

A **Workplace Challenge** is a Career Preparation activity where small groups of students (four to six per team) are engaged in solving a problem or a challenge issued by an NYS P-TECH employer in consultation with a P-TECH classroom teacher.

The structure of the challenge is based upon effective project-based learning approaches, enhanced by a focus on the targeted Career Pathway and an authentic problem or issue faced by an employer partner. The students are engaged in career-focused, project-based learning and work as a team over time to identify possible solutions. They then create and deliver a presentation on their solution to the employer.

Why are Workplace Challenges important for students?

- Research shows effective project-based learning activities like those conducted in a Workplace Challenge help students learn new concepts more easily and engage more deeply.
- Offers the opportunity to develop, practice and demonstrate many of the academic, technical and professional skills needed for success in the workplace.
- Allows students to experience what it might be like to work and practice in a field of interest.
- Enhances the relevance of academic instruction through the application of applied knowledge to a real-world problem or issue.

What are the benefits to my company?

- Exposes potential future workers to what it might feel like to work in your industry.
- Promotes an understanding of the role and contributions of your business in the local economy, and some of the issues or problems you are facing.
- Introduces P-TECH and its students to your employees and co-workers.
- Helps your employees understand how to communicate with the next generation of workers.
- Provides a fresh perspective (and perhaps viable solution) to a problem or issue your company is facing.
- Provides the opportunity for good public relations and boosts the morale of your existing workforce.

What do I need to do next?

- Contact your P-TECH coordinator.
- Arrange for a presentation to those of your employees who might be interested in being a challenge host.
- Consider any impacts on company policy.

Resources

- Visit www.ptech.org for materials that support successful Workplace Challenges.
- Distribute the *Employer Tip Sheet: Workplace Challenge* to employees who might be interested in representing your company as a challenge host.
- Review *Employer Options: P-TECH and Your Company* to learn more about how to get the most community involvement out of your partnership with P-TECH.

Grade Levels: All

Employer/Student Ratio: 1-2 employer partners to 4-6 students

Duration: 6-8 weeks

Frequency: Face-to-face sessions at the beginning and end of the challenge, with periodic check-ins.

Location: Ideally in the workplace at both the beginning and end of the activity, with student teams working on the challenge conducted at the school.

Costs: Staff time

Special Considerations: Comply with school policies. Address any safety issues at the workplace.