



Student Career Training Expo

Event Planning Tips and Timeline

Hosting a student career training expo allows employers and community leaders to see firsthand how Job Corps prepares students for the workforce through its hands-on training programs. Attendees will see students in action and have the opportunity to interact with them and their instructors. As you prepare to host a student career training expo, consider these tips and planning suggestions for 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/competing events.

2. Create a targeted invitation list. For a student career training expo, consider adding to your invite list:

- New and existing local, regional and national employers whose industries match those of your career training programs. Ask your staff for suggestions on which employers to invite.
- Labor union representatives
- Your center's current community partners and advocates:

Local workforce development leaders
Industry council members
American Job Center contacts
College partners
Work-Based Learning employers
Elected officials*

State and local government officials
Successful graduates
High school administrators and counselors
Foster care workers/organizations
Homeless youth providers/organizations

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 Student Career Training Expo Program template is a great example of how your event can flow, but here are some recommended timeframes 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 training demonstrations begin
- 11 a.m. – Career training classroom tours begin
- 12 p.m. – Guests depart

*Invitations to elected officials and their staff must be approved by your Regional Office and then submitted to the National Office for approval at least two weeks before the invitation is sent. RSVPs from the elected officials and their staff members must be shared with your Regional Office of Public Affairs once they confirm their attendance.

4. Determine the layout of your event, including table setup/training demonstrations for each training area.

For a career training expo, the idea is to showcase your students and their skills. All training areas will have a table/ designated space at the expo. Work with the instructors from each training area to identify three or four students to represent the center at the expo. The students and instructor will need to figure out what they want event attendees to see and experience at the event—something that truly represents their skill sets. Great examples of this could be any materials or tangible items the students have made, specific tools students use in their training, real-time demonstrations of students in action—a student training in health care taking a patient's vitals, a Culinary Arts student putting the final touches on a dessert. Every table should look professional and organized and be clearly labeled so attendees know which training area they are visiting.



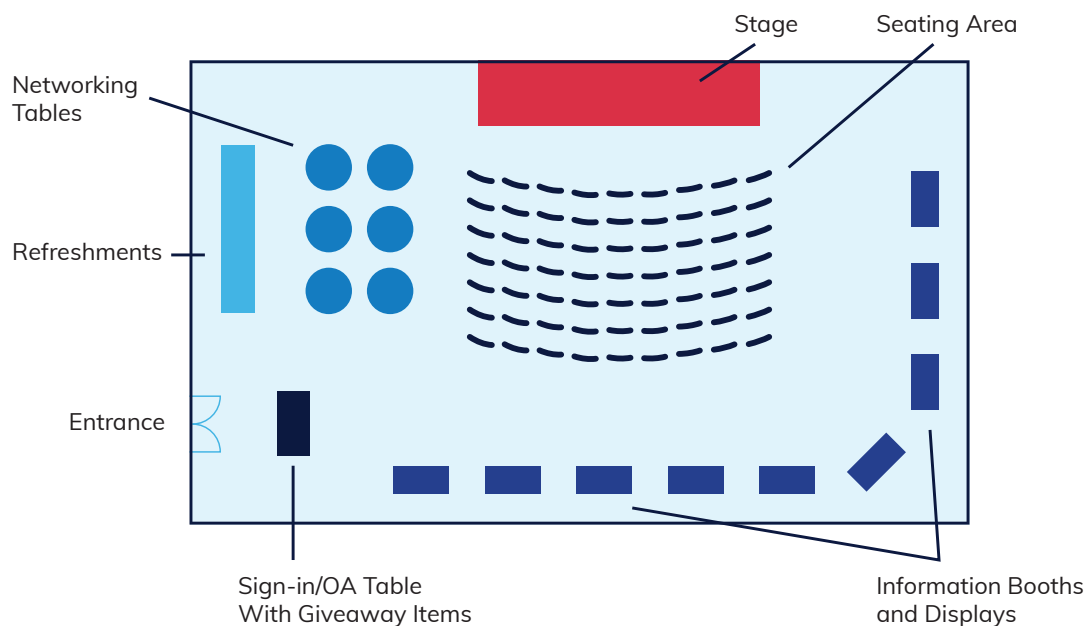
- 5. Prepare for career training classroom tours.** If classroom tours are being offered as part of your event, make sure your training space is clean, organized and professional and meets all safety standards. Work with instructors and students to determine what skills/exercises they want to highlight during the tour and be prepared to jump into action as soon as the guests arrive. All visitors should be greeted immediately by the students and instructor, and everyone should have talking points prepared to be able to speak to the skill sets the employers or other guests will want to hear. Focus on what skills the students learn and how those skills prepare them for the workforce.
- 6. 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 partnership opportunities 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 audiovisual capabilities (e.g., microphone, projector).
- 7. Determine whether you want to also invite local high school students to add a recruitment angle to the event.** Going to the schools and extending invitations in person can also be an opportunity to have face time with school counselors. Just keep in mind the size of the space where you will hold the Expo, so you don't exceed capacity. Remember that employers and the broader workforce development community are your priority invitees for this event.
- 8. Generate excitement and prepare staff and students ahead of time!** It's not every day that students get to show off what they're learning to potential employers and the community at large. Practice with the students who will be leading the demonstrations to make sure they feel confident on the day of the event. Let your students know that those visiting are employers who could potentially offer them Work-Based Learning opportunities, internships or entry-level jobs.
- 9. 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 out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brainstorm with instructors and students what training skills and projects to showcase. Reach out to individuals who could speak at the event (e.g., employer partners, workforce development leaders, elected officials and/or successful alumni). Identify vendors and research order deadlines for printing, AV, staging and giveaway items. Print items could be invitations, handouts for the career training tables, event programs, nametags, and materials from the Job Corps Materials Marketplace—JCMarketplace.com. Giveaway items could consist of pens, stickers, coffee mugs, water bottles, bags, etc. Send save-the-date. (A template is available in the Student Career Training Expo Toolkit. E-mail jobcorpsmaterials@mpf.com to request a customized save-the-date e-flier.)
1 month out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send event invitation via e-mail or, if preferred, physical mail. (E-mail jobcorpsmaterials@mpf.com for a customized invitation.) After invitation is out, follow up with calls and e-mails to solicit RSVPs. Order key items for event, like tables, tablecloths, chairs, easels for training area signs, staging and AV equipment. Order printed materials available on JCMarketplace.com: center-specific fliers, employer brochures and fliers. E-mail jobcorpsmaterials@mpf.com for other items, like outdoor directional signage, training area signs, nametag templates, and step and repeat banners. Order any small giveaway materials, like pens or hand sanitizer. Place orders for light refreshments, or if your center has a Culinary Arts training program, showcase your students' skills by enlisting them to provide the food. Create a run of show with timestamps for transitions during your event. Include times for short program with speaker(s), booth engagement time, training area tours.
2–3 weeks before	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 Student Career Training Expo Toolkit. If you need help creating a media list, let your regional MP&F contact know or reach out to jcmaterials@mpf.com.) Prepare brief remarks and speaker introductions for your center director or center representative. Run through event with students, allowing them time to practice demonstrations and talking points. Make sure everyone involved in setup knows booth locations, where refreshments will go, how people will enter and leave the event location, how they will get to the training areas they want to tour, and the timing for each part of the event.
1 week before	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resend media advisory to local media as a reminder. (Template is in Student Career Training Expo Toolkit.) Begin preparing campus for the event, including the area where the expo will be held and career training classrooms. Draft a post-event release (like the example in the toolkit) that can be sent with photos and approved speaker quotes from the event. Request a post-event survey link via the JCMarketplace.com contact form or print the Post-Event Survey. Send a follow-up e-mail or make personal calls to invitees who haven't RSVP'd.
2 days before	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send out driving directions and parking instructions to RSVP'd guests and invited media, along with any other helpful logistical details. Set up event location with any student booths, informational sheets and signage.

Time	Task
1 day before	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place welcome and directional signage outside. Do final talking point and demonstration run-throughs with students. Print and review talking points for program. Do a program and AV run-through.
Day of event!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a great event and take lots of photos and videos! 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). Share event recaps, including quotes from speakers, photos and videos, with local media unable to attend. (Use the media release template in the Student Career Training Expo Toolkit.) Share photos and recaps with your local employer partners, center supporters and the Job Corps social media team at jcdigital@mpf.com.
Day after	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send the post-event survey along with thank you note via e-mail to event attendees. Track your survey responses via the responses' link. 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.

Event Layout

There are many ways you can set up your space to hold a student career training expo. 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.