



# Suggestions for Next Steps: Implementation Grant Awards

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# Do I Understand Where You Are in the Process?

- Maryland put out a solicitation...
  - For groups of local entities including schools, community-based organizations, workforce investment boards, trade groups, unions, and employers
  - To suggest a sector that would be relevant to a local economy that the collaborative would define
  - Where the collaborative would work together to propose a workforce intervention that ultimately would help employers find the skilled workforce that they need.
- 29 Planning Grants were awarded.
- Some subset of the 29 will receive Implementation Grants.



# Some Advice for You to Consider: From the School of Hard Knocks

- When we do sectoral work, we begin to think of ourselves more in terms of economic development rather than workforce development, education, or social services...*that's just Scott talking and many disagree with the thought.*
  - Employers need skilled workers to stay competitive in the global marketplace. Workers need family-sustaining jobs that offer a good quality of life.
  - If the businesses that are a part of our regional economy cannot compete, we might as well go home.
  - This is the big mission/vision thing...sector work is in a context.



# Some Advice for You to Consider: From the School of Hard Knocks

- Keep your focus on the needs of employers.
  - Use demand-driven data.
  - Rally the employer voice to validate the data and the needs that you have identified.
    - If employers will not do that for you, maybe you should reconsider going forward with your project.
  - Find champions within the industry and put them in charge of the organizational structure.
  - Validate your plans at every stage with the employers that you engage...but find a way to do it with as few meetings as possible



# Some Advice for You to Consider: From the School of Hard Knocks

- Consider mapping a Career Pathway using demand-driven data to supplement your sectoral analysis.
  - Educators and workforce people do this differently.
  - Ultimately, you must drill down to occupations and skills...
  - And be willing to go where skill transferability takes you.
  - If you are using Career Pathways to rationalize what you want to do and don't follow the data, you will probably fail.
- After you have a Career Pathway, consider doing a Skill Acquisition Map and a Skills Gap Analysis.
  - This should help identify assets (that don't need to be reinvented) and gaps that need to be filled.



# Some Advice for You to Consider: From the School of Hard Knocks

- Keep in mind that scale is important.
  - Be prepared that the geographical area that you defined is too small or too large.
    - Sometimes, you need more partners to do what you intend to do at a scale that makes sense.
    - Sometimes, you don't need to involve everyone that has some to the table...a particular problem in big cities.
  - Industry has no interest in workforce investment area, counties, or other service area definitions. Companies in sectors go where it makes sense to do business.



# Some Advice for You to Consider: From the School of Hard Knocks

- Hit the questions of ownership of the collaborative head-on at the beginning of your project.
  - Find ways for employers to direct the project, if possible.
  - If you are a school or community-based organization, be careful to avoid being an owner and a vendor for the group...conflicts of interest...bad.
  - Owners typically hire operators or project managers who staff the project, who are often subject matter experts, and who have no conflicts of interest as far as the work of the collaboration are concerned.



# Some Advice for You to Consider: From the School of Hard Knocks

- Be open to expanding your collaboration when appropriate.
  - Sometimes, that means learning from other collaborations that have done it before. Sometimes, it means sharing with other entities that are going through it right now.
  - One of the worst things that you can do is keep your work to yourself. While we may want to be more selective about ownership of the project, we should never be selective about sharing our work with others who can benefit from it.
  - Everything that we do in this initiative is funded with public money which means that it is in the public domain.





# Some Advice for You to Consider: From the School of Hard Knocks

- Finally, do something.
  - I know that this is a planning process in which you are involved but, whether your plan is fully developed or not, you should do something of value for the businesses with which you plan to engage.
  - It doesn't have to be a big deal.
    - A business champion invites other employers to lunch;
    - Bring in a speaker that the employers respect and on a topic that interests them;
    - Personal sales call with some materials to leave behind.
  - The sooner that you stop planning and start doing, the better your project will go.



# Summary

- When we do sectoral work, we begin to think of ourselves more in terms of economic development rather than workforce development, education, or social services.
- Keep your focus on the needs of employers.
- Consider mapping a Career Pathway using demand-driven data to supplement your sectoral analysis.
- After you have a Career Pathway, consider doing a Skill Acquisition Map and a Skills Gap Analysis.
- Keep in mind that scale is important.
- Hit the questions of ownership of the collaborative head-on at the beginning of your project.
- Be open to expanding your collaboration when appropriate.
- Finally, do something.



# Questions



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