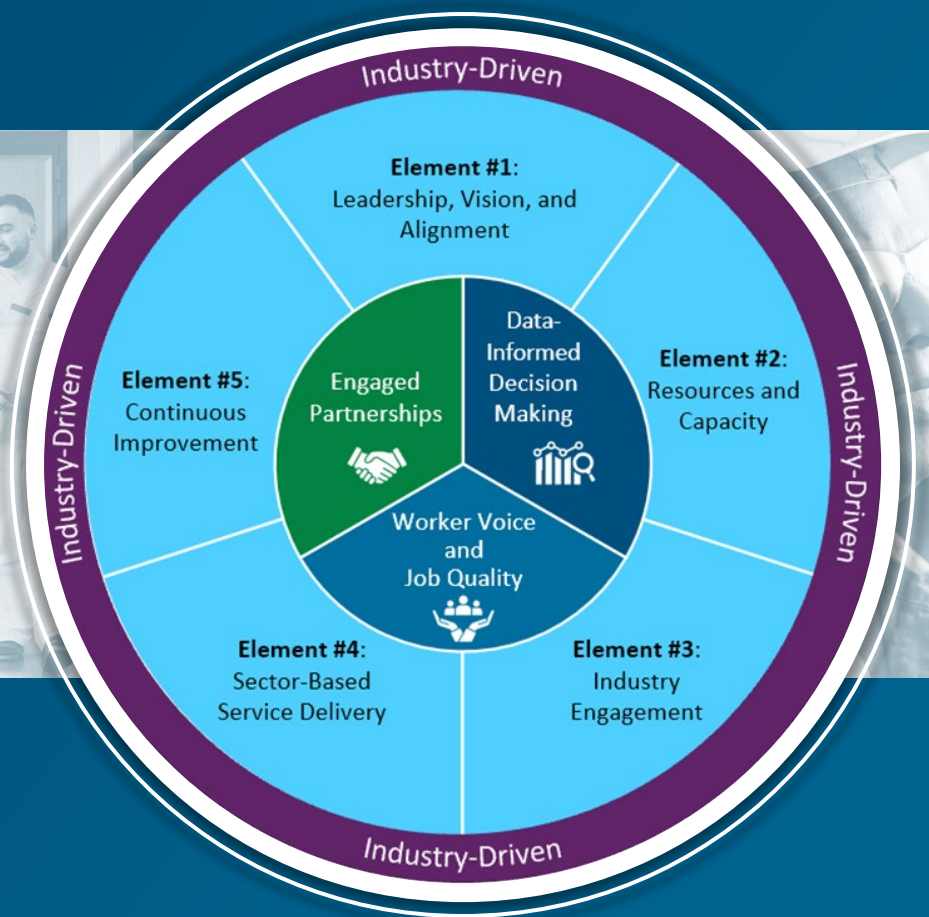


# U.S. Department of Labor Sector Strategies Framework



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## Overview

The U.S. Department of Labor’s Employment and Training Administration (ETA) Sector Strategies Framework is intended to advance knowledge and support the development, scaling, and sustainability of sector strategies. It provides workforce system practitioners with a clear picture of the concepts and elements essential to successful implementation of sector strategies, including:

### Industry-driven foundation:

The Framework underscores the importance of sector strategies being **industry-driven**. It recognizes that implementation and success hinge on a deep understanding of industry needs and dynamics, while simultaneously prioritizing the well-being of workers and the broader community. This holistic approach fosters community prosperity and sustainable growth.

**Core components:** The Framework includes three cross-cutting core components of effective sector strategies, which are:

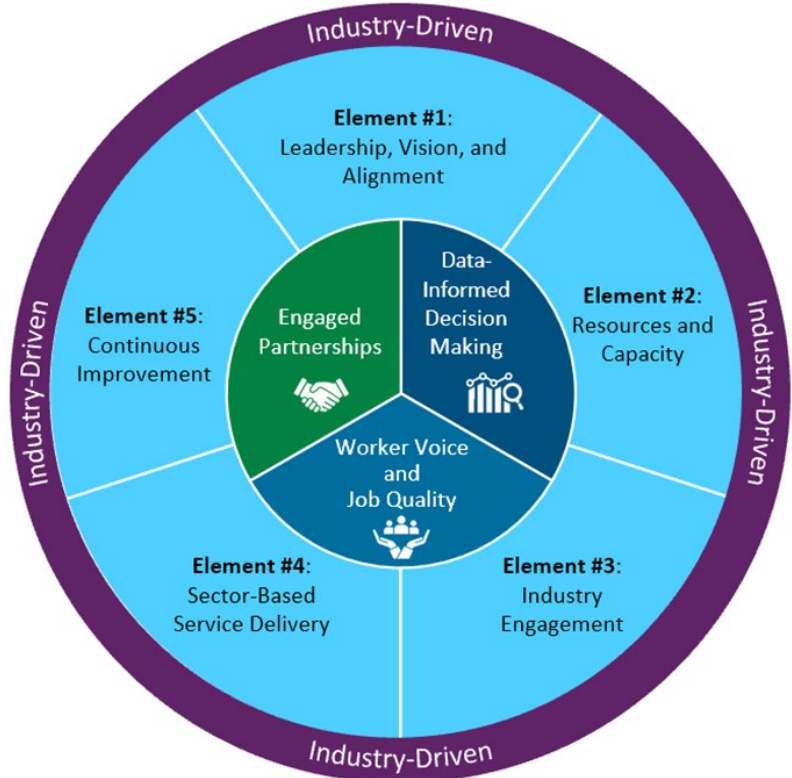
1. Engaged Partnerships,
2. Data-Informed Decision Making, and
3. Worker Voice and Job Quality.

These components are so essential to sector strategies that they are not standalone Framework elements, but rather are woven into and through each element. The core components drive the overarching strategies, while the elements of the Framework illustrate the key building blocks required for successful sector strategies.

**Key elements:** The Framework includes five key elements of effective sector strategies. These elements are:

1. **Leadership, Vision, and Alignment:** A shared vision, supported by all partners, serves as the guide for fostering ongoing collaboration, advancing initiatives, and sustaining momentum.

Figure 1: Sector Strategies Framework



2. **Resources and Capacity:** Sector partners contribute their resources in support of the partnership’s vision and in alignment with its shared goals to design and implement solutions and ensure sustainability.
3. **Industry Engagement:** Throughout all phases of the work, employer partners’ insights and expertise provide crucial context for understanding industry workforce needs and ensuring strategies and solutions are relevant and responsive.
4. **Sector-Based Service Delivery:** Successful sector strategies reflect a deep knowledge of the needs, characteristics, and dynamics of the targeted sector and of the existing workforce’s skills, education and training, needs, and barriers, leading to creation of pathways and opportunities for workers to enter and advance in careers in the sector.
5. **Continuous Improvement:** A continuous improvement mindset, including measurement of progress toward employer, worker, and community goals, fosters adaptation, innovation, and effectiveness over time.

## Background

Sector strategies are a critical model for addressing industries’ workforce and talent development needs at a regional scale and for advancing career opportunities and economic mobility for workers, job seekers, and learners.<sup>1</sup> Since the early 2000s, interest in industry sector-focused workforce development models and programs has increased significantly, fueled in part by the 2014 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act’s (WIOA) emphasis on sector strategies, as well as from increasing federal, state, local, philanthropic, and private sector investments in sector-driven efforts spanning multiple federal and state administrations.

Available research indicates that sector strategies can effectively address industry and employer workforce needs and enhance credential attainment and long-term labor market outcomes for workers.<sup>2</sup> However, the research also points to wide variance in the design and implementation of sector strategies, as well as variations in employment, advancement, and earnings impacts for workers, particularly historically marginalized and underserved workers.<sup>3</sup> Practitioners’ experiences with sector strategies have also surfaced common challenges that persist, in addition to evolving opportunity areas that require enhanced focus.

ETA developed this Sector Strategies Framework to harness what has been learned since the advent of sector strategies work, provide support to address common barriers, and build knowledge and practice in new areas of emphasis. ETA developed the Framework following a

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<sup>1</sup> This Framework is concerned with how sector strategies can support job seekers and learners, in addition to workers. However, for the sake of brevity, the Framework typically references “workers” as the umbrella term for workers, job seekers, and learners.

<sup>2</sup> J-PAL Evidence Review. (2022). “Sectoral Employment Programs as a Path to Quality Jobs: Lessons from Randomized Evaluations” Cambridge, MA: Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab. <https://www.povertyactionlab.org/publication/sectoral-employment-programs-path-quality-jobs-lessons-randomized-evaluations>

<sup>3</sup> Katz et al. (2020). Schaberg (2020). Streke & Rotz (2022). Peck et al. (2021).

review of available sector strategies research and related literature and through extensive consultation with national sector strategies subject matter experts and state and local workforce system leaders and practitioners. The Framework underscores the significance of several foundational core components of effective sector strategies, as well as research and workforce system input on the elements that are essential to implementing impactful sector strategies.

## Vision and Value Proposition

### Vision

ETA envisions that the public workforce system, driven by State and Local Workforce Development Boards (SWDBs and LWDBs), and other partners will collaborate to grow **sector partnerships**, defined as industry-driven partnerships comprising multiple employers within a regionally significant industry sector.<sup>4</sup> These sector partnerships will implement **sector strategies**, defined as the initiatives and efforts prioritized by the sector partnership for development and implementation. This process of forming sector partnerships to develop sector strategies is shown in *Figure 2: Sector partnerships devise and implement sector strategies*.

#### **Vision**

Robust sector partnerships and strategies that address industries' talent needs, support workers' economic mobility, and ensure thriving communities.

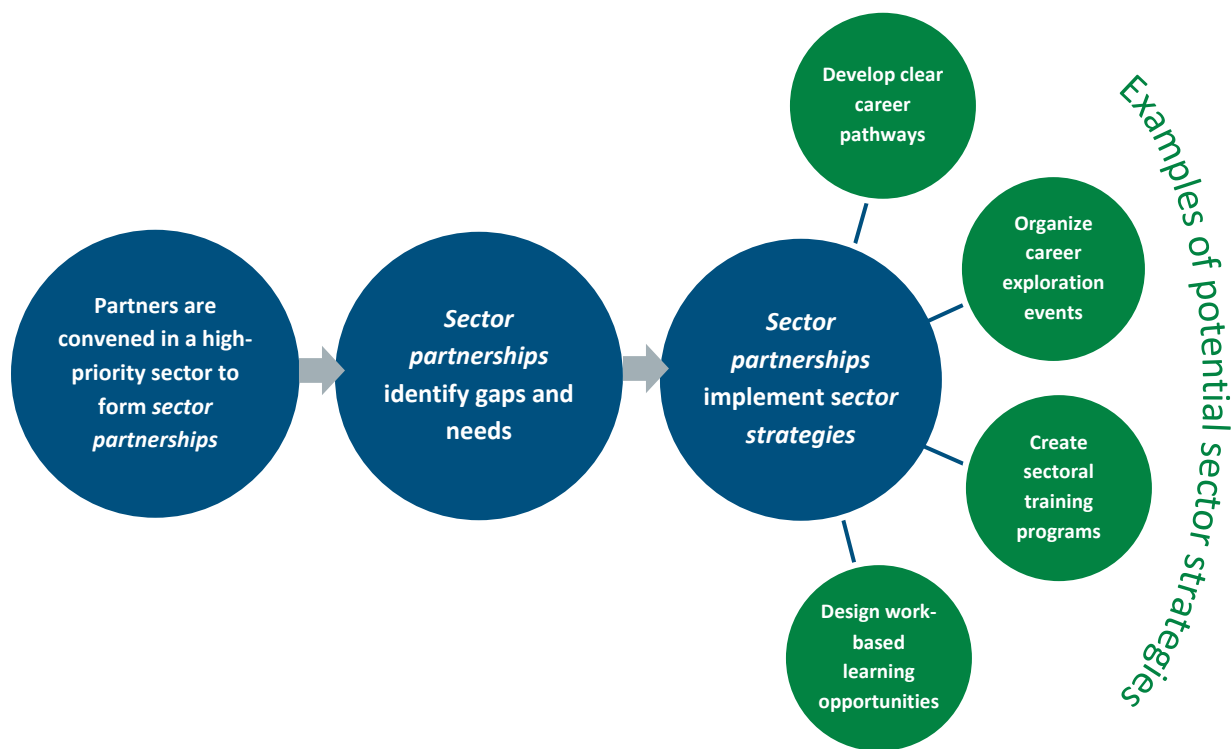
Sector strategies should align partners' goals, strategies, resources, and services to:

- Address industry talent needs and thereby support employers' economic competitiveness;
- Provide comprehensive programming that supports career pathways development and **workers'** economic well-being; and
- Ensure vibrant and thriving local communities and economic regions.

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<sup>4</sup> An industry sector may be considered "regionally significant" based on a variety of factors or combination of factors. For example, regionally significant sectors may include those that are very large in the region, have a high concentration of employers in the region, contribute significantly to the region's competitive advantage relative to other regional economies, comprise a significant portion of the region's economic activity, or are growing significantly.

Figure 2: Sector partnerships devise and implement sector strategies



## Value Proposition

Sector strategies are a guiding approach for how system partners collaboratively identify industries' and workers' talent development needs and implement responsive, coordinated solutions at a region-wide, industry scale.

According to the experts, leaders, and practitioners consulted in the development of this Framework the sector strategies model offers a variety of benefits:

- **Relevance:** Sector strategies are explicitly designed to meet the needs of industries, workers, and communities. Sector strategies provide the vehicle for ensuring that partners' career exploration and development, education and training, supportive services and business solutions are designed to address the identified needs and preferences of both workers and industry partners.
- **Systems and strategies alignment and resource optimization:** Sector strategies are fundamentally about systems alignment and improvement. They provide a model for connecting and coordinating objectives, efforts, and investments across often-siloed domains (e.g., education, economic development, and workforce development). Successful

### Value Proposition

The sector strategies model provides an approach to meeting both industries' and workers' needs that is relevant, aligns systems and strategies, enhances performance and outcomes, and advances equity and job quality.

sector partnerships align organizations, programs, and service delivery streams to leverage partners' areas of expertise, drive progress toward common goals, and maximize resource efficiency and impact.

- **Performance and outcomes enhancement:** When designed and implemented to address identified industry, worker, and community needs and preferences, sector strategies can improve outcomes and impacts for workers and employers and raise performance for workforce development and education and training programs.
- **Equity and job quality advancement:** As envisioned in this Framework, sector strategies include an explicit focus on increasing access, inclusion, and equity for all workers, especially historically marginalized and underserved workers. Sector strategies also seek to elevate quality jobs and enhance [job quality](#). By centering workers' experiences and voices in design and implementation while also partnering with employers to develop quality workplaces and jobs, sector strategies can advance workforce system partners' equity goals and efforts.

## Using the Framework

The framework is intended to provide guidance, definitions, and some potential strategies to use when developing and sustaining a sector partnership and sector strategies; however, it also recognizes that there are multiple methods for achieving the goals of sector strategies and allows for flexibility, creativity, and responsiveness to available partners, local and regional needs, context, and culture. The Implementation for Impact section in each framework element is not intended to be an exhaustive checklist for every sector partnership; rather, it showcases practices that exist in strong sector partnerships and can help launching and existing partnerships with implementation strategies for the great impact.

## Sector Partner Intermediaries

A strong sector partner intermediary is essential to guiding, supporting, and championing the work of the sector partnership. Intermediary organizations play critical roles in sector strategy efforts, from providing leadership and advocacy for the vision to coordinating and supporting more logistical and tactical activities. Sector partner intermediaries may also play other central roles in partnerships, such as employer partners or training providers. The term *intermediary* refers to a designated organization that plays several important roles in:

- Leadership;
- Partnership convening and facilitation;
- Coordination;
- Strategy and project management;
- Day-to-day staff support;
- Outreach, engagement, and communications;
- Partnership development and expansion; and
- Championship.

In some sector partnerships, this organization also plays the role of fiscal agent or another fiduciary/financial management role.

The entity fulfilling these roles may be called the intermediary, lead, or convener organization. Regardless of the term used by individual sector partnerships, the essential nature of this role demands qualified staff and the capacity to carry out the key functions of the role.

Many different types of organizations may play the intermediary role. For purposes of this framework and its audience, ETA positions LWDBs as natural candidates for the intermediary role, in line with WIOA's vision for Local Boards and their functions and responsibilities within their local and regional labor markets and workforce and economic ecosystems. In some sector partnerships, other organizations, such as industry associations, economic development organizations, or educational institutions, assume the intermediary role. And some sector partnerships choose to have two different organizations "share" components of the intermediary role. For example, an industry association might primarily be responsible for employer outreach and engagement and partnership expansion, serving as the "convener of record" and providing visible championship, while the LWDB might provide staffing, meeting planning, project and partner coordination, and communications support.

Regardless of which type of organization plays the intermediary role, it must possess the following strengths and characteristics:

**An understanding of the regional landscape:** The intermediary organization should understand which industries are best positioned to drive the region's economic and community prosperity through projected growth in quality jobs, demonstrated commitment to the region, willingness to collaborate with partners, and other factors. As important, the intermediary must know and understand the region and the involved communities, community organizations and members, and partners. This role requires a strong sense of, and appreciation for, community cultures, values, goals, and potential concerns. The intermediary organization's familiarity with the region positions it to understand how to meaningfully engage all the relevant parties.

**Having partners' trust:** The intermediary organization must be deeply credible with and trusted by industry/employers and other partners. The intermediary organization may not need to be strictly neutral; however, the organization must be trusted to advocate for the partnership's goals for industry, workers, and the community.

**Interpreting across partners:** The intermediary must act as a bridge across all sector partners, helping to interpret language from one to another. They must understand the language of business, the requirements of funding, and the missions of community-based partners. The organization responsible for facilitating sector partnerships must be "multilingual" in speaking the language of all partners to ensure mutual understanding and buy-in.

**Accountability for the partnership's vision:** Typically, the intermediary organization is responsible for facilitating development of the shared vision with partners, and then



implementing the process to achieve the vision. This is among the intermediary's most important charges and flows from the understanding, trust, and ability to act as the bridge across all partners. While all involved partners must be committed and contribute to the vision through their identified roles, resource contributions, and commitments, it is important for the intermediary to have "ownership" responsibility and accountability for the vision.

## **Intended Audience**

ETA developed this Framework with the public workforce system in mind as a primary audience. Workforce boards and other organizations that act as partnership entities and engage members from industry, the public workforce and related systems, and the community are naturally positioned to provide the umbrella structure that brings the entire workforce ecosystem together to support sector strategy efforts and act as intermediaries in sector partnerships. ETA also hopes that this Framework will serve as a helpful resource for other workforce system collaborators who may serve as sector partners or intermediaries, including industry associations, community colleges, Registered Apprenticeship partners, community-serving organizations, and other partners.

## Sector Strategy Core Components

There are three core components at the center of the Sector Strategies Framework: Engaged Partnerships, Data-Informed Decision Making, and Worker Voice and Job Quality. These components play a key role in the successful execution of sector strategies and are woven into and through each element.



### Engaged Partnerships

Engaged partnerships bring diverse perspectives, resources, and expertise to sector strategies work. Truly engaged partners build trusting relationships, collaborate toward shared goals, and co-create solutions that will reach those goals. Examples of organizations to include in a sector partnership are:

- **Public workforce system partners**, who provide leadership, employer engagement, workforce development expertise and resources, worker and learner outreach and advocacy, and structural capacity
- **Key employers and industry-affiliated organizations**, who provide leadership and guidance on talent needs, industry trends, and labor market information validation
- **Education and training partners**, who provide expertise on curriculum development, delivery of training programs, and student advocacy and support
- **Community-based organizations**, who provide worker advocacy, worker and learner supports, outreach and recruitment assistance, and community engagement



### Data-Informed Decision Making

Data provides insight into trends, challenges, and opportunities, enabling informed choices and targeted solutions. Data draws from diverse sources throughout the lifecycle of the sector partnership. Data includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- **Labor market information** including employment trends, occupational data, job vacancy information, wage and earnings data, education and training requirements, and geographic analysis
- **Skills gap analysis** to provide information on the skills and competencies required for occupations within the targeted sector compared to the skills possessed by the current available workforce
- **Worker and learner demographics** to ensure training programs and hiring practices are equitable and inclusive
- **Employer and worker feedback** to measure satisfaction with strategies and outcomes and find areas for improvement



### Worker Voice and Job Quality

Incorporating worker representation and job quality in sector strategies ensures that solutions meet both worker and employer needs, successfully providing workers with pathways to careers and employers with skilled workers. Understanding and meeting worker needs can be accomplished in the following ways:

- **Worker representation** in governance structures, including committees or advisory boards
- **Direct feedback** on challenges and supports needed for access and successful completion from individuals working in the targeted industry, learners, and job seekers
- Inclusion of **trusted community-based partners** in the sector partnership, including committees and work groups to provide input and assistance with necessary wraparound supports for worker success
- Development of **job quality guidelines** for targeted industries and occupations

# Sector Strategies Element #1

## LEADERSHIP, VISION, AND ALIGNMENT

**A shared vision facilitated by the intermediary and created with input and commitment from all partners serves as the guide for fostering ongoing collaboration, advancing initiatives, and sustaining momentum. When partners align their efforts toward common objectives, partnerships become more resilient and capable of adapting to evolving circumstances as they work toward their shared goals, build trust in one another, and stay committed to agreed-upon outcomes.**



Sector partnerships identify and engage key collaborators within the sector, including businesses, economic development organizations, workforce development organizations, nonprofit organizations, education and training institutions, Registered Apprenticeship partners, and other community groups. These diverse partners are involved in both setting and carrying out the vision of the sector partnership.



Relevant data should drive sector selection, vision development, and goal alignment, including traditional and real-time labor market information, employer input, industry reports, academic studies, surveys, and organizational data. The partnership uses data to set and measure clear objectives.



Leadership engages with workers, labor organizations, and community groups, inviting them to be active participants in the planning process, serve on committees, and take part in work groups. They prioritize worker perspectives, concerns, and priorities to build inclusive strategies.

### Implementation for Impact

Strong sector partnerships integrate the following practices to maximize their impact:

- Organize and facilitate partners to identify sector partnership vision, mission, goals, and strategies
- Formalize an agreement that outlines partner expectations and commitment to the shared vision
- Identify metrics to be regularly reported to ensure continued alignment and success
- Create engaged employers to act as sector strategy champions to engage other employers and partners to increase the impact of the partnership
- Create working committees to carry out the identified strategies

# Sector Strategies Element #2

## RESOURCES AND CAPACITY

Planning, maintaining, and growing resources and capacity are fundamental to the success of sector partnerships and strategies. These include financial and human resources, technical expertise, and organizational structures that support effective decision-making and implementation, among others. Because adequate funding and other resources are critical to sector strategies efforts, all sector partners should commit resources in support of the vision of the partnership and in alignment with its shared goals. These resources contribute to the development of effective solutions and long-term sustainability.



Engaged partnerships increase capacity by bringing an array of unique strengths, expertise, and resources to work toward a shared vision. By co-contributing and leveraging investments of both funds and time, partners ensure that sector strategies are equipped to address complex challenges.



Sector partnerships must have the ability to access and analyze data to identify trends, assess needs, and evaluate outcomes, thereby optimizing resource allocation, mitigating risks, and capitalizing on opportunities. Employers and public partners can provide access to and analysis of a variety of data sources, which are integral to identifying needs, devising targeted solutions, and effectively implementing strategies.



Amplifying worker voice allows sector partnerships to gain valuable insights into the real-world experiences, needs, and aspirations of the workforce, ensuring that resources are directed towards initiatives that appeal to and meet the needs of workers, leading to greater program participation and outcomes

### Implementation for Impact

Strong sector partnerships integrate the following practices to maximize their impact:

- Develop a comprehensive funding strategy that lays out a diversity of funding sources and identifies leveraged funds from partners
- Conduct gap analysis activities to understand the availability of resources and seek additional support where required
- Develop formal agreements that outline each partner's resource commitments and responsibilities
- Integrate resource planning into the overall strategic planning process to ensure resources are directed toward priority areas
- Incorporate sustainability planning into all resource- and capacity-building activities

# Sector Strategies Element #3

## INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT

**Industry engagement is critical to the success of all sector strategy work. Industry insight and expertise, which may come from employers, associations, and/or labor organizations, provide crucial context for understanding industry workforce needs and ensuring solutions and initiatives are relevant and responsive. This engagement helps to establish robust talent pipelines by identifying skill needs and gaps, aligning training models and curricula, and keeping pace with evolving industry needs. Key industry leaders must be engaged from the beginning and throughout to drive sector strategy design, implementation, and refinement.**



Engaged industry leadership drives successful sector strategies. Active participation and commitment by these leaders must drive sector strategies and solutions. Their leadership sets the tone for collaboration and ensures the success of initiatives. Industry leadership and engagement supports other critical partners, such as education and training providers and workforce development organizations, to implement relevant skill development programs and initiatives for the workforce.



By leveraging data-driven insights, the sector partnership can better understand and respond to the needs of industry. Data enables an understanding of industry trends, challenges, and opportunities, which is then validated, refined, and deepened with employers, resulting in more targeted and effective strategies and better outcomes.



While industry insight and expertise are vital for understanding employer needs, worker voice provides essential perspectives on job quality within the sector. By actively engaging with workers and incorporating their feedback into sector strategies, partnerships can ensure that solutions and initiatives are responsive to workers' needs and experiences and are designed to ensure workers can successfully access and complete.

### Implementation for Impact

Strong sector partnerships integrate the following practices to maximize their impact:

- Identify industry champions and begin sector strategy discussions with employer needs analyses to understand industry talent needs
- Verify labor market information with employers to ensure accurate data and emerging trends
- Conduct a skills gap analysis to identify needed solutions
- Include employers in solution design and implementation
- Schedule regular meetings for the sector partnership with clear agendas for action and decisions
- Recognize and celebrate employer contributions and sector partnership successes

# Sector Strategies Element #4

## SECTOR-BASED SERVICE DELIVERY

**Successful sector strategies reflect a deep knowledge of the needs, characteristics, and dynamics of the targeted sector and of the existing workforce’s skills, education and training, needs, and barriers. These strategies create pathways and opportunities for workers to enter and advance in careers in the sector with the necessary training, skills, and credentials. Sector strategies aim to fill an industry’s near-term workforce needs and to create talent pipelines that address long-term, future needs through training, work-based learning opportunities, and exploratory activities for the future workforce.**



Committed partners collaborate to develop solutions that are responsive to unique sector workforce needs and position workers to take advantage of career opportunities in the sector.



Sector strategies should use both employer and industry data, as well as data about the workforce, to develop meaningful solutions. Identifying skill gaps, barriers, developing curriculum and competency models, and offering training opportunities that reflect worker interests which result in positive outcomes for the industry and workers alike.



Incorporating worker voice into service delivery design results in initiatives that are responsive to worker needs, provide targeted wraparound supports, and create a skilled talent pipeline for the targeted sector.

### Implementation for Impact

Strong sector partnerships integrate the following practices to maximize their impact:

- Develop or enhance specific courses, programs, and credentials to better align post-secondary education offerings to industry-identified workforce and skill needs
- Establish clearly defined career pathways within the industry for job seekers and workers to begin and advance in the industry
- Train talent-facing staff and educators in industry expectations, career pathways, culture, and opportunities
- Include talent-facing staff in designing strategies, leveraging both existing resources and expertise in event or program design
- Build work-based learning experiences, including Registered Apprenticeship, for every level of job seeker and training

# Sector Strategies Element #5

## Continuous Improvement

**A continuous improvement mindset fosters adaptation, innovation, and effectiveness over time. Sector partnerships establish metrics to measure progress toward employer, worker, and community goals. Continuous monitoring and evaluation allow sector partnerships to assess, evolve, and transform alongside the sectors they serve, creating opportunities for sustainability.**



Engaged partners foster an environment of continuous improvement and accountability, seeking ways to learn, innovate, and improve strategies and outcomes together. Engaged partners provide iterative feedback that strengthens sector strategies over time.



Incorporating data collection and analysis into assessment and decision-making throughout the sector strategy cycles helps partnerships identify areas of success and opportunities for improvement. Ongoing data analysis enables sector partnerships to respond quickly to changing industry dynamics and contributes to sustainability. Successful sector partnerships measure quantitative and qualitative success and showcase their value.



Obtaining regular feedback from workers fosters a culture of open communication and positions sector partnerships to address concerns and barriers from workers and creates opportunities to implement changes to ensure greater workforce participation and success.

### Implementation for Impact

Strong sector partnerships establish and implement a continuous improvement process that includes:

- A review of progress toward goals on a quarterly and annual basis
- Feedback collection from all sector partners via survey to understand each partner's perception of value and return on investment
- Reflection on solutions and events to identify best practices and areas for improvement to continue to grow and scale the work
- Provide training to service providers on industry trends and to employers on worker challenges and barriers
- Provide opportunities for professional development for intermediary staff on topics such as effective facilitation, strategic funding, data access and use, and relevant industry knowledge

## Terms and Definitions

One of the common challenges in sector strategies work is a lack of shared understanding of key concepts and terms, which translates into differing applications of sector strategies concepts in practice. To support a common understanding of sector strategy concepts and their implementation, ETA offers the following definitions of key terms used in this Framework.

**Sector partnerships** – Sector partnerships are industry-driven partnerships comprising multiple employers within a regionally significant industry sector (e.g., advanced manufacturing, healthcare, or agriculture). Additional partners include:

- Workforce development organizations like LWDBs and their service providers
- Economic development organizations
- K-12 and post-secondary education systems
- Registered Apprenticeship sponsors and partners
- Industry associations and industry-affiliated centers of excellence (e.g., Manufacturing USA Institutes and Manufacturing Extension Partnerships, U.S. National Science Foundation-funded Advanced Technological Education Centers, and U.S. Department of Energy and U.S. Department of Defense national laboratories)
- Community-serving organizations
- Human and social services providers
- Organized labor organizations
- Elected and municipal leaders
- Business membership organizations like Chambers of Commerce
- Human resources organizations

The partnership is the body responsible for the development and implementation of the sector strategies themselves.

A relationship or partnership with an individual employer, or ad hoc relationships with employers in the same industry, are not sector partnerships, though enhancing relationships with individual industry employers may help “seed the ground” for subsequent development of larger and more comprehensive sector partnerships.

**Sector strategies** – Sector strategies are the group of initiatives and efforts – the strategic solutions – prioritized by the sector partnership for development and implementation industrywide that are both industry-driven and worker-centered. For example, a common sector strategy is mapping industry-defined career pathways within a target industry and then adapting regional K-12, post-secondary, and workforce education program curricula, delivery



models, and credentials to these pathways. The development or enhancement of specific courses, programs, and credentials is often a key solution within a broader sector strategy to better align post-secondary education offerings with industry-identified workforce and skill needs. However, individual sectoral training programs (as defined below), without the oversight of a sectoral partnership, do not constitute the entirety of a sector strategy.

*Note: For purposes of this Framework and its primary intended audiences – LWDBs and other workforce system partners – sector strategies are primarily workforce and talent development solutions. However, many sector partnerships also prioritize the development and implementation of other kinds of industry-supporting strategies. For example, some manufacturing sector partnerships offer industry partners Lean Six Sigma consulting support; other sector partnerships provide industry partners with connections to business incubation and capitalization assistance. While these additional activities are not included in this Framework, they can be useful tools and resources for partnership members and can further develop trust, collaboration, and engagement among members.*

**Sectoral training programs** – Sectoral training programs focus on a specific occupation (e.g., Registered Nurse) or a cluster of occupations (e.g., a nursing pathway encompassing the Certified Nursing Assistant, Licensed Practical Nurse, and Registered Nurse occupations) in an industry sector.

As noted above, while industry-aligned sectoral training programs are typically vital components of larger sector strategy efforts, they are not in and of themselves sector partnerships or comprehensive sector strategies.

**Industry-driven** – Often, sector partnerships articulate that they are “demand-driven” or “industry-led.” In this Framework, ETA prefers the concept and term “industry-driven,” for three primary reasons:

First, industry partners should inform and drive the design and implementation of sector strategies; industry input on strategy prioritization and design helps support positive outcomes for all sector partnership activities. At the same time, the needs of workers and of communities should be equally top-of-mind for sector partners and also contribute to positive outcomes. While industry partners may set the agenda in terms of sector strategy workforce priorities, the needs and wants of workers themselves and of the communities that partnerships serve should be equally centered.

Second, the concept of “industry-driven” encompasses the notion that labor market data that supports or complements industry insights must guide sector partners’ efforts. Labor market information combined with industry partners’ input help sector partnerships be more inclusive in their industry focus and more industry-driven in their strategies and solutions.

Third, industry and employer partners contribute significantly to setting the vision and priorities and are responsible for critical functions, like engaging additional employer partners, championing the work vocally and visibly, and investing tangibly in solutions development. However, employer partners are not typically responsible for leading sector strategy initiatives from an operations perspective; this is the responsibility and work of the sector partnership intermediary.

**Job quality<sup>5</sup>** – A wide variety of factors, beyond just the job itself, contribute to making a job a “quality job.” These factors include human resource practices, organizational and workplace culture, and employee skill development and career advancement support, among others. This Framework takes the following factors into account as central to job quality:

**Recruitment and hiring:** Employers actively recruit a diverse pool of applicants and use skills-based hiring that requires only the education, experience, and credentials necessary for job performance. Employers provide strong onboarding and ongoing employee retention support.

**Benefits:** Employers consult with workers on needed and desired benefits and provide full- and part-time workers with benefits like paid leave, health insurance, and retirement plans, which they encourage employees to use.

**Diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA):** Employers foster equitable and inclusive workplaces, embracing DEIA as a core value and working actively to remove systemic barriers for workers.

**Worker empowerment and representation:** Employers empower workers and give them a meaningful voice in decisions about their work, how and where it is performed, and overall organizational direction, without fear of retaliation.

**Organizational culture:** Through explicit behaviors and practices and leaderships norms, employers demonstrate that workers belong, are valued, and contribute meaningfully to the organization. Employers foster a culture of worker engagement and respect.

**Job security and working conditions:** Employers provide safe, healthy, and accessible workplaces and offer job security. As much as possible, employers provide working schedules that are adequate and predictable for employees.

**Pay:** Employers provide equitable living wages to all workers and ensure fair and transparent compensation practices.

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<sup>5</sup> Sources consulted for the job quality discussion include the [Department of Labor’s Good Jobs Principles](#); the [Employment and Training Administration’s Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 07-22](#), “Increasing Employer and Workforce System Customer Access to Good Jobs”; the [Department of Commerce’s Job Quality Toolkit](#); [MIT’s Good Jobs Institute resources](#); and the [Aspen Institute’s Job Quality Tools Library](#).

**Skill development and career advancement:** Employers provide workers with opportunities, tools, and support to develop their skills and experiences and advance in their organizations and careers.

**Workers** – Throughout the Framework, the term “workers” refers to the entire spectrum of the talent pipeline, including individuals already part of the industry’s workforce, organizations that represent workers, and job seekers and learners interested in becoming part of that workforce.

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