



August 14, 2025

Establishing and Maintaining Employer Partnerships

switchboard
connecting resettlement experts





Thank you for joining today's training!

We will begin momentarily.



Today's Speaker



Yana Mann

Switchboard
Program Officer,
Employment

Switchboard Throwback Thursdays



Did you miss a Switchboard webinar? Catch our top sessions, back by popular demand, now with **Switchboard's Throwback Thursdays!**

Our new **Throwback Thursday series** brings back our most-requested webinars, giving you a second chance to catch the insights you need. While recordings are always available, joining live offers a unique opportunity to ask questions and engage with fellow service providers.

As with all our sessions, this webinar is open to **all refugee service providers** across state agencies, resettlement organizations, and partner groups.





Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, you will be able to:



DESCRIBE

the importance of employer partnerships in the context of job placement for ORR-eligible populations

IDENTIFY

key considerations and benefits for employers and newcomer employees when establishing and maintaining partnerships

IMPLEMENT

best-practice job development approaches to effectively support newcomer clients in securing high-quality job placements

RECOGNIZE

common challenges in maintaining employer relationships and name strategies for overcoming them



The Role of Employer Partnerships

Placing Newcomers in High-Quality Jobs

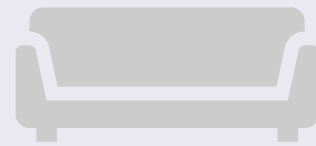


How would you describe your current employer partnerships?

The Importance of Securing a Quality Job



Food and
housing security



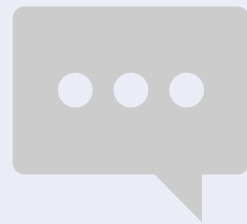
Household
essentials



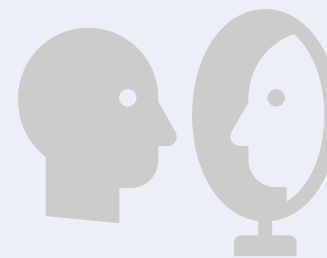
Health
insurance



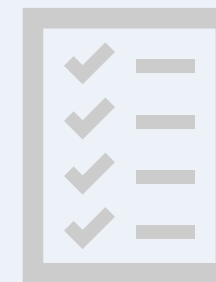
Social
connection



English practice



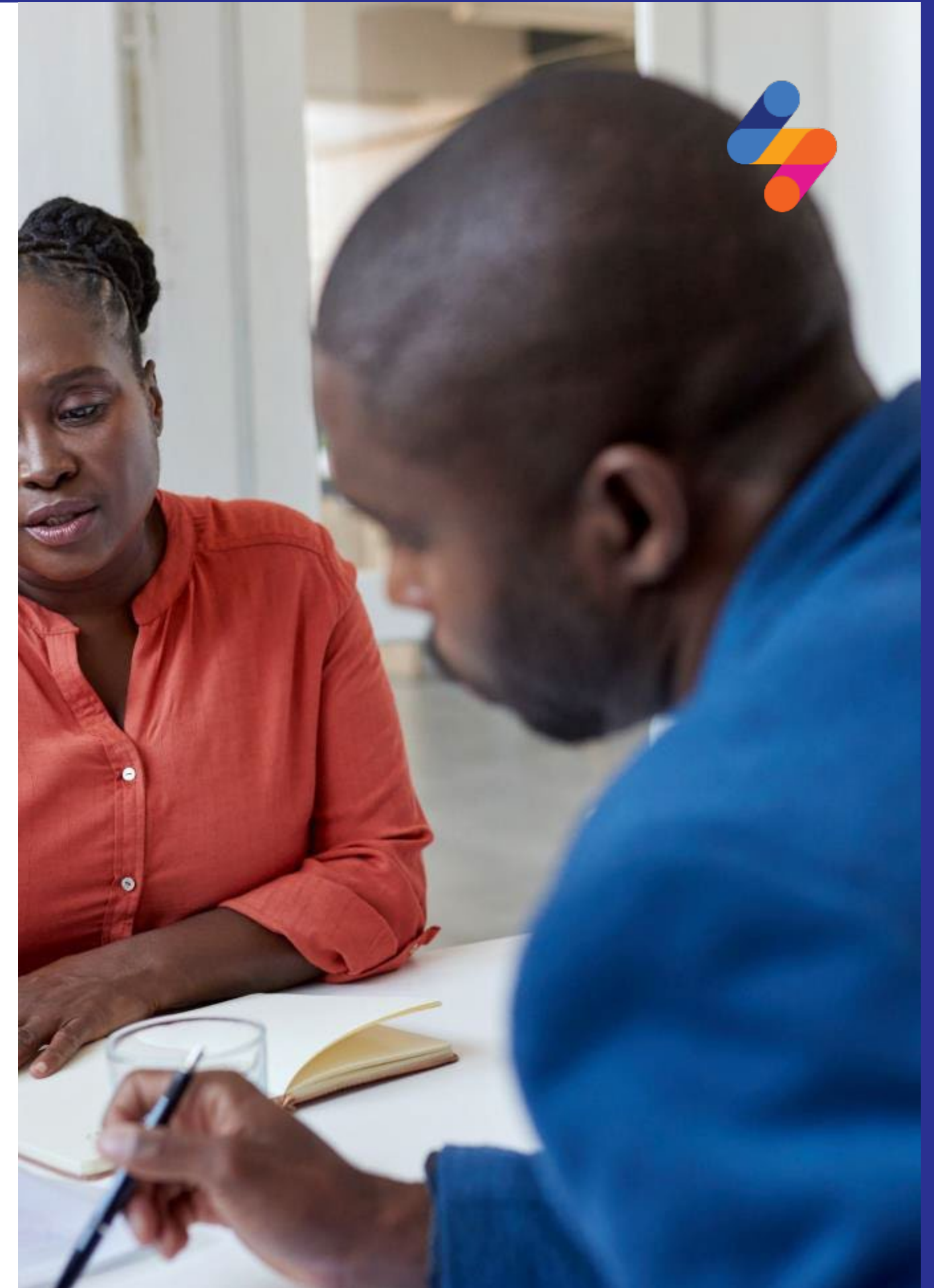
Dignity and
purpose



Compliance with
funder's self-
sufficiency
requirements

Why Rely on Employer Partnerships?

- Clients often face significant barriers to employment
- Partnerships let you advocate for accommodations and improvements in job quality
- Job placements are faster and easier to secure



Phases of Employer Partnership Development



Research and
Targeted
Outreach



Strengths-Based
Pitch



Negotiation for
Higher Job
Quality





2

Key Considerations in Establishing Employer Partnerships



What are some difficulties employer partners might face when hiring and onboarding newcomers?



How can employers benefit from working with your organization to hire newcomer talent?

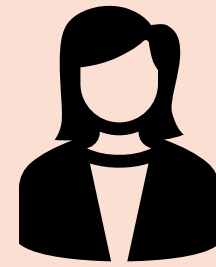


The Strengths Perspective is a corrective and transformative challenge to predominant practices and policies that reduce people and their potential to deficits, pathologies, problems, and dysfunctions. The Strengths Perspective emphasizes the human capacity for **resilience, resistance, courage, thriving, and ingenuity**, and it champions the rights of individuals and communities to form and achieve their own goals and aspirations.

Kansas University
School of Social Welfare



Strengths-Based Approach to Employer Partnership Development



The job developer or employment specialist **advocates for the jobseeker**



The employer benefits from the talents, skills, language capacity, and global perspective of the **jobseeker**



The job developer or employment specialist is confident in the **financial benefit of no-cost recruiting** and nonprofit staffing services

Preparing for a Strengths-Based Pitch



Candidate Skill Set

Understand candidate marketability



Candidate Presentation

Create polished resumes and candidate profiles

Labor Market Research

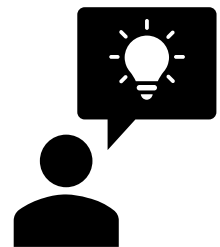
Know areas unsupported by the labor market

Job Description Research

Read and understand job descriptions



Candidate Skill Set



- Factors that would make a job ideal for this candidate (e.g., location, title, pay, hours, benefits, upward mobility)
- Employment history
- Education history
- Special skills; candidate's story of perseverance and resilience
- Elements of client's cross-cultural expertise that meet unique needs of the role (e.g., language proficiency)



Candidate Presentation



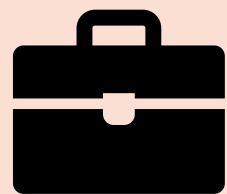
Components of a professional profile:

- Professional resume
- LinkedIn profile
- Professional summary
- Professional email address
- Headshot

*Not every candidate will require this level of professional profile.



Job Description Research

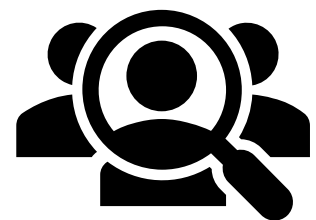


To educate yourself on what makes a strong candidate:

- Read five or more job descriptions of the same title
- Research Internet message boards (e.g., Indeed, Glassdoor, Reddit)
- Consult industry mentors
- Contact professional associations



Labor Market Research



To educate yourself on what jobs have high opportunity in your service area:

- Read your local Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA) plan
- Rely on Bureau of Labor statistics
- Recognize indicators of high-demand occupations within job descriptions (e.g., sign-on bonuses and regularly scheduled interviews)
- Identify industry-specific staffing services

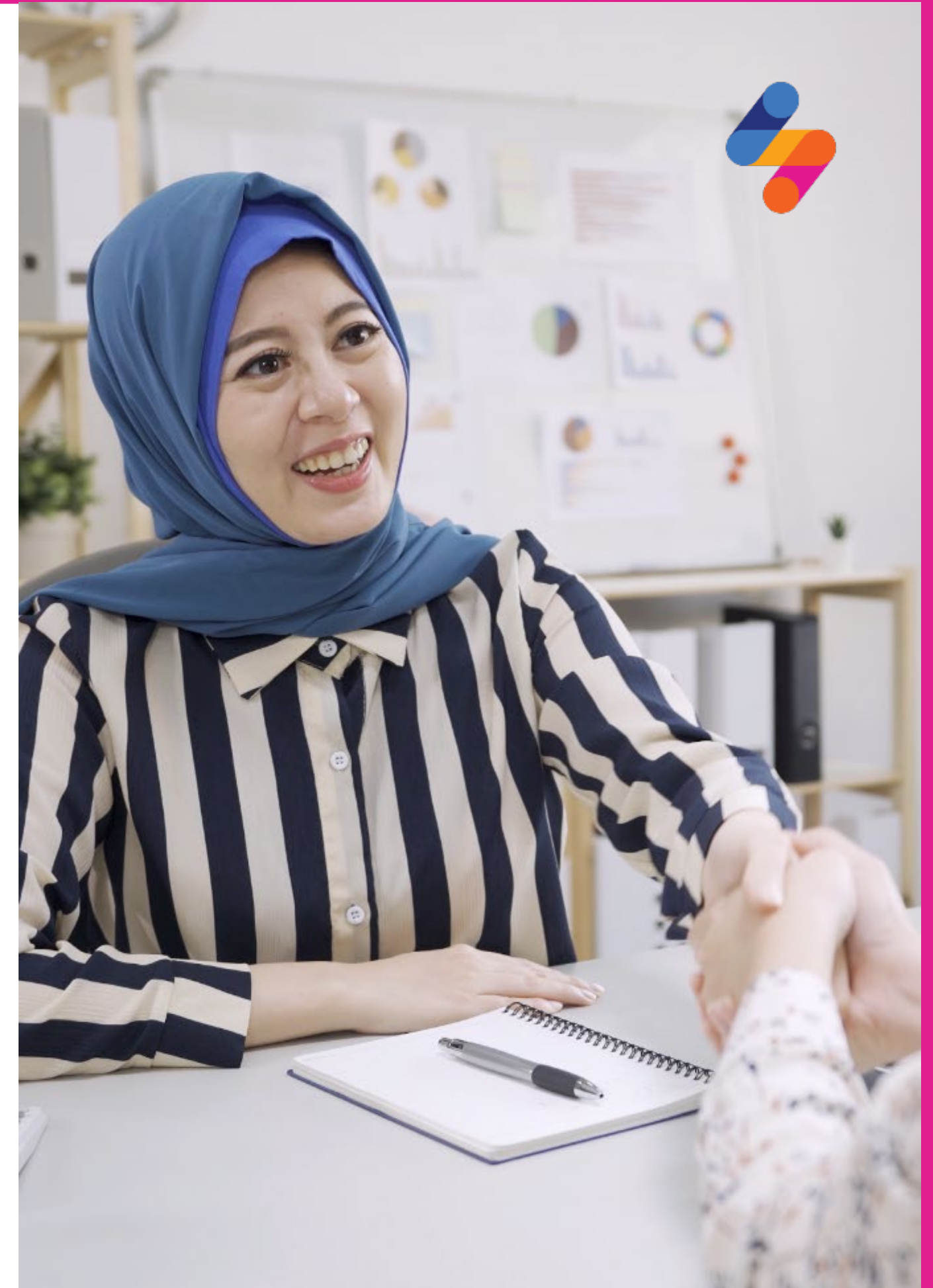


3

Best Practices in Job Development

What is Job Development?

- The practice of working with key employer partners to identify specific job opportunities that may be a good fit for jobseekers





The Job Development Process

1

Initial outreach
to a contact
with decision-
making power

2

Initial meeting in
person or via
video conference

3

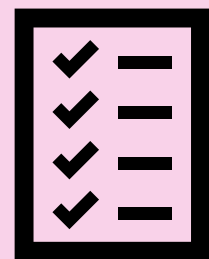
Interviews are
arranged and
initial clients are
placed

4

Follow-up and
reengagement for
additional job
opportunities



Define Your Ideal Employer Partner



- Location
- Positions Available
- Environment
- Wage Range
- Accommodations



How to Find Job Opportunities



- Job boards
- LinkedIn
- Volunteer network
- Staffing/recruiting agencies
- Newcomer community network
- Friends and family network

Components of a Strong Cold Email or LinkedIn Pitch



Rely on a template



Assuage anxieties



Use a targeted approach



Request more engagement at specific times



Reference competitors



Send polished marketing materials

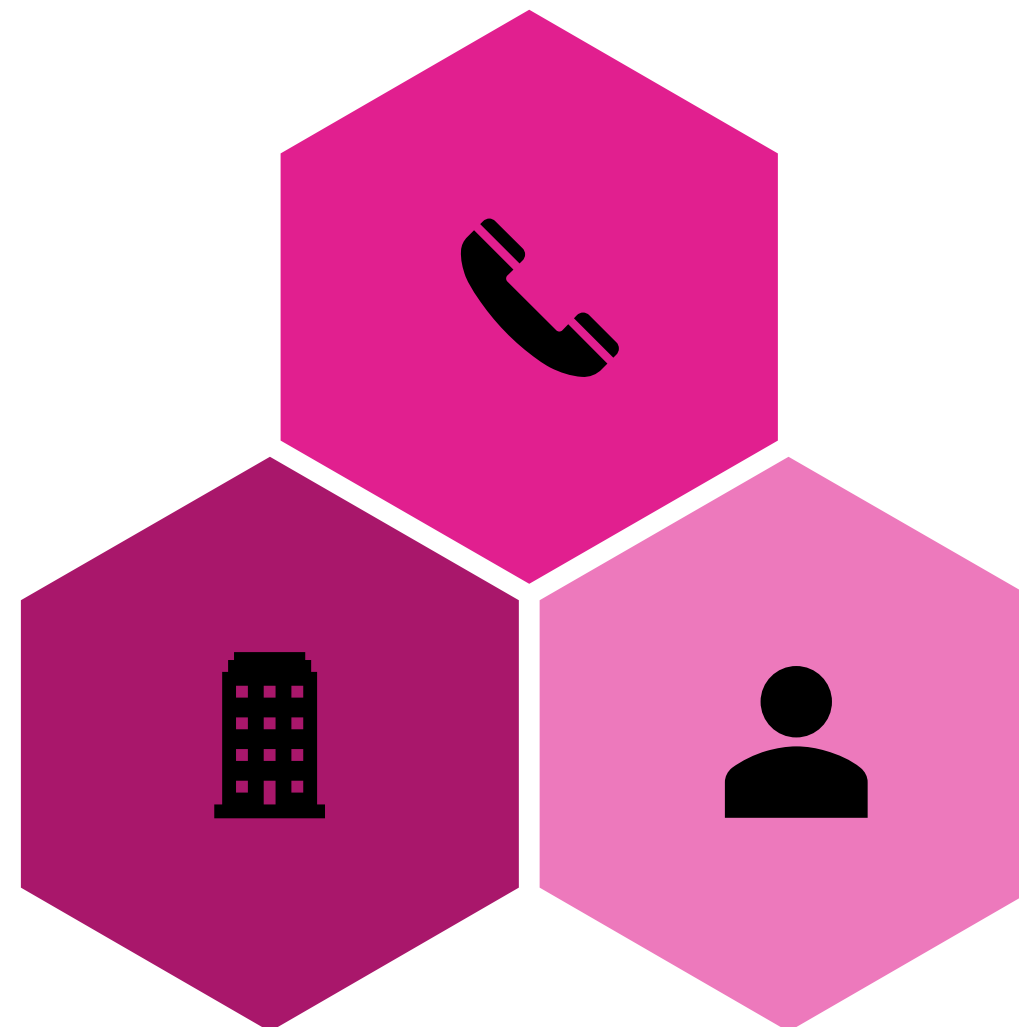


Additional Preparation for a Strong Phone Pitch



**Practice
talking points**

**Request or offer
an office tour**



**Represent client
needs/wants**

Pitch to Large Groups

- If you are not finding your ideal employer partner, find a larger audience
- Consider asking to present at local chambers of commerce or professional associations





4

Maintaining Employer Relationships

Common Challenges and Strategies for Overcoming Them



What challenges might job development staff encounter when managing employer partnerships?



Challenges in Employer Partnership Management



- Job development staff often have large caseloads
- Clients may have complex needs at the workplace
- Employers may expect immediate responses from job development staff
- Jobseekers have complex life situations that may make them seem unreliable
- Mismatch between job availability and the number of interested candidates

What are Boundaries?

Boundaries set limits and help us define appropriate, safe, and effective behaviors.

Types of boundaries:

- Professional
- Relational
- Physical
- Work-life



Why are Boundaries with Employers Important?



Build trust and establish safety

Help ensure consistent and equitable services

Empower the employer

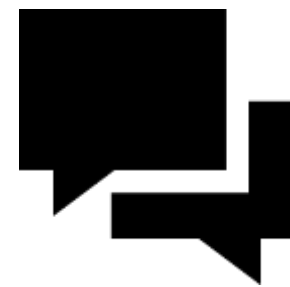
Maintain organization's reputation

Provide legal protection

Prevent burnout



How Do I Set Boundaries Without Sounding Rude?



“I understand that you’d like to schedule an interview tomorrow. Unfortunately, I am unable to source candidates for you with that turnaround. I would be happy to send you some resumes today and ask these candidates to interview next week.”

“Thank you for letting me know that this employee is having car trouble and did not come to work today. I’m sorry for the impact on the workday. I’m sure that was stressful. I have meetings and can’t provide a transportation solution for this employee, but I will call them and give you an update by end of day.”

Guidelines

- Validate the concern
- Set the limit
- Provide an explanation
- Offer an alternative

How Do I Set Expectations with Employers?



Use partnership language



Outline the services you can offer the employer and what you need from them



Remind them that newcomer jobseekers have all the same complexity as U.S.-born jobseekers.



Explain your work environment



Preview that early job placement work comes with a learning curve



Describe how and when they can expect to contact you



How Do I Maintain an Employer Partnership?

- Create a reminder for monthly follow up
- Invite the employer to advocacy/volunteer events
- Form an employer advisory council and extend invitations
- Ask to connect with their professional colleagues
- Share your social media/newsletter/success stories



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Help us help you!

Scan the QR code or click the link in the chat!

- Short, 5-question survey
- Takes 60 seconds to complete
- Helps us improve our training and technical assistance



Recommended Resources

- **Switchboard Tool:** [Contacting Potential Employer Partners: Phone and Email Templates](#)
- **Switchboard Blog Post:** [5 Mapping Strategies for Employer Outreach](#)
- **Switchboard Video:** [4 Tips for Effective Employer Conversations](#)
- **Switchboard Guide:** [Supporting Clients During Times of Economic Hardship: Doing Job Development in an Economic Recession](#)
- **ORR Funding Opportunity:** [Employer Engagement Program](#)



Contacting Potential Employer Partners: Phone and Email Templates

If you are a refugee service provider new to providing employment services, you may be wondering what to say when you reach out to a potential employer partner for the first time. This tool provides a simple email template and phone script you can modify to fit the needs of your program and clients.

Email Template

When emailing, your goal should be to grab the attention of a potential employer partner and encourage them to engage in a longer, more meaningful discussion over the phone, on a video call, or in person to strengthen the relationship and improve newcomer access to quality job opportunities.

Subject: Partner with [Organization Name] for Diverse Talent & Free Staffing Services

Dear [Hiring Manager's Name],

I hope this email finds you well. My name is [Your Name], and I represent [Organization Name]. We specialize in supporting refugees and immigrants as they transition into our community by providing job placement assistance.

Our clients are work-authorized and arrive in the United States with a diverse range of educational and professional backgrounds, language skills, and talents. Our services are similar to those of a staffing agency, including recruiting, prescreening, interview coordination and assisting with onboarding, but we offer them free of charge.

We're reaching out to your company because we saw that you're hiring for [position title] and [position title], and we have some candidates we would love to send your way.

If you're interested in learning more, I'd like to schedule a phone call or virtual meeting on [date and time] or [date and time].

Best regards,

[Your Name]
[Organization Name]
[Contact Information]

Phone Call Scripts

Before Making the Call

Prior to calling, take care to research the employer and learn about their open positions, location, and leadership structure. If possible, use LinkedIn to identify a potential advocate at the company with decision-making power whom you can request to speak with during this call. As available, also explore the company's



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