



NATIONAL
REPORTING SYSTEM
for Adult Education

COLLABORATION FOR ADULT LEARNER SUCCESS

ADVANCING ADULT EDUCATION Through Workforce, Postsecondary, and Employer Partnerships



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Collaboration for Adult Learner Success: Advancing Adult Education Through Workforce, Postsecondary, and Employer Partnerships

Workbook Description and Training

This workbook has been designed to accompany the NRS 2026 regional training, *Collaboration for Adult Learner Success: Advancing Adult Education Through Workforce, Postsecondary, and Employer Partnerships*. The training provides approaches for exploring and considering promising approaches to developing workforce and postsecondary partnerships. This accompanying workbook will help you and your state team accomplish the following:

- Identify promising models and strategies for partnerships between adult education, workforce entities, or postsecondary institutions.
- Explore how data can align and mutually benefit participant outcomes for all WIOA partners.
- Draft a partnership action plan tailored to the state landscape and adaptable by local adult education providers.

The Three Ps

As you progress through the workbook, keep in mind the three *Ps* (programs, people, and policy) and how they may inform, impact, or enhance collaborative partnership for adult education and workforce accountability.

Part I: The Different Ways We Partner

Bingo! Try to complete your card following the directions below and those provided by the facilitator.

Directions

- Only one person's response can be used per square. Answers cannot be from your own state team members.
- Work to complete at least five squares with a state other than your own

Bingo: Find Someone Whose Partnership (single or multiple) . . .

Was made possible by an introduction through a local provider	Served more than one region or county in the state	Is or includes a vocational rehabilitation agency	Is mandated through state legislation, policy, or law	Ended in 2 years or less
Cohosted a job fair or hiring event	Is with a community college	Provides or collaborates with adult education regarding workplace literacy	Offers a credential	Provides one or more "wraparound" services
Has survived a change in leadership	Is a Title I partner	 FREE SPACE	Is with a 4-year college or university	Is with a community-based organization
Has at least one private funding source	Has a unique service not offered by another partner	Has a formal data-sharing agreement	Is 4 or more years strong	Provides or supports services in a rural part of the state
Serves veterans	Provides an external champion for adult education and literacy	Is with an employer or industry group	Has included one or more statewide spotlights of adult education programs/initiatives	Took less than 2 years to formally happen

Part II: Partnership Mapping

This activity will introduce the development or expansion of a partnership map. Using the information you are provided in the presession Initial Partnership Snapshot, you will collaborate within your state teams to identify both current and potential partners. Teams will examine how existing partnerships were established, what each partner contributes, and their needs or goals. Also consider what adult education currently provides—or could provide—to these partners, as well as identify actual and potential shared outcomes.

Part 1:

- **In your state teams**, identify a minimum of three external partners, **one of whom must be a potential partner** and use the provided worksheet to complete the questions in Section 1.

Worksheet: Section 1

Who (and sometimes where!) is the partner?

What do they contribute (e.g., state plan information, specific workforce service, alignment with governor's initiative)?

What do they need?

What are actual and potential shared outcomes?

Section 1: Share-Out

Use the space below to capture any notes during the Section 1 share-out.

Notes:

Part 2:

- Working with your peer states, each state will share its Section 1 responses for one of your identified potential partners.
- Once everyone has shared, as a group discuss the questions in Section 2 for each team's selected partner.
- Be sure to capture any ideas from peer states who have experiences with the same type of partner! This is important as it may guide your team on additional data sets to draw from for both communication and action planning across current and potential partners.

Worksheet: Section 2

What data can they share and what data do they need?

What are the opportunities, challenges, and risks to partnering?

Section 2: Ideas From Peer States

Use the space below to capture ideas from peer states who have experience with the same type of partner.

Part III: From Strategy to Outcomes

This section highlights the need to develop data-informed strategies and the roles different partners can play.



Key takeaway: All strategies should begin with data.

What Partnerships Can Look Like?

What ROI Looks Like Across Partners

Partner	What they gain
WIOA and Perkins V Programs	Skill gains, credential outcomes, postsecondary transitions, employment and wage outcomes, credential alignment to labor market
Employers	Pipeline of skilled workers
State leaders	Evidence for funding and policy*

*may also include the above data elements

Key takeaway: Partners may use data differently, but the same data set can support needs across multiple partners.

Reflection Question:

How can a single data set be leveraged to meet the different needs of various partners?

Examples of Documented Partner Roles—Workforce, Postsecondary, and Business/Industry

Partner	Evidence-based role
Adult education providers	Deliver literacy and workforce prep concurrently with training AND in some cases, deliver occupational training in-house.
Community colleges/training providers	Deliver occupational skills training and credentials.
Local workforce development boards (LWDBs)	Must co-design programs aligned to labor market demand and workforce plans.
Employers/industry	Inform occupational content and ensure alignment to "in-demand careers."

Reflection Question:

What potential gaps or disconnects might occur among these partner roles? How could these gaps be addressed to improve outcomes?

Examples of Documented Partner Roles—Postsecondary and Employers

Partner	Evidence-based role
Adult education programs	Provide foundational skills, workforce prep, and other services.
Community colleges/CTE	Provide technical training and credentials.
Employers/unions	Define entry requirements and provide pipeline into registered apprenticeship programs.

Reflection Question:

How can partners coordinate to guide program participants from learning skills to getting a job?

Part IV: Rapid Round Data Exchange Simulation

Now it is time to work in a group to practice your understanding of partner data needs and your negotiation skills!

Instructions

- Working in groups of three to four people, you are to role-play the assigned partner.
- **Your goal is to negotiate what data you need, can share, and how often!**
- Draw on your presession assignments, and results from your partnership mapping and partnership data snapshot activities to help with your negotiation.

Your assigned role will include:

- ✓ Partner type
- ✓ One barrier to negotiation and one data-focused item you would want in a formal data-sharing agreement or memoranda of understanding (MOU)

Note: Once the facilitator starts the round, every group will have 12 minutes to negotiate and a final 2 minutes to capture what was agreed on and what remained outstanding.

Debrief

Did any data need or request surface that had not yet been mentioned for any of the partners?

What was it like to negotiate around each other's provided barriers?

From Challenges to Opportunities

Challenge	Opportunity
Data silos	Integrated data systems
Compliance concerns	Clear agreements (MOUs)
Limited capacity	Shared data tools , dashboards, and shared responsibilities
Incomplete outcomes	Cross-program data matching

Reflection: What additional data opportunities might you have?

Part V: Partnership Data Snapshot

For this activity, you will build on the previous section by examining what partners need from the data and identifying opportunities for alignment. You will work in small groups and use the provided handout to focus on your state to explore how data can strengthen partnerships—focusing on what each partner contributes, what they need, and the challenges they must navigate.

Instructions:

- Work in small groups.
- **Select one or two of your previously identified partners.**
- Complete Section 2 of the worksheet **with the specific data you collected in the presession.**
Discuss these data and consider:
 - How can the data be shared? What do these data reflect that may be of interest to the partner and/or help convey the value of adult education?
 - Do these data help you leverage or address the initially identified opportunities, challenges, and risks of partnering?
- **Prepare to report out.**

[State Name] Partner Snapshot Worksheet Part 2*: Data Perspectives (*Presession Responses are Part 1)

Complete this worksheet for each partner/potential partner.

Section 1

Partner Description (who is this partner, i.e., what do they do and where are they located?):

What might they contribute to adult education?

What do they need? Think both in terms of data and outside of data

What are actual and potential shared outcomes for this partner and adult education?

Section 2

Data Points/Information (Refer to your completed Pre-session Data Highlights Handout. Feel free to add additional data.)	What Do These Data Reflect That May Be of Interest to the Partner?	How Do These Data Help Convey the Value of Adult Education?	How Can These Data Be Shared?	Do These Data Help You Leverage or Address Identified Opportunities, Outcomes, Challenges and/or Risks of Partnering? How?
	•	•	•	•
What data would adult education want the partner to provide and how often?			How could these data be shared (e.g., format, dashboard)?	

Section 1

Partner Description (who is this partner, i.e., what do they do and where are they located?):

What might they contribute to adult education?

What do they need? Think both in terms of data and outside of data

What are actual and potential shared outcomes for this partner and adult education?

Section 2

Data Points/Information (Refer to your completed Presession Data Highlights Handout. Feel free to add additional data.)	What Do These Data Reflect That May Be of Interest to the Partner?	How Do These Data Help Convey the Value of Adult Education?	How Can These Data Be Shared?	Do These Data Help You Leverage or Address Identified Opportunities, Outcomes, Challenges and/or Risks of Partnering? How?
	•	•	•	•
What data would adult education want the partner to provide and how often?			How could this data be shared (e.g., format, dashboard)?	

Report Out:

What data are most valuable across partners?

Where do needs and gaps align?

What barriers are most common?

What strategies could reduce risk and build trust?

What is one action you will take next?

Data Sharing Challenges

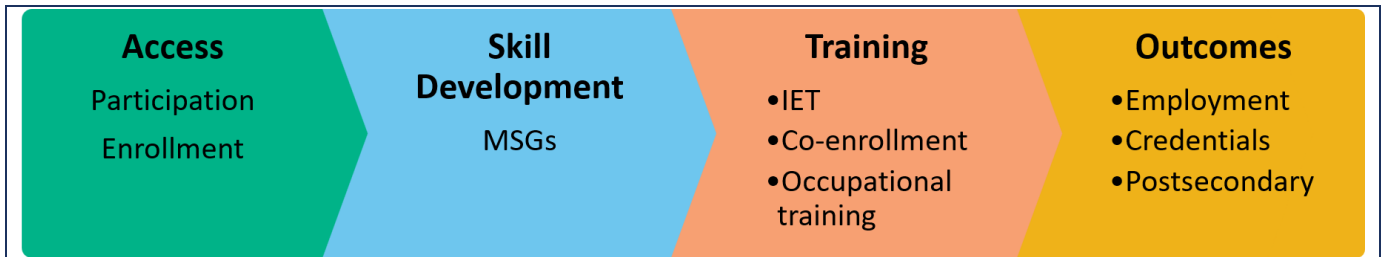
What additional data challenges do you anticipate?



Part VI: Data That Work Together

In this section, you will reflect on how different types of external data can (1) be paired with NRS data and (2) how you can align data with partnership needs.

Adult Education's Role in the System



Pairing and Aligning Data With Partnership Needs

Examples of Other Data to Pair With NRS

- WIOA Joint Performance Reporting/PIRL (participant level)
 - Co-enrollment rates (Title II + Title I; Title II + VR)
 - Time-to-exit and service sequencing (adult ed before training vs. concurrent)
- Unemployment insurance (UI) wage records/state wage interchange (for employment and earnings)
 - Wage growth for adult education participants vs. co-enrolled participants
 - Industry/NAICS of employment (if state wage data support)
- Postsecondary data
 - Eligible Training Provider List performance data

Ways to Align Data With Partnership Needs

- Align career pathways and IET to labor market demand.
- Strengthen co-enrollment and braided services (Titles I and IV).
- Demonstrate ROI to employers (workplace literacy).
- Track performance using shared WIOA indicators.
- Analyze to expand opportunity and improve access.

Reflection Questions

What other data can you pair with NRS data to support partnership outcomes?

In what other ways can you align data with partnership needs?

Part VII: Partnership Barriers

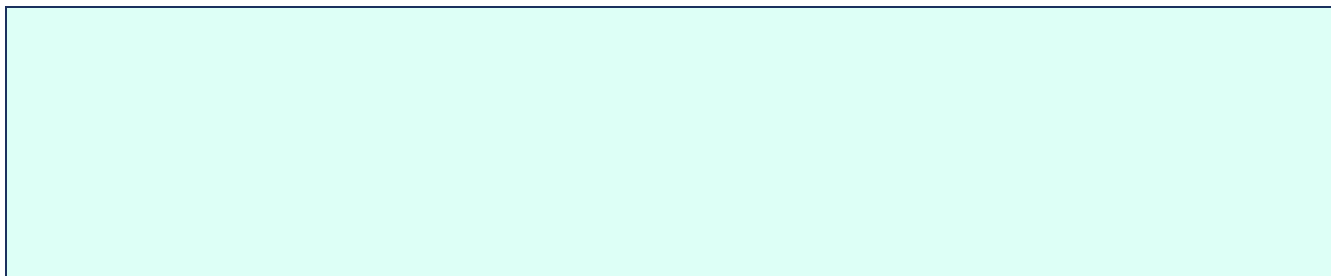
In this section, you will reflect on the various types of barriers that can hinder the development of strong, effective partnerships.

Common Barriers to Partnerships

	• Different priorities and accountability measures.
	• Collecting, sharing, and using data across systems (e.g., data privacy, secure platforms).
	• Capacity constraints: – Extensive capacity coordination is required for some partnerships (e.g., IET, building career pathways). – Capacity resources include staff, multiple funding sources, and expertise.
	• Some partners may not be included consistently in cross-system planning and decision making.
	• Funding silos and rigid funding rules can limit alignment across partners by keeping entities focused on their own allowable uses and budgets.
	• Organizational culture differences (including differences in norms, pace, risk tolerance, and decision-making styles) can create friction even when partners share broad goals.

Reflection

What other barriers may affect partnerships?



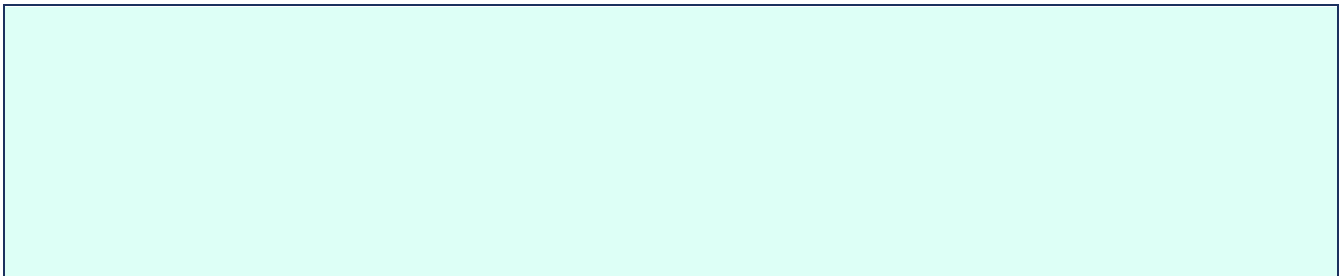
Part VIII: Barriers Carousel

Instructions

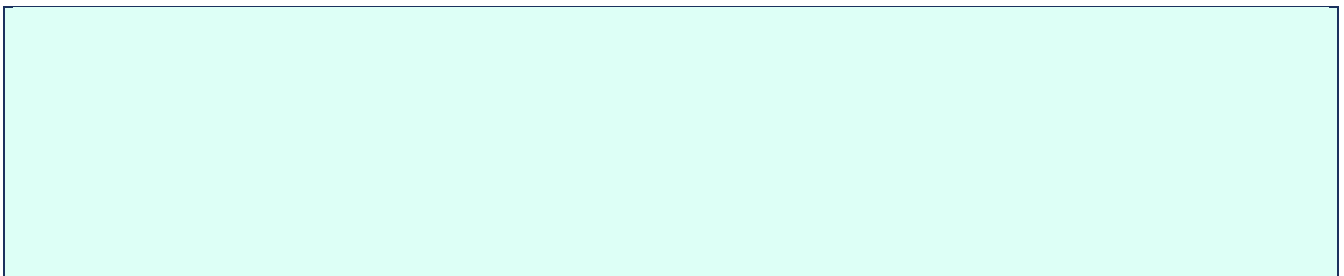
- As you rotate through each barrier, select two or three of them and use the sticky notes to capture:
 - a real-life example of this barrier
 - impact on participants
 - impact on partners
 - bonus: impact on metrics
- Place a sticky note on the barrier's chart in the corresponding row.
- Once you are done, review the responses provided by other participants.

Discussion

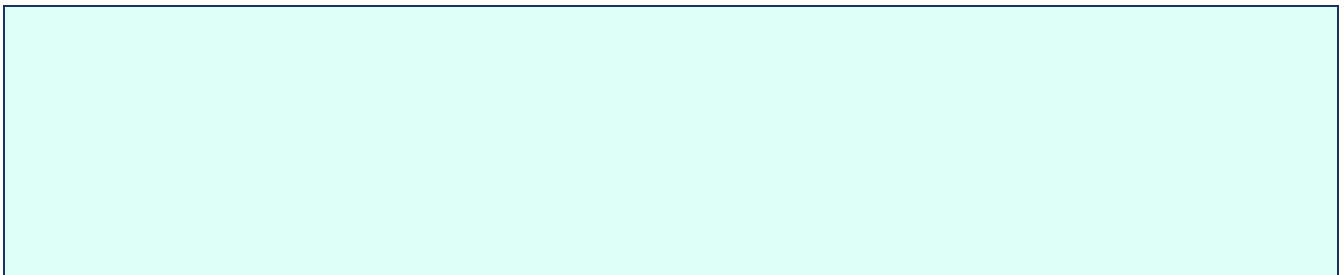
What themes did you see in various rows?



How familiar were the real examples others provided?



Were there any examples that your state team or local providers have experienced and addressed successfully? If so, how?



Part IX: Strategy Roundtables

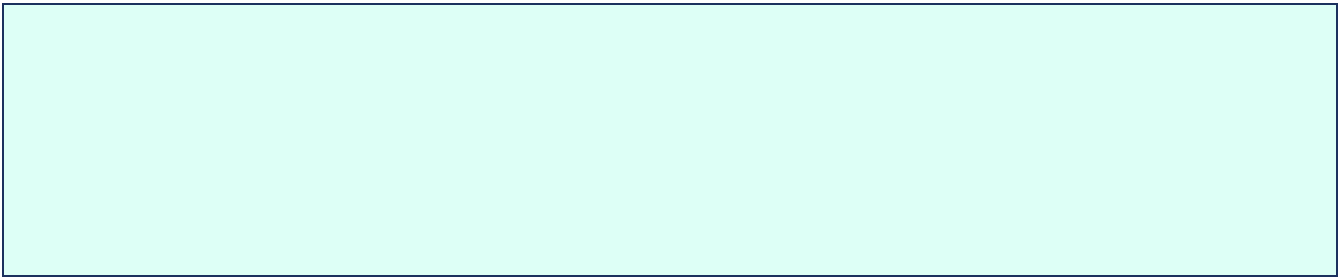
Instructions

Each state team needs to divide themselves into two to four groups (or singles!) and decide which topic they will attend.

Round 1

- Each team member will attend one of the topical Strategy Roundtables.
- Each roundtable facilitator will highlight evidence-based, promising and/or emerging strategies for that table's topic.
- Participants will then engage in discussion and capture ideas to bring back to their state team.

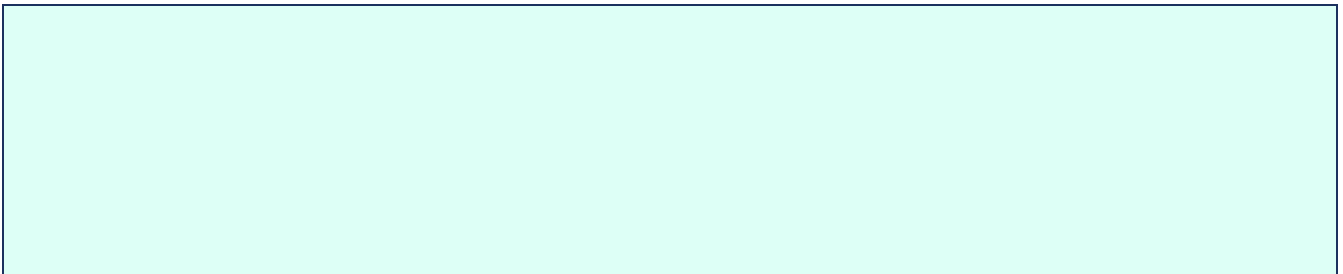
Round 1: Key Takeaways



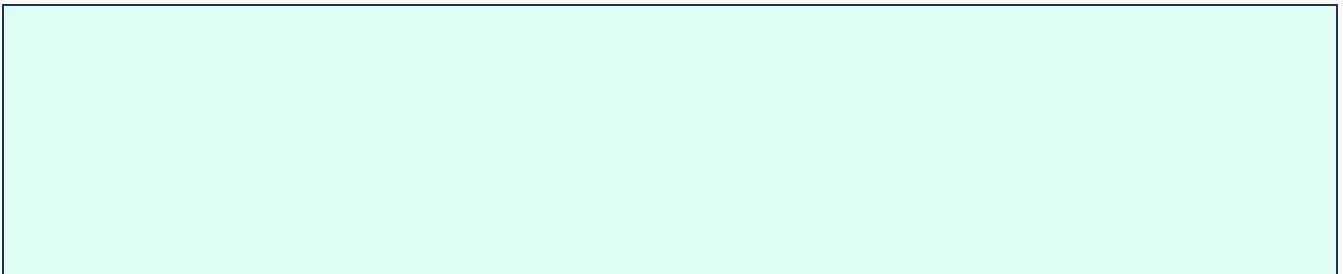
Round 2

- Participants will rotate and attend a different table, repeating the process from Round 1.

Round 2: Key Takeaways



Report Out



Part X: Partnership Action Plan

In this section, you will put what you have learned into action.

Instructions

Using the “Partnership Action Plan—90-Day” template, your team will complete a 90-day partnership plan with emphasis on the following:

• Priority partnerships (at least two) and why • Goals and shared outcomes • Key action step for initial engagement • Data-sharing steps • Needed resources • Potential barriers and mitigation strategies • Success benchmarks	• Work in your state teams on Parts 1 and 2. • Once you have your initial actions completed, then assign the timeframes of • Weeks 1–4 • Weeks 5–8 • Weeks 9–12 If something doesn't fit in those timeframes, use the “3-plus-month” option.
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Time permitting:

One line of messaging that incorporates actual data and highlights the value of adult education for the identified priority partners

Partnership Action Plan—90 Day Template

Part 1: Priority Partner Goals and Outcomes

Partner 1			
Priority Partnership Name/Description	What are your adult education goals with this partner?	What are your potential shared outcomes with this partner?	What might be additional outcomes or benefits for this partner (non-shared)?
What role(s) do you anticipate this partner will have towards these goals and outcomes?			
What is needed to support data sharing with this partner?*			

Partner 2

Priority Partnership Name/Description	What are your adult education goals with this partner?	What are your potential shared outcomes with this partner?	What might be additional outcomes or benefits for this partner (non-shared)?
What role(s) do you anticipate this partner will have towards these goals and outcomes?			
What is needed to support data sharing with this partner?*			

*Complete this response *after* completing Part 2: Action Steps—Initial Engagement and Formalizing the Partnership.

Part 2: Action Steps—Initial Engagement and Formalizing the Partnership [Partner 1]

Key action step(s) for initial engagement (or next level/sustained engagement if already initiated)	Data needed to inform and/or share in this action step? If yes, add data type	Responsible person(s)	Timeframe (use week increments, e.g., Weeks 1 4; Weeks 5 8)	Success benchmarks
	Yes; data type?		Weeks - >3 months	
	Yes; data type?		Weeks - >3 months	
	Yes; data type?		Weeks - >3 months	

Key action step(s) to actualize/formalize the partnership	Data needed to inform and/or share in this action step? If yes, add data type	Responsible person(s)	Timeframe (use week increments, e.g., Weeks 1 4; Weeks 5 8)	Success benchmarks
	Yes; data type?		Weeks - >3 months	
	Yes; data type?		Weeks - >3 months	
	Yes; data type?		Weeks - >3 months	
	Yes; data type?		Weeks - >3 months	
	Yes; data type?		Weeks - >3 months	
What resources are needed to implement these action steps?				

Part 2: Action Steps—Initial Engagement and Formalizing the Partnership [Partner 2]

Key action step(s) for initial engagement (or next level/sustained engagement if already initiated)	Data needed to inform and/or share in this action step? If yes, add data type	Responsible person(s)	Timeframe (use week increments, e.g., Weeks 1 4; Weeks 5 8)	Success benchmarks
	Yes; data type?		Weeks - >3 months	
	Yes; data type?		Weeks - >3 months	
	Yes; data type?		Weeks - >3 months	

Key action step(s) to actualize/formalize the partnership	Data needed to inform and/or share in this action step? If yes, add data type	Responsible person(s)	Timeframe (use week increments, e.g., Weeks 1 4; Weeks 5 8)	Success benchmarks
	Yes; data type?		Weeks - >3 months	
	Yes; data type?		Weeks - >3 months	
	Yes; data type?		Weeks - >3 months	
	Yes; data type?		Weeks - >3 months	
	Yes; data type?		Weeks - >3 months	
What resources are needed to implement these action steps?				

Part 3: Risk Analysis [All Partners]

Risk Considerations: Identify potential threats, challenges and barriers to your action steps, especially those that would be crucial to implementation of the overall Partnership Action Plan. Note that not every action step will have the same risks so each should be reviewed individually.

Considerations to help identify risks or challenges to the action plan (please note these are examples and not an exhaustive list):

- Resources: e.g., Do you have the resources needed to actualize your action steps and overall plan?
- Stakeholder buy-in: e.g., What resistance might you encounter and from whom? Are there unintended and ill-received results or impact might happen to or from specific stakeholders?
- Politics, policy and regulatory: e.g., What policy, regulatory and political considerations are needed to implement the key action steps? Do the action steps require or benefit from policymaker approval or agreement to proceed?
- Data: e.g., Do you or will you have or be able to receive the needed data to inform the action steps and overall plan?

Step 1: Identify potential risks.

Step 2: Determine the likelihood and potential impact of the risk (e.g., high-potential great impact, medium-potential slight impact, low-potential minimal impact; very likely, likely, unlikely, highly unlikely).

Step 3: Determine potential approaches to address the risk (e.g., eliminate the cause, reduce the probability or impact of the risk or do nothing—i.e. it's an acceptable risk).

Step 4: Prioritize risks based on risk level and response; adjust action plan as needed.

Identify risks	What is the level of risk?		Potential approach to address the risk
<i>List potential risks to implementation of the Partnership Action Plan—90 Day</i>	<i>Likelihood/ Potential impact</i>	<i>Priority to Address</i>	<i>How will team respond to the risk and persons responsible for risk response</i>
1.			
2.			
3.			

Partnership Action Plan: Peer Consultancy

Round 1: Present (6 min)	Round 2: Clarify (4 min)	Round 3: Peer discussion with silent presenter (8+2 min)
• The presenting state will share two or three highlights from their plan. (5 min) • They will then share one area or issue they would like feedback on from the peer consultant group. (3 min) • The area or issue should be phrased as a question for the peer consultant group to respond to.	• Peer consultants may ask clarifying questions to further understand the context of the presented question.	• Peer consultants then discuss ideas among themselves and provide feedback to the presenting state. • The presenting state may not speak and may only listen and take notes during this time. • After 8 minutes the presenting state may ask questions and give a reflection on the feedback they received for 2 minutes.

Note: We will repeat this sequence three times so that every team serves as both presenter and peer consultant

Debrief

What was it like to go through this process?

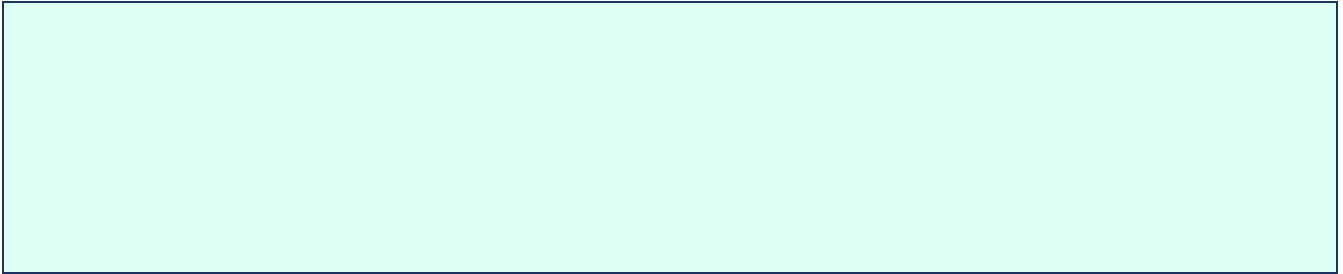
Part XI: Gallery Walk Review

Now it is time to admire everyone's hard work!

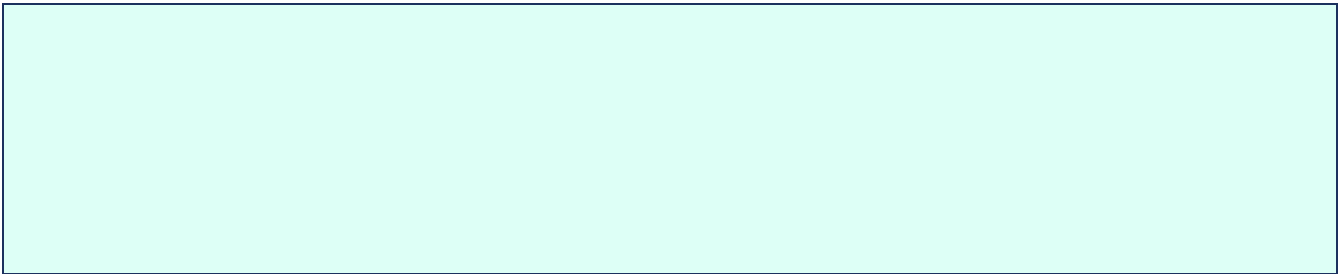
Instructions

As you review the gallery postings, take notes on the following:

What are themes you see across plans?



What are ideas from other plans that your state could consider incorporating?



Identify two state plans that you want to learn more about and place a sticky note under those plans indicating what you'd like to learn more about.

State plan 1 _____

State plan 2 _____

Part XII: Impact and Review

Time to reflect and review!

Instructions

Part 1: State Team Brainstorm

- In your state teams, refer to your Partnership Action Plan as a guide and develop two questions for each of these categories:
 - Pause and Reflect (Where are we currently with this partnership? Is the original partnership's purpose still relevant and why/why not? How do staff, local providers, and learners experience this partnership?)
 - Review (What results and outcomes have or have not occurred? Is there clarity on expectations for both sides? Are resources being used and are they used well? What barriers or challenges have occurred and how have they been addressed?)
 - Recalibrate (What should continue, be done differently, or stop? What changes, if any, would benefit the partnership? What supports and resources are needed to remain successful?)
- For each question, name at least one or two elements you would look for to help understand the response to the question.

Part 2: Round Robin Report Out

- Each team will share one question they developed for each of the categories.
- If another state has already shared one of your questions, do not repeat and select a different question.

Report Out Notes

Take notes on any interesting insights during the report out.

Appendix A: Roundtable Resources

The resources below are provided for additional learning and exploration. Although most were not developed specifically for Adult Education settings, many of the concepts and strategies can be adapted for use in a variety of educational environments.

Getting to the Table

Ansell, C., & Gash, A. (2008). Collaborative governance in theory and practice. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 18(4), 543–571. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/mum032>

This article examines collaborative governance, a model that brings public and private stakeholders together with government agencies in shared forums to participate in consensus-based decision making. Through a meta-analysis of the existing literature, the authors develop a contingency model that explains the conditions under which collaborative governance is most effective. Their research identifies several critical elements of successful collaboration, including face-to-face dialogue, trust-building, commitment among participants, and the development of a shared understanding of goals and objectives. The study also finds that collaborative efforts are most successful when participants achieve incremental “small wins,” which create a virtuous cycle of collaboration by strengthening trust, deepening commitment, and fostering greater mutual understanding over time.

Bryson, J. M., Crosby, B. C., & Stone, M. M. (2015). Designing and implementing cross-sector collaborations: Needed and challenging. *Public Administration Review*, 75(5), 647–663. <https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.12432>

This article summarizes a decade of research on cross-sector collaboration, emphasizing that although collaboration is often complex and challenging, it can help organizations achieve outcomes that would not be possible independently. Successful partnerships require a clear shared purpose, intentional design, continuous learning, strong leadership, and flexible governance that can adapt over time.

Majchrzak, A., Jarvenpaa, S. L., & Bagherzadeh, M. (2015). A review of interorganizational collaboration dynamics. *Journal of Management*, 41(5), 1338–1360. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206314563399>

This article reviewed 22 longitudinal case studies of interorganizational collaborations (IOCs) to understand why some partnerships succeed while others fail. The key finding is that successful collaborations are not stable; they adapt continuously over time. Organizations that actively manage change, relationships, and governance are more likely to achieve positive outcomes.

Milagres, R., & Burcharth, A. (2018). Knowledge transfer in interorganizational partnerships: What do we know? *Academy of Management Proceedings*, 2018(1). <https://doi.org/10.5465/AMBPP.2018.13476abstract>

This article reviews 17 years of research on knowledge transfer in interorganizational partnerships and identifies the factors that help or hinder organizations' ability to learn from one another. The central conclusion is that successful partnerships require more than information sharing—they require deliberate structures, governance, trust, learning capabilities, and absorptive capacity.

Stricklin, L., Dixon, R. A., & Holyoke, L. (2015). Collaborative partnership to address workforce education in a rural region: A case study. *Online Journal for Workforce Education and Development*, 8(1), Article 7. <https://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/ojwed/vol8/iss1/7/>

The case study found that successful workforce partnerships are strengthened by formal collaboration structures that align education, industry, and community stakeholders regarding shared workforce goals. Key tools included DACUM workshops to identify employer skill needs, MOUs to clarify partner roles and expectations, regular planning meetings to coordinate activities and maintain accountability, workforce development councils to provide ongoing cross-sector leadership, and mentor programs and showcases to connect students with industry and demonstrate project outcomes. Together, these mechanisms helped translate workforce needs into coordinated action, sustain partner engagement, and create a stronger talent pipeline for regional employers.

Wilson, R. (2015). *A resource guide to engaging employers*. Jobs for the Future. <https://www.jff.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/A-Resource-Guide-to-Employer-Engagement-011315.pdf>

This guide presents a five-level framework for employer engagement, showing how education providers can build long-term partnerships with employers to align training, curricula, and career pathways with workforce needs. It emphasizes that strong employer relationships lead to better program design, stronger student outcomes, and more effective workforce development.

Co-designing for Student Success

Hawley, J. D., Sommers, D., & Meléndez, E. (2005). The impact of institutional collaborations on the earnings of adult workforce education completers. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 56(1), 21–38. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0741713605280140>

This study examined how partnerships between adult education programs and business, nonprofits, or government organizations affect participant earnings. Using survey data and employment records, the researchers found that stronger collaboration with external partners generally leads to higher earnings for people who complete workforce training programs. The study also found that the benefits vary between men and women. Two key factors linked to higher earnings were the level of collaboration and the degree of employer involvement in the training programs.

Conway, M., Blair, A., & Helmer, M. (2012). *Courses to employment: Partnering to create paths to education and careers*. Aspen Institute, Workforce Strategies Initiative. <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/C2E.pdf>

The Courses to Employment (C2E) study found that partnerships between community colleges and nonprofit organizations can significantly improve education and employment outcomes for low-income adults. Across six workforce programs, successful partnerships combined three core elements: high-quality, industry-aligned training; comprehensive academic and personal support services; and strong employer engagement to connect participants with career opportunities. The research showed that participants achieved high program completion rates, secured employment, increased their earnings, and often continued their education. A key takeaway is that community colleges and nonprofits are most effective when they leverage their complementary strengths—colleges providing education and credentials, and nonprofits offering navigation, support, and employer connections that help adult learners persist in school and transition successfully into careers.

EQUIL Consortium. (n.d.). *A toolkit for co-production*. <https://cesie.org/media/IO4-En-Toolkit.pdf>

This toolkit provides a practical guide to implementing co-production, an approach that treats service users, professionals, families, and communities as equal partners in the design, delivery, and evaluation of services. It emphasizes six core principles—asset-based thinking, building capabilities, mutuality and reciprocity, peer networks, shared roles, and facilitation rather than delivery—and offers exercises, assessments, and real-world examples to help organizations move from doing things to people toward working with them.

Barger, M., Beheler, A., & Lesiecki, M. (2015, March 26). *Effective approaches for aligning curriculum with business demand*. Centers Collaborative for Technical Assistance.

https://connectedtech.org/ate/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/CCTA_3-26-15_Final_Final.pdf

This National Science Foundation (NSF) webinar highlights proven strategies used by NSF Advanced Technological Education (ATE) Centers nationwide to ensure that college workforce programs remain closely aligned with industry needs. It presents systematic approaches for engaging employers, validating workforce competencies, and adapting curriculum across multiple technical disciplines to better prepare students for workforce success

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education. (2018). *Stackable credentials tool kit*. https://s3.amazonaws.com/PCRN/docs/Stackable_Credentials_Tool_Kit.pdf

This toolkit explains how stackable credentials can help learners earn industry-recognized certifications, certificates, and degrees in a step-by-step progression that supports both employment and continued education. It emphasizes employer partnerships, industry-aligned curriculum, flexible learning pathways, and student support services to improve credential completion and workforce readiness.

Data System Integration

Cepa, K., & Schildt, H. (2022). Data-induced rationality and unitary spaces in interfirm collaboration. *Organization Science*, 34(1). <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2021.1566>

Real-time data sharing between partner companies helps them coordinate and manage activities across organizational boundaries in new ways. To understand how data-intensive technologies affect collaboration, we studied five long-term industrial partnerships. Our findings show that companies often assign digital activities to specialized teams, which encourages data-driven thinking and decision making. These teams rely on shared data to manage relationships more effectively, creating a common, data-focused approach to collaboration. As a result, these specialized digital teams become dedicated spaces where competing priorities and organizational tensions are set aside, allowing both companies to focus on achieving short-term benefits for their partnership.

Jussen, I., Buchwald, A., Möller, F., Otto, B., & Guggenberger, T. (2024). Data sharing practices: The interplay of data, organizational, and ecosystem characteristics. *Electronic Markets*, 34, Article 47. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12525-024-00732-0>

As organizations collect more data and use advanced analytics, they are increasingly looking to share data with external partners to create value. There is limited research and guidance on how to design effective data-sharing practices, however. This study develops a practical framework based on research and real-world examples to better understand how organizations share data. The analysis identifies four common approaches to data sharing, focused primarily on compliance, operational efficiency, revenue generation, or social value. The findings provide a stronger foundation for future research and help organizations develop and expand data-sharing strategies so they can use data more effectively as a strategic asset.

Li, J., Sikora, R., Shaw, M. J., & Tan, G. W. (2006). A strategic analysis of inter organizational information sharing. *Decision Support Systems*, 42(1), 251–266. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dss.2004.12.003>

This paper examines how different information-sharing strategies between organizations affect company performance in both stable and changing market conditions. Using supply chain data sharing as an example, the study compares five levels of information sharing, ranging from very limited to nearly complete information exchange. The results show that sharing more comprehensive information—especially multiple types of information—helps organizations perform better when market conditions are volatile and unpredictable.

Ribeiro, V., Barata, J., & Rupino da Cunha, P. (2024). Modeling inter-organizational business process governance in the age of collaborative networks. *Electronic Markets*, 34, Article 51. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12525-024-00730-2>

Collaborative business networks need clear governance processes to define who owns shared resources and activities, who is responsible for operations, what roles each partner plays, and how partners stay strategically aligned. To address this need, we developed a modeling approach for interorganizational business process governance that includes data governance activities, and informal governance practices. Our work provides a framework, modeling requirements, evaluation results, and design principles for governance modeling. For organizations, this approach helps clarify data ownership, improve accountability, coordinate governance activities across partner networks, and support compliance with regulations and partnership agreements.

Appendix B: State Spotlights

Use the fields below to reflect and take notes on the State Spotlight presentations.

Day 1 Presentation

State presenting _____

Reflection Questions:

How can this state's perspective on using data support or improve your team's approach to partnerships?

What are the key elements of this state's experiences that resonate with the partnerships your state wants to establish?

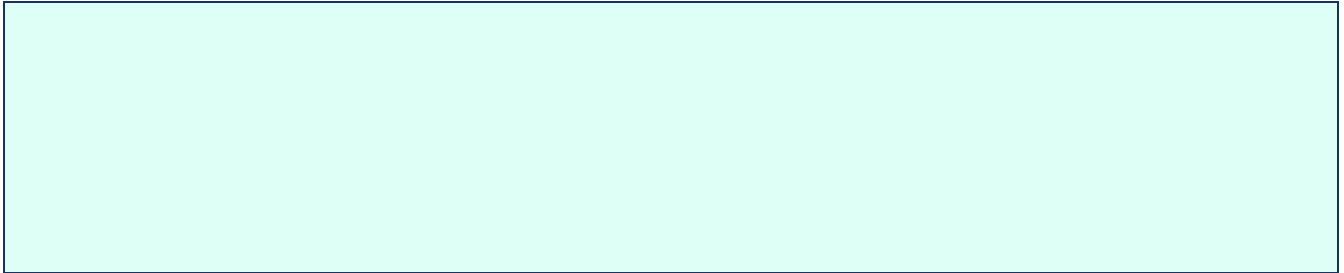
Other notes/observations:

Day 2 Presentation

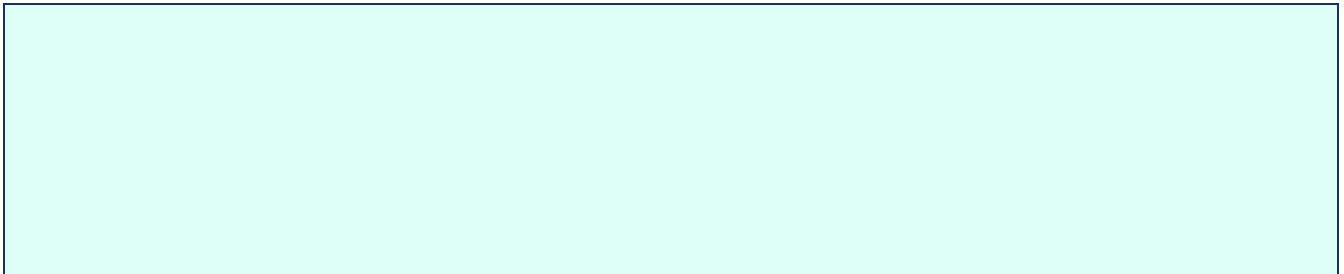
State presenting_____

Reflection Questions:

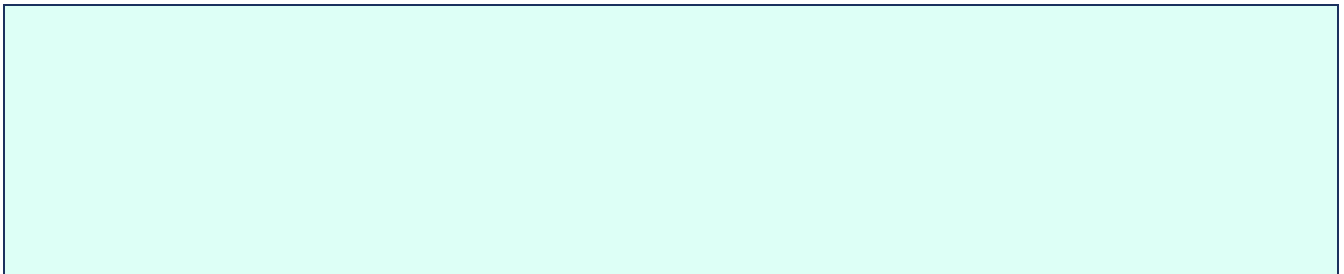
What approaches to funding, communication, or addressing challenges stood out, and how might they apply to your context?



What are the key elements of this state's experiences that resonate with the partnerships your state wants to establish?



Other notes/observations:



Appendix C: Partnership Action Plan—90 Day Template

Part 1: Priority Partner Goals and Outcomes

Partner 1			
Priority Partnership Name/Description	What are your adult education goals with this partner?	What are your potential shared outcomes with this partner?	What might be additional outcomes or benefits for this partner (non-shared)?
What role(s) do you anticipate this partner will have towards these goals and outcomes?			
What is needed to support data sharing with this partner?*			

Partner 2

Priority Partnership Name/Description	What are your adult education goals with this partner?	What are your potential shared outcomes with this partner?	What might be additional outcomes or benefits for this partner (non-shared)?
What role(s) do you anticipate this partner will have towards these goals and outcomes?			
What is needed to support data sharing with this partner?*			

*Complete this response *after* completing Part 2 - Action Steps-Initial Engagement and Formalizing the Partnership

Part 2: Action Steps-Initial Engagement and Formalizing the Partnership [Partner 1]

Key action step(s) for initial engagement (or next level/sustained engagement if already initiated)	Data needed to inform and/or share in this action step? If yes, add data type	Responsible person(s)	Timeframe (use week increments, e.g., Weeks 1 4; Weeks 5 8)	Success benchmarks
	Yes; data type?		Weeks - >3 months	
	Yes; data type?		Weeks - >3 months	
	Yes; data type?		Weeks - >3 months	

Key action step(s) to actualize/formalize the partnership	Data needed to inform and/or share in this action step? If yes, add data type	Responsible person(s)	Timeframe (use week increments, e.g., Weeks 1 4; Weeks 5 8)	Success benchmarks
	Yes; data type?		Weeks - >3 months	
	Yes; data type?		Weeks - >3 months	
	Yes; data type?		Weeks - >3 months	
	Yes; data type?		Weeks - >3 months	
	Yes; data type?		Weeks - >3 months	
What resources are needed to implement these action steps?				

Part 2: Action Steps-Initial Engagement and Formalizing the Partnership [Partner 2]

Key action step(s) for initial engagement (or next level/sustained engagement if already initiated)	Data needed to inform and/or share in this action step? If yes, add data type	Responsible person(s)	Timeframe (use week increments, e.g., Weeks 1 4; Weeks 5 8)	Success benchmarks
	Yes; data type?		Weeks - >3 months	
	Yes; data type?		Weeks - >3 months	
	Yes; data type?		Weeks - >3 months	

Key action step(s) to actualize/formalize the partnership	Data needed to inform and/or share in this action step? If yes, add data type	Responsible person(s)	Timeframe (use week increments, e.g., Weeks 1 4; Weeks 5 8)	Success benchmarks
	Yes; data type?		Weeks - >3 months	
	Yes; data type?		Weeks - >3 months	
	Yes; data type?		Weeks - >3 months	
	Yes; data type?		Weeks - >3 months	
	Yes; data type?		Weeks - >3 months	
What resources are needed to implement these action steps?				

Part 3: Risk Analysis [All Partners]

Risk Considerations: Identify potential threats, challenges and barriers to your action steps, especially those that would be crucial to implementation of the overall Partnership Action Plan. Note that not every action step will have the same risks so each should be reviewed individually.

Considerations to help identify risks or challenges to the action plan (please note these are examples and not an exhaustive list):

- Resources: e.g., Do you have the resources needed to actualize your action steps and overall plan?
- Stakeholder buy-in: e.g., What resistance might you encounter and from whom? Are there unintended and ill-received results or impact might happen to or from specific stakeholders?
- Politics, policy and regulatory: e.g., What policy, regulatory and political considerations are needed to implement the key action steps? Do the action steps require or benefit from policymaker approval or agreement to proceed?
- Data: e.g., Do you or will you have or be able to receive the needed data to inform the action steps and overall plan?

Step 1: Identify potential risks.

Step 2: Determine the likelihood and potential impact of the risk (e.g., high-potential great impact, medium-potential slight impact, low-potential minimal impact; very likely, likely, unlikely, highly unlikely).

Step 3: Determine potential approaches to address the risk (e.g., eliminate the cause, reduce the probability or impact of the risk or do nothing—i.e. it's an acceptable risk).

Step 4: Prioritize risks based on risk level and response; adjust action plan as needed.

Identify risks	What is the level of risk?		Potential approach to address the risk
List potential risks to implementation of the Partnership Action Plan—90 Day	Likelihood/ Potential impact	Priority to Address	How will team respond to the risk and persons responsible for risk response
1.			
2.			
3.			

Clear Form