

The H.I.R.E.D! Program

H.I.R.E.D! stands for Helping Individuals Reach Employment Dreams. It is a partnership between The Walton Family Foundation, Arkansas Public Resource Center, several small NWA school districts*, business and industry leaders, and post secondary educators to provide opportunities for both high school students and employers. The goal of the program is to impact the lives of students by giving them access to high quality career guidance and the education or skill development necessary to obtain the career of their dreams. The goal of the program for employers is to have the opportunity to develop and recruit a highly skilled workforce in Northwest Arkansas. At H.I.R.E.D! we believe that when accurate information about careers that are available in NWA is combined with realistic pathways for students to acquire the skills necessary to obtain those careers that both students and employers will benefit.

*School Districts: Decatur, Gentry, Gravette, Greenland, Lincoln
https://sites.google.com/apsrc.net/h-i-r-e-d/home

HIRED Components

Education, Skill Development and Career Guidance

- H.I.R.E.D! supports students through:
    - High quality career coaching. Coaches will offer a systematic approach to helping students determine if they should pursue college or technical school and offer guidance for determining the best route forward.
    - Experiential learning: H.I.R.E.D! will help schools develop experiential learning timelines and opportunities like job shadowing, field trips to local businesses and industries or post-secondary schools, technical schools, virtual field trips, and career seminars.

    - Internships: H.I.R.E.D! will help students find internship placements in business and industry. Once a student is 18, this can open up many opportunities for paid internships.
    - Youth-Apprenticeships: H.I.R.E.D! has worked to develop and offer youth-apprenticeship opportunities in a wide variety of career and technical fields and make the necessary connections between industry leaders, existing apprenticeship programs and the Office of Skills Development to do so.
    - Career planning through technical school: Career coaches will help students by guiding those who need technical school for their chosen career field regarding entrance requirements, application process and financial aid resources available.
    - For those students already working through a technical school program, youth-apprenticeship program or who have obtained business/industry certifications or specific skill sets through their CTE coursework, H.I.R.E.D! will help with job placement.
    - College planning: H.I.R.E.D! will help individual students plan for college through guidance regarding entrance exams, application process, scholarship applications and financial aid resources available.
- H.I.R.E.D! supports CTE teachers through:
    - Professional development - Externships for CTE teachers
    - Helping schedule high quality guest speakers
    - Organization of career seminars
    - Strengthening the alignment of educational programs to industry workforce needs and building stronger partnerships between employers and educators.
    - Teaching whole group lessons on employability skills like resume writing, interviewing, workplace behavior, etc.

Business and Industry Partnerships

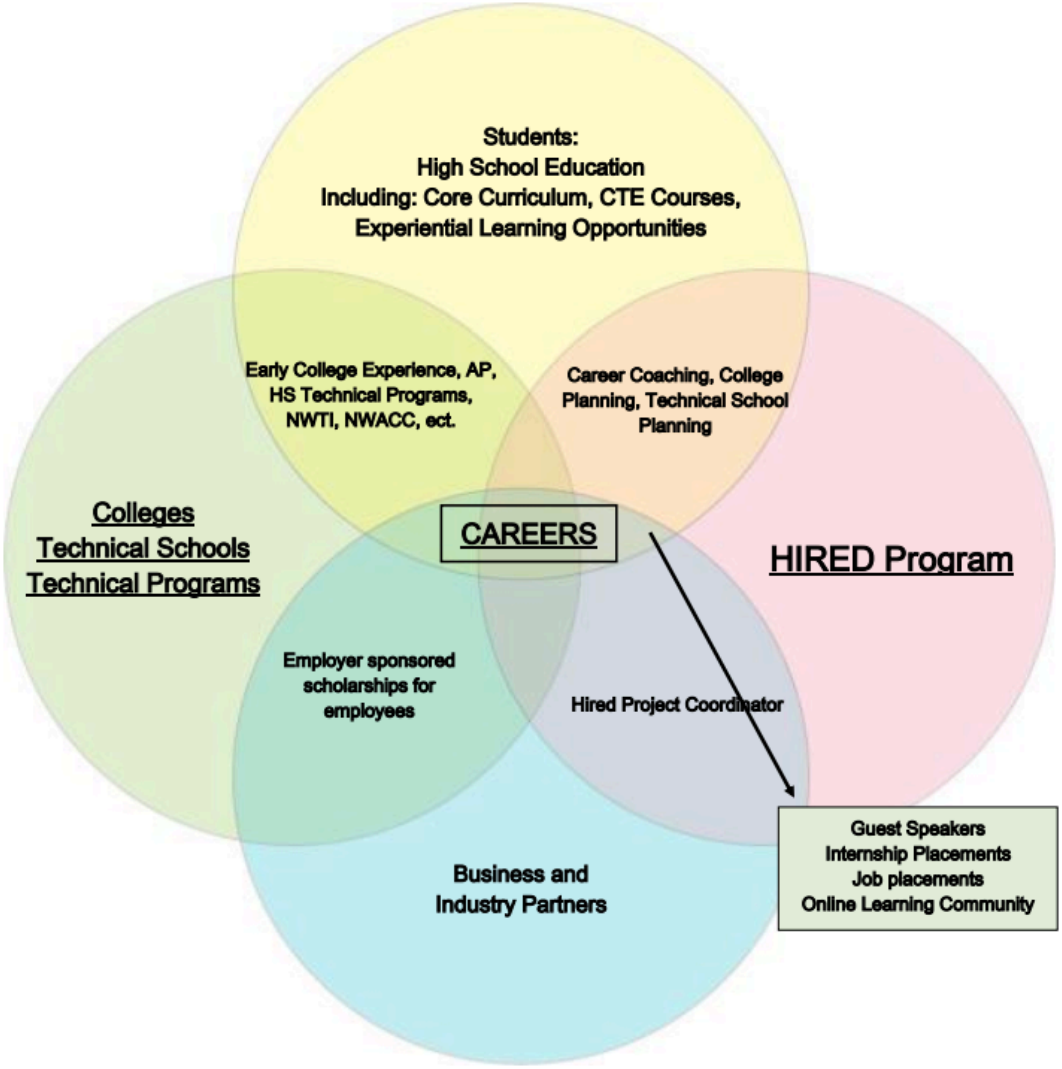
- H.I.R.E.D! Project Coordinator, Stetson Ledbetter, acts as a liaison between businesses and career coaches, CTE teachers and school leaders to strengthen connections between schools and businesses.
- H.I.R.E.D! will foster partnerships with business and industry leaders specifically in the area of talent development and acquisition to help place students who have attended technical school programs and received CTE certifications into open positions in the workplace.
- Where needed, H.I.R.E.D! will connect business and industry leaders with school district leaders to develop programs that are beneficial to both the

businesses and students of the school districts, and to help with alignment of educational programs to industry workforce needs.

Online Learning Community

- Our online community will be designed to encourage networking and collaboration among students, educators and business leaders.
- Our online community will help teachers connect real business leaders and industry professionals to their students via virtual learning opportunities like guest speakers, virtual tours and Q and A sessions.
- Online "Career Seminars" via Zoom will be. These events are designed to be events where speakers who are business and industry professionals speak to students via Zoom about their chosen profession. Topics include the professional's personal career pathway, types of careers available at the business, skills and education needed, pay scales, etc. Students will then have opportunities to ask questions about the spotlighted careers.
- By eliminating travel time, we can break down geographic barriers between students and leaders that made routine collaboration impossible in the past.

How H.I.R.E.D! Connects the Communities within Northwest Arkansas



Stetson Ledbetter
H.I.R.E.D Project Director
sledbetter@apsrc.net
Arkansas Public School Resource Center
4100 Corporate Center Drive, Suite 203
Springdale, AR 72762