.g., reach out to CTAE administrators/teachers when career opportunities become available within your company).



Connect Newton

Georgia Power Teacher Externship Program

CONNECT NEWTON

Connect Newton, a partnership between local businesses, the economic development office, and Newton County Schools, presents educators with a week-long opportunity to gain first-hand experience within the operations of local employers. With a focus on pressing needs, such as manufacturing, Connect Newton helps to bridge the gap between local employment and the future workforce pipeline. During their time as participants, teachers from across the district have a chance to shadow employees working in local industries and to show off their newfound knowledge at the end of the program by presenting portfolios and presentations about their time with each company.

CASE STUDY LINK: cviog.uga.edu/businessguide

KEYS TO SUCCESS

- ▶ Reach out to local economic development offices and schools about ways to get educators into your business
- ▶ Develop opportunities for teachers to see the full breadth of employment opportunities available at your firm
- ▶ Refine the experience over time and give opportunities to show off what teachers will bring back

GEORGIA POWER'S TEACHER EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Georgia Power's Teacher Externship program aims to address the knowledge and awareness gap around careers in the utility industry and how rewarding the pay, benefits, and career opportunities can be for Georgia's students. The Teacher Externship is a three-day program that invites teachers, counselors, and administrators to gain first-hand experience of a variety of positions offered within Georgia Power, highlighting careers with educational requirements ranging from diploma through Bachelor's degree. Georgia Power works closely with their county coordinator contacts to select teachers to apply for the program that is hosted at their headquarters in Atlanta and includes site visits to operational facilities.

CASE STUDY LINK: cviog.uga.edu/businessguide

KEYS TO SUCCESS

- ▶ Identify key careers to highlight and key employees to guide teachers during externship day
- ▶ Plan program agenda that shows teachers skill needs and entry-level careers
- ▶ Keep participant number manageable



ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY



Supporting CTAE Pathways

Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (CTAE) is the backbone of career pipelines in many communities. Supporting these programs is important as they are one of the primary methods that school districts use to ensure their pathways and curricula are in line with what employers in the area need from the future workforce. As a business, there are two main ways you can support local CTAE programs. First, you can ensure that they are offering relevant pathways that lead to credentials that are valuable to local employers. This macro-level support is important for the long-term success of all CTAE programs. On a micro-scale, you can support individual pathways and teachers that best align with your industry, which is important for short-to-medium-term CTAE success and empowering current CTAE instructors.



MACRO: ALIGNMENT/ CREDENTIAL INPUT

investment — \$

impact — time horizon — **WHAT IS ALIGNMENT/CREDENTIAL INPUT?**

Alignment is the process by which education and local employers match Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (CTAE) pathways with the skill needs of the local workforce. Proper alignment ultimately means that CTAE pathways are set up to prepare students for jobs in their local economy. Proper alignment of community needs and CTAE pathways ensures that local workforce concerns are more likely to be addressed and can help schools, private employers, and students maximize their return on investments in workforce education.

WHY ALIGNMENT/CREDENTIAL INPUT MATTERS

Aligning academic offerings with the needs of local employers involves creating clear course sequences to provide students with the most desired skills and knowledge as future employees. Alignment ensures that students learn a specific skill set in a prescribed sequence and is critical to creating strategies to generate and retain an educated population capable of driving economic growth. In an aligned CTAE curriculum, students are completing more CTAE pathways and graduating with more credentials that will serve their careers that are in demand from regional employers.



HOW TO PROVIDE ALIGNMENT/CREDENTIAL INPUT

As Stephen Covey highlights in *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, “begin with the end in mind”—employment—and work backward to understand the academic path, competencies, experiences, and credentials students need to achieve their goals. But such goals cannot be achieved without information being shared both ways.

Educational partners need to help businesses understand what they currently provide and what they can provide in the future, and businesses should help educators understand current and future needs. In short, proper CTAE alignment results from cooperation and planning between the private sector and the educational institutions tasked with preparing a new generation of workers.

As a business partner, your role in driving alignment is providing input on skills, pathways, and credential needs. This input may include suggestions for new/more specific pathways that do not currently exist in the local CTAE program (i.e., agricultural mechanics rather than just basic agriculture) or it may be working to refine an existing program to better fill local needs (i.e., adding more specific curriculum or projects from local companies, etc.). Typically, input is provided by attending alignment meetings hosted by local school systems, conversations with CTAE directors and district leaders, responding to surveys, and similar engagement opportunities. As a business leader, make sure your voice is heard on alignment and credential matters as it is your primary channel to express what skills gaps you face and how your local school district may assist in closing those gaps.




GEORGIA ALIGNMENT TOOLKIT

The Georgia Department of Education and the UGA Carl Vinson Institute of Government partnered to develop the *Georgia Alignment Toolkit*. This guide is designed to assist school districts as they work to align their CTAE programs with local needs. It is intended to complement the *Engaging the Future Workforce: A Guide for Georgia Businesses* publication.

MICRO: PATHWAY SUPPORT

investment — \$\$

impact — time horizon — **WHAT IS PATHWAY SUPPORT?**

On the micro level, pathway support is the hands-on help that industry professionals and businesses can lend to CTAE programs. How this looks depends on the resources and capacity available to your business. Guest lecturing, hosting students at your facility/company, serving on an advisory committee, and providing financial support toward instructor or equipment costs are all examples of supporting a pathway. Another example is on the Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs) side, where business representatives can serve as judges for industry-specific competitions or assist in preparing students to compete.

When businesses are plugged in, pathways are more in tune with industry needs. In terms of support like guest lectures or donating equipment, students benefit from hearing first-hand what working in their facility or field is like or learning on up-to-date equipment.

The more interaction CTAE students have with business and industry representatives, the more they can learn and understand certain workplace expectations and needs, such as job requisites for different positions, opportunities available, and steps to pursuing a career in a particular field. While CTAE programs follow industry standards and adhere to certain curricula, more direct input from businesses will lead to a more aligned, successful pipeline. It can also be an opportunity to identify students for potential work experiences, like work-based learning placement.

For many districts, Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSO) are pivotal to a student's CTAE experience. CTSOs enhance CTAE students' knowledge and involvement and are another opportunity for professionals to train and educate students. Most pathways are linked to a CTSO, with many of them having conventions, competitions, and other career-development opportunities to further educate participating students. These events are not only learning experiences for the students but a unique opportunity for networking and recruiting for businesses.

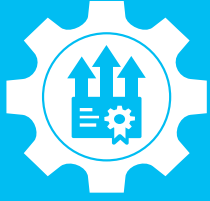
WHY PATHWAY SUPPORT MATTERS

Pathway support keeps what is being taught in the courses closely aligned with industry needs and will better prepare students to step into a position in their specific field. Levels of support may differ, but a direct link between students/the school system and the business world allows students, teachers, and administrators to see and understand the skill needs of specific industries and what the day-to-day may look like in a career field. Students and schools get the benefit of learning more from industry professionals, and businesses benefit through accessing a larger pool of talent, passing along tailored training, and increasing exposure to their company and industry overall.

HOW TO PROVIDE PATHWAY SUPPORT

Pathway support can be given in many different ways depending on company capacity and local needs. Below are several ways to provide pathway support:

- ▶ After determining which local school districts have relevant pathway programs, establish a partnership with the local pathway instructor. The local CTAE Director can help you identify the instructor if the information is not readily available on the district website (see more on how to find the CTAE Director in the overview).
- ▶ Decide what type of support you can give:
 - » Guest lectures can be done on an availability basis. While less commitment than providing a full-time instructor, guest lectures still allow for time in front of students and bring awareness to what a company does and their employment needs.
 - » Lunch-and-learns are another small-scale option. Companies can use the time to engage in hands-on training, deliver a quick “orientation” about their industry to students and teachers, or simply meet and build relationships with students.
 - » Serve on an advisory committee to help with reviewing curriculum, ensuring that the standards and curriculum reflect current needs and trends. Every CTAE pathway should have an industry advisory board that meets at least twice a year.
 - » Open the doors to your business by hosting tours and shadowing experiences to increase visibility among students. If students see and know a company, they may be more inclined to seek a career there.
 - » Participate in mock interviews to develop a stronger pool of candidates, advise students on what you may be looking for as a company, and potentially find students interested in being future employees.
 - » Judge CTSO competitions. Most pathways have a relevant CTSO that students can participate in beyond typical classroom hours. These CTSOs regularly host competitions.
 - » Cost-share equipment or instructor salary.
- ▶ Continue support moving forward and in line with conversations with local school leaders; know that the way your business supports alignment will likely evolve with the needs of your community.



Heavy Equipment Pathway in Vidalia Construction Ready

MACRO: HEAVY EQUIPMENT PATHWAY IN VIDALIA

As a result of a public-private partnership between McClendon Enterprises and the Toombs County School District, the Heavy Equipment Operator Pathway in Vidalia is giving high school students the opportunity to graduate with hands-on work experience and real industry credentials. In addition to CTAE coursework, students are placed directly with crews that show them the ropes on everything from knowing how to use a tape measure to repairing tractor trailers. This program has also been made possible through relationships with organizations like the Construction Education Foundation of Georgia (CEFGA) for curriculum and companies like Caterpillar for equipment to use in training.

CASE STUDY LINK: cviog.uga.edu/businessguide

KEYS TO SUCCESS

- ▶ Build strong relationships with local stakeholders, including the school district and other large employers in the area
- ▶ Look to other organizations or states for curriculum or ideas rather than starting from scratch
- ▶ Remember that pathways are a group effort

MICRO: CONSTRUCTION READY

Construction Ready provides a high level of pathway support to many of the high schools around Georgia, through financial investments, curriculum guidance, advisory board participation, CTSO support, and more. For nearly 30 years, leaders in the construction industry have partnered to improve the quality of training for construction careers and increase the awareness of opportunities across the many sectors of the construction industry. Instructors can connect with Construction Ready for curriculum starter kits, connections to local construction contacts in their region, training for teachers, and a framework for creating a construction program.

CASE STUDY LINK: cviog.uga.edu/businessguide


KEYS TO SUCCESS

- ▶ Connect with local school districts and teachers of your industry-related pathways
- ▶ Provide resources for student training experiences
- ▶ Develop ways to increase exposure to students – from company tours to participating in career expos



Student Exploration Experiences

investment — \$

impact — 

time horizon — 

WHAT ARE STUDENT EXPLORATION EXPERIENCES?

Student exploration experiences are designed to pique students' interest by exposing them to various training and career opportunities associated with a particular industry. These experiences can include but are not limited to shadow days and stand-alone exposure events. Exploration experiences tend to be beneficial early in a student's academic career to allow continued learning in relevant CTAE pathways.

The time commitment for exploration experiences range from an hour to a full day. Facilitated by subject matter experts of the company, time is spent with students exploring company facilities, company operations, and getting a "day in the life" experience of possible future career opportunities.

Exploration events are usually catered to groups but could also be one-on-one in the form of a job shadow. The impact of exposure events can be limited compared to other approaches due to the short time frame. Exploration or exposure events are typically most beneficial earlier in a student's career to allow time to continue learning and connecting with relevant CTAE pathways. Some companies like Shaw Industries start early, with special days to connect early STEM education to careers at Shaw, while others may wait until high school when students are more vested in their future. Unless your exposure event also serves as a recruitment event for an internship with age limitations, then targeting sophomore and junior students may be more fruitful. By senior year most students have made up their minds on what is next for them and may have completed a pathway in another topic area.

Standalone exploration events are typically a limited investment. A point person or planning team will need to spend time preparing for the experience and multiple individuals may need to be available for the day but typically the financial commitment is low. Costs may include materials, transportation, or food depending on the agreement with the school. Standalone events can be fairly easy to scale depending on the size of the company and the number of students participating. Consider starting with an event targeted to one single school or district, opening it to students from neighboring areas as company capacity allows. This option may require more planning and support staff but is a good way to hold one event when/if multiple districts are interested.

WHY STUDENT EXPLORATION EXPERIENCES MATTER

Student Exploration Experiences are the entry point for students who may not know what happens in a manufacturing plant they pass every day or are only aware of careers in fields they are typically exposed to, such as teachers, nurses, police officers, and lawyers. We often hear that "students don't know what they don't know," and one effective way to expand their career knowledge is through exploration

events. Teachers or counselors may provide lists of unique local careers, but students benefit more from experiential learning.

Beyond opening students' eyes to new fields, exploration events can serve as an opportunity to share additional programs your company has such as work-based learning or tuition assistance programs. Such programs provide recent high school graduates with real-world work experience while paying for some or all of their education.



HOW TO PROVIDE STUDENT EXPLORATION EXPERIENCES

- ▶ Leverage partnerships with local schools/school systems to identify students. Some options include inviting an entire relevant CTAE pathway or having an instructor or counselor help identify students using tools such as YouScience.

YouScience is an interest and aptitude assessment that is available to all public high school students in the state of Georgia. While not every district uses this particular tool, it can be powerful in helping to identify students who are not only interested in a job or field but those who may have aptitudes aligned to occupational needs.

- ▶ Work with school(s) to determine appropriate/feasible length of time, transportation, and other logistics.
- ▶ Meet with the internal planning team to develop a plan for the day. An agenda should include activities with timing and responsibilities. Ideally, activities would relate to school curriculum, so planning may also include the instructor.
- ▶ Host students. This includes activities such as facility tours, sharing about entry-level requirements and career pathways within the company/industry (ideally from young employees). The more experiential the event, the better! Small groups of students may move through activities together; larger groups may require rotations.
- ▶ Follow up with schools or instructors for student feedback.



CASE STUDY: STUDENT EXPLORATION EXPERIENCES

Georgia Power Career Exposure Day

GEORGIA POWER CAREER EXPOSURE DAY

Georgia Power builds its pipeline for entry-level, skilled labor during its Career Exposure Days, an onsite program started in 2019 and engaging 600+ students annually. Career Exposure Days allows students with interests and aptitudes in relevant careers, identified by local school administrators and educators, to experience a day in the life of a Georgia Power lineworker and other key roles. To learn more about how Georgia Power has implemented this program, check out the full case study online.

CASE STUDY LINK: cviog.uga.edu/businessguide

KEYS TO SUCCESS

- ▶ Host a mock event with your employees before you bring students in
- ▶ Develop engaging, interactive demos that give hands-on experiences
- ▶ Follow up with high-interest students and thank schools for participating





investment — \$\$\$

impact — 👤 👤 👤 👤

time horizon — ⌚ ⌚ ⌚

WHAT ARE STUDENT WORK EXPERIENCES?

Student work experiences can take several forms—from placements focused on workplace etiquette and transferrable skills to internships directly related to a student’s chosen pathway and apprenticeships leading to a job. Student work experiences allow businesses to train and shape students who may be entering the workforce for the first time, allowing employers to teach processes and habits that make students an asset to the workplace while giving students real-world work experiences.

Work-based learning (WBL) in Georgia has three components based on a student’s career goals, structured work experience, and related coursework. Employers seeking to become a WBL employer follow a basic training agreement between their company, the student, and the school. This agreement outlines minimum requirements for the employer, including:

- ▶ Development of a training plan of competencies the student will learn on the job and tasks the student will perform.
- ▶ Commitment to a specific number of minimum hours.
- ▶ An evaluation plan of the student’s employability skills that tracks their improvement toward competencies.
- ▶ An agreement to adhere to all state and federal youth labor laws.

Interested employers can visit <https://gawbl.org/get-involved> to learn more about becoming a WBL employer.

With work-based learning programs, students seek employment related to their pathway of choice to further their knowledge and experience in the field. It may be easy for a student interested in healthcare to connect an internship at a doctor’s office to their pathway, but not all placements are that straightforward. Administrative positions in an office setting, customer-facing roles, and similar placements are valuable work experiences, teaching students workplace communication, proper dress and etiquette, and other employability skills relevant to any job.

Alternatively, apprenticeships allow students to work toward industry certifications and potential direct hire following pathway completion or graduation. Such opportunities require more involvement from a business, as they provide in-depth training for a student and replace classroom hours.

WHY STUDENT WORK EXPERIENCES MATTER

Work experiences, whether a temporary position less relevant to a student's career or an apprentice position, allow businesses to bring students into their facilities and give them real-world training and exposure to opportunities in their community.



HOW TO PROVIDE STUDENT WORK EXPERIENCES

- ▶ Form a relationship with local schools/WBL coordinator (<https://gawbl.org/contact>).
- ▶ Identify what kind of work experiences you could offer:
 - » Shadowing requires the least time and effort, allowing students to follow different positions to see the array of opportunities.
 - » Internships can be paid or unpaid and allow students valuable work experience and in some cases result in class credit.
 - » Apprenticeships allow students to integrate their school-based learning with on-the-job training, resulting in credit toward graduation, certification, or post-secondary credential.
- ▶ Identify barriers. Are there industry (state/federal) restrictions around safety? If so, explore where students may observe skilled positions that utilize restricted equipment and still be helpful.



CASE STUDY: STUDENT WORK EXPERIENCES

Work-Based Learning with Piedmont

WORK-BASED LEARNING WITH PIEDMONT

Opportunities for aspiring healthcare professionals to gain hands-on experience can be limited especially in high school. This is where the Piedmont Healthcare-Newnan Central Educational Center work-based learning partnership lends a hand. Using personal interviews to determine their career interests, students are assigned to roles across Piedmont's operations including everything from staffing the front desk to assisting physical therapists with their patients. For 10 years this program has served a dual purpose by creating connection and knowledge among student participants and a real return on investment for Piedmont Healthcare as a result of a direct career pipeline for its workforce.

CASE STUDY LINK: cviog.uga.edu/businessguide

KEYS TO SUCCESS

- ▶ Create connections between your business and schools, including CTAE programming
- ▶ Work with administrators/instructors to develop a student selection strategy
- ▶ Ensure your current employees are positive and willing to teach student employees
- ▶ Communicate development/evaluation plans to help students build the right skills





ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Work Ready Programs

investment — \$\$

impact — 👤👤👤

time horizon — ⌚

WHAT ARE WORK READY PROGRAMS?

Work Ready Programs are tailored training programs usually offered on a shortened timeline to prepare students, or adult workers, for careers in a specific industry. Work Ready Programs are often geared towards youth and focus on training new graduates for entering the workforce and preparing for a specific industry.

Work Ready Programs are often created in partnership with a community's development authority or economic development office and the technical school in their area. These programs focus on addressing the workforce needs of participating companies that share their skills, base-level training that applies across the industry, and creating work ready graduates. The curriculum is based on the needs shared during industry visits and conversations business representatives have with program partners.

The curriculum typically consists of a mixture of employability skills and technical skills. Many high school graduates are preparing for their first job and experience in the workforce. Work Ready Programs can help by covering employability skill topics like workplace communication, HR basics, conflict resolution, and workplace culture. Additionally, industry groups can consult on necessary technical training topics. For example, a manufacturing group may include sessions on forklift operations, safety, OSHA, and basic mechatronics, while a health care program may train on taking vitals, bedside manner, and CPR certification.

Work Ready Programs are an opportunity for local employers to build their workforce with local input and funding to address workforce challenges. Participating employers can help serve as instructors for certain lessons, host lunch-and-learns, talk to participants about their workplace culture and expectations, and have face time with potential employees. This will allow students to improve work readiness, with a basic understanding of the skill needs and expectations of the job.

WHY WORK READY PROGRAMS MATTER

Work Ready Programs allow businesses to help craft a training curriculum that directly addresses their needs and cultivate a direct pipeline of employees. They also bring additional awareness and exposure to certain careers that are often overlooked or face a gap in qualified applicants.

HOW TO CONDUCT A WORK READY PROGRAM

- ▶ Seek out your development authority/economic development office and see if there is an existing program.
- ▶ If not, work with your local Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) institution, CTAE director, and economic development professional to identify businesses willing to participate in a short-term “career ready” training program.
- ▶ Establish a way to get input from the host of the program regarding curriculum (existing models include Career Ready Douglas or Berrien Ready).
- ▶ Secure funding partners and identify costs, such as meals and any program completion items (i.e., Career Ready Douglas gives gift cards to help with first-day expenses such as uniforms or transportation).
 - » Work with school work-based learning coordinators to create a schedule that works with the student cohort (e.g., two consecutive weeks, morning session, lunch-and-learn, afternoon session). High school seniors are typically engaged shortly after graduation.
- ▶ Secure location; try working with a TCSG partner, partner company, or chamber offices.
- ▶ Tap which businesses/business partners will teach sessions.
- ▶ Plan an interview day involving each of the participating businesses.
- ▶ Hold a graduation for students who successfully complete the program.
- ▶ Publicize program success stories to build interest in future skills training sessions.



CASE STUDY: WORK READY PROGRAMS

Career Ready Douglas

CAREER READY DOUGLAS

Career Ready Douglas is a two-week manufacturing-centered training program that teaches small cohorts of recent high school graduates the most pressing skill needs to fill entry-level positions. The curriculum is created based on industry input and covers employability and technical skills including: HR basics, workplace communication, forklift safety and operations, and workplace safety. This program, convened by the Elevate Douglas Economic Partnership, also relies on local companies to interview program graduates. Participating companies have access to a group of newly trained applicants who are better prepared to succeed in the industry.

CASE STUDY LINK: cviog.uga.edu/businessguide

KEYS TO SUCCESS

- ▶ Build strong relationships with the local economic development organization and the local TCSG economic development division
- ▶ Commit to providing input on curriculum and training needs
- ▶ Determine who could provide training and teach sessions during skills training sessions





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(digital version)



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