

Employer Engagement Study

NATIONAL CENTER FOR INNOVATION IN CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (NCICTE)

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) National Center for Innovation in Career and Technical Education (NCICTE) performs science-based research and evaluation, disseminates information and provides training to improve career and technical education (CTE). The NCICTE works to better integrate academic and technical education and to strengthen employer involvement in CTE.

FHI 360's National Institute for Work and Learning serves as a research partner to RTI.



Business and industry, as employers, play an essential role in designing education and training programs in partnership with community colleges. The *Employer Engagement Study* demonstrates that.

The Employer Engagement Study, part of the National Center for Innovation in Career and Technical Education, highlights successful strategies from nine business-community college partnerships that have developed programs addressing severe skills gaps in their communities. From high turnover in healthcare in Rochester, Minnesota, to technician shortages in North Carolina, to rapidly changing IT-industry needs outside Dallas, business and industry are working with community colleges to fulfill their workforce needs.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND PURPOSE

Across the country, community colleges are partnering with employers to design programs for job-ready students. NIWL conducted a qualitative research study focused on employer engagement with community college programs in manufacturing, healthcare, and information technology.

The purpose of the study was to capture best practices and lessons learned from community college and employer partnership sites across the country and develop a practical report for leadership at community colleges looking to engage employers.

After conducting a comprehensive literature review, nine community college and employer partnership sites were identified for the study that represented the three career clusters of interest and a diverse geographical distribution. Interviews and focus groups were subsequently conducted with program coordinators, faculty, and leadership from the colleges; as well as coordinators, employees, and leadership from employers. This data collection and its analysis will produce a final report that disseminates the findings using a practical, holistic approach organized by the chronological phases of partnership and program development.

ABOUT FHI 360: FHI 360 is a nonprofit human development organization dedicated to improving lives in lasting ways by advancing integrated, locally driven solutions.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR WORK AND LEARNING: As part of FHI 360's U.S. Programs, NIWL works at the nexus of education and employment systems, promoting their integration to ensure lifelong learning and productive work for all. NIWL seeks to build the capacity of public and private organizations, providing information, resources, and support needed to make decisions, strengthen programs, and improve outcomes for individuals.

Research Methodology

NIWL's mixed method qualitative study included:

- A comprehensive literature review that led to the selection of various community college and employer sites for the study
- Development of interview and focus group protocols
- Qualitative data collection and analysis
- Production of a practical final report that includes findings and case study profiles of each community college and employer site

EXPERTISE IN CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

FHI 360's NIWL has supported a research and evaluation in career and technical education through NCICTE and its previous four iterations. A sample of publications include:

- *Developing a National Research and Evaluation Agenda for Career and Technical Education*, with others. Research Triangle Park: National Center for Innovation in Career and Technical Education. 2016.
- *National Assessment of Career and Technical Education: Final Report to Congress*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. 2014.
- *Work-Based Learning Opportunities for High School Students*, with others. Research Triangle Park, NC: National Center for Innovation in Career and Technical Education. 2013.
- *Case Study of the Green-Focused Programs of Study Development Process*, with others. Louisville, KY: The National Research Center for Career and Technical Education. 2012.
- *Technical Assistance Academy on Green Programs of Study 2009-2011: A Guide for States*, with others. Louisville, KY: The National Research Center for Career and Technical Education. 2011.

OUR COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS PHILOSOPHY

NIWL believes that educators, businesses, and community-based organizations need to prepare youth and young adults for success in college and careers. Research and technical support to improve the quality of career and technical education; development of partnerships to expand use of work-based learning; design of new pathways from P-12 to postsecondary education; and an explicit emphasis on connecting college and career planning, are our methods. NIWL strengthens the systems that prepare young adults, particularly those that are not adequately served by the current system, for successful college and career transitions.

FHI 360 HEADQUARTERS

359 Blackwell Street, Suite 200
Durham, NC 27701 USA
T 1.919.544.7040
F 1.919.544.7261

WASHINGTON DC OFFICE

1825 Connecticut Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20009 USA
T 1.202.884.8000
F 1.202.884.8400

NEW YORK OFFICE

71 Fifth Avenue, 6th Floor
New York, NY 10003 USA
T 1.212.243.1110

ATLANTA OFFICE

13 Corporate Boulevard, Suite 250
Atlanta, GA, 30329 USA
T 1.678.420.0170

www.fhi360.org

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Caitlin Rose Dailey
T 202.884.8000 | E cdailey@fhi360.org

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