



Expand the boundaries of learning beyond the traditional classroom.

### Quick Guide

# How do I find meaningful industry partnerships?

Building relationships with business, industry and higher education partners is critical to the success of profession-based learning (Pro-BL). Deepening connections with your local community means more employment pipelines for students and the opportunity for them to envision a future beyond their immediate circumstances. The first step is finding partners that align with your program culture and student needs.

## IDENTIFY KEY ROLES

Developing community partnerships in a Pro-BL model requires dedicated management. Often, this looks like a designated coordinator or business development specialist who onboards partners, explains the program, provides tours, facilitates introductions and manages relationships. If hiring a full-time coordinator isn't feasible, consider forming a committee of motivated instructors and parents to lead the effort. Schools can also leverage outside community organizations to team up on staffing for industry outreach. Check with your local chamber of commerce or economic development council to inquire about a partnership.

Regardless of the approach, successful community partnerships depend on strong leadership and collaboration.



## ESTABLISH CONNECTIONS

- **Identify Potential Partners:** Look for businesses, nonprofits, government agencies or other organizations that align with your program's goals.
- **Leverage Existing Relationships:** Tap into networks of current partners, parents, alumni and staff to find potential new partners.
- **Attend Community Events:** Participate in local business forums, chamber of commerce meetings and industry-specific events to connect with potential partners.
- **Showcase Student Work:** Invite community members to student exhibitions, presentations and other events to demonstrate the value of profession-based learning.

## PURSUE PARTNERSHIPS

- **Local Businesses:** Reach out to small businesses, startups and larger corporations in your area that may benefit from fresh ideas and potential future employees.
- **Industry Associations:** Connect with local chapters of industry associations related to your program's focus areas.
- **Educational Institutions:** Collaborate with local colleges and universities, which often have resources and contacts that can help.
- **Government Agencies:** Engage with local government agencies that may have initiatives or resources to support educational partnerships.
- **Nonprofit Organizations:** Partner with nonprofits that have missions aligned with your educational efforts.

## ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY

- **Host Informational Meetings:** Organize meetings where potential partners can learn about your program, its goals and how they can get involved.
- **Create Volunteer Opportunities:** Develop roles for community members to volunteer as mentors, guest speakers or project advisors.
- **Develop Client-Connected Projects:** Create opportunities for students to work as consultants with industry partners on real projects from their to-do lists — creating value for both.
- **Regular Communication:** Maintain open lines of communication with partners through newsletters, social media updates and regular check-ins to keep them informed and engaged.

Ready to explore more? Let's connect!  
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**“Without community partnerships, we would not be able to offer quality, authentic experiences, with the coaching and training needed to close our region's skills gap, attract and keep local talent and build self-awareness in our students.”**

— Dr. Robert Hall  
 Executive Director  
 LAUNCH, Elmbrook Schools