



No.	Guide 003
Name	Understanding the Responsibilities of a Consortium Member
Audience	Consortium Members, ANC Consultants
Purpose	To discuss a consortium member's responsibilities throughout the lifecycle of a registered apprenticeship program (RAP).
Effective Date	12.11.24
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Key Terms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consortium: An association of employer sponsors that collaborates to support and promote each other's registered apprenticeship programs • Registered apprenticeship program (RAPs): An apprenticeship program that has been approved to train apprentices in our state; also referred to as a sponsored program • Employer sponsor: An employer who manages their company's own registered apprenticeship program/s; the program will be registered in this employer's name • Supplemental Education (SE): Supplemental classroom or online training that equips a participant to complete their on-the-job learning (OJL); also called Related Instruction

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Introduction

This guide will explain the expectations and best practices for consortium members in our state.

A consortium is **an association of multiple employer sponsors that collaborate to support and promote each other's registered apprenticeship programs (RAPs)**. A consortium:

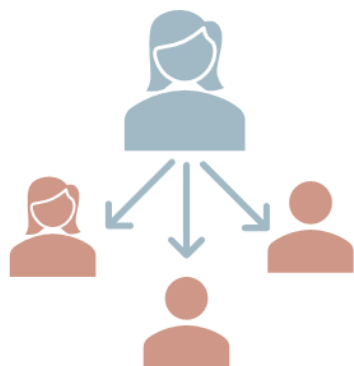
- Promotes apprenticeship within a specific industry or job market within our state
- Attracts a larger candidate pool than traditional, independent sponsorships
- Respects wage, selection, and curriculum decisions that the group makes as a whole
- Allows business leaders to collectively make a huge economic impact in our state

You may think this sounds like a group sponsorship, but a consortium provides the collaboration of a group sponsorship while still allowing each employer sponsor to independently manage their own programs.

This table and graphic compare a group sponsor and consortium:

	Group Sponsor	Consortium
Who is accountable for managing the program?	The group sponsor , who must educate the participating employers on expectations for the program	Each employer sponsor manages their own program , while sharing agreed-upon norms with other consortium members
How does the employer benefit from joining this?	They join a structured program, where a group sponsor will support them with administrative tasks and educate them on registered apprenticeship	They retain independence managing their own RAPs while benefiting from unified marketing, recruiting, and increased collaboration with other employer sponsors.

Group Sponsor



The group sponsor educates and supports a group of participating employers on their tasks and responsibilities as part of an RAP.

Consortium



In a consortium, a group of employer sponsors manages their own RAPs but unites around a common vision for apprenticeship.

This document will focus on the three phases of forming a consortium:

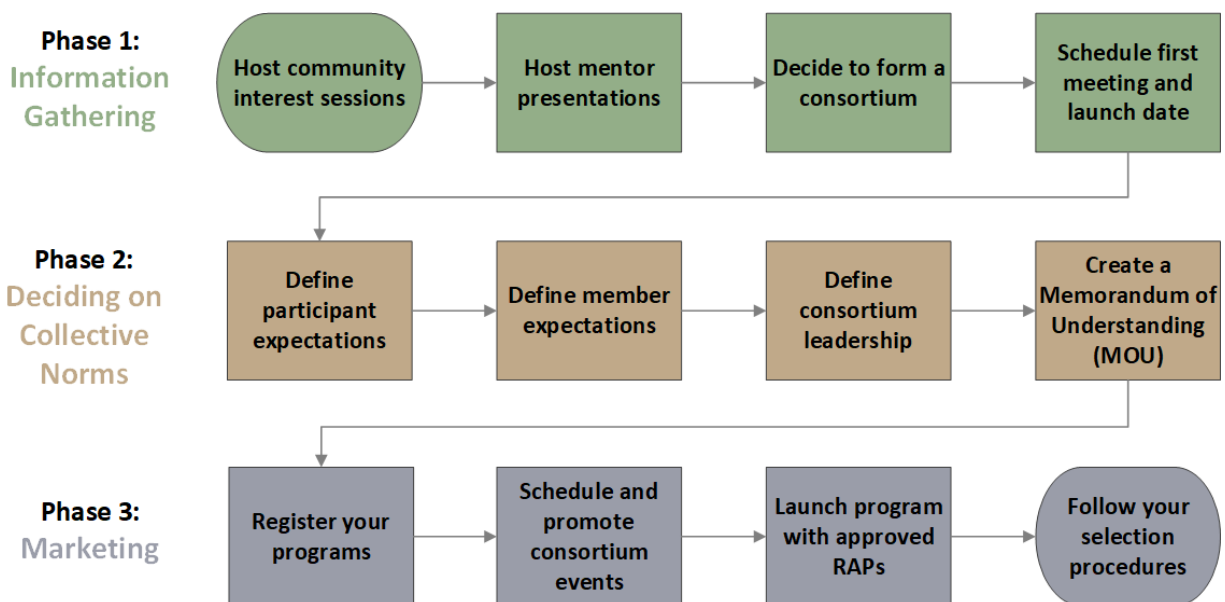
1. Information gathering
2. Deciding on collective norms
3. Marketing

The longest section will cover the collective norms you and your other consortium members will share. That section will include an effective selection procedure that consortia have used to recruit and hire new candidates.

Note: As an employer sponsor, you can find specifics on registering your program, enrolling participants, and maintaining your program in **SOP 002 – Understanding the Responsibilities of an Employer Sponsor**. Every member of a consortium will still need to independently register their program with ApprenticeshipNC (ANC).

The Three Phases of Forming a Consortium

The process for forming a consortium separates into three phases:



Phase 1: Information Gathering

Host Community Interest Sessions

Contact prospective employers in your local area or in your industry. Invite them to a community interest session to discuss forming a consortium. This is where your ANC consultant can support you. They could provide you with:

- **Promotional materials** explaining the benefits of apprenticeship
- **Contact information for employer sponsors you may want to invite** to the meeting

We recommend that you also **invite community partners** who could support you with growing the consortium.

These could include:

- Workforce development boards and career centers (ex. NCWorks)
- Local school system employees (superintendents, Career and Technical Education [CTE] Directors, guidance counselors)
- Community college representatives
- Community-based organizations
- Economic developers
- Chambers of commerce members

Your consultant can also help you contact these entities.

Host Mentor Presentations

After you feel you have some interested parties, set up another meeting. Find a knowledgeable guest speaker to invite from an existing consortium in our state. This way your prospective members can **hear about the successes of an actual consortium** and ask questions of someone directly involved with its formation.

This is where your ANC consultant can also support you. They can refer you to a good contact from an existing consortium who would be an excellent guest speaker.

Decide to Form a Consortium

After the interest session and mentor presentations, you and other sponsors should have a better idea whether a consortium would benefit your organizations and goals for apprenticeship. Now, it is time to decide if you should form a consortium. Schedule a meeting to ask sponsors if they will commit to joining the consortium. The number of members in each consortium may differ; what matters most is that **the other members share your passion for recruiting new talent and impacting your community.**

Schedule First Meeting and Launch Date

Now that you have decided to form the consortium, there are two critical dates you need to determine:

1. The first is to schedule **the date of the first meeting**, where the consortium members will begin to design the consortium. Invite your ANC consultant to the first meeting, so they can introduce themselves to your new consortium members.
2. The second is **the date you anticipate launching the consortium**. Ensure you have enough buffer time to develop your consortium's structure before you begin accepting apprentices into your program.

Phase 2: Deciding on Collective Norms

Define Participant Expectations

Participant expectations involve answering two questions:

1. What will all apprentices be expected to do?

- Define *minimum* qualifications for on-the-job learning (OJL) hours and supplemental education (SE) hours for all RAPs within the consortium.
- Define whether colleges, third-party providers, or the members themselves will deliver supplemental education
- Define minimum qualifications for participants to complete the program.
 - Ex. All participants must graduate from their high school and pass all supplemental education courses.

2. What credential will all apprentices earn for being in an RAP?

- Define which credential all participants will receive (example: task specific certifications, college degree, or a journeyworker certificate from the state).
- Define an agreed-upon wage scale or range for employers to follow. This prevents one employer from having an advantage over other consortium members with recruiting talent.
- Define how each employer sponsor will support their apprentices' tuition, fees, and tools necessary for supplemental education.

Define Member Expectations

A consortium needs to determine the expectations for its members. These expectations fall into three categories:

1. Recruiting and selecting
2. Meetings and volunteering
3. Communication and membership fees

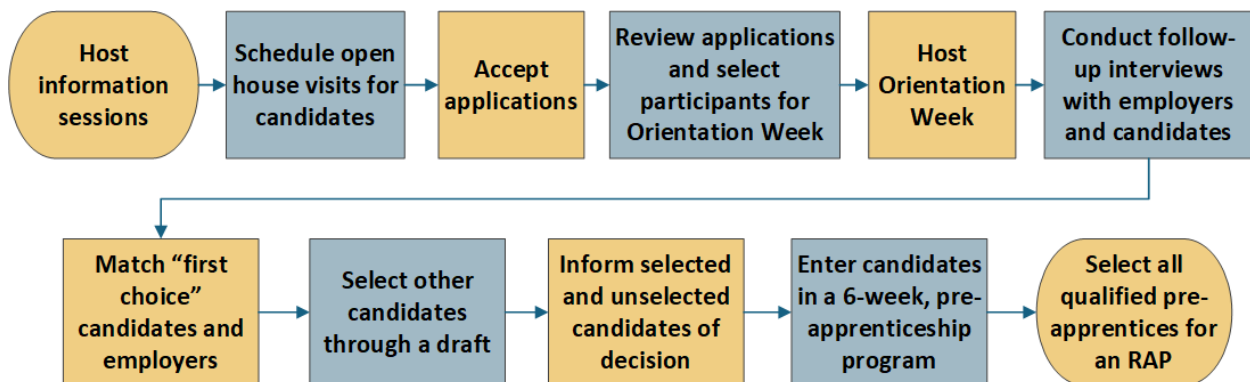
Recruiting and Selecting

First, it is important that all members agree to adhere to **consistent recruiting and hiring norms**. You may want to consider having all members agree to the following:

- Members will **not recruit apprentices before a defined Orientation Week**, where all members are involved. This allows companies to get to know all potential apprentices before they select any candidates.
- Members should **not have one-on-one conversations with candidates** or make any verbal commitments to select a candidate.
- Members will work as a group and not as individual companies to recruit new apprentices.
- Members will **not recruit apprentices from other consortium members**.

The next thing you want to do is define your selection procedures. The following is a model of a selection procedure used by consortia in the past. It is a best practice, but **you can tweak this selection procedure to fit your needs**.

Here is the process flow for this selection procedure:



1) Host Information Sessions

Often, an information session will take place at a high school or career fair. During this time, talk with prospective candidates and let them know about the benefits and process of apprenticeship. Candidates may not understand that **a consortium allows candidates to meet a variety of different employers during the selection process.**

You could also use the information session to promote upcoming open houses with consortium members.

2) Schedule Open House Visits

Each consortia member should volunteer to host an open house for candidates. You can advertise these open house events on the consortium's website and promote them during information sessions. An open house is an opportunity for potential apprentices to tour a company and talk with company representatives about what their apprenticeship experience would be like.

If the participant is a high school student, this is also an opportunity to invite the potential candidate's parent or legal guardian to tour your company along with the candidate. That way, the parent and student can be:

- Equally reassured of the safe working conditions of the companies within the consortium
- Equally excited about the potential of the student working for a company in the consortium

While not required, you should encourage candidates to attend more than one open house.
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3) Accept Applications

Each consortium should create an application form to allow candidates to apply for the program. This application should also spell out the dates of the Orientation Week, so candidates can ensure they can commit to that week if accepted.

There should be a strict deadline for all candidates to submit their applications.

4) Select Participants for Orientation Week

As a consortium, all members will meet to look through applications and select candidates for the **Orientation Week**. This is **the main event of the recruiting and candidate selection process**. For two to four nights, all consortium members will collectively host sessions throughout the evenings for applicants. These sessions can include:

- Presentations and training from each consortium member, so **candidates can learn about each company** in the consortium
- Group activities, so that **companies can vet a candidate's ability to work in teams**, communicate, complete tasks, and solve problems
- Any necessary **testing or candidate interviews**

Orientation Week allows qualified candidates and employers to get to know each other, so both can judge if the other is a good fit.

5) Host Orientation Week

You can facilitate the Orientation Week responsibilities equally among group members. Again, the norms during this time are that no group member makes a promise to a candidate or does anything to undermine the selection process for other members. Orientation Week allows the consortium members to evaluate new candidates for their suitability within the program. Companies can also judge candidates on:

- Their punctuality during the week (***Was the candidate on time for all sessions?***)
- Testing aptitude
- Ability to work well, both collaboratively and independently

6) Conduct Follow-Up Interviews

After Orientation Week, there will be informal interviews (or online surveys) sent to candidates and employers, either on the last night of orientation or shortly afterwards. As part of these interviews, give both the candidates and employers an opportunity to rank their top candidates. You may even want employers to rank their top choices from:

- First choice
- Second choice
- Third choice

This will force all members to be more selective with the candidates they thought were standouts.

7) Match “First Choice” Candidates and Employers

There are many ways that you can match candidates and employers. One recommendation is to share all results with employers in the consortium, so they can see which candidates have an interest in their company and compare these with their top choices. You could immediately **pair off any candidate or employer that chose each other as a first choice** and place the remainder of candidates into a draft pool for employers.

Please note that this is one model consortia have used to create a fair selection process, but you are free to design the selection procedure that works best for your companies.

8) Select Other Candidates through a Draft

After all “first choice” candidate-and-employer matches are complete, the employers take turns drafting the other candidates to join their program. The employer could look through the candidates’ qualifications and decide who they would want to pick, while also paying attention to the candidates that expressed interest in working at their company. This draft would continue to progress in rotation **until members have selected all desired candidates**.

It is important to remember that **your consortium does not need to accept all Orientation Week participants into a RAP**. Employers may pass if they do not see a candidate they would like to select. Bypassing a candidate will give other employers an opportunity to select that candidate.

9) Inform Selected and Unselected Candidates

Once all employers have chosen the candidates they would like to select from the candidate pool, the consortium’s leadership will send out an email to inform all other candidates that they were not selected for participation in one of this consortium’s programs.

The consortium's leadership will also email all selected candidates. This email should include:

- The employer (consortium member) who selected them
- The program’s basic information and **start date**
- Any information about a trial period or pre-apprenticeship program for selected candidates
- **Information about upcoming forms to sign**, like the *Pre-Apprenticeship* Participant Registration Form or *Apprenticeship* Participant Registration Form
- Information regarding the start of supplemental education

10) Enter Candidates in a Six-Week Pre-Apprenticeship

It is common for the candidates to be selected for a six-week paid pre-apprenticeship to evaluate how the candidate would perform with your company. Whatever length of time you designate for this trial period, try to **keep it consistent for all employers**, so candidates feel like they are being treated the same as other participants. The objective of the pre-apprenticeship is to ensure the participant believes the program is the right fit for them, and the employer thinks the candidate is the right fit for their company. This is **the final opportunity to vet the candidate**, and conversely, for the candidate to vet the company.

Note: A state tuition waiver can pay a student's community college tuition, so this could be an incentive for any youth apprentice. However, for a student to be eligible for the state tuition waiver, they must 1) enroll in a pre-apprenticeship or registered apprenticeship program *before* they graduate high school AND 2) enroll in a registered apprenticeship program within 120 days of graduating high school.

11) Select All Qualified Pre-Apprentices for an RAP

After the trial period has ended, you will decide who to invite to your company's RAP to become a full-fledged apprentice.

Again, this is only a recommended best practice for selecting candidates. You have flexibility to craft a different selection procedure that works better for you and your fellow consortium members.

Meetings and Volunteering

Along with your consortium's selection procedure, you will want to answer the following questions for your current and future members:

- When and where will meetings be held?
 - If a consistent space is not available for every meeting, you may want to have all members agree to host meetings on a rotating basis.
- How will resolutions be adopted?
 - What percentage of members need to be present for a resolution to be adopted?
 - What percentage of voters must vote in favor of a resolution for it to pass?
- **What is the process for accepting new members?**
- What are other consortium-related time commitments for members?
 - All members should be willing to **conduct a consortium presentation** at a stated frequency (annually, quarterly).
 - All members should **host an open house**.

Member Fees and Communication

Lastly, define any expectations for membership dues or communication, so you can ensure all team members agree on the steps you and future members should take to join the group.

Membership dues:

- Members may need to **pay an annual fee**. Typically, this fee covers marketing expenses (ex. website) for the consortium, but you will want to state the expenses for which you will use the money collected from dues.
- You need to **define who your fiduciary member will be** if the consortium is not a legal entity.
 - In other words, you may need to determine who you and the other members of the consortium trust to pay invoices and provide financial oversight of the consortium.
 - This could be a third-party stakeholder, who is not a member of the consortium.

Communication:

- How long do members have to respond to emails?
- **What are the expectations when it comes to promoting new events?**

Answering all these questions will help you define all requirements for current and future members.

Define Consortium Leadership

Lastly, although all consortium members are coming together to serve each other, it is best to define your leadership structure.

- Answer the following:
 - Who will lead the consortium?
 - Consider having:
 - **A chairperson** – someone who will run meetings and cast a deciding vote
 - **A treasurer** – someone to collect membership dues and approve expenditures in a timely manner
 - **A secretary** – someone who can record meeting minutes and schedule member events and meetings
- How will leaders be selected?
 - Will it be a simple majority vote to determine new leadership?
- **How long will leadership serve before new leadership is selected?**

Create a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

A memorandum of understanding (or MOU) is **a document that (while not legally binding) lays out how members agree to support each other**. What goes into the MOU is up to the members' discretion, but you will want to consider including these four main components:

1. Outlining your **participant expectations**
2. Outlining your **member expectations**
3. Defining your **consortium leadership**
4. Defining **what to do for non-compliant members**

Having these guidelines outlined in a brief MOU that all members will sign when they join the consortium will help the consortium members ensure that each new member holds the same vision for apprenticeship.

Phase 3: Marketing

Register Your Programs

Once you have your start date and your members have agreed to group norms, it now comes time for each employer to register its own RAP. They can do this by **contacting their ANC consultant** to begin designing their program. All the RAPS of your participating consortium members must be registered before they can join in the first Orientation Week and begin selecting apprentices.

Sometimes, consortiums will be formed of companies who already have RAPs that they manage. But they may need to revise their program standards to now reflect these new norms from the consortium, including:

- The Work Process Schedule (which defines how much OJL or SE hours the apprentice should complete)
- Wage information for participants
- The selection procedure

In that case, those employers will make a **program change request** to revise their current program standards.

Note: For more information on program registration or program change requests, see our **Guide 002 – Understanding the Responsibilities of an Employer Sponsor and SOP 007 - Submitting a Participant Change Request in the NCRAN Community Site.**

Schedule and Promote Consortium Events

Next comes scheduling and marketing events for the consortium. Let candidates know about:

- The RAPs and employers that will be represented in your consortium
- Any upcoming events (information sessions, employer open house events, application deadlines, Orientation Week)

You may want to consider creating a simple website or having a **social media page** dedicated to your consortium to advertise upcoming events and share success stories.

Launch Program with Approved RAPs

Stick to your consortium's official start date with all your members' approved RAPs. **Be leery of any changes to the start date.** This could cause confusion and irritation for prospective candidates.

Follow Your Selection Procedures

Whatever selection procedure you decide on, follow the guidelines you established in recruiting and hiring new program participants. If you find a selection procedure is not working well for you, follow the consortium guidelines for discussing and voting for a new selection procedure.

Conclusion

This guide provided you with the steps to create a consortium. It discussed the three phases of creating a consortium (information gathering, deciding on collecting norms, and marketing) and gave you an effective method for recruiting and selecting candidates.

In 2024, throughout North Carolina, we had twenty-four consortiums that experienced success with apprenticeship. We want you to join them in managing a successful consortium! **Contact your ANC consultant** who can start you on the process and get you in contact with a member of an existing consortium.