
Eastern Oregon Sector Partnership Practitioner Training

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Pathways to Employer Engagement

THE SHORT GAME

Makes sense for some purposes, but not structured to produce lasting results or commitment

Transactional in nature

- Survey of needs
- Focus groups
- Event sponsorship
- Single program advisory boards
- Industry in reactive role

Leads to fragmentation and duplicative efforts across programs

THE LONG GAME

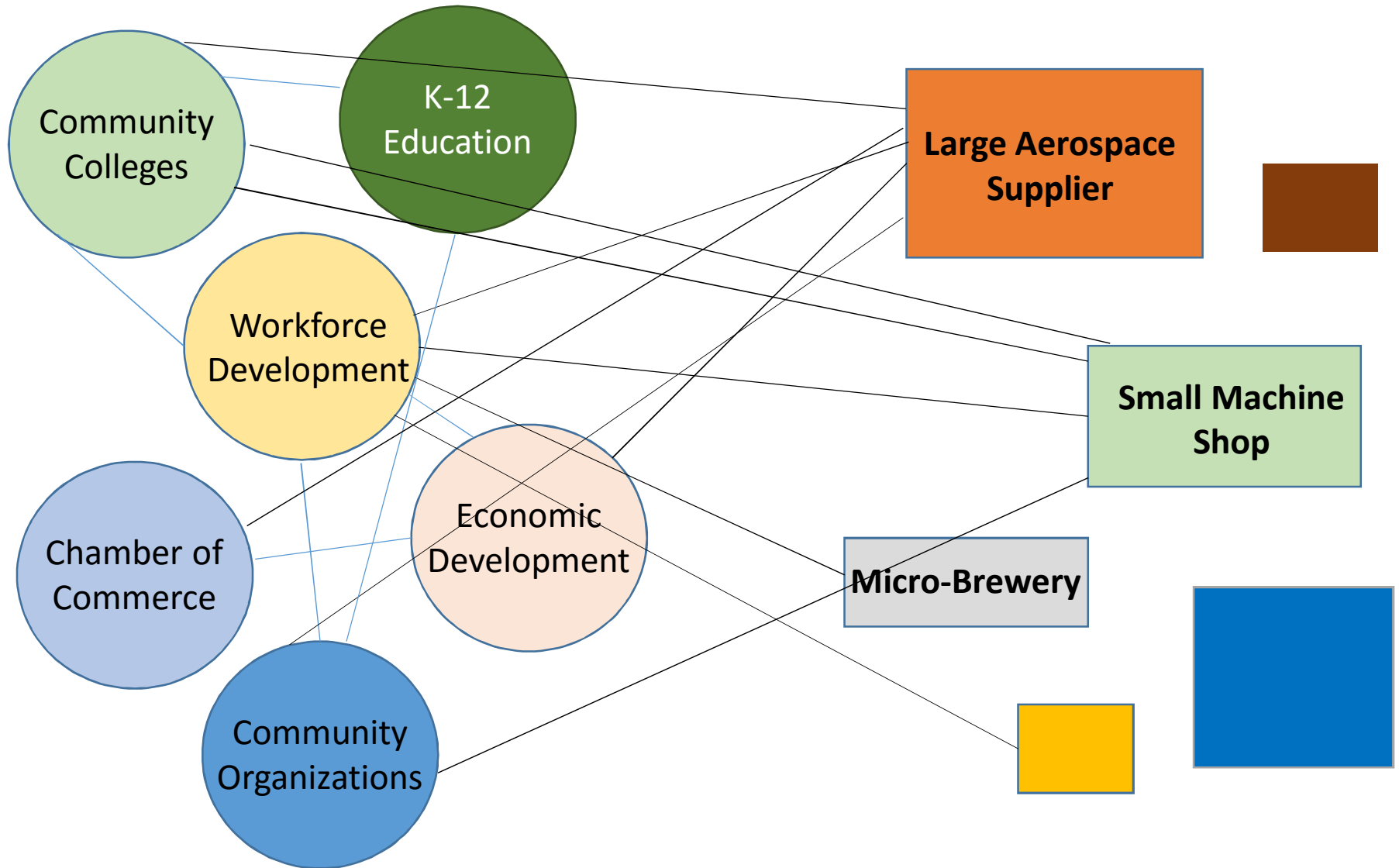
Makes sense for relationship/trust building that yields long term impact

Transformational in nature

- Employers as partners, Chairs of Sector Partnerships, co-investors
- Shared stake in comprehensive education and training
- Tackling other opportunities beyond just workforce issues
- Sustained engagement over time
- Industry in proactive role

Employer leadership acts as catalyst for a systems approach

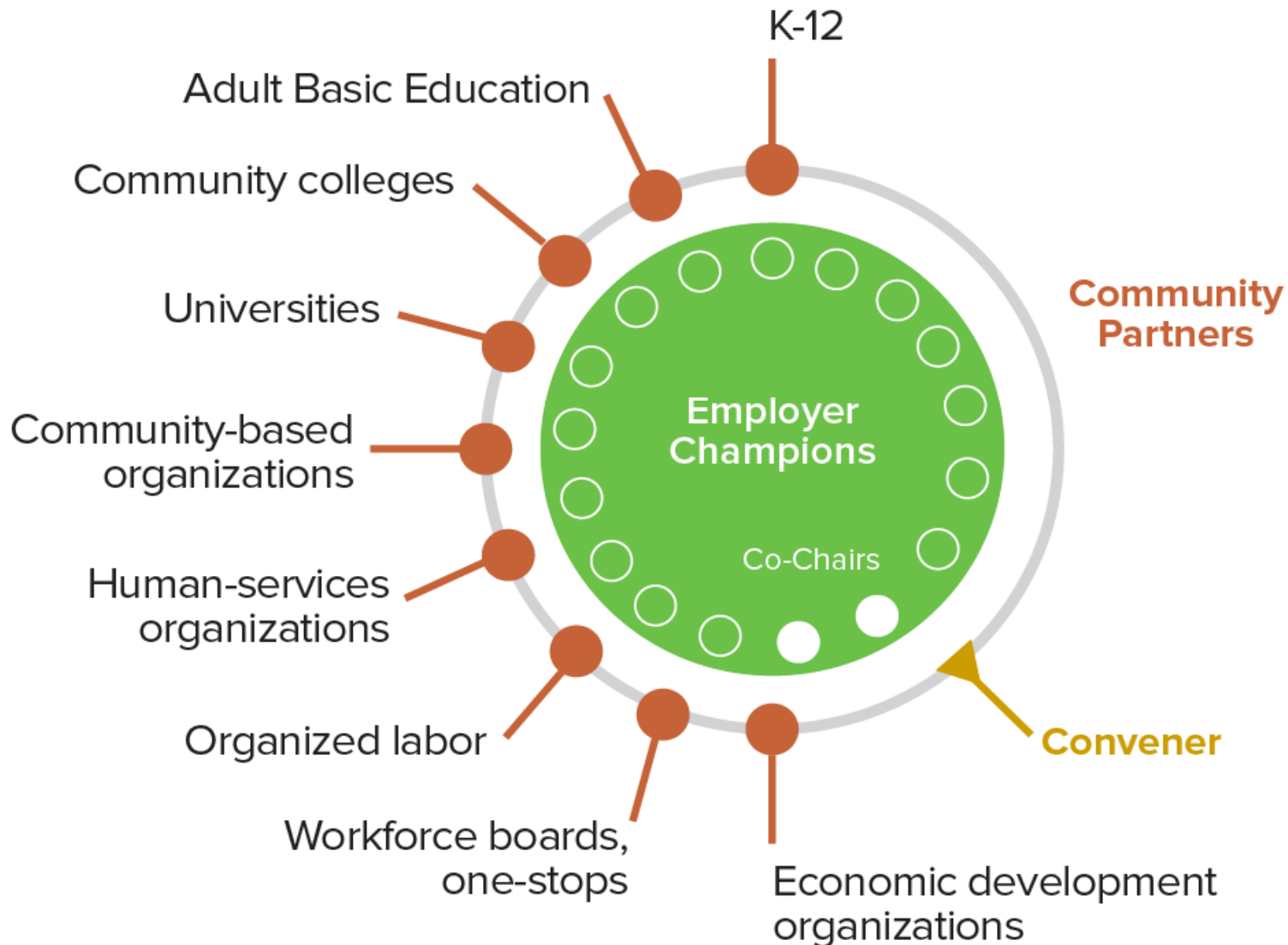
A Typical State of Play



What are Sector Partnerships?

At the regional labor market level, a **partnership** of employers within one industry sector or cluster that work closely with **government, education and training, economic development, labor and community organizations** to focus on the **workforce and other competitiveness needs** of their industry. These regional partnerships may or may not have support from the state and/or federal level.

EMPLOYER-DRIVEN, COMMUNITY-SUPPORTED SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS




What do they accomplish?

- Talent
- Infrastructure
- Innovation
- Regulatory process
- Export promotion
- Marketing
- Other shared priorities to grow and support sectors

WHAT WORKS WELL (AND NOT SO WELL)



Clusters of companies
Employers as partners
Industry-driven
Regionally-based
Existing industry strength or emerging specialty
Industry competitiveness/growth
Opportunity-focused
Employer priorities first
Champion-driven
Coalitions of the willing
People and relationships
A disciplined, replicable process

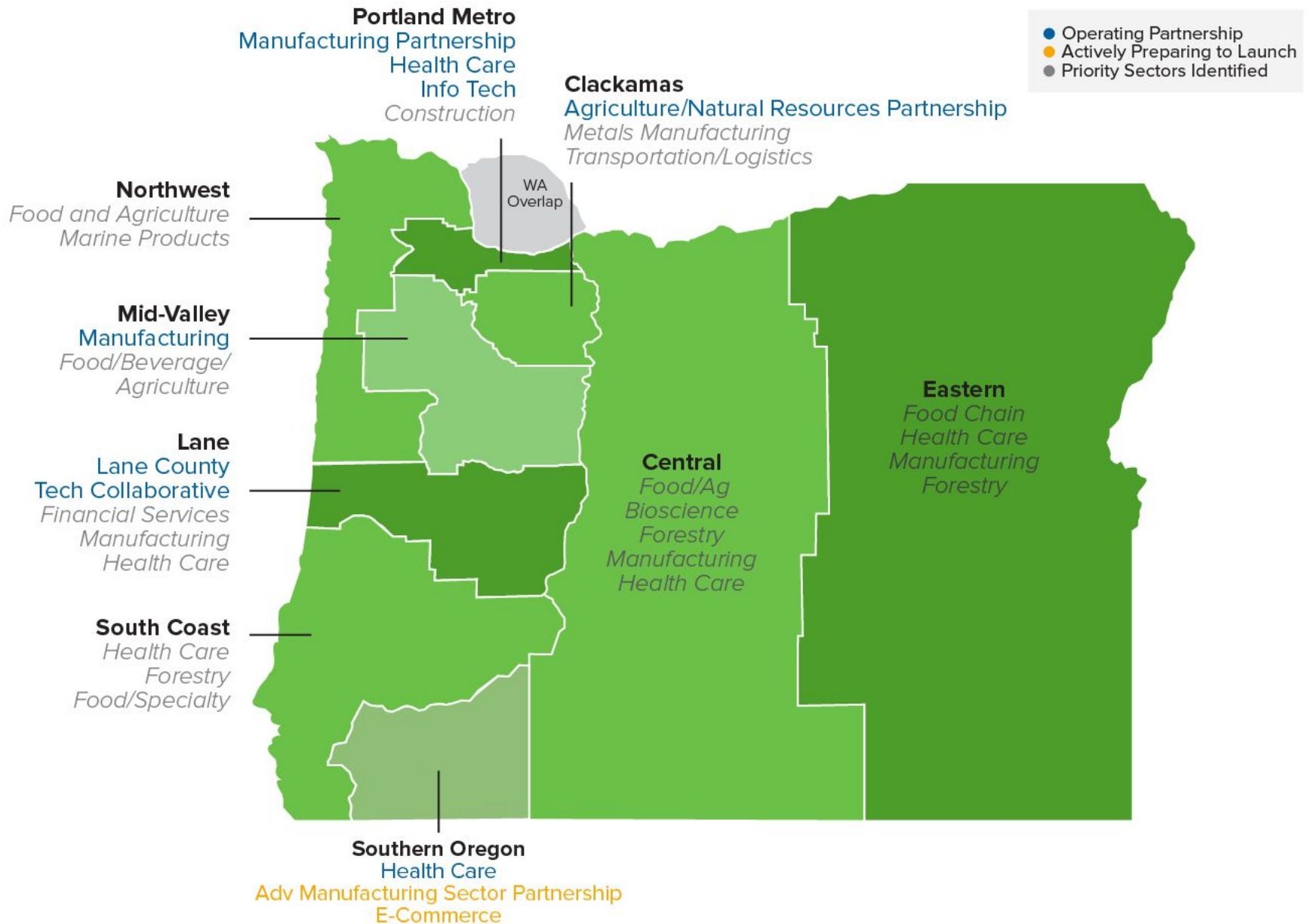


Individual firms
Employers as customers
System- or institution-driven
Statewide top-down or too local
Wishful thinking
Workforce only
Problem-driven
Target populations first
Representation-oriented
The futile search for consensus
Organizations and jurisdictions
A mysterious, unique occurrence

What's in it for me?

- **For business:** A place to solve major talent needs and address other shared competitiveness issues; a single table at which to work with public partners
- **For workforce development:** A way to strategically focus time and resources on high-impact solutions; a wholesale vs. retail approach to engaging employers
- **For education:** A venue for faster understanding of changing industry needs; a vehicle to identify, build and refine curriculum, programs and credentials; the only way to build industry-driven career pathway systems
- **For economic development:** A place for focused work with existing key industries on issues of competitiveness; a productive venue for collaborating with workforce development and education

THE STATE OF SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS



NORTHERN COLORADO MANUFACTURING PARTNERSHIP

More than 50 northern Colorado manufacturing companies and 20 public partners established the Manufacturing Partnership in 2013 to address common issues in the industry

Mission statement: “Partners working passionately to ensure Northern Colorado Manufacturers and our Communities thrive.”



PRIORITIES INCLUDE:

Networking and local supply chain issues

Changing the perception of the industry and encouraging youth to pursue manufacturing

Developing vocational/technical skills as a career pathway for youth and adults in transition

NORTHERN COLORADO MANUFACTURING PARTNERSHIP

Results thus far:

Identification of local suppliers, increased business among local companies

Campaign to local high school students, promoting manufacturing careers, company tours, hands-on events

Detailed profiles of regional high-demand occupations based on industry-wide consensus via "skills panels"

Plans by industry to expand internships/other workplace learning opportunities, assist local institutions on curriculum/delivery/equipment/etc.

New community college, university, and high school programs in process in response to industry demand



Public Partners: What's the Role?

- **First, listen** and make space for the industry voice to emerge.
- **Once industry leaders have defined their own agenda for action:**
 - **Interpret industry priorities and develop responsive solutions** in partnership with industry and other public partners;
 - **Act as a gateway into your institution**, engaging others as needed, helping others understand how supporting the sector partnership's priority aligns with the organization's core mission or goals.
 - **Broker collaborations across programs** to develop customized solutions, (as opposed to relying on pre-existing programs within institutional silos);
 - **Bring assets to the table** (staff capacity, grant dollars, existing programs or program elements etc.) that can be combined in different ways to respond to industry needs.
 - **Provide project management support** to advance sector partnership priorities, tracking progress, holding partners accountable, and driving toward action and results.