

Chapter 7: Tools in Action

Practical Resources to Activate and Sustain Workforce Partnerships



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Introduction: Tools to Move from Planning to Action

You don't have to start from scratch.

Whether you're just beginning to build partnerships or scaling up your workforce efforts, this chapter provides the ready-to-use tools you need to take action with confidence. From guest speaking to teacher externships, each resource is designed to simplify logistics, support your team, and create impactful experiences for students within your educational partnerships..

These tools are drawn from real-world practice. They are tested by builders, trade partners, and association leaders across the country and are adaptable for flexibility at the local level.

Chapter 7 supports the Partnership-Level Process especially **Quadrant 2: Implement & Manage Activities**. They offer structured, ready-to-use resources that help you shift from planning to action. From guest speaking to hosting teacher externships, every tool is designed to simplify logistics, reduce guesswork, and increase impact.

Everything has been tested by real organizations and adapted for flexibility. Use these guides to:

- Plan events and activities.
- Communicate with clarity.
- Align with educators.
- Support volunteers.
- Measure outcomes.

The goal? Make partnership practice easy and scalable. These tools help you turn strong intentions into consistent engagement without your volunteers or school partners experiencing burnout.

Picking the Right Starting Point

Before diving into the tools, take a moment to orient yourself. The next section offers a high-level overview of what's inside this chapter — student and educator activities, planning templates, and communication resources. If you're wondering where to begin, the "Choosing Your Engagement Path" guide will help you match your time, capacity, and goals to the activity that fits best.

Choosing Your Engagement Path

Not sure where to start? Use this guide to pick the activity that fits your time, goals, and capacity.

Your Capacity and Readiness	Ideal Starting Activity	Why This Works
Just getting started Limited time, new to educational partnerships	Meet-and-greet, guest speaking	Quick setup, minimal prep needed, great for testing the waters
Ready to engage Moderate time, ready to commit to planning time	Worksite tour (e.g., home immersion tours) or career day (e.g., build your future events), job shadow events	Moderate prep, deeper exposure for students and teachers
All-in for impact Willing to commit more time for planning and staff to implement	Teacher externship, industry-themed project, student internship	High visibility and long-term value for workforce pipeline

Case in Point: Scaling Engagement Through Worksite Tours

True Homes Offers Impactful Approach to Workforce Development

True Homes, the largest private builder in the Carolinas, wanted to address the lack of awareness about career opportunities in homebuilding among high school students. To bridge this gap, they launched home immersion tours (HITs), a structured worksite tour — an experience where students visit active construction sites to engage with trade professionals.

The first HIT event, in partnership with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, brought nearly 160 students to a True Homes job site, rotating through various construction phases with hands-on demonstrations from electricians, plumbers, and HVAC technicians. The event’s success led to rapid expansion, reaching over 2,000 students across multiple school districts.

By providing an organized, fully-coordinated experience, True Homes eliminated barriers for schools, such as transportation logistics and administrative hurdles, making it easy for educators to participate. The initiative also funneled interested students into summer internships with trade partners, strengthening the local workforce pipeline.



Check out the worksite tour protocol by visiting <https://bit.ly/NAHBPartnershipTools> or scan this QR Code.



“Start with a conversation. Build from there. It doesn’t have to be complicated.”

— Jake Kennedy
Program & Partnerships Manager
Builders Bridge
Monroe, NC

Now that you’ve seen the big picture, let’s dive into practical toolkits designed to help you easily plan and deliver these workforce engagement activities.

Toolkits for Real-World Engagement

The following pages break down the most common types of workforce engagement activities into three key categories: Student-Facing Activities, Educator Engagement, and Planning & Communication Tools. Each section includes practical guidance, real-world examples, and customizable templates to make implementation easy. Whether you are engaging students directly or supporting the educators who guide them, these resources are designed to help deliver high-impact experiences that connect classrooms to careers.



Looking for More Practical Tools?

Check out the original Employer's Guide to CTE Partnerships for engagement menus, sample outreach emails and templates to plan your first year of partnership.

<https://fordngl.com/reports/>

Engagement Protocols for Students

Student-facing activities are direct engagement opportunities designed specifically for students to explore career pathways, gain exposure to real-world industries, and build meaningful connections with professionals. These activities prioritize student learning, awareness, and participation through interactive, hands-on, or observational experiences.

● Low Intensity

Quick to implement, low lift. Great for first-time engagement. These are easy entry points that can be repeated or scaled with little effort.

● Moderate Intensity

Requires coordination and planning. Often involves collaboration with educators or prep for on-site visits in the classroom and/or in the place of work.

● High Intensity

Activities that require sustained engagement that supports career application. These often include recurring touchpoints and greater investment of time and resources.

● **Meet-and-Greet Events** – Informal introductions are facilitated between students and industry professionals.

- **Estimated Time:** 1 – 2 hours
- **Audience:** Students
- **Pro Tip:** Focus on relationships, not recruitment.

● **Guest Speaker Sessions** – Businesses visit classrooms to share career insights, demos, and Q&A.

- **Estimated Time:** 45 – 90 minutes
- **Audience:** Students
- **Pro Tip:** Keep it interactive and meet with teachers beforehand.



- **Career Fairs / Expos** – Students rotate through employer booths to explore careers.
 - **Estimated Time:** 4 – 8 hours
 - **Audience:** Students and sometimes parents.
 - **Pro Tip:** Use a career passport scavenger hunt to boost engagement.
- **Job Shadow** – Students observe a professional in the workplace.
 - **Estimated Time:** 2 – 6 hours or multi-day
 - **Audience:** Students
 - **Pro Tip:** Clarify objectives and prep the host site.
- **Reverse Job Shadow** – Industry professionals collaborate, using their classroom observations, with teachers to strengthen instruction by sharing real-world applications of academic content.
 - **Estimated Time:** 2 – 3 hours (over two visits)
 - **Audience:** Students
 - **Pro Tip:** Coordinate with teachers in advance and bring authentic workplace artifacts that connect directly to what students are learning.
- **Worksite Tours for Students** – Provide students first-hand exposure to your business.
 - **Estimated Time:** 3 – 5 hours
 - **Audience:** Students
 - **Pro Tip:** Co-plan with educators to connect tours to curriculum.
- **NAHB HBCU Student Leadership Program** – Build leadership and career readiness for students from historically black colleges and universities through a year-long experience.
 - **Estimated Time:** Requirements vary by each person involved in the overall program. It can include one-time speaking, hosting a workshop, or a year-long mentorship (e.g., 3-day seminars in Washington, D.C., and events at the International Builders' Show; supplemented by year-round virtual programming).
 - **Audience:** HBCU Students
 - **Pro Tip:** Support the next generation by serving as a speaker or sponsor. Provide feedback on resumes, host worksite tours, mentor and/or support internships or job placements. Build relationships with rising talent in the residential construction industry.
- **Industry-Themed Projects** – Students tackle real-world challenges designed by industry professionals.
 - **Estimated Time:** Flexible; ranges from 1 day to several weeks.
 - **Audience:** Students
 - **Pro Tip:** Build in mentorship, and track both academic and skills growth.

We have looked at the wide variety of engagement protocols available to us. Now let's take a look at what true mentorship means and what a mentor's mindset should be as they approach their vital and influential role.



Field Insight

"We try to look at every interaction as a mentorship moment. It doesn't have to be a big program. Sometimes it's just showing up and listening to a student, asking questions, or sharing a mistake you made and what you learned from it."

— Myles Cardenas, Land Planning and Development Manager, Taylor Morrison

Engagement Protocols for Educators

Intentional engagement with educators is essential because they are the primary bridge to students. When teachers see clear value and alignment with their classroom goals, they open the door for meaningful industry involvement. By collaborating early and directly, you build trust, remove barriers, and ensure that activities strengthen instruction, connect real-world industry experiences to learning outcomes, and deliver lasting value for students. Examples include:

- **Worksite Tours for Educators** – Provide educators first-hand exposure to your business operations.
 - **Estimated Time:** 3 – 5 hours
 - **Audience:** Educators
 - **Pro Tip:** Co-plan with educators to connect worksite tours to curriculum.
- **Teacher Externships** – Teachers participate in a short-term professional development experience where they work or observe in a business or industry setting to gain real-world knowledge of current workplace practices, technologies, and expectations.
 - **Estimated Time:** Multi-day plus planning; may range from 8 - 40 hours
 - **Audience:** Educators
 - **Pro Tip:** Preplan and set expectations with educators and business partners. Determine the concepts or academic standards that students struggle with, and incorporate real-world activities to deepen their understanding. Ensure there is a business engagement activity built into the curriculum.

Mentorship Is a Mindset, Not a Program

Every interaction with students (and educators), whether a classroom visit, a jobsite tour, or a hands-on project, is a chance to mentor. Sharing your story, offering advice, or encouraging curiosity can spark student interest, build confidence, and shape future pathways. Mentorship is the thread that ties all engagement together. Small moments can make a big impact.

When to Use a Formal Mentorship Program:

Consider a formal structure when:

- Students are in multi-week industry-themed projects or capstone experiences.
- Students are participating in internships, pre-apprenticeships, or job placements.
- Working with underserved youth needing more consistent guidance.
- You are focused on developing a sustainable talent pipeline.
- It is part of a structured workforce development program.

Examples from Home Builders Institute (HBI)

- Careers in Construction CO: Mentor and support students as they transition to jobsite roles.
- Future Builders of America (FBA): Programs use PACT curriculum and include structured mentoring.
- School to Skills High School Programs: Mentoring for soft skills and reinforces technical learning.
- Build Strong Academies: Formal mentoring supports recruitment, alignment, and scale.



Field Insight:



“Mentoring is about doing things to get out there and help people have experiences they couldn’t have on their own. It’s more long term. It’s not giving up.”

— **Brad Simons**
Vice President
Magleby Construction

Mentoring Tips for Industry Volunteers

You don't need to be a teacher to be a great mentor. Just be real, be present, and share what you know.

1. Be yourself.

- Share your story — how you got into the field, what you've learned, and what surprised you.
- Talk about your struggles and wins. Students relate to honesty more than perfection.

2. Connect with educators' priorities and reinforce them.

- Connect with teaching priorities by coordinating in advance to align your visit with their teaching objectives, learning outcomes, and skill development goals.

3. Ask, don't just tell.

- Get students talking. Ask:
 - What do you enjoy doing?
 - Have you ever worked on a project or built something?
 - What do you want to try or learn more about?
- Keep it conversational — not a lecture.

4. Make the work visible.

- Show how your job connects to what they are learning in school (math, teamwork, reading blueprints, communication, etc.).
- Let them see the tools, processes, or challenges in action.

5. Encourage curiosity.

- There are no dumb questions. Invite students to ask anything even if it seems small or off-topic.
- Help them explore roles they may not know exist such as estimating, project management, or customer service.

6. Reinforce what matters.

- Highlight the life skills that are also critical to success: showing up on time, being a team player, staying safe, solving problems, and asking for help.
- Let them know character counts just as much as technical skill.

7. Leave a door open.

- If appropriate, offer to connect again via email or another visit, or just encourage them to reach out.
- Share a flyer, career snapshot, or invite them to the next event or tour.



Field Insight:



"If you can get them on a job site and get them to learn from somebody and talk and engage... over time, that's how that mentorship grows."

— **Carrie DeWeese**
Realtor
Chinowth & Cohen Realtors

Pro Tip

Even a 15-minute conversation can shape a student's direction. You don't have to have all the answers — just be someone who sees their potential.

Communication and Outreach Resources

Turnkey Tools for Smooth Execution

These ready-to-use templates and guides ensure alignment, clarity, and follow-through when working with educators, administrators, and industry volunteers.

● Partnership Guide

What it is: A go-to guide for initiating, planning, and maintaining strong, school-industry relationships.

Here's a sample of what is included in the Partnership Playbook Resources Folder:

- Plug-and-play emails and meeting templates
 - Initiate and schedule school partnerships
 - Initial contact email
 - Scheduling email
 - Student/parent prep email template
 - Volunteer recruitment email
- Call Scripts
- Meeting Agendas
 - Planning meeting agenda
 - Follow-up meeting agenda
- A customizable, activity-planning worksheet
- Follow-up notes
 - Meeting recap email
 - Thank-you email
 - Quick survey follow-up email
 - Editable Google form template
- 30-day onboarding checklist
- Volunteer Prep Packet
 - Volunteer onboarding tips
- Logistics and safety checklist
- Follow-up notes and Thank-Yous
- Succession planning checklist
- Engagement Activity Protocols
 - Meet-and-Greet
 - Guest-Speaker Sessions
 - Career Expos/Fairs
 - Job Shadow
 - Reverse Job Shadow
 - Worksite Tours
 - Industry-Themed Projects
 - Teacher Externships
 - Storytelling Tools for Engaging the Next Generation
 - Next-Gen Storytelling Worksheet
 - Multi-Department Engagement Map
- Activity Reflection Tool for Business Partners

Learn More

Check out the Partnership Playbook resources by visiting <https://bit.ly/NAHBPartnershipTools> or scan this QR Code.



Amplifying Career Awareness

Bringing Careers to Life: Classroom Connections

Help students see the real-world relevance of their learning and discover the many roles available in residential construction. This section highlights classroom-ready tools and real-world examples that educators can use to spark career curiosity and deeper industry understanding.



Visit: nahb.org/workforce

On the website you will find:

- **Career snapshots**
Short, engaging role profiles that show students what a day in the life of a particular career looks like, the path to get there, and what skills matter most.
- **Storytelling tools from NAHB**
Infographics, posters, and real quotes from professionals that help demystify the industry and promote construction as a high-opportunity career.
- **Student career exploration worksheets**
Editable tools to help students reflect on what they learn, compare careers, and connect industry insights to their personal strengths and interests.

Quick-Glance: Case Studies from the Field

Examples of Industry Partners Engaging Students and Educators

- **Home Immersion Tours (HITs)** by True Homes' Builders Bridge
HITs reaches over 2,000 students across multiple school districts and features hands-on learning with trade professionals. Tours are organized for easy school participation.
- **Career Day Walk Throughs** by Madison HBA
Hundreds of students rotate through interactive trade stations staffed by builders, suppliers, and skilled professionals. Each station features a hands-on demo and Q&A. Pre-event prep includes teacher guides and student worksheets to boost engagement. Volunteers are prepped using a repeatable format, and student reflections are collected post-event.
- **Reverse Job Shadow in U.S. History**
An industry guest connects housing development history to modern residential zoning. Teachers incorporate mapping and policy research into student projects.
- **Geometry in the Real World**
A construction professional shows how surface area and volume apply to estimating materials. The experience sparks a hands-on, student mini project.
- **Weeklong Job Shadow** for Capstone Seniors
Students rotate through design, land, estimating, and sales. Custom schedules are built around student interest. The job shadow strengthens early career awareness.
- **Teacher Externship**
Educators spend three days with a builder then create a cross-curricular lesson about building codes and design. The experience includes a follow-up presentation and classroom project.

National Partnership Highlight

Partnering with Boys & Girls Clubs of America

An NAHB Initiative to Build Futures: A National Partnership Driving Local Impact

The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) collaborates with Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) to introduce youth to careers in residential construction. This national partnership empowers HBAs and local employers to connect with middle and high school students through hands-on experiences, guest speakers, jobsite tours, and long-term projects like mock builds.

Why It Matters

Boys & Girls Clubs are trusted community anchors serving millions of young people. Partnering with a local club gives your HBA or company a direct line to students — especially those who may not yet see construction as a viable or exciting career option.

Examples of Industry Partners Engaging Students and Educators

- **Greater Birmingham Association of Home Builders – Alabama**

Partnered with Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Alabama to deliver engaging, hands-on activities in plumbing, HVAC, framing, and more.

🔗 https://www.nahb.org/blog/2023/06/alabama-hba-introduces-local-boys-and-girls-club-to-trades?utm_

- **Home Builders & Remodelers of Central Connecticut**

Launched construction-focused camp activities in partnership with the Ulbrich Boys & Girls Club, connecting students with local professionals.

🔗 https://www.nahb.org/blog/2023/10/funding-for-workforce-development-programs?utm_

- **Madison Area Builders Association – Wisconsin**

Collaborated with Dane County Boys & Girls Club for a summer of construction skill-building, student showcases, and career awareness.

🔗 <https://www.nahb.org/blog/2023/06/member-partnership-success>



Get Started Locally

How to Start a Partnership with Your Local Boys & Girls Club

1. **Find your local club.**

🔗 Visit: <https://www.bgca.org/get-involved/find-a-club/> to identify nearby clubs.

2. **Reach out to the club director.**

Introduce your goals and explore how your work can support their programming.

3. **Start Small with a Pilot Activity.**

Offer a speaker session, lead a hands-on demo, or host a tour.

4. **Plan together.**

Align schedules, clarify expectations, and gather student feedback.

5. **Use NAHB support.**

Explore toolkits, funding models, and case studies at:

🔗 Visit: BGC Partnership Toolkit <http://bit.ly/4mYrdRu>

For additional support, contact Sarah Weber, Senior Director, Workforce Development & Student Chapters, NAHB (sweber@nahb.org)

National Partnership Highlight

NAHB's HBCU Student Leadership Program

Investing in Talent. Elevating the Future.

Launched in 2023, the NAHB HBCU Student Leadership Program is a national initiative designed to equip diverse young adults from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) with the skills, knowledge, and professional networks they need to thrive in the residential construction industry. The program reflects NAHB's broader commitment to building a more diverse, inclusive, and talented workforce.

Program Themes

- **Residential Construction:** Students explore all aspects of residential construction from planning and design to carpentry, plumbing, and project management while learning how to build functional, safe, and high-quality housing.
- **Leadership:** Participants develop leadership skills essential to the construction industry, including decision-making, team management, quality control, and strategic communication.
- **Career Development and Resources:** The program offers hands-on guidance in resume writing, salary negotiation, and obtaining certifications, as well as pathways for continuing education and upskilling.
- **Networking:** Through national events like the International Builders' Show, students connect directly with builders, employers, and mentors, expanding their access to opportunities in the field.

Why It Matters

By providing immersive, year-round experiences (including construction-site visits, career seminars, and mentorships) the HBCU Student Leadership Program gives students a platform to gain industry insight, build confidence, and shape their futures. One participant described it best:



“This program didn’t just support my goals—it helped me discover them. It gave me the space to test my skills, build confidence, and see what was possible. For students at HBCUs like mine, that kind of exposure and support is game-changing.”

— Lawrence Thompson III

Tuskegee University graduate and Project Manager
America's Home Place



This program is part of NAHB's larger effort to ensure the future of homebuilding is skilled, inclusive, and reflective of the communities it serves. [Learn more at: https://www.nahb.org/advocacy/top-priorities/workforce-development](https://www.nahb.org/advocacy/top-priorities/workforce-development)

Get Involved: Support the HBCU Student Leadership Program

The NAHB HBCU Student Leadership Program is preparing the next generation of diverse leaders in residential construction. You can be part of their journey.

Ways Industry Partners Can Engage

- Serve as a guest speaker or career panelist.
- Offer mentorship or job shadowing opportunities.
- Provide feedback on resumes and portfolios.
- Host site visits or company tours.
- Support with internships or job placements.

By sharing your knowledge, network, and experience, you help create a stronger, more inclusive workforce while building lasting connections with top talent.

Interested in getting involved? Contact Sarah Weber (sweber@nahb.org) to learn how you and your company can support the HBCU Student Leadership Program.



HBCU Cohort 2 - September 2024

Conclusion: Turning Tools into Action

You don't have to reinvent the wheel. These tested tools are designed to make workforce engagement easy, scalable, and sustainable, so you can focus on what matters most — building connections that last.

With these resources, you can:

- Help students and educators explore careers in your industry.
- Show how classroom learning connects to your real-world of work.
- Build a stronger pipeline for your future workforce.

Make partnering simple, impactful, and built to last. Small actions today can create big opportunities tomorrow.

Get Involved: Your Role in Shaping the Future Workforce

These national programs and engagement activities thrive because of the support of local builders, trade professionals, and HBA leaders. Whether you're hosting a student for a day, joining a panel, or mentoring over time, your involvement matters.

Take the next step:

- Connect with your local HBA to explore partnership opportunities.
- Reach out to NAHB workforce contacts to join national initiatives.
- Use the templates and toolkits in this chapter to get started today.

Small actions have the potential to create meaningful, positive change. Sharing your work experiences and encouraging our youth could be the spark that launches a student's career.

Up Next: Chapter 8 — Future-Proof Your Partnerships

It is one thing to begin a partnership. It's another to make sure your partnerships work well, and that your workforce development efforts and their benefits last and grow over time. In the next chapter we will take a look at how this work becomes an essential component of your business strategy, how it can be scaled, and how steps can be taken to sustain its success into the future.

II Pause and Reflect

As you wrap up Chapter 7, take a moment to consider how these tools can be activated in your own context.

Reflection Questions:

- Which engagement activities feel most doable given your current time and capacity?
- Where could you build in mentorship moments without launching a new program?
- How might your team use the templates and planning tools to save time and increase impact?
- Who do you need to involve from within your company or the school system to move from planning to action?
- How will you measure success, not just in numbers, but in relationships, learning, and momentum?

Next Step: Pick one activity or tool from this chapter and commit to testing it in the next 30 days. When the activity is completed, take time to reflect on the experience. What worked? What would you do differently?