

## **BEST PRACTICE: SET CLEAR QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY EXPECTATIONS FOR EMPLOYERS AND EDUCATORS**

Although many work-based learning (WBL) programs are developed and implemented at the local level, states have an important role to play in setting quality expectations and holding schools and employers accountable. States are at varying places in their development of quality expectations. Many states offer lists of roles and responsibilities for various parties, including the teacher or WBL coordinator, the employer partner, and the student, that can provide a framework for program design and establish expectations.

For example, **Iowa's** [WBL guide](#) states that WBL teacher-coordinators are responsible for program planning, development, and related classroom instruction; on-the-job instruction and coordination; guidance and advice; program administration and management; community and public relations; and development in their professional roles and activities. Employers “provide instruction in the specific tasks students are expected to complete on the job, as well as information about safety and the general operation of the business.”

This delineation of expectations is an important first step. However, states should also define what high-quality implementation of these responsibilities looks like. For example, **Georgia** [has developed](#) multiple standards for high-quality WBL programs. Each standard has an accompanying rubric to evaluate the extent to which a given program meets the standard. For example, Standard 14 sets expectations for how WBL sites are selected and how mentors at those worksites are trained, while Standard 20 sets an expectation that WBL coordinators conduct site visits and ensures what is happening at the WBL site is integrated into classroom instruction.

An even smaller number of states has taken the further step to develop processes to hold either schools or employers accountable to quality expectations. Just six states have developed a quality framework and accompanying accountability for the school-based elements of a WBL program (e.g., standards for the instructor or coordinator, expectations about student evaluation, etc.).

**New York** has defined in its [WBL manual](#) the quality expectations for WBL programs and holds them accountable by requiring that they re-register every few years. Registered WBL programs must have: a certified teacher or guidance counselor to serve as WBL coordinator, an industry advisory committee, safety training prior to placement at a worksite, supervised on-the-job training, related in-school instruction, a memorandum of agreement between schools and employers, a student training plan, and an employer evaluation. Programs must have their applications approved by the state Department of Education, and then reapply after the registration expires every few years, ensuring programs meet minimum expectations. Pennsylvania's WBL activities have to meet certain quality standards to qualify for the [Industry-Based Learning Indicator](#) of the [Future Ready PA Index](#), which assesses WBL participation in each school. In addition, the [WBL toolkit](#) provides program guidance and implementation support.



**Washington's [Career Connect Washington \(CCW\)](#)** initiative also offers an example of a robust quality and accountability system for WBL programs. In Washington, any community and technical college, training center, university, or K-12 school (in partnership with a higher education institution) in Washington can offer a WBL program, called [Career Launch](#). In order to operate a Career Launch program, however, the sponsoring organization must complete an application, undergo a [rigorous review](#) process, and receive an endorsement from CCW. Endorsements last for three years, and programs must undergo a review process to renew their endorsement. Programs with worksites that do not meet expectations may not be re-endorsed. Without these kinds of clear and consistent expectations, the quality of both schools' WBL programs and the experiences provided by participating employers likely varies considerably both within a district and across the state.

