



Job Corps Career Fair

# Event Planning Tips and Timeline



Hosting a career fair on campus is a great way to connect employers looking to fill open positions with students who are nearing graduation and ready to enter the workforce. As you prepare to host a career fair, consider these tips and planning suggestions for event success.

**1. Pick a date and time that will work well for employers and other workforce development leaders.**

Check local calendars and other resources to avoid scheduling conflicts and overlapping events.

**2. Create a targeted invitation list.** For a career fair, consider adding to your invite list:

- Employers in the industries that match your center's training programs.
- Labor union representatives
- Military representatives
- Local college representatives
- Work-based learning partners
- Your center's current partners and advocates, like
  - Local workforce development leaders*
  - Industry council members*
  - American Job Center contacts*

**3. Develop your run of show.** Every event needs a timeline of events/agenda. Think through how much time you will need for your attendees to get the most out of the experience. Once you know how many hours you will need for the event, begin to break down each component into specific increments of time. The Career Fair Program template is a great example of how your event can flow, but here are some recommended time frames for a three-hour event.

- 9 a.m. – Guests arrive, register and network with each other and Job Corps students and staff
- 9:30 a.m. – Program begins
- 10 a.m. – Career fair begins
- 12 p.m. – Guests depart

**4. Determine the layout of your event, including table setup for each employer/organization.** A career fair is all about showcasing employers, higher-education institutions and community organizations that can support Job Corps graduates. Every attendee will need to have a table/designated space at the fair. Consider dividing the gym (or other designated space) by career pathway so all health care employers are in one area, construction employers are in one area, etc. Just be sure to give each employer enough space to set up any displays or additional items they may bring.

- 5. Plan a small welcome program.** Center directors, current employer partners, student leaders, successful graduates and/or workforce development leaders are potential speakers who can talk about the value of Job Corps' training and the partnership opportunities that exist during a welcome program. Once you have your list of two or three identified speakers, you will need to assign speaking times to each person—five minutes per speaker is a good goal to aim for as you will want to keep the length of the entire program to 30 minutes or less. You will also need to make sure you have a stage with the proper lighting and AV capabilities.
- 6. Generate excitement and prepare students ahead of time!** It's not every day that employers are on campus. Prepare your students ahead of time—practice interview questions, help them with their resumes, and teach them how to “sell themselves” to potential employers.
- 7. Plan and execute logistical details in a timely manner.** See suggested timeline on the next page, along with an example floor plan and photos.



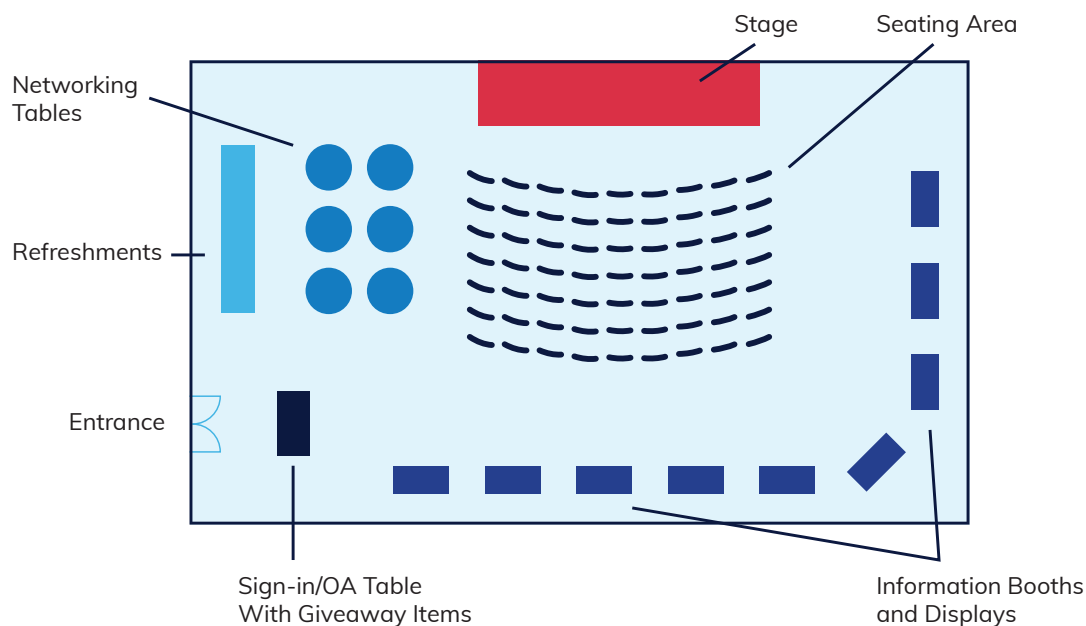


Time	Task
2 months before	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research local employers and organizations that would benefit from learning more about Job Corps and interacting with students and staff.</li> <li>• Compile a comprehensive guest list of employers and organizations to invite.</li> <li>• Reach out to individuals who might be willing speak at the event (e.g., employer partners, workforce development leaders, elected officials and/or successful alumni).</li> <li>• Identify vendors and research printing, AV, staging and giveaway item order deadlines. Print items could be invitations, handouts for the attendees, event programs, nametags, and materials from the Job Corps Materials Marketplace—<a href="https://www.jcmarketplace.com">JCMarketplace.com</a>. Giveaway items could consist of pens, stickers, coffee mugs, water bottles, bags, etc.</li> <li>• Send save-the-date. (A template is available in the Career Fair Toolkit. E-mail <a href="mailto:jobcorpsmaterials@mpf.com">jobcorpsmaterials@mpf.com</a> to request a customized save-the-date e-flier.)</li> </ul>
1 month before	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send event invitation via e-mail or, if preferred, physical mail. (E-mail <a href="mailto:jobcorpsmaterials@mpf.com">jobcorpsmaterials@mpf.com</a> for a customized invitation.)</li> <li>• After invitation is out, follow up with calls and e-mails for RSVPs.</li> <li>• Order key items for event like tables, tablecloths, chairs, staging and AV equipment.</li> <li>• Order printed materials available on JCMarketplace.com, like your center brochure, the <a href="#">employer brochures</a> and <a href="#">fliers</a> to share with employers in attendance. E-mail <a href="mailto:jobcorpsmaterials@mpf.com">jobcorpsmaterials@mpf.com</a> for other items, like outdoor directional signage, nametag templates, and step and repeat banners.</li> <li>• Order any small giveaway materials, like pens or hand sanitizer.</li> <li>• Place orders for light refreshments, or if your center offers Culinary Arts training, showcase your students' skills by enlisting them to make and provide the food.</li> <li>• Create a run of show with timestamps for transitions during your event. Include times for short program with speaker(s), booth engagement time and training area tours.</li> </ul>
2–3 weeks before	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After receiving approval from your Regional DOL Office of Public Affairs for pre- and post-event media outreach for your event, send a media advisory out to your local online, print, radio and television news stations. (A templated advisory is available in the Career Fair Toolkit. If you need help creating a media list, let your regional MP&amp;F contact know or reach out to <a href="mailto:jobcorpsmaterials@mpf.com">jobcorpsmaterials@mpf.com</a>.)</li> <li>• Prepare brief remarks and speaker introductions for your center director or center representative.</li> <li>• Make sure everyone involved in setup knows where which booths will go, where refreshments will go, how people will enter and leave the gym, and the timing for each part of the event.</li> </ul>
1 week before	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resend media advisory to local media as a reminder. (Template is in Career Fair Toolkit.)</li> <li>• Begin preparing the campus for the event. This may include landscaping and cleaning of all spaces that will be visible to attendees.</li> <li>• Draft a post-event release (like the example in the toolkit) that can be sent with photos and approved speaker quotes from the event.</li> <li>• Request a post-event survey link via the JCMarketplace.com contact form or print the Post-Event Survey.</li> <li>• Send a follow-up e-mail or make personal calls to invitees who haven't yet RSVP'd.</li> </ul>
2 days before	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send out driving directions and parking instructions to RSVP'd guests and invited media, along with any other helpful logistical details.</li> <li>• Set up gym with any informational sheets and signage.</li> </ul>

Time	Task
<b>1 day before</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Place welcome and directional signage outside.</li> <li>Print and review talking points for program.</li> <li>Do a program and AV run-through.</li> </ul>
<b>Day of event!</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have a great event and take lots of photos and videos!</li> <li>Be sure to collect feedback via either the printed Post-Event Survey or the digital post-event survey (available by request via the JCMarketplace.com contact form).</li> <li>Share event recaps, including quotes from speakers, photos and videos, with local media unable to attend. (Use the media release template in the Career Training Expo Planning Toolkit.)</li> <li>Share photos and recaps with your local employer partners, center supporters and the Job Corps social media team at <a href="mailto:jcdigital@mpf.com">jcdigital@mpf.com</a>.</li> </ul>
<b>Day after</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Send the post-event survey along with thank you note via e-mail to event attendees.</li> <li>Track your survey responses via the responses' link.</li> <li>Set up follow-up calls and meetings with employers and workforce development partners who want to discuss ways they can partner with you and/or learn more about your career training programs.</li> </ul>

## Event Layout

There are many ways you can set up your space to hold a career fair.  
Here's an example of a possible floor layout.



**Have a great event! Be sure to check out the other materials in this toolkit, and if you have any questions about the materials, reach out to [jobcorpsmaterials@mpf.com](mailto:jobcorpsmaterials@mpf.com).**