



IET STRATEGIES IN ACTION SERIES

Promising Practices for Collaborating with Industry and Workforce Development Partners in Integrated Education and Training Programs

Integrated education and training (IET) programs combine adult education and literacy activities with workforce preparation and training. By integrating these three components, IET programs can accelerate learning and support adult learners as they advance along their career pathways, transitioning to postsecondary education and obtaining good jobs. By definition, good jobs provide workers with important benefits, such as job security, good working conditions, empowerment and representation, and opportunities for skill development and career advancement.ⁱ

This publication highlights how IET program providers can collaborate with industry and workforce development organizations to establish IET program design with learner-worker training or work-based learning opportunities. Work-based learning can be defined as a “student or worker completing meaningful job tasks in a workplace that develop readiness for work, knowledge, and skills that support entry or advancement in a particular career field” and can include career exposure such as job shadowing and mentoring, career engagement opportunities including internships, pre-apprenticeships and service learning, and career experience like apprenticeships.ⁱⁱ Learner-worker training aims to increase the skills of those workers who are already employed, with the goals of meeting the employers’ needs and supporting career growth for the learner-workers.ⁱⁱⁱ

These **program design strategies**, work-based learning and learner-worker training models, can be implemented in combination with **supporting strategies** of strategic co-enrollment in WIOA Title I and Title II and the use of alternative assessments that align with learner workers’ career goals. All supporting strategies can also be used independently of the program design strategies shared in this document. Exhibit 1

*The **ADVANCE IET** project provides training and resources to assist adult educators in developing, strengthening, and scaling IET programs that effectively support adult learner pathways to high-quality careers.*

*This is the third publication in a six-part series, **IET Strategies in Action**, intended to provide adult educators with a snapshot of the ways in which some IET programs have implemented promising practices to serve diverse learner populations in a variety of settings.*

describes how learner-worker training or work-based learning approaches can be paired with strategic co-enrollment and/or aligned assessment to cultivate IET programs that are centered on learner-workers' needs, draw on investment from employers and workers, and support local labor market needs. This exhibit also describes each program design and supporting strategy. The remaining sections illustrate how IET program providers are implementing and integrating these program designs and supporting strategies. Examples from state offices that support efforts to align assessment with workers' career pathway goals and offer pre-apprenticeships are also included.

Exhibit 1. Developing IET Programs through Collaboration with Industry and Workforce Partners

Program Design Strategies



Collaborate with employers to provide learner-worker training that accommodates entry-level workers and promotes pathways for advancement. Sometimes referred to as incumbent worker programs, learner-worker training programs can address a variety of adult learner needs, such as credentials for promotion, numeracy skills for job-related tasks, and the essential understanding of worker rights and responsibilities.



Incorporate work-based learning opportunities to support learners' career exploration, hands-on work experience, and social networking opportunities. Work-based learning initiatives can include career exploration, career engagement, and career experience. Career exposure offers an introduction to a career pathway such as through job shadowing or mentoring. Career engagement includes internships (and where possible paid internships) that offer postsecondary credit or connect with potential employment opportunities. Finally, career experience most often refers to forms of apprenticeships.^{iv}

Supporting Strategies



Strategically co-enroll learners in Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I and Title II programs to leverage workforce development partners and funding streams to support adult learners more comprehensively. Effective co-enrollment may facilitate connections to employers and include aspects such as shared ownership of services and outcomes, career navigators, and professional development opportunities for staff.



Align assessment with learners' career pathway goals to enable them to demonstrate the attainment of relevant skills. Multiple methods of assessment can highlight learners' progress in a way that is meaningful to them and to employers. As explained in *Program Memorandum OCTAE 17-2*, in addition to pre- and post-testing, for workplace literacy or IET programs this may also include options such as Measurable Skill Gains (MSG) Type 3: Secondary or Postsecondary Transcript or Report Card, MSG Type 4: Progress Toward Milestones, or MSG Type 5: Passage of an Exam or Progress in Attaining Skills.

Program Design Strategy 1: Collaborating with Employers to Provide Learner-Worker Training

This section highlights how local IET providers have collaborated with employers and workforce development partners to provide training for workers. These models provide benefits to both learner workers and employers. Learner workers can build on prior experience and knowledge and obtain credentials and skills needed for career advancement, often during their paid work time. In addition, workplace training benefits workers who might not otherwise have access to or seek adult education services.^v Employers also benefit from providing learner-worker training programs. They can “grow their own” higher-skilled workforce and are more likely to retain trained employees, reducing vacancies and hiring costs. The College of Western Idaho’s Food and Nutrition IET Program is featured in the forthcoming paragraphs. In this example, IET providers obtained **investment from employers and workers** and aligned assessment with **learner workers’ career pathway goals**.

Food and Nutrition Integrated Education and Training Program, College of Western Idaho, Idaho



The College of Western Idaho Adult Education Program provides adult English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, GED Testing, and ESL Career Pathways at several locations. Across the Boise and Nampa campuses and at several outreach locations in their ten-county region, they serve around 3,000 learners annually with seven full-time staff and 115 part-time staff, including more than one hundred instructors. In addition to their ESL and GED programming, they offer a variety of IET programs—typically two annually, with 30-40 learners enrolling and completing these programs.

Multilingual learners of English and other adult learners who are employed at St. Alphonsus Hospital in Boise, Idaho can participate in a food and nutrition IET program through the College of Western Idaho. The classes are held at the hospital. Upon completion of the IET program, the goal is for workers to be able to pass the Idaho Food Safety Exam, which is required for promotion within the hospital. This course runs throughout the year, being held one hour per day, three times per week; employees can participate during their work schedule and receive compensation for their participation. After passing the Idaho Safety Exam, employees can move from dishwashing into the kitchen where they prepare food. This move comes with an increase in their pay. Additionally, workers have continued to improve their English skills and have had other opportunities to obtain other positions in the hospital. For example, incumbent employees have moved from Food and Nutrition employees to positions such as patient attendants and environmental services technicians.

IET staff aim to **gain investment from employers and learner workers**. In establishing this IET program, staff at the College of Western Idaho approached employers about partnering and offering this IET program as a collaborative process. First, staff determined the fit of the potential employer for establishing an IET program. In this case, the staff determined that there were benefits for the learner workers because the hospital provided paid time for workers to participate in the IET program and offered opportunities for promotion based on completing the course or obtaining the certification.

The IET instructors and partnering employers co-planned the IET program. This ultimately led to inclusion of important topics for workers such as negotiating workplace norms and expectations. For example, the curriculum addressed workers' understanding and use of the hospital's in-house application to request time off and schedule adjustments. Though employees are expected to use three applications to manage their schedules and work, when the College of Western Idaho started providing classes, none of the employees could access any of these applications. In class, their instructor helped learner workers connect to the applications and now they know how to use them to find their work schedules, make time off requests, and view pay statements. As a result, some employees were able to finally use their many hours of accrued paid time off. Employees are also required to do about thirty trainings every year. The trainings use formal English but don't often apply to their specific job duties. Instructors help them negotiate these trainings and simplify the English in a context that applies to them. This example shows that close collaboration with employers can benefit learner workers and employers in helping workers access the skills and certifications that will serve them in their career pathway and meet employer's direct needs.

Supporting Strategy 1: Aligning Assessment with Learner Workers' Career Pathway Goals



Like the course content described above, the measuring of workers' learning was determined in partnership with the employer. This includes not only formative assessment in the classroom but also the passage of the Idaho Food Safety Exam, which is counted as an MSG 5 and is an exam that acts as a benchmark for advancement. In this case, the use of MSG 5 (Food Handler's card) provides learner workers with the potential to earn higher wages in the hospital kitchen. The hospital opens a variety of pathways for other careers within the St. Alphonsus hospital system and helps to meet the employer's immediate needs.

Program Design Strategy 2: Incorporating Work-Based Learning Opportunities



The following section addresses work-based learning opportunities that occur within an educational setting. Work-based learning can take various forms, including pre-apprenticeships, internships, job shadowing, and other hands-on career exploration activities.^{vi} These opportunities offer a chance for learners to determine if the career pathway is an appropriate fit for their interests and skills and can also supply experience needed to inform decisions and preparation for entrance into additional employment or postsecondary options. The opportunities also provide employers with the option to build relationships with potential employees and inform job training.

This brief features examples of a Community Health Worker (CHW) IET program in Pennsylvania, a Phlebotomy Technician IET program internship in Rhode Island, and an electrician pre-apprenticeship IET program in Texas. Across these programs, providers aim to build a clear pathway for career exploration and advancement and to leverage multiple methods of assessment that align with learners' career pathway goals. In the following section, each of these IET programs and their corresponding work-based learning opportunities are described, as is how IET program staff designed and implemented these programs in connection with strategic co-enrollment in WIOA Title I and Title II.

Community Health Worker Integrated Education and Training Program: Northampton Community College, Pennsylvania

The Northampton Community College community health worker (CHW) IET program in Bethlehem, PA aims to support adult multilingual learners of English in addressing needs in their communities. Through a partnership with Eastcentral PA Area Health Education Center, participants can earn the PA CHW certificates in CPR/First Aid & AED, Mental Health First Aid and Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI), and three credits that transfer to multiple degrees at Northampton Community College (e.g., Health Sciences AAS, Public Health AAS). The IET program is 105 hours of training which takes place over the course of eleven weeks and includes occupational training, English language support, workforce preparation activities, and a capstone project. This is a growing field with a need for multilingual and multicultural workers who can support community needs.

The Community Health Worker Integrated Education and Training Program Builds a Clear Pathway for Career Exploration and Advancement

Throughout the IET program, learners have opportunities for career exposure. For example, employers and others from the healthcare industry come to speak to the class about working in that career pathway. In addition, the syllabus is designed based on the

results of a survey to learners about the topics that are most relevant to their needs and interests in social work and healthcare (e.g., legal assistance for housing needs, supporting victims of domestic violence). Finally, a capstone project serves as an opportunity to consider pathways for career advancement. For this project, learners determine an area of interest about how they could improve the community and address a social work or health care need. Then, they research this area of need in the community and develop a list of resources to share with the class. At the end of the presentations, learners have built a network of resources and knowledge regarding a range of issues important to their peers and navigated social and healthcare systems as they would as community health workers. Although the capstone project does not take place at a work site, it gives learners a meaningful opportunity to engage more fully with authentic issues and resources, providing career exposure and better equipping them to pursue their chosen career pathway.

Phlebotomy Technician Integrated Education and Training Program: Cranston Adult Education, Rhode Island

Staff at Cranston Adult Education Programs have been facilitating education and training programs long before WIOA and the focus on IET programming. The Phlebotomy Technician program began in the early 2000s when a community member came into the office and asked for training to become a phlebotomist. Since then, staff at Cranston have supported over one hundred learners in becoming phlebotomists. Cranston Adult Education is located outside of Providence, Rhode Island, and serves 110 learners annually with one full-time staff and eight part-time staff, including six instructors. In addition to their ESL and GED programming, they offer vocational training and eight sessions of IET programs annually.

The IET program begins with a sixteen-week, semester-long course that includes classes twice weekly for both daytime and nighttime cohorts to support access for learners who are also currently employed. The course includes theoretical study and practice to prepare learners for career engagement, and the subsequent forty-hour clinical internship. Due to the rigorous nature of the theoretical coursework, learners must enter the IET program at adult secondary levels on CASAS pre-tests.

The Phlebotomy Technician Integrated Education and Training Program Builds a Clear Pathway for Career Exploration and Advancement: The IET theoretical course and clinical internship are facilitated by an instructor who also works at the East Side Clinical Laboratory. Ultimately, many learners complete their clinical internships here and are hired in their labs across the state. Given that a single person plays both roles, they can ensure that the curriculum and internship procedures are adapted as needed to prepare learners for employment as phlebotomists in one of East Side Clinical

Laboratories' multiple locations. Because the Cranston staff are well informed and updated about the hiring practices and workplace needs, they can give prospective enrollees accurate information in the recruitment and referral process to help them assess whether this pathway is right for them before they invest time in training. For example, staff learned that labs are searching for bilingual job applicants who can draw on Spanish and English language skills to support patients through the medical process and can then relay and promote that option to recruit potential learners.

Supporting Strategy 2: Program Efforts to Align Assessment with Learner Workers' Career Pathway Goals



During the clinical rotation of the IET program, learners are placed at a lab for one to two weeks, depending on their availability. Learners are mentored and evaluated by staff as they complete one hundred or more successful punctures on patients of all ages. This ongoing evaluation provides learners with on-the-spot feedback about their technique. Documentation of successful completion of the clinical rotation, with the signature of a laboratory supervisor, counts as MSG Type 4. The evaluation provides space for the supervisor to conduct an overall assessment of employability skills such as adaptability and cooperation and procedure steps for the punctures such as approaching, identifying, and preparing patient or verifying diet restrictions and latex sensitivities. In addition, there is space for the learner to document each completed puncture and mark it as successful or unsuccessful with a signature from the supervisor for each puncture.

If learners do not pass based on the lab's evaluation, they are invited to take the theoretical and/or clinical portions of the course at Cranston again at no cost. If they do pass, they receive a certificate and can immediately apply for employment at their internship lab site or others. Wages start at \$18–20 an hour, and employees often receive full-time offers with benefits. Over the past three years, eighty-five percent of learners received employment upon completing the course.

Supporting Strategy 2: Statewide Efforts to Align Assessment with Learner Workers' Career Pathway Goals

At the Office of Adult Education in the Rhode Island Department of Education, the staff's goal is to cultivate a learner-centered approach to assessment. One strategy that they have employed to reach this aspiration is supporting local IET providers in using all five types of measurable skill gains.

As the adult education office in Rhode Island published their request for proposals for this current grant cycle (five years), they conducted a webinar that included guidance on how to design IET programs and, specifically, on how to make use of MSG 3–5 in workplace literacy and IET programs. The webinar was a culmination of a collaborative process. To develop their IET guidance and MSG 3-5 processes, the adult education office in Rhode Island engaged all their current grantees in a series of conversations to learn what questions and concerns needed to be answered in-state guidance. Over the past two years, as program providers have become more familiar with the process, the state office held informal learning circles to collect information from providers on the credentials and related assessments already embedded in their programs.

The state staff has supplied ongoing support for providers to determine the best fit for their programs. At the Cranston Phlebotomy Technician IET Program discussed in the previous section, the Rhode Island state staff realized that their internship assessment, or the internship report card as it was called in the program, was a good match for MSG 4 as it documented how learners had attained the necessary skills to complete a clinical rotation of one hundred successful punctures, making them ready for employment. They worked with Cranston staff to determine how this could be captured as MSG 4, thus eliminating the need for learners' post-testing when not deemed relevant. The Rhode Island state office also issued guidance—now in NRS Table 1—that participants in programs designed to result in an MSG other than pre-/post-test (MSG 1a) should be removed from the denominator when calculating a program's post-test rate. This eliminates an unintentional disincentive to using alternative measures of learning.^{vii}

Electrician Pre-Apprenticeship Integrated Education and Training Program: Workforce Solutions Brazos Valley, Texas

At Workforce Solutions Brazos Valley, an American Job Center in the rural area of Texas, staff offer adult education programs such as ESL, GED in Spanish and English, and job training. They also have created an IET program with career engagement. This is a pre-apprenticeship electrician IET program as a result of a state leadership initiative from the Texas Workforce Commission to support construction-related apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships. Through research into registered apprenticeships and in-demand career pathways in the area, staff selected a construction pathway with an electrician specialization. In the past two years, the pre-apprenticeship electrician program has served forty-four learners, including seventeen who attained certifications through the course.

Learners in the electrician pre-apprenticeship program receive valuable certifications and have financial and career navigation support. The electrician pre-apprenticeship is offered during the day for six weeks of study or during the evening for longer classes

over thirteen weeks. During the program and through its collaboration with Blinn College District, participants can earn an Occupational Safety Health Administration (OSHA) 10 card. This ten-hour safety course covers general safety and health hazards for entry-level workers. Participants also earn a National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) Core certificate, and they can prepare to pass the apprenticeship entrance exam. Throughout the program, participants can meet with a career navigator for workforce preparation activities and for support on the job search upon completion of the program.

At the onset of the program development, staff at Brazos Valley established memoranda of understanding with registered apprenticeship program providers and employers. Staff relied on their experience on the local workforce board to build connections with other employers. They held an employer roundtable and invited all employers with related registered apprenticeships. They also included electricians who did not have registered apprenticeships, and several organizations eventually applied and became registered apprenticeships as well. Finally, they held an apprenticeship event during the National Apprenticeship Week in which Texas Workforce Commission staff and Workforce Solutions board staff presented information to employers on how to become a registered apprenticeship provider.

Supporting Strategy 1: Strategically Co-Enrolling Learners in Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I and Title II Services



Because this pre-apprenticeship is housed within the offices of an integrated American Job Center, learners are enrolled in WIOA Title I and Title II, when appropriate. In this case, Title I funds can support the employers' cost of apprenticeship and the participants' required work clothes and hand tools, such as steel-toe boots and fire-retardant clothing. The workforce contractor can also provide other supportive services to eligible learners, such as transportation assistance, rental assistance, career navigation, and referrals for resources outside the American Job Center with community-based programs.

Pennsylvania's State Leadership Initiative to Link Pre-Apprenticeships to Innovation and Education Training Programs

The Pennsylvania Department of Education, Division of Adult Education has a statewide leadership project dedicated to supporting adult education providers (and their workforce partners) with designing and implementing IET programming. To promote the potential benefits of registered pre-apprenticeships, the leadership project is supporting providers to navigate the complexity of directly linking IET programs to registered pre-

apprenticeships. In Pennsylvania, apprenticeships can be registered by the Apprenticeship and Training Office in the Department of Labor & Industry, and must lead to registered apprenticeships.^{viii} The Pennsylvania pre-apprenticeship office (funded by the PA Department of Labor) and the IET project (funded by the PA Department of Education) have been working collaboratively to organize and assist providers in building relationships with employers and training providers to increase access to occupational training that is connected to career pathways in multiple industry sectors.

Over the past year, state leadership has convened regional members of the Pennsylvania Department of Labor's Apprenticeship and Training Office and IET and workplace literacy providers. The quarterly convenings aim to address important considerations for forming this partnership, such as the following:

- What is required for a pre-apprenticeship or apprenticeship to be registered?
- Which pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships are adult learners interested in?
- Which pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships are most in demand?
- Are there opportunities to provide learners with stipends for pre-apprenticeships?

As this project continues, the state leadership plans to continue being the conduit between the apprenticeship offices and adult education providers. The goal is to create several IET programs that can be approved as registered pre-apprenticeships so that local providers can replicate and modify these programs to meet their learners' needs. Currently, this leadership initiative's staff are collaborating with staff at Northampton Community College to adapt their IET program into a pre-apprenticeship linked to a registered apprenticeship as a community health worker.

Conclusion

These examples illustrate that when IET program providers collaborate with industry and workforce development organizations, they can design and offer options that address employers' needs and meet learner workers' career pathway goals. The examples also illustrate that these promising practices can be offered in combination to provide learner-worker centered programs that meet local labor market and employer and industry needs. IET program providers that offer worker training benefit when employers and workers are invested and when programs are designed in coordination with workforce development partners, such as WIOA

Title I providers. An IET program that incorporates work-based learning should simultaneously develop a clear pathway for learners' career exploration and for learners' career advancement. Finally, IET program providers can leverage multiple methods of assessment to align with learners' career pathway goals and demonstrate learners' progress and achievement to employers through statewide support efforts and collaboration with employers and workforce development partners.

Questions for Reflection

- Which employer and workforce development partnerships can help you find opportunities for learners to explore and advance in a career pathway?
- How can you leverage work-based learning, multiple methods of assessment, strategic co-enrollment, or worker training program design to meet your learners' career pathway goals?
- How can you use these practices to make your IET program more centered on learners' and workers' strengths, needs, and goals?

Endnotes

- i “Good Jobs Principles,” United States Department of Commerce and United States Department of Labor, accessed March 14, 2023, <https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/goodjobs/Good-Jobs-Summit-Principles-Factsheet.pdf>.
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- iii “Incumbent Worker Training-WIOA Desk Reference,” Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, January 2017. https://ion.workforcegps.org/resources/2017/03/19/19/18/Incumbent_Worker_Training_-_WIOA_Desk_Reference
- iv Deborah Kobes, Charlotte Cahill, and Kyle Hartung. “Work-Based Learning Framework.”
- v Margaret Becker Patterson. “The Forgotten 90%: Adult Nonparticipation in Education.” *Adult Education Quarterly* 68, no. 1 (February 2018): 41–62. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0741713617731810>.
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- viii Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry. “Apprenticeship and Training Office,” 2024, <https://www.dli.pa.gov/Individuals/Workforce-Development/apprenticeship/Pages/Services.aspx>

