

Southwest Colorado Industry Sectors and Sector Partnerships

Sector Partnerships – What are they?

- Partnerships of companies from the same industry along with education, workforce development, economic and community development stakeholders at the table to focus on key issues related to that industry.
- Sector Partnerships are employer-driven, regional, and convened by a credible third party. Conveners include local workforce boards, community colleges, labor unions, economic development or community based organizations.
- Partnerships are driven by labor market information data.

Why Sector Partnerships?

- Create highly customized responses to a target industry's needs.
- Companies don't have to navigate the dozens of programs out there themselves.
- Organize around industry needs, not public programs.
- Education, workforce development and economic development share the ultimate goal for everyone to have an opportunity for meaningful work and economic prosperity.
- For companies, it is a place to solve major talent issues, work with public entities, and address issues related to their shared competitiveness.
- For educators, it is a place to understand industry needs, a vehicle to identify any changes needed in curriculum, programs and credentials, and create an industry-driven career pathway system.
- For workforce developers, sector partnerships focus time and resources on the training employers need for the jobs that exist now.
- For economic developers, sector partnerships provide a framework to understanding the strengths and needs of an industry, and assist with retention, growth and attraction strategies.

Sector Partnership History

In 2010, the opportunity presented by the Colorado Blueprint Economic Development Plan and 14 Statewide Key Industry Networks, spearheaded by the Office of Economic Development and International Trade, has created a clear call to action for more local, regional and state stakeholders to advance sector partnerships to a higher level of impact. Nationally, the sector partnership model is breaking down silos of education, workforce development and economic development, and sector partnerships are among the few public programs interventions **with statistical evidence showing improved employment opportunities for workers and industry.**

Impact on Employers (national stats from sector partnership companies)

- Turnover: 41% reduction
- Rework: 19% reduction
- Customer complaints: 23% reduction
- Companies that said partnership was valuable: 100%
- 84% of employers survey from industry partnerships reported significant increases in productivity

Impact on Workers:

- Earn more per hour
- Decreased living in poverty from 64% to 35%
- 83% of employees in sector partnership companies said training prepared to work in sector industry

Impact on economic growth

- New product lines added
- New markets entered
- New companies relocated to region
- New jobs created

Southwest Colorado Sector Partnerships

Representatives from (education, industry, workforce and economic development) in SW Colorado attended a Sector Summit in January 2013. They received data from all their regional industry sectors and were asked to pick the top 2 or three areas in which a sector partnership might occur. Industry data was explored with the most important data points being:

- Average Annual Growth
- Average Wage
- Location Quotient
- Long Term Growth
- Number of Employees

Southwest Colorado Sectors with the strongest combination of factors:

- Energy & Natural Resources (new potential areas such as geothermal)
- Food & Agriculture (lots of activities not coordinated throughout region)
- Advanced Manufacturing (lots happening already, great potential, but regional focus needed)
- Tourism & Outdoor Recreation (lots of diverse activities, but low wages)
- Bioscience (decided too few companies in area)
- Health & Wellness (has forward momentum and Citizens Health Advisory Council (a sector partnership) without needing new sector strategy)
- Financial Services (struggled to see how sector partnership would benefit)

Sectors Chosen for first focus

1. Energy & Natural Resources – More than oil & gas
2. Food & Agriculture
3. Advanced Manufacturing

For more information, please contact Laura Lewis Marchino, Region 9 Economic Development at 970-247-9621, laura@scan.org or go to <http://www.sectorssummit.com/> for information, statewide.