



Sustainable Staffing and Funding: Five Approaches to Consider and Worksheet on Funding Considerations

This tool is intended to spur new ideas about how to sustainably staff and fund your Next Gen Sector Partnerships. View this tool as a *top 5 of models to consider* from Next Gen Sector Partnerships around the country along with a worksheet to help you think through funding and staffing for your partnership.

Why Sustained Staffing Matters

Next Gen Sector Partnerships require both a philosophical and a practical approach to sustainable staffing. The philosophical one requires that the convening and partner organizations choose to be involved in improving their region's overall economic competitiveness, not just focused on the priorities of individual organizations or programs. Organizations leading sector partnership efforts are quickly learning that there are major advantages to collaboration on regional industry efforts and that if they don't collaborate, they will be left to go it alone in an increasingly competitive and resource-strained environment. For workforce development boards, economic development boards and education systems, this means pro-actively demonstrating their unique value-add and credibility in the context of aggressive collaboration and alignment. *If an organization chooses this philosophy, there are number of ways to practically resource sector partnerships.*

Five Approaches to Consider:

- 1. Start at the Top:** Your organization's director, leadership team and high-level managers must be on board and involved with the decision-making to dedicate staff to the needed project management, relationship building, and follow-through of a partnership. In fact, they themselves are often well suited to actually help staff a partnership. They often have more flexibility in how their time is spent and can justify spending time on needed capacity building that will help build the partnership.
- 2. Use Policies and Programs that Emphasize Sector Strategies to your Advantage:** Next Gen Sector Partnerships are one model of sector partnerships or sector strategies and a proven employer engagement strategy. Think creatively about policies, as well as state and federal programs, that encourage a sector-based approach and that you might use to your advantage. For instance, your local WIOA plan should authorize and support the development of your Next Gen partnerships. WIOA funding can be used to support labor market analysis, planning and organizing local/regional activities (i.e. sector partnership activities), business service strategies, and training solutions associated with your sector partnership work. Education and economic development are also called upon (and often required) by state and federal programs to engage employers and provide funding to do so. Give yourself (and your partners) the license to think outside the box on how you leverage requirements around employer engagement to support your sector partnerships. Help your board and/or leadership body see the policy connections to this work.



3. **Think of this as a Different Way to Work, not More Work:** The best Next Gen Sector partnerships succeed because their conveners and support partners operate on an assumption that they will get more bang for their public dollar buck if they coordinate together to engage with their most critical industry sectors, and then in response coordinate to ensure that industry and jobseekers in the community get what they need. This is the same concept as coordinated business service teams at the workforce center level. If your region is already convening business service teams among WIOA core partners, or hopefully with college and economic development partners too, make sure this is not done in isolation of your sector partnership. How can you structure your coordinated business outreach efforts to directly link to and support your sector partnership? What is the line of communication? Can you consider re-purposing Business service outreach staff to recruit, engage and help staff the employer relationships of the sector partnership?

4. **Reduce your Costs by Pooling, Blending and Braiding:** Every organization should be accustomed to leveraging funding for projects and programs. It's no different when funding the critical role of staffing a sector partnership. There are many variations on this theme.
 - In Pennsylvania, leveraged WIOA funds like Rapid Response dollars, Adult/Dislocated/Youth funds, and incumbent worker training funds have funded partnership's training priorities.
 - In Eugene, Oregon, the Lane County Tech Collaborative is staffed by an employee of the statewide Technology Association who is locally based, and collaborates intensively with the local workforce board, colleges and economic development entities. Their Food & Beverage Partnership lead staff person is a shared position paid for by the Workforce Development Board, the County, the City of Eugene, The Eugene Chamber and the local utility board.
 - In Phoenix, Arizona Next Gen partnerships are spearheaded out of the Greater Phoenix Chamber where they leverage private corporate and public funding with their annual Phoenix Forward economic development fundraising campaign.
 - In Brownsville, Texas the South Texas Healthcare Partnership dedicates staff time from one of their local colleges to coordinate the partnership, and regularly leverages industry facilities for meetings and philanthropic funding for program responses.
 - In the East Bay of California, their manufacturing partnership recently merged with an existing regional manufacturing consortium that brings philanthropic funding and corporate grants to the table.

In all cases, the key is authentic partnering across diverse organizations to ensure multiple and flexible funding and staff functions are leveraged.

5. **Don't Rule Out Staffing from the Industry Side:** Across the country the most advanced partnerships make direct use of staff from industry members of their partnership. For example, a Next Gen manufacturing sector partnership in Kingman, Arizona (KAMMA) is organized and coordinated by a staff member of one of their leading companies, Laron Manufacturing. The workforce development board, local economic development agency and



college are key support partners. The Northern Colorado (NoCO) Manufacturing partnership in the Ft. Collins area relies on company leaders to chair their committees, but also leans on them to provide staff to help lead and coordinate actual committee activities.



Worksheet: Funding Considerations for your Next Gen Sector Partnership

Next Gen Sector Partnerships require ongoing funding and resources for two key reasons:

1. Provide ongoing staffing, and support, and
2. Implement priority actions of the partnership.

This worksheet provides a guide for helping your partnership carefully think through and leverage all potential funding opportunities for ongoing success.

What do others use?	What can you use?	Who do you need to talk to?
<p>Employer cash contributions</p> <p>Federal grants and programs (WIOA)</p> <p>State grants and programs</p> <p>County or city grants and programs</p> <p>Foundation grants</p> <p>Fee for service</p> <p>Corporate giving</p>		

Direct Funding
Cash



Employers' time, meeting space, equipment, staff, trainings, expertise, marketing, etc.

Public Partner Staff time to help coordinate and convene partnership and actively move business priorities forward

Got multiple partnerships? Share the workload of coordination across public partners and businesses

In-kind Support
Staff time, other support



Terms of Use for Next Generation Logo and Toolkit

All content in the Next Gen toolkit is free for use, with attribution. We created this toolkit because of growing demand for practical tools and guidance from practitioners and business leaders across the country looking to build authentic, business-driven partnerships. We don't make money off our materials. We share them freely in order to grow the field of Next Generation Sector Partnerships. So, seriously. Use our stuff. Here are rules we ask you to follow in return:

- Give full attribution via the intact Next Gen name and logo on all materials used and shared. The Next Gen Sector Partnership name and title and/or logo must also only be used for official Next Gen materials and shall not be used on materials created by other entities.
- Join the Next Gen Community of Practice to connect and share with other practitioners across the country. Sign up for our mailing list and send us a note at info@nextgensectorpartnerships.com to let us know you've found the Toolkit valuable. We'd appreciate knowing how you've used it.
- Consider contributing financially to the Institute of Networked Communities, the organization behind the Next Gen Community of Practice. Your donation supports the continued development of Next Gen tools and resources.

The Next Gen Sector Partnership Community of Practice is an initiative of the Institute for Networked Communities (INC), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. INC's mission is to build stronger, more inclusive economies by activating public-private networks around a shared commitment to place. All rights to the Next Gen Sector Partnership toolkit content are reserved by INC.