

# Introduction

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Welcome to the Talent Pipeline Management® (TPM) Resource Guide for Connecting Opportunity Population Talent to Better Career Pathways. The intended audience of this resource is organizations, their associated professionals, and their employer partners that serve opportunity populations—a term used to describe people who experience barriers to employment. Other stakeholders interested in TPM may also benefit from the resources here.

The purpose of this guide is to bridge the communication divide between opportunity population-serving organizations (OPSOs) and the business community by providing each with more information on the other. Another goal is to demonstrate how employers and OPSOs can leverage TPM to modify their processes in ways that make their partnerships more successful; shift employer perspectives and behavior; and ultimately promote greater workforce diversity, equity, and inclusion. It is our hope not only that this resource guide serves as an introduction to the TPM framework but that more OPSOs can begin leveraging and benefiting from this authentically employer-led movement.

## What is TPM?

Led by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, TPM is designed to be a scalable, authentically employer-led solution designed to close the skills gap in ways that generate shared value and a return on investment (ROI) for employers as well as learners, education and workforce providers (including OPSOs), and the communities in which they reside. This systemic approach unlocks employer leadership and engagement in a novel way by speaking the language of—and leveraging strategies and practices associated with—supply chain management.

Taught through the TPM Academy® and supported by the TPM Academy curriculum and web tools, the TPM system provides a structured process that facilitates employers engaging in collective action; producing primary source data about their workforce needs and challenges; and designing and implementing solutions that address their most pressing workforce shared pain points. Launched in 2014, the growing TPM movement is now in 33 states, D.C., and Canada, with hundreds of active employer collaboratives involving thousands of employers.

## Who Are Opportunity Population Talent?

Opportunity populations refer to people in America who have had limited access to educational and professional opportunities and who face barriers to employment and career advancement. They may include but are not limited to:

- Opportunity youth: young adults age 17–24 who are out of school or out of work
- Members of the LGBTQ community
- Members of the immigrant or refugee populations
- Formerly incarcerated individuals
- Members of Indigenous communities
- People with disabilities (physical and/or cognitive)
- People without a high school diploma
- People with limited English proficiency
- People who are (or who have been) homeless

Not all members of these groups experience barriers to employment; individual circumstances including family background, race, geography, and other factors play a significant role in one's access to opportunity.

## Why Create a TPM Resource Guide for Opportunity Populations?

In good economic times or bad, employers compete on talent. Employers in a variety of industries face chronic skill shortages and explore many strategies to work with education and training partners to address talent attraction, sourcing, retention, and diversity and equity needs.

Learners also must be effective in their pursuit of career awareness and exploration activities and in connecting their education, training, and credentialing to employment. Workers too must find, access, and complete upskilling opportunities to achieve upward economic mobility.

Moreover, community-based, nonprofit, and other OPSOs are exploring new strategies that improve their responsiveness to employer needs and abilities to train, support, and retain opportunity population talent. Complementing this objective is the increasing interest among employers to diversify their talent pipelines and create more inclusive and equitable workplaces.

Strengthening relationships between employers and OPSOs—which benefits opportunity population talent—is more important now than ever before. But even as the

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self-evident need for stronger partnerships grows, major systemic challenges remain when it comes to engaging employers and sustaining these partnerships at the scale needed.

TPM is a field-tested and proven solution that was built by the business community based on its own best practices for partner engagement; these resources include examples of how TPM has been implemented in communities large and small, as well as examples outside of the TPM network that showcase some of the key principles and processes. To date, business associations and employers that have been trained on the TPM approach have applied it to a wide variety of partnerships, including those with OPSOs; however, not until this point have we developed a set of resources and support materials that are specific to opportunity populations.

TPM is a system and process that can be leveraged in ways that enhance the employer role in these opportunity population partnerships, by moving employers from an advisory capacity to an end-customer role. TPM can be used to strengthen opportunity population pipelines in two major ways:

- **The TPM framework:** TPM provides a framework and shared language for improving understanding and communication between employers and OPSOs.
- **TPM strategies:** TPM offers a set of strategies, tools, and resources that can be used to improve how employers and OPSOs work together to develop career pathways; address barriers to success; and structure wraparound services to get better results for opportunity population talent, employers, and OPSOs.

Whether you are someone who supports opportunity population talent, an employer looking into TPM and how to better access opportunity population talent, or an existing member of the TPM National Learning Network—this resource is for you.

## What is Included in the Resource Guide?

This guide provides a set of resources that can be used to explore how TPM can be leveraged—as a framework as well as a set of strategies—to build stronger employer and opportunity population partnerships. Creating successful partnerships requires employers and OPSOs to develop a mutual understanding of each other’s worlds and the roles that different professionals and organizations play in making partnerships work. The guide is designed both to introduce newcomers to TPM and to enhance the existing TPM movement. In addition to this introduction, the guide has three core resources:

- **Resource 1: Opportunity Population-Serving Organizations (OPSOs) Orientation to Employers—** This resource is intended to better orient opportunity populations serving organizations and their associated professionals with the employer community and the professional roles therein.
- **Resource 2: Employer Orientation to the Opportunity Populations Community—** This resource is intended for the employer community as an orientation to better understand opportunity population serving organizations, the professional roles therein, and the services they provide, as well as opportunity population talent, their strengths, and the barriers to employment they face.
- **Resource 3: Leveraging TPM to Achieve Better Outcomes for Opportunity Populations—** This resource describes how to use TPM to improve employer engagement with opportunity population serving organizations (OPSOs) and therefore achieve better outcomes for opportunity population talent. It (1) provides an orientation to TPM as a framework for organizing employers and their talent supply chain partnerships to unlock a dual bottom line; (2) explains how TPM can be used to improve communication and promote shared understanding between employers and OPSOs; and (3) describes how TPM can be leveraged by employers and OPSOs to modify their processes in ways that make their partnerships more successful, shift employer perspectives and behavior, and ultimately create a more inclusive workforce.

Each resource guide offers recommended actions with questions to consider.

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## How to Use the Resource Guide

This guide is flexible in design to support a range of uses. The resources can be used as stand-alone documents or bundled together, depending on your needs or the needs of your audience. The following are examples of how you can use the documents together or separately.

- **Getting the Word Out:** The resources can be distributed via email, embedded in a newsletter, or used as collateral at related events in order to help socialize TPM with potential employer partners or with OPSOs and practitioners.
- **Meetings/Presentations:** The resources can be used as preliminary reading or as a resource to have on hand during one-on-one or group meetings, such as with chambers of commerce or with nonprofit or community-based organization boards. They can also be highlighted in or used to inform a presentation on TPM, opportunity population talent, or employer engagement best practices.
- **Workshops/Orientations:** The resources can be used to guide a workshop with employers, OPSOs and TPM practitioners to explore best practices for employer engagement or utilization of the TPM framework. They can also be used or featured during an in-person or virtual TPM orientation.
- **TPM Academies:** Should you choose to participate in or design your own TPM Academy, these resources can be embedded in the instruction of the TPM Academy curriculum. They can also be used to help recruit participants in a TPM Academy.

## Further Exploring TPM and Opportunity Populations

Again, whether you are a leader within an OPSO, an employer looking into TPM and how to better connect to opportunity population talent in your community, or an existing member of the TPM National Learning Network—the Talent Pipeline Management® (TPM) Resource Guide has something for you. Not all partners will start from scratch; TPM can be used to add value to existing collaborations between employers and OPSOs to build stronger partnerships with an outcomes-focused approach. If this is your first exposure to TPM, we encourage you to follow up with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation team, our TPM Fellows, or any current or past TPM practitioner to learn more.

In addition to this resource is a growing body of work around TPM that is available and waiting for you. We encourage you to explore the TPM Academy curriculum to unpack and learn the many strategies that make up the TPM system and approach (<https://tpmacademy.uschamberfoundation.org/the-curriculum/>). We also encourage those of you who are interested to begin exploring how you can start or join a TPM Academy.

# Authors and Review Committee

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