Introduction

This packet is designed to provide an overview of Construction Plus (C+) strategies and promising practices from Department of Labor (DOL) YouthBuild programs. Six grantees, representing communities across the country, offer important learnings for C+ program design, implementation, and partnerships, while highlighting their successes and challenges with integrating C+ into the YouthBuild program.

The goal of this packet is to help grantees develop a strong understanding of the C+ model and framework and to offer recommendations and guidance for forming and sustaining strong partnerships, recruiting and retaining youth participants, and successfully placing participants into work opportunities after graduation. This packet will help to support overall program planning and improvement by reviewing a variety of in-demand C+ industries while offering beneficial program strategies from current C+ grantees.

Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grantee Name</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>C+ Industry/Sector</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Action Agency - Cincinnati</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>Healthcare</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Teamwork, Inc. (CTI YouthBuild Lowell)</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Culinary/Food Service</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohawk Community College – Mohawk Valley YouthBuild</td>
<td>NY</td>
<td>Service and Hospitality/Customer Service</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OhioGuidestone</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>Healthcare</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portland YouthBuilders</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YWCA YouthBuild Springfield</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Healthcare</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations for YouthBuild Programs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
C+ Promising Practice Review

Grantee: Community Action Agency - Cincinnati (Cincinnati, OH)

Industry/Sector: Healthcare

Grant Class: 2016

C+ Students: 39

Certification/Credential: Nurse Aide Training Certificate (National); Ohio State Tested Nurse Aide (STNA) license (Regional)

DOL Funding: DOL funds cover the cost of C+ training, including instruction costs outlined in the training subcontract, youth participant uniforms, supplies needed for training and internships, transportation, and participant stipends.

PROMISING PRACTICES SUMMARY:

- **Program Integration** – The grantee has a pre-STNA phase of the program (prior to C+ training component) that prepares students for the Cincinnati State Workforce Development Center Nurse Aide Training Certificate (NATC). The grantee’s academic instructor worked with Cincinnati State to design this foundational component that includes medical terminology and other basic academic skills needed for the training. During the Nurse Aide training, the grantee provides supplemental tutoring support to students, as needed. In addition to the academic support, the program’s case manager provides day-to-day support to the C+ student cohort and C+ instructor. This role has been instrumental in providing supportive services and addressing participant barriers, such as transportation, while attending the training.

- **Partnership Management/Development** – The grantee established a rigorous proposal process that provided an opportunity to vet prospective C+ training partners. Once Cincinnati State was selected, the grantee worked with them to establish a comprehensive program plan and MOU. The grantee created a steering committee of all grant partners to provide orientation and ongoing updates specific to the YouthBuild grant and performance expectations. In addition to the steering committee, the program director has structured partner meetings to discuss issues and plan for the next cohort. Program planning and scheduling is determined collaboratively and takes into consideration what worked or was challenging with the previous cohort.

GRANTEE INTERVIEW SUMMARY:

*C+ Industry and Credential Selection:* How did the program use labor market trends and partnerships to determine the industry, training, curriculum, and certification(s)/credentials(s) for this C+ program?

Community Action Agency – Cincinnati (CAA) provides a range of social services, including multiple vocational training programs, in-house or with subcontract partners. Healthcare is an in-demand industry, and CAA led a rigorous process to identify its C+ partner, Cincinnati State.
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<tr>
<th><strong>Program Integration:</strong></th>
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<td>Does the program have an annotated calendar and flow chart of activities/events/class time/certifications for participants in C+?</td>
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<tr>
<td>The grantee has a detailed program calendar that guides program timelines and planning. The program calendar has been adjusted with each cohort, based on lessons learned and scheduling challenges. Relevant versions of the calendar are shared with program staff, participants, and program partners.</td>
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<th><strong>Documentation of Program Plan:</strong></th>
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<td>Does the program have a detailed narrative of the components of the C+ program from start to finish including content, activities, testing, projects, internships, and certifications that cover the time periods of Mental Toughness and Orientation, Active Programming, Exit, Placement, Follow-Up, and Retention. Does the program use the C+ Action Plan?</td>
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<tr>
<td>The program director and staff collaborate to develop the program plan. This is an iterative process and the grantee continues to strengthen the C+ program plan with each cohort, which influences the overall YouthBuild program plan as well. During mental toughness and student orientation, program staff ensure that students, partners, and other stakeholders understand the program plan and schedule. Cincinnati State has a state-approved curriculum and training model that allows for adaptations and schedule adjustments to support student success. The curriculum is shared with the grantees, along with feedback and resources for the pre-STNA academic component mentioned previously.</td>
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<th><strong>Partnership Management:</strong></th>
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<td>Do the program plan and MOU(s) include a description of the partners’ roles and responsibilities in providing key aspects of C+?</td>
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<td>CAA is an experienced agency that manages many partnerships and has developed a detailed MOU that includes roles and responsibilities. There are also regular partner meetings to discuss day-to-day operations and outcomes and to identify and address quality improvement needs to increase participant success. The case manager is available daily while students are in training and the program director has a structured partner meeting with Cincinnati State. The grantee is committed to ensuring participant success and continues to work with the C+ instructor to identify ways to support certification and license attainment outcomes.</td>
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<th><strong>Program Management and Quality Improvement:</strong></th>
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<td>How does the C+ program staff or partners interface with the academic and construction instructors, as well as case management, and program leadership to assess youth participant performance, program quality, and addressing issues/challenges during implementation?</td>
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<td>The program’s case manager and program director work with the C+ instructor directly, and the C+ instructor and the academic instructor collaborate to strengthen the pre-STNA academic component. This includes providing supplemental tutoring supports for the students, as needed. Because the C+ training occurs off-site, this collaborative approach ensures that program staff are addressing issues as they arise, and that students and C+ instructors are receiving structured support as needed. The grantee and Cincinnati State are committed to identifying ways to support student success. Their structured partnership is key since the 2016 grant is the first C+ grant cycle. Some key strengths that have been identified:</td>
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<td>• Most students that have completed the C+ training have placements in either employment or post-secondary education within the healthcare field. There have been several placements at Cincinnati State’s clinical partner’s healthcare facilities.</td>
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</table>
• STNA has been a draw for some students that were not interested in construction and has increased female participation in the YouthBuild program.

Some challenges that have been identified:
• Students have success passing the certificate exam that is administered at the end of the training and are able to work with this certificate in a number of employment opportunities. Students also take the state license exam but have struggled to successfully pass all parts of the exam because of the college-level reading and math content. CAA anticipates passing the licensing exam will take multiple tries for participants, but this is something students can work towards during their post-program placement in related employment.

Some key areas for improvement:
• CAA wants to expand their employer partnerships and is working with the local workforce development board and other partners to accomplish this goal.
• The grantee would like to develop an additional internship component beyond the required 16 hours of clinical experience to improve placement success.

**Hands-On Work Experience:**
How has the C+ program staff identified the provider of the hands-on work experience? Does the hands-on work experience occur separately from industry-recognized credential curriculum delivery? Are there formal MOUs for the hands-on work experience and do these also include agreements tied to post-program placement or continuing training opportunities?

Cincinnati State works with employer partners to provide hands-on work experience and the 16-hour clinical rotation. The C+ instructor is with the cohort during the clinical rotation and works closely with the clinical supervisor to provide on-site support and skills assessment. The instructor is an experienced nurse and can provide practical role-modeling for participants. The grantee does not directly manage the employer partners for the clinical rotation but provides input on the partnerships with the C+ training partner.

**Placement Strategies:**
How do placement activities take place with targeted employers in C+? Is there an MOU or some other formal agreement? What is the connection between the hands-on work experience site and hiring?

A number of students have been placed at healthcare facilities with which Cincinnati State partners for the clinical rotation. The grantee does not have a formal MOU with employer partners at this time, and this is an area that the grantee has identified to include in their C+ action plan moving forward.
C+ Promising Practice Review

Grantee: Community Teamwork, Inc. (CTI) - CTI YouthBuild of Greater Lowell (Lowell, MA)

Industry/Sector: Culinary/Food Service

Grant Class: 2017

C+ Students: 10

Certification/Credential: American Culinary Federation Certified Fundamentals Cook and ServSafe Manager credentials

DOL Funding: DOL funds support the salary of the YouthBuild C+ instructor, part of rent for commercial kitchen training space, and purchase of instructional items for students (such as curriculum material, tools, supplies, etc.).

PROMISING PRACTICES SUMMARY:

- **Industry and Credential Selection** – CTI utilized data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, as well as Massachusetts state and regional labor market data, and researched other areas of participant need, such as food insecurity, to select this track. They found the pathway to be a more accepting industry for youth with criminal records and a way to potentially attract more young women to their program. The credential was implemented for the first time with the 2017 grant cycle. The program successfully assisted all C+ youth to receive the ServSafe Food Protection Management certification which is the highest certification awarded by ServSafe. The certificate is earned by passing the ServSafe Manager exam, which is an interim credential that can add value to a cooking credential. The program had only one student complete the American Culinary Federation (ACF) credential. CTI has realized the ACF credential is too long and too narrowly focused for the program to implement during the active programming period, as the credential requires 1,000 hours of instruction and hands-on experience. They now see ACF as a potential apprenticeship track and only for those who want to become professional cooks. ACF also was in a state of flux at the beginning of the grant cycle as they moved to more online instruction. CTI is actively researching other culinary credentials that might be a better fit than ACF.

- **On-site Instructor** – The grantee has fully integrated the culinary instructor into the YouthBuild program, including hiring her on as staff and then onboarding her to be fully knowledgeable of the complete program design. She partners with the case management staff daily, which has helped her in gaining valuable insight to the youth. The instructor and the program director meet regularly to assess, revise, and implement the overall C+ program.

- **Use of Technology** - The program has integrated technology into the daily instruction with C+ students. All C+ students use iPads to log their hours and skills learned.

- **Partnership Management/Development** - The culinary instructor is from the community, has owned and operated a restaurant business in the community, and has far-reaching partnerships that enhance opportunities for internships, service, and placement. Additional partners include local food restaurant and businesses: Lenzi’s, Cobblestones, Lowell Burger Co., and Two Chefs Catering.
• **Development of Social Enterprise** – The social enterprise (catering business) works on several different levels for the overall program. It is a hands-on work experience for all culinary participants, increases service opportunities, and can become a pathway for unrestricted dollars to flow back into the program.

• **Apprenticeship Track** – The grantee sees a natural pathway to apprenticeship and has started working on developing this aspect of the C+ track.

**GRANTEE INTERVIEW SUMMARY:**

<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>C+ Industry and Credential Selection:</strong> How did the program use labor market trends and partnerships to determine the industry, training, curriculum, and certification(s)/credentials(s) for this C+ program?</th>
<th>The grantee researched labor market trends through the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and Massachusetts state and regional labor market data and conducted community interviews with young women to see what they might be interested in, as the program sought to increase their recruitment and retention of female participants. The grantee was also interested in a career pathway that would serve justice-involved participants and tried to model it on their existing construction pathway. The program subsequently researched various credentials and curricula and identified the nationally industry-recognized American Culinary Federation (ACF) credential. This credential seemed to fit the YouthBuild program model and schedule, offered a strong curriculum upon which to build the program, and offered the opportunity to move into the ACF Cook/Pastry Apprenticeship program. In addition, the program included the ServSafe Manager credential which is required to work in any foodservice employment. The program is currently assessing ACF credentials and researching other culinary credentials that may be a better fit for participants.</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Program Integration:</strong> Does the program have an annotated calendar and flow chart of activities/events/class time/certifications for participants in C+?</td>
<td>The grantee is developing a flow chart based on best practices gleaned from their first cohort. They have a daily calendar to track lessons taught and skills developed, and participants are required to log all activities daily.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Documentation of Program Plan:</strong> Does the program have a detailed narrative of the components of the C+ program from start to finish including content, activities, testing, projects, internships, and certifications that cover the time</td>
<td>The grantee has utilized the narrative from the Statement of Work to design the C+ program and is creating a more detailed program narrative based on what they learned through their first cohort. The grantee has not used the C+ Action Plan but will use this tool as part of their ongoing assessment.</td>
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</table>
Periods of Mental Toughness and Orientation, Active Programming, Exit, Placement, Follow-Up, and Retention. Does the program use the C+ Action Plan?

**Partnership Management:**
Do the program plan and MOU(s) include a description of the partners’ roles and responsibilities in providing key aspects of C+?

Currently, the C+ instructor has long standing relationships in the community that the grantee has leveraged to create internships and placement opportunities for participants. The grantee hopes to formalize some existing partnerships with employers via MOUs before the next cohort.

Finally, the grantee is looking to establish new partnerships as they expand the C+ program. They are currently looking to form a partnership with University of Massachusetts Lowell in their food service and hospitality department.

**Program Management and Quality Improvement:**
How does the C+ program staff or partners interface with the academic and construction instructors, as well as case management, and program leadership to assess youth participant performance, program quality, and addressing issues/challenges during implementation?

The culinary instructor provides on-site instruction and runs the for-profit catering social enterprise. She is a professional chef who owned and managed a restaurant in Lowell for thirty years. She acknowledges that working with other YouthBuild staff daily (particularly the case management staff) is crucial to her understanding of the reality of the participants she serves. She is a hands-on instructor and prioritizes regular assessment of participants through the American Culinary Federation’s logbook/assessment that both the instructor and participants utilize.

The grantee has incorporated technology into daily instruction and every participant uses an iPad as an online logbook during programming. The C+ instructor and program director work together to assess the overall success and challenges of this pathway. They are focused on looking for the right fit for participants, the right balance of classroom work and hands-on work opportunities, and keeping participants engaged in the coursework. The program staff is looking for ways to better assess incoming participants interested in this industry pathway.

The program identified that a few strengths of the culinary arts industry pathway is that it is friendly to justice-involved participants and is helpful with recruiting young women to YouthBuild. Also, the pathway offers a variety of community service opportunities, which is integral to the personal and professional development of participants.

Some challenges of the pathway include the required training hours of the ACF credential. The training requires 1,000 hours, which averages 35 hours per week to fully certify students in 10 months. Another challenge with the credential is that it is very focused on individuals who want to be professional cooks, which can limit job opportunities. The program is looking for a credential/pathway that
may have broader focus and more diverse opportunities within the culinary industry. Participant attendance is an ongoing challenge, but CTI has been able to utilize ACF’s new online curriculum for students to allow participants to make up course work they miss. Additionally, the grantee is experiencing rising rent costs associated with the kitchen used for the culinary program. To address this, CTI plans to build their own professional kitchen which will support the day-to-day instruction and the catering business.

The grantee is starting to investigate other credentials in the culinary arts industry to see if there is a better overall fit to maximize career opportunities. They have designed the first phase of the C+ training to provide the ServSafe Manager credential. It is required to get a food purveyor’s license and restaurants must have at least one credentialed person on their staff. This early credential opens doors for participants. The grantee is working to build the capacity needed to get participants to the full 1,000 hours required for the ACF Certified Fundamental Cook as the stackable credential. They have been able to access additional funding that supports paid internships as well as using the program’s social enterprise in catering to reach the 1,000 hour requirement. They see the ACF credential as a stackable secondary credential that would be completed after most students exit from the program. The goal would be for students to complete the credential in the first quarter after exit and be placed into jobs in the second quarter after exit.

**Hands-On Work Experience:**
How has the C+ program staff identified the provider of the hands-on work experience? Does the hands-on work experience occur separately from industry-recognized credential curriculum delivery? Are there formal MOUs for the hands-on work experience and do these also include agreements tied to post-program placement or continuing training opportunities?

There are many opportunities for hands-on work experience through community service events, hands-on classroom instruction, the grantee’s catering business, and internships. The grantee is working on developing MOUs and continues to develop more formal ties to placement and advanced training opportunities, including apprenticeship.

**Placement Strategies:**
How do placement activities take place with targeted employers in C+? Is there an MOU or some other formal agreement? What is the connection between the hands-on work experience site and hiring?

The grantee has successfully placed a participant, who gained her credential and completed her internship, into a full-time job earning $15 an hour, with benefits, at a local catering company. She now comes back to the program to work in the catering social enterprise business, as needed, and mentors current participants in culinary training.

Work readiness skill building is an area of improvement for the C+ training. Other participants have been placed in culinary-related
jobs but have had retention challenges. The grantee is seeking to balance soft skill development with credentialing.

The grantee finds that participants aged 16-18 are often not ready for the commitment and intensity of the full C+ training experience. The C+ instructor hopes to provide more effective orientation and training with industry partners, so they have a better understanding of the youth participants and the YouthBuild program’s goals. The grantee is working on building apprenticeship connections and believes this C+ track is a natural pathway to apprenticeship, especially since ACF has an apprenticeship pathway. They have strong connections with their local AJC, which they will use to expand apprenticeship opportunities.
C+ Promising Practice Review

Grantee: Mohawk Community College - Mohawk Valley (MCCMV) YouthBuild (Utica, NY)

Industry/Sector: Service and Hospitality/Customer Service

Grant Class: 2017

C+ Students: 25

Certification/Credential: American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute (AHLEI) Skills, Tasks, and Results Training (START) certification

DOL Funding – The program is utilizing DOL funds to pay for the salary of the YouthBuild C+ instructor, curriculum materials, and C+ youth stipends.

PROMISING PRACTICES SUMMARY:

- **Industry and Credential Selection** – The grantee chose hospitality as their C+ industry because of its strength and growth in the local area. Several new hotels are opening near the program, and a local college offers industry-related courses that can lead to additional credentials in this pathway. The program director interviewed another YouthBuild program that is highly successful in the hospitality industry to glean best practices and create a curriculum that addresses a wide spectrum of jobs within the hospitality field.

- **Inclusion of Customer Service Training** – To strengthen their existing curriculum, the grantee has incorporated YouthBuild USA’s Customer Service Excellence Training (CSET) initiative. This helps to place more emphasis on work readiness and customer service skills which are essential to success in the hospitality industry.

- **Program Integration** - MCCMV YouthBuild specifically recruits for their hospitality C+ track, and participants are led through an informational process from recruitment through mental toughness. This has helped to strengthen the retention of participants in this track. The hospitality vocational instructor is a staff member and participates regularly in staff meetings and case conferences to provide robust wrap-around support. She also meets regularly with the program director to assess, revise, and implement the C+ program.

- **Partnership Management** – The grantee has a letter of support that documents how the employer/work experience partner, Hotel Utica by Doubletree, will work with the YouthBuild program. The program director is working on developing a more formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with this partner that specifically addresses work experience opportunities and placement. They are also developing MOUs with other local partners who are providing other C+ work experiences in the hospitality and culinary fields. MOUs will cover internships, work experience, and potential employment placements. Currently, there are no placement-focused MOUs but they are being developed with the hotel partners.

- **Pre-Apprenticeship Design** – The grantee is creating a more formal pre-apprenticeship design for C+ which will be applied to any C+ industry that they pursue moving forward.
**GRANTEE INTERVIEW SUMMARY:**

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<th><strong>C+ Industry and Credential Selection:</strong></th>
<th>Initially, the grantees considered healthcare but was concerned it would be too expensive to implement and that it would not lead to viable, stackable credentials and/or jobs with good wages for participants. Using labor market data, the grantees identified a rising trend in hospitality jobs within the city of Utica. During the proposal development, three to four new hotels were under development within walking distance of the program, which presented possible partnership opportunities. The program director also looked at another YouthBuild program (Learning Works, Portland, ME) running a hospitality track to identify best practices and strategies. The program uses the American Hotel and Lodging Educational Institute (AHLEI) Skills, Tasks, and Results Training (START) curriculum which consists of 180 hours of lessons that cover twelve different hospitality positions. START typically results in at least one professional credential and can lead to additional stackable credentials. The hospitality track does not require a high school diploma/equivalency. Positions within the hospitality track are entry level, but promotions are tied to educational certificate attainment and further training.</th>
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<tr>
<td>How did the program use labor market trends and partnerships to determine the industry, training, curriculum, and certification(s)/credentials(s) for this C+ program?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Program Integration:</strong></td>
<td>All recruitment materials provide information about both the construction and hospitality trainings being offered at the program, but MCCVC specifically recruits participants for the hospitality track during hospitality information sessions. The staff instructor presents the hospitality option during Mental Toughness, including details about the program calendar, type of certifications available, average salaries, and where jobs are located, and participants are able to select hospitality.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does the program have an annotated calendar and flow chart of activities/events/class time/certifications for participants in C+?</td>
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<td><strong>Documentation of Program Plan:</strong></td>
<td>MCCVC has a detailed description of the C+ program, but the components of the program are not all documented in one place. The grantees are currently developing a C+ Action Plan to map out program improvements, including pulling together a more formal program plan.</td>
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<td>Does the program have a detailed narrative of the components of the C+ program from start to finish including content, activities, testing, projects, internships, and certifications that cover the time periods of Mental Toughness and Orientation, Active Programming, Exit, Placement, Follow-Up, and Retention. Does the program use the C+ Action Plan?</td>
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### Partnership Management:
Do both the program plan and the MOU(s) include a description of the partners’ roles and responsibilities in providing key aspects of C+?

The grantee is working with Hotel Utica by Doubletree where they have a formal MOU that outlines roles and responsibilities. They are also establishing a relationship with Delta by Marriott. Delta is currently undergoing a management change which may better support this partnership. Other partnerships have been developed with local organizations that are looking for high-quality customer service employees.

### Program Management and Quality Improvement:
How does the C+ program staff or partners interface with the academic and construction instructors, case managers, and program leadership to assess youth participant performance and program quality, and to address issues/challenges during implementation?

Share strengths/opportunities and challenges that the YouthBuild program has experienced with the C+ track(s) design and implementation.

The hospitality instructor is on staff at the program, which has been a huge advantage to engaging participants and increasing collaboration amongst program staff. The instructor has integrated the CSET with the C+ credential training as an additional certificate. CSET is a work readiness training component that supports additional work experience and internships opportunities.

The strength of this C+ pathway has been partnership development. The challenge has been that the entry level jobs that exist in the partnering hotels are in housekeeping, which is not as appealing to participants. To advance, participants need to be motivated to take on advanced training and employment challenges. The program is exploring the culinary side of hospitality to see if this would be a better fit for their participants. Mohawk Community College has a robust culinary program at their Rome campus, but participants would need to first attain their high school equivalency to enter this college program.

### Hands-On Work Experience:
How has the C+ program staff identified the provider of the hands-on work experience? Does the hands-on work experience occur separately from industry-recognized credential curriculum delivery? Are there formal MOUs for the hands-on work experience and do these also include agreements tied to post-program placement or continuing training opportunities?

Finding quality hands-on work experience at the hotels has been challenging. Currently, in the partnership with Hotel Utica by Doubletree, the instructor must be on-site at the hotels during the hands-on work experience, and this has proven challenging since the instructor also implements the classroom training component. The program is working to address this capacity issue, so they can create better opportunities for participants and increase access to more work experiences.

Formal MOUs are in the development stage with all partners for work experience and placement.

### Placement Strategies:
How do placement activities take place with targeted employers in C+? Is there an MOU or some other formal agreement? What is the connection between the hands-on work experience site and hiring?

While there are no explicit MOUs that cover placement, the grantee is working with Hotel Utica and additional partners to develop and implement placement pathways. The grantee is assessing all areas of this industry pathway. They still believe it is viable for their community and their participants, but are also assessing other hospitality pathways, such as culinary, that might be a better fit. The hotel industry is booming in the greater Utica area, but the program is still working out strategies to build better partnerships that can provide more hands-on work experience and placement opportunities for their students.
The grantee is also in the beginning stages of strengthening the alignment of the program with the Construction Plus pre-apprenticeship framework to support apprenticeship opportunities.
C+ Promising Practice Review

Grantee: OhioGuidestone (Cleveland, OH)

Industry/Sector: Healthcare

Grant Class: 2017

C+ Students: 31

Certification/Credential: Hospital Nurse Assistant (National); Ohio State Tested Nurse Aide (STNA) license (Regional)

DOL Funding: DOL funds cover the cost of C+ training, including instruction fees outlined in the training subcontract, internship uniforms and supplies, and participant stipends.

PROMISING PRACTICES SUMMARY:

- Integrated Program Planning – The grantee is the subcontractor to provide the local WIOA out-of-school youth (OSY) formula and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) services. This ensures alignment of the local programming to serve OSY and creates a single point of entry for OSY in the service area. The grantee has a streamlined intake process that determines YouthBuild program eligibility and co-enrollment with WIOA and TANF services, which creates a seamless “one-stop” experience for participants.

- Integrated Staffing Structure – The grantee has a well-developed staffing structure that allows for stronger program integration across the program components. The program teams have developed an intentional process to ensure common planning time and case conferencing to provide coordinated programming and services to participants. This staffing integration ensures that each cohort is receiving personalized wrap-around support from a dedicated staff team.

- Program Integration – OhioGuidestone’s C+ program liaison position is filled by a Professional Development (PD) Coach who provides day-to-day support to the C+ cohort and C+ training partner, NewBridge Cleveland, sharing participant needs with program teams and the C+ instructor. The grantee starts integrating C+ academic basics during the YouthBuild foundational phase of the program prior to the start of C+ training. During the initial participant assessment, they can identify skill gaps and provide remediation support before and during the C+ training.

- Partnership Management/Development – OhioGuidestone is a key stakeholder in the local workforce development system and can leverage their social capital to develop strong partnerships. The grantee has integrated effective partnership management practices developed over the years. They have detailed MOUs with program partners and dedicated staff assigned to manage partnerships, which includes a program manager and a program liaison that work closely to monitor the partnership and provide support for the C+ training implementation.
**GRANTEE INTERVIEW SUMMARY:**

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<tr>
<th>C+ Industry and Credential Selection:</th>
<th>The grantee is the WIOA out-of-school youth (OSY) service provider and worked with the local Workforce Development Board to identify the vocational training opportunities to include in the OSY services system. Healthcare continues to be an in-demand industry in the area with high earning potential for OSY. OhioGuidestone had existing partnerships with training and industry partners, developed through their many years as a workforce system services provider.</th>
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<tr>
<td>How did the program use labor market trends and partnerships to determine the industry, training, curriculum, and certification(s)/credentials(s) for this C+ program?</td>
<td>The grantee has a detailed program calendar that guides program timelines and drives program planning. Relevant versions of the calendar are shared with program staff, participants, and program partners.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Integration:</td>
<td>The grantee has a detailed plan that is used to manage each program element. The plan includes lesson plans for each program element: mental toughness/orientation, academic instruction, construction and nursing assistant training, life and career development, and follow-up period activities. Staff teams are responsible for revising and sharing program plans that are specific to areas that their teams are implementing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the program have an annotated calendar and flow chart of activities/events/class time/certifications for participants in C+?</td>
<td>The C+ training partner, NewBridge Cleveland, develops and revises the vocational training program plan and works with the program liaison to share lesson plans so that the academic instructor(s) and the PD Coach can provide supplemental education support to participants during the vocational training period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Documentation of Program Plan:</strong> Does the program have a detailed narrative of the components of the C+ program from start to finish including content, activities, testing, projects, internships, and certifications that cover the time periods of Mental Toughness and Orientation, Active Programming, Exit, Placement, Follow-Up, and Retention. Does the program use the C+ Action Plan?</td>
<td>OhioGuidestone is an experienced agency that manages many partnerships. The grantee has learned the importance of partnership management and has developed detailed MOUs that include roles and responsibilities. There are also regular partner meetings to discuss day-to-day operations and outcomes, and to identify and address quality improvement needs to increase participant success. The grantee designates a point of contact for each partnership (PD Coach for day-to-day activities and program manager for overall MOU management). The grantee is committed to ensuring participant success and has made difficult decisions with partners, such as terminating a partnership and working with a partner to address poor instruction issues. This intentional partnership management practice allows for stronger program integration.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Partnership Management:</strong> Do the program plan and MOU(s) include a description of the partners’ roles and responsibilities in providing key aspects of C+?</td>
<td>The grantee has developed a fully integrated OSY programming team that works across YouthBuild, the WIOA Youth Formula program, and TANF services, creating a single point of entry for OSY in the service area. The grantee utilizes a streamlined intake process that determines YouthBuild program eligibility and co-enrollment with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Management and Quality Improvement: How does the C+ program staff or partners interface with the academic and construction instructors, as well as case</td>
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</tbody>
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management, and program leadership to assess youth participant performance, program quality, and addressing issues/challenges during implementation?

Share strengths/opportunities and challenges that the YouthBuild program has experienced with the C+ track(s) design and implementation.

WIOA and TANF to maximize resources and ensure that participants have access to all eligible services.

The grantee’s integrated staffing structure includes:
- Community engagement specialist - works with participants from mental toughness through the follow-up period to increase access to resources needed to remove participant barriers, like legal aid, housing, health benefits, etc.;
- Recruitment specialists - conduct youth and community outreach to promote and link OSY to the program;
- PD coach - works with a cohort from mental toughness through exit and is the program liaison for the vocational training partner;
- Career coach - is assigned to a cohort and provides career exploration and work readiness skill development, and works directly with each participant to identify placement opportunities and provide support during the follow-up period;
- Advancement coach - this staff role is a part of a demonstration project funded with private funding to work with selected graduates that want to advance in their career and provide services beyond the follow-up period;
- Academic instructor - contextualizes academic skills needed for the vocational training with the high school equivalency preparation instruction. This requires intentional planning with the PD coach and the vocational training provider; and
- Nursing vocational training provider - hires the instructor who works with the PD coach and academic instructor to integrate academic and vocational training and participant success.

The grantee has developed a backend infrastructure to ensure compliance across these funding resources and has operationalized a one-stop experience for participants.

### Hands-On Work Experience:

How has the C+ program staff identified the provider of the hands-on work experience? Does the hands-on work experience occur separately from industry-recognized credential curriculum delivery? Are there formal MOUs for the hands-on work experience and do these also include agreements tied to post-program placement or continuing training opportunities?

NewBridge Cleveland works with employer partners to provide hands-on work experience and the 16-hour clinical rotation. The instructor is with the cohort during the clinical rotation and works closely with the clinical supervisor to provide on-site support and skills assessment. The C+ instructor is an experienced nurse and can provide practical role-modeling for participants. Twelve C+ participants achieved their Hospital Nurse Assistant certification and four of those twelve also achieved their State Tested Nurse Aide certification. Eight C+ participants are employed in the healthcare field with an average starting wage of $10.77, and the others are working towards placement. The grantee wants to expand to more internship opportunities and apprenticeship partnerships to provide participants with more clinical experience prior to employment. The grantee does not directly manage the employer partners for the clinical experience but provides input on the partnerships with the C+ training partner.
**Placement Strategies:**
How do placement activities take place with targeted employers in C+? Is there an MOU or some other formal agreement? What is the connection between the hands-on work experience site and hiring?

The grantee’s career coaches and C+ training partner aim to identify employment opportunities for the participants’ first jobs in healthcare. Participants have been placed with local hospitals and nursing homes, and there have been some successful internship placements with clinical rotation partners. While these placements are a start, the grantee identifies the need to develop more formal agreements with local healthcare providers to increase placement options for participants.
C+ Promising Practice Review

Grantee: Portland YouthBuilders (Portland, OR)

Industry/Sector: Information Technology (IT)

Grant Class: 2015 and 2017

C+ Students: 30 per year

Certification/Credential: CompTIA Fundamentals and CompTIA A+ certifications

DOL Funding: DOL funds support C+ staffing, youth participant incentives, and certification curriculum.

PROMISING PRACTICES SUMMARY:

• **Industry and Credential Selection** – Portland YouthBuilders (PYB) worked with their local Workforce Development Board (WDB) and PYB’s technology advisory board (staffed by leadership from Mount Hood Community College and the Technology Association of Oregon (TAO)) to identify growing industry sectors and appropriate credential(s). PYB selected CompTIA Fundamentals and the more advanced CompTIA A+ credential, as TAO and IT industry employer partners in the Portland area designated these credentials as desirable and necessary for an IT pre-apprenticeship into apprenticeship pathway. PYB works continually to align the IT training, including the length of classroom and hands-on training components, with industry needs and advanced training opportunities through the community college system.

• **On-Site Instructor** – A credentialed CompTIA Fundamentals and CompTIA A+ IT instructor is on PYB staff and is fully integrated into all YouthBuild programming. In addition, the C+ track has a Career Coach who works with participants on the work site and meets with them weekly to process work site experience and teach other soft skills.

• **Hands-On Work Experience** – The PYB IT training hands-on work experience takes two forms:
  o Introductory service learning (supervised by PYB for a total of 100-150 hours per year) centered on technology, including working with senior citizens on technology security using their own computers; working with the 3-D interface technology for visitor information at the Museum of Science; and fixing donated computers for resale to community members through the nonprofit Free Geek; and
  o Hands-on technology internships at Home Forward, a local city organization, working on office network systems; at Amazon working in their robotics service area of their warehouse; and at Free Geek working as computer rebuilders.

• **Partnership Management/Development** – PYB has developed a technology advisory board consisting of local employers, community colleges, and IT coalitions, including key active supporters: Mount Hood Community College and TAO, to assist in further developing the C+ track. Their program has identified a need to engage additional employers for placement opportunities and is actively working towards that. PYB partners with their local WDB for paid internship opportunities (120-240 hours) and develops and implements detailed MOUs with each internship partner. Additional opportunities for career exploration are provided throughout the year within the broader community. These include community college science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) events and the local library’s “Makerspace,” which provides a collaborative learning environment for
Youth that is equipped with innovative technology and other creative materials. Additionally, the grantees provides training for internship supervisors in order to support participant success.

- **Youth Quality Improvement** – Program benchmarks have been developed in both the construction and IT tracks to move participants towards their respective credentials. Additionally, all participants are assessed prior to placement in internships to support work readiness in IT.

- **C+ Quality Improvement** – PYB uses participant and graduate data to assist them in improving outcomes in instruction, engagement, work experience, and placement. The technology advisory board has also been engaged in the overall assessment of curriculum, schedules, and work experiences in order to further develop active programming and follow-up period strategies.

- **Supportive Services** – PYB has a strong supportive services team that engages participants from mental toughness through placement and beyond.

### GRANTEE INTERVIEW SUMMARY:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C+ Industry and Credential Selection</th>
<th>Portland YouthBuilders (PYB) worked collaboratively with their WDB, Mount Hood Community College, and TAO to identify growing sectors within their community. Their analysis pointed to IT as one of four sectors that had become prominent in Portland in the past few years. PYB also learned that CompTIA Fundamentals is used by community colleges to train students going into tech careers, so they chose to further explore IT as a C+ pathway. PYB has found that the length of the CompTIA curriculum (24 hours of training, which is delivered over the first phase of the YouthBuild program) fits well within their program design, gives participants foundational experience in networking and coding, and is recognized by technology employers. PYB is able to offer the CompTIA curriculum and certification in-house. The grantee’s technology advisory board has recently begun meeting again to discuss events in the community, employer and community needs, and best practices to train students. This advisory board has also helped the program identify strategies to get participants into entry-level IT positions and assists the program with staying up-to-date on changing technology skills. One of the major recommendations of PYB’s technology advisory board, implemented by PYB, was the addition of the advanced credential CompTIA A+ which is a high-demand credential by employers. This advisory board engagement has translated into jobs for many participants. A number of these jobs are with small businesses that are connected to the advisory board members (i.e. local small businesses that need an IT staff person for network support) - another essential benefit to the PYB IT C+ pathway.</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Program Integration:</strong> Does the program have an annotated calendar and flow chart of activities/events/class</td>
<td>PYB prides itself on their clear communication of the program phases to their participants so that everyone knows the program expectations upfront. Both the construction and IT pathways use competencies to track participants’ progress through the program. These competencies are organized into four phases with benchmarks</td>
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</table>
| **time/certifications for participants in C+?** | specific to IT or construction to help participants track the competencies they’ve earned and their progress towards certification. To create participant connection to the phases, they are named after local mountains, with each phase progressing to a taller mountain in the region. When participants have completed their high school equivalency diploma (HSED), they move full-time to hands-on work site experience.

Throughout their YouthBuild programming, all participants engage in career education classes that are led by their pathway’s designated career coaches, which focuses on career exploration in their fields and investigating post-secondary education. The career education classes also focus on soft skills and customer service.

Concurrently, the IT participants are working on attaining their CompTIA Fundamentals credential, and for the participants who achieve that, they then move on to working on attaining the CompTIA A+ credential. |
| **Documentation of Program Plan:** Does the program have a detailed narrative of the components of the C+ program from start to finish including content, activities, testing, projects, internships, and certifications that cover the time periods of Mental Toughness and Orientation, Active Programming, Exit, Placement, Follow-Up, and Retention. Does the program use the C+ Action Plan? | The grantee has a comprehensive narrative of the C+ components including content, activities, testing, projects, internships, and certifications that cover the full performance period of the grant. These are used in a coordinated effort by all YouthBuild staff with participants and partners. PYB has not used the C+ Action Plan Tool as of yet, but continues to identify and implement program improvement strategies. |
| **Partnership Management:** Do the program plan and MOU(s) include a description of the partners’ roles and responsibilities in providing key aspects of C+? | The grantee does have MOUs with internship partners that lay out expectations and the roles of both parties, in particular, internship supervisors and the support that the YouthBuild program will offer them. There are MOUs with Free Geek and Home Forward, as well as with Mount Hood Community College. The Mount Hood MOU contains college placement opportunities for those youth wishing to attend. The MOUs with Free Geek and Home Forward contain hands-on internship opportunities – typically supporting 1-5 youth at a time (advanced versions of the technology work described earlier, i.e. networking, hardware assembly, etc.) Additional PSE and employment placement agreements will be included as they are negotiated.

PYB has not formalized an MOU with Amazon, but one of PYB’s successful IT credentialed graduates was placed in an internship and hired into an employee position working with Amazon’s robotic arm in the warehouse. Amazon is very happy with her performance and skills and is promoting her into their IT department. This young |
A woman has been working with both PYB and Amazon to take advantage of hands-on work experiences that made her ready for successful placement. She has been instrumental in moving Amazon toward considering formal placements for other PYB IT training participants.

PYB puts significant emphasis on providing support to both the internship partner and the participant to ensure that both have a great experience. They work to clearly communicate expectations, to offer training for both parties, and to ensure ongoing communication. Prior to any employment opportunity, YouthBuild program staff meets with employers to familiarize themselves with the work environment, the hiring process, and to gauge which participants would be the best match for that internship. The successful placement described above will be key to committing Amazon to hire YouthBuild participants.

**Program Management and Quality Improvement:**

How does the C+ program staff or partners interface with the academic and construction instructors, as well as case management, and program leadership to assess youth participant performance, program quality, and addressing issues/challenges during implementation?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Strengths/Opportunities</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
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<tr>
<td>throughout the entire program cycle, there is extremely unified, focused, collaborative case management and supportive services offered to each individual participant. When the grantee begins a new cohort (four times a year), each track is assigned a case management team, consisting of a representative from each department – a career coach, a teacher, a work site representative, and a participant advocate (a staff role that functions like a case manager). After their pre-program challenge (mental toughness), the team meets to discuss each potential new participant’s readiness, motivation, and attendance and decide if the participant will be invited to the program. This case management team then follows that cohort throughout the program and meets weekly to discuss each individual participant’s progress and identify the unique supports that participant may need. In addition, the two career coaches (one focused on construction and one focused on IT) spend time weekly on their respective work sites to see participants in the work site environment. This exposure helps the career coaches see both technical and soft skills in action. The IT cohort has a weekly 70-minute class taught by the career coach and the participant advocate, providing a relationship-building opportunity for new students and a leadership opportunity for veteran students. During this class, participants also discuss current events in technology and learn financial literacy. The grantee plans to collect more participant data on both active participants and post-exit outcomes, as well as data on participants who were not successful exiters, in order to understand how to improve their program design and implementation. The grantee is also interested in using data to help them gauge what program...</td>
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</table>
Changes might improve outcomes – for example, determining the optimum program length for success. PYB’s experience has shown them that those participants who earn the HSED early in the cycle are able to move more quickly into a hands-on work experience and more successfully complete that work experience because they have the drive and higher academic skills. In these instances, the program also sees the need to provide continuous support, so the program is investigating how to build participant and staff relationships early to maintain engagement during the full-time hands-on work experience.

**Hands-On Work Experience:**
How has the C+ program staff identified the provider of the hands-on work experience? Does the hands-on work experience occur separately from industry-recognized credential curriculum delivery? Are there formal MOUs for the hands-on work experience and do these also include agreements tied to post-program placement or continuing training opportunities?

The two CompTIA credentials are offered in-house, as are the initial IT-focused service learning work activities, but the grantees also works with the following partners:

1. **Home Forward** - a local workforce office and immigrant refugee program that connects YouthBuild participants with elderly community members to teach them how to use smart phones and offer presentations on cyber security.
2. **Oregon Museum of Science and Industry** - where YouthBuild participants complete a volunteer training course to teach elementary students in different areas of technology.
3. **Free Geek** - a local computer and technology recycling organization where YouthBuild participants go to recycle and build computer components. After the participant has earned their CompTIA credential, they begin regular hands-on experience with Free Geek. After a set number of hours of service there, volunteers can earn their own computer.

The grantees is always investigating new partnerships for hands-on work experience opportunities, which are often identified through their technology advisory board meetings. The grantees host a field trip once every phase of the program to different hands-on technology events. For example, they have found that since technology is a focus in Portland, local libraries have begun offering a “Makerspace” where different organizations offer opportunities to do technology-based projects. Local community colleges have also held STEM events twice annually that motivate the participants.

PYB’s internship program is leveraged through the local WDB to provide hands-on work experience while the WDB’s subcontractor, the Immigrant Refugee Community Organization (IRCO), provides the payroll and worker’s compensation coverage for the participants during their internship with employer partners. Internship placements are based on the needs of the participant and whether the potential internship would give them experience in, or exposure to, their interests or an area relevant to their career pathway. Internships are 120-240 hours in length and are designed to accommodate the participants’ schedules.
**Placement Strategies:**

How do placement activities take place with targeted employers in C+? Is there an MOU or some other formal agreement? What is the connection between the hands-on work experience site and hiring?

In general, PYB has found that placement in IT is more difficult than construction; in part because the program has more relationships in the construction industry (PYB is the only recognized construction pre-apprenticeship program in the area). IT participants are getting placed and working, but many employers still expect more training. PYB has found limited buy-in from employers, and notes that even the local WDB is struggling to reach out and get support from technology employers to place participants right out of PYB, instead of after they’ve completed community college.

The grantee has initiated conversations with their technology advisory board to understand how they might implement more training in the program to meet employers’ needs. For example, they are now investigating whether they can offer the first half of the A+ certification through the YouthBuild program, and then participants can earn the remainder through a local community college partner.

The grantee is also exploring the idea of getting participants placed into introductory technology jobs first and then getting promoted to an advanced technology job. They had success with this approach with the participant who was placed in an Amazon warehouse and promoted to their IT department. They think this same approach may work in a hospital setting.

Additionally, PYB is also partnering with different local technology providers, like ChickTech, a local technology networking program focused on women working in technology; TechRise PDX, a higher-level technology training program focused on building hardware and working with computer programming, which works with more advanced participants in an unpaid full-time eleven-week intensive training; and IT-Ready, which works with employees on enhancing their software skills (i.e. employee professional development) to understand what strategies they are using to develop soft skills.

Community college placement was a common outcome from the grantee’s first C+ cohort. The program regularly hosts a meeting with community college staff that are running different technology programs to learn about the classroom expectations and how the career coach can best support participants to ensure this placement option continues.
C+ Promising Practice Review

Grantee: YWCA YouthBuild Springfield (Springfield, MA)

Industry/Sector: Healthcare

Grant Class: 2017

C+ Students: 20

Certification/Credential: Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), Emergency Medical Technician, and Phlebotomy credentials

DOL Funding: DOL funds support a portion of the YouthBuild educational instructors, the cost of the Allied Health credential training at Springfield Technical Community College, and stipends/wages for internships/observations at hospital.

PROMISING PRACTICES SUMMARY:

- **Industry and Credential Selection** – The grantee worked with their American Job Center (AJC) to assess the industry sector data as well as similar training programs in the region to best align their C+ training track.

- **Partnership Management/Development** – YWCA Springfield developed a relationship with the local healthcare system (Baystate Health) to build the C+ track for their participants. Through Baystate/Springfield Educational Partnership (BSEP), participants entered an existing educational and credentialing system that had been up and running with the public school system for a number of years. BSEP provides initial credentialing, work experience, and stackable credentials for the YouthBuild program through an in-kind obligation. An MOU has been developed but is broad in nature and needs to be revised to include more specific expectations for both parties. Springfield Technical Community College (STCC) provides the stackable Allied Health Credential in Phlebotomy, Certified Nurse’s Aide, or Emergency Medical Technician. The YouthBuild program has not developed an MOU with STCC to date. Currently, BSEP provides a direct entry referral for all students who complete the initial training, and the program will be working to develop an MOU directly with STCC in the future.

- **Program Integration** - The liaison from BSEP has built relationships with the participants and program staff. He has been involved with the C+ program since its inception and is closely involved with developing participants’ training and ensuring their overall success. He also works closely with the YouthBuild program’s educational instructors to design lessons specific to C+ training (i.e. medical terminology) as well as with the program’s case managers to develop career exploration tools.

- **Program Design and Planning** – The grantee has fully integrated the C+ track into the overall core programming with schedules, expectations, and training fully outlined and explained to participants at the onset. They are currently developing an overall manual for the C+ track.
**GRANTEE INTERVIEW SUMMARY:**

| **C+ Industry and Credential Selection:** | The grantee considered state and local labor market trends, in addition to their current partnerships, when choosing their C+ track. They have a strong relationship with the MassHire Hampden County Workforce Development Board (WDB) which gave them access to industry trainings that were offered through the WDB and local community colleges. YWCA Springfield also has been a long-standing subcontractor of WIA/WIOA youth formula programming for out-of-school youth. The YouthBuild program has had an existing relationship with the Baystate Healthcare System through one of their educational initiatives, Baystate/Springfield Educational Partnership (BSEP). Baystate Health is the largest healthcare system in Western Massachusetts, and BSEP has a WIOA youth contract from the local WDB to serve in-school youth. BSEP is focused on increasing the skilled workforce within the healthcare system and developing a community health worker certification. |
| How did the program use labor market trends and partnerships to determine the industry, training, curriculum, and certification(s)/credentials(s) for this C+ program? | The BSEP partnership was one of the biggest influencers in shaping the program’s credentialing as it allowed the program to offer a wider variety of trainings and credentials in addition to the CNA. This was important for the program as they wanted to make this C+ track a truly robust career pathway for participants. Through this partnership, participants gain hands-on work experience in a clinical setting and can shadow and work alongside health professionals from across a variety of specialties. The primary contact from BSEP is also heavily involved with the YouthBuild program. He works closely with participants to make sure that they can build upon their credentials and job training and works with staff to make sure that they are equipped to support participants in the career planning process. |

| **Program Integration:** | The grantee has a nine-month program calendar for the C+ track that describes the training process for participants in the program. This calendar allows staff to solidify commitments with their partners and ensure that programming is in place before the start of a new cohort. It also serves as a guide for participants so that they know what to expect from the program and specifically from the C+ job training provided to them. |
| Does the program have an annotated calendar and flow chart of activities/events/class time/certifications for participants in C+? | The most recent cohort was the first to benefit from the implementation of this calendar, and the program has assessed the process along the way to identify what works and what doesn't. As a result, the grantee has developed a series of best practices and a new calendar to implement with the next cohort of participants. |

| **Documentation of Program Plan:** | Utilizing the best practices gleaned from the program calendar and the first C+ cohort, the program is now developing a formal manual that will outline all the key components to successfully implementing a healthcare track. The grantee is developing a C+ Action Plan that |
| Does the program have a detailed narrative of the components of the C+ program from start to finish |
including content, activities, testing, projects, internships, and certifications that cover the time periods of Mental Toughness and Orientation, Active Programming, Exit, Placement, Follow-Up, and Retention. Does the program use the C+ Action Plan?

**Partnership Management:**
Do the program plan and MOU(s) include a description of the partners’ roles and responsibilities in providing key aspects of C+?

YWCA Springfield has a formal MOU with Baystate Health, although it is broad and general. The current MOU spells out Baystate’s commitment to provide the initial training to YouthBuild participants, referral to STCC for an Allied Health credential, and direct hiring into the hospital for those students who fully complete all aspects of training and credentialing. Using the lessons learned from this first year, the grantee is creating a more detailed and nuanced MOU to support programming for the next cohort. Baystate has been a phenomenal partner, willing to go the extra mile to provide robust and high-quality job training opportunities to participants, but the program director hopes to clarify all roles with a more detailed MOU that would not solely rely on individuals’ strong relationships with each other, but on the organizations’ relationship.

**Program Management and Quality Improvement:**
How does the C+ program staff or partners interface with the academic and construction instructors, as well as case management, and program leadership to assess youth participant performance, program quality, and addressing issues/challenges during implementation?

The primary contact at Baystate Health works closely with staff at the program. Specifically, he collaborates with the program’s education instructor to integrate healthcare language into the academic programming and create linkages between classroom and work site learning. He also works with case managers to strengthen the YouthBuild program’s career counseling strategies by developing long-term goal planning, connecting participants’ career interests to their career exploration efforts, and exploring continuing occupational training. He works closely with participants to support their career development and provides tools and resources to staff that are integrated into the C+ programming.

The construction and healthcare tracks are separate at the program, but participants do come together during community service opportunities.

**Hands-On Work Experience:**
How has the C+ program staff identified the provider of the hands-on work experience? Does the hands-on work experience occur separately from industry-recognized credential curriculum delivery? Are there formal MOUs for the hands-on work experience?

Participants take part in formal job shadows (up to a ten-day commitment over a two-month period) where they work in clinical settings alongside healthcare professionals. After the job shadow, they can participate in formal internships that are individualized based on the participants’ interests and career goals. The internship is most often comprised of non-clinical work but provides participants with exposure to several different jobs within the healthcare setting and gives them an opportunity to engage in hands-on work and training. Examples include stocking exam rooms,
and do these also include agreements tied to post-program placement or continuing training opportunities?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Placement Strategies:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How do placement activities take place with targeted employers in C+? Is there an MOU or some other formal agreement? What is the connection between the hands-on work experience site and hiring?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baystate Health is committed to providing placement opportunities for participants in the healthcare track as outlined in the MOU. Those who take part in the six-week job shadows and internships (after credentialing) receive priority consideration for jobs in the hospitals where they have volunteered. In the first cycle, two of the ten students in the C+ track were hired by Baystate, three already started college at Springfield Technical Community College, and two more are enrolling in classes in Spring 2019. All five college students have entered a healthcare track.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Construction Plus placements are different from other placements because of the level of support and training provided before placement. Participants in this track are already comfortable working in a clinical setting prior to placement. They have a strong understanding of the requirements and expectations of working in the healthcare field and are already familiar with Baystate Health. As a result, they are better situated for success.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The grantee is currently looking to form a new partnership with Mercy Hospital (part of Trinity Health of New England Medical Group) and hopes to replicate their work with Baystate and provide additional healthcare job opportunities to participants.</td>
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<td>At this time, there are no registered apprenticeships identified, but it is a priority area for the program. The program director attends pre-apprenticeship webinars and is working with other partners and with the local Workforce Development Board and AJC to identify and integrate these opportunities into the program.</td>
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supporting clerical and administrative work, supporting healthcare techs, and assisting child life specialists - a credentialed non-clinical position that provides emotional support to young patients who are in need of it (i.e. providing children on the pediatric ward with individual attention, activities, etc.).

Additionally, there are volunteer opportunities within the community that offer additional ways for participants to contextualize their job training, gain the necessary communication and interpersonal skills needed to be successful in the healthcare field, and further assess and hone their own career interests. Service projects are focused on helping participants understand what it takes to work in healthcare and how to support vulnerable populations. They are designed this way to help participants make sure that healthcare is a field in which they will be happy to work.
**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FIELD:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Build Strong Partnerships</strong></th>
<th>Strong and robust partnerships are a key to success when developing a C+ track. Below are suggested best practices to help C+ grantees build lasting relationships to support this work:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Partner with Experienced Trainers</strong></td>
<td>Unless there is capacity and expertise to implement the vocational training in-house, grantees should seek to partner with an organization that has already developed and implemented training in the relevant industry credential to provide the C+ training program. This relationship can be mutually beneficial, as the YouthBuild program can bring a potential new pipeline of employees that have soft skills and access to supportive services, and the partner can leverage trained participants to fill necessary jobs in in-demand industries.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Utilize Industry Connections</strong></td>
<td>Grantees can leverage the job developer function, WIOA partners, and local employers to support their C+ programming. Mapping out all existing industry connections can help a grantee better determine what their programmatic needs are and fill any gaps in services. Grantees should look to their entire staff and all existing partners to identify every industry connection available to them.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Leverage American Job Center Partnerships</strong></td>
<td>Grantees can engage with the local workforce system for ongoing analysis of labor market trends and data. Accessing local WIOA funding and connections for internships provides support for subsidized training, while limiting the financial liability for employer partners during the work experience. AJCs can also support unsubsidized placements through their network of employers.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dedicate Staff as Liaison with Partner(s)</strong></td>
<td>Grantees should have a committed liaison with the training partner and should be sure that the liaison can connect regularly with program staff to better communicate participants’ progress and assist in overall C+ design.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Create Detailed MOUs</strong></td>
<td>All MOUs with partners should be detailed and specific to ensure successful outcomes. They should fully capture the scope of the partnership, including commitments for work experience and the possibility of future training or placement, and allow for adaptability and growth as needed.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Ensure Strong Construction Plus Integration</strong></th>
<th>A strong C+ track should be integrated into the overall program model, including external partners who are providing training, credentialing, or work experience. Some ways to do this include:</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>C+ Instructor Engagement in the Program</strong></td>
<td>To create an integrated program, it is ideal to have an in-house C+ instructor or a dedicated program staff as a liaison with the training partner who is fully engaged in the YouthBuild program. Collaboration between the C+ instructor and other program staff, with a coordinated team structure, allows the program to utilize other staff expertise to develop a well-rounded C+ program.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Contextualize Hands-On Work Experience

Have trainers and instructors make direct links between the classroom and work site learning and encourage regular collaboration between the C+ instructor, work site supervisor, and any other staff who play a role in the career planning process. If possible, service learning opportunities through the program or related on-site work can provide further hands-on work experience to participants within the YouthBuild program. Offer opportunities for participants to reflect on their work experiences in the YouthBuild program. This will help them to contextualize what they are learning and how it connects to real world work. This ensures programmatic alignment and supports the successful attainment of the skills and competencies needed for industry-recognized credentials and career pathways participants may be working towards.

### Foster Strong Program Oversight and Design

C+ grantees can benefit from focusing on the planning and development of work experiences at the outset of the C+ program. Laying out the C+ program strategy from the beginning will help to identify strengths and weaknesses of the C+ program and provide an opportunity for adjustment throughout the program cycle and grant period. Below are key best practices from grantees:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Create an Advisory Board</strong></td>
<td>The formulation of a C+ advisory board that is readily engaged in both the development and ongoing assessment of the C+ track, internships, and placements ensures that the C+ training meets industry needs, prepares participants for success, and increases visibility of the training, which may lead to participant placements.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Develop Program Benchmarks</strong></td>
<td>Grantees should incorporate industry-driven benchmarks and assessments that track participant competencies and provide measurable skill gains for participants to help them see their progress in achieving credentials.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Create and Update a C+ Program Calendar</strong></td>
<td>Thoughtful C+ program planning should include the creation of a realistic program calendar that lays out all components of the YouthBuild program to ensure that there is sufficient program time to attain all desired outcomes.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Link Supportive Services to C+ Needs</strong></td>
<td>A strong supportive services team that includes case manager(s) and C+ instructor(s) working in concert with each other will help to support C+ programming and participant success, even after program exit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Enterprise Development</strong></td>
<td>As grantees expand into C+ training tracks, there may be opportunities to develop a social enterprise in the selected in-demand industry, where internal capacity allows. If viable, potential benefits include increased funding for the organization and the opportunity to provide real-world work experience to participants in a controlled environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Continue to Track Local Labor Markets and In-Demand and Growth Industries</strong></td>
<td>Grantees should continuously assess their C+ programming and make incremental improvements/changes as necessary to fit local demand and participant interests. The C+ framework is a useful tool for this purpose.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion

These best practices highlight C+ programming strategies for a number of in-demand industries, which can be utilized by any YouthBuild programs considering this training expansion. The most consistent takeaways to consider are the necessity of strong, formal partnerships; the importance of program capacity to manage diverse partnerships; and the need for flexibility and regular program self-assessment. Successful C+ grantees are those who:

✓ fully understand the C+ framework,
✓ have assessed their program alignment with the C+ framework,
✓ have a well-documented program design with a C+ Action Plan to identify program improvements,
✓ are training in viable industry pathways with in-demand certifications,
✓ identify necessary partners and develop functional and comprehensive MOUs, and
✓ are willing to adapt to ensure that training meets industry needs and provides strong placement outcomes for participants.