Finding Strategic Postsecondary and Employer Partners

Community Mapping
“Community Mapping is the visual representation of data by geography or location, the linking of information to place. Community mapping does this in order to support social and economic change on a community level. Mapping is a powerful tool in two ways: (1) it makes patterns based on place much easier to identify and analyze and (2) it provides a visual way of communicating those patterns to a broad audience, quickly and dramatically. The central value of a map is that it tells a story about what is happening in our communities. This understanding supports decision-making and consensus-building and translates into improved program design, policy development, organizing, and advocacy.”

Why Is It Important?
All YouthBuild programs are encouraged to do this exercise with all staff and board members to identify unique information that is possessed by individuals in the group. By using a systematic approach to gather and integrate information, YouthBuild programs can obtain key information on employers’ attitudes about hiring, skills required, internships and placement opportunities. With this information, YouthBuild programs can prepare students and graduates by ensuring they have achieved basic competence in work readiness; increasing their awareness of the range of occupations available within high-demand sectors based on their interests and aptitudes; and by creating partnerships that facilitate the transition of students exiting the program. This includes opportunities and supports that lead to entry-level employment, post-secondary education, and career advancement.

Methodology
1. Collect Information – See attached map
2. Identify Informational Gaps – Who’s missing; Who do we know that can help us?
3. Create an Action Plan
4. Outreach – See recommended Interview Questions

1 PolicyLink is a national research and action institute advancing economic and social equity by Lifting Up What Works.® For more information about community Mapping, visit: http://www.policylink.org/site/c.lkIXLbMNJrE/b.5136917/k.AB67/Community_Mapping.htm
Identify potential Partners
Who do you know?
How are you connected with them?
How can they help you and your students?

Archie G., Advising Specialist at The Community College—he can help through:

- **His Contacts:** Program coordinators in most program—friends with health, IT, and hospitality coordinators; friends with basketball coach, who has built relationships with program staff to get students to stay on track; friends with secretary in institutional research
- **How He Can Help Us:** Connect us to program coordinators; give us the inside scoop on particular programs; connect us to basketball coach and institutional research staff

Employers/Industry Connections
(e.g., unions, large businesses)

Postsecondary Connections
(e.g., program coordinators, coaches, training directors at non-college programs)

Your YouthBuild Program

Workforce Development/Other Community Organizations Connections
(e.g., Local Chamber of Commerce, WIBs)

Other Connections

Government and State Agency Connections
(e.g., mayor’s office, State Dept. of Labor)

Lingering Questions
1. Who needs to be on this map that you don’t yet have a connection to?
2. How can they help your students (e.g., financial aid, career services.)?

Source: Counseling to Careers: Helping Students Select Best Bets, 2010, Jobs for the Future
RECOMMENDED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS EMPLOYERS!

What jobs in your company/organization are in-demand and accessible to new graduates ages 18-26 with less than a Bachelor's degree?

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Once the employer answers, let him/her know that you’d like to ask a few questions to get a better understanding of each job named. Plan to run down a series of questions about each job. For example, What is the salary for Job 1, Job 2...?, and then, What benefits does Job 1 offer, Job 2 offer...?, etc.

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1. What is the wage range for this job (entry-level to experienced)? [Note: If the employer is national, make sure to ask for local or regional figures.] What benefits does it offer (e.g., health care, tuition remission, retirement plans)?

2. What is the typical education/training level (e.g., certificate, Associate's degree, years of related work experience) of your employees in this job?

3. What are the requirements for applying to this job, and what does your screening process involve (e.g., educational credentials, minimum years of work experience, certification, skills testing, criminal background check, drug testing, driver's license, immunizations)?

4. What special qualities do you look for in an applicant (e.g., work experience, customer service skills, specific communication/teamwork/critical thinking skills, bilingual skills)?

5. What are some of the things that employees new to the job struggle with? Are there ways they could be better prepared for the job so they’re better qualified when applying and more likely to do well once they begin the job?

6. What are the most important things an applicant should know about this job (e.g., night shifts, travel requirements, physical demands, union affiliation)? [NOTE: If the employer’s response is too general or he/she mentions many, ask him/her to highlight the top three.]

7. Who typically trains and supplies your job candidates and employees (e.g., community colleges, technical schools, institutes)? In your opinion, how well do they (and any other training programs you know about) prepare people for this job? Who does best? Who could do better? Please explain. [NOTE: If you are a counselor at a college program, and the employer does not identify your college, ask for feedback on ways in which your program(s) could better meet employer needs.]

8. Can/do employees in this job typically advance to higher positions in your company/organization? If so, how long does this take on average (i.e., to be
promoted from this job to higher-paying positions) and what wage gains are associated with this? Please describe.

9. Is your company's **current hiring status for this job** representative of what’s happening in the industry these days, or is it unusual in any way? What’s the **outlook for this job in your company/organization over the next 1-2 years**? Do you think it will change in any meaningful way? Please explain.

10. If my students are interested in learning more about these jobs and company/organization, what are **some ways they can be connected?** [NOTE: For example, would you be willing to talk to students/clients on the phone or in person to host a small group of us at your site? To visit our program to talk about your company/organization and what it takes to get a foot in the door—and ultimately succeed in these jobs? Does your company/organization provide internships (paid or unpaid), volunteer positions, or other career exploration opportunities?]