



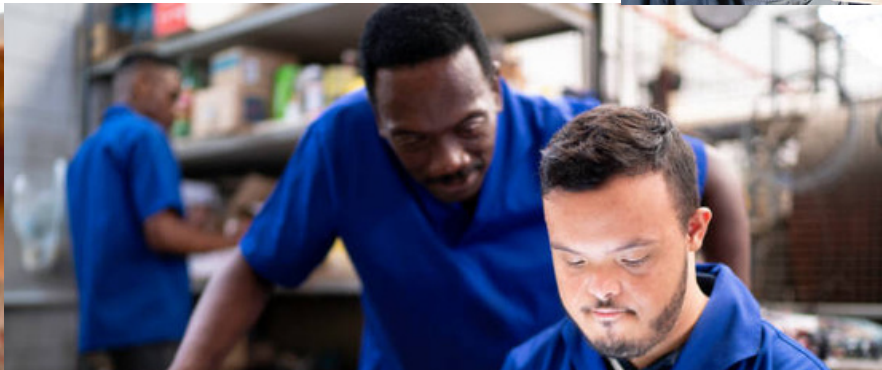
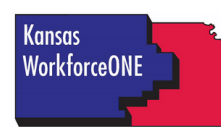
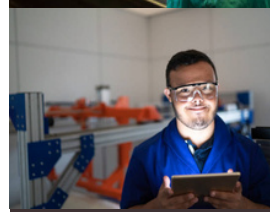
Planning a Reverse Job Fair



Garden City Public Schools in partnership with Kansas WorkforceONE, Southwest Developmental Services, Inc., and the Garden City Chamber of Commerce held a reverse job fair on March 28, 2023.



This guide outlines the steps the Garden City community team took to plan the reverse job fair and was developed to help other communities interested in conducting a reverse job fair.



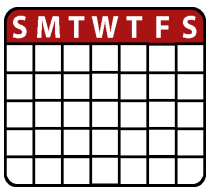
If you have questions or would like more information, please contact kucddcommunity@ku.edu.

Planning a Reverse Job Fair

Purpose

A reverse job fair is a great way for employers to get a sense of the incredible workers people with disabilities can be – focusing on students’ strengths and interests. It flips the traditional job fair script, so job seekers sell themselves – their interests and experiences – as employers seek to fit job seekers to employment opportunities. Job seekers can create display boards or other materials that highlight their qualifications and demonstrate their skills to potential employers.

Key Decisions and Timeline



A reverse job fair can be planned within as little as 3 months!

It is ideal to work with students for 5-6 months to ensure they feel supported and prepared.

Getting Started

1. Identify a Leader to Oversee the Planning Process

- The leader will oversee the entire planning process for the Reverse Job Fair. They will keep a timeline going for the event.
- This person is in charge of giving direction to other team members to keep things moving along.

2. Identify Partners

- Who will prepare job seekers?
- Who will recruit employers?
- Who will plan and track logistics?

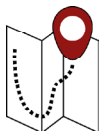
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3. Set dates and determine locations for an Educational Event and for the Reverse Job Fair

- **Consider adding an Employer Educational Component**

- Set a date and determine the location for an employer educational event.
- An employer educational event introduces employers to the concept of a reverse job fair. It also educates employers about hiring individuals with disabilities.
 - At this event, guest speakers/employers who have hired people with disabilities can share success stories and examples of accommodations they have made for workers with disabilities.
 - Education over lunch could be a great way to engage employers!

- **Reverse Job Fair**



Set a date and determine the location for the Reverse Job Fair!

- It is important to set a date for the Reverse Job Fair early on.
 - Setting a date far in advances gives you plenty of time to prepare and sort out the logistics of the event.
- The location should be accessible and have plenty of space for people to move around.

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4. Recruit and Prepare Job Seekers (Students)

- **Professional Clothing**

- It is important to support the students with finding professional clothing to wear to the reverse job fair.
- Try reaching out to thrift stores (Goodwill, Salvation Army, etc.) or local churches to see if they would be interested in donating professional clothing for the students to wear.

- **Elevator Speeches**

- The first step in supporting students with developing interview skills is to create an elevator speech for each student.
 - Components of the elevator speeches could include:
 - Who you are + a credential (Ex. Hello, my name is ____ and I am a student at _____.)
 - Your goal or career interest (Ex. I am interested in a career in _____.)
 - Your top skills (Ex. I have developed ____ skills by _____.)
 - When you are available to start (Ex. I graduate _____ and can start employment on _____.)
- After each student creates their elevator speech, have them rehearse the speech in front of someone!

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- **Mock Interviews**
 - Before the reverse job fair, students could practice one-on-one interviews with an adult to gain experience interviewing.
 - Each student should receive feedback from their interview (strengths/weaknesses of the interview).
 - Practice makes perfect – each student should practice interviewing until they feel comfortable and confident with their interviewing skills!
- **Resume, Cover Letter, Reference Letter, & Application**
 - Ideally, each student will prepare a resume, cover letter, and reference list for the reverse job fair. This could be a great career development activity!
 - Identify a teacher, pre-ETS provider, or other person to support developing these materials (We can provide examples, if needed)!
 - For the reverse job fair, each student should have several copies of their materials printed off to hand out to employers.
 - It could also be helpful for each student to have reference letters available from mentors, teachers, employers, etc.
 - Application – In addition to creating a resume, cover letter, and reference list each student should know how to fill out a job application.

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- **Display Boards**

- A great way for students to show off their interests and skills is with a display board.
 - The board can be displayed next to each student at their table and include the following:
 - Students' name
 - Top skills
 - Start date
 - Photos of them doing tasks they like, etc. (We can provide examples, if needed!)

- **What types of jobs are the students interested in?**

- It is important to have employers the students are interested in working for attend.
 - Before inviting employers, support students to identify types of jobs they are interested in.
 - You could use career assessments, job shadowing, or other techniques to support students to identify their interests.

5. Recruit Employers

A good goal for employer recruitment is to have at least one employer per student attend the job fair.

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- **Hand out flyers**

- Create a flyer for the reverse job fair to hand out to employers!
- The flyer will list the following:
 - Event Name
 - Event purpose
 - Date/time
 - Location
- It has been helpful to have students travel to businesses to hand out flyers to recruit employers for the reverse job fair.

- **Send invites via email**

- Contact your local Chamber of Commerce to see if they could contact businesses to recruit employers for the reverse job fair.
 - Employees of your local Chamber of Commerce have access to several employer emails and can easily reach out to them.

- **Employer List**

- Make sure you have a RSVP system in place so you can track how many employers will be attending. This will also allow you to track how many different employment industries will be attending.
 - Make sure someone calls each employer that registered for the fair at least 2-3 days before the event to ensure they can still attend.

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6. Reverse Job Fair Logistics

- **Duration**

- You will want to determine how long you would like the job fair to occur.
- For the Garden City Reverse Job Fair, it seemed like 1 hour per 20 job seekers was a good timeframe.

- **Student Set Up**

- You will want each student to arrive at the reverse job fair ahead of time (~30 minutes early) to set up their materials.

- **Employer Check-in**

- Before the reverse job fair begins, you will want employers to check-in before entering the room.
 - When each employer checks in, you can provide them with a bright name tag so that each student recognizes they are an employer.
 - It is also important to have each employer check-in before the reverse job fair so that you can track who attended.

- **Employer lunch/breakfast/brunch?**

- Depending on the time of the reverse job fair, you can host a lunch or breakfast/brunch for employers to attend before the reverse job fair starts.

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- **Student transportation**

- Depending on the time and location of the reverse job fair, you will want to think about how each student will get from Point A to Point B.
- If the job fair is scheduled around the same time as bus schedules, you will need to find other transportation options for students (teachers could provide rides, buses could run at other times to support transportation, etc.).

- **Satisfaction surveys**

- After the reverse job fair, it is helpful to have each employer and student fill out a satisfaction survey.
 - This will help you understand what worked/did not work so you can refine future reverse job fair events.

- **Thank you!**

- Students could send thank you notes to businesses that funded the reverse job fair.



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