

The BILT Model

An Effective Way to Engage with Employers to Guide Your Technical Program

By Dr. Ann Beheler, Principal Investigator - Pathways to Innovation, National Convergence Technology Center, and Creator of the BILT Model

All grant proposals for the National Science Foundation Advanced Technological Education Program are required to show strong employer engagement and commitment for the work proposed in the proposal. The NSF-ATE supported Business & Industry Leadership Team (BILT) model has proven to be an effective approach to employer engagement for colleges across the country. The BILT model is essentially a Business Advisory Council (BAC) “on steroids” that puts employers in a co-leadership role for the program.

The Building Pathways to Innovation grant (DUE 2039395) offers a cohort-based BILT Academy training program that helps colleges fully implement the BILT model for a college program one step at a time over a period of about 9 months beginning each fall. However, it is desirable for colleges in the proposal creation stage to implement a “preliminary” BILT to jumpstart the employer engagement process and plant seeds for the co-leadership model the proposal will support. This approach requires the college to recruit 3-5 subject matter experts to participate in one meeting that explains how BILT is different from a standard BAC and discuss the goals and objectives of the proposal to gather employer input. This permits the college to document this foundational employer commitment in the proposal and obtain commitment letters from those attending the meeting. If funded, the college would then apply to join a BILT Academy cohort for support in fully implementing the model. Several proposers have found this approach beneficial to the review process and to guide the funded work.

The Pathways to Innovation project offered a [webinar](#) in June for colleges interested in learning how they can implement a foundational BILT as part of their proposal creation.

To ask questions, contact Ann Beheler, abeheler@cord.org

To learn more about the BILT model, read:

[Six Ways to Engage Employers and Give Students the Skills They Need to Get Hired](#)