

2 National organizations that support employment and workplace-based learning for current and former foster youth have outlined strategies for employers to promote successful workplace experiences with young adults.

Recommendations include:

- Thorough initial orientation to the workplace;
- Early and clear communication about job expectations;
- Active and supportive supervision with frequent constructive feedback from supervisors;
- Specific training around workplace safety issues; and
- Coordination with community-based service providers to facilitate ongoing job coaching and support.

Employers working with aged-out foster youth should implement these practices to maximize opportunities for successful long-term employment.

Best Practices for Training Institutions

1 Members of the target populations often struggle to positively differentiate themselves from the crowd of job applicants and secure jobs due to perceived limitations in terms of criminal records, lack of language skills, or lack of work experience. Formal job skill certifications and licenses can compensate for some of these barriers and enhance employability for members of the target populations. Thus training institutions should consider structuring training programs (and perhaps even programs in basic skills, soft skills, and English as a Second Language) to result in formal certificates that can be listed by job applicants on employment applications.

Best Practices: Incorporating Basic Skills Education into Industry-Specific Job Training

Peralta and Contra Costa community colleges partner to coordinate the East Bay Career Advancement Academy, a series of industry-specific job training programs where basic skills education is incorporated into industry-specific training. Collaborators include community partners such as Rubicon Programs, which provide assessments and referrals of students into the program; local adult schools; Workforce Investment Boards; and employers, who provide students with internships and job placements.

2 Members of the target populations often lack basic literacy and math skills, which limit their abilities to secure jobs, take advantage of training opportunities, and qualify for promotions. Training institutions should include contextualized basic skills as an integrated component of industry-specific classes.

Best Practices: Collaboration of Logistics and Trade Employers, Unions, and Training Institutions

The Alameda Transportation and Logistics Academic Support Initiative (ATLAS) is a collaborative eight-week program that provides comprehensive accredited training in warehousing and logistics through the College of Alameda, one of the Peralta Community Colleges. Oakland Adult and Career Education provides basic skills education support for the program, as contextualized math, English, and ESL education is included in the program. ATLAS is planning to add training in Class A truck driving and possibly a merchant marine certificate. Job placement for ATLAS graduates is achieved through extensive collaboration with the Port of Oakland, the City of Oakland, the Teamsters, and the International Longshoremen.

3 Lack of soft skills is a barrier to hiring and especially retention for many members of the target populations. Thus training institutions should provide specific training in soft skills, including cultural norms and on-the-job conflict resolution strategies. Training institutions should also consider incorporating job shadowing and internship opportunities as components of training programs to help trainees develop soft skills and job contacts in a supportive environment.

4 Many members of the target populations lack substantial work experience, and many employers rely on positive job references in making hiring decisions. Thus training providers should consider including internships and other supervised employment as part of training programs in order to build opportunities for trainees to develop positive employer references.

5 Most members of the target populations are very low-income and cannot afford to take advantage of training opportunities that require high out-of-pocket expenses or with schedules that do not allow for simultaneous paid employment. Thus training providers should facilitate paid training opportunities and financial aid that includes living expenses and/or flexible training schedules that accommodate work schedules.