

## Community-Based Organization (CBO) Guide

This guide, which is a supplement to the Advanced Manufacturing Apprenticeship Program (AMAP) Case Study, highlights the learnings specific to community-based organizations and nonprofits. Read the case study for more context on the story, this partnership model, and lessons learned.

These guidelines are designed for nonprofit CBOS and higher education institutions that support training, workforce development, and economic mobility for the community. This could also include community organizers who are not associated with a formal nonprofit but have strong networks, trust, and recruiting capacity.

“Community-based organizations (CBOs) serve as crucial bridges, weaving a tapestry of interconnected relationships that transcend conventional boundaries. They are the linchpins of cohesive communities, interlinking various initiatives and breaking down silos that often segregate efforts. By nurturing diverse sets of relationships, CBOs cultivate an ecosystem of collaboration where voices from all corners are not just heard but amplified.

At the heart of their mission lies a profound commitment to centering the needs and voices of communities, ensuring that every action, every program, resonates with the pulse of those it serves. In this intricate web of connections, CBOs stand as beacons of inclusivity, driving forward progress that is truly representative and responsive.

ROSALYN GREEN, FOUNDER, MONTEREY COUNTY BLACK CAUCUS AND  
CHAIR OF THE MONTEREY PENINSULA COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

### Key Capabilities

We recommend that CBOs prioritize the following capabilities and follow the implementation guidance to fully realize their potential for inclusive economic development.

- **Connection to local community:** For CBOs to be effective in connecting employers with potential talent, they must have a deep understanding of the skills, assets, and challenges of the community they serve. Usually these organizations focus on a certain age group, demographic, or other subset of the community. In addition to a deep understanding, they must also have secured the trust of their community in order to be an effective broker of opportunity in this model.

- **Workforce preparation:** CBOs play an important role in supporting their communities to navigate life challenges that create barriers to accessing opportunities. Some CBOs also prepare the populations they serve for career opportunities. This includes providing soft skill development, resume support, and coaching community members to apply for opportunities. The coaching piece is particularly critical for jobs in new and high-tech industries, where the role itself and the nature of the work may feel inaccessible or jargony.
- **Broker role:** CBOs should invest in the time and capacity of their staff to attend economic development meetings, represent their communities, and build relationships with industry actors to facilitate training and employment opportunities.

“People think this job opportunity is out of their league. I want them to understand that it can be for them too. They may need encouragement and nudges from their community to apply, or support to work through barriers to employment.”

MARIA ELENA MANZO, DIRECTOR, MUJERES EN ACCIÓN

## Implementation Guidance

1. **Communicate your organization’s value-add to the inclusive economic development ecosystem.** This may require capacity building and investment in staff time to play this cross-sector coordination role. CBOs and higher education institutions can position their value to the private sector as akin to the role recruiters play in talent acquisition, and therefore equally worthy of investment. Additionally, you may have relationships with policymakers or other influencers who could help advance supportive policies and programs.
2. **Develop collaborative relationships with other CBOs, economic development organizations, and the private sector.** Building understanding across organizations and across sectors will create a foundation of trusting relationships for opportunities that arise. In these conversations, communicate your mission and priorities and how your organization’s assets support that. An important part of building this collaborative table is ensuring representation across key demographics and creating trusting relationships where people can share difficult feedback or name challenges directly.
3. **Partner with businesses to develop training and employment opportunities.** Work with businesses to develop the training program, adjust job descriptions, and tailor the hiring and onboarding process based on your understanding of the community you serve. Having access to the business’ leadership helps to influence the organization from the top down, ensuring your community members are entering into a positive and welcoming work environment.
  - a. For higher education institutions and CBOs who have **workforce development programming**, you can identify which organization is best suited to operate the training based on existing assets and skills required

for the job. For example, if the local community college already has a training program that can easily be adapted to meet employer needs, leverage that rather than creating something new that's hosted within one employer.

- 4. Engage in feedback and continuous improvement.** This makes sure that opportunities are accessible, the recruitment process is going smoothly, and participants are supported to succeed throughout their employment. Leverage storytelling to communicate successes back to the community.

## **Impact Potential**

- **Increase community access to paid training opportunities** for high-quality career pathways, improving economic mobility.
- **Support the growth and diversification of your regional economy** in a way that centers inclusion and benefits for community.
- **Reframe CBOs as essential contributors** to inclusive economic development
- **Build connectivity across organizations and across sectors** to collaborate.

### **TIPS FOR ENGAGING POLICYMAKERS**

- Policymakers want to hear **both the individual stories and the impact data** to understand the potential of your workforce or training program to influence economic mobility.
- When the **private sector is willing to commit to hiring locally and with fewer barriers to entry**, policymakers are incentivized to help them grow and succeed. Having a **signed memorandum of understanding (MOU), project labor agreement (PLA) (includes community workforce training agreement), local and targeted hiring policies, or other tangible commitment** from one or multiple employers helps to pave the way for policymakers because it demonstrates commitment, integrity, and transparency.