

Pennsylvania Commonly-Used Industry Partnership Terms

Industry Partnership: partnerships of businesses, from the same industry and in a shared labor market region, who work with economic development, education, workforce development, and community organizations to address the overall competitiveness needs of the targeted industry. In some states, these partnerships are referred to as Sector Partnerships, but in Pennsylvania, they are referred to as Industry Partnerships.

Convener: Responsible for organizing partnership activities. The convener should have credibility with businesses in the targeted sector, be able to devote staff time to the effort, and be able to neutrally facilitate the partnership's process by leaving their own organizational agenda behind.

Facilitator: An individual that facilitates partnership meetings. Must be neutral and allow business members to drive the discussion. The facilitator role may be filled by the convener or another public partner from the regional support team, but may also be filled by a third-party.

Regional Support Team: Public partners from economic development, education, workforce development, and other key stakeholders such as elected officials, organized labor, community-based organizations or others who have a stake in building stronger partnerships with the industry sectors that drive the regional economy.

Industry Champion: Business leaders that are willing to champion the idea of creating a forum for collaboration with their peers. Ideally, each partnership should have between 2-6 champions. Industry champions should be willing to jointly sign an invitation letter and be willing to physically host a launch meeting, if possible. Industry champions should have the following traits:

1. They are decision-makers in their businesses. They not only care about the growth and competitiveness of their business, but are in a position to take action on behalf of the business, working in partnership with other businesses and community partners. They can commit their own time, those of subordinates, and financial and other in-kind resources of their business. They are not representatives sent by their superior, able to listen in but not take action.
2. They are passionate about their industry. They feel strongly about the value of their industry, that it has the potential to grow. They can articulate specific opportunities for growth (new markets, new technological breakthroughs, etc.), or a broader vision for evolution of their industry. For them, it's a calling, not just a job or another rung on the corporate ladder. Because they care for their industry, they see opportunities for businesses to work together, and are able to understand that there are "pre-competitive" areas where even fierce competitors can collaborate for the common good. They are positive-sum, not zero-sum thinkers.

3. They are passionate about their community—and believe that the destinies of their business, industry, and community are interdependent. They often have a track record of giving back to the community, speaking out on issues, providing internships to local students, or working through organizations like industry associations or chambers of commerce to improve the quality of the community. They may have grown up locally, or moved to the community, but either way, they love the distinctive quality of life it offers. Most importantly, they know that a strong economy is essential to a strong community and vice versa. And, they understand that it takes the private sector and public sector working together to achieve that result.

Action Plan: A strategy that lays out a clear set of goals, outcomes, and actions to advance the partnership's shared priorities.

