

# CHARACTERISTICS OF A HIGH-PERFORMING INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP

NATIONAL FUND FOR WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS

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The National Fund defines an industry partnership as a dynamic collaboration of a regional group of employers— typically from a particular industry sector, but sometimes from multiple sectors or based around a set of occupations—who convene regularly with the assistance of a workforce intermediary. Employer members discuss their shared human-resources issues, exchange information about industry practices, and take specific actions to address workforce challenges. Many partnerships also include representatives from organized labor groups, trade associations, workforce investment boards, community-based organizations, and educational institutions. A labor-management committee may serve as an industry partnership.

Partnerships that are highly effective at solving workforce-development challenges tend to share the seven characteristics listed below. These characteristics are consistent with the National Fund model.

A high-performing industry partnership...

## 1. DEVELOPS AND MAINTAINS EMPLOYER LEADERSHIP

- a. Has employer members that actively and consistently **participate** in directing the work of the partnership.
  - decide on the design and implementation of training and other services
  - operate through a labor-management committee, where appropriate
- b. Uses **labor-market information** to inform and improve its work.
  - economic, industry, and employer-specific data
- c. Strives to coordinate with regional workforce investment boards.

## 2. PRODUCES EXCELLENT OUTCOMES FOR INDIVIDUALS AND EMPLOYERS

- a. Achieves a variety of **measurable outcomes** for individuals.
  - credentials awarded, job placements, promotions, wage gains, etc.
- b. Produces **business impact** for employers, helping address key workforce challenges.
  - higher productivity, lower turnover, greater customer satisfaction, etc.
- c. Makes the business case for creating family-sustaining careers for workers and jobseekers.

## 3. SERVES LOW-SKILL, LOW WAGE INDIVIDUALS\*

- a. Directs training investments primarily toward enhancing the skills of low-skill, low-wage individuals.
- b. Brokers **support services** for low-skill, low-wage individuals.
  - transportation, day care, case management, etc.

\*This characteristic is central to the mission of the National Fund, but it is not necessarily required for success as an industry partnership

#### 4. PROMOTES CAREER ADVANCEMENT

- a. Developed **strategies** to support career advancement among low-skill, low-wage workers.
  - education, training, career coaching, tuition assistance, etc.

#### 5. PROMOTES INDUSTRY-RECOGNIZED CREDENTIALS

- a. Ensures that employer members understand the value of industry recognized credentials.
- b. Works with employers to identify industry-recognized credentials that are most relevant to each industry.
- c. Urges employer members to use industry-recognized credentials to inform hiring and promotion decisions.
- d. Encourages education and training partners to develop programs to support industry-recognized credentials.

#### 6. COMMUNICATES KEY INFORMATION TO STAKEHOLDERS

- a. Ensures that employer members share **industry intelligence** about current and future challenges.
  - skills gap, education and training needs, industry trends, changes in occupational mix, etc.
- b. Regularly **communicates** desired skills and competencies in an organized fashion.
  - to education providers, economic development officials, community-based organizations, and other workforce stakeholders

#### 7. OPERATES WITH KNOWLEDGABLE STAFFING PROVIDED BY OR THROUGH AN INTERMEDIARY

- a. Staffing support brings **expertise** to further the partnership's goals.
  - an understanding of the industry sector and the employees within it
  - a demonstrated ability to engage and work with employers
  - an understanding of exemplary practices within the sector
- b. Staffing support is **entrepreneurial and flexible**.
  - is responsive to changing market conditions
  - maintains good relationships with employer and workforce partners

## RESOURCES

[National Fund Principles: Collaborative Partnership Achievements](#). Barbara Baran, Stephen Michon, Suzanne Teegarden, Leanne Giordono, and Kendra Lodewick. Exhibit I-1 (page 10), Exhibit I-6 (page 16). August 2012

[Workforce Partnership Guidance Tool](#). Radha Roy Blswas, Geri Scott, and Fred Dedrick. November 2010

[Partnerships: A Workforce Development Practitioner's Guide](#). Lisa Soricone, Navjeet Singh, Rebekah Lashman, and Theresa Rowland. May 2013

[Sectoral Strategies for Low-Income Workers: Lessons from the Field](#). Maureen Conway, Amy Blair, Steven L. Dawson, and Linda Dworak-Munoz. October 1, 2007.

The [National Fund for Workforce Solutions](#) is a national network promoting economic opportunity and prosperous communities through investment and innovation. Based in Washington D.C., the National Fund partners with philanthropy, employers, workers, public and private community organizations, and more than 30 regional collaboratives to invest in skills, improve workforce systems, and generate good jobs. The National Fund supports civic and business leaders in promoting evidence-based practices and policies that build shared prosperity.



1730 Rhode Island Ave. NW, #712  
Washington, DC 20036

TEL 202.223.8994

[WWW.NATIONALFUND.ORG](http://WWW.NATIONALFUND.ORG)

For more information, please contact Lisa Chensvold at [lchensvold@nationalfund.org](mailto:lchensvold@nationalfund.org).