



U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration

#RoadsToYourFuture

# Blueprint for Workforce

## Partnerships

### College Partnerships for Learning On and Off the Construction Site

*Photo Credit: Getty Images.*

Collaboration between workforce development programs and colleges is a valuable tool to bridge the gap between education and the construction industry's needs. Partnering with a college can provide access to skill-building training, certifications, and supportive services, preparing highway construction trainees for successful careers.

This blueprint outlines how to establish a productive partnership between a State transportation department and a higher education institution.

#### Step 1: Research and Identify Colleges with Relevant Programs

- **Define Program Needs:** Outline the skills gaps and training needed to meet the goals of the construction workforce development program.
- **Research Colleges:** Learn about colleges with existing construction education, successful partnership programs, and proximity to areas needing construction workers.

#### Step 2: Make Contact

- **Identify Key Contacts:** Research and contact the relevant college program deans, department heads, and partnership program coordinators.

For more resources on building a workforce development program, visit the Strategic Workforce Development Toolkit.



- **Prepare a Pitch:** Develop a pitch on the program you would like to build with the college, identify the benefits of partnering with a State transportation department, and outline the partnership's expectations.
- **Follow Up and Meet:** Preferably schedule an in-person meeting to present your pitch and discuss the mutual benefits of the partnership.

### Step 3: Create Partnership and Funding Agreements

- **Write a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU):** Collaborate with the college to develop an MOU detailing each organization's responsibilities, resources, and financial commitments.
- **Determine Financial Commitments:** Determine the funding split among all organizations, including partners outside the college that are invested in the program (contractors, workforce development boards, non-profits, etc.).

### Step 4: Prioritize Resource Sharing

- **Tap into Other Partnerships:** Identify partners or sponsors who can provide the trainees with scholarships, supplies, or supportive services.
- **Identify the Training Facility:** Share facilities with the college and, if available, offer State or partner facilities for construction training and hands-on experience.
- **Provide Career Assistance:** Work with the college to provide resume assistance, access to certifications, and soft-skills training.

### Step 5: Implement and Evaluate the Program

- **Track Metrics:** Define key performance indicators to track the program's effectiveness and areas for improvement.
- **Collect Feedback:** Develop a simple process for collecting feedback from the students and identify how to stay in contact following graduation.

Following and tailoring these steps can help a workforce development program elevate its offerings and cultivate a skilled highway construction workforce.

Questions about starting a partnership within your Strategic Workforce Development program? Contact:

**TIP:** Identify relevant personnel through the college website or LinkedIn and initiate contact. Even if unsure of the right contact, reaching out to the college can lead you in the right direction.

**TIP:** Starting small with a 4- to 6-person cohort helps identify and address challenges. Success with a small cohort can attract partners and funding opportunities.

**TIP:** Suggest that the college offer associate degree credits for trainees completing construction certifications.



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**Chrisy Currier**, Program Manager  
Federal Highway Administration Strategic Workforce Development  
[christina.currier@dot.gov](mailto:christina.currier@dot.gov)