# 2024 Business Engagement Learning Lab (BELL) Application

WPTI invites eligible workforce development programs to apply to participate in our Business Engagement Learning Lab (**BELL**), a learning community developed in response to the emerging need for improved employer engagement strategies across the workforce development field.

**BELL** is a four-month learning community, featuring seven workshops between March and May 2024, plus two one-hour implementation coaching sessions and a showcase in June, focused on employer engagement strategies, designed for teams to achieve their business engagement, job placement, retention, and relationship development goals, while maximizing impact. In September, participants will reconvene for a peer learning and troubleshooting check-in. The program utilizes WPTI's *BELL Playbook* and our *Job Development Continuum*, along with the *Engaged Businesses Success Drivers* developed in partnership with the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce and the Chicago Jobs Council.

Select topic areas include:
- Making the "business case" for your program and your candidates when engaging employers
- Using Labor Market Intelligence (LMI) to guide business development
- Developing strong messaging and eye-catching marketing materials
- Building relationships of trust with employers that will drive job retention, enhance job quality, and lead to pipelines for job placement
- And more...

At the conclusion of **BELL**, programs will be positioned to incorporate substantive improvements into their employer engagement practices. In this application, groups will select an employer engagement-related issue or challenge within their program that they are seeking to address (their "focus challenge"), and throughout the course of **BELL**, will work on incorporating the employer engagement strategies learned to make measurable progress toward addressing such issue or challenge. At the conclusion of the program, teams will present on how BELL has helped them develop strategies to take on this challenge.

**WHO: BELL** is open to workforce development organizations from across the country. Each workforce development program accepted into BELL will be required to send send three or four members:

- The program director OR supervisor of job development
- Two-to-three junior- to mid-level job developers. If an organization does not have two job developers, they can include another team member whose role includes employer engagement and/or job placement

**\*\*Because BELL is a cumulative learning experience, organizations must send the same staff members to every session and participants must commit to attend all sessions.\*\***

**WHEN: BELL** learning community sessions will take place on the following dates:

- Session 1: Kickoff - Wednesday, March 20 - 1:00-3:30pm ET
- Session 2: Know Thy Customer, Know Thyself - Wednesday, March 27 - 1:00-3:30pm ET
- Session 3: Do Your Research! Knowing the Field - Wednesday, April 3 - 1:00-3:30pm ET
- Session 4: Setting Yourself Apart with High-Quality Marketing - Wednesday, April 17 - 1:00-3:30pm ET
- Session 5: Prospecting and Canvassing - Wednesday, May 1 - 1:00-3:30pm ET
- Session 6: Making the Match - Wednesday, May 8 - 1:00-3:30pm ET
- Session 7: Long-Term Relationships, Long-Term Retention, and Job Quality - Wednesday, May 15 - 1:00-3:30pm ET
- Coaching Sessions - Each team will receive two one-hour implementation coaching sessions between May 15 and June 16
- Session 8: Showcase - Pulling It All Together - Wednesday, June 16 - 1:00-3:00pm ET
- Three-Month Check-In/Peer Learning Session - Wednesday, September 18 - 1:00-3:00pm ET

**WHERE:**

- All **BELL** activities will be conducted virtually via Zoom.
- All **BELL** sessions incorporate interactive components, including group discussions, breakout rooms and more.
- For maximum effectiveness, every participant should be located in a space free of distractions with a laptop or desktop and reliable internet service, as well as a working microphone.
- Participants must commit to working on "focus challenges" outside of sessions.

**WHY:** Here's what past **BELL** participants have had to say . . .

- "*What I loved about this specific training and what drew me to this training was that oftentimes you don't have an opportunity to **work closely with your team members** that you supervise.*"
- "*I wanted to learn from other professionals how best to provide for issues both our clients and employers face. I've done sales training before, but BELL is **closer to formal job development training than what I've been used to**.*"
- "*I had to get through my own struggle of getting the nonprofit thinking out of the way. Having these multiple sessions made that happen. I had to internally recalibrate in order to absorb this material and really **start thinking from the perspective of employers**... you have the opportunity here to really **reframe how nonprofits do their work**.*"
- "*The multi-prong approach combining skills building, high-level discourse around workforce development issues, and then bringing it back down to the organizational level and what you were going to do, meant that there was an expectation that you were going to **apply it almost instantly**. This continuity of learning was not an experience many of us have when it comes to training.*"

**COST: $399 per organization** (fee covers entire team)
*BELL* is offered at this modest price due to the generous support of the Pinkerton Foundation.

**APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS**

QuestionPro

- The program director or job development supervisor should complete this application, and a program director or above must approve the submission of the application.
- Please submit only one application per organization.
- If you have any questions about the application or eligibility, contact Justin Collins, Director of Field Building and Engagement, at jcollins@wpti.org.
- **Applications are due Wednesday, February 21 at 5pm ET.** WPTI will notify organizations accepted to the program or placed on the wait list on Monday, February 26.
- **At that point, all accepted organizations will be required to submit payment, and all participating staff and their direct supervisors will be required to submit a commitment form by Thursday, February 29.**
- We will notify all organizations of their final status and announce the cohort by Thursday, March 7 at latest.

## Organizational Info

Contact Information

\* Organization

\* Address

\* Person completing this survey

\* Title of person completing this survey

\* Pronouns of person completing this survey

**\*** Email Address

**\*** Phone

**\*** Does your organization currently serve youth ages 14-24? (Checking No will not disqualify an organization from participation in this program.)

☐ Yes    ☐ No

**\*** Does your organization currently receive funding from the Pinkerton Foundation? (Checking No will not disqualify an organization from participation in this program.)

☐ Yes    ☐ No

**\*** What target populations does your organization or program serve? (select all that apply; if your organization does not have a target population and serves general job seekers, check that option)

☐ Youth/Young Adults

☐ Youth in Foster Care

☐ Individuals with Justice/Legal Involvement

☐ Individuals with Disabilities

☐ Individuals Experiencing Homelessness

☐ Veterans

☐ LGBTQ+ Individuals

☐ Immigrants/Refugees/Asylum Seekers

☐ Domestic Violence/Trafficking Survivors

☐ Seniors

QuestionPro

- [ ] TANF/SNAP Recipients

- [ ] General Population

- [ ] Other

---

* What sectors/industries does your program or organization focus on?

- [ ] Arts/Media/Entertainment

- [ ] Building/Construction Trades

- [ ] Education/Human Services

- [ ] Food Service

- [ ] Health Care

- [ ] Hospitality/Tourism/Recreation

- [ ] Information Technology

- [ ] Manufacturing

- [ ] Retail

- [ ] Transportation/Distribution/Logistics

- [ ] My program is not industry-specific

- [ ] Other

---

* How is your program currently providing services?

- ( ) All Virtually

- ( ) All In-Person

- ( ) Hybrid (mix of in-person and virtual services/programming)

---

QuestionPro

**\*** Do you attest that a program director or more senior executive at your organization approves of your submission of this application and interest in joining BELL?

○ Yes

○ No

---

## Check the following statements that apply to your program's current job development structure. (You may check all that apply)

**\*** Our program . . . (You may check all that apply)

☐ Offers employers a set of services that goes beyond simply referring candidates

☐ Uses a centralized data system to track employer interactions over time, enabling one job developer to continue relationships created by other staff.

☐ Requires job developers to spend a portion of their time meeting employers in person, attending hiring events, or developing relationships outside the office.

☐ Provides job development staff with mobile tools such as cell phones in order to be accessible to employers outside of the office.

☐ Uses the same marketing / outreach materials for both employers and job seekers.

☐ Has created employer-specific webpage(s) and / or social media account(s) for employers that are currently or may be interested in partnering with your program.

☐ Includes staff with experience working in or engaging employers in targeted industries or occupations.

☐ integrates Labor Market Intelligence (LMI) in shaping prospecting plans and employer outreach.

☐ Provides post-placement skills upgrades or assists working graduates in connecting with training and education to move up the career ladder.

**P** QuestionPro

* What aspect(s) of employer engagement does your program currently do well?

* In what area(s) related to employer engagement could your program improve?

* What specific changes in job development practice would you like to see at the completion of BELL?

* What challenge or issue are you looking to address, and/or make measurable progress on, by participating in BELL? (select one - this will be your "focus challenge" for BELL)

- ○ Increase number of employer partners

- ○ Increase number of annual job placements

- ○ Improve job retention among placed candidates

- ○ Increase starting wages of new hires

- ○ Enter a new sector or industry

- ○ Launch a new program or initiative

- ○ Other (please specify)

QuestionPro

**\*** Why are you looking to address this specific challenge or issue, and why do you believe BELL will help you do so?

**\*** Please explain the measurable improvement you are looking to make in this area, and an outcome you are looking to achieve as a result of this program (e.g. "we currently place 150 individuals in jobs per year, and are looking to increase to 200" OR "we currently have 15 employers that hire more than 5 candidates from our program annually, and would like to increase this to 25.")

Contact Information of Applicant 1: Job Development SUPERVISOR(or higher)

**\*** First Name

**\*** Last Name

**\*** Pronouns

**\*** Phone

**\*** Email Address

**\*** Job Title

Work Address

**P** QuestionPro

* Supervisor's Name

* Supervisor's Title

* Supervisor's Email Address

* Supervisor's Phone

* Number of Years in the Workforce Development field

* Number of years at your current Organization/Company

* Brief Description of Role/Responsibilities:

* Is there anything that might prevent your commitment to the learning experience?

## Contact Information of Applicant 2: Job Developer

* First Name

* Last Name

* Pronouns

* Phone

QuestionPro

* Email Address

* Job Title

Work Address

* Supervisor's Name

* Supervisor's Title

* Supervisor's Email Address

* Supervisor's Phone

* Number of Years in the Workforce Development field

* Number of years at current Organization

* Brief Description of Role/Responsibilities:

* Is there anything that might prevent this person's commitment to the learning experience?

Contact Information of Applicant 3: Job Developer (while at least three team members is ideal, smaller organizations may apply with two team members on a case-by-case basis)

First Name

Last Name

Pronouns

Phone

Email Address

Job Title

Work Address

Supervisor's Name

Supervisor's Title

Supervisor's Email Address

Supervisor's Phone

Number of Years in the Workforce Development field

Number of years at current Organization

QuestionPro

Brief Description of Role/Responsibilities:

Is there anything that might prevent this person's commitment to the learning experience?

## Contact Information of Applicant 4: Job Developer (OPTIONAL - only complete if you are including a fourth team member)

First Name

Last Name

Pronouns

Phone

Email Address

Job Title

Work Address

Supervisor's Name

Supervisor's Title

Supervisor's Email Address

Supervisor's Phone

Number of Years in the Workforce Development field

Number of years at current Organization

Brief Description of Role/Responsibilities:

Is there anything that might prevent this person's commitment to the learning experience?

Any Questions? Contact **Justin Collins**, Director of Field Building and Engagement, at jcollins@wpti.org.

QuestionPro