

Your Data Story Starter Kit

From Invisible to Indispensable

Three tools to help you track it, tell it, and target it.

- 1. Five Metrics Worth Fighting to Track**
- 2. The Data + Story + So What Framework**
- 3. Stakeholder Mapping Grid**

1. Five Metrics Worth Fighting to Track

You don't need every number in this list — you need the two or three that make your strongest case, told cleanly. Use this as a menu, not a checklist.

Revenue & Cost Recovery

Your strongest data point in most rooms — lead with it. Track program revenue against direct cost to run it.

Fill in the blank: "This program recovered ____ % of its cost, generating \$____ in revenue."

Employer / Community Partnerships

Active relationships, signed contracts, and in-kind value (donated time, equipment, space).

Fill in the blank: "We currently partner with ____ organizations, representing \$____ in combined contract and in-kind value."

Community Reach

Who you're serving and where — populations served, geographic reach, equity impact.

Fill in the blank: "This program reached ____ participants across ____ (counties/zip codes/populations)."

Participation Trends

Registered apprentices, completions, and — importantly — returning employer sponsors (a signal of trust and value).

Fill in the blank: "Registered apprentices grew from ____ to ____ over ____ (time period), with ____ % returning employer sponsors."

Outcomes & Completion

This one is genuinely harder to track cleanly — that's normal. Report what you can measure well, and be transparent about what you can't yet.

Fill in the blank: "____ % of apprentices completed the program; of those, ____ reported a direct outcome (new job, promotion, credential/journeyworker status, etc.)."

2. The Data + Story + So What Framework

Data alone doesn't move people — stories do. This framework pairs a number with the human behind it and the impact that follows. Use it any time you need to make your work land in under 60 seconds.

Data. The Number

One concrete, credible figure.

Example: 100% cost recovery on a community program

Your turn: _____

Story. The Human Behind It

Who was this for? What did it look like on the ground?

Example: An employer who couldn't find trained workers

Your turn: _____

So What. The Impact

Why should the listener care? What changed as a result?

Example: Jobs retained, revenue generated, community trust built

Your turn: _____

Pro tip: practice saying your Data + Story + So What out loud in under 60 seconds. If it takes longer, you're probably including a second story — save it for the follow-up question.

3. Stakeholder Mapping Grid

Different audiences need different messages. Use this grid to plan what you lead with for each stakeholder — then reuse it every time you're preparing a pitch, report, or ask.

Stakeholder	What They Care About	The Message That Lands	How / When to Reach Them
Leadership / Administration	Strategic alignment, risk, ROI		
Board	Accountability, big-picture ROI		
Funders	Equity, measurable outcomes		
Employer / Community Partners	Relevance, direct value		
Faculty / Staff / Team	Workload, relevance to their work		
ICCB	Scale, compliance, statewide priorities		

The first six rows are common starting points — edit freely. The blank row is for a stakeholder specific to your own organization.