# TALENT PIPELINE MANAGEMENT ACADEMY
## TPM Orientation

# Orientation
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# Unit 0.1

# Welcome

Welcome to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's TPM Academy® curriculum. This introduction is designed to familiarize you with the Talent Pipeline Management (TPM) initiative and to orient you toward the curriculum that you are about to explore.

TPM® started in 2014 as an effort to mobilize the business community to close the skills gap by applying lessons learned from supply chain management to education and workforce partnerships. If employers play an expanded leadership role as "end-customers" of a talent supply chain, they will be more effective at determining their most critical workforce needs, communicating those needs to trusted partners, and managing and improving performance.

Since 2014, the Chamber Foundation has co-developed and field-tested a set of strategies that, when implemented together, make for an end-to-end talent management approach. These strategies are intended to address what has been the missing piece—or weakest link—in many public-private partnerships, namely effective and sustained employer engagement and leadership. What these strategies provide is a systematic framework for how employers can engage in collective action regarding common workforce needs, better organize and share data related to those needs, and proactively engage talent-sourcing providers to build high-performing internal and external talent pipelines that perform well in a cost-benefit analysis, including a measurable return on investment, for learners and employers.

This need to enhance the employer's role in public-private partnerships has resulted in the creation of the TPM Academy, for which this curriculum was created. The Chamber Foundation considers this a living document, updated based on lessons learned from the field and contributions made by TPM practitioners. As the TPM movement grows, so will the resources available to the network. While this curriculum provides a structured framework and guide, it is also meant to be customized based on each community's unique needs and challenges.

The curriculum is composed of a TPM orientation and six strategies. The orientation is designed to familiarize you with what TPM is—and is not—and provides a self-assessment to determine whether the TPM approach is the right fit for your organization and community. The orientation can also determine your readiness to implement a TPM Academy to build employer capacity to execute TPM in your community.

In addition, the orientation explores options for where to start when building talent pipelines to address current and future needs. Options include starting with upskilling initiatives that better prepare current workers for success in new, emerging, or changing job roles and for career advancement. These upskilling initiatives would focus first on building the internal side of the talent pipeline, including career advancement for current workers to fill the most critical job openings. Another option is to start with a focus on improving the number and quality of new hires coming from provider partners. This would focus on the external side of the talent pipeline.

No matter where you choose to start, TPM encourages you to gather data and make decisions based on that data. The resulting end-to-end talent pipelines can include both internal upskilling and external new hire strategies. These pipelines can be designed to address a wide range of priorities including increasing the number and quality of new hires and promotions, improving retention, and meeting diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) goals. Much more than a curriculum, the TPM Academy is also supported by a national network of peer practitioners and a set of web tools that are designed to facilitate implementation of the six strategies regardless of where you decide to start when building talent pipelines.

Should you not have an existing employer-led collaborative in place, Strategy 1 starts with identifying one or more challenges and focus areas and from there guides you through organizing and launching one or more collaboratives of your own.

Next, Strategies 2–4 provide a systematic process for employers to gather and share their workforce data in a format that can facilitate new career pathway partnerships or improve existing ones. Strategies 5–6 are designed to help employer-led collaboratives put their data to work by co-designing internal and/or external talent pipelines, making them more resilient to external disruptions and shocks like an economic recession or a pandemic, and continuously improving them with trusted provider partners.

Whether you decide to forge your own path and make use of the TPM Academy curriculum as a complementary resource, are participating in the Chamber Foundation's TPM Academy, or are interested in launching a TPM Academy for your region, state, or industry, the TPM network stands ready to learn and evolve with you.

Are you ready to join the movement? If so, we hope you enjoy exploring the TPM Academy curriculum!

# Unit 0.2

# TPM: An End-to-End Talent Solution

TPM is a way of thinking, an orientation toward employer-led education and workforce partnerships in which employers are much more than advisors or beneficiaries. Instead, they are end-customers of talent supply chains. This does not mean employers are the only customers that matter, nor does it mean schools are factories or learners are widgets. What TPM provides is a systematic framework for how employers can engage effectively in producing information, facilitating partnerships, managing performance, and improving outcomes in career pathways. TPM can be pursued on its own as a new initiative or can provide a set of strategies, practices, and implementation supports designed to enhance the employer role in an existing partnership network.

What makes TPM unique is that it is an end-to-end talent management process that gives employers a framework, or playbook, for how to get organized so they can be better partners to providers, but in a way that addresses the missing piece in many partnerships, namely employer return on investment. The TPM process itself is composed of six strategies that, when implemented together, provide a talent supply chain approach. The strategies are designed to build on each other and support employers in developing a more sophisticated data- and performance-driven approach to education and workforce partnerships that results in a positive return on investment for employers and learners.

See Table 1: TPM Academy Curriculum for a list of the strategies, what each strategy seeks to accomplish, and the suggested amount of time to implement each strategy. The curriculum is designed to support even new employer collaboratives in implementing the orientation and six strategies in one year or less.

**Table 1: TPM Academy Curriculum**

| | Chapter | Learning Outcomes | Estimated Time to Implement |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Get Organized** | TPM Orientation | Assess if TPM is a good fit and introduce the approach to your community | 6 months |
| | Strategy 1: Organize for Employer Leadership and Collaboration | Organize employers to address a skills gap for critical jobs and where to start | |
| **Do Your Homework** | Strategy 2: Project Critical Job Demand | Project the number of jobs needed across companies | 3 months |
| | Strategy 3: Align and Communicate Job Requirements | Create a shared language for communicating hiring requirements | |
| | Strategy 4: Analyze Talent Supply | Identify current and future sources of talent | |
| **Implement Solutions and Improve** | Strategy 5: Build Talent Supply Chains | Designate preferred providers of talent and build internal and/or external talent pipelines | 3 months |
| | Strategy 6: Engage in Continuous Improvement and Resiliency Planning | Manage performance, plan for resilience, and engage in continuous improvement | |

While we provide an estimated timeline for implementation, these suggestions are based on a host organization that can provide an employer collaborative adequate staffing and support, adhere to a schedule of frequent meetings, and move through the strategies with little interruption or delay. A key to long-term success in TPM is at the front end of implementation: set the right foundation of support, focus, and cadence based on the employers in your collaborative and what works best for your community. As a host organization becomes more familiar with the TPM framework, the time to launch a collaborative and work through the TPM process will likely shorten, aligning with the suggested timeline.

As you move through implementation, each strategy provides opportunities to demonstrate real and tangible progress to participating employers. There is great value in the information that is collected at each stage of TPM, not just once you have reached Strategy 6. You will be given the tools to adequately communicate that value internally to your employer collaborative members and externally to your education and training providers as well as to the public. Communicating success is discussed in further detail in Strategy 5.

See Figure 1 for a closer look at the order in which you pursue each of the strategies. Take notice of the recommendation to execute Strategies 2, 3, and 4 together so your collaborative is producing all the information necessary to make decisions (as part of Strategy 5) about which talent pipeline solution is a best fit for them.

**Figure 1: TPM Basic Flow Chart**



GET ORGANIZED

ORIENTATION          STRATEGY 1

GET THE FACTS STRAIGHT

STRATEGY 2

STRATEGY 4          STRATEGY 3

IMPLEMENT

STRATEGY 5

IMPROVE
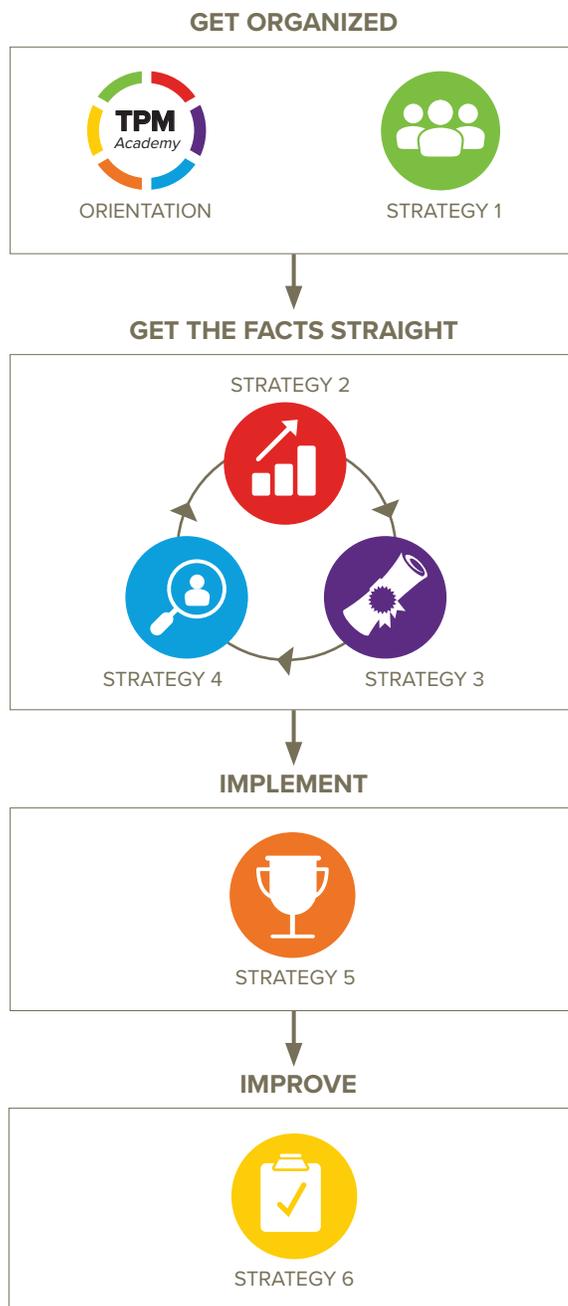
STRATEGY 6

See Figure 2: TPM Advanced Flow Chart for a comprehensive view of the order in which you pursue each strategy and the key decision points you are asked to make as you progress through the framework. This flow chart also shows when you need to go back to collect more data based on the decisions your collaborative is making. For example, if your collaborative chooses to pursue an internal talent pipeline solution, then you may need to revisit Strategies 2, 3, and 4 to backfill those positions you are upskilling.

**Figure 2: TPM Advanced Flow Chart**

Do you have a talent sourcing challenge and partners ready to organize?

**YES**

**TAKE ACTION**
Develop a plan for staffing and financing your collaborative and engage stakeholders.

**STRATEGY 1**
Organize for Employer Leadership and Collaboration

**KEY QUESTIONS**
Is there a shared need and do you have the capacity, willingness, ROI, and urgency in addressing that need?

Have you determined the focus of your collaborative and secured buy-in?

**YES**

**STRATEGY 2**
Project Critical Job Demand

**STRATEGY 3**
Align and Communicate Job Requirements

**STRATEGY 4**
Analyze Talent Supply

**STRATEGY 5**
Build Talent Supply Chains

Do we need to backfill any positions as a result of upskilling?

**YES**

Will we build an internal or external talent pipeline, or both?

**INTERNAL**    **BOTH**    **EXTERNAL**

**YES/NO**

**TAKE ACTION:** Identify preferred providers, build talent supply chains, collect performance data, and manage performance

Continue collecting data and update talent pipeline partners

**NO**

• Based on data collected, can we improve performance?
• Do we need to build resiliency into our talent pipeline?

**YES**

**NO**

**STRATEGY 6**
Engage in Continuous Improvement and Resiliency Planning

• Have you seen improved performance or an increase in ROI?
• Have you built resiliency into your talent pipeline?

**YES**

Scale solutions, implement resiliency plans, and continue collecting data and update talent pipeline partners

# TPM Action Plan

**INPUTS**
- Employer leadership and participation
- TPM framework
- TPM web tools
- State and local stakeholders and resources

**ACTIVITIES**
1. Organize for employer leadership and collaboration
2. Project critical job demand
3. Align and communicate job requirements
4. Analyze talent supply
5. Build talent supply chains
6. Engage in continuous improvement and resiliency planning

**OUTPUTS**
- Launch of new or improvement of existing employer collaboratives
- Number and performance of internal and/or external talent pipelines
- New data on workforce projections; in-demand competencies and credentials; and analysis of existing or potential talent flows

**EMPLOYER OUTCOMES & ROI**
- Reduced number of unfilled job openings and increased number of qualified job candidates
- Reduced onboarding and upgrading costs
- Improved career advancement and increased retention
- Increased employee diversity and opportunity to achieve DEI goals

**SHARED VALUE CREATION**
- Improved career guidance and job placement
- Improved career advancement and employment stability
- Increased job placement rate for education and training partners
- Improved graduate earnings and loan repayment rates

The TPM Action Plan can be used to help TPM practitioners track activities and progress. There is an action plan associated with each of the six strategies, which can be found after each strategy's learning objectives. Those participating in the TPM Academy can use the TPM web tool to store their data and share their progress via their online Action Plan.

# Key TPM Terms and Definitions

In this section you will find a list of key terms and definitions frequently used in TPM. Because TPM is a paradigm shift in how we understand employer leadership in education and workforce partnerships, we use language in new and creative ways to describe how TPM is different. This initial list of terms will enhance your understanding of the TPM process and movement. The Appendix includes a longer and more complete glossary of TPM terms.

For those who are newer to workforce development, reading through the Chamber Foundation's *Managing the Talent Pipeline* white paper and *Building the Talent Pipeline* implementation guide is a helpful first step in familiarizing yourself with TPM and a talent supply chain approach. As you progress through the TPM Academy curriculum, you will dig deeper into the concepts and terms presented in those resources. For more seasoned workforce professionals, a review of TPM's principal concepts and terms can be useful in distinguishing it from other workforce development approaches.

**Talent Pipeline Management (TPM)**
An end-to-end talent management approach that is implemented by employers to source and develop talent for jobs critical to their competitiveness and growth. TPM is built on three principles and a six-strategy process (see Table 1: TPM Academy Curriculum) for building high-performing education and workforce partnerships that perform well in a cost-benefit analysis and deliver a measurable return on investment for employers and learners:

- **Employers Drive Value Creation:** Employers play a new leadership role as end-customers in closing the skills gap for jobs most critical to their competitiveness.

- **Employers Organize and Manage Pipelines:** Employers organize and manage flexible and responsive talent pipelines in partnership with other employers and their preferred providers.

- **Employer Measures and Incentives Drive Performance:** Employers work collaboratively with one another to develop measures and incentives designed to reinforce and improve performance across all partners.

**TPM as a Supply Chain Solution**
TPM draws on the insights, strategies, and tools of supply chain management. Talent pipelines can best be seen as talent supply chains in which employers, working through employer collaboratives, play the role of end-customers in a series of customer-supplier relationships with preferred providers (see Figure 3: TPM as a Supply Chain Approach).

**Figure 3: TPM as a Supply Chain Approach**



Raw Materials — Supplier — Manufacturer — Distributor — Retailer — Customer

Learner — Provider — Support — Provider — Work-Based Learning — Support — Employer
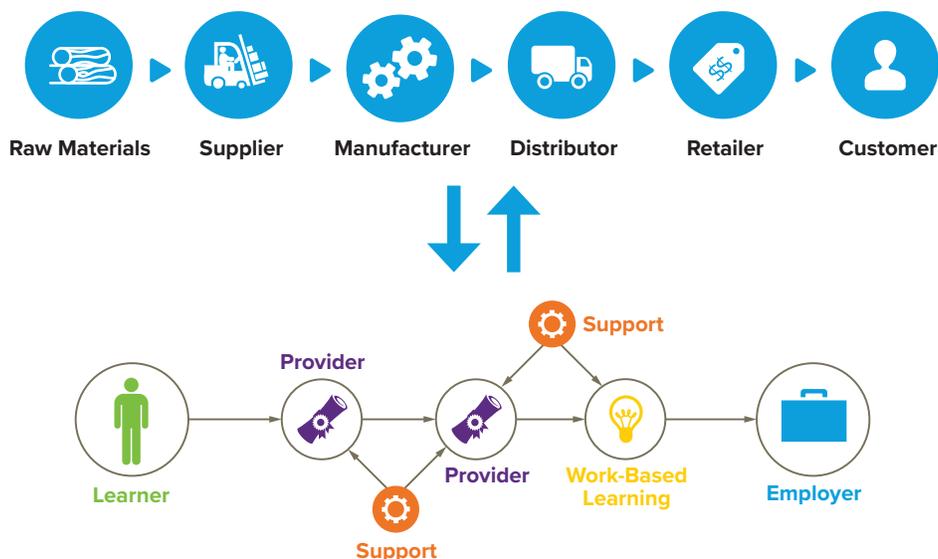
## Comprehensive End-to-End Talent Pipelines

TPM promotes a comprehensive approach to building talent pipelines based on a value stream map. The value stream map (Figure 4) includes the internal side of the talent pipeline—the upskilling of current employees—as well as the external side of the pipeline—involving new hires. Internal and external pipelines should be coordinated so that no matter where you start your TPM process you have an end-to-end approach for new hires and upskilled workers.

**Figure 4: Value Stream Map**



EXTERNAL TALENT PIPELINE (i.e., new hires) | INTERNAL TALENT PIPELINE (i.e., upskilling existing workers)

SUPPLIER RESPONSIBILITY | EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITY

ROLES

CAREER AWARENESS & GUIDANCE | CAREER EXPLORATION | CAREER PREPARATION & PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRAINING | ONBOARDING | CAREER COACHING | UPSKILLING | RETENTION

**Upskilling Current Employees**

We define upskilling as adding to the skills of current employees of collaborative members to prepare them for success in the following:

- **New, Emerging, and Changing Job Roles** due to changing technologies and changes in how work is organized and carried out within companies and across their industries. This may involve the retraining of workers who must transition to new jobs because their current jobs are transforming.

- **Career Pathways** providing career advancement opportunities within and outside their companies.

**Students and Workers as Learners**

Learners are those individuals—both students and workers—who receive education and training services, as well as wrap-around support services. Learners are also inclusive of opportunity populations, who traditionally have been underrepresented in the workforce, meaning they do not reflect the working-age population in their communities.

**Employers as End-Customers**

Employers must take on the role of end-customers in the talent supply chain and must actively orchestrate and manage their talent pipelines to meet as well as possible their workforce needs and to create shared value for providers, learners, and employers.

**Employers Form Collaboratives**

Employer collaboratives are partnerships organized by employers so that they may address shared workforce needs, such as critical jobs or functions within their respective industry, with management support provided through a new or existing employer-led organization.

**Education and Workforce Partners as Providers**

Providers are any public or private organization that delivers education and workforce training, or any other type of talent services, to employers, learners, and job-seekers. These services include career guidance, education, training, recruiting, and job placement as well as wrap-around support services. Providers can be public employment agencies (including but not limited to social services and community development), private employment and staffing agencies, high schools, community colleges, universities, proprietary schools, or community-based nonprofit organizations.

**Employers Designate Preferred Providers**

In the TPM process, employers organize and manage flexible and responsive talent pipelines in partnership with their designated preferred providers, which are identified as primary sources of talent and talent services for critical jobs within an industry or company. Preferred providers could provide services for both upskilling current workers and recruiting and preparing new hires. Providers are designated by employers based on their proven capabilities and performance, or because they meet the employer's criteria to be a new provider of talent or talent services.

# How Is TPM Different?

TPM is unique in many respects and can help activate consistent and reliable employer leadership in many types of public-private partnerships. Not all employer leadership and engagement strategies are the same. TPM uses a very specific approach and orientation toward partnerships that achieves a markedly different result; namely, it unlocks employer leadership in ways that produce an employer return on investment. Further, it is designed to sustain employer participation based on the measurable value and results it produces for participating employers.

But that is not all that makes TPM different. Below are several things that differentiate TPM from other partnership models and frameworks.

**Built on Industry Best Practices:** TPM activates employer leadership by speaking their language. Supply chain management is something employers know well. It operates as a metaphor, providing a set of guiding principles, practices, and implementation tools that already have business buy-in.

**Authentically Employer Led:** Many initiatives and partnerships tend to engage employers as advisors without them playing a clear end-customer role. Seldom do employers lead these partnerships, but instead are often convened by other partners or intermediaries seeking to address employer workforce needs on their behalf. TPM is authentically employer led from day one—by employers, for employers—based on their ability to organize themselves and work through a process of producing and using data to make decisions that address their most critical and pressing talent needs.

**Generates More Granular and Actionable Data on Employer Demand:** Employers work through a systematic process to produce, aggregate, and harmonize data based on the workforce needs of the employers that make up a collaborative. There are data that any provider is looking for to align curriculum, credentialing, assessment, and career services as part of a learning pathway. In TPM, providers get granular data about workforce needs straight from the source.

**Provides a Structured Process for Collective Action and Decision Making:** TPM is a way of thinking, an agile framework, and a structured process that employers can follow to produce actionable data that get results. TPM follows a streamlined process of data production and decision making designed to produce high-performing career pathways that achieve a return on investment for learners and employers.

**Engages the Full Spectrum of Talent Sourcing Partners:** TPM does not assume key roles for any type of talent sourcing partner. What matters is that employers engaged in TPM have organized the right mix of talent sourcing providers that can meet their most pressing talent needs. This includes both internal and external talent pipeline partners. In TPM, employers have a choice of whom they work with when building internal and external talent pipelines, including what role those partners play (e.g., career preparation). TPM does not lock employers into any one type of partner or talent-sourcing solution, but instead gives them choice.

**Creates Shared Value, Competitiveness, and Accountability:** While TPM may be authentically employer led, it is a process that produces shared value, competitiveness, and accountability with preferred and trusted talent sourcing providers as well as learners. In TPM, as in supply chains, all partners are responsible for managing time, quality, and cost in delivering a career pathway that produces a return on investment for learners and employers. TPM is a team sport.

**Focused on Employer Return on Investment:** It cannot be stated enough that the number one differentiator for TPM is the ability to perform well in a cost-benefit analysis and produce a measurable employer return on investment that keeps employers engaged. Employer return on investment has often been the missing piece in public-private partnerships. Employer return on investment is not a replacement for supply-side inputs and outputs like program enrollment or completion, or even job placement and earnings. However, none of those metrics address the key drivers of cost for employers, such as the inefficiency and costs associated with having unfilled jobs. TPM unlocks a new value proposition for employer partners in many types of education and workforce partnerships.

# Is TPM Right for You?

Perhaps you are an employer thinking through strategies and solutions for filling your most critical jobs or upskilling current workers. Or maybe you are a business association that is trying to help your employer members address their most critical workforce needs. Maybe you are an education, training, or services provider seeking better alignment opportunities with employers to ensure your learners get better employment outcomes and upward mobility opportunities. Up to now, you have learned about what TPM is, but is it the right fit for your workforce needs?

It cannot be stressed enough that TPM is not the solution for every education or workforce challenge or problem. It is a focused approach, designed to guide employers through a process to produce a specific set of data that will be used to make decisions resulting in a talent supply chain. It is one of many approaches that exist for organizing employers in public-private partnerships, and it is more of a scalpel than a broadsword when it comes to its implementation. Given the time commitment—particularly of the host organization—required to execute TPM successfully, progress will not be achieved overnight. (This will be further discussed in Strategy 1.)

What follows is some general guidance on whether TPM is the right tool for your specific challenge or opportunity.

Yes, TPM may be a good fit for you if you are an employer or employer collaborative looking to do the following:

- Address a workforce need quickly and need a talent pipeline solution that can produce a skilled workforce in two years or less.

- Address a workforce need, but one that requires additional training and development with longer lead times that may require more than two but generally fewer than four years.

- Build upskill pathways for front-line, existing workers to promote them to target jobs.

- Use a structured process for setting and reaching diversity, equity, and inclusion goals for your workforce.

Yes, TPM may be a good fit for you if you are an education, workforce, or economic development partner looking to do the following:

- Repurpose employer engagement to transform employers from advisors to end-customers in talent supply chain partnerships for existing or new pathways (including CTE and apprenticeship programs).

- Gain better insight into the jobs, competencies, skills, demonstrations, and credentials that are most in demand among the employers with which you are seeking to align.

- Better align your programming to produce more streamlined, employer-led career pathways that yield measurable results for learners and employers.

- Demonstrate value to employers based on the return-on-investment metrics that are most important to them.

No, TPM is probably not a good fit for you if you are an employer or employer collaborative looking to do the following:

- Address a short-term need that does not require a longer-term solution.

- Find available talent today that does not require any additional education, training, or credentialing before or after initial hiring.

- Improve how you partner with providers to enhance only one part or aspect of training and development, such as an internship program or career guidance.

- Better understand labor market trends or leverage data for strategic planning, but not for action.

No, TPM is probably not a good fit for you if you are an education, workforce, or economic development partner looking to do the following:

- Leverage the TPM process to support advisory board functions, but not change the employer's role.

- Sell or promote a particular program, credential, or solution to employers.

- Engage employers to standardize their jobs and adopt the same skills and credentialing requirements.

If based on the statements above you think that TPM is good fit for your workforce challenges, we recommend proceeding to determine which entry points best suit your needs and those of your partners and community.

# Unit 0.5

# Entry Points to Implement TPM

If TPM seems like a good fit for your education, training, or workforce needs, we encourage you to assess your level of readiness to implement TPM as a framework. In general, there are three entry points: (1) getting to know TPM, (2) securing buy-in to adopt TPM as a framework and begin exploring options for where to start when building talent pipelines, and (3) organizing and launching a TPM Academy. Below you will find guidance, resources, and recommendations to help you determine how to advance your understanding of TPM and move toward full implementation.

## Getting to Know TPM

Most people who find their way to TPM have heard something about it, or talent supply chains, and are interested in learning more. If this sounds like you, then the best place to start is by familiarizing yourself with TPM by accessing some of the resources that are already available to you. This includes accessing our signature report and publications; website and videos; and other resources such as slide decks, recorded webinars, and one-page handouts that describe TPM on an introductory level. Each of these resources takes only a small time commitment to access and review. Some of the many resources available to you are listed in detail in the following section and are accessible online at TheTalentSupplyChain.org and TPMacademy.org. After reviewing some or all of these resources, we encourage you to move on to the next step of securing buy-in for TPM as a framework.

## TPM Support Resources

PUBLICATIONS

**1**    **Managing the Talent Pipeline:** A New Approach to Closing the Skills Gap (2014)—For those new to the concept of talent supply chains, this white paper conceptually lays out the TPM approach for how employers can close the skills gap by leveraging best practices from supply chain management.

**2**    **Building the Talent Pipeline:** An Implementation Guide (2015)—For those familiar with talent supply chains who are considering a TPM project, this resource provides a baseline understanding of the strategies.

**3**    **Upskilling with Talent Pipeline Management (2020):** This report explores how TPM supports upskilling efforts and helps those who have successfully implemented TPM for external hires to bridge their efforts into upskilling.

**4**    **TPM CTE Resource Guide (2020):** 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 career and technical education partnerships.

**5**    **TPM Opportunity Population Resource Guide (2020):** This guide provides employers and opportunity populations—those who experience barriers to employment—and the organizations that serve them specific ways to leverage TPM to achieve better outcomes for all.

**6**    **TPM Strategy Videos:** This series of short videos on TPM includes, but is not limited to, (1) an overview of the TPM approach, (2) testimonials from TPM practitioners, and (3) overviews of each of the strategies and the signature TPM web tool.

**7**    **TPM Web Tool:** This software tool is designed to (1) provide a web presence for your employer collaborative, (2) automate much of the data collection described in the TPM Academy curriculum, (3) generate visualization tools to support your collaborative meetings, (4) provide access to a resource library with implementation supports, and (5) connect and share with peers from across the country. Note: the TPM web tool is currently available only to those participating in a TPM Academy.

**8**    **Presentation Slide Decks:** These generic TPM presentation slides and resources can be customized to support a variety of meetings.

**9**    **Case Studies:** These short stories and blogs give voice to the experience of companies and TPM practitioners. Let us tell your story.

**10**    **Events:** Via the TPMacademy.org website, the Chamber Foundation will provide notifications of upcoming TPM-related conferences and events.

If you have familiarized yourself with TPM and are still interested in learning more, we recommend that you contact the Chamber Foundation team to arrange a phone call or meeting.

Contact information for the Chamber Foundation team can be found on the website, or you can reach out to workforce@uschamber.com. In addition to setting up a meeting, our team will be happy to facilitate an introduction to a TPM peer in another city or state who has experience with socializing and implementing TPM. TPM is more than a curriculum or initiative; it is a movement made up of peers and practitioners learning together.

Should your interest continue, the next step is to arrange for a TPM presentation either via a webinar or at an in-person meeting, conference, or event that you are hosting in your community or with your peers.

You can also have TPM represented on a panel where the discussion is focused on enhancing or improving career pathways or employer engagement. This high-level introductory presentation can often build interest and excitement regarding learning more and holding a more focused, deep-dive conversation on whether this process is a good fit for your community and employer partners.

The Chamber Foundation team or a TPM practitioner will gladly make the trip and provide a presentation to interested stakeholders. All you need do is ask. Now that the TPM network is growing, it can be impactful to have a peer present his or her firsthand experiences with TPM, particularly if his or her community has faced a similar workforce challenge or has the same industry or critical job focus.

# Securing Buy-In for TPM as a Framework and Exploring Options for Where to Start

Getting to know TPM and galvanizing interest among key partners in your community for implementing the TPM approach is a critical starting place. However, we strongly encourage that you not rush into implementation, but instead build on the momentum you have achieved by laying a solid foundation for the successful adoption of TPM as a framework for your community.

If you have an interest in TPM and are looking to bring it to your community and employer partnerships, the first step is to educate your partners on what TPM is and, importantly, what it is not. This is best accomplished by first presenting on TPM at an existing conference to educate a broad community of stakeholders, including employers who might wish to participate and tap into the unique benefits TPM brings.

Next, you should organize a larger, more focused meeting or workshop on the TPM process. This should be a half-day event designed to explore whether the community should adopt the approach and which employers and organizations are best suited to implement it first while others learn from their experience.

Participants in this meeting should include employers representing a wide variety of priority industry sectors, chambers of commerce, sector-based business associations, and economic development organizations that make up the demand side. Participants should also include staff from workforce boards, education and workforce agencies and support services (e.g., social services and assistance), and public policy leaders, such as mayors or other elected officials. Representatives from K–12 and postsecondary educational institutions and other training providers should also be included, in addition to members of existing public-private partnerships or collective action initiatives. It can help establish the initiative's credibility to have an executive from the host organization send the invitation to meeting participants.

TPM has many unique benefits and can transform employer leadership in a wide variety of education and workforce partnerships. However, it should not be sold as a "silver bullet" or a solution for every workforce problem, nor should it be seen as necessarily replacing efforts that are already underway. Expectations should be managed upfront, emphasizing that TPM is a value-add to efforts already underway, not a wholesale replacement. Many people in the community might perceive TPM as duplicative or no different from what some partners or intermediaries are already doing.

The meeting also provides a forum to answer questions and build a broad coalition of support for how to best leverage the TPM process as either a new initiative or as a value-add to existing activities.

The meeting or workshop should be organized to cover a range of topics and ensure there is time to reach your ultimate objective, which is securing buy-in and support for piloting the TPM process with select employers that are willing to be the first adopters. To help you prepare for the meeting, a number of resources are available both in this chapter as well as on TheTalentSupplyChain.org including real-world examples, which are often the best resources for educating a broad community of stakeholders.

# Exploring Options for Where to Start When Building Talent Pipelines

A topic that should be covered in your meeting or workshop is that employer collaboratives have many options in deciding where to start when building their talent pipelines. They have the option of starting at any point along the end-to-end talent pipeline. They could start with upskilling current workers, improving how newly hired workers are onboarded, or exploring how to work with their partners to provide better career exploration and pre-employment training to get more qualified job applicants.

As we will cover in Strategy 1, employer collaboratives should explore the question of where to start based on the following considerations.

**Shared Pain Points:** What are the shared pain points and talent management strategies they want to address together? TPM is designed to address a wide variety of pain points and challenges, including, but not limited to the following:

- **Unfilled Job Openings:** Employers are not able to fill critical job openings with qualified talent in the time frames needed to meet business needs.

- **Onboarding, Training, and Upgrading Costs:** Employers have to increase spending to onboard recent hires, as well as train and upgrade existing workers.

- **Career Advancement, Turnover, and Retention:** Employers are struggling to retain talent and/or are not able to provide career advancement opportunities for current employees to fill critical job openings, resulting in workers leaving the company and/or the industry.

- **Meeting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Goals:** Employers are not able to increase the diversity of employees and applicants, expand economic opportunity, and promote equity and inclusion in the workplace.

Some of these pain points and challenges may require more initial attention on upskilling current workers and improving internal pipelines, while others may require more focus on improving external pipelines. For example, retail employers may want to improve career progressions and reskill existing workers to improve retention, or a group of manufacturers may use upskilling to facilitate skill attainment and career advancement through an apprenticeship program. Another group of employers may want to focus on increasing diversity by sourcing from underutilized external talent providers.

**Capacity and Willingness to Work Together.** Where do employers have the highest level of capacity and willingness to work together? Do they have the capacity and willingness to work together on upskilling challenges? Or with talent sourcing providers on improving external pipelines? Or both?

**Potential Impacts and Urgency in Getting Results.** Where can they have the largest impact? If they have immediate and pressing needs, where can they produce the greatest impact in the shortest period of time?

**Always Emphasizing the Need to Make the Final Decision Based on Data**

In presenting these options, it is important to emphasize that employer collaboratives should make some initial decisions and then continuously reevaluate these decisions based on data. Strategies 2, 3, and 4 are focused on getting the facts straight before making the final decision on where to start building talent supply chains in Strategy 5.

For example, the employer collaborative may consider two pain points—one focusing on increasing the number of qualified applicants and another on upskilling workers. After reviewing their job projections data collected during Strategy 2, the collaborative members decide that they do not have sufficient projected job openings to focus first on increasing the number of qualified job applicants. Instead, they decide to prioritize upskilling.

Another example is one in which a similar collaborative going through Strategy 3 discovers that they have sufficient agreement on the most important changes in competency hiring requirements to start with upskilling current workers. Yet another collaborative engaging in Strategy 4 decides that they have untapped talent sourcing options that could have immediate impacts on improving the number of qualified applicants.

**Underscoring the Need for a Comprehensive End-to-End Approach Regardless of Where You Start**

In reviewing these options, it is important to always remind employers and community partners that the TPM framework provides a comprehensive end-to-end approach for building both internal and external talent pipelines. And, it is important to make sure that wherever you start, you are always taking actions consistent with this comprehensive pipeline methodology.

For example, if you start with upskilling and expanding career pathways for current entry-level workers, then you want to make sure that these entry-level jobs can be easily back-filled with qualified new hires from existing or new talent sourcing partners.

If you focus on new hires, you want to make sure that existing employees have the opportunity to meet the same skill and credentialing requirements that are included for new hires. In most cases, employers will need to eventually incorporate both upskilling and new hire strategies to be successful in the long run.

# Outline and Objectives for a TPM Workshop or Meeting

In addition to exploring a collaborative's starting point when building talent pipelines, there are key components to include in a TPM workshop or meeting. The first half of the meeting or workshop should include a general presentation of the TPM movement and process. It should provide a forum to answer any questions about TPM and give examples of where TPM has been implemented successfully. It should also provide ample time for employers and key business associations to articulate what they believe are the key workforce challenges, where they see TPM potentially adding value, and what they believe has and has not worked in prior initiatives in which they have participated.

The second half of the meeting or workshop should focus on identifying where to potentially start (see previous section that presents how to gather information and facilitate early onset conversations with employers) and how to secure buy-in from key stakeholders who will be tasked with implementing the TPM pilot. Economic development and labor market experts should be provided an opportunity to present data on what they believe the biggest opportunities are in terms of addressing the skills gap in priority industries that are critical for the state or local economy. Data can also be presented on demographics and priority populations to expand economic opportunity and diversify the workforce. This information can be supplemented by any recently commissioned research or reports from business associations or economic and workforce development organizations.

Once these presentations are complete, participating employers should be provided the first opportunity to react. They should (1) confirm that the sectors and skills gaps identified in the presentations are indeed the correct ones on which to focus, (2) identify employer champions and secure sufficient buy-in from a number of employers to pilot the TPM process, and (3) identify which organization will take the lead on organizing employers and implementing the TPM process.

**COMMON QUESTIONS THAT EMPLOYERS MAY POSE IN A MEETING**

1. How is TPM different from other partnerships in which we have participated?
2. How does TPM address concerns about sharing proprietary data or compromising our competitive advantage?
3. What types of benefits do employers receive from participating in the process?
4. Where should we start? Are there advantages to focusing on upskilling current employees vs. sourcing new hires? Should we do both?
5. What are the time and resource commitments required of us and when should we begin to see results or benefits?
6. Can TPM help us get better qualified talent while also reaching our diversity, equity, and inclusion goals?

Next, an opportunity should be given for education, workforce, and economic development stakeholders to provide feedback on whether they see this process as adding value to their efforts to improve on their employer partnerships in the priority industry sectors identified.

To support this discussion, we recommend using the chart found in Figure 5: Example of Public Partner Roles and Benefits in Talent Pipeline Management, which identifies the unique ways state and public agencies can contribute to TPM as well as benefit from it.

**COMMON QUESTIONS THAT EDUCATION, WORKFORCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STAKEHOLDERS MAY POSE IN A MEETING**

1.  Why are we not included in the initial meetings of the employer collaborative?
2.  Where do we fit in the process and when should we expect to be engaged?
3.  How exactly do we benefit?
4.  Can TPM help us meet employer needs while meeting our own performance needs (e.g., accreditation, funding stream performance goals)?
5.  Can TPM help improve outcomes for learner populations (e.g., opportunity populations, veterans) that we serve?

The meeting should conclude with reiterating what the group agreed to do and how participants plan to leverage TPM, including which organization is taking the lead to coordinate stakeholders.

The organization that takes the lead should document clear next steps and disseminate them to the group. These next steps should include how the host organization will continue to enlist broader community and employer support. Should you be interested in leveraging TPM as a framework and plan to forge your own path, we encourage you to make use of the TPM resources. If you are a member of a TPM Academy cohort, you are ready to proceed to Strategy 1. Or, if you believe a TPM Academy is the vehicle that will move your workforce development initiatives forward, go to the next step of organizing and launching a TPM Academy.

# Draft Agenda for TPM Workshop

I.        Welcome and Introductions

II.       Overview of the Agenda

III.      What is TPM?

IV.      Employer Reactions
       a.    What questions do you have about TPM?
       b.    What are the key workforce challenges faced by our industry?
       c.    What has worked and what has not in prior or existing initiatives?
       d.    Where should we start when improving our talent pipelines?
       e.    Can TPM add value?
       f.    Can TPM help you achieve your diversity, equity, and inclusion goals?

V.       Stakeholder Reactions
       a.    What questions do you have about TPM?
       b.    Do you have any concerns?
       c.    What has worked and what has not when it comes to employer engagement in prior or existing initiatives?
       d.    Can TPM add value?
       e.    Can TPM help you better serve or get better outcomes for priority opportunity populations?

VI.      Next Steps
       a.    Which organization will lead?
       b.    How can we enlist and maintain community and employer support?
       c.    Do we want to organize and launch a TPM Academy?
       d.    When will the next meeting occur?

VII.     Adjourn

# Launching TPM in Kentucky Case Study
# Creating a Process for Buy-In

This case study presents an approach taken by TPM practitioners to socialize the TPM approach in communities.

The Workforce Center at the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce faced two challenges when it decided to implement TPM statewide:

1. How would it convince employers and other stakeholders to support this new workforce effort?

2. How would it persuade business leaders to participate in a multi-employer collaborative?

To raise awareness about the TPM process, the Workforce Center team participated in a series of local informational meetings across the state. Team leadership contacted local chambers to see if they would sponsor a meeting for employers and other community stakeholders interested in workforce development.

Many local chambers were anxious to drive change in these efforts. But sometimes the best champions were leaders of workforce investment boards, economic development groups, or even local chapters of the Society for Human Resource Management. In each case, the Workforce Center team worked with the local chamber to identify the community's workforce development leaders, which included, but were not limited to, employers, educators, workforce investment boards, and public policy experts. The Workforce Center provided sponsors with invitations, marketing materials, and draft press releases to promote the event.

Over four months, the Workforce Center led more than 40 meetings around the state, each lasting one to two hours. Each meeting began with a presentation of national and state data showing that the talent shortages required a different approach. The Workforce Center outlined TPM's six strategies, described the state chamber's plan for rolling out the process, and explained how Kentucky companies could become more active participants in creating streamlined transitions from education to employment. The Workforce Center expected tough questions and anticipated skeptics would attend some of the events. They came to meetings prepared.

The Workforce Center kept track of attendance and those who expressed interest in getting engaged in TPM. As a result of these meetings, the Workforce Center had a comprehensive list of employers for potential collaboratives and supportive suppliers, as well as insight into existing collaboratives with which to partner.

In many cases, the Workforce Center followed up the community events by traveling to meet one-on-one with employers to learn more about their workforce problems and to get them to agree to attend a collaborative meeting. The TPM buy-in process also included convening smaller meetings of employers to begin forming collaboratives. For example, groups in healthcare and construction were started before the series of local meetings finished.

The Workforce Center came away with the understanding that the TPM Orientation is the most challenging step because earning trust and building relationships takes time. Gaining buy-in for the TPM process proved so critical because any backfiring on the TPM Orientation would make it unlikely that partners would implement the remainder of the TPM process. Kentucky now has at least 28 employer collaboratives at work.

After reviewing the exercise, discuss the following:

**1**  What essential steps did the Kentucky Chamber's Workforce Center take in socializing a TPM approach for addressing skills gaps and building employer-led career pathways?

**2**  What questions would you anticipate from skeptics or critics and how would you prepare?

**3**  What insights from the Kentucky TPM rollout process can you apply to your own situation?

Figure 5: Example of Public Partner Roles and Benefits in Talent Pipeline Management

**Figure 5: Example of Public Partner Roles and Benefits in Talent Pipeline Management**

| State and Public Partners | Roles | Benefits |
|---|---|---|
| **Governors' Offices** | • Coordinate state agency leadership to support implementation of TPM<br><br>• Support launch of TPM in partnership with employer collaborative leads<br><br>• Help articulate the benefits of TPM to state and local/regional organizations | • Close the skills gap in critical sectors<br><br>• Provide career pathways for learners and upskill opportunities for existing workers<br><br>• Improve employer leadership in education and workforce systems<br><br>• Leverage employer investment<br><br>• Activate performance-based partnerships |
| **Economic Development Organizations** | • Provide research and data on critical growth sectors to identify highest priorities for employer collaboratives<br><br>• Engage local/regional economic development organizations in establishing collaboratives<br><br>• Target grants and incentives to performance-based, employer-led partnerships | • Leverage employer collaboratives for business development, expansion, and retention efforts<br><br>• Improve collaboration between employers and local/ regional economic development organizations |
| **Labor and Workforce Agencies and Partners** | • Provide research and data on critical growth sectors and projected new and replacement job openings in these sectors and related skill requirements<br><br>• Update eligible training provider lists and career guidance tools based on talent flows and employer-designated preferred providers<br><br>• Provide analysis on talent inflows and outflows from preferred providers<br><br>• Target grants and incentives to performance-based, employer-led partnerships that support internal and external talent pipelines<br><br>• Engage in continuous improvement efforts with employer partners | • Create access to more granular labor market information on how employers (1) define their most critical jobs, (2) project job openings, and (3) describe hiring requirements (including required and preferred credentials)<br><br>• Create better career pathway mapping from employer collaboratives, including internal pipelines and career advancement opportunities<br><br>• Improve access to work-based learning opportunities and on-the-job training<br><br>• Improve employer metrics and return on investment information with preferred providers<br><br>• Improve performance on federal and state program metrics, including job placement and earnings outcomes for eligible training providers |

*Continued on next page.*

**Figure 5:** *Continued*

| State and Public Partners | Roles | Benefits |
|---|---|---|
| **Education Agencies and Partners** | • Align curriculum to meet employer competency and credential requirements<br><br>• Coordinate feeder institutions and programs to build performance-based career pathways to targeted sectors and employer collaboratives<br><br>• Align career guidance, work-based learning, and job placement services<br><br>• Provide data on program enrollments and completers to support talent flow analysis<br><br>• Engage in continuous improvement efforts with employer partners | • Establish more granular and actionable information on employer demand and skill and credentialing requirements<br><br>• Improve feedback on partnership performance and how employers benefit<br><br>• Establish better information on talent inflows and outflows among institutions, programs, and employers<br><br>• Give priority access to employer-provided incentives, such as work-based learning placements<br><br>• Improve job placement, employment outcomes, and career advancement opportunities for learners, including opportunity populations<br><br>• Eliminate barriers for program enrollment |
| **Social Services and Community Development Partners** | • Integrate wrap-around support services in partnership with employers for newly trained talent and existing workers | • Coordinate public and private support services critical for education and career success |

This chart demonstrates how coordination among critical stakeholders can enhance a TPM project through transparency about activities and intended outcomes. Roles will vary for each TPM project based on factors such as which organization is leading the TPM effort, what existing initiatives are taking place, which organizations are involved, and the employer collaborative members' ability and willingness to collect and share information with partners, to name a few.

# Organizing and Launching a TPM Academy

Having successfully built momentum in your community, you are now ready to organize and launch a TPM Academy in partnership with the Chamber Foundation, should you decide an Academy will help move your workforce efforts forward. The Chamber Foundation can provide the TPM Branding Guidelines to help you navigate how to classify your TPM Academy.* Whether virtual or in-person, hosting a TPM Academy can be transformational in setting up your community for success in broad adoption and buy-in of the TPM model. Below are the recommended next steps to follow after successfully completing a TPM workshop and securing buy-in from key stakeholders:

**Identify a Coordinator and Fundraise:** At the workshop or meeting, one or more coordinating organizations should have been identified. An organization must now take the lead in organizing a TPM Academy in partnership with the Chamber Foundation team. This organization should work with the Chamber Foundation to identify fundraising opportunities to support the launch of a TPM Academy and address any short-term capacity needs for supporting the initial collaboratives. These collaboratives can be newly formed or build on an existing partnership.

**Consult Other TPM Partners in the Network and Learn from Their Experience:** At the same time that the lead coordinating organization is fundraising, it should engage other coordinators through the TPM network to learn from their expertise. This can include advice on how to recruit participants and supporters, manage relationships and expectations with public partners, fundraise, manage communications, and stage the TPM Academy's implementation. Several TPM Academy coordinators participate in regular calls with their peers to learn from one another's approaches and experiences as they continue to oversee implementation activities and orchestrate new TPM Academies.

**Continue to Build Support with Public Partners:** As coordinators organize their first TPM Academy, it is important that they continue to engage and serve as points of contact for public partners and government agencies. These partners will remain interested in the work that employers are preparing to undertake and will need to be kept in the loop on progress made and how they can assist or support, and when. TPM Academies are commonly launched with the support and backing of public-sector partners, which helps build credibility for the coordinating organization and the TPM Academy.

*A TPM Academy is facilitated by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation in partnership with designated leaders from the TPM network who have firsthand experience executing TPM projects. If you are not recognized as a TPM Academy faculty member, training of the curriculum is not recognized by the Chamber Foundation.

**Determine Where to Start and Recruit TPM Academy Participants:** Coordinators will need to establish a process for recruiting participants for the TPM Academy. This includes determining potential focus areas and where to start, as well as the right size, balance, and composition of the TPM Academy. If organizing TPM Academies, they are usually attended by 20–30 individuals representing as many organizations. Some coordinators have instituted a formal application process for prospective participants to screen for partner willingness, readiness, and capacity to implement the TPM approach. Use the TPM Coordinator Toolkit for a comprehensive overview of how to prepare for a successful Academy.

**Prepare Your TPM Academy Participants:** At an informational meeting, participants will likely want to know what is expected of them prior to committing to the TPM Academy. Sharing TPM resources and documents with future TPM Academy participants will help communicate in advance what is expected of them and the employers they hope to organize.

**Organize Your TPM Academy Launch:** Some coordinators choose to organize a launch event that features a reception and attendance from community leaders and local media partners. Often, launch events immediately precede or follow the first TPM Academy meeting. Coordinators will want to organize and implement a media and communications strategy prior to and during the launch event to maximize their ability to reach a wide audience. This is also a great opportunity to celebrate the pioneer organizations, employers, and funders that have taken a chance to be part of something new and exciting.

**New Collaboratives Start with Strategy 1:** Once launched, TPM Academy participants will need to determine whether they are launching a new employer collaborative or if they are leveraging TPM with an existing collaborative. For those that are starting anew, it is helpful to begin with Strategy 1 of the TPM curriculum to learn how to organize, staff, and finance an employer-led collaborative built specifically for implementing and sustaining talent supply chain solutions.

**Existing Collaboratives Start with Strategies 2–6:** TPM Academy participants starting with an existing employer collaborative have the option to accelerate their curriculum and move directly to Strategies 2–6. However, many existing collaboratives can benefit from learning about the TPM approach for organizing, staffing, and financing an employer-led collaborative, which can unlock unique benefits as well as position the collaborative for sustainability based on its delivery of a return on investment to employers. Strategy 1 is also important for helping employer collaboratives decide where to start.

# Welcome to the TPM Family!

Should you successfully move through the TPM self-assessment and participate in or launch a TPM Academy, we would like to welcome you to the TPM family! Whether a practitioner, coordinator, or participant, you are now part of a growing, employer-led movement to build high-performing career pathways. We look forward to supporting your leadership and we hope to learn from your experience. Do not be frustrated by setbacks or failures. They are lessons that will improve the TPM movement and network. And do not be shy about sharing your success.

Welcome and best of luck!