

Attachment A

About Sector Initiatives

What are Sector Initiatives?

Sector initiatives are industry-specific, regional partnerships that address employers' needs for skilled workers, and workers' needs for good jobs. Sector initiatives focus intensively on the workforce needs of a specific industry over a sustained period, often concentrating on specific occupations, and always engaging multiple employers to analyze industry needs and design customized solutions.

Sector strategies are industry-specific, regional approaches that address skill gaps by:

- ◆ Addressing the needs of employers by **focusing intensively on the skill needs of a specific industry sector** over a sustained period, often concentrating on a specific occupation or set of occupations within that industry;
- ◆ Addressing the needs of **workers** by creating formal career paths to good jobs, reducing barriers to employment, and sustaining or increasing middle-class jobs;
- ◆ Bolstering **economic growth and industry competitiveness** by engaging economic development experts in workforce issues and aligning education, economic, and workforce development planning;
- ◆ **Engaging a broader array of key stakeholders** in regional economic strategizing through partnerships organized by conveners; and
- ◆ Promoting **systemic change** that supports innovation and achieves ongoing benefits for the industry, workers, and community.

Sector partnerships involve employers, educators and training providers, the public workforce development system, economic development organizations, and other community stakeholders. These partnerships work closely together to identify the workforce needs and solutions of one industry, allowing all stakeholders to streamline their efforts and leverage resources. Sector strategies work from the premise that in any region there are certain industries that are powerful economic drivers. Targeting and leveraging public and private investments to support the growth and health of these sectors allows local and state policy makers to prioritize and grow their region's important industries while supporting citizens' needs for good jobs.

Local workforce regions are critical partners and leaders in successful sector initiatives. Sector initiatives do not replace the day-to-day activities of workforce centers. Sector initiative activities should complement local activities. Nor are sector initiatives simply focused on skills training. They also address recruitment and retention issues, work reorganization needs, and institutional and regulatory challenges. The specific challenge to be addressed by a sector initiative partnership may not be known right away. It is the responsibility of the convening organization to facilitate the identification of the root cause of common challenges across employers within the industry of focus.

Only then can a customized solution be developed and implemented by the partnership. Because of this comprehensive approach, sector initiatives are characterized by the development of career pathways within and across key industry sectors, growth of middle class jobs, their ability to leverage and align resources and strategies to the benefit of industries and their workers, and their focus and impact on regional economic competitiveness.