



# Talent Connections Toolkit:

Building and Sustaining Partnerships  
Between Government Employers  
and Higher Education

September 2023



GOVERNMENT-TO-UNIVERSITY  
NETWORK in Kansas City



THE VOLCKER ALLIANCE  
*Empowering and Inspiring Public Servants*





## Letter from the steering committee

Dear reader,

Welcome to the Talent Connections Toolkit. We are so excited to bring you this new resource to support your critical role in the education-to-workforce pipeline.

This report could not have been accomplished without support from The Volcker Alliance and our dedicated steering committee and project team. Contributions came from more than 30 experts across higher education and government at every level — federal, state and local. Thank you to all our dedicated subject matter experts who volunteered their time to make this toolkit such a valuable resource.

While the private sector often outpaces the public sector in workforce trends, it is important to note that a multitude of career opportunities exist within the public realm across various professions. Jobs exist in the public sector for careers across the spectrum of possible professions, but many individuals in fields outside public administration aren't aware of the opportunities. For example, there are information technology jobs, human resources jobs and more in the public sector. This toolkit will provide information on how to improve recruitment practices to attract talent that may not otherwise be considered public sector employment.

This toolkit is intended to facilitate greater collaboration between higher education institutions and public sector organizations for the purpose of promoting public sector careers for recent college graduates. We hope this resource will be used by a vast array of individuals working in each of those areas to incorporate collected best practices aimed at improving public sector employment trends. Only together, can we attract the best talent to provide the best experience in public sector organizations.

It's about connections. It's about workforce. It's about success.

Sincerely,

**Carolyn McKnight, Ed.D.**  
G2U University Co-Chair  
Senior Director of Community Engagement  
and Business Development  
University of Kansas

**Susan Sherman**  
G2U Government Co-Chair  
Deputy City Manager  
City of Olathe, Kansas

---

# Table of Contents

<b>Welcome letter</b> .....	2
<b>Introduction</b> .....	4
What's the purpose of the toolkit?.....	4
What's in the toolkit? .....	4
Methodologies.....	5
Key themes.....	5
Intended use of the this toolkit .....	5
<b>Chapter 1: Perceptions and unmet needs</b> .....	6
Summary of survey feedback.....	6
Highlights from the government focus group .....	7
Highlights from the student voice focus group .....	8
Recommendations.....	9
<b>Chapter 2: Engaging with higher education</b> .....	10
Key contacts and ways to engage .....	10
More about career services departments.....	12
Career fairs and events.....	13
Connecting with the right institution(s).....	14
Putting it all together — A sample timeline for campus recruitment.....	16
Recommendations.....	17
<b>Chapter 3: Opportunities for employer engagement with higher education</b> .....	18
Formal campus recruiting.....	18
Informal campus recruiting.....	19
Tips for building your on-campus recruitment strategy.....	21
Recommendations.....	22
<b>Chapter 4: Best practices for government recruitment strategies</b> .....	23
Perceptions of the government hiring process .....	23
The benefits of employer branding as a recruitment strategy .....	23
Best recruitment practices.....	24
Best technological practices.....	28
Employee retention.....	29
Recommendations.....	30
<b>Chapter 5: Employer metrics and outcomes</b> .....	31
What are KPIs and which ones help you measure success in recruitment?.....	31
KPIs vs. metrics.....	31
The most important KPIs.....	32
How to improve your KPIs.....	33
Recommendations.....	34
<b>Conclusion and recommendations</b> .....	35
<b>Appendix</b> .....	36





## Introduction

### Section 0.1: Purpose of the toolkit

The purpose of this toolkit is to strengthen relationships between government employers and higher education institutions to promote public sector careers for recent college graduates.

This project is part of the Government-to-University Initiative (G2U), to support its goal of responding to the high need for talented public servants in government. The Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) partnered with [The Volcker Alliance](#) to launch G2U in 2019 to connect government's hiring and research needs with local university capacity.

G2U started with the premise that the performance of our government institutions depends significantly on the training and education of talented public servants. G2U has three primary objectives:

1. To cultivate a vital talent pipeline into the public sector workforce.
2. To ensure that the workforce has the skills to meet public sector challenges.
3. To provide answers to government's top priority research questions.

Read more about G2U at [marc.org/g2u](http://marc.org/g2u).

### Section 0.2: What's in the toolkit

This toolkit is designed to help address challenges and inspire action. It includes:

- Who to contact at colleges and when.
- Impactful ways to engage with college campuses.
- Best practices employed by other governments in bringing in and retaining talent.
- Best practices and examples that show the application of guidance and suggestions, such as internship best practices.

The main focus of this toolkit is on how government can connect to degree-seeking university students. While we understand that many colleges have certificate programs and continuing education to support working professionals, this will not be the main focus of this toolkit. This toolkit doesn't include a directory of services, such as which college offers which major, or contact names or contact information at each institution.

---

## Section 0.3: Methodologies

To develop the toolkit, MARC closely coordinated with dozens of Kansas City region higher education and government partners through the G2U Talent Connections Work Group. Please see the appendix for details of the task force participants, research methods and toolkit development and oversight. Critical sources of input for the toolkit included:

- A survey.
- Focus groups of local government personnel and higher education students
- Members of the G2U Steering Committee, comprising 36 members from local, state and federal government; higher education, including public, private, community college and others; and the civic community.
- The Volker Alliance.
- Subject-matter experts from government and higher education organizations.

## Section 0.4: Key themes

We learned a lot during the government and student focus groups. Both groups demonstrated consensus of the value of deepening the relationship between employers and career services on-campus. Key themes from the focus group conversations included:

### What do governments want to know?

- Who to contact at colleges and when.
- How to stretch limited resources.
- Best practices used by other governments to bring in talent and how that can be adapted to local needs.
- What other governments found to be impactful ways to recruit.
- Examples of metrics to track recruitment and hiring efforts.

### What do colleges want to know?

- The benefits of working for a public sector employer and where should they tell students where to find information.
- If there are specific majors or courses of study that governments are interested in.
- Governments' difficult-to-fill roles or hiring needs. How can colleges help direct students to the right people/places?

### What do both want to know?

- How to form better relationships with each other.
- How to share information with one another on a more regular basis.

## Section 0.5: Intended use of this toolkit

The toolkit serves as a comprehensive guide for optimizing student recruitment from degree programs. It outlines essential best practices, emphasizing the importance of engaging with specific departments within higher education institutions at strategic times. It further provides valuable insights for employers seeking to establish fruitful partnerships with academic institutions. Government employers will find helpful tips for enhancing their branding to attract top talent, covering all stages from initial outreach to employee retention. Additionally, the toolkit includes a section on key performance indicators to gauge recruitment effectiveness and adapt strategies as needed. Real-world examples throughout the toolkit make the recommendations actionable and provide inspiration for successful recruitment endeavors.



## Chapter 1: Perceptions and unmet needs

This chapter provides an overview of the findings from a survey conducted by MARC to representatives from various levels of government, as well as key themes from a focus group with government representatives and another focus group with students. The information included comes from a small sample size, making it more anecdotal than data-driven. It's valuable to get a general sense of the needs, but the data should not be interpreted as statistically significant and indelible.

### Section 1.1: Summary of survey feedback

In February 2023, MARC fielded a survey to 148 representatives from all levels of government. Of those representatives, 25 responded to the survey. Local government staff represented 84% of survey respondents, and state government and federal agencies together represented 16%.

The survey findings showed that local government staff are eager and excited to work with higher education institutions to bring in talent, but can face challenges in building those relationships or competing with the private sector.

- Most respondents said they were not familiar with the calendar of campus career fairs or related events (and the associated deadlines), and most have not identified a point of contact at each college.
- Most respondents do not have a system in place to manage the early identification of students to manage engagements.
- Budget limitations and other factors can make it difficult to compete with private sector wages, hiring-process speed and remote/hybrid work opportunities.

In terms of working with higher education partners, many respondents stated they conducted targeted outreach to students or attended career fairs. Fewer stated that they held on-campus interviews or provided marketing materials for higher education outreach.

---

## Section 1.2: Highlights from the government focus group

The purpose of the government focus group was to delve deeper into the survey responses, and gather participant opinions and thoughts about challenges and opportunities related to their experiences with the campus recruiting process.

Overall, the focus group revealed a need to strengthen the relationship between government employers and higher education institutions in the region and highlighted potential solutions to address the challenges faced by both parties.

Eight key themes emerged from this focus group:

1. Factors contributing to difficulty in government staff navigating the career process include but are not limited to: with many university systems in the Kansas City region, it's challenging to know each university's strengths and programs; there can be confusion about who to contact and when; and limited resources exist across many schools/events.
2. Challenges faced by governments in bringing in talent include budget limitations, slow hiring processes and fewer remote work opportunities, when compared to the private sector.
3. Some of the benefits of working for a public sector employer include pension, the opportunity to help the community and make a difference. However, there was the general perception among government employer representatives that pensions were not of interest or weren't a selling point to recent graduates.
4. Streamlining hiring processes and effectively communicating with candidates are good practices that have been put in place to address the challenges of bringing in talent.
5. There is a need for better understanding which colleges and universities to target for hiring needs/difficult-to-fill roles and the type of information needed for this purpose.
6. The focus group participants shared interest in forming relationships between government employers and higher education institutions, along with the need for a centralized place for sharing information about events and positions.
7. Easy ways to share information are needed, such as for monthly networking events and mutual opportunities on campus. There is an interest in meeting in-person, even if someone is unable to attend every event.
8. Taking advantage of word-of-mouth opportunities to share more about your organization (i.e., interns often share information about their experience with other students) is helpful.

Based on the information discussed in the government focus group, suggested next steps include:

- Creating a centralized place where government jobs can be posted.
- Providing information on strong areas for each university/college in the region.
- Highlighting the benefits of working for a public sector employer.

Additionally, improving communication and sharing of information between HR/hiring managers of government employers and students, attending more targeted career fairs and exploring alternative ways of campus engagement were also suggested.



### Section 1.3: Highlights from the student voice focus group

The second focus group involved eight students ranging from college freshmen to graduate students. About half planned to enter into public sector or nonprofit careers. Three individuals were unsure or had other plans after graduation with only one student in the focus group planning on entering the private sector.

The students shared their thoughts and limited knowledge about working in the public sector. They echoed that more communication is needed on what it means to work in the public sector. They also discussed the need to build and promote real-world learning experiences — from site visits, shadowing, mentoring and internships — to give more students exposure and experience in the field.

Key themes that emerged from the student focus group included:

- **Students use multiple avenues to learn about prospective employers and jobs.** This ranges from career fairs to job search boards. All the student respondents said other work experiences (e.g., part-time roles, on-the-job training, social media and word of mouth) drove their knowledge of employers and jobs.
- **A lack of awareness of what fits into the public sector popped up throughout the focus group.** Several students mentioned the pay wasn't high enough in the public sector and that individuals who chose this sector did it to help people or be more hands-on in the community. Students felt public sector jobs did not do enough to decrease or pay back student loan debt. As new employees, they felt if an employer provided education loan repayment as part of the total compensation, that would be impactful on their career decisions and ability to live on the salary.
- **Transparency in job descriptions remains top of mind for students.** While there was concern about being overworked, the students mentioned the pluses of the public sector as having good benefits and mostly set working hours. Providing clear information about a role, pay scales and grades, and benefits would make it easier for students to see how an entry-level role connects to others in the department and the organization to achieve career growth.
- **All the students wanted employers to keep them informed on where they are in the hiring process and if they are advancing in the process.** Most students felt communication in the hiring process could be improved overall. Vague job descriptions further turned students away from applying for positions since they didn't have enough information to determine whether they had interest in the job or not.
- **Individuals entering a career are often unaware of the typical questions other job seekers ask.** The group wanted interviewers to be more forthcoming with information about the hiring process, including onboarding steps and timeline.
- **Hiring process pacing is another concern for students.** This group of students wanted the job description to list the expected start date. Further, they wanted all steps in the hiring process listed up front, with an estimated timeframe for accepting applications, application review,



**Tip:** The focus group participants suggested agencies should be active on social media and create a day-in-the-life video series for various positions to highlight public sector jobs.



interview period and any other steps including background checks.

- **Internships should be paid to be competitive in recruitment.** This point was clearly made by the group and heavily influenced which positions they applied for and which they did not.

#### **Other items to motivate students to seek employment:**

- Explain the growth in the position. Is there a pay grade and how does someone receive a raise or promotion?
- Show career ladder examples starting with entry-level positions; provide samples of promotions and expected salary and benefits at each stage.
- Inform students about the pension or retirement plan. There is an opportunity on the part of governments to help students understand benefits associated with public sector employment.
- Sharing ways for individuals to seek accommodations at the organization without requiring them to disclose that information during an interview increases inclusivity.
- Share all benefits that are provided, such as tuition reimbursement, loan forgiveness, parking, breaks, flextime, modality (hybrid, in-person, virtual), etc.

Overall, this focus group viewed the public sector positively. Several of the students plan to enter this sector but need experiential learning opportunities so they can explore the roles within their intended professions. A well-thought-out, early talent plan that includes shadowing, mentoring, internships and micro-internship would help grow the talent pool. Above all, make sure information is clearly stated in advance and meet students where they are. The more an applicant knows what to expect, the more likely they are to apply for a position. They are also much more likely to apply and eventually accept a job if they have a personal relationship with the organization.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the information discussed in the chapter, the following recommendations are suggested:

**Recommendation #1: Improve campus engagement strategies.** Government employers should enhance their engagement with higher education institutions by:

- Attending various types of on-campus events (e.g., targeted career fairs and networking events).
- Building relationships with faculty, staff and student organizations to increase awareness about public sector opportunities and foster connections with potential talent.

**Recommendation #2: Enhance transparency and communication.** Focus on improving transparency and communication with candidates throughout the hiring process. This can be achieved by:

- Reviewing and updating job descriptions to provide clear expectations.
- Outlining the hiring process timeline.
- Ensuring regular updates are provided to candidates regarding their application status.
- Considering creating informative workshops, informational sessions, and site visits to educate students about the various roles and career paths and the total benefits package (e.g., pensions) available in the public sector.



## Chapter 2: Engaging with higher education

This chapter outlines key higher education contacts for government staff to enhance recruitment efforts. By understanding and leveraging these institutional contacts, government staff can gain valuable insights into hiring needs and access to potential candidates.

### Section 2.1: Key contacts and ways to engage

Not sure where to start? Higher education institutions recommend government staff engage with the following groups on recruitment efforts and to foster partnership for workforce development.

#### Key contacts at higher-education institutions

- **Career Services Department:** The Career Services Department serves as the primary point of contact for government recruiters and provides essential services and assistance to both students and employers. If there is a need to connect with other areas on campus, career services staff can provide an introduction. Career services personnel can also help government recruiters post open jobs, internships, hiring events and other recruiting activities. This department provides information about campus career fairs and other campus events. See section 2.2 for more.
- **Faculty, program chairs and department chairs:** Career services staff can connect government recruiters with program-specific career events, clinical/apprenticeship/internship placements or development, and program faculty. Faculty, program chairs and department chairs may also welcome involvement from government personnel in program advisory boards or to review student learning outcomes and curriculum for alignment with current industry practice. Faculty may have better knowledge of students who are looking for internships and careers, and may be able to provide student referrals or share career and internship opportunities with students. Government staff may also be invited to speak with a class (this may vary by institution).
- **College and higher education administrators:** The administrative structure will be different at each institution, whether they have VPs, provosts or deans. This group is typically where college/employer training and workforce development partnerships begin – such as agreements to provide specific employer training or a new program/major to prepare students for future opportunities.

---

## Key contacts for different levels of government

We understand that government personnel have demanding schedules, but students are strongly encouraged to proactively identify and connect with contacts within the organization, regardless of department. Students can find potential contacts through online sources like government websites or LinkedIn, or through referrals from their network or career services personnel. These interactions don't have to be lengthy; a brief conversation over the phone or in-person at an agreed-upon public location can provide valuable insights into the organization's day-to-day activities and career opportunities.

Government agencies recommend these strategies:

- **Local government:** There are different forms of local government, but most cities and counties have chief administrative officers, such as a city manager or county manager. These positions are responsible for day-to-day oversight for all public services within the city or county. Staff in the chief administrative office can help you make appropriate connections to other staff resources in the organization. The human resources department can also help guide students to opportunities for career exploration or job shadowing.
- **State government:**
  - State of Kansas career opportunities are posted on [jobs.ks.gov](https://jobs.ks.gov). This portal provides position descriptions, wage information, recruitment contacts and application directions. Additionally, the State of Kansas posts internship opportunities on [internships.ks.gov](https://internships.ks.gov).
  - State of Missouri career opportunities are posted on [mocarriers.mo.gov](https://mocarriers.mo.gov). Additionally, the Office of Administration administers the State of Missouri Internship Program. More information can be found at [pers.oa.mo.gov/state-missouri-internship-program](https://pers.oa.mo.gov/state-missouri-internship-program).
  - Contact your state representative or senator if you are looking to connect with someone at a state agency. There are numerous public search engines available to help you find your state elected representatives. Often, these offices provide constituent services and can help people within their districts access the right contacts at state agencies.
- **Federal government:** There are over 160 federal agencies with a presence in the Kansas City region. [USAJOBS.gov](https://USAJOBS.gov), the federal government's official employment site, can be filtered by location and is the best resource to find federal jobs. The Kansas City Federal Executive Board (FEB) is a catalyst for communication, coordination and collaboration among federal offices in the region. Think of it as a chamber of commerce for federal agencies. The FEB prioritizes recruitment and retention, encouraging career paths for the next generation and facilitating employee engagement. It may have resources to help students navigate career exploration and entry-level career opportunities.



- Current students or recent graduates may be eligible for internships and job opportunities with the federal government through programs such as Pathways. The Pathways internship program is available for eligible students (i.e., current students in high school, college, trade school or another qualifying educational institution) and offers paid opportunities to work in a federal agency and explore federal careers while a student is completing their education.
- For more information, including other student programs and opportunities, visit [usajobs.gov/Help/working-in-government/unique-hiring-paths/students](https://usajobs.gov/Help/working-in-government/unique-hiring-paths/students).
- To apply for a job on USAJobs.gov, you will need to create a federal resume. There are two ways a student can create a federal resume: build a resume using a resume builder or by uploading a resume. Instructions and tips on how to create a federal resume can be found at [usajobs.gov/Help/how-to/account/documents/resume](https://usajobs.gov/Help/how-to/account/documents/resume).



## Section 2.2: More about career service departments

Career services personnel can provide a number of supports to government staff, such as:

- Providing links and information on how to post open jobs and internships, along with any other information or resources for working with the department.
- Helping promote your opportunities to students in specific majors and programs and share your opportunities with faculty in those areas.

Please note that career services staff will not provide names of students currently looking for jobs or internships. Institutions must follow federal regulations for privacy and cannot send employers student lists or contact information. These regulations stem from the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974. The law protects the privacy of student education records. Having said this, career services staff can send resume referrals of the students who have given them permission through their Handshake account to send out their resume on the student's behalf. [Handshake](#) is a website that connects college students to jobs and internships.

Career services departments primarily assist students and alumni in preparing for, identifying and reaching career goals. Services are offered through a combination of individual appointments, workshops and presentations to student groups. Higher education institutions may also offer the below supports to students and alumni:

- **Career exploration and research:** The process of discovering and investigating various career options and gathering information about them.
- **Career guidance and planning:** Providing guidance and assistance to individuals in setting career goals, developing strategies and making informed decisions about their career paths.
- **Resume and cover letter development:** Assisting individuals in creating effective resumes and cover letters that highlight their skills, qualifications, and experiences relevant to a specific job or career.

- **Job and internship search assistance:** Providing support and resources to individuals in searching for job and internship opportunities, including job boards, networking strategies and application guidance.
- **Interview preparation and practice:** Assisting individuals in preparing for job interviews by providing guidance, tips, and conducting mock interviews to enhance their interview skills and confidence.
- **Professional networking:** Facilitating connections and interactions between individuals to establish professional relationships, share information, and explore career opportunities within a specific industry or field.

### Section 2.3: Career fairs and events

On a regular basis, career services departments will host career fairs and larger events to connect students with employers. This is a great opportunity for government staff to network with students seeking internships or permanent employment. Career fairs are typically scheduled three months in advance. Smaller networking events may be scheduled during the same semester.

Mock interviews are a great example of a smaller event. A faculty member may ask career services staff to find employers to give mock interviews or sit on an employer panel, and career services personnel will reach out to employers who regularly post open positions, attend career fairs and hire interns/graduates. These smaller events often focus on specific majors or fields of study. In addition to smaller events, employers can schedule recruiting or information tables on campus. The Career Services Department can assist with arranging a spot on campus with high student traffic or near specific groups of students/majors. To request a recruitment table, reach out to career services staff at least a few weeks in advance.

Colleges will often host career fairs for specific majors. For example, if there is a renowned business school with many students in the accounting field, the college will host an accounting major fair once a year. In some cases, colleges may host events that include several related majors to include an academic division, such as social sciences or STEM.



**Example:** Below is a listing of upcoming career events at the University of Central Missouri.



CAREER AND LIFE DESIGN

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### FALL 2023

SEPTEMBER	20	CONSTRUCTION, DESIGN & DRAFTING, ENGINEERING & SAFETY JOB FAIR 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. Student Rec. & Wellness Center
SEPTEMBER	27	CAREERS IN COMPUTING & CYBERSECURITY - MIC 4:00 - 6:30 p.m. UCM - Lee's Summit
SEPTEMBER	28	CAREERS IN COMPUTING & CYBERSECURITY - MAIN CAMPUS 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. UCM - Elliott Student Union
OCTOBER	3	CULTIVATE YOUR CAREER IN AGRICULTURE NETWORKING EVENT 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. UCM - Elliott Student Union
OCTOBER	24	NETWORKING WITH PURPOSE JOB & INTERNSHIP EVENT 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. Elliott Student Union
NOVEMBER	14	FALL 2023 ALL MAJORS VIRTUAL JOB & INTERNSHIP FAIR 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. <i>Handshake</i> Hosted virtually through

## Chapter 2.4: Connecting with the right institution(s)

To connect with an institution:

- Contact the Career Services Department or check the institution’s website for a list of programs and majors.
- Check the [MARC education asset inventory report](#) as a starting point. (Please note that this information may have changed since the report was published.)

Many professional organizations for public sector service have student chapters that may be active on your campus. If not, consider joining a virtual chapter. Often memberships or conference registration fees are discounted or waived for students. Connecting with a professional association is a great way to learn more about career opportunities and gain exposure to potential employers.

- [SHRM student chapter](#) (shrm.org) – human resources professionals
- [ICMA student chapters](#) (icma.org) – city and county management professionals
- [APWA student outreach network](#) (apwa.org) – public works professionals, such as civil engineers and construction managers
- [APA students and new planners](#) (planning.org) – urban planners
- [NRPA](#) (nrpa.org) – landscape architecture, recreation management, fitness and wellness, tourism and hospitality management
- [APHA student assembly](#) (apha.org) – public health professionals
- [GFOA student chapters](#) – financial management professionals

Local governments and higher education institutions around the region are working together to strengthen recruiting pipelines.



### Examples of recruiting activities and events at Johnson County Community College (JCCC)

JCCC holds reverse career fairs, where students meet with local employers, ask questions, learn about skills needed for prospective employment opportunities, and get feedback on resumes and portfolios. Jesse Salmon, the CEO and president of Computer Impressions, is one employer who has become a dedicated partner of JCCC’s Computing Science and Information Technology Program because he has found the students participating in the reverse career fairs to be high-caliber talent. [Read more.](#)

Employers hire from specialty programs. JCCC’s reputation for producing skilled tradespeople resonated with Olathe business owner Daniel Todd, president of DTI Precision Machining. He called Scott Crompton, associate professor in metal fabrication/welding, and asked if he could recommend a student to fit a fabricator position. Crompton toured DTI’s shop floor and said, “I have just the student.” [Read more.](#)

JCCC's free services for employers include recruiting opportunities, a job posting database, and job shadowing and internship opportunities. Details and short descriptions are [available online.](#)





### Example of private-sector recruiting:

Kiewit, a private sector employer, sponsored an informal career networking event at the University of Central Missouri. This event could be adapted based on the policies of your organization.



## Internship spotlight and internship resources

The National Association of Colleges and Employer (NACE) has [a guide to internships](#).

NACE guidance states that internships should be a learning experience with real-world opportunity and employers should provide: the opportunity to learn skills and knowledge that are transferable to other employment settings, a defined beginning and end, clear responsibilities, defined learning objectives and goals and direct supervision by a professional with relevant experience.



### Example of a city's internship program

The City of Olathe offers a summer intern program for high school, trade school and college students. The program introduces potential employees to public service and also provides summer jobs at a good rate of pay, with additional benefits of teamwork, belonging and network building. Each summer, Olathe has about 30 interns from high school to college graduates. The goal is to introduce them to public service in a way that inspires them to continue to give back. The summer internship program includes:

- A **speaker series** that includes hearing from former interns who are current full-time Olathe employees, guidance from the Olathe communications team on creating your personal brand by using social media, and effective networking. This also includes guidance from the City of Olathe human resources team on job preparations skills/tools. There is also a “speed networking/interviewing” event with various levels of Olathe management, including executives.
- In-person **development classes**, such as mentoring basics and a session on the DISC profile, an assessment tool.
- **Behind-the-scenes** tours of the wastewater treatment facility and lab, the firehouse station, the infrastructure office and more.
- Access to **online courses** that cover a variety of topics, such as developing a growth mindset and setting goals that work, and live classes, such as "five coaching skills of a leader" and leadership styles.

## Putting it all together — A sample timeline for campus recruitment

The campus recruitment calendar or timeline for higher education institutions can vary depending on the specific institution, industry and region of the country. Below is a high-level, general overview of a typical higher education campus recruitment calendar that includes some common milestones.

Before starting to recruit, there should be a planning phase where you identify recruitment goals and objectives, figure out resources for recruiting (e.g., staffing, budget), determine target higher education institutions, and establish relationships with career service personnel at target institutions.

### Summer/early fall semester (June to Sept.)

- Begin outreach to career services offices to learn about and schedule on-campus recruitment events.
- Develop job postings and internship opportunities.
- Prepare recruitment materials.
- Schedule information sessions, workshops, and networking events on campuses.
- Attend career fairs (many may be held in September)
- Start accepting applications for internships and entry-level positions.

### Mid to late fall semester (Oct. to Dec.)

- Conduct on-campus information sessions and workshops.
- Attend career fairs and expos at target institutions.
- Start collecting resumes and conducting initial screenings (this is a continuous process).
- Begin scheduling interviews with candidates.
- Select candidates for further interviews or assessments.

### Early spring semester (Jan. to Feb.)

- Extend offers to select candidates.
- Participate in career fairs and recruitment events if applicable.
- Continue recruiting for any remaining positions.

### Late spring semester (March to May)

- Wrap up the recruitment process for the academic year.
- Conduct on-campus or virtual orientation sessions for incoming hires.
- Continue to build relationships with career services offices for future recruitment cycles.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the recruitment process and make improvements.

### Ongoing throughout the year:

- Maintain communication with universities and colleges for ongoing partnership.
- Attend career-related events, workshops and seminars.
- Engage in employer branding and marketing efforts on campuses.

The general timeline may vary based on the academic calendar of the institutions you are targeting and the industry you are recruiting for. Our recommendation is that you build relationships and contact the organization that you are interested in recruiting from to learn more about when and how to engage in their campus recruitment activities.

## Recommendations

To start or strengthen recruiting and workforce development connections between higher education institutions and government, follow these steps.

### **Recommendation #1: Begin by contacting the Career Services Department on college campuses as the primary point of contact for recruitment.**

- They can provide introductions and valuable assistance in posting open jobs, internships and recruiting activities. Reach out to them in advance to request a recruitment table to participate in relevant events.
- Career services staff set up career fairs, large events and small events (e.g., mock interviews) where you can network with students seeking internships or permanent employment — and we encourage you to take advantage of them. In many cases, these events will provide opportunities for engagement with students in specific majors or fields of study.

**Recommendation #2: There are many way for students to identify jobs within the public sector at all levels (e.g. local, state and federal).** Let students know that public sector employees welcome informational interviews or informal meetings to share more about their work and what their day-to-day activities look like.

### **Recommendation #3: To connect with students from specific majors:**

- Reach out to the Career Services Department or check the institution's website for a list of offered programs and majors.
- Refer to resources, such as the [MARC education asset inventory report](#), as a starting point. (Please note that this information may have changed since the report was published.)





## Chapter 3: Opportunities for employer engagement with higher education institutions

The most successful organizations recruiting on college campuses are the ones that have developed strong on-campus brand recognition and are deliberate and strategic in their approach to recruiting activities. Though higher education institutions may be structured differently, employer engagement options are similar at any institution. When initially connecting with an institution, start with the campus's Career Services Department (reference chapter two for more information about the service offerings). Career services professionals can share on-campus engagement opportunities, as well as connect employers to student groups and faculty.

On-campus recruiting provides the opportunity to connect with talented students and build your organization's brand, using both formal and informal strategies. Each offers unique avenues to engage with students and promote your organization.

### Section 3.1: Formal campus recruiting

Formal on-campus recruiting methods include:

- **Career fairs:** Registering for a booth at a career fair allows recruiters to engage with a large number of students. The most proactive recruiters stand in front of the table/display area to connect with students. Fairs typically occur in the fall and spring semesters. Check with the career services professional at each school to determine the fair or fairs that may be the best to attend to reach the intended target audience.
- **On-campus interviews:** Employers who have identified job or intern candidates can request space to interview on-campus. Career services staff will assist employers with the reservation process.
- **Info sessions:** Employers can schedule on-campus information sessions to promote their organization and early talent pipeline programs. These sessions are focused on your organization and can highlight the variety of roles and opportunities in your workplace. An organization that is recruiting for a wide range of roles should consider having multiple representatives participate who can share more about specific roles. Info sessions should be scheduled in advance so

---

the session can be promoted for at least two weeks to students, faculty and staff. Set your organization apart by giving all attendees swag.

- **Social media distribution:** Get your organization noticed by having the Career Services Department share your information via their social media feeds. This opportunity allows you to distribute your messages to students the way you want to be known. If your organization has created promotional materials and you are attending an event, send those to your career services contact for distribution.
- **Lunch with faculty members:** Cater an on-campus lunch and invite faculty to learn more about your organization and hiring needs. This gives your organization a chance to learn more about the department(s) you are interested in hiring students from and share about your internship programs, projects and more. Career services can help connect you to the appropriate staff to plan the logistics.

### Section 3.2: Informal campus recruiting

There are many informal on-campus recruiting methods available to government staff. Busy local government staff could prioritize or pilot a few of the below options as part of their overall recruitment efforts.

- **Informational interviews/conversations:** Having informational interviews/conversations, as well as offering opportunities for students to job shadow, is a way to drive awareness of career options within the public sector.
- **Tabling/coffee chats:** Schedule a table as part of a larger event and bring goodies (coffee/donuts or pizza/water) so students can drop by and have casual conversations to learn more about your organization. Recruiters should expect to spend only a few minutes talking with a student at this type of event. Though this event is typically a table with chairs, depending on needs, the concept can be expanded. For example, the Children's Division of the Missouri Department of Social Services catered a breakfast and brought several different area supervisors to campus to recruit for part-time, full-time and internship positions so the organization was booked in a large, high-traffic area to meet with students.
- **Mock interview days:** Sign up to participate in mock interview days. This is an opportunity to identify candidates for positions your organization is trying to fill. Each institution will have a different level of need for mock interviewers. Interviewers should expect to commit one to two hours volunteering and meeting with each student, typically for 30 minutes. Interviewers should be able to provide feedback that helps a student prepare for future interviews.
- **Panel discussions:** Employees might be asked to serve on panels to provide career development knowledge or discuss a topic within a particular career field or industry. Panelists should be able to articulate the topic at hand. If your organization would be willing to serve on a panel, notify career services staff.

- **Classroom presentations:** You can work with career services staff to identify opportunities to speak in a classroom. Career services professionals give a variety of presentations each semester and are willing to co-present with employers who can expand on a particular topic. Typically, the focus of the classroom presentation is on a career development topic and an organization would share best practices, instead of using this presentation as a formal recruiting opportunity. Career services staff are also willing to share your contact information with faculty who teach the students you want to recruit.
- **Student organization meetings:** Ask the Career Services Department about student organizations that would be a good fit to connect with. You could be put in contact with the organization, and its leaders would work with you on potentially attending a meeting. It is always helpful to provide food (pizza, sandwiches, etc.) and bring recruitment flyers.
- **Mentoring:** Mentoring is a great option for organization representatives or others interested in developing a student's career preparedness and expanding their professional network. Mentors are paired with students for a set timeframe; the purpose is to allow the mentee to learn about what it means to be a professional. Mentoring only takes a few hours each semester. Career services professionals can share information about the mentoring programs on their campus.
- **Networking events:** Register to attend networking events held on campus. These provide an opportunity to connect with many students outside of more formal settings.
- **Sponsorship:** Consider sponsoring an event or a portion of an event to get your organization's logo in front of attendees. Talk to your career services contact about this option.
- **Develop a brand ambassadors program:** Brand ambassadors are students or young alumni who completed your internship program, fellowship program or other organization opportunities. They can help with recruiting your next participants.

---

### Section 3.3: Tips for building your on-campus recruitment strategy

Ways to develop successful on-campus recruiting strategies include, but are not limited to:

- **Promoting early talent programs:** Your organization needs to be able to share shadowing opportunities, available internships, part-time jobs and full-time jobs with students. Brochures, printed pieces, social media and a webpage should provide details about the positions and qualifications needed. These materials should also explain the career pathways at your organization.

More private sector organizations are developing short-term experiences for early talent, such as freshmen or sophomores, to increase applications for upper-level internship programs. This type of experience could serve as inspiration for the public sector.

- **Targeting audiences:** Once your organization has developed an early talent program, it needs to determine the target student populations. At this point, it would be helpful for employers to reach out to career services staff to provide suggestions about upcoming events and programming, as well as other campus connections.
- **In-person vs. virtual:** Your organization should consider its capacity to be on campus multiple times a year. Almost all forms of recruiting can occur either in person or virtually, though some campuses, such as UMKC, are seeing in-person employer events draw more students. Before determining a particular format, contact the career services professionals on campus to discuss your strategies and identify dates and locations. Each Career Services Department will meet with employers to listen to their needs, provide suggestions and develop a plan for the year that fits with the organization's budget and capacity. Career services professionals are a good starting point when attempting to recruit students. Career services staff can also share other on-campus branding opportunities.
- **Identify your representative:** Once your organization has identified events to attend, they should send representatives who can answer questions about the overall organization and details about the roles being recruited for. And this representative does not have to be from the human resources team. In fact, we encourage HR to reach out to non-HR employees who can speak to the specific hiring needs and skills for individual roles, as well as share insights on day-to-day activities.
- **Job boards:** Make sure all your job ads are posted on each campus's job board. Career services professionals always start with their school-specific job boards when helping students in the job search process. Confirm before you arrive on campus that the positions you are recruiting for have active job links.



Another new available resource is [MetroKCGovJobs.org](https://MetroKCGovJobs.org), which aggregates public sector jobs in the metro. This resource will be soft-launched at the end of September and official role out will begin in 2024.



**Online resource:** Visit the new [MetroKCGovJobs.org](https://MetroKCGovJobs.org), a regional public sector jobs aggregator site.

- **Follow up:** After an event, follow up with the students. You should be able to get a list of student attendees from the Career Services Department. Career services staff can send resume referrals of students who have given them permission through their Handshake account to send out resumes on the student's behalf.
- **Brand recognition:** Building an on-campus brand is an ongoing process. Touch base with the Career Services Department at least annually to provide your recruiting goals for the upcoming year. By summer, career centers are working on the next academic year.

By embracing these tips and techniques, you can enhance your organization's visibility, attract top talent and forge meaningful connections within the student and academic community.

## Recommendations

### Recommendation #1: Establish an early talent program

To effectively engage students, establish an early talent program that offers shadowing opportunities, internships, part-time jobs and full-time positions. Clearly communicate program details and qualifications through various channels such as brochures, social media and your organization's website. Consider developing short-term experiences for freshmen or sophomores to increase applications for upper-level internship programs.

### Recommendation #2: Target Specific Student Populations

Identify and target specific student populations aligned with your recruitment goals. Connect with career services staff to gain insights into upcoming events and programming and to facilitate connections with other campus stakeholders. By understanding the campus landscape and collaborating with the career services team, you can strategically plan your recruitment efforts and participate in events that cater to your target student populations.

### Recommendation #3: Maintain regular communication and follow-up

Maintain consistent communication with the Career Services Department to build your on-campus brand and foster connections. Stay in touch with career services staff at least once a year to discuss your upcoming recruiting goals. After participating in on-campus events, follow up with students by obtaining a list of attendees from career services personnel and reaching out to express continued interest and provide additional information. Career services can send resume referrals of students who have given them permission through their Handshake account to send out resumes on the student's behalf.



## Chapter 4: Best practices for government recruitment strategies

Effective recruiting is the lifeline of any successful organization. To attain this objective, organizations must constantly reevaluate and update their recruitment practices to ensure the greatest competitive edge possible. Taking the time to maximize recruitment practices is particularly important in the public sector due to limited resources and negative perceptions of government jobs.

### Section 4.1: Perceptions of the government hiring process

Negative stereotypes may take hold in the government sector and impact perceptions of government work:

1. Government jobs are mired in bureaucracy.
2. Government workers are overworked and underpaid.
3. It's impossible to get promoted in a government job.

The best way to combat these perceptions is to follow best practices for recruitment. The practices are always changing, so a big part of finding success is staying up-to-date with what other employers do and what new employees are looking for, and making necessary adjustments based on those findings. The practices outlined in this chapter are a good starting point for any organization, but constantly revisiting and revising your strategies will lead to the best sustained results.

### Section 4.2: The benefits of employer branding as a recruitment strategy

- **Cohesive branding:** Providing a unified front to the outside world is important to establish legitimacy. Set brand standards and don't stray from them in external communication. Anything from newsletters to job postings to website articles and everything in between must appear uniform and connected. Establishing legitimacy in the eyes of potential employees will increase the chance they choose to apply and accept an offered job.
- **Social media:** In today's world, it is difficult for an organization to be relevant if they are not on social media. It's particularly important to have cohesive branding across your social media accounts since they are so visible. When establishing a social media presence, make sure to be authentic to the organization's mission, vision and values. Don't use a voice that's too formal or



posts will lack engagement, but be wary of sounding too informal so potential candidates take the entity seriously. There is a sweet spot that is tough to properly hit, but organizations have to figure out a way to stay relevant.

- **Effective job descriptions:** Draft job descriptions that are detailed but also concise. Customize the way the description is written to the job. For example, an entry-level position doesn't need all the specific ins-and-outs a director-level position may need. When writing, make sure to cut out all internal lingo that would not make sense to someone outside the organization.
- **Walk the talk:** One of the quickest ways to turn potential employees away is by acting with a lack of transparency. Appropriate transparency is essential to establish the legitimacy of an organization and to build trust between the employer and potential employee. Developing trust starts with the first interaction – whether it is an ad, chat, career fair or student telling another student about their internship experience. If your organization is not viewed as legitimate, people are not likely to choose the opportunity if given other choices. Also, don't promote values that are not followed by the organization. For example, MARC provides almost entirely reusable, recyclable or compostable products to limit the office's impact on the environment – which is in line with MARC's values. If an organization says one thing yet does another, why should any other entity follow its advice? It also plants a lack of trust in candidates that is almost impossible to move past.



**Example:** Denver launched a branding campaign in 2016 and the marketing blitz included billboards, social media and bus

ads. The result was that between 2018 and 2019, Denver saw a 19% increase in number of applications it received. Additionally, the number of first-time applicants rose by 20%.

### DENVER ACCENTUATES THE POSITIVE

Denver has a good problem. It's adding 1,000 new residents per month in the metro area, officials say.

But with such rapid growth comes greater demand for services provided by the city-county government, which must hire more municipal employees to keep up.

"We're really challenged because we're up against every employer in the market looking for the top workers," says Diane Vertovec, Denver's director of marketing and communications.

In 2016, her department oversaw creation of a branding campaign to encourage the area's multigenerational workforce to apply for positions in the municipal government. Stakeholders who helped steer the initiative were enthused about the potential excitement that could be associated with working for the Mile High City.

The slogan "Be a part of the city that you love" became the linchpin for a marketing blitz that included billboards, social media ads and signage wrapped around public transit vehicles. A number of city-county employees served as "brand champions" for some of the messaging.

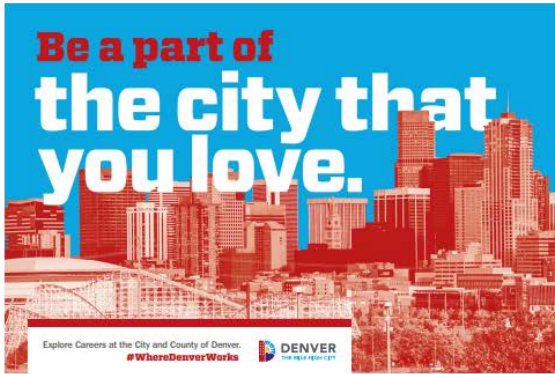
Between 2018 and 2019, Denver saw a 19 percent increase in the number of applications it received, to 160,000 from 135,000, according to figures provided by Vertovec. The number of first-time applicants rose 20 percent, to 5,514 from 4,605. Traffic at Denver's jobs website jumped 217 percent during the period.

The successful effort would be for naught, Vertovec notes, if new employees didn't like the jobs and work environment they encountered upon being hired.

"It's not getting them; it's keeping them," she says. "It's not just engagement; it's employee satisfaction." —M.R.

Below are examples of the different types of posters Denver created:

**OVERARCHING**



**ESTABLISHED IN CAREER**



**NEW TO WORKFORCE (VERSION 1)**





**YOUNG PROFESSIONALS**



**NEW TO WORKFORCE (VERSION 2)**




This USAJOBS advertisement highlights the mission and purpose of the organization

**PATHWAYS RECENT GRADUATE – Program Specialist**

**SUMMARY**  
 This position is in the Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division (EFLHD), Planning, Programming, and Environmental Branch in Ashburn, VA. The EFLHD is responsible for the program administration of the Federal Lands Transportation Program (FLTP) and other programs in the eastern half of the United States (31 States), including Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

**JOB DESCRIPTION AND MORE DETAILS:**




Real solutions to meet genuine challenges. Innovative ideas to take on growing realities. That's the Federal Highway Administration - Leaders in Paving the Way on the Road to Success.

The U.S. Department of Transportation strives to ensure that equity, transparency, accountability, collaboration, and communication permeate all that we do for the betterment of the Department, the traveling public, and our nation. As such, DOT values a highly diverse workforce of persons who promote a culture of belonging by respecting the personal dignity and worth of each individual and fostering a positive environment where all feel safe and welcome. If these commitments coincide with your personal ideals and professional aspirations, please consider joining the DOT family.

**THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (DOT) IS RANKED #6 IN THE 2022 BEST PLACES TO WORK IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT!**

**CLARIFICATION FROM THE AGENCY**  
 This position is part of the DOT Pathways Program and is open only to eligible Recent Graduates. For additional information please visit:





This is an example of a private-sector job advertisement for an early career professional that outlines responsibilities, career path, skills, education and experience.



**Community Impact Coordinator**

**ROLE SUMMARY**  
The Community Impact Coordinator will provide routine clerical/administrative support to one or more functional areas of Community Impact. This position will be responsible for administrative tasks and scheduling, assisting in daily office needs, and providing communications support for the Community Impact Department at JE Dunn. All activities will be performed in support of the strategy, vision and values of JE Dunn.

**AUTONOMY & DECISION-MAKING:** Follows directions and refers all exceptions to supervisor.  
**CAREER PATH:** Senior Community Impact Coordinator

**KEY ROLE RESPONSIBILITIES - CORE**  
**COMMUNITY IMPACT COORDINATOR FAMILY - CORE**

- Provide administrative support for department leadership (organize and schedule meetings, correspondence, travel arrangements, etc.).
- Gather, organize, and file Community Impact records.
- Create, maintain, and update various databases for tracking and reporting purposes.
- Prepare reports, forms, letters, and other documents used in the Community Impact function.
- Respond to routine questions on Community Impact activities and programs.
- Schedule and coordinate weekly nonprofit partner tours for department.
- Reserve conference rooms + place catering orders for Community Impact events.
- Manage department supplies and workspace.
- Upload employee event participation and group volunteer hours into employee engagement database.
- Assist Grant Specialist with monthly donations reconcile and upload of tax receipts into donation management platform.
- Assist with internal and external access to donations management platform, including addressing questions and issues regarding follow-up reporting and troubleshooting.

**KEY ROLE RESPONSIBILITIES - ADDITIONAL CORE**

- Coordinate Community Impact section of JE Dunn intranet, including messaging, graphics, and storytelling.
- Capture stories and images from Community Impact efforts and provides social media content to Communications.
- Assist in creation of monthly KC e-newsletter, annual Community Impact Year in Review, and presentation materials for department leadership.
- Function as a face of the company and ensures brand image and culture in all Community Impact programming.

**KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS & ABILITIES**

- Ability to perform work accurately and completely, and in a timely manner.
- Communication skills, verbal and written.
- Proficiency in MS Office.
- Ability to effectively communicate with customers.
- Organizational skills
- Listening skills
- Ability to deliver quality through attention to detail.
- Ability to learn and use a variety of software, tools and systems necessary to meet business needs.
- Ability to quickly and effectively solve problems.
- Knowledge of Community Impact processes for their assigned areas
- Ability to build relationships and collaborate within a team, internally and externally.

**EDUCATION**

- High School/GED or equivalent (Required)
- Bachelor's degree in human resources or related field (Preferred)
- In lieu of the above requirements, relevant experience will be considered

**EXPERIENCE**  
0-2 years Human Resources, Nonprofit or Communications experience. (Preferred)



## NOW HIRING

*Join the Division of Youth Services*

**ABOUT US**  
The Division of Youth Services (DYS) offers care and treatment to youth in our custody to help them become successful in their home and community.

Make a difference in the life of a young person, and consider a career with DYS!

**CURRENT JOB OPENINGS**  
We are looking to fill **Career Center** positions in:

- Kansas City
- St. Joseph
- Lawson
- Waverly

**APPLY NOW!**  
Visit: [mocareers.mo.gov/dys](http://mocareers.mo.gov/dys) to learn about these positions, and submit your application today!




**OUR BENEFITS**

-  13 paid state holidays
-  Paid sick & annual leave
-  Insurance coverage health, vision, & dental
-  Retirement plan

**CONTACT US**

Missouri Department of Social Services is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. TDD/TTY: 800-735-2966, Relay Missouri: 711

This job description flyer highlights the benefits offered by a public sector organization.

## Section 4.3a: Best recruitment practices

- **Online advertisements:** Employers can reach many more candidates with targeted online advertisements in strategic locations for fewer dollars than with print solicitations. This was one of the first areas of change made to the City of Kansas City, Missouri’s recruitment process when its new human resources manager took over. Spending money on print advertisements is a far less efficient use of resources than if those same resources were sent elsewhere.
- **Social media:** Advertising on social media can prove to be very effective for organizations. Social media companies can target groups of individuals who are likely to be qualified and interested applicants, which saves an immense amount of time and resources. Taking those same solicitations to career-focused sites like LinkedIn, Indeed and Handshake will allow for the greatest value for every dollar spent. Even social media sites like Instagram and Facebook could be effective depending on the type of applicant an employer is searching for.
- **Community engagement:** Recruitment is almost always targeted at students taking a more “traditional” path of high school to a four-year institution to the workforce, but that is merely a fraction of the total possible applicant pool. The best way to engage adult learners or others taking a less-direct path is to meet them in the community. This approach has the added benefit of furthering a positive brand for any organization as it allows residents to get to know the brand on a more genuine level. Community engagement is time consuming but will also lead to the most impactful results.
- **Emphasizing diversity:** Particularly for organizations representing a community full of diverse individuals, hiring a diverse workforce is imperative. The biggest factor fighting against efforts surrounding improved diversity is unconscious bias. One way to mitigate this issue is to have and provide clearly articulated criteria. This will improve equity in the hiring process as fewer personal judgments will be taken into consideration. An important part of this step is to eliminate “nice-to-haves” from job descriptions. For instance, having this category in a job description can unintentionally reduce the number of female applicants.
- **Clearly communicate with applicants:** Nobody wants their time wasted. Once an organization has stopped considering a candidate, tell them immediately. This will allow the entity to move on and focus only on potential employees while the former candidate can focus their time elsewhere. The only thing worse than knowing is not knowing. This starts with the job posting. Employers should make sure that the job posting requirements/qualifications align with the group the employer is trying to recruit. An example is requiring several years of professional experience for an entry-level role or new graduate role. If an employer isn’t getting many applicants for a role, this might be one area to check.

Consider ways to improve communication and sharing of information between HR/hiring managers of government employers, such as sharing best practices (e.g., using a QR code to track where site traffic was generated and asking the question on a job application how they heard about the position) or a bringing a document to a career fair/event with relevant information about open positions.

- **Alternatives to career fairs:** Some government employers don't see a return on investment for the time spent at career fairs. If this is your experience, explore alternative ways of campus engagement that might be more impactful for your organization. For example, you can look into participating in more targeted career fairs, such as one specific to public health graduates.



**Examples:** One employer in the region was finding it hard to fill some public health related positions. They discovered and attended a career fair geared toward public health professionals and were able to fill their open positions.

A local government employer started to attend more informal types of networking events hosted on campus, such as Careers and Coffee at UMKC. They were able to build relationships early on with students and could look to this group as an early talent pipeline for their organization.

### Section 4.3.b: Best technological practices

- **Automate the system:** Get rid of paper applications — mostly. Most applicants today will apply virtually, so ensuring an easy online process is important for any organization. There does need to always be an option for individuals to apply via paper, but it should not be the majority of applicants. For example:
  - An online application lets employers include an automated pre-screening process, which can save time when reviewing each application. Though this can be an efficient approach, employers need to be sure to set moderately loose parameters so they do not miss out on any qualified applicants.
  - Streamlining the hiring process in other ways, such as eliminating the need for having a notary sign documents when all the hiring paperwork can be done via DocuSign, and communicating often with prospective candidates will allow the process to move more smoothly.
- **Audit where applications get stuck:** Part of an effective recruitment approach is constant updates based on past information. Conduct regular recruitment audits to expose any bottlenecks that slow down the process. Then, once a bottleneck has been identified, work with hiring supervisors to resolve the issue. Since the issues can often come during the interview phase, make sure individuals involved in the hiring process are given the proper resources to conduct the most efficient, effective and equitable interviews possible. This will allow for constant improvements for the applicant-to-hire pipeline, costing the organization less time and money.
- **Take advantage of external analytics:** Another tool available to employers is external analytics from job websites. These companies, such as Indeed, collect information on users of their site. Some of that information can be readily available to employers if they ask for it. Don't be afraid to contact external companies that may have helpful information for a more effective hiring process.

## Section 4.4: Employee retention

It may seem surprising to see retention discussed as part of recruitment because — at least on the surface — they appear to be opposites, but that couldn't be farther from the truth. The most important advocates for any organization are its employees and former employees. These same individuals can be the greatest detractors as well, so keeping them happy should be of the utmost importance to any organization.

- **Onboarding:** How an employee's experience begins in an organization sets the tone for their entire tenure. While it is possible to recover from a poor onboarding experience, it requires much more effort than ensuring the process is smooth from the start. An in-depth explanation of onboarding could be its own chapter, but some important, high-level points to hit on are:
  - Preboard new hires so they know what to expect before day one.
  - Assign a co-worker "buddy" to answer questions and show them the ropes.
  - Share a definition of success.
  - Check-in regularly.
  - Be flexible.

Every new employee has their own style, so it's important to understand their needs and tailor the experience to them. It is also important to revisit these practices on a regular basis to ensure they remain top-notch.

- **Employee training:** New employees may dread the trainings they must complete before beginning the actual work. These trainings exist to provide vital information, but they do nothing if they are quickly skipped through due to lack of interest. When possible, take the time, effort and money to make these trainings as interesting and engaging as possible. If employees don't take the time to learn from trainings, all the related time, energy and money is a complete waste anyway, so organizations might as well go the extra step to ensure new workers internalize what is taught. For example, the cybersecurity training at MARC is so interesting that everybody looks forward to getting access to new episodes. It's a topic of conversation between employees in the office. Employees enjoy watching it and they gain understandings of the best cybersecurity practices in the process.
- **Manager training:** Everybody has had a teacher or boss who — while they may have a great understanding of content — had limited ability to successfully coach and manage those they oversaw. A freshman engineering student can't be expected to build a bridge, so why are new managers expected to successfully manage others with no training? Since it's not baked into the education system, the brunt of responsibility to ensure managers are adequately prepared falls on the organization. Implement training for new managers so they make the career transition successfully. Just like with other training — the more engaging and personalized, the better.



## **Recommendations**

### **Recommendation #1: Establish a reliable, friendly public brand**

If organizations establish a trustworthy brand, more individuals will apply for open positions. If people want to work for an entity, more candidate options will appear, leading to an increase in talent available for an organization to hire. A big part of establishing a friendly brand is proactive engagement with candidates.

### **Recommendation #2: Focus on retention**

Happy employees bring more happy employees. Keeping employees satisfied will also lead to fewer needs for recruiting new employees, saving organizations time, money, effort and institutional knowledge. A piece of advice often given to those looking for jobs is to ask employees not in leadership positions about their experience in the organization. If those employees speak highly of the entity, it will greatly increase the interest of the candidate.

### **Recommendation #3: Constantly audit and update the process**

There is always new research leading to new best practices to incorporate into a recruitment process. Make sure to regularly evaluate the process that currently exists and create an opportunity for updates to recruitment within an organization.



## Chapter 5: Employer metrics and outcomes

### Section 5.1: What are KPIs and which ones help you measure success in recruitment?

Recruitment KPIs are specific measures designed to calculate and evaluate the efficiency of the hiring process. Recruitment KPIs represent the organization's objectives and provide the data that helps the recruiting team understand where they currently stand, what needs to improve and which steps are necessary to follow organizational goals.

KPIs are usually represented as percentages, ratios or single figures so everyone can easily interpret them. They provide valuable insight and information into core recruitment activities, such as employee turnover and candidate satisfaction.

Combining the results of all areas of the recruitment process and recruitment activities can give a clearer picture of what can be improved and how. KPIs are indicators that provide crucial insights into the strengths of an organization's hiring strategy.

### Section 5.2: KPIs vs. metrics

KPIs and metrics are often used interchangeably; however, they are quite different. Although both are quantifiable measurements, they serve different purposes. A key indicator of how KPIs differ from metrics is the level of perspective given to each audience. KPIs represent business objectives connected to various departments, while metrics are lower-level indicators and their perspective is focused on a specific business area.

KPIs are indispensable tools for performance tracking, designed to make the recruitment process as valuable to any organization as possible. Setting hiring goals is only the first step in getting a glimpse of success in the recruitment process. Organizations need to evaluate what works and what doesn't work, and KPIs help give insight.

Data is very crucial in finding talent. The social media giant, LinkedIn, has reported that talent acquisition teams with mature analytics are two times more likely to improve their hiring efforts and three times more likely to reduce costs. Data-driven improvements aren't just about collecting as many metrics as possible; it's also about mapping out a team's efforts to attain specific goals and create the right metrics to assess and deal with challenges.

### Section 5.3: The most important KPIs

- Application KPIs:** This is mostly seen as passive because employers typically wait for applicants to respond to job postings; however, this can be an active approach, as well. Take the time to invest in the best talent sources and create a big funnel/candidate pool before people apply. Then, get to know where the best employees come from and focus most efforts on that platform.
- Time to hire:** This is tightly linked to customer experience and measures the application process from the candidate’s perspective. According to LinkedIn, some industries take up to 49 days to hire a new employee. Spending a lot of time filling vacancies costs the organization a fortune in other avenues. It also gives candidates more time to consider other opportunities. It is particularly crucial in tough job markets to ensure the best candidates receive quick offers.
- Offer acceptance rate:** This calculates how many applicants accept an offer from an organization. According to the 2017 Talent Acquisition Benchmarking Report from the Society for Human Resources Management, 3/4 of companies have an OAR rate of 86%. If the acceptance rate is lower than 80%, it’s time to reevaluate job descriptions, competitive pay structures and strong organization branding/engagement.
- Interviews per hire:** This KPI shows how many interviews have been conducted before making a new hire. In 2022, the average of interviews per hire was slightly greater than two.
- Cost per hire:** This KPI refers to the average cost of filling a vacancy, from recruitment costs such as job advertisement rates, referral fees, administrative taxes and payment for the time the hiring team is spending on the process. To calculate this cost, divide the final cost of the hiring process by the number of vacancies filled.



This is an **example** of a data analytics dashboard. [See other examples.](#)

- **First year turnover rates:** Employee turnovers have a lasting effect on the success of an organization. To save any unnecessary organizational expenses and to optimize the hiring process, measure this KPI by dividing the total number of employees who leave within their first year by the total number of employees who leave from the start of a determined measuring period. This could be any period of time greater than one year.

## Section 5.4: How to improve your KPIs

Once your organization identifies the types and number of KPIs to track, here are a few ways to enhance their overall usefulness in the hiring process.

- **Automate KPIs:** Making a KPI dashboard with interactive charts will help provide easily accessible visual data. It helps organizations automate processes and track consistently without excessive effort.
- **Skills assessment:** Skills assessments will help entities hire, without bias, based on the demonstrable abilities of the candidates. Organizations can use these skills assessments to filter out unqualified candidates, reducing the time and cost spent on the hiring process. To ensure no unintended bias, only include truly required elements in the skills assessment.
- **Buy in from team:** Involving the whole team can help solve issues faster. Involving more professionals will increase the chances of finding a solution or improving those already in existence.



The article “Transforming public sector hiring with data-enabled talent ‘win rooms’” does an excellent job exploring how to enact common issues uncovered by the effective use of KPIs and metrics. It discusses "building a data-enabled talent win room" to effectively implement changes deemed necessary in the hiring process. The article breaks it down into three categories: a cross-functional team of stakeholders, a central repository for accurate hiring data and an iterative working model. [Learn more from McKinsey & Company.](#)



## **Recommendations**

### **Recommendation #1: Determine what KPIs make sense for the organization**

A one-size-fits-all approach rarely works. The KPIs mentioned in this section are ones often implemented by organizations, but they certainly don't all pertain to every entity. Understand what parts of the organization's recruitment process need to be measured before implementing anything to ensure no time and resources are wasted.

### **Recommendation #2: Implement recommended KPIs**

Once your organization determines which KPIs will be beneficial to track, implement them into your recruitment process. This step needs to be included in the process after a very new hire to gain the best result. It will generate tangible information on where your recruitment process is now and how it could improve.

### **Recommendation #3: Update recruitment processes based on information from KPIs**

Collecting the information is the first step. The next step is incorporating the information gained from KPIs into the recruitment process. The KPI data will allow organizations to improve their recruitment processes in evidence-backed ways. Making KPIs part of the recruitment process for every new hire and then ensuring the information gained is put right back into the process for the next open position will ensure the organization is constantly employing best practices.



## Conclusion

### Conclusion and recommendations

Some recommendations beyond the scope of the toolkit that we think are opportunities for future projects include:

- **Providing information on strong areas for each university/college in the region:** It was beyond the scope of this project to research and provide content on specific fields of study for each institution.
- **Sharing information:** Government employers and university contacts wanted an easy way to share information and interact with each other, such as through a centralized platform or monthly networking event. This would also involve informing students about opportunities in the public sector and providing public sector employers with opportunities to connect with students and faculty, such as speaking during classes or mock interview days.
- **Other levels of government:** The government subject matter experts involved in the development of this toolkit are largely drawn from local government. We have more work to do to ensure that state and federal opportunities in our region are represented.
- **Adult learners:** We learned that many higher education partners are developing strategies to meet the needs of a growing population of adult learners. To align our efforts and messaging appropriately, we must consider the strategies being developed by higher education partners for this emerging talent pool and not be exclusively focused on traditional students.
- **Non-credit branch:** During our discussions with university partners, the non-credit branch of universities emerged as an important topic. The non-credit branch is an alternative avenue for delivering education. It might be worth exploring the potential role of a G2U collaboration with governments in enhancing the skill development of government employees for the future. This collaboration could involve the development of course or certificate programs to meet the evolving needs of government workers (i.e., upskilling or re-skilling needs).

## Appendix

### Task force

To develop this toolkit, career services personnel, government representatives, students and other stakeholders were invited to join a planning task force with the aim of identifying common barriers to public sector on-campus recruitment. This work involved:

- Establishing a project timeline and organizing monthly meetings for the G2U Talent Connections work group focused on developing the toolkit.
- Convening 32 members of the work group including, but not limited to representatives from higher education institutions:
  - University of Missouri-Kansas City.
  - Metropolitan Community College.
  - University of Central Missouri.
  - Local governments, including Shawnee, Kansas; Lenexa, Kansas; Kansas City, Missouri; and Johnson County, Kansas.
  - Federal agencies, including the U.S. Office of Personnel Management.
  - Members of the Volcker Alliance.
- Soliciting updates and feedback during work group meetings in March, April, May and June 2023.

### Research

The partner group deployed research methodologies to determine the toolkit's content. The research steps included:

- Developing and deploying a survey in February 2023 designed to identify opportunities and challenges to feature in the toolkit chapters.
- Planning and facilitating a focus group of local government personnel and others in March 2023 to gather input about challenges and opportunities related to their experiences with the campus recruiting process.
- Developing and conducting a student focus group that was carried out by a higher education partner in May 2023.

### Toolkit development and oversight

Many individuals and organizations helped shape this toolkit. In March 2023, the G2U Steering Committee, which provides oversight of the toolkit initiative, shared input regarding key themes and the chapter outline. The G2U Steering Committee consists of 36 members from local, state and federal government; higher education, including public, private, community college and others; and the civic community. Members of the Volcker Alliance also reviewed and shared feedback on the drafts of this toolkit and the content outline for the toolkit.

The group also recruited more than 15 subject matter experts from both government and higher education organizations to ensure their active involvement in the drafting and/or reviewing process of the toolkit chapters.

