1.1 Core Elements of Outside-in Programs

Partner with an Effective Workforce Intermediary

What Is a Workforce Intermediary?

A workforce intermediary is an organization that helps connect people to jobs through training, access to employment opportunities, and other wraparound supports. A publication from the Aspen Institute on sector-based workforce approaches defined intermediaries as "organizational homes" that can "broker resources and services to improve how workers and employers come together in their regional labor markets." This organizational home can take many forms. Intermediaries can be public agencies, nonprofits focused on preparing people for work and providing job placement and supports, community based organizations focused on specific geographies or neighborhoods, educational and training organizations, union apprenticeship programs, or other workforce training partners.

While the make-up and structure of organizations might vary, successful intermediaries can bring the following resources to the table:

- Credibility with and knowledge of the community
- Access to data, funding streams, and training resources
- Time and staffing to recruit, screen, and train candidates prior to application at the institution
- Capacity and skills to support people as they transition to their new job
- Provision of retention support and services
- Ability to reduce training costs through cohort models with multiple employers

Identifying a workforce intermediary to partner with is a critical first step in developing an intentional, outside-in pathway program. Intermediaries bring many assets and resources to the table that can make existing institutional hiring processes more time efficient, targeted, and effective.

Intermediaries can reduce time spent on recruitment and onboarding, and heighten access to high-quality applicants who have received customized training, including job readiness skills. Moreover, intermediaries can help address strategic goals. For example, they can help broaden the pool of potential applicants by connecting with various populations and communities. Intermediaries often have funding streams that include both public funding and philanthropic dollars that can be leveraged to train candidates for high-turnover or hard-to-fill positions. In addition, intermediaries can help the healthcare system make deeper connections in the communities they serve.

However, intermediaries do best when working in close collaboration with the employers, because without knowing the variety of positions, qualifications, and the ins-and-outs of the hiring process, they cannot adequately prepare candidates for specific job openings. With input and guidance from the healthcare system, intermediaries are able to create training and job readiness programs that meet the needs of the healthcare system.

Much of the investment needed to effectively partner with a workforce development intermediary is in-kind —use of space, meeting time to establish training and hiring criteria, access to data, staff time for training and interviews, and adjustments to internal practices. These relatively low-cost investments can bolster existing workforce development programming, and in turn make the recruitment process more efficient and increase long-term employee retention.

Common success metrics

When collaborating with intermediaries and community-based organizations (CBOs), it's important to understand the measures of success for each organization and ensure alignment so each is working towards common goals. Some common success metrics are:

- number of individuals who enrolled in a program
- number of individuals who completed a program
- number of individuals who transitioned to jobs
- retention rate at 30-60-90 days

FROM THE FIELD

To determine which CBOs to collaborate with, University of California San Francisco (UCSF) used a tiered model to rank organizations based on how well they could help meet the health system's hiring needs. To do this, UCSF assessed the CBOs' specialties and how their strengths aligned with the institution's hiring needs. For instance, some CBOs specialized in intake and connecting individuals to support services, while others specialized in assisting individuals with the "last mile" of workforce development, such as submitting applications and preparing for interviews. After conducting this assessment, UCSF prioritized building relationships with CBOs that were best situated to provide the services in the areas that UCSF needed most. This approach improved the experience of recruiters, thereby increasing internal buy-in for collaborating with CBOs to implement intentional, outside-in pathways to hire.

In some cases, an institution or several institutions have helped to incubate a workforce intermediary organization when one did not exist that met their specific needs. For example, West Side United grew from an initiative at Rush University System for Health, where they partnered with other anchor institutions to provide new investments in workforce development programming in order to improve access to jobs in Chicago's West Side—a key priority identified by community members.

Benefits of Intermediary Partnerships

Intermediary partners provide value through their deep community connections, access to funding and resources, knowledge and insights of the local labor market, candidate recruitment and training programs, and ability to reduce training costs through cohort models with multiple employers.

Credibility with and knowledge of the community

Effective workforce intermediaries are often embedded in the community and work directly with grassroots community-based organizations. They often have a network of people they can recruit from, and have a good reputation and credibility in the community. Intermediaries are also positioned to connect with a wide array of employers who could co-sponsor training programs when necessary, helping to scale impact in a community by offering additional employment opportunities. For example, if an individual is not a good fit with an employer, or in a particular job, the intermediary can still connect them to a position with a different employer.

One health system partners with a local community development corporation (CDC) on monthly hiring fairs. This CDC is known as "the go-to organization in the community" because of its knowledge, expertise, and roots in the community, and it acts in a pre-screening function, helping to advertise job opportunities and prepare local residents for employment at the health system. The CDC plays a key role in promoting health system hiring events with a strong presence at libraries, coffee shops, and churches in the neighborhood.

At the hiring events, individuals can apply at an onsite computer lab for entry-level jobs in environmental services and patient care, as well as pre-apprenticeship programs. If they fulfill the necessary requirements, they are invited to interview with a hiring manager from the health system that same day. This streamlined process has helped the health system to increase impact hires.

Access to data, funding streams, and training resources

Workforce intermediaries have the infrastructure and staffing to apply for grants, and often are funded with streams of public and/or philanthropic dollars. Intermediaries can bring these resources to the table, which can then be leveraged for programming that will benefit both the community and the institution. Hospital fund development staff might not have the capacity nor mandate to search for external funding for workforce development, and current hospital staff might not have the ability or capacity to operationalize training programs. However, intermediaries can bring the expertise necessary to make outside-in pathway programs successful by utilizing their staff, which may include job coaches, sector-specific trainers, and other positions that are critical to program success.

University Hospitals' (UH) outside-in program initially began with grant funding and community-based support from its partner Towards Employment, a workforce intermediary. However, as the work progressed and became successful, the program became established at UH and internal resources were used as the funding source. Establishing funding through internal resources provides stability for impact workforce programs and enables consideration of where additional resources can be contributed, such as allocating employees' time even during training periods.

Information about the state of the local labor market

Intermediaries can also provide health systems with useful data on workforce development trends and workforce issues. Workforce intermediaries often receive funding to conduct research on workforce trends and develop sector-specific training strategies. This research can be an important resource for hospital human resource departments. Dr. Cinda Herndon-King, director of Atlanta CareerRise based in Atlanta, Georgia, emphasizes that the workforce intermediary helps to track outcomes and employer and community benefits. As she explains it: "We can track and calculate what effect a program has had on a cohort, an occupation, or community... it seems that many hospitals aren't prepared to evaluate outcomes, either because of manpower or available data systems." Project QUEST, a workforce intermediary based in San Antonio, Texas, provides a similar function. Former executive director Sister Pearl Caesar described their role: "We identify in-demand occupations, recruit people who have a high school diploma, a GED, or are interested in obtaining a GED, and then move those people into the training for those high-demand occupations that pay a living wage." Investing resources into researching job and training needs—and applying those findings to program design—will produce a more qualified and relevant applicant pool for area anchor institutions.

Time and staffing to recruit, screen, and train candidates prior to application at the institution

The candidates presented by intermediaries have already gone through the organization's program application process and training. Staff has screened each candidate and coaches can share their experiences working and interacting with them on a consistent basis. This in-depth knowledge of a candidate is more than a recruiter or hiring manager would learn from an online job application. Thus, intermediaries can help to reduce risk in hiring decisions, as they are able to put forward candidates that have demonstrated commitment, engagement, and skill.

Ability to reduce training costs through cohort models with multiple employers

Sometimes, high-need positions do not necessarily correspond to high-volume positions. In these instances, it might not be worth it for an individual institution to invest resources in a training program. However, an intermediary that works with multiple employers could bring together an entire cohort to train

for a commonly shared position category, thus lowering the cost per participant. Cohort models ensure a steady stream of applicants, even if there are fluctuations in individual institution hiring.

Utilize Position-Specific Cohort Training Models

Cohort training models function by training a group of participants around a specific curriculum at the same time. This enables efficient use of training resources, facilitates peer learning, and ensures that training programming produces results at a scale that can have impact on the hiring needs of the health system. With the cohort curriculum focused on specific high-need positions, cohort participants are trained for specific open positions, thus making the time invested into training worthwhile. This model also offers hiring departments a qualified pool of applicants, which allows them to fill positions more quickly and save on recruitment resources.

Cohort setup and design

The practice of designing specific cohorts around employer needs ensures that candidates receive training for skills that are actually in demand. In this model, the curriculum is tailored to specific institutions and for specific job responsibilities. Job-specific training increases the value-add to institutions, as it enables them to target hard-to-fill or high-turnover positions and complement the traditional recruitment process.

A successful approach for developing cohorts involves extending institutional efforts to the regional level and filling in-demand jobs through collaborative partnerships. In 2020, local hospital systems across northeast Ohio worked together to launch the Career On-Ramp program. Putting participants in training programs as a cohort, beginning and ending together, resulted in a greater number of community residents hired into entry-level healthcare roles.

The number of participants in a cohort varies by position type and number of participating institutions. One example is a Medical Assistant Accelerated Pathway to Employment Training developed by the Center for Healthcare Careers of Southeast Wisconsin in partnership with local health systems Children's Wisconsin, Advocate Health, Ascension, and Froedtert Health. Compared to a typical medical assistant training period of one to two years, this program prepares participants over 14 weeks, combining paid classroom-learning experience and a clinical placement. Class sizes range between 12 to 16 people. To date, 48 participants have been enrolled at Froedtert since 2020, with the majority coming from lower-income backgrounds.

If a particular institution does not have a need for that many new hires, intermediary organizations can work with multiple anchor institution employers to form a cohort whose graduates may go to one of several employers. For example, West Side United, the anchor collaborative in Chicago, is supported by several other health systems that may hire people from the intermediary's workforce initiatives.

Develop Paid Training Programs with Pathways to Hire

Paid training programs with pathways to hire, such as internships and apprenticeships, expand employment opportunities for local residents who earn training wages while obtaining foundational skills training, technical skills, and credentials.

Internship programs

Internship programs offer entry points into an institution's workforce, help provide relevant work experience, and introduce candidates to a healthcare environment. In addition, they offer future jobseekers the opportunity to build relationships with hiring managers and co-workers. Temporary staffing departments can provide some of the same benefits of an internship program, since candidates receive on-the-job training and get the opportunity to build relationships. With additional supports, this can be an

effective way to provide an entry point to the institution as well. However, all of these approaches must include a path to more permanent employment for them to be successful, intentional outside-in hiring pathways. Below, we highlight a few examples:

High school internship programs

Internship programs for youth can help to build the future healthcare workforce and catalyze interest in healthcare careers. This can be critical to address skills shortages in the long-term, especially in rural areas where recruitment is a pressing challenge. Moreover, the best-in-class high school internship programs provide young people with financial benefits. Participants are connected to paid part-time or summer work, and many programs offer college scholarships and access to other forms of financial support.

Nemours Children's Health in the Delaware Valley strategically focuses on developing youth pipelines as part of its workforce pipeline development efforts. To address high turnover rates among nursing and medical assistant roles, the health system partnered with a local community college and vocational high schools to introduce students to pediatric careers. Students choose areas of interest and gain foundational skills starting in the 9th and 10th grades. Then, they engage in a hybrid learning model that includes professional shadowing. If the students opt to pursue a career in pediatric care, they can sit for their certification at the end of their 11th grade year and can join a paid co-op program in 12th grade. This approach aligns job training with institutional needs, enhances skill relevance for high-turnover positions, and supports career planning to better match students' goals with job responsibilities.

The MetroHealth System in Cleveland, Ohio has a partnership with the Cleveland Metropolitan School District, where the school offers opportunities for young people in the community to learn about healthcare careers through experiential learning, internships, mentoring support, and professional development and certification programs, all while in high school. The program was designed to provide opportunities to the local students and to prepare the next generation for the healthcare workforce. The culmination of the high school experience is a 120-hour internship, during which students work one day per week at the health system in departments such as nursing, radiology, orthopedics, public safety, patient experience, and physical therapy.

The school's first class graduated in 2019. As of 2024, the school has continued to reach at or above a 90% graduation rate year after year, and 25% of students have obtained professional certifications and/or have been hired into full and part time roles at the hospital. "Agility is key," says Tiffany Short, director of workforce development and external education at MetroHealth. Short emphasizes that "[you need to] meet the students where they are. This may require you to change the curriculum every year." In addition, in 2023, MetroHealth committed $125,000 to the United Negro College Fund to support scholarships and internship opportunities for students from economically disinvested areas. This initiative addresses the need for the health system's workforce to better care for their patient population.

> Internship programs may include a job-shadowing component, allowing students to gain exposure to multiple departments and roles.

Internship programs serve as important development and networking experiences for students as well as a recruitment strategy for employers. Internships connect high school and college students to career paths and training opportunities in their local area that lead to high demand positions. Dartmouth Health, which serves rural communities in New Hampshire and Vermont, sees its internship programs as a necessary investment in its future workforce. In a region with low unemployment rates and high out-migration of young adults, "we need more people to see the healthcare sector as a place to start and grow a career," says Jenny Macaulay, director of workforce development and planning. Internships and job readiness programs "[create] access and opportunity for people to directly experience being in meaningful jobs that

have pathways to advance education, career and income potential." Summer internships combine paid work, professional skill development, mentoring, and experiential learning. A rotational model gives interns practical experience in multiple departments, exposing them to the wide variety of roles available within healthcare.

Another option for a youth internship program is hosting a camp. Camps provide young people with an introduction to the healthcare field and can spark interest in healthcare jobs. An example of this model is the Scrubs Camp, developed at Winona State University, located in southeastern Minnesota. The camp was initially conceived of as a way to connect middle school and high school students who would be first generation college attendees to a college environment and expose them to healthcare careers. Scrubs Camp has since partnered with Healthforce Minnesota—a collaboration of industry, education, and government—in order to help the state meet its healthcare workforce needs, and it has expanded to twenty sites across the state.

Although it focuses on introducing youth to healthcare careers and college environments, Scrubs Camp also provides an entry point to the employer partners. For Fairview Health Services in Minneapolis, Scrubs Camp functions as part of its network of intentional, outside-in hiring pathways and part-time work opportunities that help connect community members to career pathways. Scrubs Camp has introduced middle and high school students to healthcare careers, and about 50% of camp students receive scholarships. In total, Fairview has sponsored 181 students for Scrubs Camp since 2008. Fairview also sources interns through Step Up, an initiative facilitated by the nonprofit organization Achieve Twin Cities, which connects youth aged 16 to 21 to work readiness training and paid internships with local employers. One graduate of the Step Up program is Mary Yang, who interned within Fairview's human resources department while exploring career options. Yang reports, "I did Step Up as a high school student, and now, many years later, I work in the human resources department doing something I love."

Fairview also offers paid internships in nursing, information technologies, finance, medical records, and communications. In total, Fairview provides approximately one hundred paid internships that range from high school summer experiences to year-round graduate level fellowships. In addition, they support the Central Corridor Fellows program, which provides work experience and career coaching support to metro-area community college and university students, many of whom are lower-income.

Community resident internship programs

While the internship program examples cited above focus on secondary students, internship programs can also be designed to focus on community residents of a wider age range. Internships for community residents can be more targeted towards immediate careers than youth programs, since individuals are less likely to move towards full-time, post-secondary education. Internship programs create opportunities for career-shadowing, allow residents to gain exposure to a healthcare setting, and connect them to individual departments and hiring managers. In addition, community resident internships have the dual benefit of providing training while fulfilling labor needs at the institution. Institutions such as The Johns Hopkins University and Health System have taken advantage of this by utilizing internships to fill positions vacated by their staff pursuing internal career development. Interns become accustomed to the norms and expectations of the institution, which can then reduce the cost of onboarding and training if they are hired on permanently.

NewYork-Presbyterian (NYP) launched a community resident internship program in 2022 in response to COVID-19-related staffing shortages. The health system partners with Phipps Neighborhoods, a community-based organization that serves low-income families across New York City, in order to help individuals aged 18 to 30 secure employment in healthcare and obtain professional certifications. Phipps' Career Network is a cohort-based training program that consists of three weeks of classroom instruction, six weeks of onsite learning at NYP, and a final week to focus on interview scheduling, certification testing,

and graduation. Participating departments include Environmental Services, Food and Nutrition, Patient Transport, Linen, Amenities, Finance, Surgical Stepdown, and Workforce Health and Safety.

When designing the program, NYP and Phipps agreed on the importance of creating a supportive environment where participants could learn life skills or "soft skills," and realize their strengths before entering into the hospital setting. Participants also earn stipends and receive assistance from Phipps to address any barriers that might impact their participation, such as transportation or finding necessary work attire. According to recruiter Monique Daniels, "keeping a clear line of communication open [with Phipps] in the event of challenges" has been key to the internship program's success. This has led to improvements such as adding skill development in areas of conflict resolution, identifying resources, and self-advocacy. Since the program began, NYP has hosted an average of 30 community resident interns per year and hired 18 individuals into full-time roles. "The candidates [from the first cohort] blew everyone away," says Daniels. "They were ready to work. We've heard from hiring managers about how well it's working."

Build a knowledgeable workforce via apprenticeship programs

One health system launched several apprenticeship programs to address critical workforce needs and create economic opportunity for residents of low-income neighborhoods, as identified through the health system's CHNA. These paid apprenticeships combine on-the-job experience with classroom learning, and participants receive full healthcare benefits. For example, through an accelerated pharmacy technician apprenticeship, participants are able to graduate in 18 weeks and be prepared to sit for a national certification in Pharmacy Technology. Apprenticeship opportunities are promoted at community hiring fairs with community partners. An internal career coach helps to secure resources for program participants. In addition, the coach provides support on work and life needs, and soft skills development.

Internships and apprenticeships are tied to pathways for advancement within the institution

One health system seeks to provide multiple opportunities that meet both the needs of the system and the career pathways employees desire to follow. To that end, it runs several apprenticeship tracks for positions such as nurse assistants, medical lab technicians, and certified medical assistants. During the apprenticeship program, participants receive on-the-job training and support from career mentors, and upon completion they earn a credential. In 2024, data pointed to a reduced turnover rate for apprenticeship program participants.

Providence turned to apprenticeships to address a critical workforce shortage of medical assistants. With turnover at 22%, "we had to find a unique way to recruit and retain our caregivers," says Nicole Stuart-Pesevic, executive director of clinical operations. "[We felt] the apprenticeship approach was the most sustainable to recruit, retain, and help grow individuals into a healthcare career." Providence partnered with Stepful, a healthcare training organization, to develop and launch registered medical assistant apprenticeships across four states. It was important that the program be open to incumbent employees and community members, and that the medical assistant position would be connected to a career laddering program. Stepful recruits participants, focusing on reaching working adults from low-income communities, and provides them with online, cohort-based training. Providence then selects preceptors and runs the on-the-job training component of the apprenticeship. The costs of starting up this program were covered by grant funding. Providence has identified first-year turnover following completion of the program as one of the metrics for success of the apprenticeship program.