

Framework for Effective Employer Intermediaries

The Framework outlines three levels of effectiveness across the five key functions that employer intermediaries perform. Policymakers, funders, and intermediaries themselves can use this tool to guide their efforts to expand high-quality work-based learning opportunities.

Function	Emerging Innovators <i>Independent effort, individual-led, establishing early practices</i>	Program Builders <i>Coordinated practice, organized, program-based, consistent</i>	Trusted Partners <i>Strategic, partnership-led, integrated into the business, efficient, reduces complexity</i>
Employer Engagement <i>Cultivating relationships with employers to understand their talent challenges and build buy-in for WBL as a viable talent solution.</i>	Builds relationships with employers and begins identifying talent needs, without clear program models or structures.	Uses structured needs assessment and consistent program or service models to respond to employer needs.	Acts as a trusted advisor to employers and is their first call for entry-level talent; leverages a deep understanding of employer pain-points and opportunities to build the case for WBL.
Solutions Design <i>Involving and representing employers in designing and negotiating talent solutions with learning providers that address employer needs and expand opportunities for learners.</i>	Engages employers in early design conversations and helps them pilot initial WBL solutions.	Consults employers in structured design processes, such as selection of related technical instruction, to adapt and implement proven program models to address talent challenges.	Co-designs new WBL solutions that are timely, adaptable, responsive to changing talent needs, and positioned for long-term business planning versus more transactional, short-term WBL experiences.
Solutions Brokering <i>Connecting employers with the right partners to grow talent pipelines.</i>	Connects employers with education and training partners through personal relationships to communicate talent needs.	Cultivates and grows a reliable roster of education and training partners with consistent referrals and clear expectations of entry-level talent.	Strategically matches employer priorities with education institution and training partner capabilities; provides accountability for quality outcomes (e.g., student readiness for WBL; hiring commitments).
Implementation Support <i>Helping employers adopt and sustain WBL programming that yields lasting impact.</i>	Provides hands-on support to employers piloting WBL programs, with some effort to simplify processes.	Offers standardized technical assistance, tools, and troubleshooting to strengthen program delivery and WBL outcomes.	Directly facilitates WBL implementation for employers through creation of job descriptions, support with candidate recruitment and screening, development of trainee tasks, training of supervisors, development of mentorship programs, identifying resources to improve WBL engagement and retention, and strategic recommendations of braided funding and technology tools to scale impact.
Administrative Support <i>Simplifying processes for employers related to WBL administration and funding.</i>	Assists employers with initial paperwork, compliance, and funding processes.	Uses tools and shared services to streamline administration and improve efficiency.	Manages administrative activities such as payroll, compliance, intern/apprentice placement, apprenticeship registration, employer of record services, and data reporting.
Sample Indicators of Effectiveness as Intermediaries Move Along Continuum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heightened employer awareness of WBL as a solution and increased volume of WBL opportunities • Less complexity for employers engaging in WBL (employers know where to go, solutions are available and in place) • Acquisition of new employer partners and retention of existing employer partners • Tangible return on investment demonstrated for employers, such as reduced time to hire, increased retention, and productivity of entry-level hires • Stronger education and workforce outcomes (e.g., educational attainment, lower underemployment, and reduced workforce shortages) 		