

Virtual Job Fairs: Connecting Talent with Business

While virtual job fairs have existed for some time, the recent transition to virtual meetings and work from home arrangements is driving the increasing use of the model for many local and regional communities. Although youth TechHire participants have been increasingly adept at using social media, mobile apps, and virtual communication, strategies for preparing for virtual career fairs may be needed. Here are some tips to ensure success.

What is a virtual job fair, and how should I market it to businesses?

Virtual job fairs range in content, style, and platform, but usually connect students and job seekers to training resources, information booths, live interviews, demonstrations or links to videos about companies that are hiring, or even video recordings of a worker performing job tasks. These venues offer businesses safe and effective access to job seekers both within and outside of their immediate region in a flexible online environment, decreasing the cost and time needed to hire skilled workers.

For businesses seeking candidates, it might be beneficial to encourage them to attend a large-scale event that offers the opportunity to review TechHire candidates among others from the community. A recent Pathway to Recovery [resource](#) posted by the US DOL's Employment and Training Administration outlines the benefits of virtual job fairs for businesses, along with tips for engaging businesses during an economic recovery.

Connecting to youth before the event.

Get Schooled, a national non-profit organization that provides resources and support to out-of-school youth looking for education and job opportunities, presented on a recent [webinar](#) where they discussed the importance of social media recruitment while planning virtual job fairs.

As often is the case, unusual circumstances tend to drive innovation. For a recent event, Get Schooled had only six days to recruit participants to a job fair they were planning in order to meet industry demand. In order to prepare their population quickly and get folks engaged, they encouraged young people to pre-register for the event they were hosting by texting the word "jobs" to their number, so job coaches could work with them ahead of time to provide résumé templates, lists of common questions hiring managers might ask, and ensure individuals were prepared for the event.

Some TechHire grantees have chosen to hold virtual job fair prep sessions the week before to connect with participants and ensure readiness. Others have held bi-lingual job fairs. Miami-Dade College's TechHire program, in partnership with MDC Works, is providing their students with a virtual interview [tip sheet](#) before events. The key to success in virtual interviews lies in

preparing for the event just as one would for an in-person interview, but also keeping in mind things that are unique to a virtual environment. Some virtual interview tips to share with your TechHire participants include:

- Prepare and submit an electronic résumé, wear appropriate attire, research companies, and prepare questions ahead of time.
- Use a laptop rather than a phone, if possible, and ensure appropriate lighting, background, and camera angle.
- Test audio quality and plug into to a hard line internet connection rather than relying on WiFi, if possible.
- Find a private, quiet setting, and remove all distractions and background noises before the interview.
- Download the interview platform before the event. Test it and become comfortable navigating it.
- Explore resources provided by the employers prior to the interview.
- Follow up with the interviewer by email immediately following the interview to thank them for their time.

Debriefing with participants after the event.

Always follow up with TechHire participants afterward to help them identify what went well, what could be improved, and how to plan for the next virtual interview. While some participants may struggle in their first virtual interview, it will be important to prepare them for the next opportunity.

Have you already participated in or developed a virtual career fair? Do you have promising practices to share? Is this an idea that you are considering? If so, let us know by emailing techhire@dol.gov.

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