

## Commonly-Used Next Gen Terms

**Next Generation Industry Partnership:** partnerships of businesses, from the same industry and in a shared labor market region, who work with economic development, education, workforce development, and community organizations to address the overall competitiveness needs of the targeted industry. In some states, these partnerships are referred to as Next Generation Sector Partnerships, but in the commonwealth, they are referred to as Next Generation Industry Partnerships. Next Generation Industry Partnerships are eligible to receive grant funds to support the convening of the partnership and implementation of business-driven priorities if they meet eligibility criteria outlined under “implementation” below.

**Convener:** Responsible for organizing partnership activities. The convener should have credibility with companies in the targeted sector, be able to devote staff time to the effort, and be able to neutrally facilitate the partnership’s process by leaving their own organizational agenda behind.

**Facilitator:** An individual that facilitates partnership meetings. Must be neutral and allow business members to drive the discussion. The facilitator role may be filled by the convener or another public partner from the regional support team, but may also be filled by a third-party.

**Regional Support Team:** Public partners from economic development, education, workforce development, and other key stakeholders such as elected officials, organized labor, community-based organizations or others who have a stake in building stronger partnerships with the industry sectors that drive the regional economy.

**Industry Champion:** Business leaders that are willing to champion the idea of creating a forum for collaboration with their peers. Ideally, each partnership should have between 2-6 champions. Industry champions should be willing to jointly sign an invitation letter and be willing to physically host a launch meeting, if possible. Industry champions should have the following traits:

1. They are decision-makers in their businesses. They not only care about the growth and competitiveness of their firm, but are in a position to take action on behalf of the firm, working in partnership with other companies and community partners. They can commit their own time, those of subordinates, and financial and other in-kind resources of their company. They are not representatives sent by their superior, able to listen in but not take action.
2. They are passionate about their industry. They feel strongly about the value of their industry, that it has the potential to grow. They can articulate specific opportunities for growth (new markets, new technological breakthroughs, etc.), or a broader vision for evolution of their industry. For them, it’s a calling, not just a job or another rung on the corporate ladder. Because they care for their industry, they see opportunities for businesses to work together, and are able to understand that there are “pre-competitive” areas where even fierce competitors can collaborate for the common good. They are positive-sum, not zero-sum thinkers.

3. They are passionate about their community—and believe that the destinies of their company, industry, and community are interdependent. They often have a track record of giving back to the community, speaking out on issues, providing internships to local students, or working through organizations like industry associations or chambers of commerce to improve the quality of the community. They may have grown up locally, or moved to the community, but either way, they love the distinctive quality of life it offers. Most importantly, they know that a strong economy is essential to a strong community and vice versa. And, they understand that it takes the private sector and public sector working together to achieve that result.

**Launch Meeting:** Facilitated meeting to determine business-driven priorities. The physical setup includes a center table for business members and outside seating for the regional support team. Business members drive the discussion while the regional support team engages in active listening. Launch meetings typically last two hours. The meeting starts with brief introductions for all attendees and moves to a discussion about opportunities to grow the targeted industry in the targeted region. Business members physically identify their top opportunities by writing them down and results are categorized. The discussion then turns to actions required to capitalize on the identified opportunities for the industry. Again, business members physically identify their top opportunities for action and results are categorized. The meeting ends with a call for champions for each of the categorized action items. These categorized actions are the business-driven priorities of the partnership.

**Action Plan:** A strategy that lays out a clear set of goals, outcomes, and actions to advance the partnership's shared priorities.

**Action Team:** Focused group of business champions (who volunteered for a priority area at the launch) working regional support team members to address one of the partnership's priority areas. Action team meetings are held either in-person or over the phone. Action teams initially work on defining success (e.g. "What are we trying to achieve? How will we know when we're successful?") and identifying any immediate opportunities for "quick wins" (e.g. "What can we accomplish in the next 60 days that will help advance this priority? How can we get started?").

In the early stages of the partnership's action team, there is a tendency for regional support partners, with the best of intentions, to take over and drive action, not wanting to impose on the business members. While well-intentioned, this is a formula for failure. If regional support partners exert themselves too much, business members will begin to step back and disengage. At this critical moment, regional support partners must give space for the business voice to emerge and solidify their engagement as partners, not customers.

**Convening Grant:** also referred to as a "seed grant" or "planning grant." These funds are competitively awarded to support the convening of Next Generation Industry Partnerships.

**Implementation:** Phase of partnership development where action moves from idea to reality. The partnership's action plan is clearly defined and the partnership is ready to begin working on priority action items.

Currently, to achieve implementation status and be eligible to receive implementation funds to address business-driven partnership priorities, a partnership must have been awarded a planning grant and meet a set of criteria for Next Generation Industry Partnerships developed by the commonwealth. Partnerships must clearly meet the first three criteria, and provide evidence of early progress across the remaining four criteria below:

1. Regional support team is committed to and understands Next Gen methodology.
  - Regional support team in place and committed to working together to launch a partnership. Team includes (at a minimum) economic development, education, and workforce development partners and, ideally, community-based partners as well.
  - Proposed partnership targets driving industry sector of the regional economy.
  - Plan for recruiting business champions to co-sign invitation letter and host launch meeting.
2. Proposed partnership will operate in a regional labor market.
  - Partnership defines its geographic scope based on locations of companies, commuter sheds, and other important labor market information, not per the confines of a workforce area, city, county or other geopolitical boundary.
3. Partnership operates strategically and effectively.
  - Partnership operates under shared, up-to-date action plan. Action plan was developed by business leaders and focuses on opportunities for industry growth and competitiveness.
  - Partnership has a clear convener or convening team focused on keeping the partnership on-task and moving forward.
4. Partnership is led by, and continually attracts, influential, engaged private sector leaders.
  - Private sector members play leadership roles in the partnership (actively chairing action teams and the overall partnership) and define the partnership's agenda.
  - Broad participation from industry members at meetings (private sector participation outnumbers public partners; primarily senior decision-makers from business);
  - Evidence of business leaders partnering to implement partnership priorities (e.g. providing in-kind or financial resources or similar).
5. Partnership is supported by a comprehensive "regional support team" of non-employer partners, with demonstrated commitment to each other.
  - Partnership includes critical and engaged partners across workforce development, economic development, education programs and community organizations.
  - Regional support partners are actively involved in responding to industry's priorities, contributing to partnership initiatives in measurable ways (in-kind or financial resources, staff time etc.)
6. Partnership focuses on solutions with economic impact.
  - Partnership is actively addressing business-identified priorities that relate to economic development, education, and workforce development.
7. Partnership can demonstrate action.
  - Partnership demonstrates "quick wins" with measurable outcomes resulting from activities, services or products that the partnership has prioritized.