

# Building a Bridge to Future Members

## A Step-by-Step Guide to Career Fairs

### Table of Contents

#### Before the Career Fair

2

Using Career Fairs to Connect with Future Members

2

Strategically Choosing a Career Fair

3

Coordinating with Career Services Offices

4

Building a Better Career Fair, Step-by-Step

5

1. Identify your team
2. Publicize your participation
3. Gather your materials
4. Practice your rap
5. Plan more ways to engage

#### During the Career Fair

6

Building a Better Career Fair, Step-by-Step (*continued*)

6

6. Reach out to everyone on Career Fair Day
7. Enter the data right away

7

#### Career Fair Resources

8

Sample Script for Table Conversations

8

Data Collection: Aspiring Educators Data Card

9

Interview Tips for Prospective Teachers

10

Follow Up Engagement Activity: Hosting an Early Educator Panel

11

Sample Event Description:

Surviving and Thriving Your First Year in the Classroom

12

Sample Email Invite for Engagement Activity

13

More Ways to Engage with Future Members

14

# Using Career Fairs to Connect with Future Members

## WHY DO A CAREER FAIR?

College graduation is an exciting time in a person's life. It is a rite of passage and denotes a transition that is both scary and exhilarating. Finding your first job, especially one in education, is no small task and should not be taken lightly. NEA and its affiliates can be a partner and resource in making that transition. For those graduating that are members of an Aspiring Educator chapter, they are already aware of opportunities offered through the Association to become better professional practice leaders and to build relationships. But for those looking to enter the field of education that are not Aspiring Educator members, how do we reach them before they get hired?

## CAREER FAIRS.

Career fairs are an important part of the recruitment process. In many instances, this may be a local or state affiliate's first opportunity to interface with potential members. With that in mind, we want to ensure potential members are exposed to and see the value in the Association while they are looking for a district to call home.



### **Results Snapshot:** Linking Career Fair and New Ed Campaigns Doubles Likelihood to Join

Research shows that first-year educators who engage in conversations during a Career Fair Organizing Program are more than twice as likely to join their Local Association when also engaged through the New Ed Campaign.

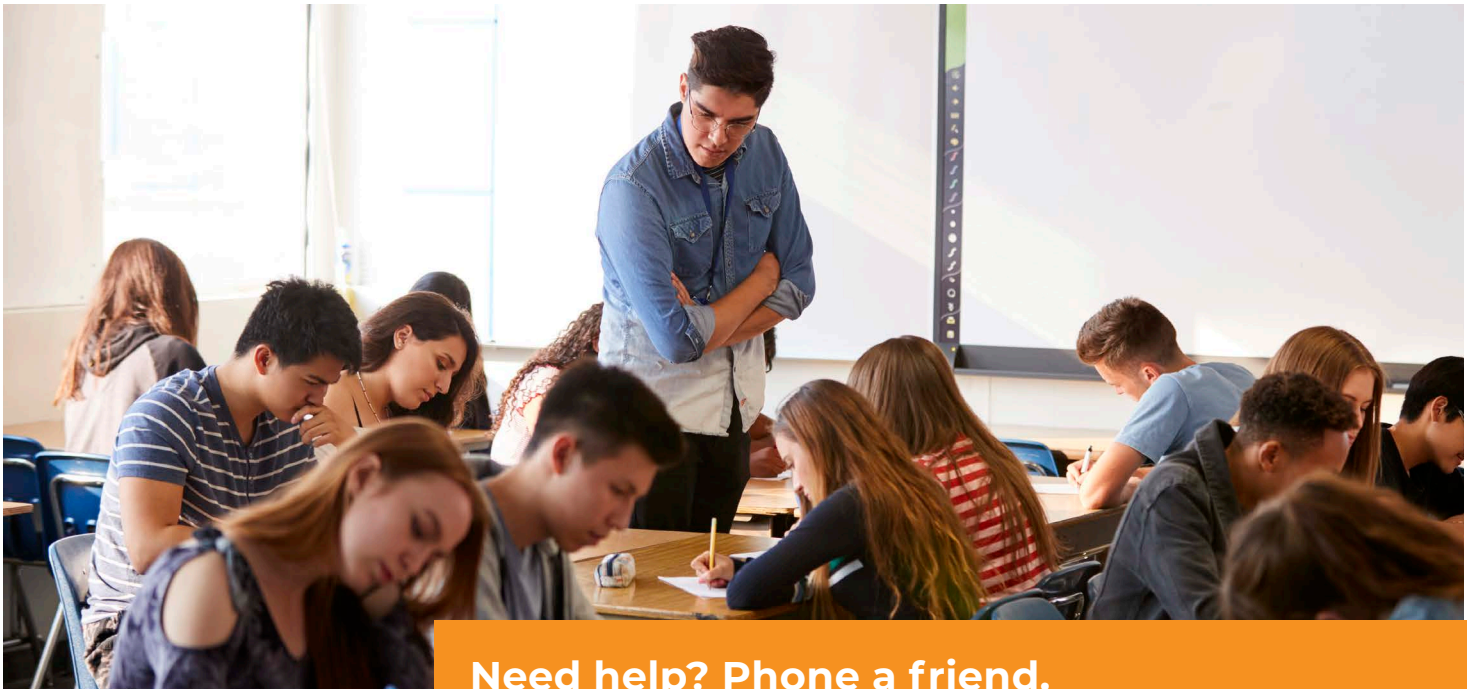
# Strategically Choosing a Career Fair

We've eliminated the guesswork for you. Go to our SharePoint site to access our [List of Identified Career Fairs](#) and [Career Fair Sign-Up Form](#).

- Review the NEA's List of Identified Career Fairs, which includes the top, credential-producing universities in every state, plus additional fairs we have identified. It's a good idea to choose schools with strong student chapter leadership, where student chapter leaders can help navigate the school bureaucracy and also participate in the career fair at the table.

**Note:** If a school has inactive chapters or no NEA student chapter, our experience is that career fairs can both identify graduating seniors and also provide access to underclassmen. These connections may help to develop a chapter and identify potential faculty advisors.

- Complete the Career Fair Organizing Sign-Up to receive tools, resources, and supports to make your participation and engagement a success.



## Need help? Phone a friend.

If you would like assistance with targeting criteria for your state, including supplemental enrollment and membership density data, please contact [NewEducator@nea.org](mailto:NewEducator@nea.org)

# Coordinating with Career Services Offices

## How to Register for a Career Fair

Find the university's Career Office online to get a schedule, contact person, and registration link.

Explain who you are—these offices mainly interact with employers like school districts and charter school operators—so tell them about our values and our mission.

## Describe the Association to Career Offices like this:

1. We are invested in attracting the best and brightest students at the university to become teachers.
2. We provide informal mentoring to aspiring educators to help them find jobs.
3. We provide professional learning supports to build educators' knowledge and skills.
4. As an Association, we support and represent teachers during their entire career, from their first step into the classroom to retirement.



## Career Fair Registration Checklist

### Information you need to register:

1. A description of your Association from your website, a mission statement, or a value statement.
2. Credit card to pay the registration fee.
3. Information on who will participate, i.e., staff the booth.

### Registration tips:

- If you are asked for a type of organization and union is not an option, choose trade association, non-profit, or other.
- If you are asked if you are a third-party recruiter, the answer is yes according to industry definitions.

# Building a Better Career Fair, Step-by-Step

## 1. Identify your team.

The best organizers of future first-year educators are new educators. If your state has a formal early career educator group, caucus, task force etc., reach out to their leadership and ask for volunteers. Build a team that will reflect the diverse community of aspiring educators you will be speaking with at the events. If possible, also recruit alumni from the college or university hosting the career fair you are attending. Don't forget to connect with the NEA Aspiring Educator Program Chapter on the campus to inform them of your participation and ask for volunteers.

## 2. Publicize your participation.

- Let your members and the community know you'll be there and offer opportunities to volunteer.
- If there is an Aspiring Educator Program, ask them to promote the event on social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat.

## 3. Gather your materials.

- Request Aspiring Ed cards and materials from [NewEducator@nea.org](mailto:NewEducator@nea.org)
- Flyers, materials, or resources for professional learning opportunities (see chapter on professional resources offered by NEA or the Local Affiliate)
- Other membership benefits materials
- Use colorful affiliate banner(s) and swag to highlight your table and increase interest

## 4. Practice your rap.

See [page 8](#) for a sample script.

## 5. Plan more ways to engage.

- Host an Early Career Educator Panel (See [page 12](#) for a sample event description, and [page 13](#) for a sample turnout email).
- For other ideas to engage beyond the career fair, see [page 14](#).

# Building a Better Career Fair, Step-by-Step *(continued)*

## 6. Reach out to everyone on Career Fair Day.

### Top 10 Tips for Tabling at a Career Fair

1. **Ask everyone.** Assume every conversation could be helpful.
2. **Sweep not deep.** Focus on having as many short conversations as possible to gather as many contacts as possible on the Aspiring Ed card.
3. **Use the Aspiring Ed card.** Gathering contact information on this card allows you to follow up later.
4. **Stand in front of the table.** Do not wait for students to approach you.
5. **Go to where the people are.** Look for where students gather and approach them there.
6. **Make eye contact and wave.** Make eye contact before they're within 10 feet of you, focus on one person, not a group, and smile and wave at them before you make the ask.
7. **Use a catch phrase to stop people.** "Would you like to connect with local teachers?"
8. **Keep it positive.** Setting up a good rapport will make everything more enjoyable.
9. **Move on easily and quickly.** Don't waste time trying to convince people who aren't interested.
10. **Never table alone.** Always table in groups of two or more.

# Building a Better Career Fair, Step-by-Step *(continued)*

## 7. Enter the data right away.

We need data in order to connect students identified during the career fair with additional digital engagement pieces. You can share the data in the following ways:

1. Scan and email data entry cards to [NewEducator@nea.org](mailto:NewEducator@nea.org)
2. Enter data in Excel spreadsheet provided by [NewEducator@nea.org](mailto:NewEducator@nea.org)
3. Enter data using MyWorkers VAN Data Entry Form

# Sample Script for Table Conversations



## Ask a compelling question:

- Hey, do you want to attend professional learning opportunities for new teachers?
- Hey, where are you planning on teaching next year?
- Are you familiar with [state/local] Association and our supports for new educators?
- Do you want to advocate for racial and social justice on behalf of students?

**Student:** Yeah, actually.

**Organizer:** Cool. I teach at [school]. I'm a member of [state/local] Association and we support people like you who are entering the profession for the first time.

## Get to know them as a future educator:

- What grade or subject are you planning to teach?
- Where are you planning to teach?

## Describe how the Association supports new educators:

Examples include:

- Early Career Educator groups
- Professional development opportunities
- Mentoring
- Student loan forgiveness trainings
- Racial and social justice advocacy

## Ask the student to complete the Aspiring Ed card:

**Organizer:** Please take a minute to fill out this card – here's a pen. We'll be in touch with resources like I mentioned. Be sure to give us your permanent email address where we can reach you after graduation.

**Student:** Thanks so much for this information!

**Organizer:** You are welcome! We'll be in touch soon.





# Your Partner. Your Advocate. Your Association.

*How can we best support you?*

Please print using one box per letter.

FIRST NAME

MIDDLE NAME

LAST NAME

PERSONAL EMAIL

HOME ADDRESS

CELL PHONE #

CITY

STATE

ZIP

Get NEA Mobile Alerts

Message and data rates may apply.  
Four msgs/month.  
SMS terms at [nea.org/terms](http://nea.org/terms).

UNIVERSITY ATTENDING (Please use full name and do not abbreviate with initials)

SUBJECT AREA

1) Year of expected graduation?

 (YYYY)

2) Your association provides supports and tools to ensure your success with students. What tools/trainings would you like to hear more about?

- Classroom management (e.g. student behavior, relationships with students)
- Lesson planning
- Working with mentors/coaches
- Working with families
- Collaborating with administrators and colleagues
- Unpacking professional expectations (e.g. Evaluations, observations)

3) Your association works to ensure that schools provide students with opportunities to be successful. Which issues are most important to you?

- Social and racial justice
- Meeting the needs of students in poverty
- Family and community engagement
- Fully funded schools
- Education policy—*Contributing to critical decisions affecting my students, school, and district*
- Political advocacy—*Supporting education policies to ensure all students have opportunities to succeed*

4) Your association advocates for conditions that retain high-quality educators for every student. Which of these are you interested in learning about?

- Salary
- Educator Rights & Responsibilities
- Health Care Benefits
- Pensions and Retirement Security
- Student Debt and/or Finances
- Stretching Your Paycheck
- Working Conditions



ASPIRING  
EDUCATORS  
[www.nea.org/student](http://www.nea.org/student)

Office Use: University ID

# Interview Tips for Prospective Teachers



## *Sell your successes.*

- Identify concrete examples of impacting student learning.
- Prepare yourself to share your experience in planning for instruction, student assessment, and working with parents and the community.
- Create a portfolio, but don't count on having time to walk through it during the interview. Consider leaving a copy behind.

## *Do your research.*

- Learn about the number of schools in the district and demographics of the student populations.
- Identify major instructional initiatives, special projects and programs, and community partners.
- Think about connections to your teaching experiences so you can mention them in the interview.
- Identify partners from communities of color or LGBTQ organizations and issues around racial or social justice in the district that these organizations have addressed.

## *Ask smart questions.*

Remember that the interview process is a two-way experience. You are looking for quality support as much as they are looking for a quality educator. Some questions to consider:

1. Is there an induction or mentorship program for beginning teachers?
2. What is the professional development focus of the school/district?
3. What is the process for formal teaching observations?
4. Are there opportunities for collaborative team planning?
5. What is retention like for beginning teachers in your school district/building?

## *Dress professionally.*

## *Bring multiple copies of your resume.*

Receive free resources and hear from our experts by visiting

[www.nea.org/newed](http://www.nea.org/newed)

# Hosting an Early Career Educator Panel

Graduating seniors are naturally curious about the experiences of Early Career Educators. Panel discussions that bring these groups together provide a space for professional connections and demonstrate the value of your Association. Creating a panel is simple:

- Schedule it on the same day as the career fair (if possible).
- Identify 2-3 Early Career Educators that are Association members who can talk about how to survive and thrive in the first year.
- Open with brief remarks, then handle like a Q&A. Take questions live from the audience or use prompts to get the conversation started.

**Sample Panelist Questions:** Prepare your panelists to answer in ways that highlight the challenges of being a first-year teacher and the ways the Association supports them.

## Questions about being a new educator:

- What surprised you most about your first year of teaching?
- How do you collaborate with colleagues that have differing teaching styles?
- How do you keep in touch with parents?

## Questions about the Association:

- In what ways do Association members support you at your school?
- What professional supports does the Association provide to support you as an educator?
- How are you involved in your Association?
- How has the Association's work improved the lives of educators and students?
- What racial and social justice issues are important to you and how has the Association worked to address them?

## Questions about further education and jobs:

- Are you already working on a master's degree? Why or why not?
- What advice do you have for preparing for an interview?
- Are there any job openings in your district? If so, how can I apply?

## Turnout Tips

- Ask the Career Services Office to help with recruitment and publicity.
- If you feed them, they will come.
- Identify list of graduating seniors at the school of education.
- Identify faculty allies that will share the event information with students.



## Surviving and Thriving Your First Year in the Classroom

Have you ever wanted to ask a new educator what it is like to lead your own classroom on the first day? Curious to know what teaching strategies, tools, and resources are the most useful for a new educator? Do you want to know the things they don't teach you about teaching?

Join us for an unfiltered panel discussion with first-time teachers in the area.

**WHO:** Future educators

**WHAT:** Q&A Panel discussion of new teachers sharing their stories

**WHEN:** TBD

**WHERE:** TBD

**RSVP INFO:** TBD

We'll bring the pizza. You bring your curiosity and passion for the profession.

The *[State Association Name]* is committed to supporting aspiring educators at *[College or University Name]* on their path to the classroom.

**RSVP now so we know how much pizza to order!**

Hi *[First Name]*,

Have you ever wanted to ask an educator what it really takes to get ready for the first day in the classroom? Curious to know what teaching strategies, tools and resources are the most useful for a new educator?

*[DATE]* at *[TIME]* is your chance to find out.

Please join the *[State Association Name]* for a discussion with early career educators. Hear about their experiences as new educators and ask any questions you have about how to prepare, what to expect, and anything else you want to know.

Everything you wanted to know—but were afraid to ask—about being a new teacher.

*[Include info about your event]*

RSVP here and we'll send you all the information you need to join the call. *[Link to Action Network Event Page]*

The *[State Association Name]* is committed to supporting aspiring educators on their path to the classroom. Join us to hear from great speakers about how to lead our profession in your classroom.

## More Ways to Engage

**Find ways to connect aspiring educators and Early Career Educators.** Work with your State Association's Early Career Educator Group to recruit and engage potential new members. Early Career Educator members are ideal messengers and recruiters since they recently attended school and can best relate to current students. It's helpful to maintain connections via social media and texting.

**Open the line of communication to graduating seniors.** Identify other opportunities—such as student teacher orientations, required classes, or seminars—for graduating seniors, then reach out to the professor or administrator and ask to participate. While there, use the same organizing strategies to connect to more graduating seniors. Ask for 5 minutes before or after class to give a brief presentation about your Association and ask everyone to complete the Aspiring Ed card.



**NEW EDUCATOR**  
CAMPAIGN

Additional Resources Available (previews are below,  
or email [NewEducator@nea.org](mailto:NewEducator@nea.org) for design files to print)