Business Sector

Who is the Business Sector?

The Business Sector includes local employers, from small businesses to large companies. These businesses help support the economy and shape workplace culture.

Because people spend a lot of time at work, businesses can help make recovery more accepted. By working with ROSCs, businesses can create recovery-friendly workplaces. These workplaces reduce stigma, support employee health, and provide steady income, which helps people succeed long-term.

How can the Business Sector support recovery?

Businesses can make a big difference by shaping jobs, workplace culture, and opportunities. They can help make recovery a normal and accepted part of the community.

To make the biggest impact, businesses and ROSCs can:

- **Create recovery-friendly policies:** Offer flexible time off, support for returning to work, and employee help programs.
- **Use fair and inclusive hiring:** Give people in recovery a chance to get and keep jobs.
- **Teach staff and leaders:** Provide training about mental health and recovery to reduce stigma.
- **Support employee wellness:** Offer programs that help people stay healthy and manage stress.
- **Speak up for recovery:** Encourage policies and practices that support a strong and healthy workforce.
- **Promote recovery openly:** Show that recovery is a strength that helps both workers and businesses.

How can ROSCs work with the Business Sector?

- Add flexible leave, return-to-work support, and wellness programs into workplaces.
- Connect job programs with treatment and peer support services.
- Include business leaders in planning and decision-making.
- Provide training to reduce stigma and support understanding.
- Work together on shared goals and use data to improve results.

Why Engage the Business Sector?

Access to Resources	Funding, in-kind donations, facilities, technology.
Expertise & Skills	Marketing, finance, project management, legal, strategic planning.
Influence & Advocacy	Amplifying community voices, advocating for change, networking.
Employee Engagement	Volunteerism, boosting morale, skill development for staff.
Shared Prosperity	A thriving community benefits local businesses.

Finding your Allies: Who to Partner With?

- **Local Businesses:** Small shops, restaurants, service providers (e.g., banks, real estate).
- **Larger Corporations:** Regional or national companies with local branches/operations.
- **Business Associations**: Chambers of Commerce, Main Street programs, Rotary Clubs.
- **Consider Alignment:** Look for businesses with values, mission, or customer base that naturally aligns with your community initiative.
- **Research & Networking**: Attend local business events, utilize online directories.

Making the Connection: Your approach

- **Start Small:** Invite participation in a specific event or project.
- **Clear "Ask":** Be specific about what you need and what the business gains.
- **Show Value:** Highlight positive PR, employee engagement, and community goodwill.
- **Personalized Outreach:** One-on-one meetings, not just generic emails.
- **Listen & Learn:** Understand their business goals and how your initiative can complement them.

Leveraging Business Resources & Expertise

- **Financial Support:** Sponsorships, grants, direct donations.
- **In-Kind Contributions**: Donated goods (materials, equipment), services (printing, catering, advertising).
- **Volunteerism:** Employee skill-based volunteering (pro bono marketing, accounting, IT support).
- **Space & Facilities:** Hosting events, meetings, or pop-up activities.
- **Mentorship & Training:** Businesses providing expertise to community members or non-profits.

Building Partnerships with Shared Goals

- **Identify Overlapping Interests:** Where do community needs and business interests intersect? (e.g., public safety, local economic growth, environmental sustainability).
- **Co-Creation:** Involve businesses in the planning and execution of initiatives.
- **Mutual Benefit:** Clearly articulate the "win-win" scenario. How does this partnership serve both their bottom line and community well-being?
- **Formal Agreements:** Consider MOUs or partnership agreements for clarity and commitment.

Nurturing Sustainable Partnerships

- **Regular Communication:** Keep partners informed of progress and impact.
- **Recognition & Appreciation:** Publicly acknowledge their contributions (social media, press releases, events).
- **Demonstrate Impact:** Share success stories and metrics showing how their involvement made a difference.
- **Flexibility & Adaptability:** Be open to evolving the partnership as needs change.
- **Feedback Loop:** Regularly check in with partners to get their insights and address concerns.

Case Study: Advancing Cities Plank Road Initiative, Baton Rouge

Launched in 2020, the AdvancingCities Plank Road Initiative revitalized an underserved corridor in Baton Rouge through a $5M investment led by JPMorgan Chase.

Initiative	Boosted minority-owned businesses, created a food-access commercial kitchen, and preserved affordable housing
Partners	JPMorgan Chase, Build Baton Rouge, TruFund, MetroMorphosis, Co-City Baton Rouge
Impact	• Fifteen minority-owned businesses supported • Historic 3,500 sq ft building converted into a commercial kitchen • Community Land Trust established for housing
Success Factors	• Strong public-private collaboration • Clear community-focused goals • Transparent progress tracking • Sustainable development model