

Guiding Principles of Data

Know what it will give you . . .

- A baseline of real information
- A way to prioritize
 - Avoid the “Picking winners and losers” trap
 - You have limited collective resources. Use them well.
- A starting place for a conversation

Know the limitations . . .

- No data set is perfect
- There is usually a lag
- There is always missing data
- There is also always too much data!
 - Beware: Analysis Paralysis
- There is no substitute for actual conversations with employers

Which data points matter most?

1. Current Employment
2. Short term change in Jobs (2 years)
3. Long term change in jobs (10 years)
4. Current and past Location Quotients
5. Current wages
6. # Establishments
7. Average # Jobs per Establishment
8. Job Growth Projections
9. Occupational data
10. Your on-the-ground knowledge

Your Job: Get the data points to interact (and don't do this alone). Try This:

1. Get everyone in the same room looking at the same data:
 - Workforce Development
 - Labor Market Information specialists and regional economists
 - Economic Development
 - Education
 - Other Stakeholders (community based organizations, human service organizations, etc)
2. Discuss!
 - Discuss each data point.
 - Assess which feels “real” based on what you know already.
 - Share on-the-ground knowledge that the data does not reflect.
 - Come to some agreement on which industry sectors really matter (jobs, quality)

Discussion Questions

1. **Current Employment:** *Which sectors are your biggest employers? Moderate employment? Smallest employment?*
2. **Short term change in Jobs:** *Any upticks? Any rapid declines? Which show strongest combination of absolute and percentage change?*
3. **Long term change in Jobs:** *Which sectors have added the most jobs in the past decade? Which have highest long term growth rates? Which reflect growth over long and short term?*
4. **Current and past location quotients:** *Which sectors have an LQ above 1.0? Which have the highest LQs? Is there an industry sector that shows an increase in LQ over time? If so, it's growing faster in your region than the national average.*
5. **Current wages:** *Which sectors show the highest and lowest average wages? Which sectors have the strongest combination of higher than average wages and job growth?*

6. **# Current Establishments:** *Which sectors show the largest # of actual firms/companies?*
7. **Average # jobs per Establishment:** *Which have the highest # jobs per firm? Which have the lowest? Which have the highest # of establishments but low # jobs? Which have the lowest # of establishments but high # of jobs? What does this say about the structure of the sector?*
8. **Job Growth Projections:** *Which sectors show growth? Which show strongest combined growth in absolute #s and percentages?*
9. **Occupational Data:** *What are the top occupations in terms of jobs and family-sustaining wages in your potential target sectors? Are there occupations that cross multiple sub-sectors of an industry? What does the data show in terms of projected new growth and replacement needs? What are the skills requirements?*
10. **Your On-the-ground Knowledge:** *What do all the combined above inquiries yield? What do we know anecdotally about certain sectors? What's the culture of the industry? Readiness of industry to collaborate? Willingness of industry to invest in solutions? Other timing considerations? What are our individual and collective relationships?*

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The Next Gen Sector Partnership staff, a team of four independent consultants—Lindsey Woolsey, John Melville, Francie Genz and Emily Lesh— collaborate to make the Next Gen sector partnership community of practice possible.

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