SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS ADDRESS NEEDS BY INDUSTRY

In June 2016 the Chamber, in partnership with the University of Hawaii Systems and Strada Education, launched a new initiative known as the “Sector Partnerships.” The concept of Sector Partnerships is not new; many states, including California, Colorado and others, have adopted the model to address workforce and other needs in various sectors. Sector Partnerships brings together business leaders from targeted industries to collaborate with public partners within workforce development, economic development, education and community organizations. Business leaders share and discuss common needs within their respective sector, which provides the support partners with a list of priorities based on sector needs. By understanding the needs and concerns of businesses, public partners are able to create training to provide needed skills for industries to expand and compete. Sector partnerships help facilitate communication between industry and public partners, improving the understanding of business needs for the short and long term.

What makes the Sector Partnerships unique and different from other development efforts is that it invites multiple industry players to one table, instead of each reaching out to individual companies to address needs specific to that individual. Addressing issues individually, rather than collectively, made it difficult for community partners to pinpoint industry-wide concerns and gain access to all programs needed to help businesses expand.

With the Sector Partnerships, there is an opportunity for employers and business leaders to provide valuable input and shape programs to help their industries grow, with support from community partners. In this model, industry leads and defines the agenda while engaging and collaborating with support partners.

Currently, there are multiple Sector Partnerships being held across the state and on multiple islands. Successful partnerships that have launched include banking, agriculture, food manufacturing, healthcare and engineering. Programs such as the Universal Banking Program, which trains bank tellers to perform more than the traditional tasks, have been created to address the needs identified by industry. The aim of Sector Partnerships is to develop a lasting, sustained relationship between businesses and community partners to help industries grow here in Hawaii.