REDF
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# PROGRAM MODEL TOOLKIT

**DEVELOPED FOR: REDF**
**Flying Whale Strategies**
**October 2024**

## PURPOSE AND INTRODUCTION

This document provides employment social enterprises (ESEs) with a comprehensive set of standard operating procedures for running a highly effective Employee Success Program.

Employee success includes:

1. the intentional design of the employee pathway
2. the individual activities, services, and benefits that help workers
3. the training that supplements work experience

This guide supports ESE leaders in planning and articulating all three of these components. It guides ESE leaders through the process of defining their employee success program, enabling better management and clarity. Often, leaders are asked to manage abstract ideas rather than concrete programs. By clearly outlining the program, ESEs will have a well-defined set of expectations. The handbook begins with an overview of the theory and practice of workforce programming, followed by a detailed framework for moving participants from initial entry to a successful exit, resulting in transformational change.

The purpose of this handbook is to help identify the key decisions necessary for operating a day-to-day workforce program within an ESE. Each section of the handbook includes a description and an example of the completed section.

## HOW THIS TOOL WORKS

After studying the description and reflecting on the questions, ESEs can delete the description and the example and replace it with their version of the plan for each section of the handbook. Once customized, this handbook will serve as a documented program model, enabling it to be handed off to another organization for replication.

## GLOSSARY

Job training: Training that supplements work experience to equip participant workers with the skills needed for long-term success in mainstream employment and life (e.g., GED/HSE preparation, financial literacy and empowerment, forklift certification). Includes on-the-job training (firsthand experience and learning from doing a job with real-time guidance from a coworker or supervisor) and instructor or group-led training (classroom or skills training provided before or during ESE employment to upskill workers).

Participants: The people an ESE actively recruits and is focused on providing work experience and employee success wraparound services.

Industry-Expert Trainers: Subject-matter experts working within your business who are called upon to train others. Within an apprenticeship model, they may be called master-level trainers or craftsmen.

Employee Success Program: An ESE service to support an ESE participant worker's success while working at an ESE and if or when they move on to the next job. An employee success program is a structured set of activities and services through which employment social enterprises (ESEs) address the barriers to employment faced by their participant workers supporting participant workers reach their goals.

Curriculum: A plan for learning hard and soft skills within the social enterprise. Curriculum can be delivered on-the-job, in a classroom, through 1-1 coaching, or through personal reflection questions.

Apprenticeship: An apprenticeship program is a workforce training experience with a defined series of learning outcomes and responsibilities that increase in complexity at each level of growth.

Internal Certification: A series of certifications designed by the ESE to set high expectations while providing opportunities for frequent raises and promotions.

## CLARIFY YOUR EMPLOYEE SUCCESS PROGRAM MODEL

### Start here: Define Success

We encourage you to begin with the ultimate goals of your program. By having a clear sense of where you're headed, you can orient your work toward this north star.

Reflection
Write down:

- Do we know what our program outcome goals are?
- Are they *outcome goals* or simply *outputs*? See the logic model toolkit to help you differentiate.

*Example:*
Our definition of success:
We are working toward a bold vision. We will prove that the BBQ industry can become a model that ends homelessness and recidivism within our lifetime. In order to move toward this vision, we have set our sights on three measurable outcomes to achieve in the next three years:

- Outcome #1: Basic Stabilization (Financial and Family and Post-Incarceration): By 2026, 75% of Just Q'in Employees will increase their degree of basic stabilization by at least two levels.

- Outcome 2: Well-Being (Physical, Mental, and Spiritual Health): By 2026, 85% of our participants will increase at least two levels of wellbeing.
- Outcome 3: Earning Power: By 2026, 85% of the people we serve will increase earning power.

**Define Your ESE Profitability Goals**

Your program goals exist in the context of your enterprise profitability goals. Pressure to achieve rigorous profitability impacts your ability to hire employees facing high barriers to employment. In the beginning, you might be aiming to strike a balance between profitability and employment opportunities. Or you might decide that profitability doesn't matter as much as missional outcomes. You'd rather achieve impact with participant employees with high barriers than turn a profit. Or you might decide to set up a profitable business with work-ready employees before taking on the risk of hiring individuals with little to no experience.

As you mature, you may make calculated decisions to open businesses that offer numerous employment opportunities for people with high barriers in tandem with businesses that generate more revenue to subsidize the others.

It is necessary to clarify where you wish to land on the spectrum of profitability so that you can manage your employee success program accordingly. In the following example, the restaurant has low profitability goals, not necessarily low-quality expectations. Quality is maintained by hiring a crew of traditional restaurant professionals to work alongside participant employees. This allows the program leadership to run a rigorous employee success program without impacting the overall performance.

Reflection:

- Are there improvements that need to be made in the relationship between business and programming? Are we operating in silos with competing interests?
- Can I achieve my program goals within the current business plan?
- Do I have suggestions as to how we might exceed profitability goals while also offering a rigorous employment program?

*Example:*

We aim to operate our business at an earned income loss so that we have the opportunity to hire the maximum number of individuals with barriers to employment. We will intentionally spend above-market rates on staffing costs and cost of goods sold because we are prioritizing our training program goals. We will hire professional restaurant staff to work alongside program employees to ensure the ESE lands on the roster of the city's best restaurants. We will fundraise in order to meet overall revenue goals.

**Define your Methodology**
Next, identify your chosen methodology for meeting your program's outcome goals that you described above. In this section, identify your "recipe" for success. For some ESE's, this will be your theory of change. For others, it will be a description of how you approach each of your goals. It should always include your unique approach that sets you apart from other organizations.

Reflection
Write down:

- What do we believe about how to move the needle with the people we serve?
- What's unique about our approach?
- What do we want to do differently than what's been done before?

*Example:*
Our theoretical framework:
We have found that there are three key ingredients in ending homelessness and recidivism. All three require increasing the dosage of: life stability, well-being, and earning power. For us, stability looks like having fewer emergencies that set people back. We measure it through a self-sufficiency matrix. Well-being looks like achieving a level of physical, mental, and spiritual health. We measure it according to the participant's personal goals in each of those categories. Earning power looks like the ability to get increasingly higher paying jobs after leaving Just Q'in. We measure it by a participant achieving one or more factors that we have found to increase earning power.

In our experience, moving the needle on each of these three things requires a combination of case management and on-the-job reflection. Thus, our programming is designed to lead participants through a steady dose of targeted case management and ensure that their work experience is infused with moments of reflection. And we know that our program participants come to us with chronic stress and trauma as a result of their life experience. We also know that chronic stress and trauma damages executive functioning skills, the cognitive skills managed by the part of the brain that gets less exercise when the fight or flight response is overactive. Our case management and workplace training is offered with a special attention toward rebuilding the executive functioning skills of our participants. When this happens, we witness their ability to make progress on their three core outcomes: stabilization, well-being, and earning power.

Fill in the Blank:
We have found that there are (insert number) key ingredients in (fill in with your ESE's ultimate goal). All three require increasing the dosage of: (insert the ingredients that

need to get stronger). For us, (ingredient one) looks like (describe what it looks like when it's improved). We measure it through a (insert tool). (Ingredient two) looks like (describe what it looks like when it's improved). We measure it (insert tool). (Ingredient three) looks like (describe what it looks like when it's improved). We measure it by (insert tool).

In our experience, moving the needle on each of these three things requires a combination of (insert your two or three types of effort). Thus, our programming is designed to lead participants through a steady dose of (insert first effort). And we know that our program participants come to us with (describe the barriers they experience). Our (insert your two or three types of effort) is offered with a special attention toward (insert how you uniquely address those barriers). When this happens, we witness their ability to make progress on their three core outcomes: (repeat the categories of your three program outcomes)

**WHO IS ON STAFF?**

This section outlines your ideal staffing model. Consider matching your staffing model with the methodology you just described above. Also consider ensuring that there are staff dedicated to each of the program outcome goals listed above. This exercise will reveal if you have the right staff to achieve the outcome goals.

If you are offering both case management and on-the-job training, identify the staff who are responsible for each. As such, you will include business/enterprise staff as well as employee success staff in this table. If you have multiple programs such as a general workforce development program, a youth program, and a re-entry program, clarify which programs each staff member supports.

Reflection

Write down:

- Are my staff capable of and interested in the methodology we wish to prioritize? Or is the methodology something only the leadership is familiar with?
- Are industry expert trainers equipped with the level of teaching skills necessary to work effectively within our employment program?
- Does your staffing plan reflect the type of training program you are operating? See "Training Model" section below to find out more.
- Who do we need to hire?
- Are there job duties we need to clarify?

*Ideal Staffing Model Example:*

| Title | Decisions they Make | Goals they are | Program they |
|---|---|---|---|

| | | Responsible for | support |
|---|---|---|---|
| Shift Managers (2 FTE) | -The schedule<br>-What jobs individuals are assigned<br>-Disciplinary action | Production goals<br>Profitability goals | Workforce |
| Pit Master | -How meat is cooked | Production goals<br>Profitability goals | Workforce |
| Career Coach | -How we do recruitment<br>-Who is recruited<br>-All hiring decisions<br>-Who gets hired into outside jobs and when<br>-When people get pulled off the floor | Program outcome goals | Workforce |
| Chaplain | -How spiritual formation is done | Program outcome goals | Workforce |

For a full analysis on staffing models for ESE's please see (Insert Govind's tool)

**OUR PARTICIPANTS**

Defining who you serve, your focus population, clarifies the population whom you will be most effective. When the boundaries of who you serve are clear, you are more likely to achieve impact goals. It is also helpful to determine whether or not you will serve a wider audience than those who align with your mission. In other words, identify if you will hire people without barriers to employment or not.

Reflection

Write down:

- Are we defining our focus population based on the people we are best set up to serve?
- Are we afraid of excluding someone and therefore have defined our population more widely?
- Are we defining our population based on the funding that comes with them?

*Example:*

We serve adults ages 18+ who have experience with homelessness or the justice system across Cincinnati.

Over the years it has become clear that we are not set up well to serve youth younger than 18 years old. We have also learned that our expertise lies with the specific challenges that come with homelessness and the justice system. Thus, anyone who does not have this background is referred to our partners for work and support.

## RECRUITMENT AND INTAKE

Recruitment and intake for ESEs align with the needs of your focus population. In this section, clarify your recruitment and intake for program participants not yet employed in the businesses as well as recruitment and intake for program employees working in the enterprises. They may be one and the same. Click here to see our toolkit on intake processes.

Options for recruitment:

- Similar to recruitment for standard businesses in your field. Post jobs online or physically in the business space.
- Recruit through community partnerships (nonprofits who serve your focus population)
- Recruit through government partnerships (diversion officers, parole officers, TANF offices)
- Recruit through information sessions which are published online and in your physical business space.
- Recruit through word of mouth, e.g. offering ESE participant employees referral incentives

Options for intake:

- Traditional hiring practices based on an application and interview process.
- Review referrals with the referring partner and make hiring decisions in collaboration.
- Require program completion of a pre-work program before hiring into the enterprise.
- Require completion of an orientation before hiring into the enterprise.

Reflection
Write down:

- How much effort does recruitment require? Is there a correlation with our reputation in the community?
- What is the one decision we can make that will change all future recruitment efforts? Ex: Begin working within prisons rather than waiting until individuals are released.
- How are we overcomplicating our intake process?
- What culture-building activities can we add into our intake process?

- Are we compensating participants for attending recruitment or intake events? Note: the type of income a prospective participant has at the time of recruitment helps you answer this question. If your focus population has some income coming through, they may be able to withstand a two week long orientation process without pay. But if someone is actively houseless, their willingness to stay engaged may not be for so long.

*Example:*
We conduct monthly information sessions for people who are interested in our program. The sessions are designed to introduce the unique culture we have created at Just Q'in as well as the progression of the program. This is an opportunity for potential candidates to ask questions, meet our team, and determine if our program is the right fit for their journey. Often these sessions are attended by case managers or diversion officers at our referring partner organizations. We expect about 20 people each month.

There is no formal application or interview process to join our workforce program. If they complete our 1-week orientation, they are offered employment in our social enterprise and enter our workforce program. We sign people up for the 1-week orientation at the monthly information sessions. We also sign people up through 1-1 outreach to our partners and respond to people who reach out through our website postings.

Our 1-week orientations are offered quarterly. Thus, we bring in a new cohort four times per year.

**ENROLLMENT MODEL**
This section describes how often you bring new individuals or groups into your programs. There are two common methods: individuals enroll on a rolling basis or individuals enroll in cohorts. The decision hinges on your revenue generating model. If you rely primarily on earned revenue, your hiring is going to be driven by business needs. If you have a significant amount of government funding, you may be required to hire a certain number of individuals in which case you'll likely implement a rolling basis or cohort.

Also, your enrollment model might depend on your theory of change. If you believe community is critical to achieving your programmatic outcomes, then you'll likely implement a cohort model. If you believe training is best conducted 1-1, individuals should roll in at any time. If training is best conducted in groups, consider cohorts to mirror "classes" which benefit from cohesion and group work.

Rolling Enrollment Model

Benefits:

        - Individuals can begin the program at any time. They do not need to wait for a cohort start date
        - Businesses can fill gaps by bringing new employees on immediately
        - Potentially serve more people per year

    Disadvantages:

        - Intake and orientation is repetitive
        - Individuals lack a sense of camaraderie with others who start at the same time
        - With staggered entry points, it can be challenging to measure and compare progress across individuals or plan group activities like graduation ceremonies

Cohort Enrollment Model

Benefits:

- Improves efficiency in the intake and onboarding process
- Builds a sense of community immediately
- Programs can develop a more organized training schedule that progresses through a set curriculum with specific milestones.

Disadvantages:

- Individuals must wait for an upcoming start date, which results in attrition

Reflection

Write down:

- What are the downstream effects of our chosen enrollment method?
- Have we chosen an enrollment model based on our training needs or the demand from participants?
- Have we chosen an enrollment model based primarily on funding requirements or expectations from our donors?
- How does our enrollment model impact participant engagement and retention?
- What are the operational costs associated with each model?
- Are our learning outcomes or program goals better suited to individual or group learning? How will the enrollment model impact achievement of those goals?
- What feedback have we received from past participants about their experience with our enrollment process? How could this inform our choice of model?

*Example:*

We enroll new employees on a rolling basis. Thus there are no groups or cohorts that must reach a critical mass before employment begins.

**ORIENTATION**
An effective orientation sets the tone for your program or workplace culture. ESEs can operate orientations in order to accelerate learning by including activities that train on soft or hard skills. In other words, your orientation can serve as the first dose of training participants receive.

Reflection
Write down:
- How can our orientation be delivered using our program's methodology? (Review your methodology section above)
- How can we use our orientation to begin training on fundamental mindsets and skill sets?
- How can we design a learning experience rather than an information download?
- Do we want to pay participants for attending orientation?
- How can we use our orientation as a screening process? What part of the application/interview process can it replace?
- What part of our program has been most confusing in the past? How can we clarify it during orientation?
- What beliefs does our organization hold that we need to clarify up front?

*Example:*
At Just Q'in, we consider our orientation to function like a working interview. Our orientations provide a sample of our workplace culture to allow participants to determine if they wish to continue working with us. Thus, we structure them with presentations, hands-on activities, and personal reflection. Our orientation takes place over the course of two weeks, four hours per day. We offer a $200 stipend to all who complete orientation.
What we cover:
- Mission/Vision/Values
- The Just Q'in story
- Describe outcome goals and your path in our system
- Level system and assessments
- How shift schedules work
- The leadership team (who offers you what)
- Our expectations (what would get you fired? vs what are we here to see you through)

Working Interview/Orientation Schedule Example:
Week 1: Understanding the Mission, Values, and Systems
Day 1: Welcome & Introduction
- 10:00 AM – 10:30 AM: Welcome Breakfast (Meet & Greet)

- 10:30 AM – 11:15 AM: Overview of Orientation and Expectations
- 11:15 AM – 12:00 PM: The Just Q'in Story: History, Growth, and Purpose
- 12:00 PM – 12:30 PM: Personal Reflection Activity: "Why Am I Here?"

Day 2: Mission, Vision, and Values
- 10:00 AM – 10:45 AM: Mission, Vision, and Values Presentation
- 10:45 AM – 11:45 AM: Group Activity: Aligning Personal Values with Company Values
- 11:45 AM – 12:30 PM: Hands-on: What it Means to Live Our Values on the Job

Day 3: Outcome Goals & System Path
- 10:00 AM – 10:30 AM: Presentation: What Success Looks Like Here
- 10:30 AM – 11:30 AM: Your Path in Our System (Goal Setting & Career Progression)
- 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM: Workshop: Mapping Your Path (Personalized Reflection)

Day 4: Level System and Assessments
- 10:00 AM – 10:45 AM: Introduction to the Level System: How Growth is Measured
- 10:45 AM – 11:45 AM: Assessment Overview: What to Expect
- 11:45 AM – 12:30 PM: Introduction to the stations

Day 5: Shift Schedules & Workplace Flow
- 10:00 AM – 10:45 AM: Understanding Shift Schedules & Time Management
- 10:45 AM – 11:45 AM: Hands-on Activity: Simulating Shift Work
- 11:45 AM – 12:30 PM: Discussion: Balancing Work with Life

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Week 2: Practical Application and Leadership Interaction
Day 6: Leadership Team & Support System
- 10:00 AM – 10:30 AM: Meet the Leadership Team
- 10:30 AM – 11:30 AM: Leadership Roles: Who to Go to for What
- 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM: Open Forum: How Can Leadership Support You?

Day 7: Expectations: What Gets You Fired vs. What We Support
- 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM: Presentation: Clear Expectations for Success
- 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM: Group Discussion: Boundaries and Support Systems
- 12:00 PM – 12:30 PM: Reflection: Overcoming Personal Challenges

Day 8: Practical Skills Development
- 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM: Hands-on Training: Key Skills for the Job (e.g., BBQ techniques, customer service)
- 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM: Peer-to-Peer Coaching & Feedback

Day 9: OSHA Certification

- 10:00 AM – 12:30 AM: OSHA Certification with workforce partner

Day 10: Wrap-up & Graduation

- 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM: Week 2 Recap: Key Learnings & Reflections
- 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM: Closing Ceremony & Stipend Distribution
- 12:00 PM – 12:30 PM: Personal Reflection & Goal Setting for Next Steps

**JOB TRAINING MODEL**

The job training model describes the approach to work-based training within your ESEs. A model is created by asking the basic question: How will participants progress in knowledge and skills as they work in our business? We cannot assume that hours on the job are enough to achieve the type of progression we want to see. Instead, we build a model that has targeted learning outcomes. We have defined three types of training models that exist within ESEs. We have organized them from Level 1- least complex, to Level 3- most complex.

**Training Model Summary:**

- Level 1: The ESE offers a supportive learning environment through supervisors equipped as on-the-job trainers.
- Level 2: The ESE leverages trained supervisors to guide employees through internal certifications. Internal certifications are earned through demonstrating the skills and knowledge required for each. This requires a thoughtful curriculum which is delivered in a classroom and on-the-job.
- Level 3: The ESE offers an apprenticeship program, which is a workforce training experience that defines a series of learning outcomes and responsibilities that increase in complexity at each level of growth.

Level 1: Teach staff how to teach
(different than teach staff how to be supportive)
Method: In Level 1 we are equipping specifically trained staff how to teach new employees using the tenets of adult learning theory. We provide training as well as capacity to teach on-the-job. This means that we give supervisors a workload that includes time for coaching and reflecting with new employees. In this model, the bulk of the learning happens on shift through a relationship between a mentor and a student. We also build in extra infrastructure for pre-shift meetings to prepare participant employees to learn and be coached throughout their shift.

Staffing Needed:

- Experienced staff capable of spending 50% of their time training on-the-job.
- Operational staff running the business during the 50% of the time the supervisors are unavailable.

- Program staff offering supportive services outside the shift.

Steps:

1. Identify the hard and soft-skill competencies that should be achieved to succeed in your workplace.
2. Identify the expert staff that are responsible for teaching these.
3. Provide training to these supervisors on how to teach: Important note: REDF has found a promising practice is to include coaching and training in job descriptions and performance management tools for supervisors.
    - Identifying learning moments
    - Focusing learning on the most important aspect of learning in that moment (not piling on)
    - Facilitating quick conversations to analyze what happened
    - Building on prior knowledge. Scaffolding the conversation based on where the employee is in their learning process.
    - Asking productive questions
    - Encouraging rapid iteration of new behaviors
4. Identify the personal supports that will accompany employees throughout their journey. These could be in-house case managers, career counselors, navigators, or another role that provides stabilization, goal setting, and referrals to needed services. You could also contract with outside partners to provide these supports, but will need a point person to coordinate in-house.

Recommendation on training for ESE supervisors: Economic Mobility Pathways (EMP) in Boston, MA has built a network of economic development organizations focusing on using brain science to build pathways out of poverty. EMP and the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University explain that working memory, inhibitory control, and mental flexibility are unable to fully develop in youth who grow up with acute stress caused by poverty— in a world where violence, unpredictability, scarcity, and lack of control are constants. Without these Executive Functioning (EF) skills, employees struggle under the tyranny of the urgent. On the job training can be designed to enhance EF skills. The discipline to stay on task (inhibitory control), remember something that happened with a customer yesterday and apply the learning to today (working memory), and understand why a teammate might be struggling to grasp latte art (mental flexibility) are a few examples.

Benefits to Level 1: Lowest burden on supervisory staff of the three models

Challenges with Level 1:

- May not produce the economic mobility outcomes that the other two models produce
- Requires leadership that can train and reinforce mindsets in supervisory staff

*Level 1 In Action:*
John, one of the coffeehouse employees, is working through his morning shift and learning to master the art of making a perfect latte. He has been in the program for 3 months. Today, he's focused on quality, not speed. For example, he takes 8 minutes to make a latte, which is longer than your standard time, but at this stage, quality is more important than speed.

During the morning rush, the Operations Team ensures customers are receiving their drinks on time, so they manage customer experience. Meanwhile, the supervisor focuses on John's growth by providing constructive feedback. They've trained John to monitor key quality factors, such as milk temperature, ingredient measurements, and the taste of each drink. However, within the first three months, they don't expect employees to know the "why" behind these factors. They simply memorize the specs for each drink and have a cheat sheet if they need it.

At a break in the rush, the supervisor seizes the opportunity for a brief coaching session with John. He notices that one of the drinks John made tasted slightly off—more watery than it should be.

Supervisor:
"Hey John, great job getting through that rush. I can tell you're putting a lot of care into each drink. Let's take a minute to reflect on your last few lattes. How do you feel they went?"

John:
"I think they turned out okay, but I noticed one of them felt a bit off when I tasted it. It was kind of watery."

Supervisor:
"Good catch! Let's focus on that. Go ahead and make me a latte now, just like you did earlier. But this time, walk me through the steps as you go. Tell me the milk temp, the inputs, and outputs. We'll figure out where the issue might be."

(John starts preparing the drink, narrating the process.)

John:
"Okay, so I'm steaming the milk to 150°F... I'm using 2 shots of espresso and 8 ounces of milk…"

Supervisor:
(Tasting the drink) "Hmm… the texture's there, but it still tastes a little watery to me. What does the cheat sheet say about watery drinks?"

John:
“Check the espresso? It didn’t look as rich as it usually does.”

Supervisor:
“Great observation. What could have caused that? What part of the process affects how rich or watery the espresso turns out?”

John:
“Probably the grind size or how long the shot pulled. Maybe the grind was too coarse?”

Supervisor:
“Right on. And what does the sheet say is the ideal extraction time for a balanced shot?”

John:
“Between 25 and 30 seconds for a double shot. Anything shorter than that can lead to under-extraction, and too long means over-extraction, which can taste bitter.”

Supervisor:
“Exactly. So, based on that, what adjustments would you make next time?”

John:
“I’d adjust the grind a bit finer to slow down the extraction and aim for a pull time closer to 28 seconds. That should give me a richer shot with more balanced flavors.”

(John adjusts the grinder, pulls another shot, and prepares the latte again.)

Supervisor:
“Alright, how does that feel? Look at the color of the crema and the texture of the milk. How’s it all coming together?”

John:
“Taste’s better! The shot is definitely richer now.”

Supervisor:
“Spot on. That’s what we’re aiming for. Your attention to detail is improving every time. The speed will come naturally as you practice more. For now, keep focusing on perfecting that balance between grind, milk temp, and timing.”

John:
“Got it, I’ll keep working on that.”

All of this requires a trainer, working alongside John who is tuned into and capable of applying the best elements of adult education to a task on the job.

Level 2: Build a series of internal certifications related to your trade
Method: The Level 2 model builds upon the first by adding a curriculum. The curriculum prepares employees to pass certification tests. The ESE creates a series of attainable certifications designed to set high expectations while providing opportunities for frequent raises and promotions. Each is aligned with skills needed for employees to experience self-worth and accomplishment, as well as foundational skills for all workplaces.

Example Certifications:
Point of Sale Certification
Front of House Certification
Back of House Certification
Food Prep Certification
Bakery Certification
Customer Experience Certification
Knife Skill Certification
Heavy Machinery Certification
Delivery Driver Certification
Database Management Certification
Camera Operator Certification

Staffing Needed:
- Subject matter experts capable of spending 25% of their time training on-the-job and in classroom-based settings. Experts help build the certifications and are conducting assessments in this model.
- Program staff offering supportive services outside the shift.

Steps:
1. Identify the certifications you wish to offer. They should be limited to those that contribute to high quality execution of your business goals.
2. Identify the staff responsible for certifying participants.
3. Identify the hard and soft skill competencies needed to earn that certification.
4. Build an assessment (written and/or demonstration) that proves the employee has gained these competencies.
5. Identify curriculum for teaching toward those assessments. Within the curriculum, identify the mode of learning: on-the-job, classroom, 1-1 coaching, or personal reflection. Click here for a curriculum outline.
6. Track progress toward attaining those competencies.
7. Award certifications when attained.

8. Identify the personal supports that will accompany trainees? throughout their journey. These could be in-house case managers, career counselors, navigators, or another role that provides stabilization, goal setting, and referrals to needed services. You could also contract with outside partners to provide these supports, but will need a point person to coordinate in-house.

Recommendation on training for ESE supervisors: Learning requires setting clear standards and providing the scaffolded teaching to help learners achieve success. High standards and high support are key. Unlike longer, traditional degrees, certifications focus on specific job skills and can be completed relatively quickly. This allows employees to gain specialized knowledge and apply it immediately, which is especially beneficial in fast-paced industries like food service or retail.

Benefits to Level 2:

- Certifications can be explained to future employers as reference points for what the employee is equipped to do.
- Certifications provide strong intrinsic motivation to employees to attain various levels of mastery in their trade.
- Improved clarity on the steps for program progression
- Increased motivation among program employees

Challenges with Level 2:

- Requires classroom training
- Requires a system for assessing/certifying program employees

*Level 2 in Action:*
Employees begin on-the-job training focused on mastering the meat station certification. A meat station certification requires:

1. Written knowledge evaluation featuring questions about knives, parts of the animal providing different cuts of meat, type of meat smokers, and how to use a scale, for example.
2. Skill evaluation where the employee demonstrates proficiency in building a brisket plate and a pastrami sandwich.

Level 3: Build an Apprenticeship program
Method:
An apprenticeship program is a workforce training experience with a defined series of learning outcomes and responsibilities that increase in complexity at each level of growth. Most apprenticeships focus on career pathways that are in demand and offer living wage employment. According to the US Department of Labor, apprenticeships combine paid on-the-job training with classroom instruction to prepare workers for highly-skilled careers. Some ESEs provide classroom instruction in house such as

language learning, adult basic education (ABE) or GED classes. Others partner with community or technical colleges.

ESEs have a unique opportunity to design their concurrent learning in a way that meets the needs of the focus population. For example, rather than offering standard GED classes, the ESE can offer basic math lessons through the lens of cooking measurements, or whatever the subject matter is for the social enterprise. Contextualized basic education has the potential to reignite the love of learning. The goal of concurrent learning is to create a culture where employees are passionately pursuing mastery. They are studying rather than simply working.

The following are common models used for apprenticeship programs:

1. Pre-apprenticeship to Registered Apprenticeship Model. Pre-apprenticeship programs provide basic skills training, work readiness, and other foundational skills to prepare youth or adult workers to succeed in Registered Apprenticeship programs. Pre-apprenticeship programs have formal partnerships with one or more Registered Apprenticeship programs, a program registered with the local Department of Labor or a state apprenticeship agency. Participants begin a Registered Apprenticeship program once they have met the basic qualifications for entry into the apprenticeship.
2. Traditional Apprenticeship Model. Apprentices receive both related instruction and On-the-job-training (OJT) concurrently throughout the program.
3. Front-loaded Apprenticeship Model. Apprentices complete some related instruction or classes before starting on the job, in order to learn critical skills needed the first day at the job site. The related instruction may be provided by the employer or a partner, such as a community college.

Staffing Needed:

- Expert trainers capable of spending 25% of their time providing workshops and 75% of their time instructing on-the-job.
- Shift supervisors capable of spending 50% of their time reinforcing that training.
- Operational staff running the business during the 50% of the time the supervisors are unavailable.
- Program staff offering supportive services outside of the shift.

Steps:

1. Define discrete apprenticeship levels with:
    a. the hard and soft skills required at each level
    b. the responsibilities required at each level
    c. the pay rate for each level
2. Identify both knowledge and skill assessments that will be used to test fulfillment of the learning in each level.

3. Build curriculum for teaching toward those assessments. Within the curriculum, identify the mode of learning: on-the-job, classroom, 1-1 coaching, or personal reflection. Click here for a curriculum outline.
4. Identify the personal supports that will accompany apprentices throughout their journey. These could be in-house case managers, career counselors, navigators, or another role that provides stabilization, goal setting, and referrals to needed services. You could also contract with outside partners to provide these supports, but will need a point person to coordinate in-house.
5. Identify the concurrent learning you wish to offer with your apprenticeship program: Adult Basic Education (ABE), GED classes, language learning, Career Technical Education certificates relevant to your business.
6. Identify who will offer this education. Will you do it in house or through an academic partner? Technical, vocational, or other colleges and universities can partner with you to provide industry-recognized certifications. In some cases, they will accredit your apprenticeship program and award academic credits to your graduates. In other cases, your program is the workplace component of a registered apprenticeship (through your local department of labor). The academic partner will enroll the apprentice and provide classroom training while you provide the workplace training. In many cases, workforce grants will pay the student's wages while they are enrolled in an apprenticeship.
7. Clarify how to launch apprentices into careers after your program. Example: Apprentices build a portfolio (instead of a resume) that includes some of the following:
    a. Personal statement with defining traits
    b. Goals they've set and achieved
    c. Future aspirations
    d. An asset matrix informed by their co-workers

**Recommendation on training for ESE supervisors:** Expertise in any skill requires a major investment of time. Thus, we must design our training program so that apprentices have ample time to practice their skills. Researchers estimate it takes 50,000 to 100,000 hours to be a master chess player. This, often referred to as 'time on task,' is essential for mastery. But time alone is not sufficient. Mastery also requires deliberate practice, where apprentices are engaged in a loop of strategizing, practice, reflection, seeking and using feedback, and making intentional adjustments.

**Benefits to Level 3:**

- Strongest economic mobility outcomes of the three models.
- Increased access to workforce funding that values innovative models.
- The pursuit of mastery leads to reconnecting with a passion for learning and work. This is essential for individuals who come to your workplace with negative experiences in these two areas of their lives.

- Apprenticeship models tend to bring out the highest quality performance in individuals because they are inspired by their leaders and want to meet high expectations.
- Level 3 also results in a high degree of earning power. Apprentices are readily placed in jobs with high growth potential in terms of both role and wage.

**Challenges with Level 3:**

- Most complex operationally: scheduling, assessing, training, concurrent learning partner management, etc.

*Level 3 in Action*

**Just Q'in Apprenticeship Plan**

At Just Q'in, we have selected to operate an apprenticeship within our restaurants in order to provide the most structured on-the-job training and progression through the employee journey. The apprenticeship structure offers a few unique benefits.

**Hands-On Learning**: Apprenticeships provide real-world, practical experience, allowing apprentices to develop skills directly on the job.

**The Pursuit of Mastery**: Apprenticeships emphasize the pursuit of excellence over time. For Just Q'in, this means fostering a deep commitment to perfecting the art of BBQ and hospitality. Apprentices are encouraged to strive for mastery in their roles, continually refining their skills.

**Reconnecting the Love of Learning**: Apprenticeships reignite a love of learning by offering a structured yet dynamic environment where team members can grow both personally and professionally. This process nurtures curiosity and ambition, helping individuals rediscover the value of education through practical application.

**Structured Mentorship**: Apprenticeships provide a pathway to growth through consistent, hands-on guidance from experienced mentors. At Just Q'in, this support helps apprentices feel confident and valued as they progress through the program, knowing they have a dedicated team invested in their success.

**Skill Progression with Purpose**: Apprenticeships offer clear opportunities for advancement, allowing individuals to progress from entry-level tasks to more skilled roles. Just Q'in's apprenticeship program helps team members align their personal goals with professional growth, giving them a sense of purpose and direction.

**Earn While You Learn**: Apprenticeships empower individuals by providing them with an income while they develop critical job skills. This model is especially important for those facing barriers like homelessness or reentry, offering a sustainable way to gain stability and independence.

**Intensive Training**: Apprenticeships allow for on-the-job and classroom-based training. These two locations ensure apprentices can double down on specific skills through laboratory experiments, guest speakers, and dialogue without the worry of customer service.

**PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Personal development requires employee support. This section outlines your employee support system. Consider designing your employee support activities to meet your program's outcome goals. You may also wish to incorporate your soft skill training curriculum into your personal development programming. View REDF's survey of soft skills curriculum here.

**Reflection**

**Write down:**

- Will we offer case management in house or through a partner organization?
- What topics will case management cover?
- Is career counseling separate from case management?
- Is job development for the next-step-job separate from career counseling?
- How can we align our personal development activities with our outcome goals?
- How can we align our personal development activities with our methodology (section above)?
- What is the relationship between support staff working on personal development and support staff working in the enterprise? See our Employee Confidentiality toolkit for ideas on collaborative models.

*Example*

At Just Q'in, apprentices work with a Program Coach who is an employee of our partner nonprofit, Renew. The Program Coach is responsible for the 10 hours/week that apprentices spend working on a broad spectrum of tasks that result in our outcome goals:

- Outcome #1: Basic Stabilization (Financial and Family and Post-Incarceration): By 2026, 75% of Just Q'in Employees will increase their degree of basic stabilization by at least two levels.
- Outcome 2: Well-Being (Physical, Mental, and Spiritual Health): By 2026, 85% of our participants will increase at least two levels of wellbeing.
- Outcome 3: Earning Power: By 2026, 85% of the people we serve will increase earning power.

**BASIC STABILIZATION**

We define basic stabilization as having fewer emergencies that set people back. We measure it through a self-sufficiency matrix that is discussed with apprentices during 1-1 coaching meetings. The self-sufficiency matrix defines stages of stabilization from “in-crisis” to “empowered” on a five point scale. We rely on our community partners to support the resources needed for stabilization. Our partnership manual outlines these thoroughly. We consider ourselves successful when participants move at least two levels forward on the matrix.

**Well-Being**

Well-being looks like achieving a level of physical, mental, and spiritual health according to the participant's personal goals in each of those categories. Our Program Coach meets weekly with apprentices to work on these goals. We also offer our Healing Circle program that serves many apprentices mental and spiritual health goals:

- Healing Circle gatherings provide a safe, judgment-free, mutually supportive space for apprentices to engage in honest and constructive reflection on their life experience. Each week we encourage a different participant to choose a topic for the session and facilitate discussion. All participants have the opportunity to share real-life experiences as part of the discussion. These sessions help build a network of understanding and respect between each member and begin a dialogue on personal issues that members can later address individually.

**Earning Power**

Earning power looks like the ability to get increasingly higher paying jobs after leaving Just Q’in. We measure it by a participant achieving one or more factors that we have found to increase earning power:

- Earned an industry recognized credential
- Achieved a post-secondary education goal
- Earned a GED
- Earned a raise
- Was promoted
- Maintained employment

Our Program Coach curates a menu of education and industry training that supplements their work at Just Q’in. For example: describe how you partner with schools and other industry partners to offer certifications, tutoring, ESL, GED classes, etc. all toward improved earning power.

**How Participant employees spend their personal development time**

We pay apprentices for activities and training that support their outcome goals for up to 10 hours per week. Apprentices “clock in” during this time and are doing any of the following:

- Meeting with the Program Coach
- Meeting with the Chaplain
- Attending a Just Q’in workshop

- Attending approved outside workshops
- Working with a tutor or mentor
- GED classes

**PROGRAM PROGRESSION**
At this point, you have defined your personal development model and your training model for the program. You are now ready to create a map or process flow that articulates how people move through your program. We call this the employee journey.

Many ESEs build their program progression plan based on the life circumstances of employees. Early in their journey, employees will be working on basic stabilization efforts and will need space, time, and support. Their shift schedule and responsibilities should reflect this priority. As they progress, they can gradually increase responsibility and time on shift.

**Reflection**
**Write down:**
- Can we define the “seasons” or “chapters” of an employee journey that describe our priorities for them?
- What are the steps through our journey? How would we label them separately?
- What is the length of time we expect each step to take?
- What activities are unique to that step?
- How do we know when employees are ready for the next step?

*Example*
Our apprenticeship program spans 6-14 months depending on the needs of the apprentice. We offer the following stages of progress described in the table below:
- Apprentice Level 1
- Apprentice Level 2
- Apprentice Level 3
- Shift Lead

Please refer to this template for a visual alternative to the table provided.

| Season of the journey | Step of the journey | Length of time | Activities during this step | Triggers for the next step |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Stabilization- Emphasis on personal growth and building | Intake | 1 hour | • Attend monthly info sessions<br>• Complete the application | Participant self-selects to attend orientation |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| commitment to a job | Orientation | 1 week | ● Weeklong orientation to the job and program | Anyone who completes orientation is offered employment |
| | Apprentice Level 1 | 4-6 months | ● Up to 20 hours/week paid shift work<br>● Up to 5 hours/week paid personal development work<br>● Level 1 training across 3 stations | Passing grade on all Level 1 knowledge and skill assessments results in successful graduation or progression to Apprentice Level 2 |
| Professional Growth- Emphasis on rapid learning and skill progression | Apprentice Level 2 | 2-4 months | ● Up to 25 hours/week paid shift work<br>● Up to 10 hours/week paid personal development work<br>● Level 2 training across 3 stations | Passing grade on all Level 2 knowledge and skill assessments results in successful graduation or progression to Apprentice Level 3 |
| | Apprentice Level 3 | 2-4 months | ● Up to 30 hours/week paid shift work<br>● Up to 10 hours/week paid personal development work<br>● Level 3 training across 5 stations | Passing grade on all Level 3 knowledge and skill assessments results in successful graduation or transition to Shift Lead |
| Personal and Professional Maturity- Emphasis on a deeper level of personal growth while professional skills stabilize | Shift Lead | 4-6 months | ● Up to 30 hours/week paid shift work<br>● Up to 10 hours/week paid personal development work<br>● Shift lead training | Passing grade on all Shift Lead knowledge and skill assessments results in successful graduation or transition to Operations Manager |
| Graduation or exit | Graduate | N/A | ● Complete presentation of learning<br>● Attain permanent employment | This is the final stage of the journey. |

**DEVELOPING AN EMPLOYEE PARTICIPANT SCHEDULE**

Developing schedules is not only a logistical puzzle, but requires attention to the needs of participants at each level of your program.

In the following apprenticeship example, the employee is rotating within three different stations at Level 2: meat, point of sale, and bread stations. The classroom activity prepares them for the on-the-job activity. As the employee progresses through the different levels of the apprenticeship program, this routine will stay in place, but the subject matter will change.

The schedule template allows for you to include whatever amount of time per week you are able to schedule the employee.

**Reflection:**

- What is the appropriate amount of on-the-clock time (shift hours and paid learning/personal development) for an employee at each season of their growth?
- What amount of classroom time is needed to achieve the certifications or apprenticeship competencies we're expecting?

*Example*

Apprentice Level 2

24 hours/week shift work

5 hours/week personal development

| | **Monday** | **Tuesday** | **Wednesday** | **Thursday** | **Friday** | **Saturday** | **Sunday** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Morning | Classroom | Classroom | 1-1 Coaching | Day off | Day off | On-the-Job | Day off |
| Afternoon | On-the-Job | On-the-Job | On-the-Job | Day off | Day off | On-the-Job | Day off |

| Day | Location | Content | Hours |
|---|---|---|---|
| Monday Morning | Classroom | Meat Station Level 1 Workshop Curriculum | 2 hours |
| Monday Afternoon | Shop | On-the-job Meat Station | 5 hours |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Tuesday Morning | Classroom | Point of Sale Station Level 1 Workshop Curriculum | 2 hours |
| Tuesday Afternoon | Shop | On-the-job Point of Sale Station | 5 hours |
| Wednesday Morning | 1-1 with Program Coach | Personal Development | 1 hours |
| Wednesday Afternoon | Shop | On-the-job Point of Sale Station | 6 hours |
| Thursday | Off | Off | Off |
| Friday | Off | Off | Off |
| Saturday Morning | Shop | On-the-job Meat Station | 4 hours |
| Saturday Afternoon | Shop | On-the-job Bread Station | 4 hours |
| Sunday | Off | Off | Off |

**PROGRAM COMPLETION**

As you consider "off-ramps" from your program, you might be thinking about: What is the minimum level of accomplishment necessary to be job ready? If our goal is economic mobility, we must send people out into the workforce ready to compete? While this is true, your program goals are a clearer guide for program completion than a universal standard of job readiness. Thus, we encourage you to rely on attainment of program goals to determine when someone has completed your program. You might define program completion as:

- Completing a discrete certification level
- Passing an assessment
- Meeting outcome goals: ex: increasing their earning power

**Reflection:**

- What are the outcomes of our program? Should meeting these outcomes be necessary for program completion?
- Should program completion be determined by length of time in the program or completion of specific outcomes?
- Is there an amount of time in our program that is too long for participants because it creates dependency?
- What is the minimum level of accomplishment necessary to be job ready?
- What is the minimum level of credentialing required to be job ready?
- What is the average length of time required for someone to achieve these standards?

- If you’re a permanent employer, is there a point that staff stop receiving/meeting with a case manager? Is there is a point that someone “graduates’ out of the program?

*Example*
There are several “off ramps” for our apprentices into a successful graduation. We have determined that someone can graduate after completing at least Apprentice Level 1, but can also graduate after each subsequent level. They cannot graduate in the middle of a particular level, but must finish the knowledge and skills assessment to graduate.

Routines for Management

Now that you have defined the elements of your workforce program, the following is a guide for building rhythms and routines to manage it.

**DAILY ROUTINES**
Orient your team to your organization’s unique methodology. When you are asked questions, when you are in meetings, when you are challenged by a personnel issue, go back to your methodology. In the example we provided, the unique methodology was an attention to the impact of chronic stress on someone’s brain:

> “We know that our program participants come to us with chronic stress and trauma as a result of their life experience. We also know that chronic stress and trauma damages executive functioning skills, the cognitive skills managed by the part of the brain that gets less exercise when the fight or flight response is overactive.”

Let this theory be a guiding north star for how you train staff, what you remind them to consider, and how you solve problems.

**WEEKLY ROUTINES**
Throughout the week, you will be meeting with staff 1-1 and in groups. During these meetings, consider orienting the conversation toward the following agenda items:

- Decisions that need to be made
- Problems that need to be solved
- Successes to report
- Progress toward goals

**MONTHLY ROUTINES**
Program leaders should review the dashboard related to their logic model every month. Make sure this is on your team’s calendar and the standard agenda is shared. This means reviewing progress toward goals on outputs and outcomes as a whole. This is the quickest way to evaluate the health of the program. The monthly frequency allows for pivots to be made. Review the dashboard independently, but also facilitate a meeting

with the enterprise leaders to assess the relationship between the challenges they are facing on the business side and the challenges faced on the program side. Use this as an opportunity to fine tune progress toward outcomes.
Example conversation topics:

- Why apprentices are struggling to complete Level 2 certifications
- Why apprentices are sailing through the meat station with no issues
- Why apprentices are complaining about George (shift lead)
- Why customers are not ordering dessert

**QUARTERLY ROUTINES**
Curriculum is at the heart of the quality of your programs. Review your classroom and on-the-job curriculum quarterly. Ask staff responsible for implementing curriculum the following questions:

- What aspects of the curriculum are most engaging? Why?
- What aspects of the curriculum are the hardest to teach? Why?
- What topics should we invent curriculum to teach?
- I'm noticing that we're struggling with the following challenge in the enterprise (based on the monthly meetings). How could curriculum be the solution?
- Are there opportunities to partner with other organizations to enhance or extend the curriculum?
- What changes in logistics could improve the implementation of the curriculum?
- How effective were the instructional methods used by trainers or facilitators?
- Are the learning objectives still aligned with our organizational goals and the needs of our participants?
- How well does the curriculum address the core competencies we aim to develop?
- Are there any emerging industry trends or participant needs that require curriculum updates?

Program leaders should also evaluate employee success activities on a quarterly basis. This includes all the work you are doing within your Personal Development section of your program plan. Consider conducting an Employee Satisfaction Survey or an Employee Perception Survey. In addition, consider the following reflection questions:

- How do participant employees perceive the support they receive from the Program Coach, Chaplain, and other mentors?
- How accessible and responsive are our support systems to the individual needs of apprentices?
- How well are community partners contributing to achieving stabilization goals? Are there partnerships that need strengthening or new ones that need to be formed?
- What specific support structures have been most effective in reducing emergencies for apprentices (e.g., financial planning, family support, legal aid)?

- How actively are apprentices participating in well-being activities such as the Healing Circle and personal goal-setting sessions?
- What factors are influencing participation levels, and how can we increase engagement?
- How well are we supporting apprentices in achieving career advancement goals like earning credentials, GEDs, or promotions?
- Are there any additional certifications, workshops, or educational partnerships we should consider to enhance earning power?
- How are apprentices using their personal development hours? Are they engaging with a variety of support activities or focusing on specific areas?
- Is the time allocation (up to 10 hours/week) sufficient, or should it be adjusted based on apprentice feedback and needs?

**ANNUAL ROUTINES**

Conduct a program audit activity. A program activity audit is an internal process that tests the correlation between the activities you're doing and the outputs and outcomes they are generating. This is useful because it allows the team to see the value of their work. It also allows the program leaders to cancel or revise activities that are no longer useful.

Feel free to use our "Program Activity Audit" sheet to conduct the following exercise:

Start here:

Step 1: Copy the list of activities from your logic model into a spreadsheet.

Step 2: Ask your front-line program staff to add other activities they do on a regular basis that they would like to add to the audit list. Explain: "we are testing how helpful our day to day activities are in meeting our goals."

Step 3: Assign each person on your team a column beside the list of activities. Label each column with the team member's name.

Step 4: Present the outcome goals (from the logic model) clearly in plain sight. Explain: "Each of us will rank the activities on this list on a scale from 1-3 in terms of how helpful the activity is in meeting our outcome goals. We're using the outcomes rather than the outputs because we want to keep our focus on the big picture. We believe that all our work, all the things we spend time and money on, should be driving toward our goals."

Step 5: Ask each person to rank each activity by adding a 1, 2, or 3, in the cell beside the activity. 1=not at all helpful in meeting our goals, 2=somewhat helpful in meeting our goals, 3=very helpful in meeting our goals.

Step 6: When everyone is finished scoring each activity, highlight those that had controversy. Anything that people disagreed on (some marked it 1, others 3) should be highlighted.

Step 7: Indicate that any activity that scored an average of 2 is up for revision. We want to change the way we do this activity in order to make it more aligned with our goals.

Step 8: Indicate that any activity that scores an average of 1 is up to be canceled. We no longer want to spend time on activities that we all believe are not well suited to meet our goals.

Step 9: Indicate that any activity that scores an average of 3 will pass forward. We will continue to invest in these activities.

Step 10: Assign activities that scored an average of 2 to the team responsible for them. They will need to return to the group with a proposed revision to these activities at the next meeting.

Step 11: Ask the team to list any new activities that are not on our list, but should be added in order to meet our outcome goals.

Step 12: Assign new activities to the team responsible to create a plan for implementation.

Step 13: Update your logic model