

Your partnership has launched and is gaining traction. Congratulations! You are also likely recognizing the need for sustainable support to staff the partnership. This document is intended to spur new ideas about how to sustainably staff your Next Generation Industry Partnerships (NGIP). View this tool as a *top 5 of models to consider* from Next Gen Sector Partnerships around the country, as well as from a handful of individuals who offered their collective experience from traditional Industry Partnership efforts in Pennsylvania.<sup>1</sup>

### Why Sustained Staffing Matters

Next Generation Industry Partnerships (Next Generation Sector Partnerships) require both a philosophical and a practical approach to sustainable staffing. *The philosophical approach* requires that convening and partner organizations are committed to alignment and support a discussion about their region's economic competitiveness (not just workforce or education). Organizations leading Next Gen efforts are quickly learning the major advantages to collaborating on regional industry efforts, and that if they don't collaborate they will be left behind in an increasingly competitive and resource-strained environment. For workforce development boards, economic development boards and education systems, this means an increasing call and demand to pro-actively demonstrate the unique value-add and credibility of partnerships. *If an organization chooses the philosophy of aggressive collaboration and alignment, there are number of ways to **practically resource** a Next Gen partnership.*

### Five Approaches to Consider:

1. **Start at the Top:** Your organization's director, leadership team and high-level managers must be on board, involved with decision-making and committed to alignment with convening team partners. Leaders must dedicate staff to project management, relationship building, and follow-through of a partnership. In fact, they themselves are often well suited to help staff a partnership because they often have some flexibility and can justify spending time on needed capacity and relationship building.
2. **Use the Law to your Advantage:** Next Gen partnerships are one model of sector partnerships or sector strategies supported by the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Your local and regional WIOA plan should therefore authorize and support the development of your Next Generation Industry 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 (i.e. outreach to businesses in your NGIP), and training solutions associated with your sector partnership work. Help workforce boards see the policy connections and important role Next Generation Industry partnerships can play in accomplishing their work.
3. **Think of this as a Different Way to Work, not More Work:** The best Next Gen partnerships succeed because their conveners and support partners operate on an assumption that they will get more bang for their public dollar buck by working together. Partners who recognize efficiencies in coordinating business engagement and aligning responses recognize meaningful outcomes for both industry and jobseekers in their communities. This is the same concept as coordinated business services across WIOA core programs at the CareerLinks®. 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 partnership. How can you structure your coordinated business outreach efforts to directly link to and support your 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 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 Next Gen partnership. There are many variations on this theme. In Pennsylvania, leveraging WIOA funds like Rapid Response dollars, Adult/Dislocated/Youth funds, and incumbent worker training funds is typical. Consider other options too: 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* resulting in the ability to leverage various staff functions and flexible funding from multiple sources.
  
5. **Don't Rule Out Staffing from the Industry Side:** Pennsylvania Industry Partnerships have experience securing employer matches for training via *sustainability funds*. In some regions, these sustainability funds have become magnets for additional corporate, public and philanthropic investments. Nationally, the most advanced partnerships also 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, and lean on them to provide staff who lead and coordinate actual committee activities.

---

<sup>i</sup> Thank you to the Next Gen Community of Practice for generating examples used in this tool, and to Rory Stevenson, Berks County Workforce Development; Barbara Allen of Consultant Operations and Johnetta Frazier of PhillyWorks; Pamela Streich, Workforce Solutions of North Central Pennsylvania; Marty Culp, Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission; and Marybeth DiVincenzo, Chester County Economic Development Council.

