

Community Partner Template

Step 1: Community partner outreach

<p>a. Research the site</p> <p>This is your opportunity to get familiar with the potential ELO site. Knowledge of the site sets the stage for meaningful conversations with possible mentors.</p> <p>This is where the “matching” thought process begins.</p>	<p>Website:</p> <p>Contact Name:</p> <p>How many employees?</p> <p>What percentage of positions are entry level?</p> <p>Who can I talk to for more information?</p>
<p>b. Communication</p> <p>This first contact is when the site gets to hear a little bit about who and your ELO initiative. Sites will be curious about the structure of ELOs, so this is an opportunity to define the program. This is also a chance to feel out general program opportunities (students or competencies that could benefit from an ELO at this site).</p> <p>Generally this is not the time to get into the details of the program. Try to get them to say “let’s talk more” and spark an interest in working with students.</p> <p>TIP: Budget a good chunk of time for this conversation, and remember, this is your chance to listen to them.</p> <p>TIP: When defining the program, it is helpful to have a summarized version in your head so you don’t get sidetracked into too many details.</p>	<p>Explain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • your school’s definition of an ELO • competency-based learning • how the partnership supports the student’s learning
<p>c. Making a match</p> <p>Initiate discussion with a highly qualified teacher, certified school staff and other supporting staff. Determine what competencies can link to this particular site. Also begin identifying possible student candidates for an interview and determine interest and viability of the match.</p>	<p>Content/skills site can provide:</p> <p>Desired skills for student to have when starting:</p>



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Step 2a: Community partner preparation

<p>a. Proposing an ELO opportunity (to the site)</p> <p>This is a quick check to see if they still want to pursue an ELO. Use “I understand...” type sentences. Ask very clearly whether they’d be willing to have another meeting where you would talk more about the ELO initiative.</p> <p>TIP: Make sure you’re talking with the person who has the <i>authority</i> to make this decision.</p>	<p>What kinds of positions do they have available?</p> <p>What has collaboration with schools looked like?</p> <p>What is the training process? Orientation?</p> <p>Are there handbooks/materials available online?</p> <p>What would they look for in a student intern?</p> <p>Set the date for an informational meeting (below).</p> <p>Ask who will be attending the meeting from the site.</p>
<p>b. Meeting: discuss the program with the site</p> <p>Clarify expectations (theirs, yours, the student’s). Have a program handbook with you to clarify any points of confusion. Give concrete examples of successful ELOs - help them visualize a successful ELO. Talk about the value-added aspect of the ELO (what benefits the student will bring to the site) and explain the project criteria.</p> <p>TIP: Always use concrete examples (even if imagined).</p> <p>TIP: Have the Department of Labor work site approval forms with you at the meeting. Be sure to get their Federal ID # at this time as well.</p> <p>Details (possibly part of the meeting): Make sure the site is clear about what program follow up is legally (insurance, fingerprinting, etc.) and procedurally (when an interview will happen, how students log their attendance, etc.).</p>	<p>Do they want an ELO? Y N</p> <p>What positions are available? How many employees?</p> <p>Who could be the mentor(s)?</p> <p>When could a student start?</p> <p>What days/times are available?</p> <p>What is the duration of the ELO?</p> <p>Is there mandatory orientation/training/age?</p> <p>Information to provide to the site: Clarify who will be the school contact person, when an interview will follow, and the timeline of the certification process.</p>



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Step 4a: Student support

<p>a. Setting/clarifying expectations</p> <p>The more clarity around roles, responsibilities, and expectations you can have, the greater the likelihood the ELO will be a successful experience for everyone involved. It’s a good idea to have contract templates for everyone involved. If there are responsibilities specific to the ELO those should be documented and added to the contract.</p> <p>There should be clear guidelines for ending an ELO. Having clear parameters around the length of an ELO can be very helpful. All parties may choose to have a checkpoint to review whether or not to extend the ELO.</p> <p>Have a process in place for unexpectedly needing to end an ELO, and to discuss it at the beginning of the ELO.</p> <p>TIP: Include clear guidelines for notifying the site if a student is going to be absent from their ELO, including snow days, and for tracking/reporting attendance.</p> <p>TIP: It is very helpful for the student to have a clearly designated “go-to” person in case a problem arises.</p>	<p>Attach ELO agreement form and completed Design Template.</p> <p>Student’s “go-to” person and contact info:</p>
<p>b. Coaching</p> <p>Regular reflective communication from students during their ELOs provides critical information for coaching. Students need support and guidance on how to advocate for themselves, in both positive situations (e.g., the site really likes them and wants them to do more than they are able to manage with their school load) and negative situations (e.g., the student feels they are only doing menial tasks and not having an opportunity to be part of the real work).</p>	<p>Accommodations that need to be considered and supported:</p>



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Step 4a: Student support, continued

<p>Coaching, continued</p> <p>Students may need to talk through or practice how to problem solve about and with a site or a mentor. They may need help identifying workplace cues to guide them in acting professionally, or they may need assistance with working through communication or social interactions.</p> <p>TIP: Students may need coaching to advocate for their learning needs, especially if they have an IEP or 504 plans.</p> <p>Most students need help learning to end an ELO in an appropriate fashion. Few teenagers know how to end or transition relationships gracefully, especially if they are not happy with the way things are going.</p> <p>TIP: Students should be helped to understand upfront that simply choosing to not return if things aren't going well is not acceptable (exceptions, of course, are situations that place a student at risk.)</p>	<p>Potential site challenges that may call for student coaching and/or support:</p>
<p>c. Communication</p> <p>Maintaining regular communications is an essential component of ensuring a good experience for the student and continuing positive public relations for the school/program.</p> <p>Schedule a regular time to check in, once every three weeks at a minimum.</p> <p>Have clear lines of communication for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • troubleshooting issues • snow days • late starts • sick days (i.e., any time the student will not be showing up) • when something comes up at the site that requires the student not come in • other logistical issues 	<p>Contact information:</p> <p>Student:</p> <p>Mentor:</p> <p>Site:</p> <p>School Contact:</p> <p>Parent(s)/Family:</p>



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Step 4a: Student support, continued

<p>d. Documentation of learning</p> <p>Have clear expectations of student documentation of learning.</p> <p>Having students write daily journals may be the single best way to maintain clear communication and attend to the student's learning process, as well as identify potential trouble spots.</p>	<p>General expectations:</p> <p>Frequency of documentation:</p> <p>Who will receive/review:</p>
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Step 4b: Community partner support

<p>a. Communication (again!)</p> <p>Clear communications is essential for providing students with quality learning experiences. It's also key to providing support for community partners.</p> <p>Check-ins offer the best possibility for ensuring both community partners and the student understand expectations regarding the competencies and the student's learning goals.</p> <p>Regular check-ins are also an excellent opportunity for informal assessment checks on and coaching for the student's workplace skills (formative assessment). Discussions about professional behavior have the greatest impact when held in such an immediate and meaningful context.</p> <p>TIP: Create a form for capturing check-in discussions. Include some common questions and prompts for the discussion. These notes provide an ongoing record of the student's growth and progress.</p>	<p>Questions to ask at check-ins:</p>
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Step 4b: Community partner support, continued

<p>b. Learning partnerships</p> <p>Identify ways to support the community partner’s ability to be a successful partner in the student’s learning.</p> <p>Careful thought needs to be given to how to communicate any special needs a student may have, and how to share that information while still maintaining appropriate confidentiality.</p> <p>TIP: An ELO can provide an excellent opportunity for coaching a student on how to best advocate for him or herself in the workplace environment.</p>	<p>Resources to support community partner’s role in the student’s learning:</p> <p>Student learning needs:</p> <p>Strategies for addressing and/or communicating student needs:</p>
<p>c. Troubleshooting</p> <p>Is the ELO progressing as expected? If not, then what next?</p> <p>Areas to be prepared to troubleshoot include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● needs of the business* ● student expectations ● personality conflicts ● monitoring compliance/liability issues <p>* TIP: It must be clear that the work of a student is not displacing an already existing worker.</p>	<p>Potential problem areas:</p> <p>Strategies for addressing:</p>



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Step 4a: Wrapping up, continued

<p>c. Thank you, recognition</p> <p>Recognition of the value of a community partner's contribution to student learning is essential.</p> <p>The student and a school representative should send separate thank you letters.</p> <p>TIP: Provide students with examples of quality thank you letters to community partners.</p> <p>Some additional ways to provide recognition of contribution include holding a community partner breakfast or a mentor recognition dinner. These gatherings can serve as networking for businesses, and allow businesses to share best practices with each other.</p> <p>TIP: Honoring community partners with a plaque or a certificate provides a tangible record of their contribution to display at their place of business, with the additional benefit of positive marketing for both the partner and the school.</p>	<p>Date student's thank you letter sent:</p> <p>Date school's thank you letter sent:</p>
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