Partnering with Postsecondary Education Institutions

YouthBuild programs can and should play an integral role in connecting young people to career and postsecondary opportunities. YouthBuild programs should seek to create, strengthen and build upon partnerships with local postsecondary institutions. Such partnerships ensure that students have access to postsecondary education, support navigating the system, and guidance from both their YouthBuild program and the college as they work towards their credentials.

When selecting partner organizations, programs should understand the local labor market, considering potential career tracks that not only interest students, but that are linked to high growth sectors. YouthBuild programs should review the types of degree and credential programs offered by the college, and discuss with the institution how well those programs align with high-growth career tracks and employer needs. Considering local labor market trends and projections, YouthBuild programs and postsecondary institutions can work together to ensure that graduates are as prepared as possible to be competitive in the job market.

Locating PSE Institutions in Your Area

Registered Apprenticeships
Apprenticeship is a combination of on-the-job training and related instruction in which workers learn the practical and theoretical aspects of a highly skilled occupation. Apprenticeship programs can be sponsored by individual employers, joint employer and labor groups, and/or employer associations. The U.S. Department of Labor's role is to safeguard the welfare of apprentices, ensure equality of access to apprenticeship programs, and provide integrated employment and training information to sponsors and the local employment and training community. To find information about apprenticeship and training programs nationwide: [http://oa.doleta.gov/bat.cfm](http://oa.doleta.gov/bat.cfm)

Certificate Programs
Many community and proprietary schools offer certificates in skilled trades, career-oriented fields and academic fields. Examples of certificate programs include heating and air conditioning repair, medical and dental assisting, office management and accounting. While the entry requirements for certificate programs vary by school and by program, students require a high school diploma or GED to qualify for admittance. Schools may have additional requirements, such as basic math skills, English language skills and basic technology proficiency. Requirements for completing certificate programs also vary, but most can be finished in less than one year on a full-time basis. [http://www.careeronestop.org/EducationTraining/KeepLearning/GetCredentials.aspx](http://www.careeronestop.org/EducationTraining/KeepLearning/GetCredentials.aspx)
**Two and Four Years Colleges**
The College Board helps students connect with and successfully complete a high-quality college education. The website provides resources, tools and services to students, parents, colleges and universities in the areas of college planning, recruitment and admissions, financial aid, and retention. Their College Matchmaker search engine lets you to search for colleges based on a number of different categories including: type of school, majors, cost & financial aid, admissions, sports & activities, housing & programs, specialized options, and location, allowing you to search for colleges within a specified number of miles of your YouthBuild program. Search results provide quick profiles of the schools which include, entrance requirements, academic programs, cost, etc...

**What to Look for in Selecting Partners (If You Have Options) or What to Develop with Partners (If You Have One Option):**
- Degree and credential programs that effectively relate to student interests, respond to labor market trends, and include strong connections w/ employers
- Real evidence of a strong and consistent commitment at all levels of the institution for working with non-traditional students
- Track record of success (data indicates high retention, job placement and advancement rates for students in specific degree/credential programs within high-demand career fields)
- Readily accessible social, emotional, academic, financial aid and career/transfer support services/staff members (dedicated staff members to work with YB graduates)
- Innovative teaching & learning practices

**Getting Started: Building Relationships with Postsecondary Stakeholders**
- Visit campus and approach staff/faculty in person (verses initially reaching out via calls and emails)
- Arrive armed with clear vision and a list of targeted questions, requests, and commitments
- Invite postsecondary staff and faculty to your YouthBuild program.
- Include students in the conversations
- Build PSE relationships across levels of the institution
- Ask for personal introductions to other key postsecondary staff and/or faculty
- Pitch the value of YouthBuild and YB grads

**Characteristics of Effective Partnerships***
- Create Mutual Accountability for Student Success
- Customize to Reflect Local Context, Unique Student Needs and Available Resources
- Formalize Agreements (MOU, Articulation, Data Sharing, Letter of Agreement – See Toolkit for Examples & Processes)
- Clarify Goals, Objectives, Roles and Responsibilities
- Collect, Share and Respond to Data in Real Time (Student Attendance, Retention, Credit Accumulation, Completion)
- Focus Attention on Alignment of Academic Instruction and Content
- Provide Accessible, Proactive and Comprehensive Student Support Services (social, emotional, financial aid, advising, career services, transfer support, etc.)
- Engage Multiple Individuals from Across Both Organizations
- Sustain Over Time and Evolve Over Time
- Listen to and Respond to Student Voice

Upon selecting an appropriate postsecondary partner and discussing the ways in which you can work together to provide supports to YouthBuild students and alumni, you are strongly encouraged to collaborate with the postsecondary institution to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). An MOU is a formal written agreement outlining roles and responsibilities of your YouthBuild program and the postsecondary institution. This document contains tools to help your YouthBuild program select and develop a relationship with an appropriate post-secondary partner, develop an MOU, and strengthen and expand your partnership goals and activities.

