

Making the Case That Your Organization is Aligned With a Funder's Priorities

Introduction

This JFF tool explains how to effectively make your case to funders who are more explicitly interested in workforce development and funders who have other areas of focus.

Funders Interested in Workforce Training Programs

What Makes Your Workforce Training Program Unique?

Review the text box below for plug-and-play language that highlights what makes investing in initiatives like High Road Training Partnerships unique for philanthropic funders in California. This type of language will work well for communicating with funders who already support workforce development initiatives.

Review the text box below for plug-and-play language that highlights what makes investing in initiatives like the High Road Training Fund, and other similar workforce initiatives, unique for philanthropic funders in California

Text Box 1. What Makes My Workforce Training Program Unique?

[Insert name of workforce training program] incorporates innovative, sector-based strategies designed to build a skilled and equitable workforce that meets evolving industry needs. Here are the key features that set it apart:

1. **Industry-Driven Collaboration:** The program fosters collaboration among industry leaders, community-based organizations (CBOs), labor unions, and educational institutions. This multi-stakeholder approach tailors training programs to high-demand sectors such as health care, clean energy, advanced manufacturing, and information technology.
2. **Focus on Worker Power:** The program incorporates worker power and voice by partnering with labor unions and worker organizations to ensure workers actively shape training strategies. It prioritizes workers' input in decision-making to enhance job quality and career pathways. This approach fosters collaboration to improve workplace policies and industry practices.

3. **Sustainable Career Pathways:** Unlike traditional programs, this initiative emphasizes long-term career growth and matches workers with employers who meet standards for wages and job quality. It offers training that leads to industry-recognized credentials, apprenticeships, and advancement opportunities within high-wage sectors, supporting job security and career growth.
4. **Adaptability to Industry Changes:** The program is responsive to evolving industry demands. By engaging with employers and monitoring labor market trends, it adapts training curricula to meet emerging skill needs, keeping workers competitive.

Text Box 2. Why Should Funders Care?

1. **Promotes Economic Growth and Stability:** Investing in this program contributes to economic stability and growth by developing a skilled workforce that attracts businesses, drives innovation, and strengthens local economies.
2. **Advances Social Equity:** Funding supports efforts to provide equal access to high-quality training and employment opportunities, helping to create pathways to quality jobs and close the equity gap.
3. **Catalyzes Systemic Change:** The program serves as a model for effective workforce development, influencing policies and practices locally and nationally, and inspiring similar initiatives in other states. For example, the High Road Training Partnership model has become a national model for supporting quality job access.
4. **Demonstrates Impact and Accountability:** The program commits to robust data collection and reporting on key metrics such as job placement rates and wage growth, ensuring transparency and accountability.
5. **Leverages Collaborative Funding:** The initiative uses diverse funding sources, amplifying impact through collaborative investments that maximize resources and drive sustainable outcomes.

Funders Outside of Workforce Development

When engaging with potential funders, whether through initial outreach, proposals, follow-up, or networking, it is crucial to tailor your communication to resonate with their interests and priorities. This is not just about crafting grant proposals. It extends to any interaction you have with funders, aiming to build strong, lasting relationships.

Research Funder's Mission and Thematic Priorities

Before reaching out, take the time to thoroughly understand the funder's mission, vision, and

thematic priorities. Review their website, published reports, and any available public statements to gain insights into what drives their funding decisions. This research will help you tailor your message to show alignment with their broader goals, increasing the likelihood of a positive response.

Review Past Grants and Case Studies

Analyze past grants and case studies to identify patterns in the types of projects the funder has supported. This can provide valuable context for how to position your program or initiative. Consider highlighting successful case studies similar to your work to demonstrate a clear precedent for the kind of support you are seeking. To do this, you can use prospect research tools such as [Foundation Directory](#) or [Kindsight](#) to source philanthropic giving history for existing donors or prospects.

Frame Programmatic Work to Align with Priorities

When framing your programmatic work for a potential funder, focus on how it aligns with the funder's identified priorities. Do you provide training across any of the following thematic areas? Use the sample text below as a starting point to craft your funder's message.

Templates by Theme

Text Box 3. Sample Template for Thematic Area - *Health Care*

Sample Text

"Our workforce training program is aligned with the needs of the health care industry by addressing both critical skills shortages and the social determinants of health that impact our communities. We provide tailored training in areas such as **[insert specific health care roles, e.g., nursing, allied health, health care administration]**, with a strong emphasis on understanding and mitigating factors like socioeconomic status, access to care, and environmental influences on health. By partnering with **[insert specific health care providers or organizations]**, we ensure our curriculum not only meets industry standards but also empowers participants to make a meaningful difference in the health and well-being of **[insert specific target populations, e.g., communities that have been underserved by public and private institutions such as rural populations, etc.]**."

Key Considerations

- **Social Determinants of Health:**

When communicating the impact of your training programs, emphasize how they address social determinants of health, such as socioeconomic status, access to care, and environmental conditions. Highlight how your training equips participants to work in roles that improve health outcomes in communities that have been historically underserved, directly contributing to health equity.

- **Health Care Workforce Needs:**

Frame your programs as aligned with the specific needs of the health care sector, particularly in areas where workforce shortages exist, such as nursing, mental health, or elder care. Emphasize how your program is responsive to local labor market demands and helps fill critical gaps in the health care system.

- **Partnerships with Health Care Providers:**

Showcase your strong partnerships with health care providers, community health organizations, and public health agencies. Highlight how these collaborations ensure that your training programs align with current industry standards and emerging trends, preparing participants for successful careers in health care.

Text Box 4. Sample Template for Thematic Area - *Environment and Climate Change*

Sample Text

“Our workforce development initiatives are designed to support community wealth-building and resilience. We focus on training participants for roles that strengthen local economies, such as [insert specific sectors, e.g., community-owned businesses, local food systems, sustainable infrastructure]. By emphasizing skills that promote economic equity and resilience, we help communities build wealth from within, creating sustainable, long-term economic opportunities. Our collaboration with [insert specific community organizations, local enterprises] ensures that our programs not only meet labor market demands but also contribute to the economic empowerment and resilience of communities, particularly those historically excluded from wealth-building opportunities.”

Key Considerations

- **Emphasis on Economic Empowerment:**

Promote how your programs are designed to build economic resilience within communities by training participants for roles that foster local ownership and wealth retention. Highlight your efforts in sectors like local entrepreneurship, cooperative businesses, or community-based economic development to demonstrate your commitment to sustainable economic empowerment.

- **Inclusive Training Opportunities:**

Showcase how your programs are structured to reach and benefit populations that have historically been marginalized and underserved. Spotlight your strategies for supporting these communities in building long-term economic resilience, whether through targeted outreach, tailored support services, or by addressing barriers to participation.

- **Resilience in Program Design:**

Position your training programs as essential to community resilience. Amplify how you prepare participants for roles in critical infrastructure, emergency response, or sectors vital for maintaining community stability during economic or environmental disruptions, demonstrating your program’s long-term impact.