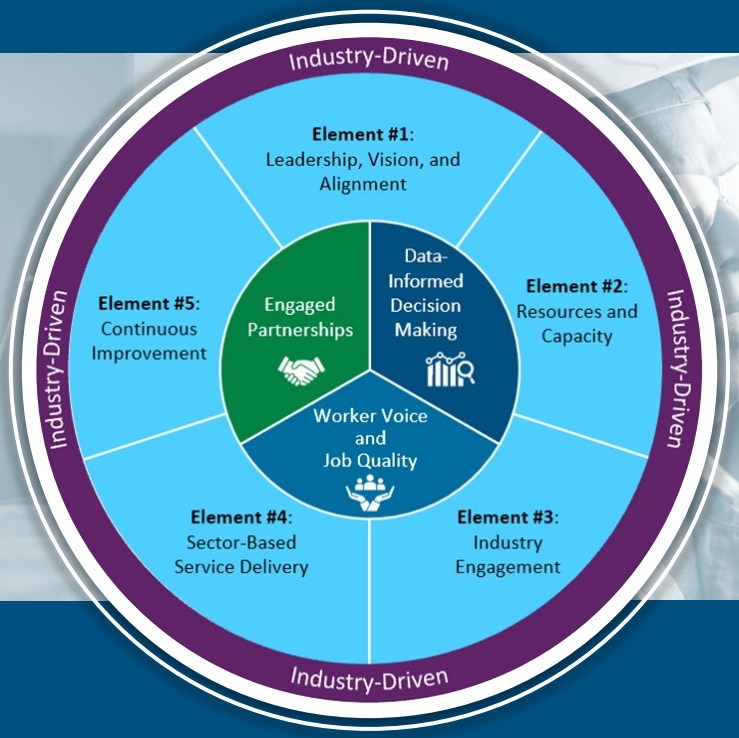
U.S. Department of Labor Sector Strategies Implementation Guide



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U.S. Department of Labor Sector Strategies Implementation Guide

Development of the Sector Strategies Implementation Guide has been an intentionally collaborative process throughout. The American Institutes for Research (AIR) team would like to extend a special thanks to the many subject matter experts, state staff, and local practitioners who gave their time and shared their sector strategies knowledge and experience with us. We would also like to thank U.S. Department of Labor-Employment and Training Administration (ETA) staff for their leadership, guidance, and thoughtful review of the Guide and related materials, especially Robin Fernkas, Deputy Administrator, Office of Workforce Investment (OWI); Jenn Smith, Division Chief, Division of Strategic Investments (DSI)-OWI; Lauren Fairley, Workforce Analyst, DSI-OWI; and the members of ETA's Sector Strategies Workgroup.

The AIR Team:

Lynn Bajorek
Deja Garraway
Chris Herzog
Brittany Lenertz
Monica Melville
Joe Quick
Gretchen Sullivan
Joe Thiry
Meghan Wills

Prepared for:

U.S. Department of Labor
Employment & Training Administration

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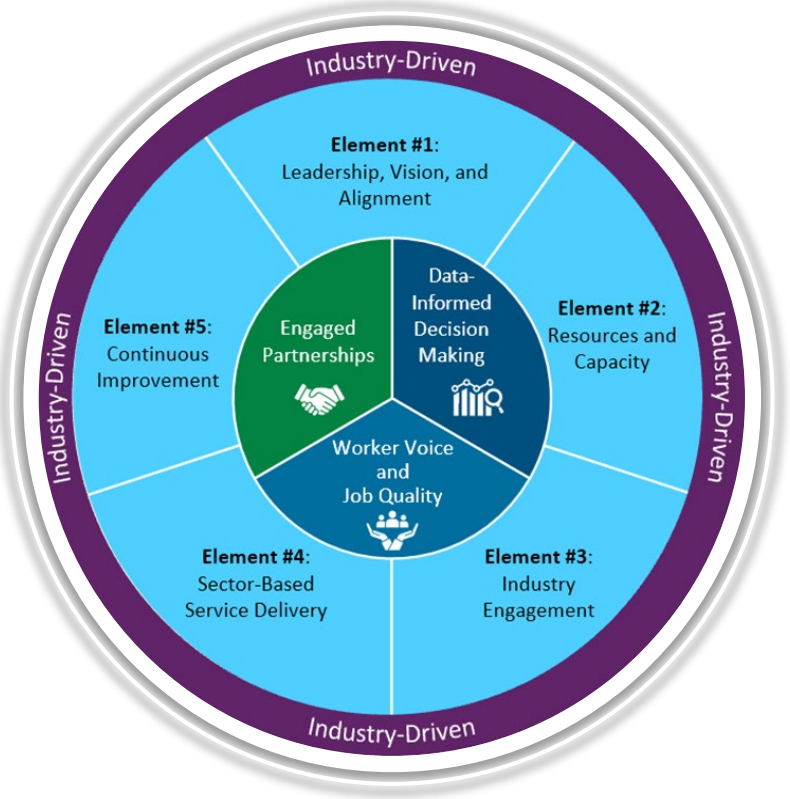
Introduction to the Sector Strategies Implementation Guide

The U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) Sector Strategies Framework is designed to advance knowledge and support the development, scaling, and sustainability of sector strategies. This framework visual (Figure 1, Sector Strategies Framework Graphic) provides workforce system practitioners with a clear picture of the core concepts and elements essential to the successful implementation of sector strategies. It reflects the feedback and information gathered from practitioners and subject matter experts across the country, ensuring that it is grounded in practical experience and real-world insights.

Figure 1, Sector Strategies Framework Graphic



This implementation guide is intended to provide practitioners with strategies and steps to implement Framework components and elements. It includes examples and promising approaches used in successful sector partnerships across the country, offering a wealth of practical insights for workforce practitioners.

It is important to note that no two sector strategy efforts or partnerships are the same. Partners, resources, labor market contexts, and challenges vary widely, and the strategies and processes outlined in this guide should be adapted to fit the unique reality of each sector partnership. The steps laid out in this guide may need to occur in a different order, simultaneously, or be repeated, depending on the specific needs and circumstances of each sector partnership.

**Consistent with the Framework, throughout this guide, the term worker refers to the entire spectrum of the talent pipeline, including individuals already part of an industry's workforce, organizations that represent workers, and job seekers and learners interested in becoming part of the workforce.*

By following the guidance in this implementation guide and adapting it to your unique context, you can effectively develop,

implement, and sustain sector strategies that meet the needs of both industry and workers*, ultimately contributing to a stronger and more resilient workforce system and regional economy.

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 each Framework element and throughout this Implementation Guide. Look for the icons throughout this guide to see how each is important to the various phases of sector strategy implementation presented in the guide.

Core Component #1: ENGAGED PARTNERSHIPS

What It Means

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 throughout the process
- **Education and training** partners, who provide expertise on curriculum development, delivery of training programs, and student advocacy and support
- **Worker-serving and community-based organizations**, who provide worker advocacy, worker and learner support, outreach and recruitment assistance, and community engagement

Tools & Resources

- Aspen Institute's Communities that Work Partnership Playbook
- Collective Impact Forum's Community Engagement Toolkit

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How well do our partners represent the needs and perspectives of the targeted industry and the workers and communities we serve?
- What partners may be missing from our partnership?
- Are employer partners well-represented? Are they engaged in designing solutions and do they stay engaged through implementation?
- How have we cultivated and maintained trusting relationships among all partners?
- Do all of our partners understand their roles and responsibilities?
- Have all partners committed resources and capacity to achieving our goals?
- Are all partners actively involved in the creation and implementation of solutions?
- How have we worked to ensure shared value for our partners?

What It Means

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 interests, satisfaction with strategies and outcomes, and find areas for improvement

Tools & Resources

- WorkforceGPS Labor Market and Business Intelligence: How they Guide Your Way
- Labor Market Information Analysis Guide

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How are we using data to identify trends, challenges, and opportunities within the sector? How often?
- Are we utilizing a diverse array of data sources throughout the cycles of our partnership? What are they? Are they consistent?
- Do we have the organizational capacity and required skills across partners to analyze data effectively? Who is best poised to do so?
- Are we providing opportunities for employers to validate existing LMI data and supplement it with industry intelligence?
- Do we have adequate data on worker demographics, interests, and needs?
- Are we getting good data on training and education programs and completions? Skill and credential attainment?

Core Component #3: WORKER VOICE AND JOB QUALITY

What It Means

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 of the sector partnership, 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 worker-serving and community-based partners** in the sector partnership, including on 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

Tools & Resources

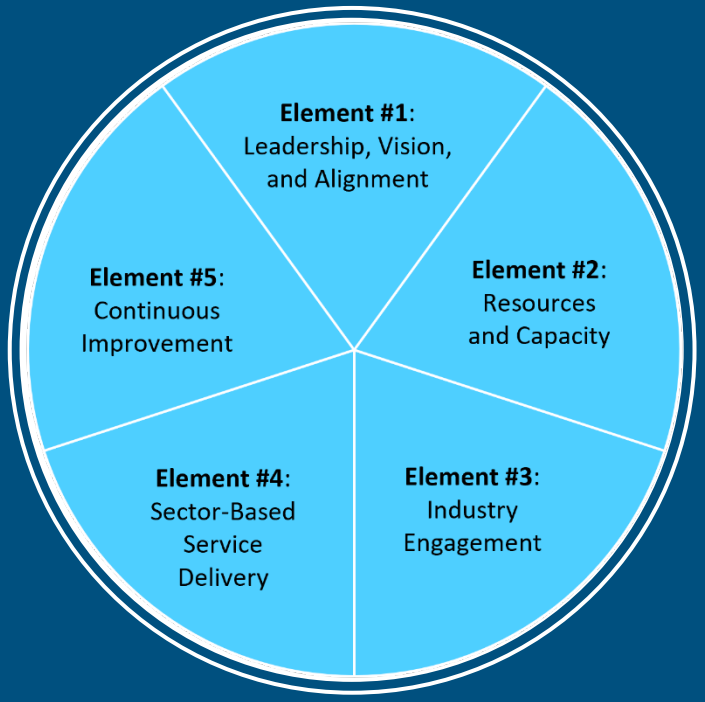
- WorkforceGPS Job Quality and Worker Voice
- WorkforceGPS Worker Voice and Engagement
- WorkforceGPS Building Quality Jobs and Equity for All
- Aspen Institute's Centering Worker Voice in Employer Engagement and Program Design: A Guide for Leading Worker Focus Groups for Workforce Organizations
- National Fund's What We Mean by Worker Voice
- High Road Training Partnership's Incorporate Worker Wisdom Throughout the Partnership

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How are workers represented in our sector partnership governance structures, such as committees or advisory boards?
- Are worker representatives given meaningful opportunities to contribute to decision-making processes? Are we creating comfortable opportunities to do so?
- How do we collect and utilize direct feedback from individuals working in the targeted industry, learners, and job seekers?
- Are we inclusive in our outreach to partners that serve historically marginalized, underrepresented, and underserved workers to obtain diverse worker and learner perspectives?
- Have we established clear job quality guidelines for our targeted industry and occupations? How do we ensure these guidelines are aligned with the needs and expectations of both workers and employers?

Sector Strategy Key Elements

The Framework includes five key elements of effective sector strategies: Leadership, Vision and Alignment, Resources and Capacity, Industry Engagement, Sector–Based Service Delivery, and Continuous Improvement. Developed with extensive input from sector strategies subject matter experts and state and local workforce system leaders and practitioners, these elements provide a comprehensive approach that guides collaboration, ensures sustainability, leverages industry insights, delivers targeted services, and fosters ongoing adaptation and innovation, ultimately leading to more effective and responsive workforce solutions. These key elements are listed below to orient readers and are woven throughout this guide



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.

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.

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.

ELEMENT #4: SECTOR-BASED SERVICE DELIVERY

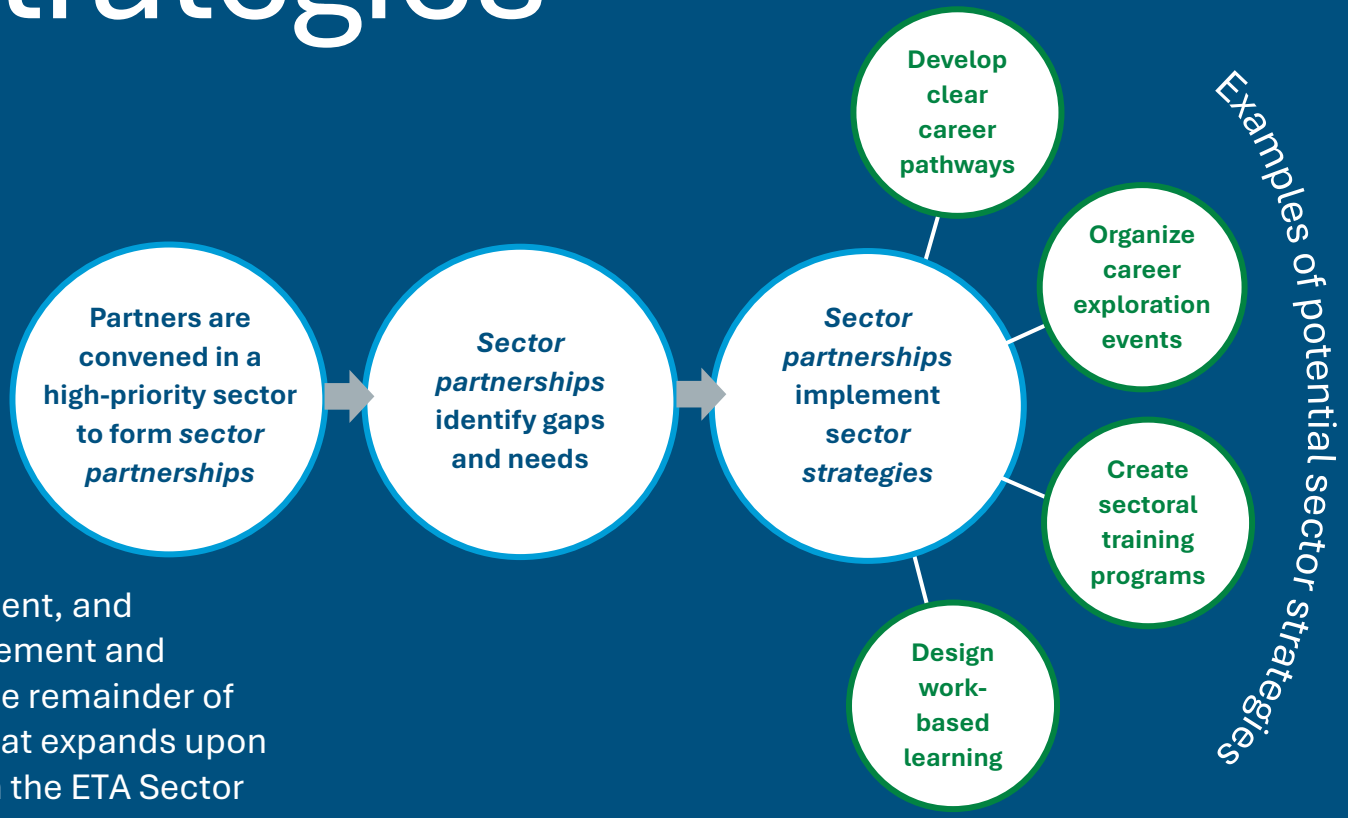
Successful sector strategies reflect a deep knowledge of the needs, characteristics, and dynamics of the targeted sector and of the existing workforce's skills, education and training, needs, and barriers. These strategies create pathways and opportunities for workers to enter and advance in careers 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.

ELEMENT #5: CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

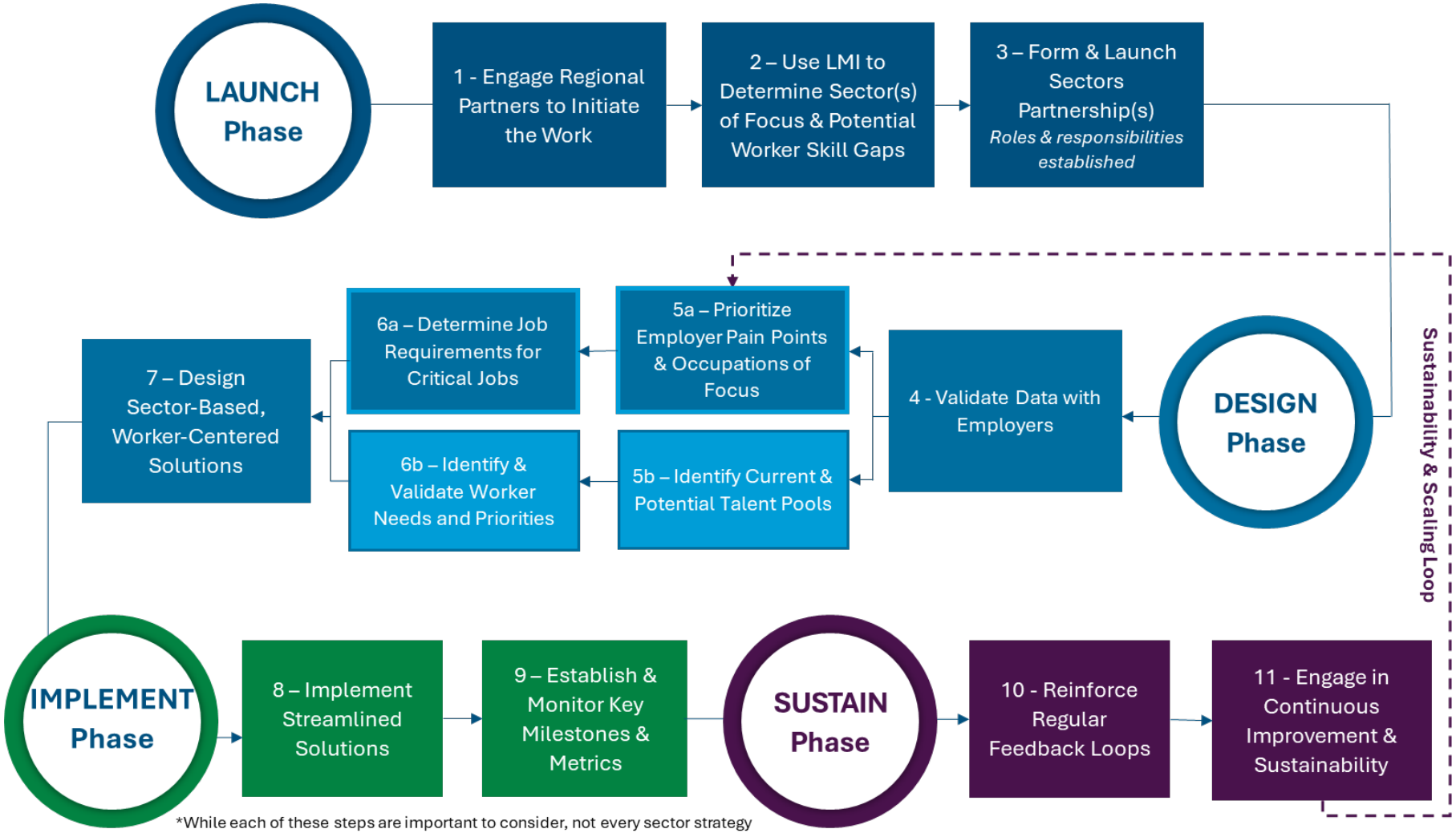
A continuous improvement mindset fosters adaptation, innovation, and effectiveness over time. Sector partnerships establish metrics to measure progress toward employer, worker, and community goals. Continuous monitoring and evaluation allow sector partnerships to assess, evolve, and transform alongside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

Sector Strategies Process

Even though the specific actions taken may vary based on regional context and industry and worker needs, a well-defined process ensures that all partners have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, promotes alignment, and facilitates the continuous improvement and scalability of sector strategies. The remainder of this guide provides information that expands upon the high-level process provided in the ETA Sector Strategies Framework to outline the important phases in sector partnership implementation: launch, design, implement, and sustain.



Example Sector Partnership Process*



*While each of these steps are important to consider, not every sector strategy effort is linear. Based on the specific needs of each sector partnership, some steps may be skipped, occur simultaneously or in a different order, or be repeated.

LAUNCH Phase

Prepare for and Launch Sector Partnerships

The preparation for and launch of a sector partnership is arguably the most crucial phase, as it sets the tone for the partnership and can significantly influence the level of success that can be achieved. This initial phase involves identifying target sectors, selecting appropriate partners and geographic scope, creating a unified vision, defining clear roles, and implementing clear partnership agreements. Equally important is identifying long-term funding strategies and resource allocation planning, essential for sustaining the partnership and achieving the desired impact. By laying a strong foundation during this phase, partners can foster a collaborative and well-coordinated effort that maximizes impact and creates shared value.

Engaged Partnerships

The LAUNCH Phase lays the groundwork for engaged partnerships. In this phase of the work, you will identify key partners, agree upon roles and responsibilities, and build relationships that will sustain the work.

Data-Informed Decision Making

Identification and analysis of good data lays the foundation for the sector strategies in the LAUNCH Phase. During this preparation, you will use data to identify industry sectors of focus and potential talent and/or skill gaps.

Worker Voice and Job Quality

Worker voice should be included as a foundational component from the outset of a sector partnership's launch. During this phase it is important that you engage organizations that represent workers, understand their needs, and mitigate barriers from these early planning stages.

Launch Phase: Activities

1 *Engage Regional Partners to Initiate the Work*

Assess the regional landscape and existing initiatives to avoid duplication and ensure alignment.

To promote regional collaboration, maximize time and effort, and avoid duplicative efforts toward industry partners and across regional partners, your team should look to any existing structures and partnerships as a starting point for either starting a *new* sector partnership or for revitalizing or adding value to existing initiatives.

- **Identify and catalog existing regional workforce efforts, partnerships, and structures that can be leveraged for sector strategy work.** Are there already partnerships in place that address workforce development issues or other challenges of concern to employers? Are there strong public-private partnerships in place that support workers to obtain the skills required for in-demand, high-wage jobs? By design, for example, local workforce development boards are business-led and include representatives from education, organized labor, and community organizations.
- **Decide whether to start anew or leverage an existing effort or partnership.** Consider the pros and cons each way, including existing relationships, existing "baggage," or the time it will take to launch the effort.
- **Identify partners for a regional partner convening.** With intelligence in hand about existing efforts, partners, and resources, determine which partners might be most important to launching or scaling your sector strategy efforts. Use your knowledge of your region's partnership dynamics to identify those most crucial to initial conversations to guide strategy and determine focus. Consider the following organizations:
  - Key industry employers, including representatives like executives, human resource leaders, and senior managers
  - Local workforce development boards and their partners
  - K-12 educators, career and technical education (CTE) programs, and community-based workforce programs for youth
  - Organizations that provide adult education and community-based workforce programming for adults
  - Post-secondary education institutions, including community and technical colleges and universities
  - Union representatives, labor-management partnerships, worker centers, and community service providers that interact with and support a diverse set of learners, job seekers, and workers

Before officially launching your sector partnership efforts, convene the employer leaders and regional partners most critical to a regional sector strategy effort's success to discuss initial goals, priorities, and roles. These may be existing industry or public-private partnerships addressing talent or other business issues, regional workforce boards, economic development organizations, leading training and education partners, and community leaders key to implementing a regional sector strategy approach.

- **Share the industry-driven impetus for and importance of a regional sector strategy approach and gain multi-partner consensus on a path forward.** Discuss how launching a regional sector strategy effort *or* building on, scaling, or improving current efforts can collectively solve industry and worker talent challenges. Use this conversation (or several conversations) to align key regional partners around the need for and goals associated with a coordinated regional sector-based strategy.
- **Identify initial priorities and goals of the regional sector strategy effort and how they align to individual organizations' goals.**
  Set some initial parameters for what your regional sector strategy approach seeks to accomplish. Before consulting data, obtaining employer feedback, and inviting more partners to the table, these initial goals may be relatively high-level and based on anecdotal information about skill gaps and worker needs. **Discussion topics may include things like long-term goals or persistent talent challenges or worker barriers.**
- **Discuss the structure, launch, and make-up of an eventual sector partnership.** Consider potential priority industries, as well as potential convening organizations to lead the efforts. Discuss initial resourcing, staffing capacity, and industry relationship considerations, and the number of sectors the region may want to focus on, both in the short- and long-term.

2 *Use LMI to Determine Sector(s) of Focus and Potential Talent Gaps*

Identify labor market information (LMI) resources and available expertise.

As your organization—with other key regional workforce partners—explores which industry sectors are most important for your sector strategy efforts, having a clear and consistent process for accessing quality data to determine key focuses is important. It is likely that your community, region, or state has existing LMI resources, reports, and expertise available to guide your work.

- **Research existing resources regarding labor market information.** Leverage internal resources and partners and state-level expertise, and become familiar with available LMI sources by consulting federal data sets, like those available through the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics at https://www.bls.gov/, as well as resources and expertise available through your state LMI team.
- **Create a collective data strategy that defines sources, roles, and frequency of LMI analysis to guide regional sector strategy work.** You may choose to adopt a formal, multi-partner LMI data strategy that identifies trustworthy sources, outlines partnership roles and responsibilities related to data, and establishes how frequently your partnership will evaluate LMI.

Find the experts! Connect with your state LMI team. Consult the state LMI contact list on the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics website here.

Collect traditional and real-time labor market data to better understand industry priorities and needs.

Once data sources and processes for collection of LMI have been established, work with regional experts to understand what data you need to better understand the regional labor market and determine the most critical industry sectors for your efforts.

First, consult any existing regional labor market studies and/or reports that highlight established or emerging sectors of importance. Economic and workforce development organizations—as well as many education and training institutions—look to industry and occupational data to determine priority industries of focus and to prioritize service delivery to those industry partners that will generate the greatest impact for workers and the economy. In the interest of maximizing time and resources and leveraging existing expertise, check with partners to see if they've already done this work for you.

- **Identify the questions you are trying to answer.** Before consulting your LMI experts and resources, brainstorm with your partners and internal team the questions most important to better understanding your region's major sectors and the questions that might help inform exploration of talent development, attraction, or retention strategies.
- **Get the right data and seek to understand its limitations.** Working with your LMI experts, determine the data most useful for answering your key questions and whether the questions can be effectively answered with available data sources. Getting the right data in hand can help you not only in this launch phase, but also in determining the strategic priorities of your sector partnership once it is launched.

Check out this tool! For a high-level overview of industry and occupational data, as well as key LMI definitions, refer to the Framework's "Labor Market Information Analysis Guide" resource.

Analyze data and employer intelligence to gain consensus regarding key industry sectors, potential occupations of focus, and geographic scope.

To determine the industry sector (or sectors) of focus for your efforts, analyze the LMI you collected, validate it with key employer champions, and consult the current regional workforce preparation ecosystem to narrow your focus.

- **Identify critical industry sectors.** Prioritize those sectors with the highest growth, density in your region, importance to the economy, and largest talent needs. Ensure that each industry sector and its regional employers provide quality jobs with sustainable wages. You and your partners may also identify known (or anecdotal) misalignment or underperformance in regional employment and training programming within a sector, where labor market and/or economic forecasts may spur concern and action.
- **Flag potential occupations of focus.** Use data and intelligence from regional business leaders (e.g., employer champions, board members, industry associations) to identify those high-demand occupations with sustainable wages that are most critical to your region and its businesses. Which may have significant talent gaps? Do these align with the industries you've prioritized based on a review of industry data?
- **Identify your geographic scope.** The regional geographic scope of your efforts may already be practically dictated to some degree by political boundaries or service areas (though it is important to note that the boundaries of functional regional economies do not typically line up neatly with jurisdictional or service area boundaries). If not, you and your partners *should* use LMI and intelligence from key employer partners—as well as an analysis of regional labor patterns and talent preparation processes—to define the geographic scope of your sector strategy efforts. *Note: As you further refine efforts with your sector partnership, your geographic scope may shift*.

Engage industry leaders (or "champions") to foster passion, interest, and commitment for solving common workforce challenges.

Surface the "ready and willing." Tap key regional employers/business leaders to gauge interest, passion, and commitment for working together to solve business challenges. Consider employers who are most vocal about talent challenges or others who have already demonstrated a willingness to engage.

3 *Form and Launch Sector Partnership(s)*

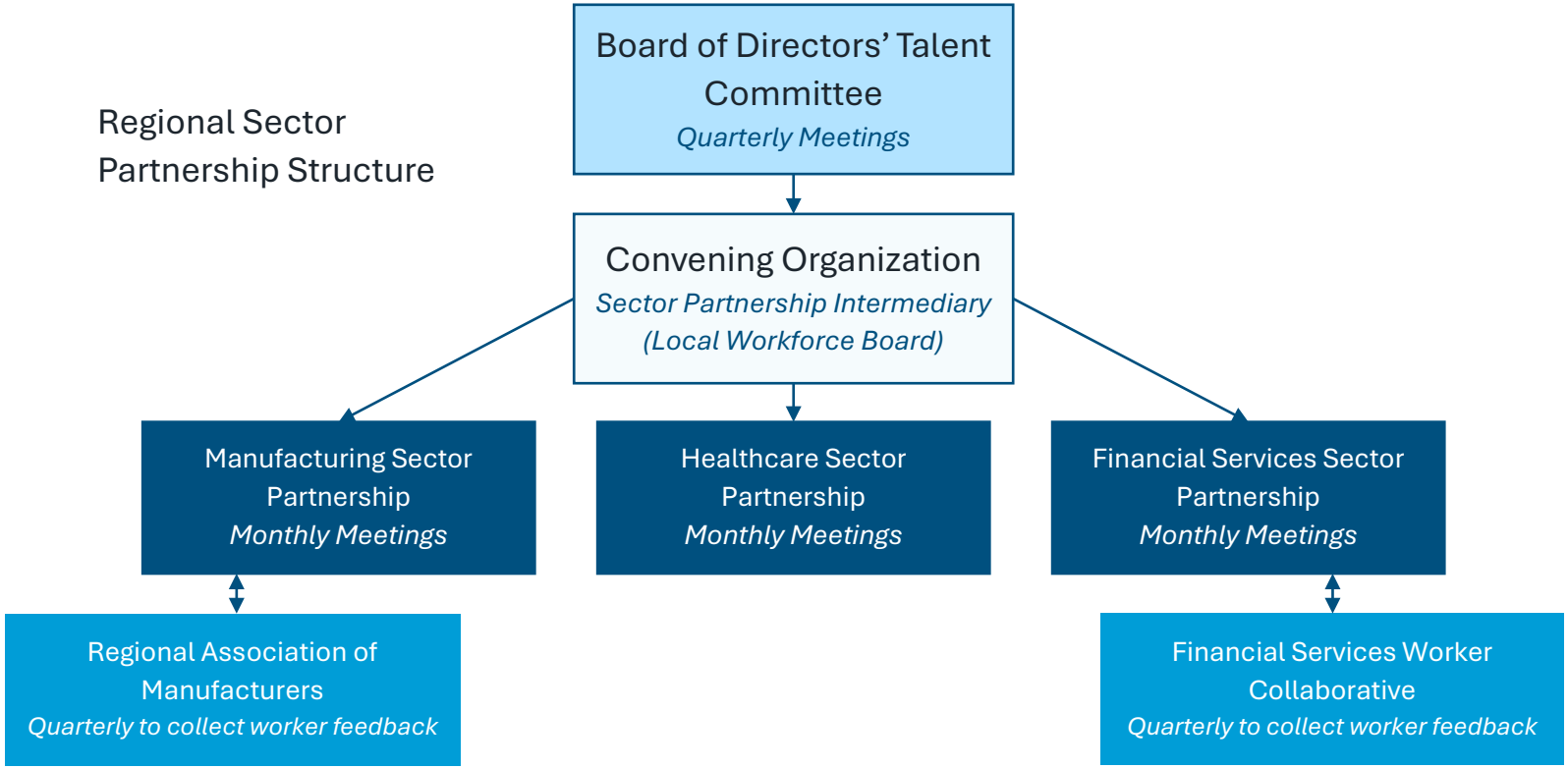
Determine the structure of your sector partnership and its efforts.

Sector partnerships can take many forms, and a single convening organization may decide to focus on multiple industry sectors at once. Employers, workforce development organizations (including workforce development boards), education and training providers, industry associations, economic development organizations, and other entities responsible for designing and delivering talent solutions can come together to form one or more industry sector partnerships focused on specific high-priority industries in many different ways. See figures 2 and 3 for examples.

Figure 2. Single industry regional sector partnership effort, with an oversight committee and specialized workgroups.

Note: workgroups (often identified as sector partnerships) determine their priority efforts to better manage complex work across various workstreams. This allows for partnerships to tap expertise across employers and partners to focus on making measurable progress for individual efforts.

Figure 3. Multiple industry sector partnerships supported by the same convener organization.



Note: In this case, the sector partnership convener also engages with a worker collaborative and extends its reach to manufacturing employers through a partnership with the regional manufacturer's association.

Select a sector convener, often also referred to as an "intermediary," "backbone organization," or "host organization."

A strong sector partnership convener is essential to guiding, supporting, and championing the work of the sector partnership. This lead organization supports overall service delivery to industry and worker customers and facilitates coordination across all sector partnership entities.

- **Selecting the right organization.** The sector partnership intermediary, or convener, should have the capacity to support sector partnership planning activities, meeting facilitation, strategy and project management, outreach and engagement with businesses and partners, and championship of the regional sector work. They should also have the respect of regional employers and regional workforce ecosystem partners.

Check out this resource! Refer to the Framework's "Sector Partnership Intermediaries" section (pages 5-7) for more detail on the responsibilities and qualities of a strong sector partnership intermediary organization.

Develop a regional sector partnership funding strategy.

Regional leadership should explore all the current and potential funding resources available to support the administration of the sector partnership and to fund its efforts to improve regional workforce approaches to training, education, and support of learners and workers for critical roles. While this should be an ongoing and evolving conversation, discussion of sustainable funding should start early.

- **Explore a diverse set of funders and resources.** Identify current and potential funders of your efforts, including federal grants, state and local funding, private sector contributions (including from your industry partners), and philanthropic organizations.
- **Think about a long-term strategy to promote sustainability** that includes a diversity of funding sources, a funding reserve to ensure ongoing responsiveness, and strong relationships with partners and funders to ensure advocacy for your efforts.

Check out this tool! Do you need help formulating a multi-partner funding strategy to support the efforts of your sector partnership? Check out this "Regional Sector Partnership Funding Strategy Example" resource as a starting point for funding your partnership launch and planning for long-term sustainability.

Expand the partnership as needed. Identify and engage additional employer, workforce, education and training, and community partners.

Now that you have focused your efforts on a particular industry (or industries), work with the key partners you engaged to establish your regional sector strategy efforts to identify additional partners to join the partnership. Create an outreach and recruitment strategy and share responsibility for growing the partnership.

- **Communicate a clear value proposition to each partner audience.** Consider creating an "elevator pitch" or other communications resource (like a compelling and accessible data summary or infographic) for joining the sector strategy effort and refine that pitch for each audience. Consult the "Pitching Sector Strategies to Key Audiences" resource for guidance regarding what might be most impactful in your pitches to employer partners, education and training institutions, workforce development partners, chambers and economic development organizations, and others.
- **Gather diverse partners to the table for your sector(s) of focus.** Consider a diverse group of employers from various industry subsectors (e.g., auto manufacturing and food manufacturing) who represent different company sizes and geography. Consider other diverse partners who represent worker voices and training and service providers. Leverage their connections to continue to expand your partnership as needed.
- **Get commitment to attend a kick-off meeting.** As you reach out to prospective sector partnership members, get commitment to attend a kick-off meeting, champion your efforts with others, and recruit additional attendees.

Check out this tool! Sector-based strategies benefit industry and workers, but they also provide key benefits to various other regional partners. Check out this "Pitching Sector Strategies to Key Audiences" resource to refine your messaging about the value of joining your sector partnership.

Formally launch efforts through a kick-off meeting, confirming the partnerships goals and securing commitment.

Schedule and facilitate a kick-off meeting to introduce your efforts, gain support for and consensus on key sector partnership objectives, and generate discussion about key occupational and talent management priorities.

- **Get the right people to the table.** As you reach out to industry partners and regional workforce ecosystem partners to invite them to your meeting, aim to include both key executive-level leaders who can commit their organization's staffing, resources, and capacity to your efforts, as well as various experts. Throughout your efforts, it's important to have leadership buy-in from employers and partners, and to have the right human resources and functional experts, curriculum experts, service providers, worker representatives, and others at the table as you define your strategies.
- **Generate excitement through a participatory agenda.** Create an engaging agenda that presents industry sector challenges and opportunities, encourages participation from employers and key partners, and generates excitement for collective action to solve critical regional workforce challenges.
- **Gain consensus on your vision, mission, values, goals, and priorities to generate sustained involvement and promote shared value.** In your first meeting (or couple of meetings), you and your key partners that have been meeting to plan for your sector partnership launch should discuss your draft vision, mission, values, goals, and potential priorities, gaining consensus and support from the full group.
- **Align the shared goals of the sector partnership to individual organizational goals.** Discuss with those in attendance how the collective goals align with their own internal organizational goals. This is important to both generating sustained commitment and to obtaining the capacity and support—both financial and otherwise—required for actionable and measurable sector partnership results.

Check out this tool! A strong, engaging agenda can generate commitment and excitement from your employers and partners. Check out this "Sample Sector Partnership Kick-Off Agenda Template" resource for a template and suggested guidance for your sector partnership kick-off meeting. For future meetings, use this "Sector Partnership Meeting Agenda Template."

Formalize partnership roles, responsibilities, expectations, and commitments.

Your efforts will benefit from clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and expectations, outlined for the sector partnership intermediary, industry partners, and all supporting regional entities.

- **Define a leadership role and identify responsibilities for industry leaders.** Leverage employer commitment to solving regional workforce challenges that are better solved with other employers and lean on them to guide the partnership toward those critical occupations and talent management challenges that are most critical to solve.
- **Detail clear roles, responsibilities, expectations, commitments, and assurances in an official partnership agreement or memorandum of understanding (MOUs).** Many sector partnerships decide to formalize roles and responsibilities through a formal partnership agreement to ensure ongoing commitment and engagement from all partners. It may detail roles and responsibilities, outline expectations for each partner, and identify funding and governance structures for the partnership. Agreements should be reviewed regularly (e.g., yearly) to manage expectations, align organizational missions, and respond to changes in needs or strategies.

Check out this tool! Review these "Regional Sector Partnership MOU Template" to help create a formal agreement that meets the needs of your sector partnership.

Create a regular cadence of meetings and feedback loops for key partners and create a clear roadmap for next steps.

Create a regular schedule of sector partnership meetings to generate and sustain momentum and ensure commitment. Track progress throughout, indicating key successes and milestones already achieved, and activities on the horizon.

Check out this tool! Many sector partnerships track progress through a sector partnership "roadmap" that keeps members apprised of key successes to date and upcoming meeting activities, as well as activity that may occur between meetings (e.g., internal data collection, discussions with various organizational subject matter experts, etc.). These can be provided separately or as an attachment to agendas. Check out this "Sector Partnership Roadmap Example" resource.

For additional help with your LAUNCH phase, check out these resources!

LAUNCH Phase: Guiding Questions

- Have we identified and convened the right regional leaders to establish an effective sector partnership?
- Do we have the organizational and leadership buy-in required of a strong sector partnership? Are our vision, mission, values, and goals aligned?
- Is there an existing body that could serve as the convener for our sector partnership?
- Is the organization or other entity that serves as our partnership's intermediary/convener well-poised, with sufficient staff capacity and resources, to play this role?
- Have we determined the criteria we will use to identify and prioritize industry sectors?
- Have we defined our geographic scope? Does it generally align with our regional labor market?
- Are we intentional about including diverse voices in our sector partnership?
- Do we have a regular meeting cadence, and the necessary capacity to facilitate the sector partnership?

Anticipated Milestones

At the end of the lAUNCH Phase, your sector partnership should expect to have reached the following high-level milestones.

Identified Partners

Partnership Agreement

Consensus on Initial Priorities

Meeting Cadence Established

Convener Selection

DESIGN Phase

Design Solutions for Critical Industry and Worker Pain Points

The DESIGN Phase of sector strategies implementation focuses on gathering and validating data to understand the key challenges within the targeted industry sectors and worker skills and needs. During this phase, partners work collaboratively to identify and narrow the focus of the partnership, ensuring that the most pressing issues are addressed. This involves analyzing labor market data, industry trends, and feedback from employers and workers to pinpoint specific needs and obstacles. Solutions are then designed to meet the needs of industry.

Engaged Partnerships

Employer partners are key in the DESIGN Phase as you begin to identify pain points, occupations, and priorities. Additionally, all partners are engaged in solution design to ensure a holistic approach that meets the needs of employers and workers.

Data-Informed Decision Making

Solutions are designed around key data, included occupational pain points, job requirements, necessary skills, and worker availability, skills, and needs.

Worker Voice and Job Quality

Job quality is considered when making decisions about occupations of focus. The partnership works to understand the talent pool's current skills and challenges. Solution design includes worker voice to ensure success throughout implementation.

DESIGN Phase: Activities

4 *Validate Data with Employers*

Present LMI to employers to get feedback, explore additional nuance, and supplement traditional data with industry feedback.

LAUNCH Phase Step 2: Use LMI to Determine Sector(s) of Focus and Potential Talent Gaps lays out the importance of using LMI to select your sector(s) of focus. In the DESIGN phase, you will continue to use LMI to help narrow your focus by identifying priority pain points and eventually selecting occupations to focus on within that sector. In the DESIGN phase, it is critical that employer partners validate your data to provide important context about the criticality of occupational growth trajectories, perceived talent gaps, and nuanced hiring cycles. This is important, as real-time LMI in particular, may under- or over-represent the number of openings, or there might be a specific positions that do not show high numbers of openings but that present significant challenges to employers if left unfilled.

- **Create digestible reports and/or presentations that overview data trends.** When presenting industry and occupational data, create clear and digestible reports to identify potential occupations for further discussion. Areas for discussion may be warranted by large growth projections (in number and/or growth rate), sustainable wages, analysis that seems to indicate gaps between labor demand and supply (in terms of workforce availability, skills, demographics, etc.), or trends in attrition or retention.

Figure 4. Example: Food Processing Workers Staffing Pattern (2020-2030)

OCCUPATION (WITH SOC CODE)	BASE EMPLOYMENT (2020)	PROJECTED EMPLOYMENT (2030)	EMPLOYMENT CHANGE (2020-2030)		MEDIAN HOURLY EARNINGS	TYPICAL ENTRY-LEVEL EDUCATION
			#	%		
51-3000. All Food Processing Workers	16,992	18,139	1,147	6.75	N/A	N/A
51-3011. Bakers	4,510	4,952	442	9.80	$15.42	HS diploma or equivalent
51-3021. Butchers & Meat Cutters	2,961	2,999	38	1.28	$17.38	HS diploma or equivalent
51-3022. Meat, Poultry & Fish Cutters/Trimmers	916	961	45	4.91	$18.58	HS diploma or equivalent
51-3023. Slaughterers & Meat Packers	2,158	2,297	139	6.44	$18.94	HS diploma or equivalent
51-3091. Food and Tobacco Roasting, Baking, and Drying Machine Operators and Tenders	449	497	48	10.69	$19.68	HS diploma or equivalent
51-3092. Food Batchmakers	5,367	5,747	380	7.08	$18.56	HS diploma or equivalent
51-3093. Food Cooking Machine Operators/Tenders	402	431	29	7.21	$19.14	HS diploma or equivalent
51-3099. Food Processing Workers, All Other	229	255	26	11.35	$17.50	HS diploma or equivalent

- **Identify potential trends, gaps, and focus areas of interest and create guiding questions for partnership discussions**. Generate open discussion with industry partners about these numbers, the level of need, the accuracy of projections, and whether they reflect the dynamics of which occupations may be most critical. Examine perceived gaps in the talent pipeline by looking at comparisons of occupational projections to associated training and education completion data, where available.
- **Identify data gaps and explore solutions for obtaining additional data.** Industry partners may suggest additional data collection and review to supplement the existing analyses. This may focus on additional roles not captured in your reports, different projection periods, or other elements. In some cases, industry partners may be able and willing to provide data they collect, Note: Refer to the LAUNCH Phase *"Step 2: Use LMI to Determine Sector(s) of Focus & Potential Worker Skill Gaps"* section of this document for reminders on where—and from whom—to obtain this data.

Check out this tool! For a high-level overview of industry and occupational data, as well as key LMI definitions, refer to the Framework's "Labor Market Information Analysis Guide" resource.

Collect additional primary data directly from partnership employers to add nuance and granularity.

Work with your industry partners to collect primary (i.e., directly sourced) data from employers that represents more dynamic, shorter-term projections and a more granular level of detail regarding regional demand for critical roles. This exercise will provide not only more actionable regional data but will encourage employers to engage in internal discussions about their growth patterns and most critical needs, as well as illuminate any under-representations in traditional LMI data sets.

- **Collect additional demand planning data on the needs of your employers for critical jobs and compare it to traditional labor market data projections.** "Demand planning" refers to a business's internal efforts to understand their projected hiring needs for roles, especially those most critical to their ongoing operations and growth. It includes an examination of whether projected hiring demand is a result of growth (i.e., new jobs) or of both natural and concerning turnover rates, retirements, or promotions into more advanced roles.
- **Expand your reach through surveys to partner organization constituents (e.g., industry associations, chamber of commerce members).** To extend your reach to a more representative sample of your region's employers in your industry of focus, especially as you continue to grow your employer membership, tap into regional industry associations to more widely distribute a demand planning survey.

5a *Prioritize Employer Pain Points and Occupations of Focus*

Use employer-led conversation to determine the most critical *pain point occupations*.

Use the data you have collected, analyzed, and discussed with your employer partners to come to consensus on the most critical pain point occupations to focus your sector strategy efforts.

- **Give employers space to discuss and prioritize their most critical occupations.** Employers benefit immensely from collaborative conversation about occupational needs and the criticality of specific jobs to their operations. Facilitated conversation can help them come to consensus on occupations of focus.
- **Discuss which occupational pain points are most critical to solve, and prioritize these in your sector strategy efforts.** Consider factors such as the highest number of job openings, positions that take the longest to fill or have a clear career pathway, or roles that most employer partners struggle to fill. Gather additional data as necessary to explore these factors fully and enhance your understanding of the level of effort that may be required to address high-priority pain points.

Check out this tool! Review the "Prioritizing Critical Pain Points Guide" resource to explore some guiding questions to help you navigate this employer-led conversation. This resource also includes a basic impact-effort matrix tool to help you facilitate conversations about the most critical roles and challenges.

5b *Identify Current and Potential Talent Pools*

Collect data and employer intelligence on current and potential sources of quality talent and individual talent preparation pathways.

To better understand current and potential talent pools and their training and preparation pathways, work with employers to mine human resource information systems (HRIS) and/or obtain information about the sources of their talent through other means.

- **Work with employers to understand where they currently find their talent and where they are being prepared.** Employers in your sector partnership have a wealth of information about where they get their best talent and how that talent was prepared. While this approach is a more advanced practice, mature sector partnerships may want to explore employer HRIS and applicant tracking systems (ATS) data.
- **Re-examine current and potential talent pools in the context of diverse and equitable talent pipelines.** Encourage employers to examine the diversity of their workforce – particularly those in critical roles. It may be helpful to compare the demographics of their workforce to the demographics of the surrounding community, particularly for those of working age. Do this same comparison with training institutions that provide training for those critical roles.

Facilitate employer-led conversation to determine the most critical *talent management challenges*.	Explore potential talent pools with service providers, training institutions, and organizations that represent workers.
Many workforce-related challenges transcend occupations and impact multiple critical roles. Others are focused on specific occupations or career pathways but focus less on preparation of quality talent and more on recruitment, retention, or upskilling needs. After a focused discussion on priority occupations for your sector partnership efforts, consider the following approaches to illuminate what this implementation guide refers to as "critical talent management challenges." • **Identify overall talent management challenges that transcend (but may contribute to) individual occupational pain points,** which may include issues such as lack of interest or awareness of the industry, employee retention issues, or lack of work-based learning opportunities like Registered Apprenticeship. • **Weigh the impact and effort of solving for talent management challenges to prioritize efforts.** Prioritize with your sector partnership those talent management challenges which may be most important to address, carefully weighing the impact solving them would make (on employers *and* workers), the effort required to solve them, and the willingness of employers and partners to address them.	Collaborate with organizations that directly interact with workers to identify and understand the characteristics and strengths of various talent pools within the region. This includes assessing the skills, qualifications, and readiness of individuals from diverse backgrounds, including underrepresented and marginalized communities. • **Work closely with service providers to identify individuals who are currently seeking new or different employment who may benefit from additional training or support.** Service providers, such as workforce development agencies and community-based organizations, have direct access to job seekers and can offer valuable insights into the characteristics and needs of this population. • **Partner with organizations that represent workers, such as labor unions, labor-management partnerships, worker centers, and community-based organizations, to gain insights into the needs and aspirations of the workforce.** These organizations can provide valuable feedback on the types of support and opportunities that workers are looking for, as well as barriers they may face in accessing quality jobs.

Look at the performance and capacity of regional training and education partners to provide a sufficient talent pool.

Engage in comprehensive demand-supply data analysis using previously collected LMI projections and publicly available education and training completion data. Collaborate with regional training and education partners and licensing bodies to understand learner enrollment, retention, completion rates, required credential attainment, and capacity to expand programs for critical roles if necessary.

- **Work directly with training and education partners in your partnership (and beyond) to understand enrollment and completer data and capacity to expand programs.** Work with identified training and education providers—especially those from which employers have determined they get great talent—to better understand enrollment and completion numbers for critical occupations. Compare this information to previously collected LMI to identify gaps in training capacity.
- **Obtain data from education and training providers and certificate-issuing organizations and/or licensing bodies to better understand credential attainment required for critical roles.** This effort may uncover a need to improve the rate at which training and education completers sit for licensure exams or other requirements of credential issuance. It may also point to opportunities to engage learners to understand their barriers to credential attainment.

Find the experts! If you have not already, connect with your state LMI team to ask for publicly available education data on enrollments and completions for programs identified to be relevant for critical roles. Consult the state LMI contact list on the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics website here, or consult public education data by visiting the National Center for Educations Statistics' (NCES) Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) website to explore this data yourself.

Examine how well your region attracts and retains qualified talent for critical jobs in your industry sector(s) of focus.

Mature sector partnerships may take the following steps to better understand the talent their region attracts and retains for critical jobs. This information can highlight the need for both talent retention and talent attraction strategies.

- **Work with education and training institutions to find out where learners are going after they complete relevant programs.** While this information is often difficult for education and training providers—both public and private—to obtain, information about whether your region is keeping the talent it graduates from relevant programming for critical jobs is extremely valuable.
- **Collect employer and worker intelligence on where talent goes when they leave (e.g., other employers, other regions, other industries).** Work with employers and workers directly—through exit surveys and other means—to understand why talent may leave their organizations. Are they going to other employers in the same industry? Leaving the industry altogether? Leaving your region for employment?
- **Discuss the need for strategies that promote overall industry attraction and retention to fill talent gaps and preserve the current labor force for critical occupations.** Find ways to promote your region's careers and critical, "good" jobs in the industry sector and to increase enrollments, completions, and placement with regional employers. When necessary, discuss additional efforts to attract qualified talent for critical roles from outside the region.

6a *Identify Job Requirements for Critical Roles*

Obtain consensus on the job requirements associated with critical occupations.

After identifying the most critical occupations of focus, explore the competencies, credentials, and other job requirements associated with your prioritized occupations. This step is crucial to better communicate job requirements to various audiences.

- **Start by defining what makes a great employee in this role and compare the results of this discussion with job descriptions for those roles.** Have employers brainstorm what makes a great employee and capture these attributes. Consider including existing workers in this exercise to hear from them directly. This can then be compared to what is currently communicated in existing job descriptions to see if there are any disconnects in what is desired and what is communicated.
- **Use existing competency and/or skills frameworks and competency models (or create new ones) as a framework for discussing job requirements.** There are several existing frameworks or models that can provide you with a starting point for a list of competencies to consider and modify with your employer partners. See the example resources provided below.

6b *Identify and Validate Worker Needs and Priorities*

Work with trusted community and worker organizations to deepen your understanding of your talent pool's skills, resources, and needs.

Engaging with trusted community-based organizations, labor unions, labor-management partnerships, and other worker-serving organizations is essential for validating data findings and gaining deeper insights into worker needs and priorities, which can help inform and refine sector partnership strategies down the road.

- **Make sure you have trusted community-based organizations and organizations that represent workers in your sector partnership.** Go back to the makeup of your sector partnership and make sure it includes organizations that can adequately represent worker voice and needs in the partnership. These organizations should be representative of the workers in your existing or potential talent pools, especially underrepresented populations.
- **Include labor union leaders and other representatives of worker-serving organizations in your sector partnership.** Engage with union and related leaders to understand the collective needs and priorities of existing workers, especially in industries with a strong union presence.

• **Examine the job requirements for critical roles, agree on the most important ones, and discuss how to clearly communicate these needs to training and education partners.** Identify what skills or credentials are truly *required* and what is simply *preference*. It's vital for education and training partners (and workers) to understand skill application in different industry contexts and the importance of each skill so they can develop better learning objectives and work-based learning experiences. Ensure alignment with state and national standards, certifying/licensing bodies, and other systems and entities, as appropriate. Explore the USDOL-ETA's Competency Modeling Clearinghouse and Occupational Information Network (O*NET) websites, and the Urban Institute Competency-Based Frameworks for Registered Apprenticeships as examples of these skill and competency framework resources.	• **Use the existing data to begin your conversations with these trusted partners.** Begin with what you think you know from the data you have collected and the research you have done. Ask questions that seek to deepen your understanding and challenge assumptions you may have.

Discuss and communicate how critical roles fit within career pathways to advancement.	Design focus groups, interviews, or worker surveys to validate the needs and priorities that have emerged.
Determine how critical jobs connect to both "feeder" jobs that lead to them and to advancement opportunities that may require additional training, education, or on-the-job experience. Capture and communicate this information to workers to promote enhanced career awareness and to cultivate long-term pipelines and sustained career options in the industry sector. • **Create career pathway maps that visualize career and education progressions and promote advancement opportunities.** This is especially important for entry-level jobs that are important doorways to long-term careers in critical industries but may not exhibit all of the important job indicators. In addition, career pathway maps can help current workers at each company better understand the requirements for advancement and promotion within their organization. • **Visualize and discuss multiple on- and offramps to education and training that promote advancement along career pathways.** Not every worker takes a traditional path to upskilling and advancement—and to landing in their career of choice. Family priorities, financial constraints, and non-traditional pathways within and across industries and occupations are realities of workers' careers and lives. To the extent possible, provide visual representation to these on- and offramps, as well as career progression opportunities.	Designing effective focus groups, interviews, or worker surveys to validate the needs and priorities that have emerged from your data requires careful planning and execution. • **Determine which method – focus group, interview, or survey – will be the most effective for the group of people you are trying to reach.** Clarify what goals you aim to achieve with this worker feedback and who you hope to hear from. Work with the community-based organization partners to determine the most effective method. • **Put a clear plan together for how you expect to achieve the results you'd like to see.** This will include timelines, responsibilities, and methods. For example, if conducting a survey, what platform will you use and who will design the survey within the platform? How will you distribute the survey, and who will compile the results? • **Work with community-based organizations or other experts as you develop the questions you will use.** Making sure your questions are free from assumptions or biases. Using language that is relatable to your participants is essential to getting quality results regardless of method. • **Ensure anonymity and that your participants feel safe to respond honestly.** When you conduct your focus group, interviews, or surveys, make sure the people participating feel safe to respond openly and honestly. Make sure they know their responses are anonymous, and then work to make sure that is true! Gaining and keeping the trust of workers is crucial to ensuring the long-term success of your sector strategies.

Conduct an analysis of the data gathered from these activities and provide a worker report to your sector partnership to understand how to best design services for this talent pool.

Conducting an analysis of the data gathered from existing sources, partners, and focus groups, interviews, or surveys, and then providing a worker report to your sector partnership, involves a structured process to ensure the findings are clear, actionable, and aligned with your strategic objectives.

- **Compile the data and categorize responses.** Organize the data by categorizing responses based on themes, topics, and demographic variables. This can include grouping feedback related to training needs, employment barriers, family priorities, support services, and more.
- **Synthesize your findings.** Combine the quantitative data (LMI, census, some survey responses) with your qualitative data (interviews, focus groups, open-ended survey responses) to get the clearest picture possible of your worker needs and priorities.
- **Develop the report.** Create a report to share with your sector partnership that is clear, explains your methodology (like who you talked to, what method you used, and what questions you asked), and what information you learned that is pertinent to your sector strategies. Be careful not to draw conclusions that weren't stated or put your own "spin" on this report. It should provide your partnership with information that will be helpful as you move to designing sector strategies that will benefit both employers and workers in the long-term.
- **Review and validate the report.** Conduct an internal review with key partners or committee members to ensure accuracy and completeness. Share a draft of the report with representatives from labor unions, labor-management partnerships, worker centers, and community-based organizations to gather their feedback and validate your findings. Take time to listen and make changes where necessary.
- **Present the report to your sector partnership.** Be open, honest, and transparent with the results. Be prepared to answer questions and gather feedback from your partners. You can then use these results as a group as you think about what strategies make the most sense for industry and for meeting the needs and priorities of workers.

7 *Design Sector-Based, Worker-Centered Solutions*

Design short- and long-term solutions to industry talent challenges identified for critical roles and talent management pain points. Ensure alignment with the most critical industry needs and quality job opportunities.

Sector-based, worker-centered solutions can address employers' occupational and talent management needs while offering support and employment preparation to workers. Solutions should be informed by insights around key pain points and aligned with industry and worker needs.

- **Identify and leverage solutions that are *already* working.** Sector partnerships should be sure not to ignore or neglect solutions that are already working or "reinvent the wheel." Before exploring the solutions described below, take stock with your industry partners, learners, job seekers, and workers to understand which workforce solutions are *already* leading to quality talent and quality job opportunities.
- **Explore a full continuum of workforce solutions to support the success of industry partners and workers.** With a focus on improving talent pipelines for critical roles and ensuring equitable access to quality, in-demand jobs to workers, your partnership should explore solutions that expand the regional pipeline of workers for critical jobs through everything from career inspiration and awareness activities and hands-on career exploration; to training, education and career preparation efforts; to use of work-based training and Registered Apprenticeships; to recruitment/job placement activities; to intentional retention, upskilling, and promotion along career pathways.
- **Make sure workforce preparation and pipeline solutions directly impact the critical occupational and talent management pain points prioritized.** As your sector partnership explores solutions and approaches, be sure that these solutions solve the industry partner and worker pain points you have identified throughout your process, and that *both* employers and workers are consulted throughout your solution prioritization and design to ensure relevance and success. More on worker voice is included below.

Check out this resource! The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Talent Pipeline Management® (TPM®) framework and methodology, one of many sector-based models for improving talent pipelines and creating worker opportunity, has created a valuable visual to represent the various stages of a worker's journey and the roles of education and training providers and employers in supporting that journey. Refer to "Figure 4: Value Stream Map" in the TPM Curriculum here (see TPM Orientation, page 11).

Incorporate worker needs into solution design to ensure success. Examine solutions and service strategies through an equity lens.

Ask workers for feedback on current and existing programming, identify barriers to successful completion of education and training, and look at solutions and strategies through an equity lens.

- **Make sure worker voice is incorporated into solutions and service delivery.** Leverage the regular feedback loops you have put in place with workers to ensure that your sector partnership's workforce approaches will meet their needs. Extend these approaches to capture feedback from learners in education and training programs and job seekers interacting with the regional workforce ecosystem to find quality jobs.
- **Examine prioritized solutions and services through an equity lens and ensure equitable approaches in design and implementation of those solutions.** Focused on good jobs with meaningful pathways, your sector partnership should seek to diversify talent pipelines and ensure equitable access to workforce and education programs, services, supports. Include historically marginalized populations' voices throughout in the design, delivery, and evaluation of your sector strategy efforts.

For additional help with your DESIGN phase, check out these resources!

DESIGN Phase: Guiding Questions

- What data have we obtained to determine occupational focus, and how are we validating it with employers?
- How are we identifying and prioritizing occupations based on their criticality to the industry?
- What data are we using to understand the skills, interests, and needs of workers and learners?
- How do we ensure that our priority occupations meet the definition of "good jobs" with sustainable wages and career pathways?
- Do we have a deep understanding of the job requirements for our identified occupations of focus?
- How are we providing time and space for employer partners to discuss common pain points, critical roles, emerging occupations, and talent management challenges?
- How are we providing time and space for workers and learners to share their interests, challenges, and needs?
- Have we identified existing and potential talent pools with input from both employers and worker-serving organizations?
- How are we providing time and space for workers and learners to share their interests, challenges, and needs?
- How are we gathering input from both employers and worker-serving organizations to identify existing and potential talent pools?

Anticipated Milestones

At the end of the DESIGN Phase, your sector partnership should expect to have reached the following high-level milestones.

System for Validating Data (Employer & Worker)

Identification of Priority Occupations

Strategies Identified to Support Industry and Workers

Clear and Actionable Data Analysis

Understanding of Job Requirements and Worker Needs

Implement Coordinated Solutions and Track Progress

In the IMPLEMENT Phase, partners begin to implement the developed strategies, working together to create a plan for implementation to ensure alignment with their established goals. This blueprint outlines the steps, timelines, responsibilities, and accountability for accomplishing the work. Establishing clear processes is crucial for maintaining consistency and continued alignment across partners. As these solutions are implemented, partners set up tracking mechanisms to monitor ongoing progress.

Engaged Partnerships

Partners begin to implement sector strategies together, according to their identified roles and responsibilities. They begin to track progress based on their agreed upon goals and metrics.

Data-Informed Decision Making

The sector partnership begins to gather new data as solutions are implemented. This data focuses on the goals and metrics that partners laid out and tracks the progress of the solutions.

Worker Voice and Job Quality

Partners focus on diversifying talent pipelines, and solutions are implemented and examined through an equity lens. Workers and/or worker-representing organizations are included in tracking progress.

IMPLEMENT Phase: Activities

8 *Implement Streamlined Solutions*

Establish and Monitor Key Milestones and Metrics

Create a service delivery implementation plan to outline the steps, timelines, responsibilities, and accountability associated with the delivery of prioritized solutions to industry partners and workers.

The design and delivery of solutions like career inspiration and awareness initiatives, training and education programs, work-based learning models like Registered Apprenticeship, worker and learner supports, and worker recruitment, retention, and upskilling efforts are all complex and require the resources and capacity of many partners. An implementation plan is key to capturing the actionable steps, timelines, responsibilities, and associated measures of success of your partnership efforts.

- **Create a comprehensive implementation plan.** In this critical step, partners should use the collective vision and goals outlined in the LAUNCH phase, prioritized solutions identified to address critical industry and worker pain points in the DESIGN phase, and ongoing input from employer and worker customers to design an implementation plan. This plan can be simple to start and gain more complexity as the partnership matures. Revisit this plan often and make agreed-upon adjustments, as necessary.

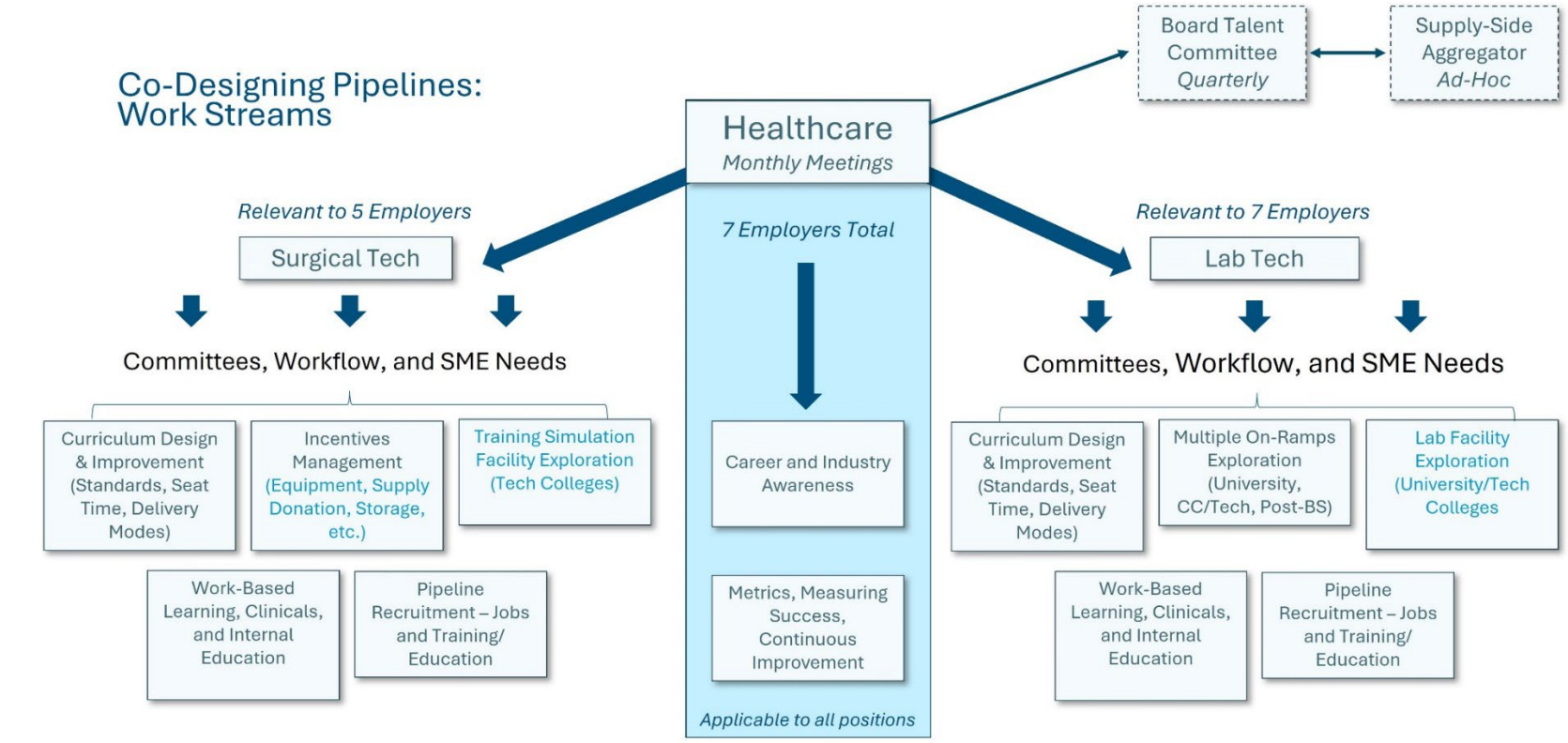
Check out this tool! A simple action plan can be used as a starting point for documenting roles and responsibilities associated with implementing your partnership's solutions. Whether launching a career awareness campaign to attract workers to an industry or creating or improving complex education and training programming, a simple tool to track timelines, progress, responsibilities, and outcomes is key. Check out this "Implementation for Impact Planning Tool" to get started.

Break down workstreams and coordinate working groups to advance complex solutions.

Complex solutions often include multiple work streams designed, delivered, and led by multiple employer representatives and partner organizations. Whether creating a new education or training program, implementing improvements to existing work-based learning solutions, diversifying worker pipelines, or designing and employing new worker retention strategies, breaking down these various workstreams into pieces and supporting them with knowledgeable working groups can help a sector partnership manage the work.

- **Create specialized workgroups to extend the expertise and capacity of your sector partnership and address specific components of each solution.** Specific solutions require different expertise. Human resources leaders may not be experts in the specific on-the-job skills required for a position for example. Identifying specific workstreams and assigning them to experts identified by your employer and other partners can extend the expertise and capacity. It can also bring worker voice to the table by tapping current workers in critical occupations.
- **Depict workstreams in graphic form to capture high-level roles and responsibilities and track the various workstreams occurring simultaneously.** See Figure 5, Co-Designing Pipelines: Work Streams for an example.

Figure 5 Co-Designing Pipelines: Work Streams



9 *Establish and Monitor Key Milestones and Metrics*

Set and track key activities, milestones, outputs, and outcomes that indicate your success in serving industry partners and workers.

For a sector partnership to be sustainable, it must measure progress toward meeting the needs of industry partners and workers and the goals of the partnership's members. Measuring and demonstrating progress provides value to employers and encourages a level of sustained ownership in your efforts. This progress also shows system partners the value in aligning resources and designing services that will move their participants or students into family-sustaining careers and support workers through the creation of good jobs and career pathway opportunities.

- **Discuss and clearly define what success means to your sector partnership, and what it means to individual employers and workers.** Discuss what is most important to your sector partnership members and most critical to solving the occupational and talent management challenges you have identified through your work together.
- **Align your metrics to what's important to your key audiences to keep them engaged.** Tracking and monitoring progress toward sector partnership goals is key to sustained involvement and support of your efforts, and to ongoing continuous improvement efforts that ensure quality service delivery to industry partners and workers. Your partnership should develop common measures of success based on input from employers and workers and in alignment with your overall partnership vision and goals for regional prosperity.
- **Track short-term wins and progress toward longer-term metrics.** Track ongoing activities through a logic model that details a set of activities which lead to those milestones most important to achieving leading and lagging metrics, or outcomes. This is a great way to ensure alignment between your efforts and your ultimate goals. As new solutions or approaches are proposed, check these against your long-term regional workforce goals for your industry sector—and the pain points identified—to be sure those efforts are in alignment with your mission and the challenges you set out to solve.
  - *Activities* signify the actions your partnership takes to move your identified solutions forward. They contribute to reaching key milestones important to your overall implementation. For example, your partnership employers may re-examine their job descriptions and role requirements to make sure they are in alignment with the needs for each role. They may also launch internal surveys to understand what has contributed to the success of their highest performing workers for critical jobs. You may carry out these activities to achieve better communication to various partners and

constituents about the job requirements for your roles of focus and communicate about the skills that lead to success.

- *Milestones* are actions or events that mark a significant change or stage in development. Milestones demonstrate progress toward outcomes. For the example above, this might include capturing adjusted requirements for critical roles that include emerging skills not accurately captured in current job descriptions, for which better information can now be provided to education and training partners and potential workers. It may also include reduced barriers to entry for roles after discussion of skills-based hiring instead of credential requirements.
- *Outcomes* may be measured by leading and lagging metrics. Leading metrics are shorter-term measures that capture progress toward longer-term goals. In this case, enhanced and more accurate job descriptions may lead to more and better qualified candidates for a critical role in the short-term, resulting in more job offers to fill critical jobs. In the long-term, lagging metrics like higher productivity and retention of employees in this role may be tracked as a result of getting the *right* candidates through the door through the improvements made earlier in the sector partnership's process.

Historically, sector strategy models have focused primarily on process measures such as awareness, engagement, and certification completion rates, which, while useful when sector partnerships are initially built, are incomplete. For a more holistic approach to measure impact, include long-term goals and outcomes.

Check out this tool! Review this "Example Metrics and Measures of Success" resource to explore various metrics that many sector partnerships track to monitor their progress.

Establish regular opportunities and methods for communicating progress, success, and personal interest success stories to various community audiences and constituents. Focus on the positive impact to employers, workers, and communities.

Data tells a part of your sector partnership's success story, but communicating successes through regular reports, presentations, and various narrative formats (e.g., promising practice briefs, personal interest stories, videos highlighting the impact of your efforts on industry partners and workers) can resonate with your key constituents and garner and expand support for your ongoing efforts. Consider the following strategies for reporting on your progress.

- **Provide regular opportunities for various audiences to learn about the progress of your industry sector partnership efforts.** For example, quarterly progress reports, presentations, or other communications about progress toward your goals can excite key audiences and create support and advocacy for your ongoing efforts. These strategies can also bring additional employers and partners to the table and inspire workers to consider industry jobs and training programs. Find existing workforce ecosystem leadership meetings, conferences, and other opportunities to promote the progress and success of your partnership efforts.
- **Create success story briefs, videos, and other items that highlight the transformational journeys of workers in the industry sector.** Not only are these opportunities to promote the success of training, education, and career preparation efforts for critical roles in your industry sector, they are opportunities to highlight worker success and inspire new talent in critical career fields. Highlight things like successful entry into new careers, progression along critical industry career pathways, and transformative wage increases and career advancement for workers. These kinds of communications can build support for and engagement with your efforts and also help "make the case" around sustainability and scaling.

Capture what you have learned throughout the implementation process and adjust strategies as necessary.

As you implement your solutions, capture what went well and what didn't, with a focus on future continuous improvement. Use sector partnership meetings to gather ongoing feedback and insights from employers and partners. As important, ensure opportunities for workers and worker-serving organizations to be involved in measuring progress and determining next steps toward success.

For additional help with your IMPLEMENT phase, check out these resources!

IMPLEMENT Phase: Guiding Questions

- Have we developed a shared document that outlines implementation strategies, timelines, and responsible parties?
- Have we established common, shared measures of success that all partners use to measure progress on our sector strategy initiatives?
- How are we ensuring that employers, industry organizations, and workers have input into the strategies we are implementing and the measurements we are using?
- Do we have a committee or workgroup structure in place to ensure that complex tasks are completed?
- What key activities, milestones, and leading and lagging indicators have we established and tracked to monitor progress, successes, and failures on our approaches and delivery systems?
- How are we ensuring that metrics focus on addressing pain points and opportunities for various audiences, including employers, learners, and workers?
- Are we actively capturing successes, challenges, and lessons learned to reflect on and use in a continuous improvement process?

Anticipated Milestones

At the end of the IMPLEMENT Phase, your sector partnership should expect to have reached the following high-level milestones.

A Coordinated Implementation Plan)

Implemented Strategies

Data Tracking and Performance Systems/Dashboards

Good Jobs Guidelines Established and Reinforced

Identified Shared Measures

SUSTAIN Phase

Adapt and Improve Sector Strategies

The SUSTAIN Phase is dedicated to ensuring the long-term impact and growth of the partnership and its initiatives. It involves collecting feedback from partners and constituents to gauge the effectiveness of the implemented solutions and identify areas for improvement. By analyzing data gathered from various sources, the partnership can make informed decisions on how to refine strategies and scale successful practices. Continuous improvement is a key focus during this phase, as ongoing adjustment ensures that the strategies remain relevant and effective in both addressing industry needs and improving worker outcomes. Through intentional evaluation and adaptation, the partnership can achieve sustainable success and expand its positive impact over time. Continued communication about partnership successes, growth, impacts, and outcomes is also an important component of this phase.

Engaged Partnerships

Engaged partners use their diverse perspective to give feedback to the effectiveness of implemented strategies. They celebrate and replicate achievements and successes and look for opportunities for improvement.

Data-Informed Decision Making

Robust data analysis plays a pivotal role in continuous improvement, ensuring the sector strategies are successful. Through intentional evaluation and adaptation grounded in data insights, the sector partnership can continue to innovate and scale solutions.

Worker Voice and Job Quality

Feedback from workers is incorporated into continuous improvement strategies. By incorporating worker perspectives, the sector partnership can make informed decisions on how to scale successful practices and refine strategies to better meet worker needs.

SUSTAIN Phase: Activities

10 *Reinforce Regular Feedback Loops*

Reinforce feedback loops with employer partners.

Your partnership already established feedback loops when it invited industry partners to the table to identify critical occupations and talent management pain points, and to design and implement solutions in collaboration with regional partner organizations. To enhance this ongoing engagement and ensure that your efforts are meeting ever-changing business needs, your partnership can reinforce existing feedback mechanisms through creating additional opportunities for employers to provide feedback on progress throughout the effort. Feedback-gathering activities typically occur at least annually, but may take place more or less frequently depending on the solutions you are implementing.

- **Launch surveys to gauge employer partner satisfaction with your sector strategy efforts, including sector partnership meetings, implemented workforce pipeline solutions, and regional partnership progress to date.** Collecting feedback at various reflection points can help your partnership adjust its approaches to sector partnership meetings and strategic efforts, sustain employer satisfaction and involvement, adjust strategies to better meet existing needs, and capture new, emerging needs that may need attention.
- **Call employer partners—especially your strongest champions—to have an open and honest chat about what is and is not working well and confirm what is most important to them. Use this intel to guide continuous improvement efforts.** Regular, individual touchpoints with industry partners can provide an additional opportunity for candid feedback and help prioritize efforts that may not surface in full partnership meetings. Often, these conversations can help guide your agenda development for future discussions, refine your programmatic approaches, and cultivate a sense of ownership from important regional employers for key efforts.
- **Regularly check in to confirm that prioritized pain points are still the most pressing.** As economic and labor market dynamics shift, those priorities identified at the start of your sector partnership activities may not be as relevant, and new and emerging struggles may surface. It's important to check in during your sector partnership meetings, in one-on-one conversations, and through various other information collection mechanisms (e.g., surveys to partnership employers and extended employer networks).

Reinforce feedback loops with workers.

Just as your partnership should make a concerted effort obtain direct feedback about worker needs and potential barriers throughout the design and implementation phases, you should also engage directly with learners, job seekers, and workers impacted by your efforts to gauge their satisfaction, short- and long-term success in the job market and in critical roles, and insight on potential improvements.

- **Utilize surveys and focus groups to obtain feedback and performance data (e.g., job placement, retention, upskilling and promotion) on worker success.** Focus your efforts on obtaining worker voice regarding the relevance of your sector solutions, equitable access to programming and opportunities, and culture changes that might be needed in the industry to promote a positive experience for all workers. Distribute surveys through the convening organization or through employer partners and maintain anonymity to ensure honest worker feedback.
- **Create a worker collaborative.** Consider providing regular, formal opportunities—through your convening organization or another partner—to provide discussion among the employees of industry sector partners about key workforce issues, needed support services, areas for program and initiative improvement, and training, education, and upskilling innovations that lead to success. Some sector partnerships create a "worker collaborative" or "worker partnership" to regularly obtain worker feedback and present it anonymously to sector partnership employers and partners for continuous improvement.
- **Leverage labor unions, labor-management partnerships, worker centers, and other worker-serving organizations**—including workforce, education, and community-based organization partners—to elevate worker voice collectively.
- **Include a focus on Good Jobs Principles in your worker feedback efforts.** Ensure that worker feedback efforts include a reflection on job quality indicators like equitable recruitment and hiring practices; family-sustaining wages and quality benefits; diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and belonging (DEIAB) efforts; empowerment and representation; job security and safe and welcoming working conditions; organizational culture; and opportunities for skill and career advancement; among others.

Check out these tools and resources! Consult the following job quality resources from various national initiatives, including the U.S. Department of Labor's (USDOL) Good Jobs Initiative, the U.S. Department of Commerce's Job Quality Toolkit; and their collaborative "Good Jobs Principles" fact sheet.

Reinforce feedback loops with partners—those in your sector partnership and beyond—and various other community constituents.

Strong, sustained regional partnerships require maintenance, trust, and shared value creation. It is important to collect feedback from the regional partners actively engaged in your sector partnership, as well as others impacted by your sector strategy efforts. Gather regular feedback through your ongoing partnership meetings, one-on-one conversations about progress and priorities, and survey mechanisms.

11 *Engage in Continuous Improvement and Sustainability*

Adopt a culture of continuous improvement and utilize a recognized continuous improvement framework.

There are many continuous improvement frameworks and methodologies that partners can leverage and embed in their work to identify and implement improvements to their sector strategy efforts. As mentioned in the "Implement" phase, you should be capturing key learnings and opportunities for improvement (or replication of success) throughout your efforts. As your designed solutions and programs begin producing results (e.g., graduates, certificate completions, retention strategy implementation), examine them for potential failures and improvement opportunities to promote service and strategy excellence and generate continued support and buy-in for your regional efforts.

- **Offer opportunities for (formal or informal) reflection throughout workforce solution design and implementation.** As discussed throughout this implementation guide, find opportunities to collect industry partner feedback and worker voice to support strategy design and delivery and to surface opportunities for improvement.
- **Base opportunities for improvement on those efforts for which you are not meeting the activity, milestone, and short- and long-term outcome metrics identified and tracked throughout your implementation.** Note that some of these identified shortcomings may illuminate program or service quality concerns at your organization or those of your other partnership members. Conversations about improvement should be focused on ways that these improvements—no matter where they are needed—will impact overall regional workforce pipeline efforts and result in positive outcomes for industry partners *and* workers.

- **Adopt one of many continuous improvement frameworks and/or methodologies to support your continuous improvement efforts.** There are many continuous improvement models, and you can choose one that works for your sector partnership. For the sake of simplicity, we have summarized basic continuous improvement steps below. These steps are most closely aligned to the DMAIC approach—Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve, and Control.
  - Step 1: Identify specific improvement opportunities or failures in your services design or delivery.
  - Step 2: Analyze the root causes of those failures or shortcomings, through data and discussion of the "whys" behind them.
  - Step 3: Develop solutions and improvements to these system failures, bringing industry partner, worker, and regional partner voices to the table to ensure solutions will work for all collaborators and constituents.
  - Step 4: Pilot or test these solutions with a few employer and training provider champions, for example, without implementing them partnership- or system-wide. Ensure that these new solutions and approaches will work.
  - Step 5: Implement proven solutions at scale for the benefit of the full partnership and the industry and workers it serves.
- **Revisit partnership vision, mission, values, goals, priority efforts, and various measures of success in light of intelligence gathered through your continuous improvement efforts.**

Check out these tools and resources! Some well-known continuous improvement frameworks and methodologies include the Plan, Do, Check (or Study), Act Cycle and Six Sigma and Lean Six Sigma. The Human (or Customer-)-Centered Design model may also be valuable in continuous improvement efforts.

Revisit sustainable funding strategies in the context of your sector partnership's progress.

Revisit your funding and sustainability planning conversations in the context of your progress, achievement toward key milestones and metrics, and feedback collected from industry partners and workers.

- **Review what has traditionally been important to sustained involvement in and support of regional workforce initiatives—and what has impeded them.** As you revisit potential funding mechanisms and plans for long-term stability, discuss what have traditionally been barriers *or* advantages to obtaining long-term support, funding, and engagement in workforce and/or sector-based initiatives and what you may have experienced in your work thus far. Discuss with your sector partnership what has motivated them to invest their time and resources in your effort, and what might sustain that involvement.

Check out these tools! To prepare for deeper discussions with your future sector partnership, check out this "Regional Sector Partnership Funding Strategy Example" resource as a starting point.

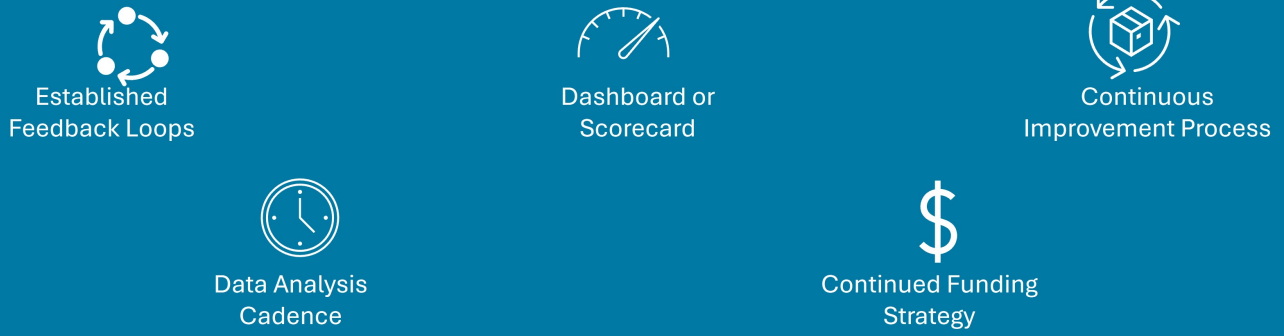
For additional help with your SUSTAIN phase, check out these resources!

SUSTAIN Phase: Guiding Questions

- Have we established, and are we using, regular feedback loops to identify changes in employer or workers' needs? Are they effective?
- Have we established clear goals and metrics to measure the progress of the sector partnership and sector strategies? Are these transparent and available to all partners and constituents?
- Have we established methodologies and timelines to examine data from feedback and metrics to identify successes and areas for improvement?
- How are we addressing service gaps and identifying opportunities to improve outcomes for workers?

Anticipated Milestones

At the end of Phase 4, your sector partnership should expect to have accomplished:

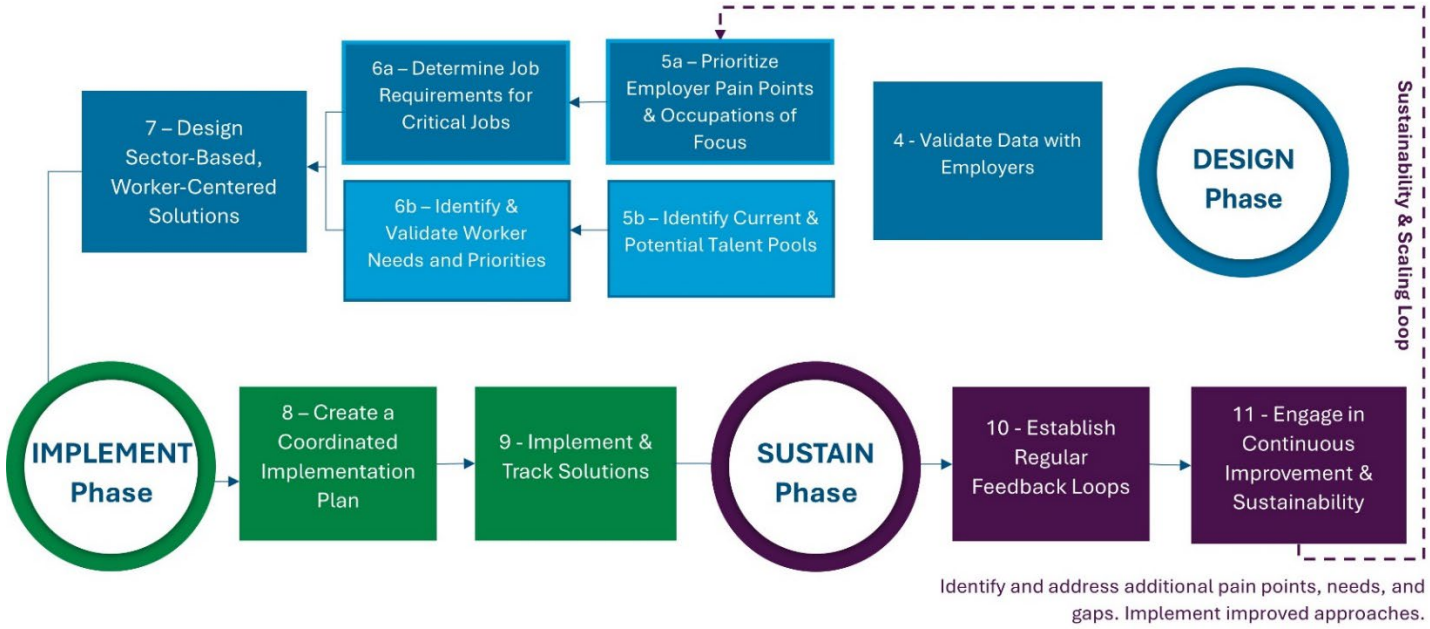


Sustainability and Scaling Loop

The work of identifying successes and challenges, refining processes and strategies, and identifying new pain points and priorities will continue well beyond initial implementation. In fact, this work is never really done. To ensure long-term success for industry and worker partners, an iterative continuous improvement cycle must continue so that the work is not only sustained but can grow into greater and more impactful solutions.

This "loop" is depicted in Figure 6, Scaling and Sustainability Loop. Within an existing sector partnership, going back to revisit prioritized pain points, understanding worker needs, and designing new or improved strategies should be a common and ongoing occurrence. The convening organization should have this kind of review built into a regular and re-occurring schedule to ensure the sector partnership establishes a continuous improvement rhythm. During periods of economic shifts or occupational and skill need transformation, a re-evaluation of your industry and/or occupational focuses may be a critical component of this sustainability and scaling loop.

Figure 6, Scaling and Sustainability Loop



SUSTAINABILITY and SCALING LOOP Guiding Questions

- How frequently are we conducting reviews of our sector partnership's processes and strategies for effectiveness and impact?
- What mechanisms do we have in place to identify, document, and respond to both successes and challenges?
- Do we have established criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of our strategies?
- Do we have processes in place to consider when and how we should expand our focus to ensure alignment for industry relevance and to occupational and worker needs?
- What strategies are in place for scaling successful practices and solutions within our sector partnership?

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Additional Resources

- Common Sector Strategies Implementation Challenges
- LAUNCH Phase Resources
- DESIGN Phase Resources
- IMPLEMENT Phase Resources
- SUSTAIN Phase Resources

Common Sector Strategies Implementation Challenges

Common Challenge	Explanation	Approaches and Resources
Adequate and Sustainable Funding	Sector initiatives often falter due to a lack of dedicated funding for essential personnel and activities. The absence of consistent financial support undermines the partnership's ability to maintain momentum and deliver impactful outcomes. Having a long-term funding strategy that consists of funding to support organizational capacity, staffing, and the strategies that result from the partnership are essential to sector partnership sustainability and scalability.	**Key tools and resources:** • Revisit the LAUNCH phase of this guide to review the **Develop a regional sector partnership funding strategy** tips. • Check out the **Regional Sector Partnership Funding Strategy** example, which can help your partnership think through existing and potential funding sources and document gaps in your funding strategy. • Visit the **Funding Resources** section of the LAUNCH phase resources.
Adequate Staffing	One challenge to sustaining sector partnerships is staffing capacity, which necessitates both dedicated staffing and a specialized skillset. This skillset involves facilitating groups with diverse agendas and priorities, creating and implementing effective plans, maintaining partner engagement over time, empowering multiple partners to make measurable progress together, and navigating local politics, among other complex tasks. Importantly, staffing skillsets also include gaining and fostering all partners' respect and trust through demonstration of	**Key tools and resources:** • Check out the **Resources for Conveners** in the LAUNCH phase resources in this guide. • Explore Collective Impact Forum's **Backbone Starter Guide** for ideas on how to structure your convening organization, including staffing. • Review the **Step 3: Form and Launch Sector Partnership(s)** section of this guide for strategies on choosing and structuring the convener organization.

Common Challenge	Explanation	Approaches and Resources
	neutrality and commitment to the partnership's collective vision. Ensuring the right people with these capabilities are in place is essential for the long-term success and effectiveness of sector partnerships.	• Check out this resource from Collective Impact Forum on **Facilitating Intentional Group Learning: A Practical Guide to 21 Learning Activities**. Resources like this can help with professional development of your sector strategy facilitators to continue to foster strong partner engagement.
Data Practices and Metrics Tracking	Practitioners noted that data management and measurement also present additional hurdles to sustaining partnerships. Determining responsibility for data collection and analysis is essential for grounding ongoing work and assessing the effectiveness of partnership activities. Regular updates and "measuring the existing engagement of partners" are crucial for demonstrating impact and informing strategic decision-making. However, challenges in data collection and measurement can impede progress and hinder the partnership's ability to achieve its objectives.	**Key tools and resources:** • Visit **Core Component #2: DATA-INFORMED DECISION MAKING** in the USDOL Sector Strategies Framework to understand how the use of data is central to sector strategies and woven throughout the Key Elements. • The importance of the use of data, as well as practical ideas for how to use data are demonstrated throughout this guide. Two particular areas of focus include **Step 2: Use LMI to Determine Sector(s) of Focus and Potential** Talent Gaps in the LAUNCH phase of this guide, as well as **Step 4: Validate Data with Employers** in the DESIGN phase. • Additionally, the **SUSTAIN phase** in this guide includes several practical types of data that may be collected and used for long-term success and sustainability of your partnership.

Common Challenge	Explanation	Approaches and Resources
		• Check out this resources from National Fund for Workforce Solutions on **Making Data More Useful.**
Developing Focus and Strategy to Navigate a Crowded Landscape	One major hurdle experienced by many is the challenge of helping partners navigate through the noise of a crowded workforce landscape while eliminating duplication of effort. Multiple programs, shifting priorities, and new initiatives make it difficult to effectively prioritize sector strategies over a long period of time. A sector strategy approach is most effectively operated when it is the foundational approach for an organization that other work is organized around, rather than it becoming "just another initiative." This kind of reorganization and focus is difficult to establish.	**Key tools and resources:** Effective sector strategies are best accomplished when they are viewed as the foundation for how you do business, rather than an "add-on" or another initiative. When viewed this way, sector partnerships and strategies can help you organize your work, evaluate priorities, and implement other initiatives. • For ideas on this type of approach, revisit **USDOL's Sector Strategy Framework Key Element #4: Sector-Based Service Delivery**. • You may also want to revisit **Step 8: Create a Coordinated Implementation Plan** for practical ideas on how to implement this approach.
Maintaining a Balanced Approach	Worker voice and employer-driven approaches are complementary, not in opposition to one another, but it can be difficult to maintain this balance. Sector strategy success hinges on everyone benefiting from a strong talent pool that supports both the community and its employers. Successful sector partnerships do not view the needs of each constituency as "mutually	**Key tools and resources:** Remembering that sector strategy work should be rooted in industry engagement and working to understand and implement the importance of the core component of Worker Voice and Job Quality should help you achieve this effective level of balance and complementary work. It may be helpful to visit the following resources.

Common Challenge	Explanation	Approaches and Resources
	exclusive," but rather require active engagement from both employers and workers.	• The **USDOL Sector Strategy Framework**, which outlines the importance of worker voice and job quality, as well as the importance of an industry-driven approach. • Visit the **Worker Voice and Job Quality** section of this guide for helpful ideas and resources for including workers throughout the phases of a sector partnership. • Revisit the **DESIGN phase** activities in this guide for practical ways to gather input from employers and workers to design strategies that work for all.
Organizational Capacity	Organizational capacity includes having the necessary infrastructure, technology, and human resources to support effective collaboration. Key elements include robust communication systems, data management tools, and skilled leadership and staff, including cross-trained staff to mitigate the effects of turnover. Ensuring that organizational structures are in place to support decision-making and implementation processes is vital for maintaining partner engagement and achieving long-term success. Without adequate organizational capacity, sector partnerships may struggle to coordinate efforts, track progress, and sustain their momentum.	**Key tools and resources:** Many of the resources that speak to adequate staffing also speak to organizational capacity. • Check out the **Resources for Conveners** in the LAUNCH phase resources in this guide. • Explore Collective Impact Forum's **Backbone Starter Guide** for ideas on how to structure your convening organization. • Review the **Step 3: Form and Launch Sector Partnership(s)** section of this guide for strategies on choosing and structuring the convener organization.

Common Challenge	Explanation	Approaches and Resources
Sustained Employer Buy-in	Sector partnerships often struggle with first attracting employers to the partnership, as well as fostering meaningful and ongoing engagement with employers. It is difficult to gain buy-in and find ways to overcome employers' "initiative fatigue" and outreach from multiple workforce and education ecosystem partners. This often stems from unclear expectations, competing internal or initiative priorities, slow or stalled momentum or progress, and lack of shared value or return on investment (ROI).	**Key Tools and Resources:** • Revisit the "**Form and Launch Sector Partnership(s)**" section of this implementation guide for more on engaging industry employers in meaningful sector partnership leadership roles. • Sector-based strategies benefit industry and workers, but they also provide key benefits to various regional partners and stakeholders. Chek out this **Pitching Sector Strategies to Key Audiences** resource to refine your messaging about the value of joining your sector partnership. • Revisit the **Engage in Continuous Improvement and Sustainability** section of this guide for more on key tenets of sustained employer and partner engagement. • Revisit the suggested approaches and resources in the **Implement and Track Solutions** section of this guide, which will help you track milestones and metrics that represent your progress.

LAUNCH Phase: Tools and Resources

The following resources may be useful to sector partners in the LAUNCH phase. Several of these resources also include content that is relevant and valuable in other phases.

Sector Strategies Models and Frameworks

- ETA Sector Strategies Framework and related resources on WorkforceGPS
- Next Generation Sector Partnership Model, Institute for Networked Communities (INC)
- Toolkit for Developing High-Performing Industry Partnerships, National Fund for Workforce Solutions
- Talent Pipeline Management® (TPM) Framework, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation

Resources for Collaborative Efforts

- Collective Impact Model resources:
  - Collective Impact Forum
  - Tamarack Institute
  - Community Toolbox
- Multistate Collaboration Toolkit, Appalachian Regional Commission, Appalachian Regional Initiative for Stronger Economies (ARISE)
- Quick Guides for Collaboratives, National Fund for Workforce Solutions

Resources for Conveners/Intermediaries/Backbone Organizations

- Convener's Checklist, Collaborative Leaders Network
- Backbone Starter Guide, Collective Impact Forum

Labor Market Information (LMI) Resources

- Labor Market Information Analysis Guide
- LMI Central Community, U.S. Department of Labor-Employment and Training Administration's WorkforceGPS
- LMI Central Community, U.S. Department of Labor-Employment and Training Administration's WorkforceGPS
- State Labor Market Information Contact List, BLS
- The Council for Community and Economic Research
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)
- U.S. Census Bureau

Funding Resources

- Co-Invest for Impact: A Pivotal Model for Workforce Success, National Fund for Workforce Solutions
- Funding Career Pathways: A Federal Funding Toolkit for State and Local/Regional Career Pathway Partnerships, The Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
- Promoting the Adoption of Sector Strategies by Workforce Development Boards Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, prepared by the Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources at the University of Texas at Austin, with funding from the Annie E. Casey Foundation
- Securing Funding for the Collective Impact Backbone Role: Lessons from the Field, Collective Impact Forum

Templates and Samples

- Next Generation Sector Partnerships Toolkit, Module 1
- Regional Sector Partnership Funding Strategy Example
- Sample Partnership Agreement/Memorandum of Understanding
- Sector Partnership Roadmap Example

DESIGN Phase: Tools and Resources

Many of the resources provided for the LAUNCH phase are also relevant and valuable in the DESIGN phase. These include, for example, Sector Strategies Models and Frameworks, Resources for Collaborative Efforts, Labor Market Information Resources, and Funding Resources. The following additional resources may be particularly useful to sector partners in the DESIGN phase.

Workforce Data, Occupational, and Competency Analysis

- Competency Modeling Clearinghouse, U.S. Department of Labor-Employment and Training Administration
- Competency-Based Frameworks for Registered Apprenticeships, Urban Institute
- Occupational Information Network (O*NET), U.S. Department of Labor-Employment and Training Administration

Identifying Comprehensive Talent Development Solutions

- TPM Value Stream Map, from Talent Pipeline Management (TPM) Academy Curriculum, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation

Career Pathways Development

- Career Pathways Toolkit: An Enhanced Guide and Workbook for System Development, U.S. Department of Labor-Employment and Training Administration
- Guided Career Pathways Framework, Jobs for the Future
- *What Works for Adult Learners: Lessons from Career Pathway Evaluations,* Jobs for the Future

Centering Workers' Voices, Advancing Equity, and Human-Centered Design

- Anti-Racist Workforce Development System Framework, Chicago Jobs Council
- The Good Jobs Strategy, MIT's Good Jobs Institute
- Good Jobs Principles, U.S. Department of Labor's
- Human-Centered Design Resources
  - Stanford University Design School
  - Human-centered design resources from IDEO
- Job Quality Toolkit, U.S. Department of Commerce
- Job Quality Tools Library, Aspen Institute
- Talent Development and Equity Resources, Sandra Grace Consulting LLC
- The Good Jobs Initiative website, U.S. Department of Labor
- Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 07-22, *Increasing Employer and Workforce System Customer Access to Good Jobs*, U.S. Department of Labor-Employment and Training Administration's
- Workforce System Equity Framework, American Institutes for Research

IMPLEMENT Phase: Tools & Resources

Many of the resources provided for the LAUNCH and DESIGN phases are also relevant and valuable in the IMPLEMENT phase. These include, for example, Sector Strategies Models and Frameworks, Resources for Collaborative Efforts, Resources for Conveners/Intermediaries/Backbone Organizations, and Funding Resources from the LAUNCH phase. Identifying Talent Development Solutions; Career Pathways Development; and Centering Workers' Voices, Advancing Equity, and Human-Centered Design resources from the DESIGN phase may all be relevant in the IMPLEMENT phase. The following additional resources may be particularly useful to sector partners in the IMPLEMENT phase.

Implementation Planning and Plan Management

- Action Planning Tool, CareerSource Florida Sector Strategies Toolkit
- Blueprint for Manufacturing in Northeast Ohio, MAGNET: The Manufacturing Advocacy and Growth Network (2021)
- City Colleges of Chicago (CCC) Centers of Excellence Playbook, The American Institutes for Research for CCC (2024)
- Collaborative Leadership Resources, Community Toolbox
- How to Lead Collective Impact Working Groups Toolkit, Collective Impact Forum
- Participant Support Lifecycle planning resources and tools, U.S. Department of Labor
- Tools for Steering Committees, Collective Impact Forum
- Toward Sustainability and Scale: A Playbook for California Apprenticeship Stakeholders and Champions, Social Policy Research Associates for the Foundation for California Community Colleges (2021)

Tracking and Measuring Progress

- 2024 Blueprint Report Card, Blueprint for Manufacturing in Northeast Ohio (MAGNET: The Manufacturing Advocacy and Growth Network)
- A Point-Menu System for Measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, Aspen Institute Workforce Strategies Initiative
- Changing Workforce Systems: A Framework for Describing and Measuring Systems Change, Urban Institute
- Measuring Business Impact: A Workforce Development Practitioners Guide, Commonwealth Corporation
- Workforce Equity Dashboard, National Fund for Workforce Solutions

SUSTAIN Phase: Tools and Resources

Many of the resources provided for the LAUNCH, DESIGN, and IMPLEMENT DESIGN phases are also relevant and valuable in the SUSTAIN phase. These include, for example, Sector Strategies Models and Frameworks, Resources for Collaborative Efforts, Resources for Conveners/Intermediaries/Backbone Organizations, and Funding Resources from the LAUNCH phase. Identifying Talent Development Solutions; Career Pathways Development; and Centering Workers' Voices, Advancing Equity, and Human-Centered Design resources from the DESIGN phase may all be relevant in the SUSTAIN phase, as might the Implementation Planning and Plan Management and Tracking and Measuring Progress resources from the IMPLEMENT phase. The following additional resources may be particularly useful to sector partners in the SUSTAIN phase.

Continuous Learning and Continuous Improvement

- Genesis at Work: Evaluating the Effects of Manufacturing Extension on Business Success and Job Quality, Aspen Institute-Workforce Strategies Initiative
- Human (or Customer-)-Centered Design, IDEO
- Learning to Thrive: How Data Can Fuel Better Workforce Development Results, Corporation for a Skilled Workforce (CSW)
- Metropolitan Dallas Healthcare Employer Learning Consortium Case Studies, United Way of Metropolitan Dallas and the Dallas Fort-Worth Hospital Council Foundation
- Six Sigma and Lean Six Sigma, American Society for Quality
- The Plan, Do, Check (or Study), Act Cycle, American Society for Quality
- The Three Elements of Continuous Learning: Priorities, Plans, and Culture, Collective Impact Forum

Gathering Worker and Employer Feedback

- Engaging Employees to Solve Retention Issues and Building Employee Collaboratives for Insight and Problem-Solving, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation Talent Pipeline Management (TPM)
- How to Use Qualitative Research in a Workforce Collaborative, National Fund for Workforce Solutions
- Making Data More Useful, National Fund for Workforce Solutions
- Manufacturing Employer Survey, SkillUp Washington
- Worker Voice resources, Jobs for the Future

Sustainability and Scaling

- A Guide for Building a Sustainable and Resilient Collaboration and Sustainability Self-Assessment, Tamarack Institute
- Facilitating Intentional Group Learning: A Practical Guide to 21 Learning Activities, Collective Impact Forum
- Funding Strategy Plan Example
- Session 4: Planning for Sustainability (2024) – Session slides and planning worksheet, U.S. Department of Labor H-1B One Workforce and Rural Healthcare Grantee Virtual Convening
- Sustainability Guide for Regional Collaboratives, National Fund for Workforce Solutions
- Supporting a Sustainable and Resilient Collaboration – Part 1 (podcast) and Supporting a Sustainable and Resilient Collaboration – Part 2 (podcast), Collective Impact Forum
- Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) Sustainability Toolkit Launch Webinar, U.S. Department of Labor