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## Guidance on Effective Partnerships Strategies for the SyncUp Colorado Challenge



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*Colorado Succeeds is a SyncUp Challenge Partner and is supporting industry in pursuing the prize.*

### Overview

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The purpose of this document is two-fold:

1. To provide some general guidance on effective partnership strategies that may be compelling in applying for the [SyncUp Colorado Challenge](#), and;
2. To provide guidance for what sort of topics an applicant of the SyncUp Colorado Challenge may want to cover in their partnership MOU. This MOU guidance is delivered in the form of questions because every partnership in this space is highly variable based on the partners, industry, and activities involved.

*Note: This document is for informational purposes only and is not meant to be construed as a legal document or legal advice from Colorado Succeeds, Zoma Foundation, Common Group, or any SyncUp Colorado Challenge Partner or affiliate.*

### General Advice on Setting Up Work-Based Learning Partnerships

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- **Establish a Common Vision**

Both partners should have a compelling rationale and vision for entering this partnership.

- **Business:** This should align well with objectives around talent pipelines related to critical early career roles to ensure a business rationale. Secondary rationales can include corporate social responsibility or community engagement. While business objectives may motivate an organization's involvement, the business should be aware that the project should not typically involve activities that the business otherwise would be carrying on, nor should the primary purpose of the project be to achieve profit or the creation of a talent pipeline **only** for the business. See [additional guidance here](#).
- **Education:** This should align well with helping students learn outside of the classroom, enhancing career exposure and engagement, and preparation for college and career.

- **Seed Prize Applicants**

Start small and then plan for scale as you satisfy certain benchmarks determined by each partner, especially if neither partner has ever attempted to do something like this before.

- Working out the details and building out the capacity to scale is easier after initial results with a reasonably-sized cohort that can be studied.

- **Scale Prize Applicants**

Ensure your solution and strategy is focused on solving the problem limiting the scale of your current program/partnership.

- **Connect with Experts**

Join Colorado Succeeds' [Community of Practice around Work-Based Learning](#), which is a group of experienced and aspiring work-based learning practitioners that meet quarterly to share best practices around this relatively new talent development practice.

- **Build Your Bench**

Get the right people involved on both sides.

- On the business side, who on your team is passionate about developing talent and training the next generation for your company? What department will own this program? Do you have buy-in from relevant decisionmakers?
- On the education side, who is genuinely excited to help your students/participants engage with business and work-based learning and has the communication skills to work with business leaders?

## Topics to Address When Establishing Your MOU

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- **Nature of the Partnership**

- The MOU must identify which entity has complete discretion, control, and supervision of the proposed project, any grant funds received for the project, and any reporting that may be required in connection with the project
  - Any persons authorized to speak, act, and/or execute agreements on behalf of the project must be consistent with the above
- Defining the goals and responsibilities of each partner
  - The purposes of the partnership should be to support Coloradans ages 12-24 in making informed choices and obtaining job-relevant skills to build a high-quality career, and otherwise be consistent with the scope of the SyncUp Colorado Challenge.
  - What does each partner want out of this partnership?
  - What is each partner willing to commit to in terms of responsibilities?
- Who is the “point person” for each partner? Who else will likely be involved? How often will these people communicate?
  - Business side: supervisor(s) of the student participant
  - Education side: student support
- What is the defined time frame this MOU will govern? What “activates” it and what would be cause for termination? How informal or formal do you want to be about making changes to the partnership or operating parameters?

- For example, you may want the partnership to “activate” only if your application is selected for funding.
    - The MOU should be in effect for the duration of the proposed project.
  - What are the timelines for program development and execution? What stages are you hoping to achieve, and by when?
- **Define the Work-Based Learning Activities Governed by the MOU**
  - Apprenticeship (typically 1-3 years)? Internship (typically 2-4 months)? Something else? Get clear about what type of work-based learning the participants will be doing.
  - Define what happens if someone exits the program early (whether voluntarily or involuntarily) and what happens after the participant “graduates” from the program.
    - For example, if you are doing an apprenticeship/internship program, will the participant have the opportunity to apply for a full-time role?
  - Is there a timing aspect to this? Does it need to align with key parts of a given day/week/month/quarter/semester for both partners?
    - This could include proposed schedules, remote vs on-site, etc.
- **Define the Financial and Human Resources Involved**
  - Will the student participants be paid?
  - Will either the student participant or people on the business side need to undergo any type of interview, screening, or background check process?
  - Will there be FTEs or partial FTEs dedicated to running this program/partnership on each organization’s payroll?
  - What teams/departments will be involved? Which budget will be utilized or how will the prize money be distributed if your application is successful?
- **Intellectual Property Rights**
  - The ownership and use of any intellectual property to be developed by the project must be clearly spelled out, including how the ownership and use will not result in more than incidental benefit to any private person.
- **Who needs to sign off on the MOU?**

A legally authorized representative of each partner must sign the MOU. As mentioned above, it is also helpful to have the point person and any other personnel likely to be significantly involved to be listed on the document for recordkeeping.
- **Pay attention to other requirements in the [Challenge Brief](#) or reach out to their [team directly](#) to ensure you’ve met all MOU requirements.**
- **Need additional support? [Schedule a time to connect with Brad.](#)**