

## **Salinas Valley Sector Partnerships: Scope of Work for Sector Intermediary**

**Background:** Five cities in the Salinas Valley - Gonzales, Greenfield, King City, Salinas, and Soledad – have jointly agreed to collaborate on a strategy to link workforce development to economic development for the region by launching sector partnerships in two industry sectors critical to the economic vitality of region: agriculture and healthcare. A sector partnership is a coalition of multiple employers within a critical industry working with education, economic development, workforce systems, and community organizations to collaboratively identify workforce needs and develop strategies to meet those needs within a regional labor market. Sector partnerships are frequently referred to as “dual customer” strategies because they focus on developing services that meet the needs of both employers and workers or job seekers. Sector partnerships help residents prepare for and advance in their careers, by ensuring that regional training and other workforce services are closely aligned with the needs of employers. Sector partnerships help local companies recruit, train, retain, and advance workers by ensuring that regional public and private education and training providers design services that are responsive to employer needs, and by assisting companies to develop and implement workforce policies and procedures that contribute to economic competitiveness.

Sector partnerships are supported by an intermediary, which is an organization that provides the staffing and leadership to identify the shared workforce needs of employers in the target industry and to collaborate with education and training providers, community organizations, and other key partners to develop effective workforce solutions to address these challenges.

The five cities are driving the formation of sector partnerships in agriculture and healthcare because these industries jointly employ the majority of Salinas Valley residents, and are the economic drivers of regional prosperity. Agricultural and healthcare employers in the Salinas Valley share common workforce challenges, but lack a formal infrastructure to convene and collaborate to address their shared workforce needs. At the same time, the civic leadership of the region, as represented by the five cities, need a single point of contact for each industry to organize resources, analyze workforce challenges and opportunities, and develop programs and services that meet the needs of all residents, from low-skilled to high-skilled and from north to south, closing gaps in services and reducing duplication. Salinas Valley’s civic leadership needs a knowledgeable and reliable source of information about the region’s workforce needs and innovations to guide their strategic planning for the region’s growth and prosperity. Sector intermediaries in health care and agriculture will address this need. Finally, it is more efficient and effective to launch sector partnerships that include all five cities, rather than developing a series of initiatives that benefit individual cities, because the cities

share a common labor market and a regional approach helps leverage their collective resources.

**Role of the Intermediary:** Effective sector partnerships hinge in part on strong leadership from an intermediary that acts as a neutral broker among all the stakeholders in the target sector. The intermediary helps build a shared vision and strategy among employers and other stakeholders by convening them on a regular basis to identify mutual workforce needs and by brokering solutions that align the resources of education and training providers, community organizations and other key partners in the area to address these challenges.

*Staff competencies:* Intermediaries are most successful when they are staffed by a senior level leader with knowledge of the industry, knowledge of workforce development systems and resources with strong facilitation skills, the capability to engage and work effectively with business executives, and the interpersonal skills and knowledge to collaborate and maintain strong relationships with education and community partners. Intermediary leadership must be able to understand the terminology, culture, and priorities of the industry, and to gain regional employers' trust as a valued advisor on workforce issues. Intermediary leadership must be "bi-cultural" in order to translate input from the business community into language and strategies that make sense to educators and other workforce providers. He or she must have the interest and ability to learn about these industries.

*Develop and maintain employer leadership:* A core component of the intermediary's role is to recruit and maintain employer leadership that actively and consistently participates in driving the work of the sector partnership. The intermediary recruits and supports an industry champion, who is a current or retired industry executive who will play a leadership role in convening his/her peers and championing the efforts of the sector partnership to employers and other stakeholders in the region and potentially the state. The intermediary staffs the industry champion and employer group by:

- Guiding a planning process to identify the sector partnership's goals.
- Using labor market information and local industry needs assessments to identify the shared workforce needs of regional employers.
- Accessing the expertise of education and training providers to develop strategies to address ongoing and emerging workforce development needs.
- Simplifying the interface between employers and the workforce development system.
- Brokering the design and implementation of training and other services with education, training, and other service providers.
- Helping align the education, training, and other workforce services within the region to eliminate gaps in service, reduce duplication of effort, and assure a seamless delivery of workforce services.
- Accessing diverse financial resources from public, private, and philanthropic sources to support workforce services.

- Gathering feedback from employers on the effectiveness of workforce programs in meeting their needs, and conveying this feedback to the workforce system in actionable form.
- Advising employers on workforce policies and procedures that strengthen their recruitment, training, retention, and advancement of a skilled, efficient, and productive workforce.
- Serving as a single point of contact with employers, workforce development stakeholders, and the region's civic leadership to communicate the plans and activities of the sector partnership.

The intermediary will work with employers throughout the region to ensure they actively and consistently participate in directing the work of the sector partnership.

*Characteristics of the Sector Partnership's Workforce Solutions:* The intermediary will support the sector partnership to develop and implement workforce solutions that have these four critical characteristics:

- Provide strong outcomes for both employers and individuals. This includes producing and measuring business impact for employers such as increasing productivity and reducing turnover. It also includes achieving a variety of outcomes for individuals, such as training that leads to industry-recognized credentials, job placements, promotions, and wage gains.
- Serve the complete talent pipeline. The sector partnerships will develop workforce solutions that target the complete talent pipeline in the Salinas Valley, including youth and adults, employed and unemployed individuals, and the northern and southern areas of the region. This ranges from high school students to unemployed adults and incumbent workers.
- Promote career advancement among workers. Sector partnerships will engage a range of organizations, from community colleges and four year universities to community-based organizations that serve low-literacy and unemployed adults, as all play a critical role in developing strategies to support career advancement, from providing new education and training programs to career coaching.
- Promote the use of industry-recognized credentials. Sector partnerships will work with area providers to develop and implement programs that result in diplomas, degrees, licenses, and/or industry-association certificates and these credentials will help ensure workers have the skills that employers need, while supporting worker advancement and portability.

*Communicating Activities of the Partnership Throughout the Region:* The intermediary will share industry guidance on current and emerging workforce challenges, such as skills gaps and education and training needs with civic leadership, funders, and other workforce stakeholders. This will help ensure that key organizations throughout the Salinas Valley, from secondary schools to four-year universities, are aware of the target industry's needs and can develop, design, and implement programs accordingly. The intermediary will also ensure that

funders, economic developers, and regional and state civic leaders are informed of the sector partnership's activities, needs, plans, resources, and innovations, so there is strong regional awareness of its work and opportunities for collaboration.

**Staffing Level.** Each partnership will require the intermediary to provide at least 50% of a full time employee to effectively staff its efforts. The intermediary leader will invest more time during start-up, from November 2016 through April 2017, as plans for the partnerships are finalized, the partnerships are formally launched, employers are convened, and related tasks are accomplished. This individual's key responsibilities will include facilitating regular meetings with employers and other key partners, inventorying current workforce development resources and gaps in service, working closely with employers, education and training providers, and other organizations to develop workforce solutions that address employer needs, and sharing the progress of the partnership with the executive committee (see below) and other key regional stakeholders.

**Geographic Area:** The intermediary will work with employers and other partners to develop and implement workforce solutions that address industry needs and benefit workers in all five cities: Gonzales, Greenfield, King City, Salinas, and Soledad.

**Oversight and Governance:** Leadership from the five cities, and other key regional stakeholders who are identified and invited by the five city leaders, will provide oversight and governance of the project through an executive Leadership Committee. The Leadership Committee usually includes each organization that is funding the intermediary, with each having one vote in the partnership's decision-making process. The intermediary will provide regular reports and briefings to the Leadership Committee on the sector partnership's needs analyses, activities and plans. The Leadership Committee will review and approve the intermediary's plans, and will assist the intermediary in identifying and obtaining resources to carry out these plans.

**Resources:** The five cities will each contribute resources to support the intermediary. The Monterey County Workforce Development Board may also support the intermediary's work with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I formula funds. Leadership of the five cities and other members of the executive committee will assist and support the intermediary in pursuing additional federal, state, philanthropic, and employer contributions to support the work of the intermediary, as needed.

**Timeline:** The intermediary will begin work on November 1, 2016. Sector partnerships will continue to operate as long as employers demonstrate that the partnerships are addressing their workforce needs by continuing to actively participate in the work of the sector partnerships.