Demo Day rarely comes together through one organization alone. Demo Day can be led by an educator, a chamber or economic development professional, a regional education partner or by any combination of the three working together. There's no single right starting point. What matters is what you bring and what you might need help with. Find where you fit below to see your starting position and how to move forward.

If you're an educator

Maybe you're a: teacher, counselor, career advisor, CTE coordinator or administrator

What you bring

Students, a venue and staff support on event day. You know your students, your school calendar and what your community context can realistically support. If you already have employer relationships, an advisory board, a CTE program with industry ties, you may be able to run a Demo Day entirely on your own, using the Employer Recruitment Guide to build out the rest.

What you need

If employer relationships are the harder piece, a chamber of commerce, an economic development office, a regional education partner or a local business or industry leader can often fill that gap faster than building it from scratch. Recognizing this early saves time, attempting employer recruitment alone in a community where you don't have existing relationships is the single most common reason a Demo Day may stall before it starts.

Where to begin

Reach out to your local chamber of commerce or economic development office directly. Many are actively looking for structured ways to connect with schools and would welcome a specific, concrete ask. Come with a proposed date range and a rough sense of what you need so the conversation starts with something actionable.

If you're a chamber or economic developer

Maybe you're a: chamber director, economic development professional or workforce development professional

What you bring

Employer relationships and a direct understanding of the local talent pipeline. You likely already know which businesses are civic-minded, which are struggling to hire and which would respond well to an invitation like this.

What you need

Students, a venue and staff to run the event day of. You need a school or a small group of schools willing to bring students and handle the pieces that only a school can— family communication, transportation logistics and staff supervision.

How to start

A few things make that first conversation with a school land well: come with something concrete, not just an idea— a list of employers already willing to participate and a proposed date range makes the ask feel real rather than aspirational. Lead with what you're offering, not what you need. Find the right first contact: a counselor, a CTE coordinator or an assistant principal is usually a strong starting point.

If you’re a regional education partner

Maybe you're a: educational cooperative staff, regional coordinator or multi-school program lead

What you bring

Reach across multiple schools and a system-level view of career exposure programming in your region. You may run a Demo Day yourself, host one that pulls students from several schools at once or support individual schools running their own.

What you need

If you're running an event yourself, whether for one school or several pooled together, you need the same things any organizer needs— employers, a venue and students. If you're supporting other schools instead, you need willing school-level leads ready to take this on with your backing.

How to start

A few common paths, and you're not locked into just one. You might run one event yourself, pooling students from several schools, especially useful when individual schools are too small to meet minimum group sizes on their own. You might pair schools strategically to run a joint event with two or three nearby schools who have complementary strengths, or you might support individual schools running their own, identifying the right school-level leads across your network and sharing the toolkit with them.

If you’re a business or industry leader

Maybe you're a: business owner, plant manager, HR or talent director or an industry association representative

What you bring

A direct stake in your local workforce, and often, real influence with other employers in your industry or region. You may already have relationships with other businesses who'd participate if asked by someone in their own industry rather than a school or chamber they don't know.

What you need

A school or group of schools willing to bring students, and likely a chamber or regional partner to help coordinate logistics if you don't have existing school relationships yourself.

How to start

Reach out to a school counselor, CTE coordinator or your local chamber of commerce to gauge interest, and come with something concrete such as your own willingness to participate plus a rough sense of which other local businesses you could help recruit. Your credibility with other employers is often the single most valuable thing you bring to getting a Demo Day off the ground.