

# 2022 Colorado Sector Strategies Update

## Colorado Sector Partnerships Overview

In Colorado, sector partnerships are defined as partnerships of business leaders from the same industry and in a shared labor market region who work with education, workforce development, economic development, and community organizations to address the workforce and other competitiveness needs in their industry. Sector partnerships are proven to be critically important for a strong talent development system through precise, practical alignment of workforce development resources with the needs of business and industry within a labor market region. Colorado has been intentional about investing in industry-driven approaches to grow Colorado's economy since the first sector partnership launched in the state in 2005.

In fall of 2021, the Colorado Workforce Development Council (CWDC) Sector Steering Committee requested an external evaluation of Colorado's sector strategy with a focus on recommendations to strengthen the strategy to ensure effectiveness as Colorado works proactively towards economic recovery and improving outcomes for employers, learners, and workers now and into the future.

WildFIG Partners, a public policy consulting firm, was selected to conduct the evaluation. The evaluation launched in February 2022. Areas of the evaluation include:

- CWDC Sectors Steering Committee structure and processes for information sharing and providing guidance
- Community of Practice Approach: value, method of implementation, division of groups
- Funding: Grants offered, timing, amount, focus areas, application process, reporting process
- CWDC staffing: number of people, types of roles, additional skill sets needed
- Definitions of success for committee overall
- Convening approach: identify clear goals and define approach moving forward
- Partner engagement at state and local level
- Impact of strategy

The following information provides a high level summary of the findings of the sector partnership evaluation and an overview of next steps that the CWDC will pursue to strengthen sector partnerships and industry engagement in Colorado as a result of these findings. The full evaluation report and plan to reinvigorate Colorado's sector strategies can be found [here](#) or accessed via the CWDC's [Sector Partnerships webpage](#).

## Final Sector Partnership Evaluation Summary

As one of the first states to implement a sector strategy, Colorado has long been recognized as a national leader in this arena. Colorado's sector strategy has developed strong networks and robust supports available to partnerships in regions throughout the state.

The Colorado Workforce Development Council (CWDC) champions Colorado's sector partnerships and helps to coordinate activities related to the state's sector strategy by providing technical assistance; coordinating community of practice seminars and convenings; and offering funding opportunities, often through competitive grant awards, to eligible partnerships. The evaluation report compares Colorado's grantmaking activities to those in other states and presents findings and recommendations related to grantmaking, staffing resources and other support offered to partnerships, and related administrative processes.

There are currently 16 active or sustaining sector partnerships, and two exploring partnerships, in Colorado. Another 16 partnerships are currently inactive, which, in several cases, resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic. Partnerships that serve rural communities have experienced more challenges than their urban counterparts. Since the inception of Colorado's sector strategy, 17 sector partnerships have been launched within the state's rural regions, but only five are active today. Conversely, nine of 13 partnerships from urban areas are actively engaged or sustaining\*. The report includes recommendations intended to better meet the needs of sector partnerships while also addressing challenges specific to these rural sector partnerships.

Public partners are part of a network of support for sector partnerships that comes from education, workforce development, economic development, and other organizations. These partners often serve as partnership conveners. The Evaluation Team reviewed convener partnership data to analyze how different approaches to the convener role may affect the likelihood of a partnership's success. The report presents findings and recommendations from the review of partnership data related to conveners with a focus on issues related to the role of public partners serving as sector partnership conveners.

A key component of the evaluation was to review the current Key Performance Indicator (KPI) instrument, examine metrics and collection methods, and consider other elements of the data collection process to develop a new survey instrument to ensure the KPI instrument is actionable, balanced, and aligned to the sector partnership strategy. The final draft can be viewed in the accompanying Key Performance Indicator Instrument report.

Sector partnerships succeed when states establish the necessary conditions for them to thrive—through public policy, local capacity building, and other measures. When states actively aid in the establishment of sector alliances, systemic change is possible. Collaborations across sectors are not confined to a single training initiative or program. Rather, sector partnership approaches (or sector strategies) should serve as the foundation upon which regions, and particularly workforce systems, operate. This comprehensive evaluation report provides recommendations intended to further strengthen these supports, adapt the sector strategy to economic and societal changes, and ensure that the sector strategy is as effective as possible.

The report outlines 29 recommendations to strengthen the sector partnership efforts in the state. In response to these recommendations the CWDC Office crafted a sector partnership refresh plan and is working to move forward to advance the following five priorities:

❖ **Revitalize and Grow the Sector Partnership Network**

Sector partnerships offer a strong approach for coordinating and aligning efforts across industry, education, workforce, and economic development. Given the role of these partnerships and continued interest from industry and public partners in collaborating to meet shared goals, this priority invests in refreshing the shared vision across state agencies to strengthen support for sector partnerships and investing in training and coaching for new sector partnership conveners to help revitalize dormant sector partnerships and launch new ones.

❖ **Increase Awareness and Impact of Sector Partnerships**

This priority invests in an updated approach to data collection and storytelling to better communicate the impact of sector partnerships. This priority also includes the launch of a sector partnership roadshow that allows for individuals across the state to join sector partnerships in regional gatherings that spotlight the needs of local industry and invite discussion on innovative approaches to addressing those needs.

❖ **Strengthen Support Infrastructure**

State agencies play an important role in enabling robust and thriving sector partnerships. To maximize CWDC's support infrastructure, the evaluation recommended dedicating additional FTE to support sector partnerships, refresh the community of practice, and launch an orientation for the Sectors Steering Committee to ensure the CWDC is well equipped to effectively champion sector partnerships and help them to adapt to this dynamic economic environment.

❖ **Catalyze and Sustain Rural Engagement**

Of the sector partnerships that went dormant, the majority were in rural communities. The evaluation also identified a number of challenges rural communities face in sustaining sector partnerships. To maximize support and industry engagement in rural communities, this priority authorizes the CWDC to conduct a rural needs assessment to better understand the priorities in rural communities and the industry engagement models that are currently working, and adjusts the CWDC's sector approaches to ensure responsiveness to the needs of communities in urban and rural areas of Colorado.

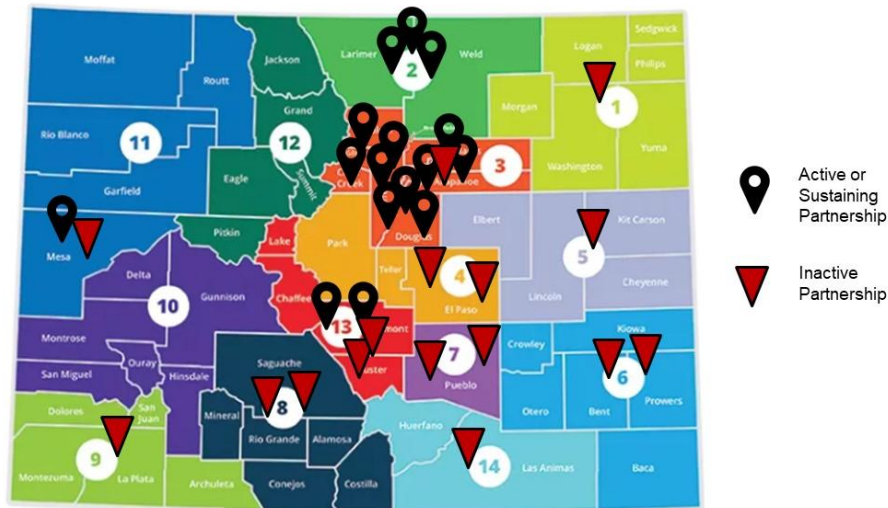
❖ **Ground Model in Equity and Job Quality**

In 2020, the CWDC adopted the values of equity, agility, and integration to guide how the talent development ecosystem in Colorado works together. These values are being integrated into all of CWDC's work and help to focus efforts on ensuring that all Coloradans have the opportunity to benefit from a strong and thriving economy.

## Snapshot of Sector Partnerships in Colorado

In 2020, there were over 1,632 business and industry partners actively engaged throughout 28 sector active partnerships in Colorado. In 2021, sector partnership reports indicated a drop to 266 active businesses engaged in sector partnerships across 16 active sector partnerships. This data however is inconclusive due to a limited number of sector partnerships who submitted data as they experienced challenges with COVID and faced challenges with reporting and data collection.

### Sector Partnerships by Region



### List of Active Sector Partnerships by Region (as of June 2022)

#### Region 2:

Northern Colorado Construction Partnership  
 Northern Colorado Manufacturing Sector Partnership  
 Northern Colorado Health Sector Partnership

#### Region 11:

Mesa County Manufacturing Sector Partnership

#### Region 13:

Upper Arkansas Healthcare Sector Partnership  
 South Central Tech Sector Partnership

#### Region 3:

Colorado Tree Care Sector Partnership  
 Freight Industry Sector Partnership  
 Denver Metro Construction Sector Partnership  
 Denver Metro Construction Sector Partnership  
 Aerospace/Aviation Sector Partnership  
 Boulder County Healthcare Sector Group  
 Colorado Media Journalism  
 Greater Metro Denver Healthcare Partnership  
 Metro Denver Retail Sector Partnership  
 Tech Talent Boulder/Broomfield  
 Tech Talent Denver (formerly Denver Technology)

## List of Inactive Sector Partnerships by Region (as of June 2022)

**Region 1:**

Northeast Colorado Manufacturers

**Region 3:**

Metro Manufacturing Partnership

**Region 4:**

Colorado Springs Healthcare Sector Partnership  
Pikes Peak Regional Retail and Hospitality Sector Partnership

**Region 5:**

Region 5 Health Enrichment Partners

**Region 6:**

Southeastern Colorado Healthcare Sector Partnership Alliance  
Southeast Colorado Manufacturing Sector Partnership

**Region 7:**

Southern Colorado Healthcare Sector Partnership  
Southern Colorado Manufacturing Partnership

**Region 8:**

Value-Added Ag Sector Partnership  
San Luis Valley Healthcare Partnership

**Region 9:**

Southwest Colorado Healthcare Sector Partnership Alliance

**Region 11:**

Mesa County Health Care Sector Partnership

**Region 13:**

Upper Arkansas Early Childhood Sector Partnership  
Reg. 13 Tourism & Outdoor Rec./Retail Sector Partnership

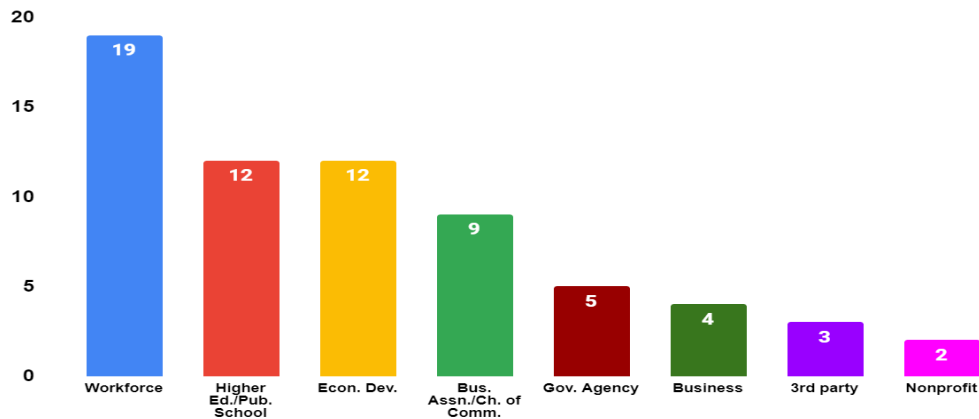
**Region 14:**

Spanish Peaks Retail Sector Partnership

## List of Sector Partnerships by Industry (as of June 2022)

Industry	Active / Sustaining	Inactive
Aerospace	Aerospace/Aviation Sector Partnership	No Partnerships
Energy & Natural Resources	Colorado Tree Care Sector Partnership	No Partnerships
Education	No Partnerships	Upper Arkansas Early Childhood Sector Partnership
Food and Agriculture	No Partnerships	Value-Added Ag Sector Partnership
Health & Wellness	Northern Colorado Health Sector Partnership Boulder County Healthcare Sector Group Greater Metro Denver Healthcare Partnership Upper Arkansas Healthcare Sector Partnership	Mesa County Health Care Sector Partnership Southeastern Colorado Healthcare Sector Partnership Alliance Colorado Springs Healthcare Sector Partnership Region 5 Health Enrichment Partners San Luis Valley Healthcare Partnership Southern Colorado Healthcare Sector Partnership Southwest Colorado Healthcare Sector Partnership Alliance
Infrastructure Engineering	Denver Metro Construction Sector Partnership Northern Colorado Construction Partnership	No Partnerships
Information Technology	Tech Talent Boulder/Broomfield Tech Talent Denver (formerly Denver Technology) South Central Tech Sector Partnership	No Partnerships
Manufacturing	Northern Colorado Manufacturing Sector Partnership Mesa County Manufacturing Sector Partnership	Northeast Colorado Manufacturers Southeast Colorado Manufacturing Sector Partnership Metro Manufacturing Partnership Southern Colorado Manufacturing Partnership
Media and Communications	Colorado Media Journalism	No Partnerships
Retail and Hospitality	Metro Denver Retail Sector Partnership	Pikes Peak Regional Retail and Hospitality Sector Partnership Spanish Peaks Retail Sector Partnership
Tourism	No Partnerships	Region 13 Tourism & Outdoor Recreation/Retail Sector Partnership
Transportation & Logistics	Freight Industry Sector Partnership	No Partnerships

## Sector Partnership Conveners by Partner Type



Conveners serve as the backbone support for sector partnerships. The role is staffed by a variety of different organizations in Colorado as indicated above. Eleven out of 15 sector partnerships that remained active throughout the pandemic were staffed by multi-convener teams representing more than one organization.

**\*Active:** The sector partnership has launched, identified industry-led priorities, and business champions and a convener in place.

**Sustaining:** The partnership has a sustainable “organizational home” that provides ongoing convening support while ensuring employers continue to drive the agenda. In addition, the partnership:

- Has diverse members committed to harnessing the enduring value of the sector partnership for both companies and community partners; members commit time, energy, and resources to support the partnership on an ongoing basis.
- Continues to attract new employer members and the action agenda continues to evolve as the partnership makes progress and takes on new opportunities.
- Serves as a vehicle for strong coordination and alignment across multiple levels and institutions of education and training (i.e., the building of true career pathway “systems”).

**Exploring:** A convening of industry and support partners that are implementing the step-by-step process of building an industry-led sector partnership.

**Inactive:** The sector partnership does not have convening support, industry champions, or ongoing support for industry-led priorities.