

Strengthening Colorado’s Sector Strategies: December 2023 Progress Update

In December 2022 the Colorado Workforce Development Council’s (CWDC) Sectors Steering Committee released the results of an evaluation of its sector strategies. [The Final Evaluation report](#) outlined 29 recommendations to strengthen and evolve sector strategies in Colorado. The report also informed the development of a five-point plan to revitalize the network of active sector partnerships in the state post COVID-19 and evolve the sector strategies to meet the needs of Colorado learners, workers, and employers within a changing economy. This document provides an update on key accomplishments in the year since the evaluation.

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Goals from Sectors Refresh Plan

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. This priority invests in refreshing the shared vision across state agencies to strengthen support for sector partnerships and investing in training for 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 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 the CWDC's support infrastructure, the evaluation recommended dedicating additional personnel to support sector partnerships, refresh the community of practice experience, and launch an orientation for the Sectors Steering Committee to ensure the CWDC is well equipped to champion sector partnerships and help them to adapt to a dynamic economic environment.

Catalyze and Sustain Rural Engagement

Many sector partnerships that went dormant since the onset of Covid-19 were in rural communities, and 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 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 the CWDC's work and help to focus efforts on ensuring that all Coloradans have the opportunity to benefit from a strong and thriving economy.

Key Progress to Date

Goal: Revitalize and Grow the Sector Partnership Network

Status: Colorado has increased its network of active or sustaining sector partnerships by 64%.

- Expanded Colorado's sectors network from 16 active or sustaining sector partnerships to 25 with support of CWDC regional convener grants and technical assistance to strengthen awareness of best practices in regional

collaboration and expand capacity of local communities to collaborate across employers, economic development, education and training providers, and community organizations.

- CWDC invested ARPA dollars to fund organizations to add 11 new regional sector partnership conveners to the sectors network. The funds supported individuals committed to collaborating across organization boundaries and included conveners from workforce centers, trade associations, chambers of commerce, and economic development. Two of the seven grants went to rural organizations including the Colorado Rural Workforce Consortium and the Southwest Education Collaborative to support the expansion of sector partnerships in rural communities.

Goal: Increase Awareness and Impact of Sector Partnerships

Status: Funded Northern Colorado and Boulder to pilot new approaches to building and sharing evidence of sector partnership impact within their regions.

- Contracted with the Colorado Equitable Economic Mobility Initiative (CEEMI) to provide technical assistance and advance evidence-based practices of regional sector partnerships and other CWDC grantees.
- Launched a new KPI process and evaluation tool to strengthen data collection and capture better information to more effectively communicate the impact of sector partnerships on learners/workers, employers, and regional economies.

- Published a [Sector Partnership Acknowledgement Form](#) to provide a clear process for public/private partnerships meeting key criteria to be acknowledged on the state's sector partnership webpage and increase transparency regarding public funding for sector partnerships.

Goal: Strengthen Support Infrastructure

Status: Hired Bobbie Wolfe, Senior Consultant - Sector Partnerships and Industry Engagement.

- Bobbie Wolfe is experienced in economic mobility, industry engagement, and career pathway development. She is well known within the sectors network and was a natural fit to lead Colorado's efforts to strengthen sector strategies. In 2023, Bobbie hired the first Sectors Apprentice to support the growth and evolution of the sectors network.
- Partners with the Institute for Networked Communities (INC) to train 44 individuals in Colorado's next-generation sector partnership model. The training initiative has since expanded to include ongoing support for regional collaboration and mentorship and skill development for new sector partnership conveners.
- Convened six state agencies to update on the sector partnership evaluation findings, refresh the shared visions for sector strategies, and clarify roles for supporting the work moving forward.

Goal: Catalyze and Sustain Rural Engagement

Status: Seven new sector partnership launches are being explored in rural Colorado.

- Regional sector conveners housed at rural-serving organizations are strengthening rural engagement in sectors efforts and critical to sustaining rural sector partnerships and supporting their expansion.
- Hosted CIVICO Governor's Fellows to conduct a rural landscape analysis of rural, employer-led collaboration and provide recommendations to strengthen rural engagement.

Key Performance Indicator Instrument

As part of the evaluation, the project team conducted a detailed review of the current Key Performance Indicator (KPI) instrument, examined metrics and collection methods, and considered 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 documentation is available for review in [the full KPI report](#).

The purpose of the KPI survey is to:

- Capture the positive outcomes, challenges, opportunities, and impacts of sector partnerships.
- Evaluate the distinct and unique value sector partnerships contribute to their regions.

- Inform strategic decision making for investments in sector partnerships at a local and state level.
- Grow and garner support for sector partnerships locally and across the state to demonstrate the value of sector partnerships in Colorado.
- Build and sustain high-performing sector partnerships.

The CWDC is looking to include metrics to collect baseline data to continue to advance industry-led outcomes and regional collaboration. Previous highlights from the KPI survey include:

- 60% [of businesses involved in a sector partnership] are developing or participating in an internship or apprenticeship program.
- 60% [of businesses involved in a sector partnership] had new or enhanced human resource policies, practices, and recruitment.

List of Sector Partnerships by Industry



(List updated as of July 2023)

*denotes a 2023 launch date

Region 2

- Northern Colorado Health Sector Partnership
- Northern Colorado Manufacturing Sector Partnership
- Northern Colorado Construction Sector Partnership
- Nonprofit Sector Partnership
- Northern Colorado Hospitality Sector Partnership

Region 3

- Aerospace Sector Partnership
- Tech Talent Boulder / Broomfield
- Tech Talent Denver
- Boulder Food, Beverage, & Hospitality Sector Partnership*
- Boulder Healthcare Sector Partnership*
- Colorado Media Journalism Sector Partnership
- Metro Denver Retail Sector Partnership
- Colorado Tree Care Sector Partnership
- Freight Industry Sector Partnership
- Metro Denver Construction Sector Partnership
- Boulder Area Manufacturing Sector Partnership
- West Metro Advanced Manufacturing Alliance
- West Metro Construction Sector Partnership*
- Denver Metro Construction Sector Partnership

Region 4

- Colorado Springs Retail and Hospitality Partnership
- Southern Colorado Healthcare Sector Partnership* (collaborating with regions 7 & 13)

Region 11

- Mesa Manufacturing

Region 13

- Upper Arkansas Health and Wellness Sector Partnership
- South Central Tech Sector Partnership
- Early Childhood Education Sector Partnership*

Sector strategies (including sector partnerships and/or industry associations) are present in 87% of Colorado’s critical industries as of May 2023.

