

Identifying clear steps for establishing a sector partnership can be challenging. Even those who are doing “sectors-based work” may find it difficult to make the leap to a functional sector partnership. While the challenge is real it does not mean that progress cannot be made! True collaboration typically takes time, perseverance and a willingness to approach the effort from various angles depending on the partner and industry.

The tool below is meant to be used in conjunction with the Sector Strategies Self-Assessment to help you identify some clear next steps for moving your region forward in its effort to establish a functional sector partnership. Like the Self-Assessment, it is designed around the six key elements of sector strategies to help the user break down the overall process into key areas of action steps. It can be completed by one key partner who has the will to move forward (if that is the region’s starting point) or a team of partners (may only be two) who have embraced sector strategies as the best path forward for their region.

Six Key Elements of Sector Strategies:

- ✓ Built around great data
- ✓ Founded on a shared regional vision
- ✓ Are guided by industry
- ✓ Lead to strategic alignment
- ✓ Transform how services are delivered
- ✓ Are measured, improved and sustained



Action Planning:

Element #1: Built around great data (i.e. rigorous data is used to make decisions about target industries, education, and training investments)

Below are the components to have in place to ensure your sector partnership is built around great data.

- Up-to-date labor market, economic, education, and industry data to determine key growth sectors, identify specific skills needs, level of demand, and education and training gaps.
- Ability to systematically validate this data through employer and public partner conversations.
- Workforce, education and economic development partners use the same data and have consensus around what it means.
- Workforce, education and economic development partners collaboratively identified and target the same sectors/industries.
- Workforce, education and economic development partners agree on the major high-growth occupations in those industries that offer in-demand occupations with family sustaining wages, and that should, therefore, be concentrated on in your local area in terms of developing career pathways.

Which components are not yet in place for your region? What are the obstacles to moving forward? In the table below, identify the strategic objectives, key actions, timing, lead person/organization, resources/technical assistance needed and desired outcomes for your Region to achieve Element #1.

| Strategic Objective | Key Actions | Timeline | Lead Person/ Organization | Resources/ TA Needed | Desired Outcomes |
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Element #2: Founded in a shared vision (i.e. the Local Workforce Development Board has documented and communicated a broad vision that includes sector-driven workforce development and service delivery)

Below are the components to have in place to ensure your sector partnership is founded on a shared vision.

- Key partners (other workforce agencies, education entities and economic development organizations) have consensus on the makeup of your economic region, based on commuting patterns, labor market data and economic dynamics (vs. county or other municipal borders).
- Leadership from key partners are collaborative and work as a regional partnership to plan workforce and economic development activities.
- Key partners (outlined above) have developed (and documented) a unified vision for establishing and implementing a sector strategy framework in the region.

Have you successfully established a full, engaged and active workforce collaborative where the key organizations regularly come together to align and leverage their work? Which partners are missing or not as engaged as they need to be? Why aren't they coming to the table? What can be done to get them there or to move forward without them? In the table below, identify the strategic objectives, key actions, timing, lead person/organization, resources/technical assistance needed and desired outcomes for your Region to achieve Element #2.

| Strategic Objective | Key Actions | Timeline | Lead Person/ Organization | Resources/ TA Needed | Desired Outcomes |
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Element #3: Guided by industry (i.e. targeted industry sector(s) employers are engaged in designing and delivering programs and services)

Below are the components to have in place to ensure your sector partnership is guided (ideally, led) by industry.

- Decision-makers from targeted sector employers are active members of the Local Workforce Development Board.
- Decision-makers from targeted sector employers and leadership from key partners are actively engaged in a developing or established sector partnership (meaning they attend regular meetings, provide input into their workforce needs and work with partners to produce solutions to meet those needs).

Do you have the right employers and the right representatives from those employers regularly at the table? Are they engaged in an ongoing partnership where they share needs, hear and respond to proposed solutions and provide feedback/input to ensure those solutions meet their needs (rather than attending an annual or semi-annual “event” where they talk at a high-level about what they need)? If no, why not? What can be done to engage them – not just as customers – but partners? Is there a partner who has a strong relationship with a key employer who could take the lead on bringing them to the table?

In the table below, identify the strategic objectives, key actions, timing, lead person/organization, resources/technical assistance needed and desired outcomes for your Region to achieve Element #3.

| Strategic Objective | Key Actions | Timeline | Lead Person/ Organization | Resources/ TA Needed | Desired Outcomes |
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Element #4: Lead to strategic alignment (i.e. lead institutions, especially economic development, workforce development, and education, are aligning strategies and programs toward target sectors and the needs of students and workers seeking opportunities in these sectors)

Below are the components to have in place to ensure that your partnership is leading to strategic alignment of lead agency policies, resources/investments, activities, etc. to design and delivery solutions to meet employer and worker needs:

- Local Workforce Development Board or another lead agency is operating as a catalyst to bring together the partners to discuss and deliver on alignment.
- The sector partnership is designing and delivering education and training programs and/or services to meet employer needs.
- The sector partnership is designing and delivering career pathways for workers that help them advance into jobs that pay family sustaining wages and opportunities for advancement.

Does your partnership have the “glue” of a convener which regular brings all of the partners together (both with industry and independently) to develop solutions? Do you have a charter or MOU that details the roles, responsibilities and commitments of all the partners? Are you moving beyond development of “one-off” training programs to work with employers to “map” out the skills and competencies needed to advance in the industry? If no, what do you need to do to move the partners’ thinking in that direction?

In the table below, identify the strategic objectives, key actions, timing, lead person/organization, resources/technical assistance needed and desired outcomes for your region to achieve Element #4.

| Strategic Objective | Key Actions | Timeline | Lead Person/ Organization | Resources/ TA Needed | Desired Outcomes |
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Element #5: Transformative or changing how employer and job seeker services are delivered (i.e. sector strategies are reflected in how services are delivered)

Below are the components to have in place to ensure that your sector partnership is transforming how all partners are delivering services to meet customer needs:

- Partners (as appropriate) provide job seekers with labor market information customized to their abilities and interests relative to target sectors and occupations.
- Partners (as appropriate) provide career coaching aligned to target sectors and occupations by staff with knowledge about skill and competency needs, demands of jobs, working conditions etc.
- Business services across partners are unified meaning that industry is approached by one partner representing a regional collaboration (rather than individual partners) and information is shared across partners to collaboratively devise solutions.

True transformation should impact every person’s job within every organization of the partnership. All partners should be orienting their day to day operations to achieve the objectives of the sector strategies vision and framework outlined in the elements above. Has your partnership achieved transformation in service delivery? Are there partners who come to the table but then go back and continue business as usual? What can you do to build their buy-in for the transformative potential of the sector partnership?

In the table below, identify the strategic objectives, key actions, timing, lead person/organization, resources/technical assistance needed and desired outcomes for your Region to achieve Element #5.

| Strategic Objective | Key Actions | Timeline | Lead Person/ Organization | Resources/ TA Needed | Desired Outcomes |
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Element #6: Measured, improved and sustained (i.e. sector strategy outcomes are measured and adjusted, as needed, and sector work is sustained overtime)

Below are the components to have in place to measure sector strategy outcomes which helps to improve and sustain the partnerships:

- The partnership has agreed to measures (qualitative and/or quantitative and in addition to existing programmatic measures) to evaluate the outcomes of the partnership.
- Partners, especially workforce, education and economic development, have a clear process for acting on the findings to continuously improve their collaborative work and, therefore, strengthen the partnership.
- All partners contribute resources (financial and otherwise) to support and sustain the work of the sector partnership.

Does your partnership have clear goals and objectives? How will you know when you've met them and when and how will you know if you're not on track? What do you need to put into place to ensure you can benchmark the success of your sector partnership? In the table below, identify the strategic objectives, key actions, timing, lead person/organization, resources/technical assistance needed and desired outcomes for your Region to achieve Element #6.

| Strategic Objective | Key Actions | Timeline | Lead Person/ Organization | Resources/ TA Needed | Desired Outcomes |
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Additional Resources:

- Sector Strategies Overview
- Sector Strategies Self-Assessment
- Sector Strategies Conveners Guide for Partner Outreach
- Sector Strategies 101 PowerPoint Library