



Scaling Apprenticeship

Emerging Practice Spotlight



Connecticut State Colleges and Universities

H-1B Scaling Apprenticeship
Grantee (Advanced
Manufacturing)

National Advanced Manufacturing Apprenticeship Program Grant



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Equitable Recruitment and Retention Roundtables

In September 2021, the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) team held the first employer-driven virtual forum focused on equitable hiring for underserved populations, called the Equitable Recruitment and Retention Roundtable (ER3).

This forum was developed in partnership with [Achieving the Dream \(ATD\)](#) – one of the CSCU partner organizations. ATD offers colleges a diverse suite of unique supports, programs and resources that specifically match their student success needs, including identifying and addressing equity issues on their campuses.

The first roundtable focused on the veteran population. During this first session, Lockheed Martin, who is an anchor employer on the [National Advanced Manufacturing Apprenticeship Project \(NAMAP\)](#), delivered a presentation about promising practices for recruiting veterans. This is important to Lockheed Martin, because one in five, or 20 percent, of its employees are veterans. The presentation focused on the company's recruitment strategy and partnership with the Veterans Transition Assistance Program (TAP). The roundtable also set a baseline for defining Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and the presenters provided a progress update on NAMAP. The presenters offered an opportunity for Q&A, as well, and used poll questions to engage participants. Additionally, there were group activities designed to generate a discussion about equitable recruitment ideas, strategies, and challenges.

“The mission of the Equitable Recruitment & Retention Roundtable is to build equitable apprenticeship recruitment and retention practices with NAMAP employer partners focusing on identifying challenges faced by apprentices, [promising] practices, and effective partnerships. Specifically, the roundtable will provide the opportunity to view existing practices through an equity lens to identify barriers faced by apprentices and to promote strategies to effectively recruit and retain a diverse talent pool.”
(The ER3 charter)

Evolution of ER3

NAMAP's project director determined that the topic of equity was missing in CSCU's conversations with employers. He and his team wanted to focus on equity, particularly on issues of recruitment and retention within marginalized communities. They reached out to their partner, ATD, who suggested that they hold employer roundtables focusing on equity. NAMAP decided to use their quarterly national apprenticeship forum where

employers meet, share best practices, and connect, as the vehicle for the employer roundtables since it was part of the Scaling Apprenticeship grant. The purpose of the forum is to bring employers together, share ideas, and hopefully make an impact on the recruitment and retention of apprentices from under-represented communities, in alignment with existing DEI strategies. CSCU and NAMAP are giving back to employers and providing them with a space to share ideas and challenges.

“Regardless of the size of the organization...we all share the same struggles with recruitment.”

Ralph Watson, the Director of Human Resources & Safety of Collins & Jewell

Once CSCU decided to use their quarterly forums with employers as a roundtable on equity, ATD facilitated a training with the NAMAP staff and helped them develop the format and structure of the ER3. The training provided staff with baseline definitions of diversity, equity, and inclusion to share with their employers. For the first ER3, CSCU reached out to Lockheed Martin, one of the anchor employers. Lockheed Martin employs recruitment strategies designed for veterans, one of their key populations. Because of their well-developed recruitment strategies, Lockheed Martin’s workforce is one-fifth veterans.

Lockheed Martin agreed to present, and CSCU worked closely with ATD and Lockheed Martin to launch the ER3 series in September 2021. In addition to the promising practices presentation by an employer, all roundtables include polling the audience and a group activity that allows participants to join a smaller group to share ideas and discuss what they heard. The introduction included a grant update and DEI definitions to set a baseline for the discussion and will be included in subsequent roundtables. The CSCU team developed a pacing guide that will be used for every roundtable. The pacing guide allows all key players to better understand their roles and the timing of each activity during the roundtable. The audience at the first roundtable included three anchor employers and two small-to mid-sized local employers.

Polling questions and the group activity provided attendees with several occasions to interact with each other and the presenter on DEI issues. The poll questions asked attendees to rate DEI at their organizations based on the definitions provided in the presentation. Attendees were also asked to identify where inequities were evident in their apprenticeship programs: recruitment, retention, program, or policy. The group activity was a 15-minute opportunity to brainstorm and discuss equitable recruitment ideas/strategies and challenges in small groups. Feedback from roundtable participants was generally positive and indicated that employers were excited to hear from other employers about how they recruit apprentices from under-represented communities. As Jemiel Rose, NAMAP’s Project Director explained “employers would much rather hear from other employers on recruitment and retention issues than almost anyone else”.

Next Steps

The CSCU team scheduled the next roundtable for December. IBM will share promising practices for recruiting People of Color in under-represented communities. The team plans to develop a self-assessment tool for employers to rate themselves on DEI issues and make improvements based on the results.

ER3 in Action

Every ER3 meeting uses the same format, structure, and agenda: welcome and introductions; grant highlights and partners updates; DEI definitions; promising practices presentation by grant employer; Q&A on promising practices presentation; group activity; and group discussion.

Pacing Guide	Polling	Rehearsals	Internal Team
The agenda is broken down into five-to-ten-minute blocks of time to keep the meeting moving and ensure enough time for each section of the roundtable.	Each roundtable includes three to five polling questions. The polling engages participants from the very beginning and provides presenters with an understanding of what participants know and believe.	The CSCU team and employer presenter rehearse the material several times to become comfortable with both the technology and the content.	Every member of the CSCU team works collaboratively behind the scenes.

Elements of Success

With ATD’s guidance, the NAMAP team created a process for holding quarterly equity roundtables with employers. From planning to innovation to collaboration, they mapped a way forward for ER3s to come, using the following elements of success. Note: all the elements are iterative except for those with asterisks, which are one-time upfront activities.

“Driven by the needs of employers, ER3 intends to be a conduit for real change within the NAMAP partnering employers.”

Jemiel Rose, Project Director for NAMAP

Planning	Opportunities to Innovate	Collaborate and Celebrate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ATD equity training for internal team* • Six-months of planning from inception to launch of 1st session* • Groundwork set for future sessions Meeting content development Pacing Guide* • Polling Question planning • Invitations to employer sponsors and other local employers • Dry runs on all aspects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employers sharing ideas and considering strategies to employ at their business • Group activities with a mix of employers (anchor employers, small to mid-size local employers) assigned to each breakout Coordination of Employer Practice and the question group activities asked. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership with ATD, Employer Practice (Lockheed Martin/Veterans for 1st ER3, IBM/People of Color for 2nd ER3), internal team • Meeting evaluation by participants Press release and practice newsletter

Tips and Strategies for Other SA Grantees

The NAMAP team shared some of the tips and strategies they found most helpful while implementing ER3:

- It is important for employers to hear directly from other employers, particularly about what works in DEI and the recruitment of apprentices from under-represented communities.
- Planning is key.
- Hold equity sessions with your team to prepare for the roundtables. Include DEI definitions at the outset to establish a baseline.
- Rehearse with technology more than once.
- Get your partners on board (in CSCU’s case, that included ATD, and the employers). Create a charter with a mission and goals.
- Design a pacing guide for the roundtables with defined team roles and responsibilities. Develop guiding questions to prompt discussion during participation lulls.
- Offer similar initiatives to boost the retention, completion, and job placement rates of apprentices from under-represented communities.



More Information

National Advanced Manufacturing Apprenticeship Project (NAMAP)

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Resources and Forms

- [The National Advanced Manufacturing Apprenticeship Project \(NAMAP\)](#)
- [Achieving the Dream website](#)
- [ER3 Charter](#)
- [Session I - Veteran Population ER3 Presentation](#)
- [Session I - Veteran Population ER3 Agenda](#)