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[Home](#) > [Ask The Expert](#)

ASK THE EXPERT

By Kimberly L. Williams, Consultant,
McCallum Sweeney Consulting

Spotting the Best Worker Training

When it comes to state and local workforce training programs, three criteria separate the run-of-the-mill from the truly outstanding.



We're going to need to do a considerable amount of worker training at our new facility, so that's a major factor in where we finally land. What's the best way to find out which locations offer the best workforce training assistance?
—Anonymous reader

The Expert Says: If you are performing a site search, then you are most likely working with state and/or local economic development professionals. They should be able to provide an overview of the training resources available at the state and local level, as well as provide introductions to and/or contact information for individuals who specialize in the type of training you seek.

Once you have gathered data about the training programs in each prospective location, you should begin comparing the programs and assessing which best suits your needs. Regardless of where you are looking or what industry you are in, the best workforce training assistance is a program that is coordinated, comprehensive, and flexible.

In order to make this evaluation, it is important to understand what each of these criteria means in the context of training programs. An understanding of the best practices among the nation's top training programs is also valuable—this understanding can shape the questions that you put to training providers.

A coordinated training program is one that effectively brings together the elements and resources of multiple agencies and institutions. Well-coordinated training programs ease the administrative burden for companies by designating a single point of contact as the facilitator of the training services. Some of the nation's best programs offer an even higher level of coordination by incorporating recruitment, screening, and training in a seamless process that is easy for companies to utilize.

A comprehensive training program offers training in each of the skills for which your employees will need to be proficient. If the curriculum for one or more of your training requirements is not already in place, then an organization that strives to provide comprehensive training will offer to develop a program for teaching the necessary skills. The most comprehensive training programs do not simply rely on offering "off the shelf" classes, but are accustomed to developing a customized training program to meet the specific needs of each company.

Flexibility is important in regards to several aspects of training programs. The locations at which the training will be offered is something differ between programs. The top training programs in the nation will bring the training to you, through either a temporary or permanent on-site training facility. The types of activities that are eligible for funding also differs between programs, so it is important to assess how your planned training expenditures compare to the qualified activities guidelines. If your company prefers to conduct some or all of the training internally, then look for a program that offers reimbursement for those activities.



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Although start-up training is of immediate concern, it is also important to investigate what training programs are offered to assist with future training needs. Look for a training program that will be a good fit for your company and will lead to a successful long-term partnership.

See previous questions answered by Ask The Expert:

- 2006/11 » [We are a smaller manufacturing company \(150 employees\) and we're looking at spots to open a second plant. Which managers/executives should we put on the team looking for sites, and how big should the team be?](#)
- 2006/10 » [If you were going to build an aircraft MRO \(Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul\) operation, what location assets would you look for?](#)
- 2006/09 » [What are the risks and advantages of locating a company overseas? Where can I find this information?](#)
- 2006/09 » [My company has various warehouse facilities around the country. Is there a national database where I can find information on light industrial warehouse space?](#)
- 2006/08 » [All the locations I'm considering for my expansion claim to offer the same advantages—central location, skilled and abundant labor, etc. What tests can I apply to narrow down my options?](#)

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