

# SECTOR PARTNERSHIP & CAREER PATHWAY ADVISORY COUNCIL

## OVERVIEW AND SURVEY FINDINGS

DECEMBER 2015



**COMMUNITY COLLEGES**

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## Acknowledgements

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## Sector Partnership & Career Pathway Advisory Council Membership

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MaryAnne Nickle  
Iowa Valley Community College District

Bethany Parker  
Kirkwood Community College

Mary Schultz  
North Iowa Area Community College

Rachel Scott  
Iowa College Student Aid Commission

Jason Shanks  
Plumbers and Steamfitters Local 33

Pat Steele  
Central Iowa Works

Jim Vanderloo  
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Joan Williams  
Southeastern Iowa Community College

Jennifer Wilson  
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Kodie Wittenauer  
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## Overview of Sector Partnership & Career Pathway Advisory Council

The Iowa Department of Education's Division of Community Colleges first convened the Sector Partnership & Career Pathway Advisory Council to address sector partnership and career pathway implementation for the Pathways for Academic Career and Employment (PACE) program. Enacted in 2013, the PACE program supports the implementation of simplified, streamlined, and comprehensive academic and training pathways which enable eligible participants to acquire the necessary skills to secure gainful, quality in-state employment. The council initially consisted of representatives exclusively from Iowa's 15 community colleges.

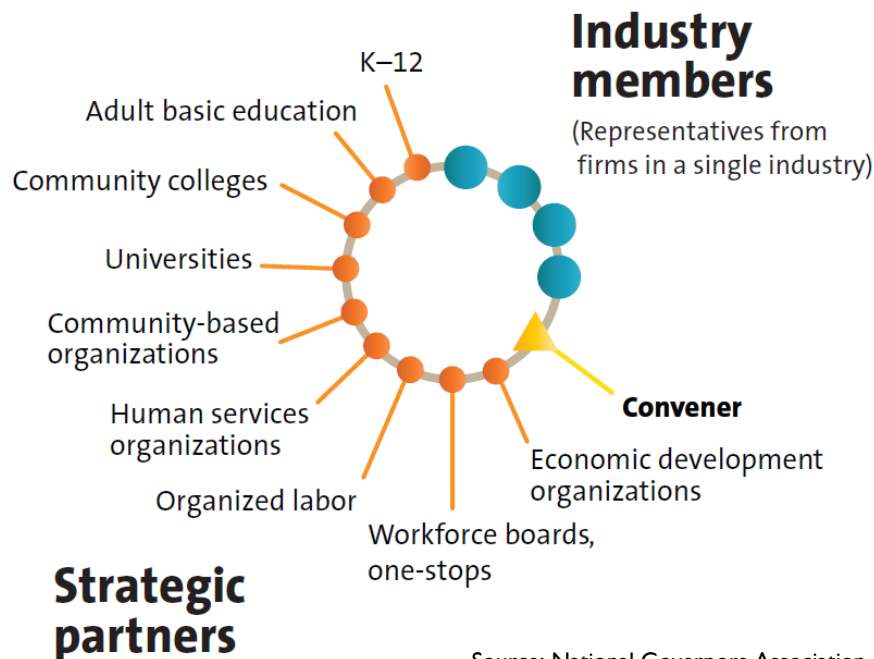
The scope of the council was broadened following the passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). It was recognized that that council was well positioned to assist with the implementation of several WIOA provisions which emphasize credential attainment through the use of sector partnerships and career pathways. To ensure more coordinated efforts related to these aspects of WIOA, membership was broadened to include representatives from several state agencies, trade unions, and non-profit organizations. A membership list is provided on the preceding page.

The council envisions being reconfigured to assume a more formal role in the implementation and achievement of objectives related to sector partnerships and career pathways outlined in the WIOA Unified State Plan, which may entail a more formal advisory role to the Iowa Workforce Board. This would require a reconfiguration of council membership, with greater business and industry representation so that the council is truly business-led and oriented. The council will maintain broad education, workforce development, and economic development representation.

## Introduction to Sector Partnerships

Sector partnerships are increasingly recognized as an effective method for aligning education, economic, and workforce development systems to address industry-identified labor market needs. To that end, sector partnerships "benefit industry by facilitating creation of a pool of appropriately skilled labor and an industry cluster that provides access to shared resources, innovation, and markets ([National Governors Association, 2015](#))."

*(Continued on Next Page)*



Source: National Governors Association

Sector partnerships are comprised of industries with shared needs, as well as various education, workforce, economic, and community organizations in a supportive role. These partnerships develop and continuously evaluate goals, policies, and service-delivery strategies to meet the needs of employers in a given sector.

Sector partnerships operate within labor market regions, and are not confined to municipal, county, educational, or even state boundaries. The scope and size of a sector partnership is based entirely on where industries in a particular sector are located.

Effective sector partnerships are industry-driven, meaning industry identify needs and assume a lead role in developing strategies which address the identified needs. Accordingly, industry sets the agenda, takes an active role in designing workforce solutions, and engages in practices which promote partnership sustainability.

A widely utilized workforce solution is the career pathway. Career pathways consist of sequential education and training services which afford individuals to opportunity the acquire validated, stackable skills, and credentials applicable to a certain industry or sector. Pathways consist of several entry and exit points so that individuals “can move seamlessly between academic and career technical programs, to and from work, and to advanced credentials ([Maher & Maher, 2015](#)).”

Ultimately, sector partnerships and career pathways are a proven means “for helping workers prepare for middle-skill jobs and helping employers find skilled workers ([National Skills Coalition, 2015](#)).”

## About the Survey

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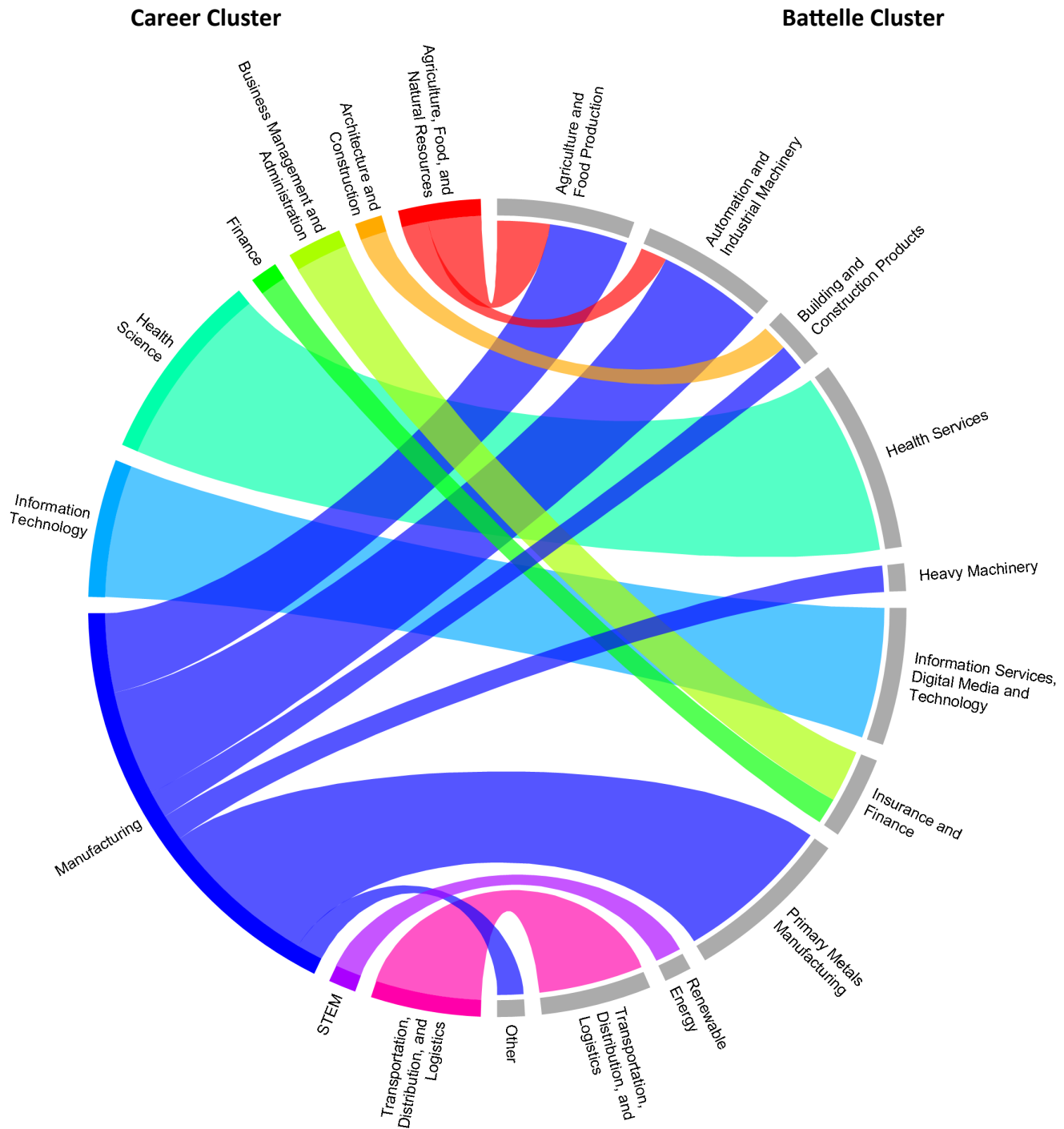
The council was tasked with establishing common definitions and expectations for sector partnerships and career pathways aligned with WIOA and other federal guidelines such as the ability to benefit (ATB) provision of the Higher Education Act. (See [Appendix A](#) for the sector partnership and career pathway definitions adopted by the council.)

To better understand the current sector partnership/career pathway landscape, these definitions were utilized in a survey which was sent to each community college, as well as other organizations involved with convening and facilitating sector partnerships. The results of the survey are summarized in this report. All available information gathered from the survey is included in this report, and is current as of December 11, 2015.

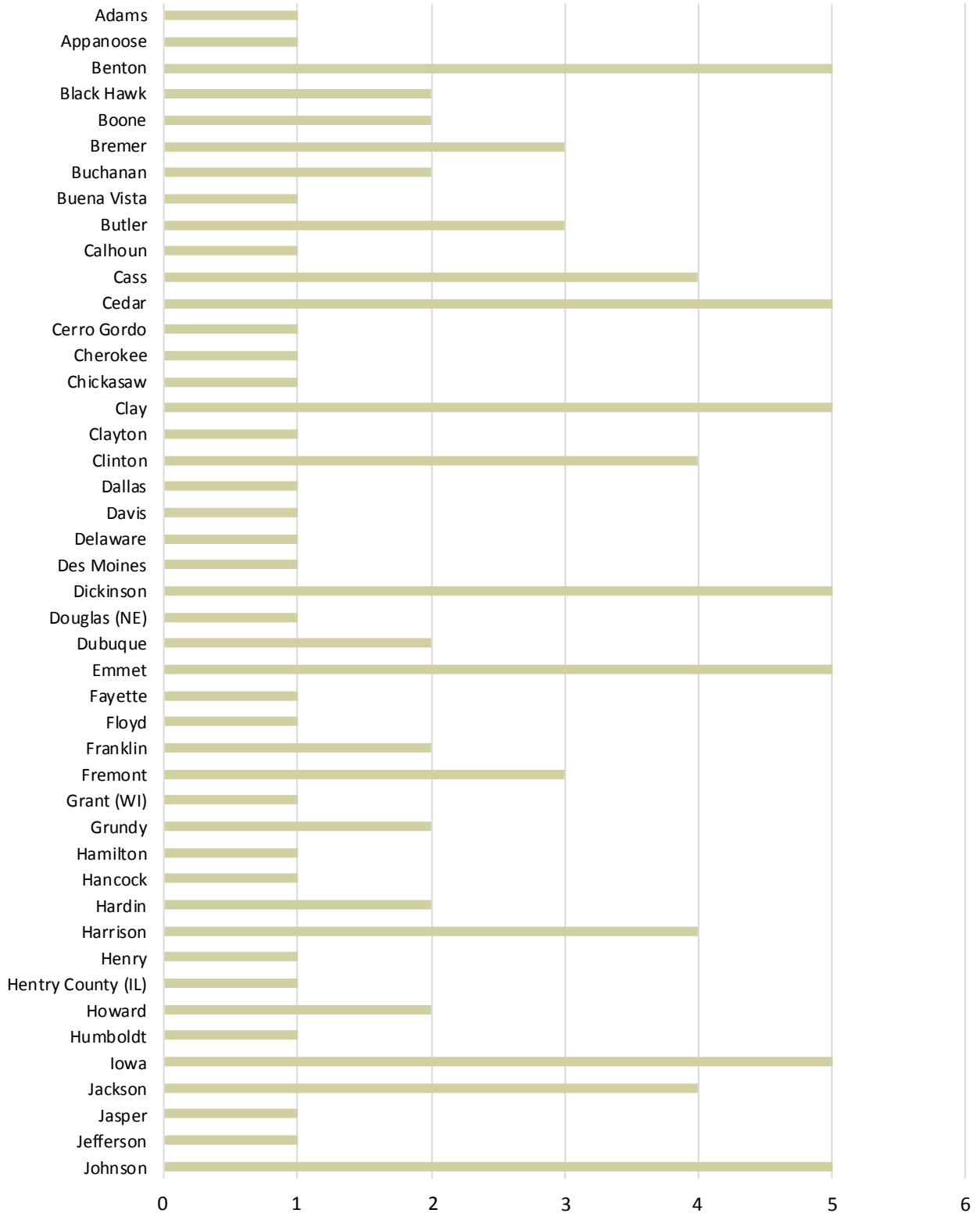
Number of Survey Responses	40
Number of Complete Survey Responses	36
Number of Follow-up Attempts	2
Number of Community College Regions Served by Sector Partnerships	15 of 15
Number of Iowa Counties Served by Sector Partnerships	85
Total Number of Counties Served by Sector Partnerships	90
Number of Career Clusters Represented	9 of 16
Number of Batelle Clusters Represented	11 of 12

### Sector Partnership by Career Cluster and Battelle Cluster (Self-Identified)

The graph depicts the association between a sector partnership’s self-identified career cluster and the Battelle cluster (economic development clusters identified in the [2014 Battelle Report](#) of the Iowa Partnership for Economic Progress). Size of bar conveys the number of sector partnerships which identified with a given career and Battelle cluster.

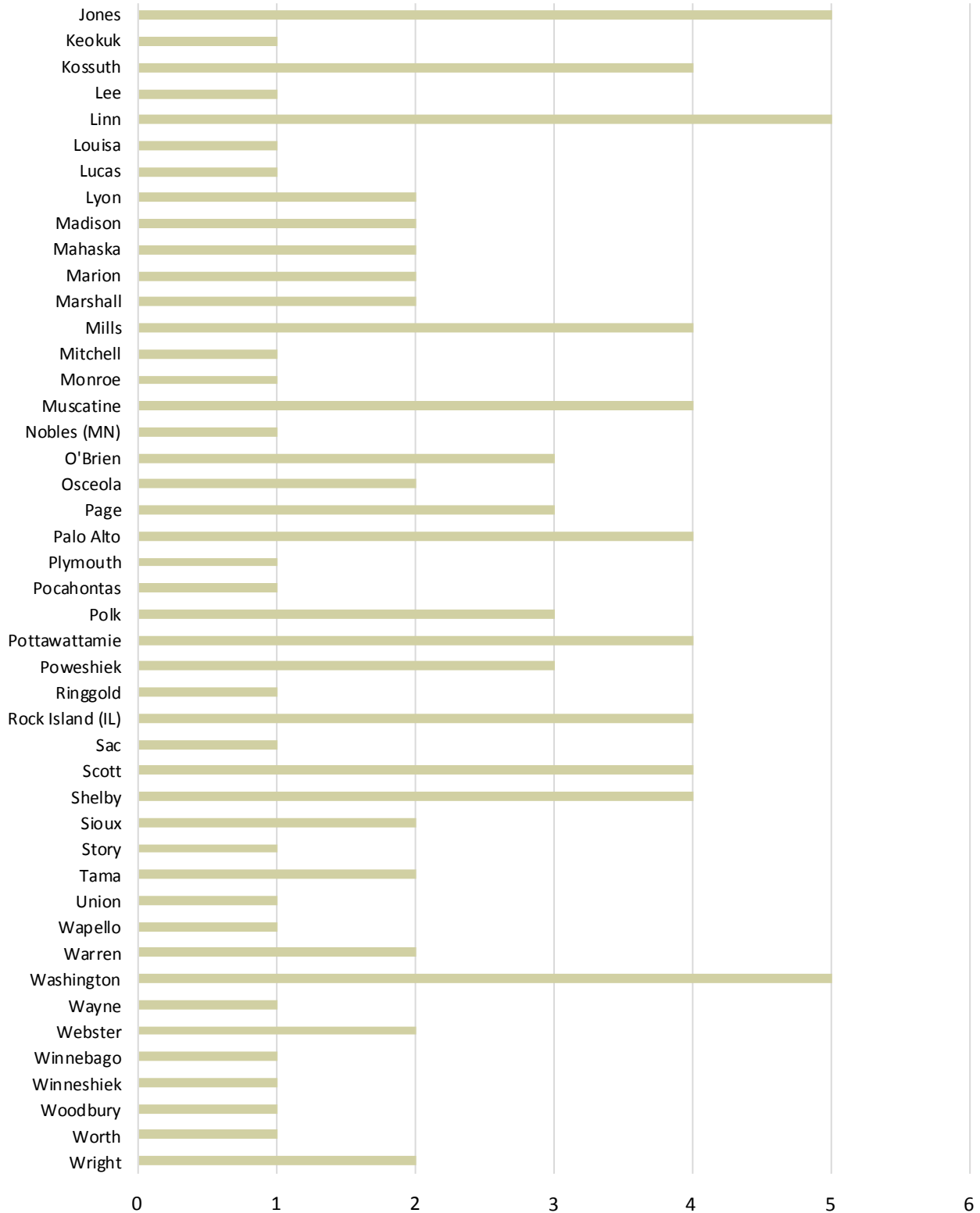


### Number of Sector Partnerships Serving County

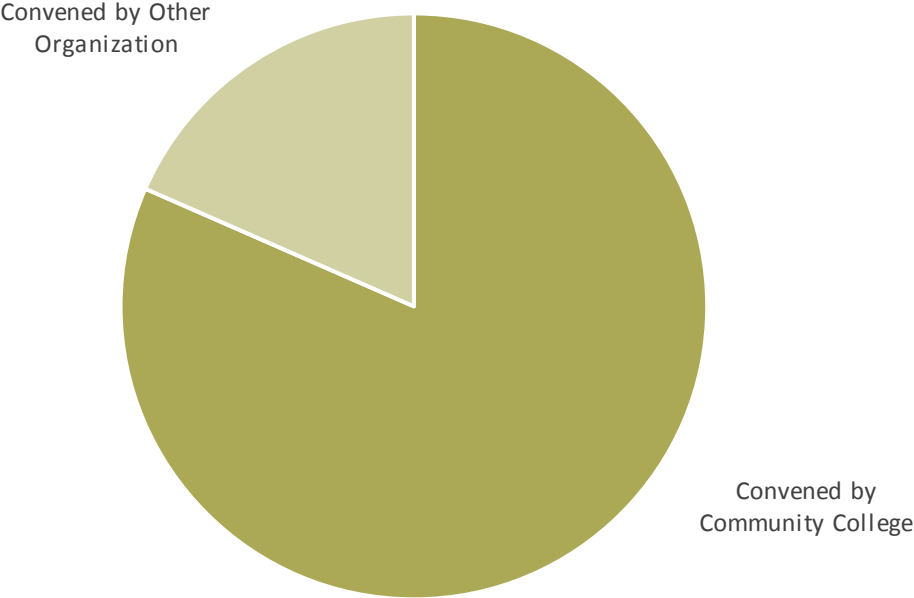




## Number of Sector Partnerships Serving County

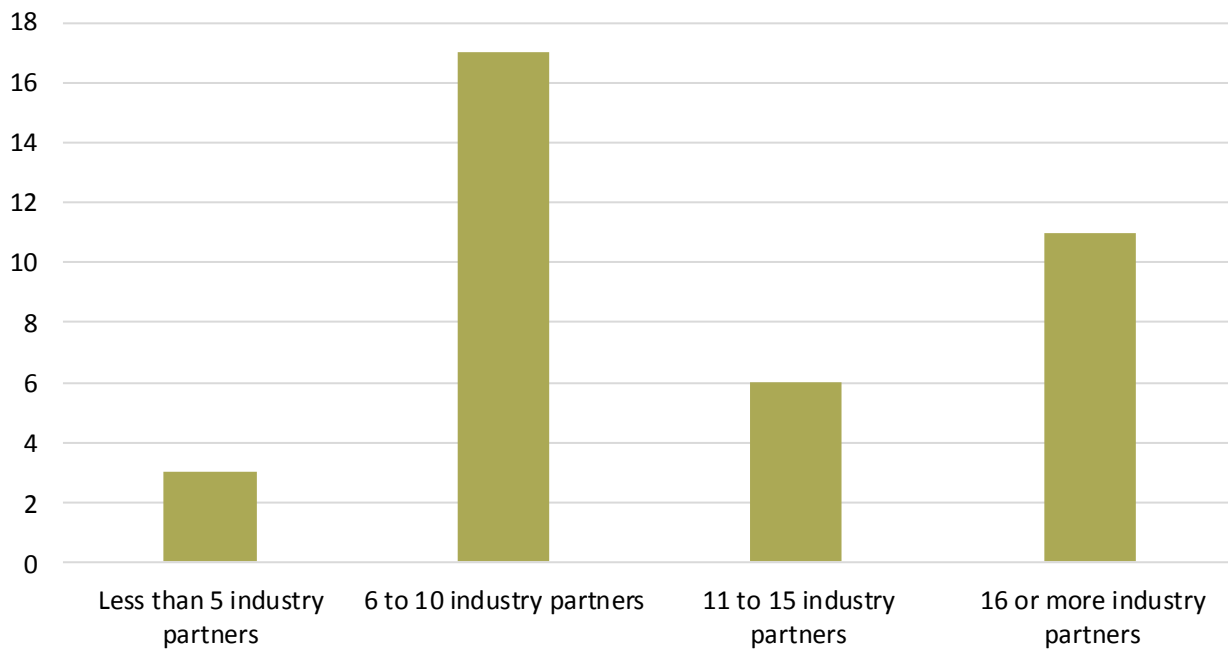
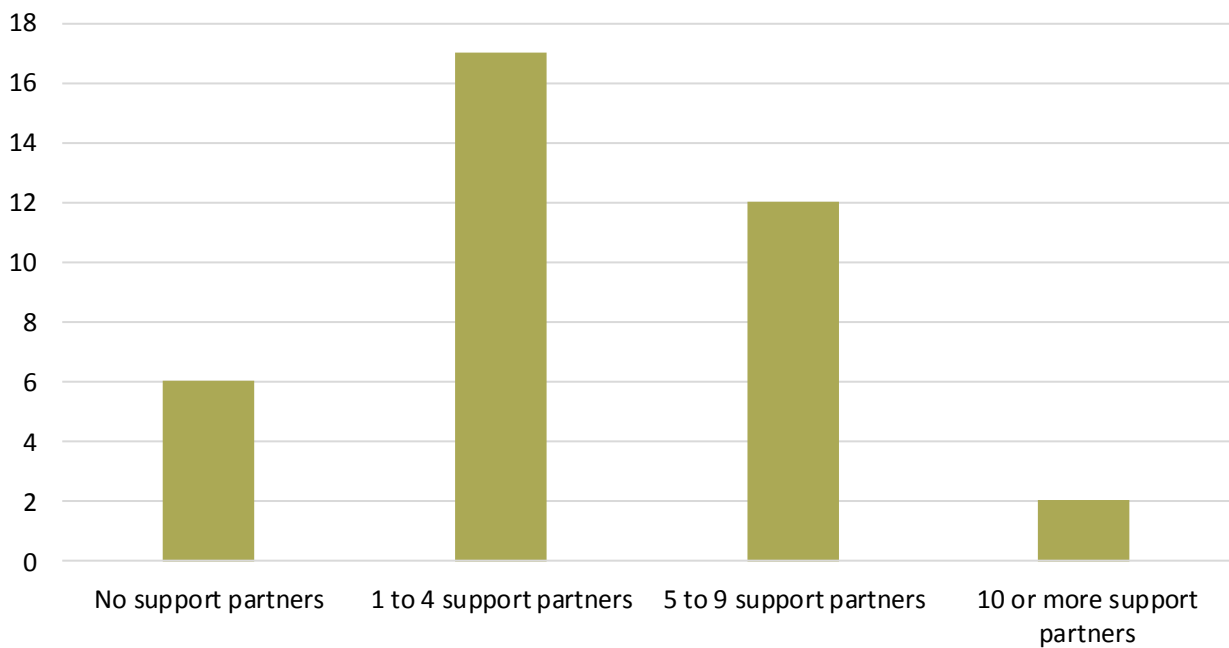


**Q. Who convened the sector partnership?**



**Q. Does the sector partnership have a facilitator?**

	<i>Number of Responses</i>
<b><i>Yes, sector partnership has a designated, neutral facilitator.</i></b>	<b>27</b>
Yes, sector partnership has an interim facilitator.	5
No, the sector partnership does not have a facilitator.	7

**Q. Does the sector partnership have active and engaged industry partners?****Q. Does the sector partnership have active and engaged support partners?**

**Q. Does the sector partnership have a chair or lead partner selected from industry partners?**

	<i>Number of Responses</i>
<b><i>Yes, sector partnership has a designated chairperson or lead partner.</i></b>	<b>15</b>
No, but has engaged an industry partner to chair or lead.	9
No, sector partnership does not have chair or lead partner.	13

**Q. Has the sector partnership developed and validated at least one career pathway?**

	<i>Number of Responses</i>
<b><i>Yes, at least one career pathway has been developed and validated.</i></b>	<b>20</b>
No, but a career pathway is in the process of being developed and validated.	11
No, a career pathway has not developed.	6

**Q. Does the sector partnership operate according to a shared, long-term strategic plan?**

	<i>Number of Responses</i>
Yes, the sector partnership operates according to a strategic plan.	10
No, but the sector partnership is in the process of developing a strategic plan.	10
<b><i>No, and the sector partnership is not in the process of developing a strategic plan.</i></b>	<b>18</b>

**Q. Has the sector partnership established common, measurable indicators of success?**

*Number  
of Responses*

Yes, the partnership has established common success indicators.

12

***No, the partnership has not established common success indicators.***

**25**

**Q. At what maturity level would the sector partnership be ranked (*ranked by individual submitting the survey*)?**

*Number  
of Responses*

Mature

4

***Emerging***

**30**

Planning

4

## Appendix A – Definitions

A **sector partnership** is a workforce collaborative that organizes key stakeholders and targeted industry partners into a sustainable working group that focuses on the long-term workforce needs of a targeted industry cluster. Membership in the sector partnership is determined by the targeted industry partners. Sector partnerships operate within a true labor market region and are not confined to particular workforce, education, or similar regional boundaries.

The term **industry partners** means a concentration of interconnected businesses, suppliers, research and development entities, service providers, and associated institutions in a particular field that are linked by common workforce needs.

Sector **support partners** work to meet the skill, recruitment, and retention needs of employers and the training, employment, and career advancement needs of workers. By meeting the needs of sector partnerships on behalf of industry, jobseekers, and workers, sector support partners strengthen a region's overall economic vitality. Support partners should include entities such as:

- local government;
- local economic development agencies;
- local agencies;
- chambers of commerce;
- nonprofit organizations;
- philanthropic organizations;
- community service agencies;
- economic development organizations;
- industry associations;
- labor organizations, except in instances where no labor representation exists;
- representatives of local boards;
- representatives of K-12, adult education, and postsecondary educational institutions or other training providers; and
- representatives of state workforce agencies or other entities providing employment services; and representatives of other, related regional sector partnerships.

Key roles in the development and implementation of a sector partnership is that of the **convener** and **facilitator or facilitating team**. A **convener** is a credible entity in a position to identify regional economic and labor needs and convene industry and support partners to develop

strategies which address the identified regional needs. A **facilitator** or facilitating team is a neutral, credible, and trained entity tasked with ensuring the ongoing operation and sustainability of a sector partnership. Accordingly, the facilitator assists in introducing options which address identified regional needs, distinguishing resource needs and funding sources, and other activities vital to the functioning of the sector partnership.

The facilitator is not the sector partnership leader, a position which should be designated upon a partnership member. Rather, a facilitator works closely with the partnership leader to accomplish the aforementioned tasks.

A convener and facilitator may be the same entity – i.e., the convener may assume the facilitator role – if that entity possesses the appropriate capacities to fully perform in both roles.

### Levels of Sector Partnership Development

**Mature** means the sector partnership:

- has a clear neutral facilitator or facilitating team;
- is led by industry, as demonstrated by industry sector members playing leadership roles (chairperson, etc.), who are committed to the long-term sustainability of the sector partnership;
- has broad industry engagement as demonstrated by industry members attending meetings, partnering on activities, providing in-kind or financial resources, or similar;
- includes critical and engaged support partners across programs from workforce development economic development, education, community organizations and others. Sector partnership actively communicates and collaborates with regional Workforce Investment Board(s);
- operates in a true labor market region, not within the confines of a workforce area, community college boundary, or other boundaries;
- operates under a shared, long-term strategic plan, road map, etc.;
- has developed at least one effective, employer-validated career pathway in support of a target industry cluster based on mapping knowledge, skills and abilities, and skill attainment at multiple entry and exit points;

- has clear, identified priorities and is able to demonstrate recent (within the past six months) or current activities, services or products that are a direct outcome of the partnership, including, but not limited to the design and implementation, with employers of work-based learning models in targeted sector(s); on-the-job training; cooperative education; paid internships and; pre-apprenticeship or registered apprenticeship programs; and
- has common agreed-upon dashboard of success indicators (i.e. consensus around sector partnership “outcomes”) determined in part by indicators needed to bring about system changes

*Emerging* means the sector partnership:

- has at least an interim independent facilitator or facilitating team;
- has engaged at least one private sector champion to help drive the launch and implementation of a sector partnership;
- includes support partners from workforce development, education, economic development, and other programs or organizations in strategic roles. Is developing the capacity to engage in active communication and collaboration with regional Workforce Investment Board(s);
- can say with confidence when the partnership is expected to “launch;” and
- engaged in networking with mature sector partnerships.

*Planning* means a convener is:

- determining whether the partnership really makes sense for their community;
- considering or preparing for actions needed to launch a partnership, but has not committed to the formation of a sector partnership; and
- working to identify partners who would be involved.

#### **Career Pathways:**

A **career pathway** consists of structured course sequences which organize rigorous and high-quality education, training, and other services related to a targeted industry cluster to meet the education and skill needs of the region and state, and the particular needs of an individual, all in the context of workforce preparation. This is achieved through collaboration between industry partners and support partners within a sector partnership.

A career pathway must include advising and support services which identify education and career needs and goals to meet the needs of individuals with or without the need for relevant and reasonable accommodations. To meet the needs of all individuals, a career pathway must be equipped to effectively:

- enable an individual to attain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent and at least one recognized postsecondary credential;
- prepare an individual to be successful in any of a full range of secondary and postsecondary education options, including apprenticeships; and
- help an individual enter and advance within a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

Attention must be given to strategies and approaches which accelerate the educational postsecondary credential attainment and career advancement of the individual to the extent practicable. Such strategies must include, but is not limited to, the concurrent delivery of adult education and eligible postsecondary education programs, and “bridge” curricula which connects adult and basic education to workforce preparation programs and integrates education and training to allow students to advance in their education and employment.

A **career pathway system** is the cohesive combination of sector partnerships, resources and funding, policies, data, and shared accountability measures that support the development, quality, scaling, and sustainability of career pathways for youth and adults. As such, a career pathway system is a long-term objective for which all sector partnerships should strive. A career pathway system is an overarching frame and is not couched within any one public education, workforce, or other system; however, one system may take the lead on developing the career pathway. The value of a career pathway system is that it is not created in a vacuum, but connects and aligns all other related public systems to each other and to private and non-profit partners.



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