



# Virtual Job Fairs

## Efficient and Effective Tools for Economic Recovery and Long-Term Employment Solutions

Virtual job fairs are not new; however, industries have increased the use of them during the pandemic. Organizations have been using a variety of web-based tools to create online job fair experiences for over a decade, ranging from basic webinar platforms to connect employers and job seekers, to comprehensive online platforms that replicate a physical job fair. Virtual job fairs may include elements such as employer demonstrations, information booths, private discussion rooms, live interviews, and training resources. This document outlines the benefits of virtual job fairs, factors to consider when selecting a platform to host the event, and promising practices from two states who designed very different virtual job fair experiences.

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### Benefits of Virtual Job Fairs

**Businesses** enjoy a flexible, manageable online interface that can broaden their reach to more qualified and diverse candidates from across the state, nation, or the world. Employees can staff the virtual job fair without the cost and time of leaving the office. Set up is convenient and inexpensive. Online job fairs may also shorten the hiring cycle.

**Jobseekers** gain easy-to-navigate online resources to improve several aspects of their job search, such as resumes, education, and access to meet and interact with employers who are ready to hire. These resources can be available 24/7 – on any device – regardless of geographic location.

**The workforce development system** can deliver a cost-effective way to serve more employers and jobseekers, with minimal staffing compared to physical job fairs, while removing barriers for jobseekers such as transportation and childcare. Virtual job fairs enable the workforce system to fulfill today’s mission while positioning the system to scale, adapt, and maintain technological readiness for future innovation and the ever-changing labor and employment conditions.

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### Factors to Consider

One of the first steps in planning a virtual job fair is to select an online platform to host the event. It will be helpful to identify your goals and determine your needs before selecting a suitable platform. Consider these questions:

- What is the budget available to develop and operate virtual job fairs? Can funds for physical job fairs or other employer services be repurposed?
- How much staff capacity do you have to support virtual job fairs?
- What are the most important elements to offer as part of the virtual job fair? Which elements would be nice to have if possible?



- Is this a long-term, sustainable solution for our state/local area or merely a temporary solution?

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## Promising Practices

### *Colorado*

Colorado originally created the virtual job fair (VJF) to provide remote services to active duty military (and their spouses) who knew they would be returning to Colorado at the end of their active service. The VJF enabled active duty military in Afghanistan and Iraq to explore and apply for jobs in Colorado while still deployed. The success of this project demonstrated the long-term value of this solution, and Colorado invested further by providing comprehensive access to online job fairs throughout the state and embedding VJFs into the fabric of the Colorado workforce development system, both of which have proven invaluable during times of economic recovery.

The Colorado VJF allows employers and job seekers to meet in a virtual environment. Employers and jobseekers interact using various tools, such as chat rooms, webcasts, training/workshop videos, webinars, and employer online hiring sites. Colorado also uses VJFs as a virtual interactive event for information and resources targeted toward specific groups, such as youth or veterans.

VJFs in Colorado are coordinated by the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE) Workforce Development Programs and hosted by local American Job Centers (AJCs). CDLE has implemented a series of tools to make it as simple as possible for local AJCs to host a VJF. [CDLE's VJF page](#) on its website provides templates and guidance. A [calendar](#) directs businesses/employers and jobseekers to planned events, local AJCs and state agencies promote VJFs for their employers and jobseekers, and best practices are shared. Colorado's platform is provided by [Source360](#).

### *Indiana*

Indiana created their virtual job fair in response to a significant shortage of pilots in the state. The Indiana VJF demonstrated a need for a sustainable solution, and the Indiana Department of Workforce Development (DWD) continued to build out the tool. The VJF is a webinar featuring a business or panel of businesses presenting company information, open positions, benefits, and requirements, as well as steps on how to apply. These webinars are co-hosted with local areas, community colleges, and other partners. The DWD manages the Indiana VJF including the [Indiana VJF webpage](#) for information sharing, a calendar of upcoming job fairs, and a toolkit for employers to assist with preparation. All registrants are connected with employers and receive a link to the recording, such as this [VJF with the US Census Bureau](#). This webinar-based solution is a much simpler and effective way to virtually connect employers and jobseekers.