

C2L Program Design: Launching, Leading, & Sustaining High-Quality Programs



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Introduction

Career Connected Learning is a model, the continuum pictured below can be seen as a tool to help implement the model. The City of Philadelphia's (The City) version, Career Connected Learning Philadelphia (C2L-PHL or C2L), is a city-wide collaboration designed for youth to explore different career paths and fields, work on skills needed to reach their career goals, and help them uncover strengths and passions to inform future career decisions. C2L combines hands-on experience with rigorous classroom learning and reflection. The continuum, as pictured below, takes youth from career awareness where they are learning about different career options, to career preparation where they participate in internships to get hands-on experience, to career launch where youth begin the additional education needed to start their career.



Youth workforce programs date back to the Industrial Revolution and the founding of the YMCA which was dedicated to youth work. Ever since, youth workforce programs have evolved to address the needs of diverse youth populations, providing them with education, job training, and employment opportunities. The National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth) developed a set of competencies for youth service providers titled Youth Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities for Practitioners. Included are [7 core competencies](#) identified to inform capacity building priority areas. They serve as the

foundation for the work of capacity building, to ensure programs are meeting the needs of the youth they serve.

Objectives

By the end of this guide, you should be able to:

- Describe the C2L continuum and 7 core competencies, explaining their importance for high-quality programming.
- Implement a C2L program using practical guidance and examples to ensure fidelity to the model.
- Design and manage a C2L program by integrating the C2L continuum and adapting it to the specific needs of the organization and participating youth.

How to Use this Guidebook

This guide is a resource for all organizations who are either starting a C2L program or improving an existing one. Through examples and case studies, we will dive into the 7 core competencies used to inform capacity building priorities and how to implement the C2L continuum. This guide is broken up into 3 sections as described below; Launch, Lead, and Sustain. This guide can be used cover to cover or by reviewing the relevant sections based on your program needs. It is based on the requirements from the C2L Fiscal and Contracting Intermediary, JEVS Human Services (JEVS), as well as the C2L Capacity Building Provider, Foundations, Inc.

Launch

- Launch provides an overview of C2L and the core competencies, a discussion on what makes a high-quality program, and a description of implementing programs with fidelity.

Lead

- Lead will guide programs through building a C2L program or adapting an existing program to fit the C2L model.

Sustain

- Sustain reviews ways to keep programming going through partnerships and continuous quality improvement processes.

Throughout the guide are Provider Spotlights. These spotlights share real-life stories of actual C2L providers and their programs. They provide examples of different topics that they have implemented with success.

LAUNCH

The launch phase for a C2L program provider, which is a youth-serving non-profit organization, is about laying the foundation for C2L-PHL programming, getting an understanding of what C2L is and determining if it is a fit for your organization. This is different than the career launch phase that is part of the continuum which is focused more on connecting youth to career pathways. In this section we will provide an overview of:

- What C2L-PHL is, including an overview of the work-based learning strands.
- Introduce what capacity building is and how that support is designed to align with core competencies and program quality standards.
- Providers will also learn what is needed to ensure their programs are high quality and implemented with fidelity.

Overview of C2L-PHL

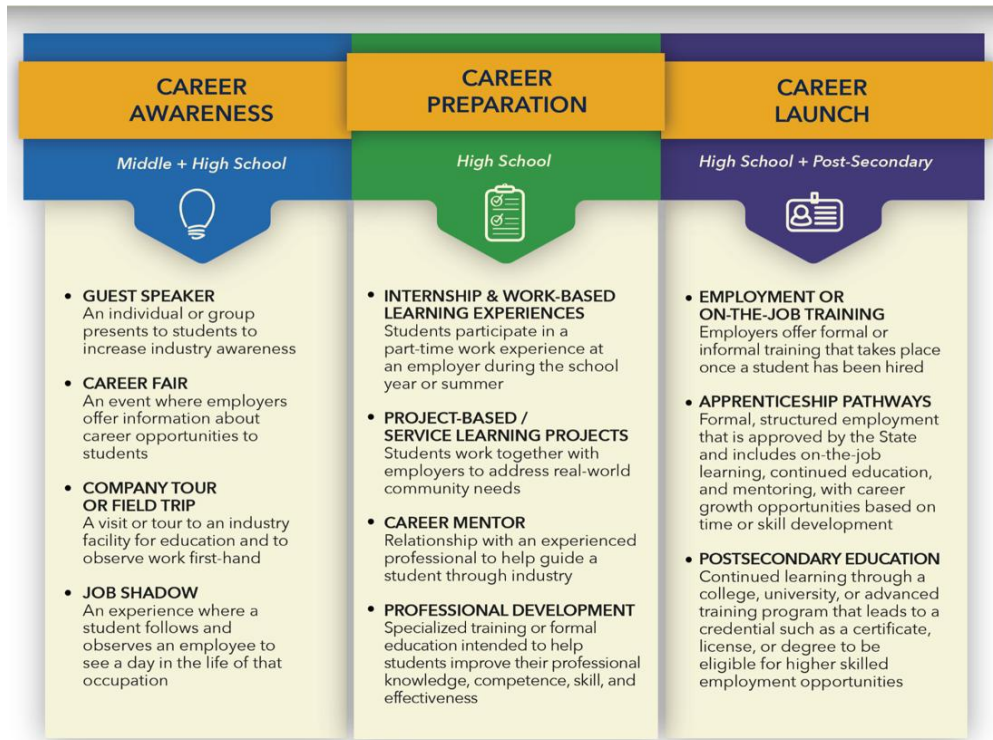
As stated on the [City of Philadelphia's website](#), C2L-PHL is Philadelphia's version of Career Connected Learning. This widely recognized model is designed to help youth develop the skills, knowledge, and mindset necessary to prepare them to enter the workforce and future careers. In Philadelphia, the three goals for youth are:

- Explore different career paths and fields
- Work on the skills needed to achieve their career goals
- Uncover their strengths and passions to inform career decisions

The foundation of career connected learning is that hands-on experiences - connected to classroom learning - and reflection allow youth to build the necessary skills for a successful career. The partnership between Philadelphia Works, the City of Philadelphia, and the School District of Philadelphia, is committed to supporting this large-scale effort for youth to engage in valuable experiences that expose them to various career options and pathways, build the skills necessary to enter the workforce, the opportunity to earn industry-relevant credentials, and help youth earn a living wage and advance their careers.

C2L Continuum

Career connected learning activities are offered along a continuum: Awareness, Preparation, Launch, and Advancement. The graphic below lists some of the activities that can happen at each point in the continuum. These are recommendations. The advancement phase provides youth the opportunity to strategize through networking with professionals in their field of interest and taking advantage of mentorship opportunities. In the advancement phase, youth should develop personal branding and communication skills, self-confidence, and deep-rooted connections to their field of interest. If you have a program serving high school students in the career preparation phase, there is value in bringing a guest speaker into your program, especially if youth may be deciding between various career paths. Seeing and speaking to someone in a specific field can help them picture themselves in that role and whether it has the potential to be a good fit.



The primary goal of the C2L model is to consistently expose youth to a variety of professional development opportunities within workplace settings, enabling them to explore multiple career pathways. The objectives for this model, designed to offer comprehensive support, include:

- Youth are given access and experiences to explore different career paths and fields.
- Youth are equipped with the tools and skills they need to explore, set, and achieve career goals.
- Youth know how to identify and utilize their strengths and passions to inform career decisions.

Capacity Building Resources

The [C2L-PHL Resource Library](#) has been built to support C2L providers through every phase of implementation, especially the launch phase of programming. The [Provider Resource Kit](#) page of the Resource Library contains tools, templates, guides, recorded virtual professional development trainings, self-paced learning modules, and podcasts broken out by Core Competency area.

Tools, templates, and guides allow providers to quickly learn and then implement strategies that may be useful for their programs. Tools provide quick, useful information that can be incorporated into programming while templates are worksheets that can be customized and completed to help programs take action. Guides can serve as workbooks to be used with youth, leadership and frontline staff as well as placement sites. They have the flexibility to be used as a whole document or broken into parts that are most relevant to your needs.

The Virtual PD column lists topics discussed during past virtual professional development trainings including engaging with youth, how to use data to inform program design, and training to ensure programs are high-quality. Providers who are uncertain about which type of work-based learning to implement for their program can review the [Crafting Effective Learning Series](#) to learn more about project-based learning, service learning, and internships.

The Learning Modules dive deeper into topics like an overview of C2L, implementing stipend-based activities, and trauma informed practices. Upon the successful completion of a module, a certificate will be issued. This is a great way for providers to assess the learning of themselves as well as their staff.

The last column of the Provider Resource Kit are Podcasts. They are designed to be quick information sessions to help providers and employers work with youth and their families. Each podcast features a guest subject matter expert.

A training plan for providers and their staff can be developed based on needs and programming structure. The Capacity Building Specialist, staff assigned to various providers, can help develop a training curriculum that will help programs not only launch programs but also around building plans for continuous learning.

Work-based Learning Overview

According to Jobs for the Future¹, work-based learning (WBL) is defined as engaging in meaningful job tasks in a workplace that assists with the development of readiness to work, knowledge, and skills that support entry or advancement in a particular career field. WBL supports a continuum of lifelong learning and skill development.

In C2L-PHL programs, there are 3 types of work-based learning opportunities that programs may host for youth to participate in. They are internship, service learning, and project-based learning. These activities can happen at provider sites or in partnership with employers or other community organizations. For a quick reference guide, visit [Work-Based Learning Matrix](#) in the [Provider Resource Kit](#) of the [C2L-PHL Resource Library](#). Below are descriptions of the work-based learning types.

Project-Based Learning

Project-based learning, or PBL, is a teaching method where youth learn by actively engaging in real-world and personally meaningful projects. The advantages of PBL include helping youth build 21st century skills like critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration in areas such as health and wellness, STEM, and literacy. Through PBL youth are able to practice social emotional skills like self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and responsible decision-making. PBL projects begin with a driving question that is designed to get youth to answer an open-ended question by solving a problem. It is designed to engage youth in the learning experience. Ideally this is best for youth aged 12-14 to help them gain awareness of careers and real-world challenges. Some sample projects youth have completed in C2L include researching future careers including education, cost of education, and potential

¹ <https://www.jff.org/idea/work-based-learning-framework/>

earning at Building on Opportunity for Sound Training (BOOST) and coming up with a plan of how to help or solve an issue that is happening in Philadelphia at the University of Pennsylvania Vice Provost of Student Engagement (VPSE) program.

Service-Learning

Through service learning, youth are able to connect community problem-solving to academic curriculum. Youth engage in meaningful service projects that will help them develop empathy, social responsibility, and teamwork skills. There are many advantages to having youth participate in a service-learning project. One reason is that it engages them and helps them raise awareness on current issues by helping them understand that what they do in their community can have impacts elsewhere. This can help youth feel empowered to make changes and see how those changes can impact their community. Service-learning is also beneficial because it connects academics in a practical way through real-world experiences. This is ideal for youth aged 14-18. Since service-learning projects may mean working with another organization, it is important that youth are prepared for that level of interaction. Sample C2L service-learning projects include organizing and hosting community events at Bartram's Garden.

Internship

Internships are short-term opportunities that allow youth to gain entry-level work experience in a particular industry or field, through hands-on experience. This hands-on experience allows youth to develop and build skills they may need in that profession like communication, professionalism, and working in a team. Through navigating new work environments, work dynamics and other challenges, youth gain social and emotional growth by building adaptability and resiliency skills. Ideally this is best for youth aged 16-24, youth who have an idea of a career path and are able to explore it in their internship. Example internships that C2L youth have participated in include serving as camp counselors at Philadelphia Parks & Rec and creating products for another organization at the Workshop School.

Apprenticeships also deserve an honorable mention in the work-based learning experience. They are another great way for youth to get hands-on experience and preparation for a future career, usually in a trade. They work under the supervision of an experienced professional and in the end are able to gain an industry-recognized credential.

PROVIDER SPOTLIGHT

Ligouri Academy is an internship-based program that serves youth ages 14-21, predominately high school juniors and seniors. During programming, youth completed internships in industries such as technology, art, construction, and healthcare. Some of their partners include Alterra Property Group, Good City Studio, and Abbey Color. During their internship experiences, youth noted they gained valuable skills relevant to the industries. A few youth interned at The Princeton Group and shared that they gained communication skills and how to interact with clients, the importance of networking, and diving deeper into financial literacy learning how investments, banking, and money work. The internships match up with the cohorts that youth participate in during the school day. Ligouri has objectives for both partner engagement and internship. This provider receives formal and informal feedback from partners and youth. That feedback is used to assess what changes need to be

made to the program.

Additional work-based learning opportunities can be included in any of the options discussed above, including hosting a career fair, bringing in guest speakers to talk about careers, going on a company tour or behind the scenes tour, or job shadowing for a day or two.

If you are unsure of which work-based learning type fits best with your program, here are a few tips to help you decide. Use the handout below to track your responses.

1. Consider the age range of the youth you are serving. It's important to meet youth where they are but also have opportunities for them to stretch and grow. Project-based learning may not be the best for youth who are 18 and older because they should be in the career preparation phase where they are getting hands-on experiences and connecting to potential employers.
2. Think about the connections you have in the community and how you may be able to incorporate them into your C2L program. Maybe you have a really good connection with a local bakery but unfortunately, they don't have the bandwidth to bring on an intern. You could bring them in as a guest speaker to talk about their experience as a baker.
3. Look closely at what you have the ability to do. Are you able to facilitate the step-by-step activities that go with a project-based learning program? For service learning and internships, do you have the right connections in the area to make sure it will be a smooth experience for your C2L youth? If you have not spent much time thinking about this, now is the perfect time to reflect before the next session starts.
4. Examine whether all youth will benefit from participating in the same work-based learning type. Say your program serves youth ages 12-18. 12-year-olds may not be ready for an internship, whereas 18-year-olds may be. Do you have enough staff and support to host 2 different experiences at your site? The 12-year-olds may need some foundational skill building like working in a team, developing communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills which they can get through project-based learning. The 18-year-olds may already have experience with developing these skills and would benefit from putting what they learned into practice by participating in an internship.

Work-based learning is effective, in part, because of the relationships and connections that support it. Think about the youth, potential mentors, employers/business partners/industry leaders, and the program staff. Regardless of which work-based learning type you incorporate, making connections between what youth may be learning during professional development sessions to real-world experiences of professionals will be beneficial for youth. It's important that youth start to see themselves in different careers than what they may be exposed to on a daily basis.

Work-based Learning Types Reflection

Use this form to help you assess which work-based learning type fits best with your program and its alignment to the C2L continuum. When making your selection, consider your program's goals, the age and developmental stage of the youth you plan to serve, and your current staff capacity.

Youth to be served

Age range of youth being served: _____

Based on age range, which area of the continuum will your program fall?

What are the needs of the youth? _____

Community connection

What organizations are you connected to? What role could they play in your C2L program?

Organization	Role within C2L

Program Capacity

of staff who will work on the C2L initiative: _____

How much time per week are they available? (include number of hours required)

Staff Name	Time Available (in hours per week)

Now that you have done some reflection, refer to the [Work-Based Learning Matrix](#). Based on the age range of the youth, the needs you have identified, and the capacity of your program, which work-based learning type will fit best with your program?

_____ Project-based learning _____ Service-learning _____ Internship

List the rationale for selecting the work-based learning type: _____

Is there anything you need to add to your program to ensure you are able to host this work-based learning type? _____

Stipend-based Activities

C2L provides participating youth with stipends as a form of financial compensation. In the stipend-based model, youth receive a predetermined amount of money for participating in specific activities over a period of time, as opposed to wage-based programs which provide compensation for hours worked. Unlike wage-based activities, stipend-based programs emphasize skill development, learning outcomes, and personal growth rather than just completing tasks for pay. If you have any specific questions about youth pay, make sure to contact your assigned fiscal and contracting intermediary.

Components to consider when crafting your stipend-policy include:

- Establishing a clear attendance policy. Included in the attendance policy should be a statement about absences, punctuality, and dress code.
- Creating clear learning objectives. Define what youth should achieve through each activity they will participate in. The objectives should align with the measurable goals of the program.
- Defining benchmarks and milestones. Many programs have a culminating project that youth must complete and present at the end of programming. You may consider establishing benchmarks throughout the program to ensure they stay on track.
- Ensuring youth are engaged during programming. Showing up is only a part of what youth will gain out of this experience. They must also actively engage, which may look different for each youth. Some youth are more outgoing and may tend to speak up a lot. Youth who are quiet can still show their engagement by paying attention, taking notes, and actively engaging in smaller group activities. Make sure engagement is clearly defined for youth.

This could be a bit of a shift if programs are used to wage-based models. For example, a stipend-based program may have youth completing a service-learning project with a local community kitchen where youth are able to provide input on communicating organization services to the community, allowing them to explore skills like professional communication and innovative ways to use social media. Youth engage with the organization staff not only to fulfill the project, but they also get guidance on the development of their own career pathways, connecting them to resources and networks that can help youth achieve their goals. Unlike wage-based, stipend-based is not as clearly defined. As a C2L program provider, it is up to you to determine the criteria youth must meet in order to receive their stipend in any pay period.

In addition to documenting youth time-in and time-out each day, develop a form where you list the criteria and mark progress at the end of every day or week. Determine what the threshold will be for youth to receive their pay each pay period. For example, a program might say that youth must meet 80% of the criteria at each pay period to receive their pay. If there is a list of 10 things a youth must complete, they can only miss a maximum of 2 things and still receive their pay. Whatever process the program determines, this needs to be communicated to youth and their families during program orientation. Programs may consider adding this to a contract or agreement they have youth sign at the beginning of every session to ensure they understand the rules and policies.

Youth Tracking Spreadsheet

An easy way to track youth participation and ensure they are meeting the requirements established to receive their stipend is to create a spreadsheet that lists all the youth in one column and all the components to be tracked across the top, like the example below. A blank template can be found in [Appendix A](#).

Youth Name	Attendance		Benchmarks		Activity participation	
	Mon, 8/9	Tues, 8/10	Present Research Topic idea - 8/16	Develop research outline - 8/23	Guest Speaker - Nick Sirianni - 8/24	Field trip- Lincoln Financial Field - 8/30
Jalen Hurts	x	x	Submitted 8/18	x	x	x
Copper Dejean	Late	x	x	x	No show	x
Brandon Graham	No show	Excused absence	x	Asked for and received extension for 8/28, submitted 8/27	x	x

Note that it is up to you whether you have a make-up policy/process for youth who miss programming. If a youth has an excused absence, you can make an arrangement for them to complete the work they missed or an equivalent activity within a certain period, so they still get credit and aren't penalized a payment.

For more information on wage-based to stipend-based activities, check out the [Transitioning from Wage-Based to Stipend-Based Activities](#) module and [Transformative Career Connected Learning](#) previously recorded virtual PD on the Provider Resource Kit page of the Resource Library.

Understanding the Core Competencies

There are 7 core competencies identified to guide the work of C2L-PHL capacity building support. They serve as the foundation for the site visit and document review process as well as the development of trainings and other resources that may be useful for providers. These competencies were adapted from the [Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities Assessment for Practitioners developed by the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth](#). The Pre-Program Assessment ([leadership version](#), [frontline staff version](#)) also known as the Pre-PA, tool was developed based on the core competencies for new providers and new staff to complete in order to assess the knowledge, skills, and abilities of leadership and frontline staff. The results of the Pre-PA are used to set capacity building goals for individual providers as well as all C2L providers as a whole.



Knowledge of the Field - Assesses provider knowledge of youth development theory, youth rights and laws, and understanding of 504s and IEPs. Knowledge and the active practice of youth development theories, career theories, and facilitation methodologies are included in this competency.

Program Design & Delivery - Gauges understanding of the workforce development system and designing effective programs. This competency includes developing measurable goals and trainings that teach youth about soft skills like communication and teamwork, technical

skills related to industry needs, and work readiness skills like resume writing and interview skills.

Communication with Youth, Caregiver(s), and Community – The ability to be open-minded and non-judgmental as well as the ability to engage youth, caregivers, and the community. Holding youth accountable and establishing a family engagement plan also fall within this competency.

Assessment and Individualized Planning – The ability to assess goals, interests, and learning styles as well as how to use information from assessments. Also looks at engaging youth in the planning process. Data collection, program improvement plans, and including career counseling throughout programming are also a part of this competency.

Workforce Preparation – The ability to facilitate job-readiness skill building activities and to place youth at placement sites that are a good fit for their abilities. This ensures the curriculum meets the C2L model and includes work-based learning opportunities like exposure to guest speakers, placement sites, and job shadowing.

Employer Engagement Support – Assesses provider ability to develop relationships with employers and to advocate on behalf of youth. This competency will encourage programs to assess their current employer partners and how actively engaged they are in the design and delivery of skill development activities such as serving as placement sites for internships and service-learning, guest speakers, and field trips.

Access to Resources – The understanding and ability to refer youth and their families/caregivers to resources as well as the ability to provide supportive services.

Implementing High Quality Programs with Fidelity

A high-quality program is one that not only meets the needs of youth participants but also meets the needs of industry and the community as well as having all the necessary C2L processes defined and documented. As a C2L provider, you will be assessed on specific program components to ensure high-quality programming.

Program Quality Standards

Quality standards are practices that are widely recognized elements necessary for program excellence and positive youth outcomes. They serve as a foundation for program quality and a benchmark for professionalism in the services provided. The Program Quality Standards were determined and developed by system partners supporting the C2L-PHL initiative. There are 9 domains that include a clear purpose, specific standards, and a developmental rubric to guide program implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement.



Quality Standard	Purpose	Examples
Program Goals & Alignment	To ensure that all stakeholders have a clear understanding of the program's mission by establishing transparent, shared goals that align with youth interests, community priorities, and workforce needs, thereby driving coherent implementation and meaningful outcomes.	Measurable program goals align with youth interest and industry priorities and are clearly documented and accessible to staff, youth, and partners.
Skills Development	To equip youth with a balanced foundation of technical and soft skills that prepare them for career awareness and exposure success through engaging, academically and professionally enriching, and evidence-based instruction facilitated by qualified professionals.	Soft skills like communication, teamwork, and professionalism are taught during programming.
Career Exposure	To provide youth with opportunities that will enhance their understanding of different careers and industries and allow them to make	A guest speaker from an in-demand industry comes to the

Quality Standard	Purpose	Examples
	sound decisions for their future in a career or industry.	program to share information on their journey and a day-in-the life in their career.
Work-Based Learning	To provide youth with diverse, structured opportunities to practice and prepare for careers and gain real-world insights through authentic work-based learning experiences co-designed with employers, thereby enhancing career readiness and informed decision-making.	Youth participate in an internship to improve their knowledge, competence, skill, and effectiveness as a young professional in their identified career.
Youth Support & Supportive Services	To foster youth development, confidence, and direction by offering personalized guidance, mentoring, extensive career development, and supportive services that promote self-awareness, planning, and sustained engagement in career connected learning.	Program leverages relationships with local agencies to offer mental health services to C2L program youth.
Employer and Community Partnerships	To strengthen program quality and broaden opportunity access by cultivating meaningful collaborations with local employers, industry professionals, and community-based organizations that contribute resources, expertise, and supportive services.	Program partners with a local employer to co-collaborate on developing a curriculum for the program.
Data-Driven Improvement	To enhance program effectiveness and accountability by using systematic data collection and analysis to inform continuous improvement, ensure goal alignment, and adapt services to youth needs and outcomes.	Programs utilize data from Hello Insight to inform changes to programming for the next session.
Access, Inclusion & Equity	To create a welcoming, accessible, and equitable program environment where all youth—regardless of background or need—can fully participate, thrive, and achieve success through inclusive design and targeted supports.	The location is accessible to youth with physical disabilities such as ramps, furniture that can be moved, and elevators.
Instructional Practice, Activity Facilitation & Youth-Centered Design	To deliver engaging, personalized, and developmentally appropriate learning experiences grounded in youth voice, positive youth development, and career relevance, using instructional strategies that foster agency, reflection, and real-world application.	Activities integrate real-world experiences such as creating a business plan and presenting it to a panel asking for funding.

Quality Standard	Purpose	Examples
Family & Community Engagement	To build trust and reinforce youth success by actively engaging families and communities through consistent communication, partnership, and access to supportive resources that address participation barriers.	Weekly newsletter is sent to families, caregivers, and the community with program updates and other important information.

SMART Goal Setting

One of the first steps in designing a program is to determine what the goals will be. Why does the program exist? What outcomes does the program want for youth? Goals should be tied to the overall mission and vision of the program. Once goals are determined, the next step is to make them measurable.

A popular goal setting design is the SMART framework. SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound. The tool below is adapted from the [Employer Action Plan](#) in the Employer Resource Kit in the C2L-PHL Resource Library.

An example goal may be to increase the engagement and satisfaction of youth during career development activities. Turning that into a SMART goal may look like: **Increase engagement and satisfaction through individualized career development plans and activities of youth who regularly attend C2L-PHL programming by 10% at the end of the required skill development hours, as measured by pre- and post- career reflection surveys.** Taking that statement apart:

Specific: Defines what needs to be achieved and the target audience.

Measurable: Using data from the pre- and post- career reflection surveys.

Achievable: Engagement and satisfaction of youth can increase by 10% if they engage in programming.

Relevant: Engagement and satisfaction are key indicators of a person-centered approach in high-quality career connected learning.

Time-Bound: The outcomes will be measured at the end of the required skill development hours for programming.

A SMART goal template is located in [Appendix A](#).

Goals are also an important tool for evaluating and assessing the success of programs. What happens once the goal is ready to be measured? [Developing a Continuous Program Quality Improvement Process](#) will be discussed later in this guide.

Recruitment & Retention

It is required that all providers have a recruitment and retention plan that includes the number of youth the program will serve and a strategy for outreach, recruitment, and program retention. Providers are responsible for hosting in-person outreach events until all program slots are filled. This information should be tracked like in a document or excel spreadsheet. The [C2L Youth Recruitment and Retention Plan](#) template will help leaders develop and document a strategic approach to youth recruitment and retention. An example of a plan using the C2L Youth Recruitment and Retention Plan is below.

Completed Sample Recruitment and Retention Plan

C2L-PHL Youth Recruitment and Retention Plan							
Program Slot Size/Retention Goal	Slot Size: 50						
	Enrollment Goal: 55						
	Youth Enrolled: 53						
Goal: <i>Think - Of the youth who attended your last program session, how many do you plan to retain for the next session? Based on your program's capacity and past recruitment trends, how many new youth participants do you aim to enroll during the next session?</i> <i>About 30 of the youth from the last session will continue. Based on that number we will need to recruit 25 youth.</i>							
Special Population Target <i>Think - What special populations are/are not represented in your program, and how will you tailor your approach to meet their needs? What percentage of new youth will represent priority populations?</i>							
Your Program's Special Population Target	☐ DHS Involved or Foster Care	☒ Justice-Involved	☐ Youth with disabilities	☐ Homelessness or Housing Insecurity	☐ Parenting or Expectant Youth	☐ Other:	
Barriers to Participation <i>(Brainstorm ways to overcome identified barriers. Think - What supportive services does your program currently have? What services can partners provide?)</i>							
Current Supports: <i>On our board we have a lawyer, Kay Smith, who specializes in working with youth in the juvenile justice system. She offers pro-bono services to youth in our program to help with their situation.</i> Potential Partner/Internal Supports:							
Recruitment Strategies (Need more space? Add a row after each strategy!)	Major Tasks/Actions	Timeline	Person Responsible	Resources/ Partners	Evidence of Implementation		
					Task Completed	Date of Completion	Evidence
Conduct Community Outreach	Table at a City of Philadelphia Summer Resource Fair	Saturday, April 18	Sanya - coordinator and James peer leader		Yes	April 18	Completed 12 youth interest forms

	<i>Attend School's Open House</i>	Monday, May 12	Kelly - C2L manager and James - peer leader		Yes	May 12	Completed 5 youth interest forms
Retention Strategies (Need more space? Add a row after each strategy!)	Major Tasks/Actions	Timeline	Person Responsible	Resources/ Partners	Evidence of Implementation		
					Task Completed	Date of Completion	Evidence
<i>Add more opportunities for youth voice & choice</i>	<i>Inform youth orientation plans with new youth feedback</i>	End of April 2026	Director - Joe				

Supportive Services

Supportive services are those that enable youth to participate in program activities. The most common support services are assistance with transportation like SEPTA passes or assistance in securing vital documents like birth certificates. It is expected by JEVS, the C2L intermediary, that programs leverage costs and resources to provide supportive services at a reasonable level. Some additional examples of supportive services include providing mental health vouchers by We Love Philly and the University of Pennsylvania VPSE program offers university resources like counseling services to their program participants.

Professional Development for Youth

A major part of C2L is providing professional development for youth. There are a set number of hours of professional development that programs must offer. As of August 2025, 30 hours are required during the school year (15 in the fall and 15 in the spring) and 30 hours for the summer. Professional development for youth can include financial literacy, career exploration, and skill building. Examples of professional development include:

- Financial literacy – bringing in a local bank to talk about financial literacy. For example, some banks may do a simulation activity that is hands-on and engaging.
- Career exploration – a panel discussion with professionals from various industries or a behind the scenes tour of an entertainment venue, highlighting the various careers involved.
- Skill building – resume writing, practice interviews, and mock networking are all skill building activities. Consider tapping into your organization’s Human Resources department, a local business, or the career services office of a local university. Not only will youth build skills, they may also explore related careers.

The [Activity Lesson Planning Template](#) is a useful resource because it allows you to plan out the different activities that can occur during programming in detail, including the learning goals and how long the activity will take.

Professional Development for Staff

It is expected that all program providers will provide professional development for their staff. The programming should include information about C2L to ensure they are aware of the initiative, but also anything else relevant to your program and the needs of your youth. There are many resources available to help pull together a professional development plan for your staff by visiting the [C2L-PHL Resource Library](#). The library includes previously recorded trainings, self-paced learning modules, and tools and templates. You can use the resources together to create a plan for your staff. If you need assistance, feel free to reach out to your assigned Capacity Building Specialist.

Mentors

While mentoring is not a required component for C2L programs, there may be value in incorporating it into your program. A mentor component may be useful if you have a youth interested in a career field that you and your staff have no knowledge of. Using your network to connect youth to a mentor can help them as they explore and develop their career pathway. Mentor programs can be formal or informal. A formal mentor program does require

a bit more effort. It may look like working with internal and external partners to pair them with C2L youth in your program. They should be paired based on some commonality, like career interest or extracurricular activity. This helps to ensure they are able to establish a connection and hopefully grow their relationship. Another part of the structure may include having connection requirements. Perhaps they must connect once a month or once a quarter. You may also consider building opportunities during programming for mentor interactions to take place. For example, you could set aside 2 hours every other Friday for mentors to attend and either chat with youth or function as guest speakers and talk about their careers.

Informal mentoring is a relationship that forms naturally through regular interaction. Many times, it looks like a bit more time spent with an individual youth. When interviewed in C2L programs, many youth shared they viewed staff as mentors because they expressed care, checked in on them, and helped if they needed assistance.

One thing to remember about mentoring is that it does not have to last forever, but it should be able to sustain after programming.

Communication with Families/Caregivers

Effective communication with families and caregivers about youth needs and program participation should be a component of program plans. Despite all of your best efforts, you may not be able to engage all families and caregivers, but that shouldn't stop you from trying. How are you currently communicating to your youth, staff, and other stakeholders? If you already have a communication strategy in place, you may not need to recreate the wheel. For example, if you send out a weekly email to youth participants, you could add their families and caregivers to ensure they are kept in the loop of what their youth is doing in the program. This can help families and caregivers engage with youth around their experience, which may also increase the family/caregiver engagement with the program.

PROVIDER SPOTLIGHT

We Love Philly's Priority Population Pre-Apprenticeship Hub serves youth ages 16-24 for internship experiences. Their mentor program offers one-on-one or group mentoring opportunities to their pre-apprentice participants who choose to opt-in. They seek mentors who are dedicated to making a difference in a youth's life through sharing experiences, communicating, and being an additional positive resource in their life. Monthly meet-ups are hosted by We Love Philly, in addition to providing reimbursement for activities done between mentors and mentees. The expectation is that mentors and youth meet for a minimum of 4 hours per month. Mentors are young adults, with the necessary clearances, who are recruited through their network, word of mouth, social media, and even at tabling events. The goal is to have mentors start as volunteers in their tribe and then grow to become a mentor. Mentors are paired with youth by the Social Emotional Coordinator through information completed in their "Story of Self" that asks about experience in childhood, details about goals, and where they currently are today. Feedback is provided by mentors through mid-way and end of program surveys which captures their thoughts on impact, suggestions for improvement, and any additional resources they may need to be successful mentors. Youth complete an exit survey at the end of the mentor program which measures their social-emotional growth during their time in the program.

Fidelity

Implementing a program with fidelity means making sure that each component is carried out as planned. There are 4 areas programs can measure to ensure programs are implemented with fidelity.

1. Adherence assesses whether programs are staying true to the activities planned. Ask yourself whether your program is implementing the activities as planned.
2. Dosage relates to the attendance of youth and the duration of their participation in each session. For example, if your program is 4 times a week, 2 hours a day, think about whether youth are attending 4 days and 2 hours each day.
3. Engagement is about how youth interact during activities. Are they asking questions, involved in group activities, and using critical thinking skills.
4. Delivery refers to how the facilitator is guiding youth through learning, like by encouraging the development of new skills and helping youth move to higher levels of thinking.

As you are building and implementing your program, it may be useful to do a self-evaluation. Using a rubric is a great way to check if your program is being implemented with fidelity and to measure performance of specific activities. The rubric below has been adapted from the [Planning and Implementation Toolkit and User Guide](#) developed by [21st CCLC NTAC](#). A blank template can be found in [Appendix A: Sample Program Binder](#).

Fidelity Implementation Rubric Sample

A blank template can be found in [Appendix A](#).

Activity Name: Financial Literacy Game: Adulting 101

Site/Location: ABC Center, 123 Walnut St

Date & Time: August 1, 2025

Observer: K. Schwarber

Rating Scale:

1 - Low: Key standards are missing or poorly executed; the facilitator shows little to no effort in engaging youth

2 - Medium: Meets basic expectations with room for improvement; the facilitator shows appropriate effort in engaging youth

3 - High: Exceeds expectations in all areas; the facilitator demonstrates strong levels of engagement with youth

Category	Indicators	Rating	Notes
Adherence	The activity focuses on the following skills: (list the skills/objectives intended for the activity being	2	Facilitator communicated effectively with youth

	observed) • Communication • Teamwork • Leadership		around how the game is played based on their ease of play. Facilitator encourages group to be respectful of each other while still having fun. Activity started with an overview of financial literacy to help youth understand the game they were about to play.
	Required resources/materials are available: • Calculator • Pens/pencils • Game supplies printed out	3	The supplies needed were laid out before the youth arrived, ensuring everything needed to play the game was available.

Site Visit & Document Review Process

Part of the Capacity Building process is to conduct site visits. These are not meant to be punitive, but more of an opportunity to ensure programming is high quality and being implemented with fidelity. It is a great way to identify any gaps that may exist and coordinate with your assigned Capacity Building Specialist (CBS) to develop an action plan that will address those gaps. Prior to the start of programming, your assigned CBS will reach out to you to schedule an intake meeting. During this meeting, the role of the CBS will be discussed, as well as the site visit process, any required trainings, and important dates to know.

During the site visit, the CBS will observe an activity, such as a skill development activity or workshop. There will also be interviews with C2L youth and staff. The feedback gathered during the interviews provides valuable insight into the lived experience of participants. Below is a list of some of the features that will be observed during the site visit:

- Program Alignment
 - Goal Documentation and Alignment
- Ongoing Assessment & Improvement
 - Data Collection
 - Program Improvement
- Comprehensive Skills Development
 - Technical Skills Training
 - Soft Skills Training
 - Work Readiness Training

- Facilitation of Skill Development Activities
 - Professional Provider(s)
- Work-based Learning Opportunities
 - Work-based learning opportunities provided and youth engagement
 - Employer engagement
- Individualized Support
 - Career Planning
 - Youth Involvement in Career Planning
 - Communication with Youth
- Strong Partnerships with Employers and Community Organizations
 - Employer Partnerships
 - Community Organization Collaboration
- Inclusivity & Accessibility
 - Accessibility Measures
 - Support for Diverse Needs
 - Cultural Competence and Equity
- Knowledge of Field and Teaching/Facilitation Methodologies
 - Knowledge of Youth Development and Career Theories
 - Use of Teaching/Facilitation Methodologies
 - Safety and Emergency Procedures
- Communication with Families and Community
 - Family Engagement
 - Community Resource Access

Another component of the site visit is to review documents. The specific documents should be shared before setting up a time for the site visit. This information gives the CBSs an idea of what programming may look like and what to expect at the site visit. Below is a list of some of the documents collected during the process.

- Program Operations
 - Program Schedule
 - Youth Recruitment & Retention Plan
 - Policies & Procedures for Youth
 - Staffing and Youth Roster
 - Support Services Plan
 - Emergency Preparedness Plan
- Program Effectiveness
 - Measurable Program Goals
 - Continuous Quality Improvement Process/Plan
- Stakeholder/Partner Involvement
 - Family Engagement Plan
 - School-day Collaboration Plan
 - Employer Partnership and Target Industry Focus Plan
 - List of Partners
- Program Effectiveness

- Written Youth Behavior Management Plan
- Staff Professional Development
 - Professional Development Plan
- Content, Youth Facilitation & Engagement
 - Professional Development Plan Activities
 - Workbased Learning Activities/Services plan
 - Activity/lesson planning template
 - Career Plan/Schedule

While most documents may be stored digitally and easy to share, there may be instances where only hard copies of documents are available. If that is the case, then time will be added to the site visit to review those documents on-site.

CONTINUE YOUR LEARNING

[Crafting Effective Learning Series](#)

[Work-based Learning Matrix](#)

[Transformative Career Connected Learning](#)

[Transitioning from Wage-based to Stipend-based Activities](#)

[Holding Youth Accountable](#)

[Employer Action Plan](#)

[Activity Lesson Planning Template](#)

[Using the CLEAR Coaching Framework](#)

[Youth Workforce Providers Guidebook](#)

LEAD

Now that the foundation of C2L-PHL has been established, the Lead section will guide programs through building a C2L program or adapting an existing program to fit the C2L model. All programs should start with the [Auditing Your Program](#) below. [Building a C2L-PHL Program](#) is focused on new providers but can also serve as a reminder for returning providers. [Adapting Existing Programs](#) helps you determine what you have and what you need in order to have a program that fits into the C2L model.

Auditing Your Program

Regardless of whether you are new to C2L or a returning provider, taking an audit of your program is helpful to determine what's working and what changes need to be made. Some of the things that may need to be audited include:

- Program goals and alignment
- Skill development for youth
- Career exposure
- Work-Based learning
- Youth support and services
- Data-driven improvement, access, inclusion, and equity
- Instructional practice & youth-centered design
- Family, caregivers, and community engagement

AUDIT YOUR PROGRAM TOOL SAMPLE

A blank template of this tool is available in [Appendix A](#).

Topic	Question	Yes	No	Comments/Action
Program Goals & Alignment	Are your goals clearly documented?		X	<i>The goals have been included in presentations but nothing that stands alone. Create a document that has the goals and print to display in the room. Also make sure the goals are included in youth and staff handbooks.</i>
	Do they align with youth interests?	X		
	Do they align with community priorities and workforce needs?		X	<i>The goals focus on youth outcomes without connecting them to workforce needs. Use our employer partners to help revise our goals so they also align with what workforce needs are.</i>
	Do they align with the C2L-PHL objectives and continuum?	X		

Topic	Question	Yes	No	Comments/Action
	Can your youth and staff articulate the goals?	X		
Skill Development for Youth	Are youth gaining technical and soft skills?	X		
	Are youth receiving financial literacy education as part of your 30 hours of professional development and learning?		X	<i>We do not currently have financial literacy built into the curriculum. Prior to the start of next session, outreach to local banks to have one come in and do a financial literacy presentation. Also see if they have their own curriculum that we can incorporate in our programming.</i>
	Are youth receiving engaging instruction?			

Building a C2L-PHL Program

After reviewing high-quality programming, program fidelity, and auditing your current offerings, the next step is to focus on building a C2L-PHL Program. If your program is already focused on workforce readiness, your next step is to ensure its alignment with C2L objectives. The funding received from C2L can help programs supplement their current program structure to align with C2L and to be leveraged to expand the impact of the program. Think about what resources are needed to ensure youth are getting hands-on, real-world experience and building the necessary skills to be successful in the job market.

If you have a more traditional OST program and have received C2L funding, there is some work to do to ensure it aligns with C2L objectives. It may include building technical and soft skill opportunities in the curriculum. This could include sessions on computer literacy, computer coding, writing professional emails, and working on a team to complete a project. Partnerships can be utilized in a different way. For example, if your program always takes a trip to the local park, ask to do a behind the scenes tour so youth can see how the park operates and can learn about the different career paths that individuals working at the park have.

A great place to start learning more about C2L-PHL programming is the C2L-PHL Resource Library (www.c2lphlresourcelibrary.org). The [Overview of C2L-PHL](#) module provides a high-level overview of career connected learning and C2L. This is a required module for all C2L programs and their program staff to complete.

After you have an understanding of career connected learning, it's time to determine which work-based learning strand your program will follow - project-based learning, service learning, or internship - as discussed earlier in [Work-based Learning Overview](#). The [Crafting Effective Learning Series](#) is a great place to go if you aren't sure which strand will fit best with your program. After you have viewed the virtual PDs, referencing the [Work-Based Learning](#)

[Matrix](#) on the Provider Resource Kit page of the [C2L-PHL Resource Library](#) can help with the final decision.

Now that you've decided on which work-based learning strand your program will follow, what will programming look like? If you are currently running any sort of youth program, get youth feedback on what interests them. Topics to consider include career interests, networking, public speaking, time management, reflection opportunities, and how to interact with youth. The [Youth Workforce Program Activities](#) tool in the Resource Library has a list of activities you can incorporate into your program. Before diving into specific topics, take time to intentionally design programming that reflects youth interests, developmental needs, and your program's goals. Below are key components or areas for you to reflect on.

Career Interests

A key component of any C2L program is to help youth explore their career interests. Think back to the continuum. Younger youth in the awareness phase are just learning about careers and starting to explore their interests. Activities for them may include bringing in guest speakers or taking youth on field trips where they get a behind-the-scenes tour of a facility. Youth who are older and in the launch phase might explore their career interests through internships and other hands-on experiences working in a specific industry. Regardless of their age, youth should leave your program with a better understanding of a potential career path, even if that career path is as vague as wanting to work with computers or in the culinary industry.

Networking

Find opportunities for youth to network with professionals. This can be a structured mentor program or simply bringing in a guest speaker who youth can connect with after their speech. Consider scheduling a networking workshop as part of your professional development hours so youth can learn how to approach a professional and ask them questions and for their contact information if they are able to make a career focused connection.

Reflection Opportunities

Providing time for youth to reflect is an important part of developing a career path. Building time after key activities like field trips, guest speakers, or skill development will provide youth with the space to process what they just heard and learned and how it may fit into the picture they have for their future. Consider having youth complete weekly reflections. This may be a helpful resource for assessing the effectiveness of activities and help you decide what may need to change and what may be able to stay the same.

Interacting with Youth

Think about what interaction with youth participants will look like, especially based on the number of staff who will be dedicated to working in the C2L program. If you currently run any type of youth programming, gauge how youth want to interact with staff and with their peers. If you currently have a C2L program, you will have access to Hello Insight survey data which includes a question that asks youth to evaluate their learning preferences. Understanding the preferences of youth will help to ensure their active participation. It is impossible to satisfy everyone's preferences, but there may be ways to incorporate all into different aspects of

your program. Below are some of the interactions youth can choose from the Hello Insight survey and some examples of how you can implement them into your program.

- **Working 1:1 with an adult** can look like individual career counseling sessions.
- **Peer work/group work** can be the completion of a culminating project for PBL or service-learning programs. Help youth navigate various roles they can take in the group project. The [Learning Activity Group Roles](#) tool is a great resource that can be used to assign youth to various group roles.
- **Hands-on project/activity** can be a wide range of activities. There are a few current C2L programs where youth are engaged in agricultural activities like gardening, farming, and tending to herbs and other small plants. These youth start with planting the seeds and tending to the plants and crops as they grow. Through the lessons they learn they are taught what to look for, whether a plant needs more water, less water, or more or less light. Other programs have youth creating products like t-shirts and coasters using technology like laser printers and heat presses.
- **Learning on their own** activities can also look like culminating projects. A common end of program project is to have youth research and develop a presentation on their future career. This allows youth to explore something that interests them.
- **Physical activity** in C2L can be built in time for stretching, quick energizer activities, or even yoga or other relaxation activities. While there are some programs whose sole focus is on health and wellness, those who don't have that focus can still incorporate elements of physical activity in the day to keep youth focused and engaged.

If you used the [Activity Lesson Planning](#) template above in [High Quality Programs](#) section, next you may consider using the [Setting Clear Objectives](#) worksheet. This document will help you develop outcomes for each activity using Bloom's Taxonomy.

Additional Considerations

Capacity

Based on current staffing levels, do you have enough staff to manage a youth workforce readiness program for 6-9 weeks? Given the ratio requirements, supervisor to youth ratios should be:

- Service Learning - 1 supervisor for every 15 youth
- PBL - 1 supervisor for every 15 youth
- Internship - 1 supervisor for every 10 youth

If overseeing youth under the age of 18, consider how many staff you have and then determine how many youth based on the ratios above you will be able to serve. Remember that supervising adults and program facilitators are required to have clearances.

In addition to having enough staff to focus on C2L programming, you are also responsible for training your team. Your Capacity Building Specialist will be able to help you develop a plan to best serve you and your staff from past virtual PDs and modules available on the C2L-PHL Resource Library. It is important to ensure that your staff, whether permanent, temporary, full-time, or part-time, understand what C2L is.

Capacity also refers to your program's ability to serve priority populations. JEVS has determined that priority populations are youth from the following populations:

- Juvenile justice court-involved
- Involved in the child welfare system, including in or aging out of foster care
- Disabled
- Pregnant or parenting

As of August 2025, providers must allow for 20% of their slots to be for youth from priority populations, especially juvenile justice involved youth and youth involved in the foster care system.

Timing

You can apply to either year-round (which includes summer) or summer only programming. When considering what time frame you want to apply for, think about when your current programming occurs. Is it already year-round or is it summer only? If it is currently summer only and you want to have year-round programming, it may be easier to apply for summer only initially and then implement year-round programming on your own to ensure you and your staff have the capacity to support the additional time requirements.

Another aspect of timing is the duration of programming. During the school-year, programs will be 7 weeks, while during the summer programs can be either 6 or 8 weeks. Think about what matches your current schedule best.

Finally, keep in mind the number of hours required during each session. During the summer, youth participants must complete 120 hours, 30 hours of which should be professional development and the remaining 90 hours for internship or other work-based learning activity. During the school year the breakdown is slightly different. The total 120 hours is split into two cohorts, 60 in fall and 60 in spring with 15 hours per cohort for professional development and 45 hours for internship or other work-based learning activity.

Location

Where will your program take place? Do you already have a space dedicated to your program or will you need to find a space? The space you have will also impact the number of youth you can support. If you have a space that only fits 50 people, you may only be able to support 40 youth since you have to allocate space for your staff.

Outreach, Recruitment, and Retention

Programs are responsible for their own recruitment to fill the slots they are awarded for programming. The expectation is for all providers to have a plan that includes the number of youth to be served, the staff who will be dedicated to recruitment and their time commitment, and a strategy for outreach, recruitment, and program retention. While there may be opportunities for city- wide recruitment events, especially for summer, it is still the responsibility of each provider to host or attend in-person outreach events and to track the progress and success at each event. Many established programs already have a pool of youth they can recruit from, however they will still need to complete the centralized C2L-PHL application, to be shared by JEVS when the application cycle opens for each session.

Adapting Existing Programs

One common challenge programs face is adapting their existing program structure to fit the C2L model. It is not enough to have a program that already focuses on career preparation; programming must include components required by the C2L-PHL model. There may not be a lot to change. This is where your Capacity Building Specialist comes into play; they can guide you to resources that will help ensure your program is compliant.

Note that there are specific components that differentiate C2L-PHL from other career prep programs. Hands-on work-based learning opportunities through consistent exposure and professional development is one priority for C2L-PHL. The model also offers youth the opportunity to explore multiple fields and occupations through internships, service learning, and project-based learning. Career connected learning is rooted in the idea that the best way for youth to build the skills needed for a successful career is through direct, hands-on experience that is connected to rigorous classroom learning and reflection.

If you are adapting an existing program so that it will fit the C2L model, follow this guide to think through what aspects of your program may need to be revised to fit C2L.

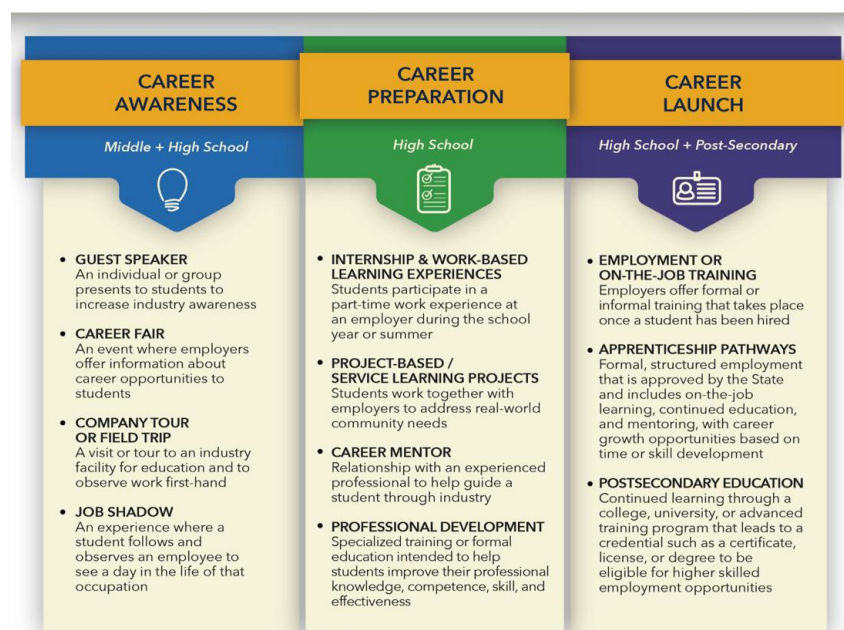
Assess Your Current Program Worksheet

Check the items below that your program currently does/has and include a brief description of how your program meets that practice.

X	Quality Program Practices	Description
	Program goals align with participant needs and industry priorities	
	Technical skills relevant to industry needs are part of the curriculum (computer literacy, coding, arts, etc.)	
	Soft skills are part of the curriculum (communication, teamwork, etc.)	
	Work readiness training is part of the curriculum (resume writing, interviewing, etc.)	
	Work-based learning activities are part of the curriculum (check all that apply) ☐ Guest speakers ☐ Placement sites ☐ Employer engagement ☐ Job shadowing ☐ Field trips ☐ Service-learning project ☐ Internship ☐ Project-based learning	
	Career counseling is part of the curriculum (this includes guest speakers, hands-on activities, reflection, and guidance)	
	Partnerships with employers exist	
	Partnerships with community organizations exist	
	There is a system in place for collecting data on participant achievements/progress and areas for improvement	
	Data is used to inform program improvements	
	Accessibility measures are in place for youth with physical, cognitive, or other	

	Program is able to support youth with diverse needs (e.g., financial aid, transportation, multi-lingual learners, youth with disabilities, young men/young women, LGBTQI+ youth, youth impacted by justice, pregnant or parenting youth, foster care youth, including youth in or aging out of foster care)	
	There is demonstration of cultural competence and commitment to equity	
	Staff demonstrate knowledge of positive youth development and career theories	
	Effective teaching methodologies and practices are used to broaden youth experience	
	Safety and emergency procedures are established and communicated effectively	
	Communication plan with families regarding youth needs and program updates is in place	
	Resources are communicated effectively to support youth participation in the program	

Using the graphic below, circle which phase in the continuum your youth fit. Circle the activities within that phase that you currently do.



Based on the Quality Program Practices table and the continuum graphic above, list the practices and activities that your program does not currently do. In the next column list the action you need to take to incorporate it into your program, include information on what needs to be done, how it will be done, and who will do it or assist with it. In the last column list whether this action can be taken in the short-term or will need more time and will be implemented in the long-term.

Quality Program Practices Gaps	Action to Take	Short-term vs Long-term
<i>Ex. Soft skills are part of the curriculum (communication, teamwork, etc.)</i>	<i>Integrate communication skills into programming. May include writing professional emails and public speaking. Contact partner to see if they can help develop this part of the curriculum.</i>	<i>Short-term</i>

CONTINUE YOUR LEARNING

[Growing Your Program](#)

[Youth Workforce Program Activities](#)

[Learning Activity Group Roles](#)

[Activity Lesson Planning Template](#)

[Setting Clear Objectives](#)

SUSTAIN

Designing a program plan is only half the battle. Being able to sustain the program year-after-year is just as important. How do you plan to sustain your program? This section will walk through ways to maintain programming, like partnerships and continuous quality improvement processes.

Developing Partnerships

Whether you are developing a program at a big college or a small program with just a few staff, developing partnerships have multiple benefits. Some of those advantages include getting insight into youth education, maximizing resources, and providing more support to your youth. This section will explore potential partnerships and the advantages of each. For more information on developing partnerships, review the [Growing Relationships to Develop Lasting Partnerships](#) virtual PD.

Youth & Family

Youth and family directly benefit from the partnership because it provides youth access to learning opportunities. Youth will learn new approaches to learning by applying knowledge from the classroom to careers and their everyday lives. A partnership with families and caregivers can help provide additional support to youth learning, as they may be able to support not only youth attendance but also their participation.

Businesses

From a business perspective, C2L partnerships can help businesses build a strong workforce and identify high-quality talent early. They can train youth to address their industry growth and needs. For C2L programs, business connections are useful for a variety of reasons. One is to have them serve as placement sites. JEVS has a process and form you must complete to bring on placement sites. If the business does not have the bandwidth to bring in youth as a placement site, perhaps they can offer a tour of their facility. If that is not a feasible option, representatives can always come to your program as guest speakers to share their experiences and journey.

Schools

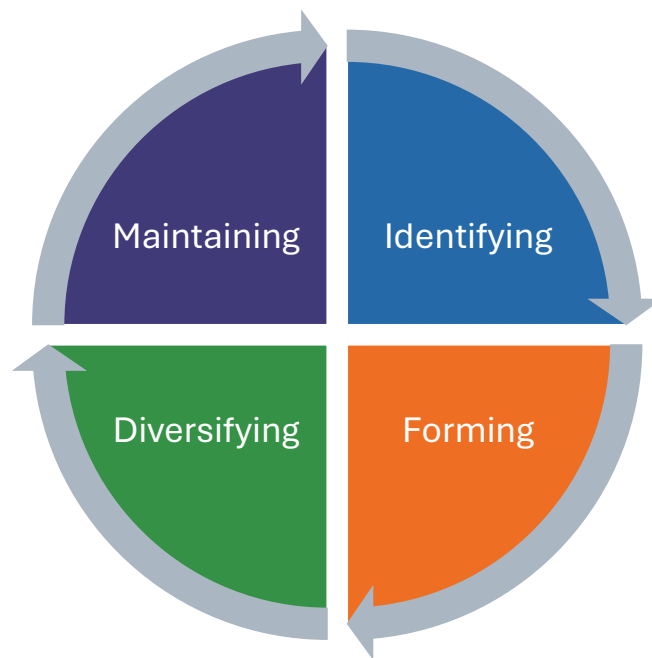
A partnership with schools can help with the classroom to program transition. If you have a connection with families and caregivers, they can help serve as a bridge to communicating with the school, for example if youth have IEPs or 504s. A connection with schools can also help with curriculum planning, by being able to get insight into what youth are working on you may be able to align your own curriculum to complement what they are learning during the day.

Community

Partnering with the surrounding community also has its benefits. Similar to businesses, organizations in the community may be able to serve as placement sites, or individuals

could host tours or participate as guest speakers. Having connections in the community can also help to keep youth safe. If community organizations are aware of the youth in your program, they may be able to keep an eye out for youth as they arrive and leave to make sure they remain safe.

Developing partnerships should be a cyclical process. First, providers identify potential partners, then form a relationship, followed by assessing to ensure there is diversity in the list of partnerships, and finally working to maintain those partnerships. The next few sections will further explore each step in the process.



Identifying Potential Partnerships

When venturing out to establish new partnerships, it is a good idea to think about why you want to partner with that organization, what value will they bring to the partnership, as well as what can you potentially offer so that it is a shared partnership. Be flexible in what you want. If asking an organization to serve as a placement site, but after talking with them and not finding a fit, see how else you may be able to partner. Maybe they can still visit as a guest speaker.

Before reaching out, do some research. Most organizations and businesses will have a website, but if they don't, you can ask around for some feedback from other individuals. Things to explore include the shared values you and the potential organization have as well as their reputation. If your values don't align then the partnership will struggle to exist. If you have heard some negative feedback about the organization, try to gather as much additional information as possible. Is their reputation warranted? Was it based on a single experience that got blown out of proportion? How long has the negative information been associated with the organization?

The Potential Partners Outreach List can be used to capture background information on all partnerships in one location. There is an example table below and a blank form can be found in [Appendix A](#).

Potential Partners Outreach List

A blank form can be found in [Appendix A](#).

Organization	Address	Point(s) of Contact	Website	Area of the City	Reason for partnership	Contact details (date/time, staff)	PD type (financial, career, skill, etc.)	Notes
Evergreen Community Center	123 Forest Lane	Jenny Gump	www.evergreenc.com	University City	Service- learning partner on community health fair	Phone conversation on 5/10/25	Agreed to lead a CPR certification session for youth	

Forming Partnerships

The Tuckman Model was developed as a tool to understand the evolution of group development. There were 4 stages identified: forming, storming, norming, and performing. The first stage, forming, is the initial coming together of partners after they have been identified. Within forming is the introduction of partners, establishing the environment and setting a positive atmosphere, and the beginning stages of establishing roles, responsibilities, and goals of the partnership. This stage sets the foundation for the remainder of the partnership. The [Identifying Potential Partnerships](#) tool is a document that captures information about the partnership agreement including goals, skills, desired outcomes, and next steps. Providers will include information on their own program on the left and information on the potential partnership on the right. This view enables an easy way to see where the connections exist and where there are differences. A sample can be found below, while a blank template can be found on the Resource Library under the [Growing Relationships to Develop Lasting Partnerships Virtual PD](#).

Identifying Potential Partnerships

Type of Partnership: <i>(circle one of the following)</i> Business, <u>Community</u>, Employer, Provider, School, Other	
Provider: Being the Best for YOUth	Provider: Angelou's Angels
Goal(s) • Partner with an entity that will provide a focus on specialized training modules: technical, behavioral	Goal(s) • Increased youth attendance, enrollment and participation

Skills: • <i>Creating tables using Microsoft Excel</i> • <i>Effective Communication</i> • <i>Conflict Resolution</i> Strengths: • <i>Creating curriculum based on youth interest</i> • <i>Connecting employers to necessary training materials</i> • <i>Remaining connected to youth after graduation</i> Weaknesses: • <i>Small facility</i> • <i>Low Staff</i> • <i>Limited technological access</i> Interests: • <i>Assessing youth capabilities before they start training</i>	Skills: • <i>Canva</i> • <i>Time Management</i> • <i>Providing Feedback</i> • <i>Coaching</i> Strengths: • <i>Identify the target professions</i> • <i>Established partnerships with several surrounding businesses</i> • <i>Providing on-site training for the employers of the worksites</i> Weaknesses: • <i>Engaging participants</i> • <i>Delivering instructions in various formats</i> Interests: • <i>Deliver ROI to employers and workers</i> • <i>Coordinating workforce-development centrally</i>
Desired Outcome: <i>Employers of placement sites are more capable of embedding soft skills in service-learning projects and holding youth accountable.</i>	Desired Outcome: Following one year of partnership: increase enrollment by a minimum of 15%, at least 60% of youth attend 3 days a week, each youth completes at least 2 assigned projects.
Availability to Meet: <i>Monday, Wednesday and Thursday 12pm-3pm</i>	Availability to Meet: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 1pm-4pm Monday 8am-9am

Diversity in Partnerships

Creating a diverse partnership warrants multiple perspectives being provided and additional aspects being considered whilst developing plans to attain goals. Diversification in a partnership allows the stakeholders to remain connected between the needs and creating a project that identifies a variety of people. With a more diverse team, expect success rate to be higher due to an array of personalities and perspectives on the same team.

To identify diverse partnerships, look at organizations that serve a different demographic, have a different mission, or offer complementary resources than what your organization offers. This may include faith-based groups, cultural centers, civic organizations, and colleges. Do as much research as possible to understand their goals, needs, and past experiences. When ready to reach out, do so with a clear, concise pitch that outlines the mutual benefits of a potential partnership.

Diversity becomes a barrier when partners fail to bring several perspectives and knowledge to the partnership causing it to become more one dimensional.

Maintaining

On a regular basis, such as annually or every other year, set aside time to assess your current partnerships. Reflect on whether both parties have been meeting the agreed upon goals and expectations, whether the partnership is a benefit for youth, what areas could be improved upon, and an action plan for moving the partnership forward. Allow your partner to do their own assessment, and come together to compare notes. As a partnership, agree on a way forward. It is possible that the reflection exercise reveals that the partnership is not working and the best thing may be to dissolve it. Don't fight to keep something going that is not working for anyone. Discuss what needs to happen, if anything, to resolve the relationship and move forward.

The [Partnership Health Check Tool](#) in the [Maintaining Industry Partnerships Virtual PD](#) is a great resource you and your partners can use to reflect on your partnership. Complete the tool individually and then come together to discuss your results and determine the best way forward.

Overcoming Barriers

While forming partnerships with schools, businesses, communities, youth, and families is a critical step in building a strong C2L program, it's equally important to anticipate and address the barriers that may arise during implementation. We will explore some barriers and ways to overcome them.

Communication

One of the biggest reasons relationships fail is due to poor communication. Communication is what is said, how it is said, and even what is not said, it can be written, verbal, and nonverbal. Lack of transparency can also be a cause of poor communication. Ensure the goals of the partnership are clear and understood by everyone. Building rapport is also part of communication.

Role Confusion

Lack of transparency can also lead to role confusion. Be direct and ask for clarification if needed. Clearly define roles for effective collaboration. Make sure all parties know what is expected of them. Say what you will do as well as what they will do.

Communication becomes unclear due to a lack of transparency- undisclosed information and misunderstanding without asking clarifying questions leads to confusion and even role confusion.

Despite the number of partners engaged, clearly defined roles are an essential part of effective collaboration. Each party must comprehend the things that are expected of them, which should be tailored to their shared strengths, weaknesses and interests. In the easily accessible partnership norm document, this can be phrased as "I will arrange for the travel to and from facilities" or "My role as a provider is to provide youth with a meaningful experience to prepare them for the future workforce" Setting clear roles prevents tasks being overlapped.

Trust

Trust matters in five big ways, and each directly impacts outcomes in C2L.

1. Youth engagement and confidence. When youth feel trusted and trust you in return, they're more willing to take risks, ask questions, and persevere through challenges. They feel like they belong and that they matter.
2. Family and community buy-in. Families will not fully invest in your program unless they believe it values their voice and their child's future.
3. Employer collaboration. Employers need to trust that you're preparing youth - not just technically, but socially and emotionally for workplace expectations.
4. Equity and access. Trust allows us to build bridges with historically marginalized communities. Without trust, we unintentionally replicate systems that exclude.
5. Trust improves program quality. A high-trust culture leads to better communication, collaboration, and retention. It becomes the root system that supports every other branch of the program

PROVIDER SPOTLIGHT

The Niche Clinic is a project-based learning programming serving youth ages 13-24 with disabilities or in the juvenile justice system located in the areas of Southwest, West, Germantown, Northeast, and Olney-Oak Lane. During programming youth learn about money while earning money through financial literacy workshops that are infused across a wide variety of career-connected learning opportunities. These opportunities include weightlifting, boxing, chemistry, debate team, and small business creations. Some of their partnerships include Tattoo Threadz, Sam Shaw's Treater, and Fitness Boxing Gym. For Niche Clinic, many of their partnerships were formed just by walking into the businesses, sometimes with youth, to have a conversation with the owners about C2L and how they can engage with youth. One of the challenges they faced with these partnerships is getting youth prepared for professionalism expectations. Sometimes they would show up late or not at all, which let the business down and jeopardized the relationship. One of the many positive partnerships Niche Clinic has with Tattoo Threadz was the creation of a fashion show for the program.

Continuous Quality Improvement Action Planning

Continuous Quality Improvement Action Planning, or CQIAP, is a detailed approach that identifies and addresses opportunities for enhancement within an organization's processes, products, or services. It encourages organizations to adopt a mindset of constantly striving to increase the quality of programming and that the status quo is not enough.

One of the first steps of CQIAP is developing measurable program goals. Many providers have goals, but they are not measurable. A common goal amongst C2L providers may be to "provide youth an opportunity to engage with different careers and industries."

Does your program have a plan? There are many reasons why you as a C2L program provider may want to implement a CQIAP process. The process purpose is to improve program effectiveness and efficiency and ensure alignment with organizational goals. By consistently looking for ways to optimize processes, organizations can begin to streamline their processes.

A commonly used framework is the Plan-Do-Study-Act Cycle, or PDSA. It may also be referred to as the Deming Cycle or Shewhart Cycle. It is a 4-stage process that helps organizations gain valuable learning and knowledge for the continual improvement of a process or service.



1. Plan: Identify the problem, gather relevant data, and develop an improvement plan. It will also be important to identify key roles and responsibilities, as well as timeframe and measures of success.
2. Do: Implement the planned improvement on a small scale or pilot. During this part of the cycle, collect documentation and data to assist with the next stage.
3. Study: Analyze results of the implementation and evaluate the effectiveness of the improvement. Results should be shared with staff. Identify any areas where adjustments may need to be made. Identify and celebrate any learnings and successes as a result.
4. Act: Based on the previous stage, decide whether to adopt, modify, or abandon the improvement. If successful, standardize and implement the improvement on a broader scale. Get prepared to do this for another opportunity.

There are other frameworks that can be used instead of PDSA. There is a virtual professional development that goes into more detail on them titled [Driving Excellence: A Framework for Continuous Program Quality Improvement](#). The handout that goes with the training, [CPQI Planning Activity](#), will be a useful tool to help programs brainstorm their own continuous improvement plan.

Using Data

A large part of CPQI is data. Data is needed for a variety of reasons including to track progress, collect demographic information on your program, and even to help make improvements to your program.

Where is your data coming from?

Data comes from more places than just surveys. The information you have on youth like age, address/area of the city, race/ethnicity, and school are all useful bits of information. Even if your program only works with youth within a certain range, such as 14-18, and most of the youth in your program are 15 and 16, that information can tell you a couple things. Does the curriculum you have in place address what youth 15 and 16 need? If you really want youth to represent every age of your range, how and where do you recruit more youth? Knowing the schools your youth attend, if they are still in school, can be a useful piece of information when you are evaluating your recruitment plan each year. Can you use those youth to help you get in contact with staff from the school so you can recruit more youth?

If you want to learn more about the youth in Philadelphia, you may consider checking out the School District's data at <https://www.philasd.org/research/>. There is endless data that the district collects each year from their youth. Programs can find information on graduation rates, student assessment outcomes, and youth and their families experience with the school district.

After at least your first session with C2L you will get access to the Hello Insights survey. Youth complete a pre- and a post-survey. As long as enough youth complete both surveys, programs will get access to the results. The survey gathers information on youths learning preferences, their beliefs about how supportive adults are to them, and the growth youth experienced in their skills and career knowledge.

How often are you collecting data?

The timing and frequency of when you are collecting data and the data you are using is important. It will not be useful to reference data from 10 or even 5 years ago since everything evolves too quickly. The different generations of youth bring different ways of communication. Developing a data collection plan may be useful. If your programming runs from November to May, perhaps you do your own pre-and-post assessment survey with your youth. But it's not the youth you need feedback from; you also need to gather feedback from your staff. They can share whether they thought the content they delivered was useful, challenging, or needs to be revised in any way.

Are you collecting enough data? Does the data you have help you answer your questions?

If the data you have access to does not help you track the progress of your goals and ensure you are meeting your objectives, then you may need to take a closer look at the data you have access to see if you are missing anything and then determine other sources for collecting your needed data. For example, if you have a goal around the progress youth will make at the end of your program, but you aren't collecting data at the beginning of the program, then how are you able to effectively track the changes youth make throughout programming?

Action Planning

The Individual Provider Support Program (IPSP) is a document that every C2L provider will have developed for them by their assigned Capacity Building Specialist (CBS). This document is a tailored capacity-building action plan developed to address the unique needs and

challenges of each provider, ensuring they have the necessary support to deliver high-quality programming and meet specific goals of the C2L-PHL initiative.

After the site visit, a report is generated by your assigned CBS. They will share a draft of the report with you and schedule time to debrief and review. This process is meant to be collaborative. If, while you are reviewing the report, you realize you forgot to submit a document or you have information that changes a response, you can share any additional evidence and artifacts to your CBS before they produce the final report, which will be created after the debrief meeting. During that meeting, there will be a review of findings, which includes program strengths as well as recommendations for improvement.

Recommendations may include things like creating a C2L Handbook for Youth, incorporating more workforce readiness activities like bringing in guest speakers, or creating measurable goals and an improvement plan, depending on what information was shared and what observations were made. Based on the recommendations, your CBS will walk through a potential action plan based on the recommendations. This will be a collaborative discussion to determine what is feasible for you and your staff in a reasonable amount of time. The action plan will be finalized based on the conversation and what was determined as a need and will include links to tools and templates, recorded virtual PDs, and modules that may help you and your team act on the recommendations. A sample action plan is below:

Dear ABC Summer Program,

Thank you for your participation in C2L-PHL's Capacity Building Supports. The following capacity building priority area(s) have been identified to support your program implementation. To address the capacity building priority area(s) the following will be implemented:

Summarized Provider Action Plan				
Key Activity/Milestone	Resources/Tools Provided	Target Audience	Timeline	Outcome
(1) Workforce Preparation	Crafting Effective Learning Series Part 3 & 4: The Service-Learning Approach Embedding 21st Century Skills in Service-Learning Projects	☒ Provider Leadership ☐ Provider frontline staff ☐ Both ☐ Placement Sites Supervisors	Due: Revise curriculum for Summer 2026 programming to include reflection activities to help youth make the connection between their service-learning activity and career pathways.	Goal: By the beginning of Summer 2026 programming, leadership will revise the curriculum to include career counseling activities for youth. Measured by: Reviewing the updated curriculum during document review and interviewing youth and staff.
(2) Communication with Youth, Caregiver(s), and Community	Partnering and Engaging with Families & Caregivers	☒ Provider Leadership ☐ Provider frontline staff ☐ Both ☐ Placement Sites Supervisors	Due: April 2026, to begin implementing during recruitment period	Goal: By April 2026, leadership, in collaboration with frontline staff, will develop a family engagement plan.

				Measured by: Document created and reviewed during document review process in June 2026.
Next Steps for Provider				
• Check-in with leadership early May 2026 for progress update, including training completion data • By June 1 create curriculum for summer program • End of July 2026 frontline and leadership staff interviews or survey to check progress of coaching plan				

Once providers receive their final action plan, they should coordinate with their staff to develop a plan for meeting the outcomes. Using the ABC Summer Program Action Plan above as an example, it may make sense to prioritize the second item, Communication with Youth, Caregiver(s), and Community first based on the earliest due date. With the goal of having a plan by April in time for recruitment, think about all the steps that are needed to create a plan. One step would be to review the training that was recommended that can provide information to help with the plan creation. Another step would be to schedule meetings with the necessary stakeholders to get their input on the plan. Also take into consideration key dates like holidays or deadlines. The [Summer Program Check-In Virtual PD](#) includes a Program Transition Reflection Process that provides a template to assist providers to take your action plan to the next level.

CONTINUE YOUR LEARNING

[Driving Excellence: A Framework for Continuous Program Quality Improvement](#)

[CPQI Planning Activity](#)

[Growing Relationships to Develop Lasting Partnerships](#)

[Identifying Potential Partnerships tool](#)

[Rooted in Trust: Building Trust with Youth, Families, and Partners](#)

[SOAR Analysis Tool](#)

[Partnership Health Check Tool](#)

[Data Power Up: Strategies for Data Collection](#)

[Partnering and Engaging with Families and Caregivers](#)

[Engaging Families and Caregivers Podcast](#)

Conclusion

Capacity refers to the ability of an organization, team, or individual to perform certain functions, meet objectives, or achieve goals. Capacity Building is the process of improving the ability of people, groups/organizations, and/or systems to meet objectives, address stakeholders' needs and ultimately, perform better. For C2L-PHL programs to meet and maintain high performance, leadership, staff, and employers must engage in professional learning and capacity building to improve their ability to meet program objectives, address stakeholder needs and eventually perform better. Foundations, Inc., the C2L-PHL Capacity Building Provider, is here to do just that. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to your assigned Capacity Building Specialist or email careerprograms@foundationsinc.org.

For any questions related to the grant, payment, or the youth process, please contact your Fiscal and Contracting Intermediary.

Appendix

[Sample Program Binder](#)