



## Network Mapping Exercise

This exercise is designed to help you assess networks in your community along three dimensions:

- Networks among business leaders from a single industry;
- Networks among public partners (education, workforce development and economic development)
- Networks between business leaders and public partners.

The exercise is designed for regions with at least one active Next Gen Sector Partnership. (If you have more than one active partnership, pick just one for the purposes of this exercise).

### Materials Needed

- A big piece of blank paper
- Three different colored pens or markers

### Step #1: Mapping Public Partners

1. On a separate piece of paper, spend 3 minutes writing down the names of the key leaders and organizations in your region's economic development, workforce development and education systems. This will include (but may not be limited to) your Next Gen Partnership support team.
  - ⇒ The list doesn't have to be exhaustive. Include as many names and organizations as you can think of in 3 minutes.
  - ⇒ Don't forget to include yourself!
  - ⇒ Include names of individuals, not just their organizations. This will require thinking about who the key decision-maker or point person is from that organization. In some cases, there may be more than one. That's ok – list all the individuals that you know need to be on board in order to work effectively with that organization.
  - ⇒ You may know of some organizations but don't know who right point person is. In that case, just leave a "?" next to the organization's name.

*Example:*

Individual(s)	Organization
Tammy, CEO	Regional Chamber of Commerce
Will, CTE Director	Springfield County K-12 CTE
Jane, CTE Director	Greenfield County K-12 CTE

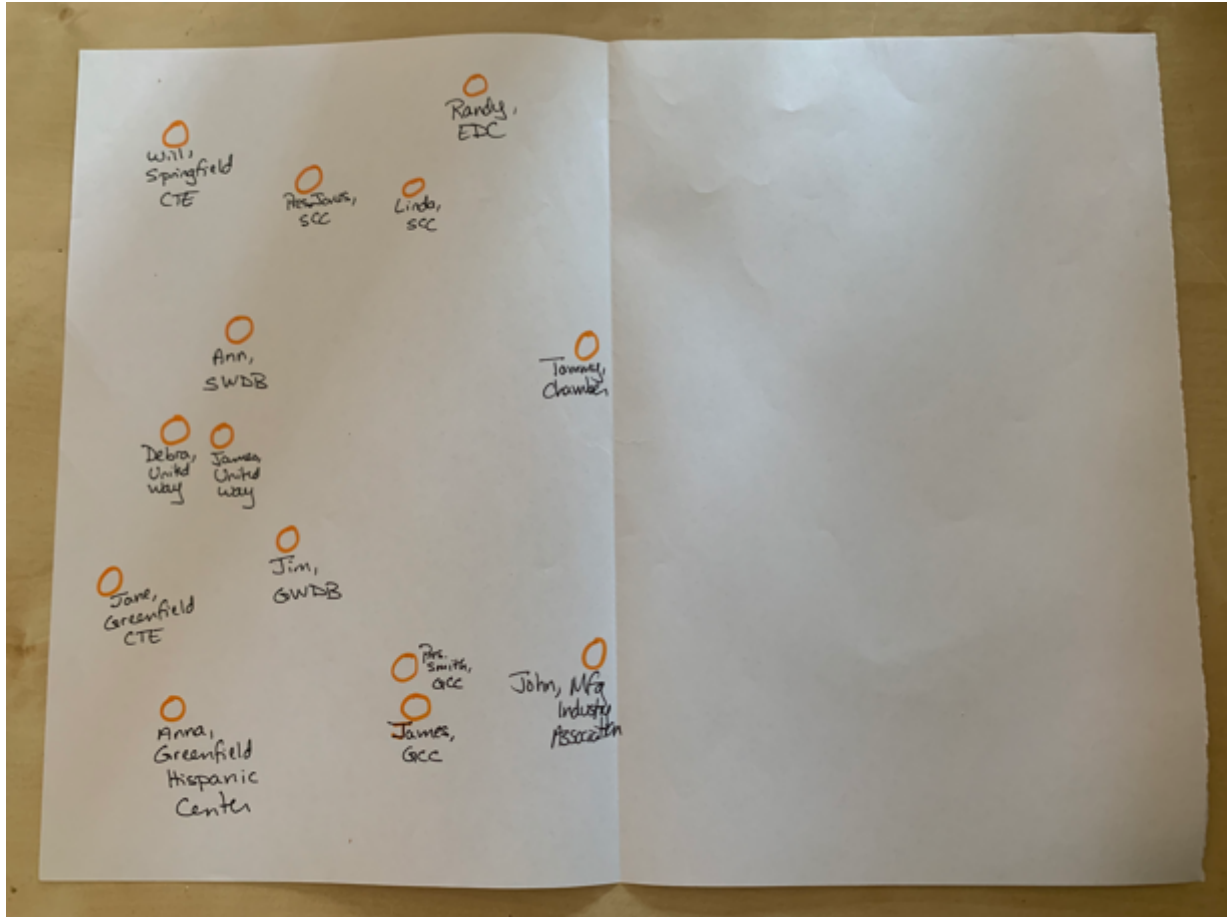


President Jones; Linda, Workforce Director	Springfield Community College
President Smith; James, Manufacturing Program Director	Greenfield Community College
Debra, CEO; James, Partnership Coordinator	Happy Valley United Way
Ann, Director	Springfield Workforce Development Board
Jim, Director	Greenfield Workforce Development Board
John, Director	Manufacturing Industry Association
Randy, CEO	Happy Valley Economic Development Corporation
Anna, Director	Greenfield Hispanic Center

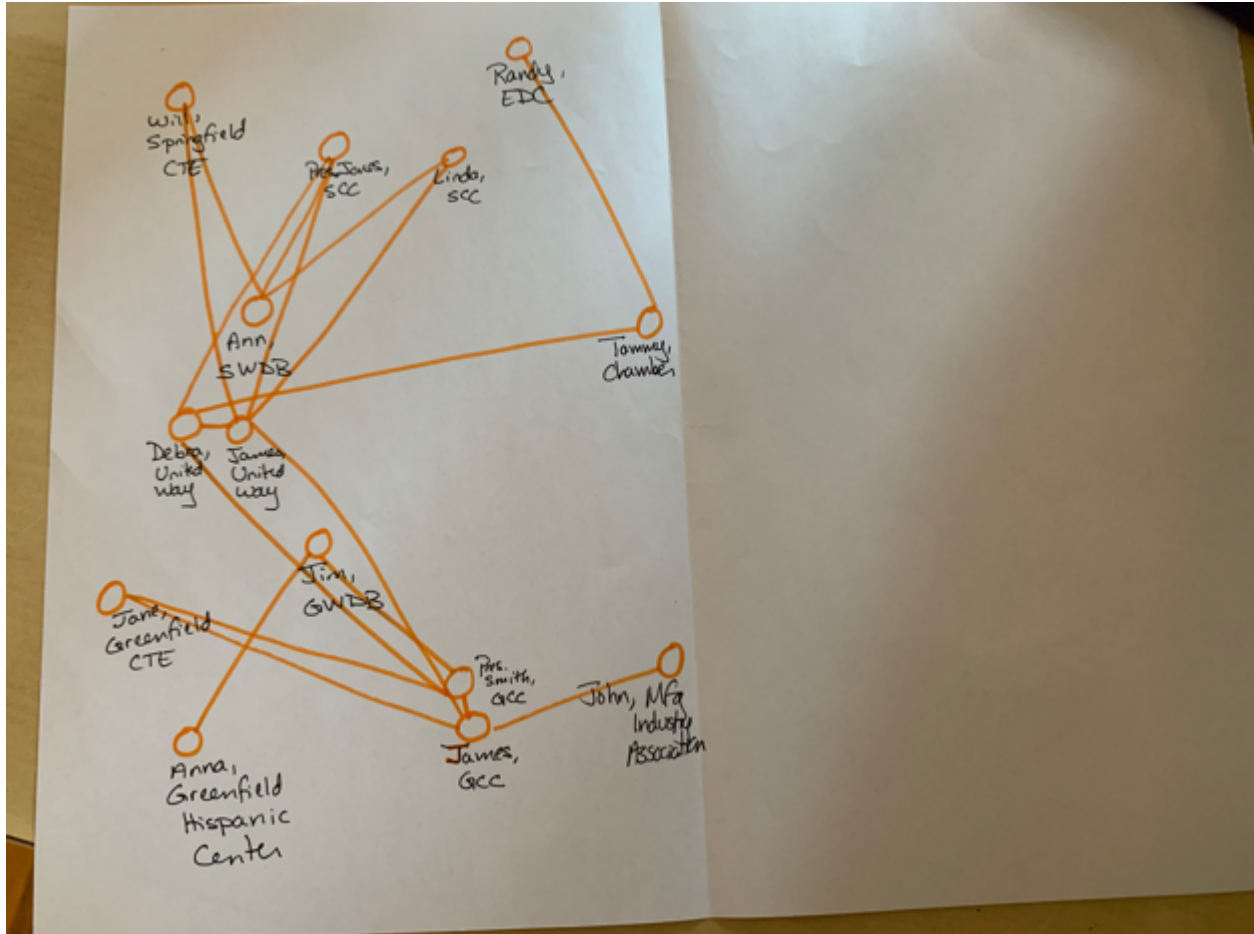
2. Step back from your list and consider:
  - Which of these partners has the most credibility with business and industry? (For example, they have strong working relationships with business leaders in the region, they have a positive reputation among business, they are perceived as a business-serving organization etc.)
  - How strong are the relationships among these individuals? Who works most closely with whom?
  
3. Now pull out your blank piece of paper. Fold it in half to create a crease down the middle of the page. Use the left half of the page for your public partner map (we'll use the right half to map out a business network later on).



4. Draw your partner map. Using the list you created above, draw a circle for each individual partner. (In cases where you have multiple names for one organization, draw multiple circles). Draw the individuals with the strongest credibility with business and industry closest to the crease at the center line.

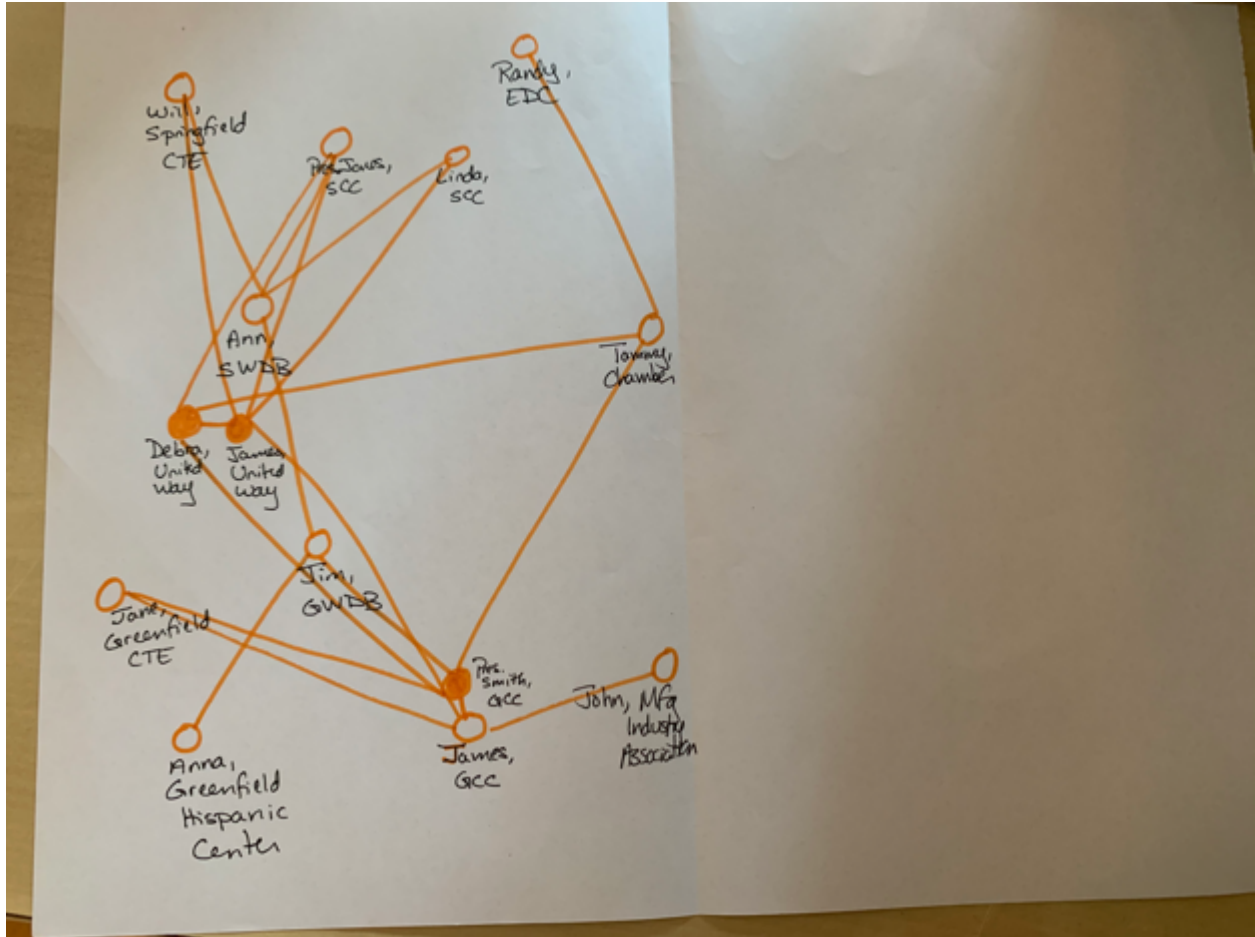


5. Consider the connections among these partners. Draw a line connecting partners who work closely together on a regular basis. *Note: don't feel obligated to draw a line connecting every partner. Lines should only indicate strong working relationships (i.e. they collaborate regularly on projects, know each other well).*





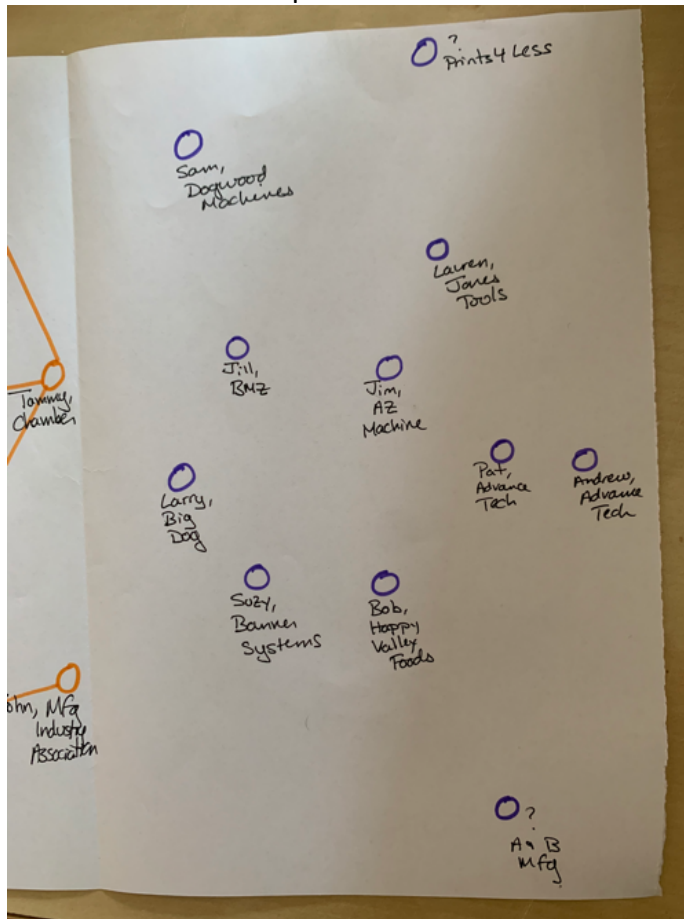
6. Identify the “connectors.” Which partners on the map would you consider to be “connectors”? Connectors are organizations or people who play an active role in brokering partnerships across organizations and people. Indicate connectors by filling in their circle.





## Step #2: Mapping Business Leaders

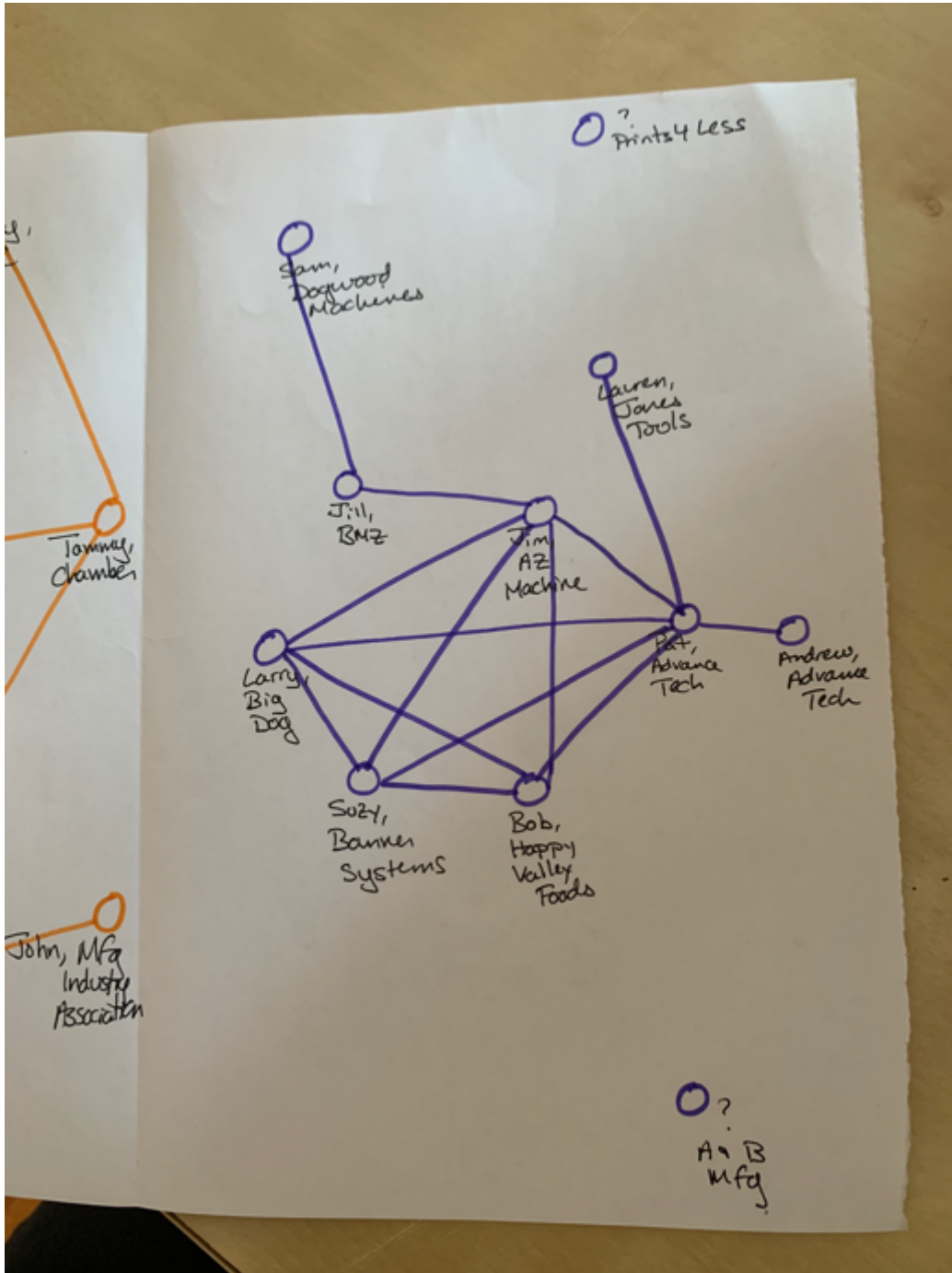
1. Now it's time to add business leaders to your map. Using the right half of your paper and a different colored pen, draw a circle for the first 10-20 businesses leaders who come to mind from your targeted industry. These may be the most significant employers in your region (# of employees or economic impact), those who are most involved in your partnership, those who you have a strong relationship with (or wish you had a stronger relationship with!) or all of the above!
  - ⇒ Include those leaders actively involved in your partnership as well as those who have not been involved.
  - ⇒ Remember to draw a circle for people, not businesses. If there are more than one individuals from a single business involved in your partnership, draw more than one circle.
  - ⇒ If you don't know the name of the right individual, leave a blank line but still list the company.
  - ⇒ Don't worry about where to draw each circle; it doesn't matter where they're located on the map.





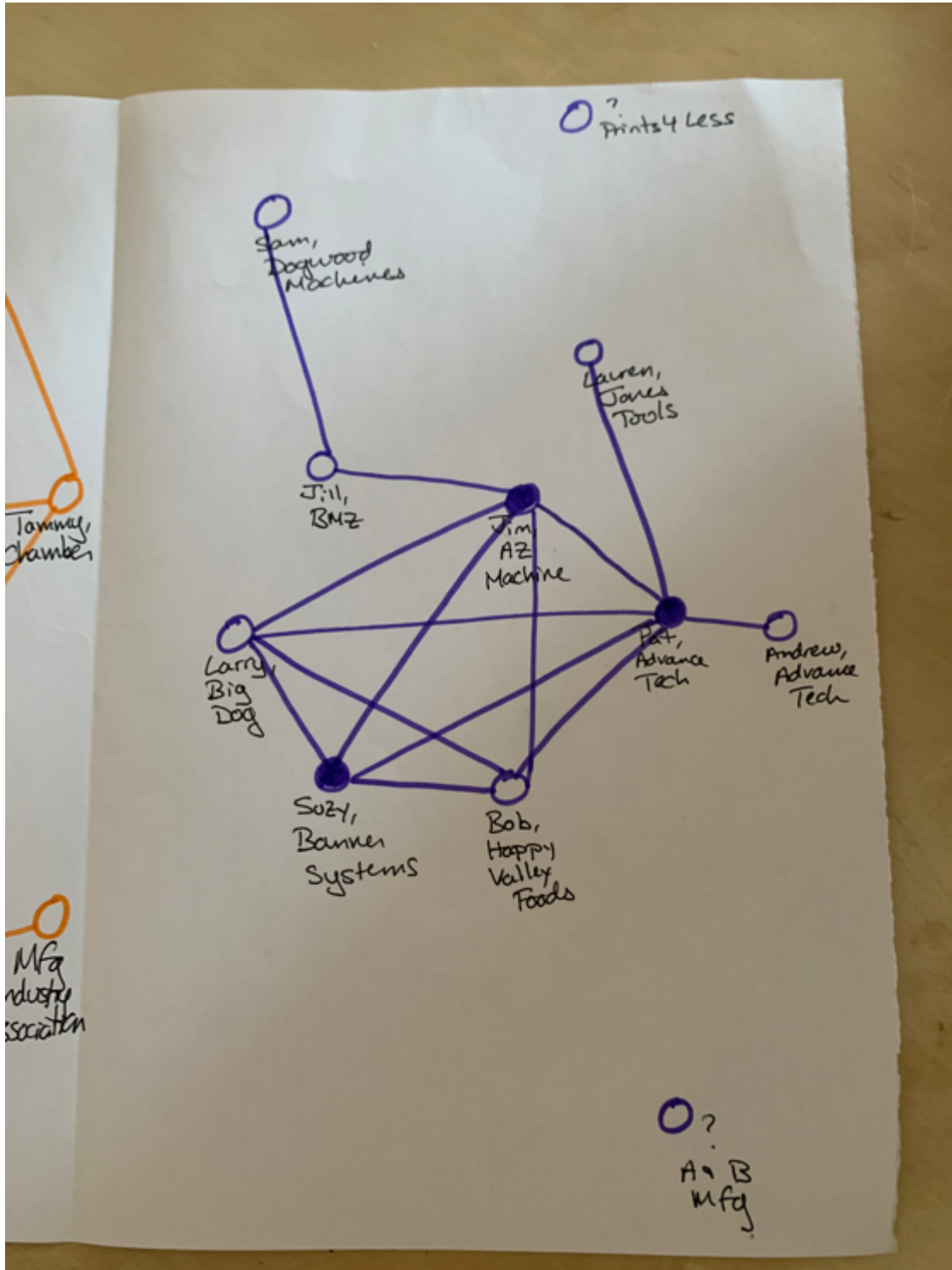
2. Now map the connections among these business leaders.
  - ⇒ Draw a line connecting people who have a relationship. (This doesn't need to be a very strong relationship, but they should know each other by name and have met at least once or twice).
  - ⇒ You may not know the extent of the relationships among these people (and they may draw the map quite differently than you). That's ok! Just give it your best guess.





- Identify the “connectors.” Which business leaders on the map would you consider to be “connectors”? Connectors are people who play an active role in brokering partnerships with others and bringing new business leaders into the partnership. Indicate connectors by filling in their circle.

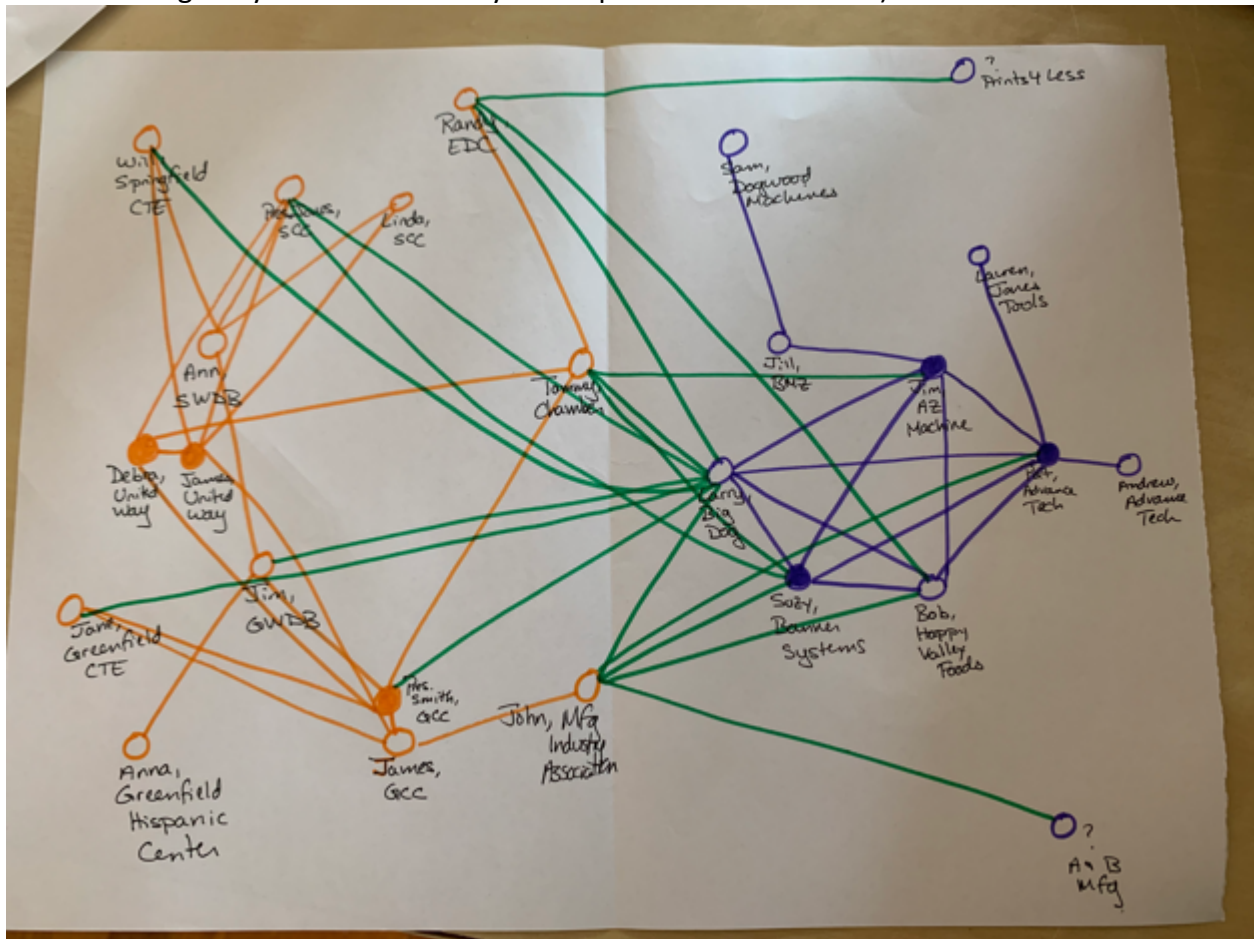




Step #3: Mapping Business/Public Partner Connections



1. Use a third color marker to draw connections between the public partners on the left side of the page and business leaders on the right.  
⇒ Where there are established relationships, draw a line connecting public partners with business leaders. (As a rule of thumb, an established relationship means that business leader knows that public partner by name, communicates with them regularly and would readily take a phone call from them).





#### Step #4: Assess

At this point, your map should look pretty messy! Now it's time to step back, assess, and identify where and how the network could be strengthened.

1. How many public partners are connectors? Do these connectors broker partnerships among public partners or are do they broker partnerships between businesses & public partners? Or both?  
⇒ Note: Ideally, your sector partnership convener should be a connector both for public partners and with business leaders. (An important criterion for becoming convener is having credibility both with public partners and with industry). Is this the case for you? If not, why?
2. How many of your business leaders are connectors? Do they primarily connect business leaders to one another? Or business leaders to public partners? Or both?
3. What do you notice about connections between public partners and business leaders? Do connections flow through just a few organizations? How many public partners are left out of the network? How many businesses are left out?
4. Where do you think the networks MOST need to be strengthened?
  - a. Among public partners;
  - b. Among business leaders, or;
  - c. Between public partners and business leaders.
5. What would your map look like, ideally?
6. Identify 2-3 needed actions to make your community look more like your ideal map.