



**Colorado has been modeling sector partnerships for over eleven years as a framework for industry-driven alignment across economic development, workforce development, and education. The state has invested in regional, public-private partnerships targeting key industries that are vital to our regional economies.**

### What are Sector Partnerships?

Businesses within a single industry share common needs – recruiting and retaining talent, training and advancing workers, and increasing productivity and work quality, for example. A Sector Partnership is an industry-led effort that collectively defines common opportunities and challenges, and connects these businesses with workforce, education, and economic development partners to create solutions that improve the businesses' bottom line.

### Impact: 2016 Next Generation of Sector Partnerships

- Nearly every active or emerging sector partnership increased participation by businesses in the target industry and region, as well as education, training, and student/jobseeker support organizations (K-12, postsecondary, workforce programs, etc) over the last year.
- 86% of partnerships implemented joint or shared projects across community partners.
- 71% of partnerships increased student/jobseeker awareness of training/education programs.
- 62% of businesses experienced improvements in HR policies and/or employee development practices.
- 35% of businesses found support in connecting with employees with the skills and experiences their business needs as a result of their participation in the partnership.
- 42% of businesses formed new or enhanced joint ventures.

### Outcomes: Sector Partnership grants 2008-2015

- An additional \$1.43 in earnings goes back into the community, for every dollar invested by the Metro Denver Healthcare Partnership.
- Over 1,100 people received training through Colorado's pilot sector partnerships in the last four years and 93% received industry-recognized credentials.
- At least 83% have entered employment, retained or advanced in their jobs to date as a result of training.
- In 2013, industry leadership along with public partners launched or expanded over 30 sector partnerships across 14 key industries.



*The focus of these partnerships is to innovate the way we do business and to develop a sustainable and collaborative model for regional economic development.*



– Jay Hardy, Vice President, McWhinney, and Chair of Colorado Workforce Development Council's Sector Strategies Steering Committee



*The Metro Denver Healthcare Sector Partnership has been a great place to collaborate with other organizations sharing the same goal of ensuring our industries have qualified candidates for our job openings.*



– Mame Fuhrman, University of Colorado Hospital.

# Taking Sector Partnerships to Scale in Colorado

2005

The **WELLS Center** is launched through a \$1,600,000 grant from USDOL to alleviate Colorado's critical shortage of healthcare professionals and build capacity for training. This is Colorado's first sector partnership.

2007

CDLE is accepted to participate in a Policy Academy on Sector Strategies organized by the National Governors Association. The **Sector Strategies Steering Committee**, composed of industry leaders and staff from workforce, education, and economic development, is established to guide policies and practical implementation of sector partnerships.

2008

CWDC commissions **industry analyses** and reports in the fields of health care, energy, and manufacturing to document how local areas create sector partnerships in these critical industries.

CDLE creates a full-time **staff position** to lead sector partnership activities.

CWDC repurposes WIA discretionary funds to create **start-up grants**, including guidance to local areas to establish sector partnerships. New grants are competitively awarded over the next three years.

2009

Local workforce areas and their partners in industry, education, economic development are convened for annual **Sector Strategy Academies** to learn from one another and from national sector practitioners.

2010

Executive Order signed to reconstitute the CWDC as the entity to align education, workforce, and economic development.

2011

The **Sector Strategies Steering Committee becomes a sub-committee of the CWDC** to ensure alignment with CWDC's broader mission to convene workforce, education and economic development partners.

The Colorado's statewide bottom up economic development plan, The Colorado Blueprint, completed by the Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT).

2012

CDLE and CWDC integrate the concept of sector strategies into new state initiatives, local workforce planning, and proposals for federal funding, so that the practice remains a core way of doing business.

CWDC brings relevant partners together to launch Career pathway initiative.

OEDIT launches Key Industry Networks for 9 of the 14 Key Industry Networks.

2013

CWDC hosts a statewide **Sectors Summit: The Next Generation of Sector Partnerships** to launch the next generation of sector partnerships. Regional teams committed to launching or expanding over 30 partnerships, and are now in the process of convening industry members and identifying priority areas for collective action.

CWDC provides **training, intensive coaching, and capacity building** for local programs to design and implement sector partnerships.

CWDC rolls out common statewide **messaging**, and begins developing a "dashboard" to track and measure **performance** of sector partnerships.

OEDIT launches remaining 5 Key Industry Networks.

Colorado Community College System (CCCS) and CWDC receive technical assistance grant from Department of Education for career pathways.

# Taking Sector Partnerships to Scale in Colorado

2014

CWDC hosts **Sectors Summit II: Growing the Talent Pipeline** focused on expanding Colorado's network of sector partnerships and integrating career pathways into sector partnerships.

Colorado introduced "**Creating Career Pathways in Colorado: A Step-by-Step Guide**" as a resource for sector partnerships to engage in career pathway systems building. The Guide was built off of lessons learned from several Colorado partnerships and national best practices.

Colorado passed **legislation codifying sector partnerships and career pathways** as a way of doing business in Colorado among workforce, education, and economic development partners.

Colorado's **first annual Talent Pipeline Report** released providing a snapshot of Colorado's talent pipeline and summarizing the impact of statewide sector and career pathway strategies.

2015

CWDC hosts the **Sectors Academy** to bring Colorado's active and emerging sector partnerships together for sharing, learning and technical assistance.

The NoCO Manufacturing Partnership piloted the **Creating Career Pathways in Colorado: A Step-by-Step Guide** resulting in new and adapted curriculum across the education pipeline.

Governor Hickenlooper launched the **Business Experiential-Learning Commission (BEL Commission)** to develop, evaluate and implement a systemic solution for integrated work-based education and training to meet the needs of Colorado's economy. Sector strategies provide a backbone for business engagement.

State legislation (HB15-1274) tasked the CWDC and the Colorado Community College System with the development of an **industry-driven career pathway systems and a statewide career pathway map** in two industries a year.

State legislation (HB15-1170) focused on **increasing postsecondary workforce readiness among Colorado students** through increased partnership between the CWDC and the CO Department of Education. A shared staff person between the agencies focuses on engaging the k-12 community in sector partnership-driven career pathways.

USDOL **Sectors National Emergency grant** received.

2016

Colorado is home to **21 sector partnerships** in health and wellness, manufacturing, tourism and outdoor recreation, and food and agriculture.

CWDC launched **funding to support industry identified priorities of active and emerging** sector partnerships.

Over a **half dozen sector partnerships engaged in regional career pathway systems building.**

**Statewide career pathway map in Information Technology** published on [careersincolorado.com](http://careersincolorado.com).

The BEL Commission partners to **launch CareerWise**, a program aimed at placing 20,000 students in apprenticeship programs by 2027.



# What's Working in Colorado

## *Lessons Learned from 2008-2012 of First Generation Sector Partnerships*

### Select a Convener that is trusted by Business

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

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

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

### Return On Investment (ROI): Data Collection & Communication

Demonstrating the value of a partnership is critical to secure business buy-in. One way to demonstrate value is through collecting and communicating key performance measurement data. Methods of data collection and desired outcomes should be determined at the start of any sector partnership. Without consistent data collection partnership trends cannot be tracked or communicated. The Sustainable Manufacturing Industry Alliance of Colorado (SMIAC)

successfully collected impact data about retention, job creation, cost savings, and increased sales through a survey. They found that the acceptable product rate increased from 30% to 90% after employee training; rework costs were reduced from as high as \$8,000/ person/ month to \$100/ person/ month as a result of training.

### Create Sustainability and Flexibility through Employer Investment

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

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

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



# What's Working in Colorado

## *Lessons Learned from 2008-2012 of First Generation Sector Partnerships*

### **Make Time for Productive and Short Meetings**

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

### **Engage Subject Matter Experts from Industry**

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

### **Let Task-focused Subcommittees Do the Work**

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

### **Value of Incumbent Worker Training**

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

### **Flexible Customized Training**

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