# recruiting and engaging partners

This document is intended for use by NAF academies in their efforts to recruit advisory board members and local partners. The goal is to connect with business and community partners who will provide work-based learning experiences, including internships, to NAF students.

**Individual Connections**

Academy Directors, principals, and current advisory board members spearhead outreach to obtain new board members and local partners. Once new prospective members have been identified, the following questions can be used to learn about their interest.

Conversational questions:

* Are you familiar with the school or district?
* Are you familiar with the NAF model and the history of success in NAF academies?
* What does your company need the most from future employees?
* How does your company engage in the local community?
* What are some approaches your company has used to connect with entry level talent?
* What is your interest in getting involved with K-12 education?

**Connect**:

As you converse, listen to what excites the prospective partner. Feel free to ask clarifying questions and learn as much as you can. Share about your experience and why you are involved with a NAF academy and advisory board. You can mention that partners offer a range of opportunities for students to identify career interests, build skills, and make connections for the future.

**Inform:**

Select a few positive and inspiring points to share about your academy or advisory board. This could include your academy’s mission, student demographics, community impact, workforce preparation activities, and student success. Inform the prospective partner of the types of ways he or she can get involved. Not everything can or should be shared in the first interaction; therefore, more can be shared electronically or in a subsequent call or meeting. Invite the person to tour the school, visit a board meeting, or to talk with another leader within the academy or board of advisors.

**Ask:**

Depending on the person’s interests and their excitement level you can make an appropriate ask. If the person is interested in being on the advisory board, you can provide more details on the commitment level. If the partner is interested in participating or sponsoring a work-based learning event, you can connect with them with the appropriate person at the academy or advisory board. Ensure to clarify if they are committing as an individual or if they plan on involving his or her employer.

**Craft and Share Resources**

* Create a set of [marketing materials](https://ash.naf.org/public/marketing-library); use NAF templates or documents as a foundation for your own customization.
* Create the academy’s webpage on the school’s website and maintain updates to highlight relevant information for potential members
* Update your LinkedIn Profile with your Advisory Board roles & responsibilities
* Develop a 30 second elevator pitch to share with potential members

**Advisory Board Kick Off Recruitment Event**

Many new academies host a kick off recruitment event to form an advisory board and to connect with local business, academia, and community partners. Below are some helpful tips:

* ​Determine date and time at least one month before the event:  Consider an early morning breakfast or early evening mixer at the end or the beginning of a school year. Create a Google or Outlook Invite to assist with RSVPs
* Leverage personal connections and existing partners to invite 25 or more prospects
* Reserve a meeting space at your school and coordinate for light refreshments​
* Plan an Agenda (60-75 minutes);  include: program intro, inspiring student story, WBL needs overview, and a clear call to action. If possible, have a business professional to help lead the event
* Ask new participants to complete a [Partner Interest Survey](https://ash.naf.org/public/downloadable-resource/index/partner-interest-survey) or form which collects contact information and volunteer interests ​
* Consider requesting the virtual attendance of a NAF Portfolio Manager