

Twin Cities Greater Metropolitan Workforce Council Sector Skills Academy Participant Overview



WHAT IS THE SECTOR SKILLS ACADEMY?

The Twin Cities Greater Metropolitan Workforce Council (GMWC), MSPWin, Corporation for a Skilled Workforce (CSW), the Aspen Institute, and local stakeholders are partnering to create a Sector Skills Academy for up to 30 workforce development professionals in the Minneapolis-Saint Paul metro region. The purpose of this Academy is to support Minnesota's and GMWC's goal of creating and sustaining high-performing sector partnerships.

The Academy will incorporate key components of the Aspen Institute's Economic Opportunities Program National Sector Skills Academy, CSW's national sector strategy and partnership capacity building tools and resources, and resources from the National Fund for Workforce Solutions. Components of these nationally-recognized professional development approaches are being aligned and customized to fit the unique needs of the Twin Cities metro workforce development ecosystem.

WHAT ARE SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS?

Minnesota's new State Plan in response to WIOA sets as one of two primary goals building employer-led industry-sector partnerships to "better understand the skills that employers need and connect skilled workers to those opportunities."

Sector partnerships are industry-specific workforce development approaches designed to meet the talent demands of employers and the employment needs of communities. These partnerships:

- Ensure active employer leadership and focus on outcomes for both job seekers and companies
- Target sectors and occupations where there is equitable opportunity for people with low-skills to gain employment and advance through career pathways
- Craft workforce solutions for a specific industry or cluster of occupations within a region
- Coordinate across education and training, workers supports, and business services to eliminate duplication and gaps in service
- Support workers in improving their range of employment-related skills and ability to compete for higher quality opportunities within sectors
- Prepare people with industry-recognized competencies and credentials
- Promote systemic change by restructuring internal and external educational opportunities, public policies, and employment and business practices that remove employment barriers and skills gaps

This work is accomplished in several ways. Members of these collaborative efforts (or partnerships) often conduct research about the industry and the types of jobs available, convene employers to discuss their challenges and ideas for solutions, align education and training programs for specific industries and occupations, coordinate access to work and learning related supports, advocate for public policy changes, or provide other services designed to meet the needs of both workers and a group of employers.

WHAT ARE THE GOALS AND INTENDED OUTCOMES?

The Academy will be grounded in existing sector work in the metro area that is replicable and ready to be transformed beyond the borders of the local service level. Targeted sectors include healthcare, construction, IT, government, manufacturing, and business and financial services. The Academy will accomplish several key outcomes:

- Build the capacity of new or existing local sector efforts to become high-performing regional sector partnership teams

- Develop region-wide sector plans with specific goals, activities and resources available
- Increase understanding of existing sector workforce initiatives and how they align toward shared outcomes
- Formalize agreements among stakeholder organizations to support the sector partnerships
- Build a community of regional workforce leaders to grow collective social capital to support shared solutions

WHO WILL PARTICIPATE?

Participants will include:

- leaders from nonprofit workforce training programs, local employers, public workforce agencies, community colleges, unions, workforce centers, industry associations and/or other relevant organizations;
- a mix of workforce development practitioners who are either currently or interested in leading strategic change initiatives, particularly those focused at an industry sector level;
- representatives working within communities impacted by economic disparities; and
- an inclusive and diverse group of mid-to-senior level managers in the metro region with authority to implement organizational and/or program changes.

WHAT DOES THIS LEARNING OPPORTUNITY LOOK LIKE?

The Academy will provide 12 months of professional development for a cohort of six sector strategy teams who will participate in a series of learning and planning retreats and workshops to generate and test robust sector strategies. This approach will create a peer learning and support network to address collaborative leadership, racial equity, systems change and partnership development needs, in the context of learning more about and facilitating innovative and equitable sector and career pathway strategies and practices.

The Academy combines learning, planning, and action. Specific retreats and day-long workshops (every 6-8 weeks) will allow participants to learn about specific techniques for forming and sustaining sector partnerships. You will work in collaboration with others in your industry sector throughout the Academy. The sessions and self-directed action items outside of sessions will support planning for sector partnership goals, strategies, timelines and actions. Specific actions between sessions could include industry outreach, collaboration among partnership team members, and implementation of specific strategies.

The Twin Cities GMWC Sector Skills Academy will include local and national guest faculty and facilitators who will support learning, planning and action on topics such as:

- Data Driven Decision Making: Utilizing Labor Market and Program Related Data
- Engaging System Partners: Industry Leaders, State Leaders, and Public Partners
- Strategic Employer Engagement: Coordinating Business Services and Outreach
- Connecting Industry-Led Partnerships to Career Pathway Systems
- Learning and Evaluation: Success Metrics for Sector Partnerships and Systems Change
- Capacity Building: Developing Core Leadership and Convener Competencies
- Policy: Legislative and Administrative Change Strategies
- Funding Strategies and Sustainability

Key elements of the Academy include:

- Intentional community building and a focus on peer-to-peer learning and planning
- Interaction with national and local expert practitioners whose knowledge and hands-on experience doing sector-based and cross-sector work is relevant to participants' interests

- Tools and exercises for mapping and understanding existing organizational and leadership capabilities and gaps, identifying and targeting priorities for change, assessing partnerships, leveraging relationships, and building organizational capacity

WHAT IS MY COMMITMENT?

Each Academy member will work in sector groups to develop a region-wide sector partnership strategic plan that they will help lead, including identification of goals, strategies, partners, timelines and designated resources for implementation. To accomplish this goal, participants are asked to commit to the process in writing and agree to fully participate in:

- The Academy launch and opening 2-day retreat in the Metro region (tentatively scheduled for June 7-8, 2018)
- A series of 6 full-day workshops held in the Metro region, occurring approximately every 6 weeks (between July 2018 and March 2019)
- Continued sector strategy development learning and application between workshop sessions (self-directed time of up to 4-8 hours between sessions)
- A closing 1-2 day retreat (in May 2019)

Participants must commit to participate fully and actively in all the GMWC Sector Skills Academy events, both to enhance their individual experience and to contribute to the peer learning elements for the group.

All sessions are within 30-90 minute driving distance in the Metro area. Sessions will run a full day, typically 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.

PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY AND SELECTION

All applicants engaged in or planning workforce development efforts that focus on a specific industry, or that provide cross-sector workforce development services seeking to connect workers to quality jobs, and/or career pathways are invited to apply.

A fully-developed sector or industry strategy is NOT a requirement for application or acceptance into the Academy.

Inclusivity and diversity of race, ethnicity and gender are core values of the GMWC Sector Skills Academy. Applicants of color are encouraged to apply.

Ideally applicants meet the following:

- Are leading or interested in leading industry sector initiatives or other strategic change initiatives
- Hold positions of leadership and decision-making authority regarding those initiatives
- Be based and active within the Minneapolis/St. Paul region
- Working within communities impacted by economic disparities

Inclusivity and diversity of race, ethnicity and gender are core values of the GMWC Sector Skills Academy. Applicants of color are encouraged to apply.

Successful applicants will have a demonstrated interest in designing and implementing sectoral or industry-led employment strategies, commit to working in partnership across systems to achieve outcomes, have the capacity and ability to execute strategies within their organizations, have the willingness to fully engage in active learning, and be committed to increasing workforce equity in race, gender and ethnicity. The cohort will be established to represent diversity of industry, organizational type, status of sector initiative(s), and emphasize diversity across race, gender, and ethnicity.

APPLICATION PROCESS AND DEADLINES

We will hold an Academy Information Session on **Wednesday, March 28, 2018 at 8:30 am CT** to review the program and answer questions. An audio recording of this information session will be made available.

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/5102536985929896961>

The GMWC Sector Skills Academy application deadline is **Friday, April 13, 2018 at 5:00 pm CT**. No late applications will be accepted.

Applications will be reviewed by members of the GMWC Sector Skills Academy planning team. Leaders from the GMWC will approve selection of the final cohort. All applicants will be notified of the status of their applications by **Friday, April 27, 2018**.

The electronic application can be accessed and completed here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BV2ZKRB>

The materials for submission include:

- A completed application submitted online
- A short bio (to be used for the announcement of the GMWC Sector Skills Academy 2018-2019 cohort)
- A Signed “Commitment to Participate” Form

ACADEMY FACILITATION TEAM

Corporation for a Skilled Workforce

Corporation for a Skilled Workforce is a national non-profit organization that partners with philanthropy, government, business, and community leaders to connect workers with good jobs, increase the competitiveness of companies, and build sustainable communities. For over 25 years, CSW have worked with dozens of workforce investment boards, state and local workforce agencies, community-based organizations, companies, and community colleges to create lasting impact through their collaborative action. CSW is a national expert in the field of sector strategies and brings a breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding of how new and existing sector partnerships can achieve results with employers and workers. CSW recently implemented a workforce system leadership development academy in Detroit in partnership with Aspen.

The Aspen Institute Economic Opportunities Program

The Aspen Institute is an educational and policy studies organization based in Washington DC. Its mission is to spark intellectual inquiry and exchange, create a diverse worldwide community of leaders committed to the greater good, and provide a nonpartisan forum for reaching solutions on vital public policy issues. The Aspen Institute’s Economic Opportunities Program advances promising strategies and policies to help low- and moderate-income people thrive in today’s dynamic economy. For nine years The Aspen Institute’s Economy Opportunities Program led the Aspen Sector Skills Academy, a year-long leadership program. The goal was to improve the quantity, quality, and sustainability of sector efforts on the ground. This was done by developing the competencies and leadership of senior managers to use sectoral approaches and to strengthen the organizational capacity of their institutions to achieve lasting sectoral change.

NEED ADDITIONAL INFORMATION?

If you have any questions about the GMWC Sector Skills Academy, your eligibility to apply, or the application process including technical difficulties with the application submission, please e-mail:

Kysha Frazier, Senior Policy Associate
Corporation for a Skilled Workforce
GMWCAcademy@skilledwork.org