



Select a Convener that is trusted by Business

Successful sector partnerships have at their core a trusted third party that has credibility with industry and all partners. The convener must have strong relationships in the community, the drive to keep the partnership moving forward, and the discipline to let industry partners truly develop their own agenda and chart the course for the partnership.

- As the co-convener for the Sustainable Manufacturing Industry Alliance of Colorado (SMIAC) partnership, Upstate Colorado Economic Development brings business relationships to the collaboration between the workforce development system and the economic development community.
- The project manager for the Greater Metro Denver Healthcare Industry Partnership is housed at the Aurora Chamber of Commerce to provide a neutral ground for partners to meet.
- The Pueblo Manufacturing Consortium is convened by the Pueblo Workforce Center, a trusted entity that works closely with Pueblo Community College and area employers.

The convener plays a critical project management role. Responsibilities typically include managing activities, logistics, outreach, coordination and implementation of a strong sector partnership. This often requires dedicating a staff person to the task, or re-purposing staff across organizations. For instance:

Return On Investment (ROI): Data Collection & Communication

Demonstrating the value of a partnership is critical to secure business buy-in. Methods of data collection and desired outcomes should be determined at the start of any sector partnership. Inconsistent data results in the absence of important outcomes, such as change in wages or employee retention. The Sustainable Manufacturing Industry Alliance of Colorado (SMIAC) successfully collected impact data about retention, job creation, cost savings, and increased sales through a survey to

involved businesses. This is an example of how data can be used to communicate the impact of the partnership on businesses' bottom line:

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- Increased acceptable product rate went from 30% to 90% after worker training.
- Improved the quality of product and reduced the number of damaged pieces in the assembly process as a result of assembly changes made after a lean training
- Decreased rework costs as a result of training- which can reach as high as \$8,000 per month/ person reduced to only \$100 for one worker.
- Businesses that benefited from partnerships spoke with new businesses about what they had gained

Create Sustainability and Flexibility through Employer Investment

Diverse public and private investments provide flexibility and sustainability for sector partnerships. Public workforce funds can leverage employer contributions; city and county funds can help cover costs of sector partnership activities; and employers may offer in-kind resources such as training space, equipment and time.

Employers who understand the benefits of a sector partnership for their company begin to take on a larger

share of responsibility as champions for the sector approach. Businesses are more likely to buy in and invest their time and other leveraged resources in the sector partnership when the return-on-investment is clear and quantifiable. For example in the Get into Water! Front Range Sector Partnership, the Rocky Mountain Section of the American Water Works Association stepped in to pay the salary for the project manager.

Make Time for Productive and Short Meetings

Keep a schedule of regular action-oriented meetings with a clear agenda and desired outcomes to help facilitate communication and collaboration, focus partners on a timetable for deliverables, and ensure engagement of members. Be sure to obtain outcomes and keep momentum going between meetings.

Engage Subject Matter Experts from Industry

If you are addressing a specific opportunity identified by employers, engage subject matter experts regularly. For instance, The Greater Metro Denver Healthcare Industry Partnership used industry subject matter experts to identify the critical knowledge, skills and abilities needed within certain occupations to inform curriculum development. The experts meet regularly in small groups to provide first-hand experience and insights about employee skill sets and the qualities needed for success. Input from subject matter experts resulted in the successful development of specialized training that met the needs of healthcare industry employers.

Let Task-focused Subcommittees Do the Work

Divide and conquer via subcommittees. They allow for the division of tasks and the engagement of individuals by interest and/or expertise. They maximize the contribution of busy people by employing their talents in a time-limited specific way, while building towards a larger goal.

Value of Incumbent Worker Training

Sector partnerships are about much more than workforce development, but it is one of the most common priorities of employers across most industries. Incumbent worker training is a common intervention as part of sector partnerships. Incumbent worker training can increase capacity, production, and operational efficiencies. Workers can acquire better communication and problem solving abilities. Training incumbent workers can facilitate internal promotions and new job openings, therefore establishing new pathways for job seekers.

Value of Incumbent Worker Training

Be flexible and go where the need is. Mobile Training Labs (MLL) increased the capacity of training providers to provide hands-on training to more areas and individuals for manufactures in southern Colorado. MLLs were very successfully used by the Pueblo Manufacturing Collaboration to provide incumbent worker training in rural areas, or on employer job sites to improve attendance and completion rates for existing workers.