



## Leverage Corporate Partnerships

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### INTRODUCTION

In August 2022, PIMA Medical Institute accepted its first respiratory therapy (RT) student who qualified for tuition-free education benefits from Guild. Fifty percent of PIMA's 32 associate degree slots are now Guild-funded, and PIMA has a waiting list of candidates wanting to be in its respiratory therapy education program.

### HOW IT WORKS

[Guild](#) is a social-impact company offering tuition-free education benefits to employers of all sizes, including Fortune 1000 employers such as The Walt Disney Company, Walmart, and healthcare organizations that include Children's Hospital of Colorado and the University of Colorado. Guild selected PIMA as one of 25 education providers in the Denver market to participate in the tuition program for RT students. Guild pays the tuition and book costs for each student employed by Children's Hospital or the University of Colorado; in return, PIMA is paid the tuition fee, minus a slight discount. Each student is required to continue in employment (part-time, maintain passing grades at PIMA, and work post-graduation at either University or Children's for a specified period – typically two years).

The University of Colorado and Guild also offer tuition reimbursement benefits for students who wish to return after their first year of full employment as a RT to get their bachelor's degree. RTs must fulfill similar requirements (continued part-time employment as a RT, passing grades, and continued employment post-graduation for a period of time).

Employers (e.g., Starbucks, Uber, Amazon, Adidas, and Walmart) are expanding the design of their tuition-reimbursement programs to incentivize their employees to pursue educational pathways, often called upskilling. The programs collaborate with colleges and universities offering healthcare-related degrees to extend tuition reimbursement to interested candidates. For example, Walmart employees can apply for one of seven bachelor's degrees and two career diplomas in health-related fields (Medical Assistants and Certified Nurse Assistants). The program is designed to recruit and retain qualified health employees for its Walmart Health clinics.

Like Guild, InStride is a social-purpose, public-benefit company founded in collaboration with Arizona State University and funded by The Rise Fund in 2019. Today, the InStride academic network includes seven institutions of higher learning with various health profession tuition reimbursement assistant programs. Most recently, [Rochester Regional Health](#) announced Advance U, which will include employees across hundreds of New York locations for an RN-BSN pathway and entry-level programs for Medical Assistants and Medical Coders. Currently, none of the InStride workforce education programs include career mobility options for respiratory therapy; however, two-year, and four-year respiratory therapy education programs have the opportunity to design career advancement programs with local health systems.



### OPPORTUNITY

Collaborate with local health systems to design a career advancement program; assess the potential to partner with social-impact companies like Guild and InStride.