

Wyoming Next Generation Sector Partnerships or Other Sector Strategies Technical Proposal

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Proposers Background and Experience.....	7
Resumes	19
References.....	20
Single Point of Contact.....	23
Proposers Project Work Plan	23
Project Management Plan	27
Project Delays	28
Contract Exceptions	28
Staffing and Project Organization.....	28
Proposer Checklist	28

Executive Summary

Collaborative Economics proposes to continue providing Wyoming regions and state agencies with support in launching and sustaining the most effective model for sector partnerships in the country.

John Melville of Collaborative Economics is one of the co-founders of the national Next Generation Sector Partnership network. The Next Gen model is a proven, place-based approach for mobilizing private and public leaders around critical industry sectors to strengthen regional economies and connect people to jobs. The model marries decades of workforce/sector partnership experience with decades of economic cluster initiative experience. The Next Generation Sector Partnership network was established in 2011, and Collaborative Economics was incorporated in 1993.

The Next Gen model has proven to be successful in a wide range of industries, from manufacturing to healthcare, food and agriculture, construction and life sciences, and in a wide variety of rural and urban settings. Over a 40-year career, John Melville has worked on the ground in more than 100 communities and 25 states around the country. He helps lead a national community of practice made up of thousands of practitioners and business leaders involved in building regional partnerships using the Next Gen model.

One of those states is Wyoming, which with the assistance of Mr. Melville introduced Next Generation Sector Partnerships in May 2018, with an inaugural Next Gen Academy. Four subsequent academies have been held, with a cumulative total of more than 300 leaders from business, education, workforce development, economic development, the State Legislature, and other community groups in attendance. The Academies continue to attract both a substantial number of multi-year as well as new attendees.

At the first Academy, regional teams reviewed profiles of their economies, and prioritized promising candidates for launching Next Generation Sector Partnerships. Every team developed launch plans for those top candidates, and then followed-through to recruit business champions and launch their first Partnerships. As a result:

- *Industry sector partnerships were launched across 9 Wyoming regions between August 2018 and November 2019, a rate of growth faster than any other state. These initial partnerships spanned several industries: health care, manufacturing, construction, and finance and insurance, and hospitality/tourism.*

- *More than 200 Wyoming business leaders participated in industry sector launches, and more have joined these and newer partnerships since those launches.*
- *More than 200 Wyoming public partners have been involved with the industry sector partnerships, supporting them in a variety of ways.*
- *In terms of results, these original and newer Next Gen sector partnerships have launched more than 50 new industry-led workforce, education, and economic development initiatives so far.*

Wyoming's state agencies have also been a strong supporter of regional priorities, encouraging and rewarding grassroots, industry-driven initiatives. These are important steps supporting systems change and support for regional industry sector partnerships. Mr. Melville worked with WWDC, Department of Workforce Services, Business Council, Department of Education, and the Community College Commission to develop a state policy agenda supporting Next Generation Sector Partnerships, including dedicated funding for partnership development, preference points for agency grant programs, and other policy changes that help support sector partnerships across Wyoming.

As he has since 2018, Mr. Melville will continue to personally support Wyoming's Next Generation Sector Partnership efforts. He will continue to provide a mix of facilitation, expert coaching, best practices information, and training and technical assistance (including a 2024 Wyoming Next Generation Partnership Academy). As laid out in this proposal's Project Work Plan, he will personally staff each work stream.

Collaborative Economics proposes to continue to provide administrative assistance, project management, and facilitation support to Wyoming's existing and proposed Next Gen Sector Partnerships. Mr. Melville will be responsible for all work products and deliverables that will be collaboratively determined. The Project Work Program will consist of the following activities:

- ***Working with WWDC and the Staff Support Team to Provide Industry Data.*** As has been the case three times in the past five years, John Melville will work with the Wyoming's labor market information staff to provide updated regional employment data to regional Next Gen support teams for the purpose of informing their existing sector partnerships and the choice of potential new sector partnerships.
- ***Assisting Regional Teams in Launching and Growing Their Sector Partnerships.*** As he has for the past five years, Mr. Melville will continue to

work with Wyoming's nine regional teams, providing a mix of facilitation, coaching, best practice information, and connections to other Next Gen practitioners so that they can move forward effectively.

- ***Working with Community Partners to Recruit Business Champions.*** Mr. Melville will continue to work regularly with regional convenors (i.e., the public partners who lead the regional support teams) to identify potential business champions from targeted sectors, orient them to the Next Gen model and their potential role, and actively recruit them to serve in a leadership role.
- ***Assisting Sector Partnerships in Defining Goals, Opportunities, and Actions.*** Mr. Melville will continue to assist Wyoming's regional sector partnerships not only to define and update their goals and opportunities, but to decide on and implement specific actions to achieve those goals and opportunities. Every Wyoming Next Gen Sector Partnership is expected to have a written action plan with deliverables and champions committed to implementing those actions.
- ***Providing Technical Support and Administrative Assistance to Help Sector Partnerships Move from Ideas to Action Plans and Implementation.*** Mr. Melville will continue to actively work with Wyoming's regional teams to provide technical support in the form of expert facilitation and coaching, best practice information, and connections to other experienced Next Gen practitioners (through one-on-one connections as well as the Wyoming Next Gen Academy and other training offerings since 2018). Consistent with the Next Gen methodology, this technical support focuses on moving ideas to action, then evaluating results, adapting, and moving to a new level of action. Mr. Melville also will continue to advise regional convenors and teams on how best to address the administrative needs of sector partnerships, including meeting setup, invitations, follow-ups, written action plans, newsletters, and other communications and staff support roles.
- ***Launching New Sector Partnerships.*** Mr. Melville was not only the facilitator at every one of Wyoming's Next Gen Sector Partnership launches since 2018, but continues to work with regions to identify and facilitate new launches or relaunches of sector partnerships. For example, since June 2023, he has launched one new sector partnership (the Central Wyoming Health Sector Partnership) and is working with regional convenors to plan three more launches by the end of 2023 (in Southwest Wyoming, Big Horn Basin, and Northeast Wyoming).

- ***Providing Training and Technical Assistance to Sector Partnerships as a Whole in Wyoming.*** Mr. Melville has provided more than 10 Next Generation Sector Partnership orientation trainings for individual regional teams and state government agency staff since 2018. He has designed and been the lead facilitator for five Wyoming Next Generation Sector Partnership Academies, which bring together regional teams to receive training, expert technical assistance, and peer support. He will design and serve as lead facilitator for a proposed sixth Wyoming Next Generation Sector Partnership Academy in 2024, and design and lead other trainings for regions and state agencies as requested.
- ***Continue Working with the WWDC Staff Support Team to Provide Coaching in the Sector Partnership Model and Assist with State Policy Development When Necessary.*** Mr. Melville has worked with and will continue to work with WWDC, Department of Workforce Services, Department of Education, Business Council, and Community College Commission staff to provide guidance in the Next Gen model, but also to identify how best to support regional Next Gen Sector Partnerships from the state level.
- ***Working with Other Stakeholders Regarding Sector Partnerships Which Could Include the Wyoming Innovation Partnership.*** Mr. Melville has already provided information and discussed possible connections with Wyoming Innovation Partnership principals and staff. He is also working with the Governor's Health Care Task Force to explore potential opportunities for new Next Gen health care partnerships across Wyoming. These opportunities for collaboration will be one of the priorities for 2024, with Mr. Melville working with principals and staff to identify specific opportunities to leverage Wyoming Innovation Partnership, Health Care Task Force, and other resources and support.
- ***Developing a Performance Metrics Report in Collaboration with the Next Generation Sector Partnerships and Career Pathways Committee.*** Development of a performance metrics report will be one of the top priorities for 2024. Regions must be rigorous in holding themselves accountable for progress against their own metrics, whether that be promoting awareness of career opportunities in their industry among youth and career-changing adults, or educating and training more people to enter career pathways, or taking other steps to increase the growth and competitiveness of their key industries. Collaborative Economics proposes to design and implement a new regional performance metrics report in 2024.

As the full proposal demonstrates, John Melville, CEO of Collaborative Economics, is deeply experienced in the country's leading sector partnership approach, including more than five years of direct experience in Wyoming's regions and with state agencies.

This proposal meets and exceeds all the RFP requirements that will be used as a basis for evaluation, specifically addressing each of the Technical Proposal sections: Proposer Background and Experience, Staffing and Project Organization, Proposer's Project Work Plan, and Approach to Contract Performance.

In addition, in terms of Value Added, this proposal distinguishes itself from other proposals in that it commits John Melville, CEO of Collaborative Economics, to personally staff the project (as opposed to a mix of senior and junior consultants, or mostly junior consultants). Mr. Melville has not only extensive Wyoming and national experience specifically in launching and supporting sector partnerships, but was co-founder of the national Next Generation Sector Partnership network, and continues to serve as coach to its national community of practice.

As in years past, Wyoming's Next Generation Sector Partnership efforts will be supported personally by one of the nation's most recognized and effective individuals working in this field, who will also provide a conduit to leading practitioners nationally who in turn have and will continue to be a resource to Wyoming practitioners.

Proposer's Background and Experience

John Melville of Collaborative Economics is one of the co-founders of the national Next Generation Sector Partnership network. The Next Gen model is a proven, place-based approach for mobilizing private and public leaders around critical industry sectors to strengthen regional economies and connect people to jobs. The model marries decades of workforce/sector partnership experience with decades of economic cluster initiative experience. The Next Generation Sector Partnership network was established in 2011, and Collaborative Economics was incorporated in 1993. More information on John Melville/Collaborative Economics experience prior to and during the operation of the Next Generation Sector Partnership network is included in his resume.

Next Gen is often cited as a go-to resource by federal agencies and national workforce and economic development organizations, including most recently by the Department of Commerce in its March 2023 Workforce Development Guide developed for CHIPS Incentives Applicants and by U.S. Department of Labor in its February 2022 edition of Workforce GPS. In December 2022, Next Gen was invited to speak at the first convening of Good Jobs Challenge grantees to introduce the Next Gen Sector

Partnership model and highlight leading partnerships from our national community of practice.

We bring a distinct and nationally recognized methodology and step-by-step process that is based on years of combined experience and decades of lessons learned from the field across workforce and economic development, and their critical intersections.

Our model is distinct from traditional sector partnerships in three key ways:

1. **Industry-led vs. industry-advised.** Our approach puts industry at the center of regional partnerships, setting the expectation that business leaders must define, champion and own their shared agenda for action, not just provide input. Our methodology emphasizes the need to cultivate industry leaders as champions and partnership drivers, not just advisors and participants.
2. **Coordinated support from education, workforce and economic development systems vs. focused on a single system.** Traditionally, sector partnerships have been viewed as workforce initiatives, centered on workforce development boards and focused on guiding workforce investments. Next Gen Partnerships, in contrast, depend on an *integrated* team that spans multiple education, workforce and economic development organizations to jointly support sector partnerships. This is essential to their sustainability and impact; because Next Gen Partnerships rely on a broader team for support, they can tackle issues beyond skills training that impact the industry's health and talent pipeline.
3. **Agenda that tackles broad industry competitiveness needs vs. workforce only.** Our model centers on an agenda that tackles the priorities that impact businesses' ability to grow *and* create new, quality jobs, including a strong emphasis on workforce and education. Engaging business leaders independently around separate agendas—workforce development, on the one hand, and industry growth, on the other—diminishes the effectiveness of both efforts. Our integrated approach builds stronger, more sustainable, more impactful partnerships.

These distinctions result in partnerships that are more sustainable over time and that serve as effective mechanisms attract the commitment and investment of industry leaders that is essential to achieving long-term impact.

The Next Gen model has proven to be successful in a wide range of industries, from manufacturing to healthcare, food and agriculture, construction and life sciences, and in

a wide range of rural and urban settings. Over a 40-year career, John Melville has worked on the ground in more than 100 communities and 25 states around the country. He helps lead a national community of practice made up of thousands of practitioners and business leaders involved in building regional partnerships using the Next Gen model.

The Next Gen Experience in Wyoming

Overview

Wyoming introduced Next Generation Sector Partnerships in May 2018, with an inaugural Next Gen Academy. Four subsequent academies have been held, with a cumulative total of more than 300 leaders from business, education, workforce development, economic development, the State Legislature, and other community groups in attendance. The Academies continue to attract both a substantial number of multi-year as well as new attendees.

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Regional By Region Results (2019-2022)

A partial sampling of the more than 50 initiatives launched during this period includes:

- **Big Horn Basin Healthcare Partnership:** Held a new health care camp/curriculum targeted at middle and high school students to build awareness

about health care careers; completed assessment of regional transportation options to identify gaps to be addressed for both patient and employee travel; became COVID-19 mutual support group, sharing health and safety strategies and supplies.

- **Central Wyoming Construction and Trades Alliance (Converse/Natrona Counties):** Secured grant from the McMurry Foundation for outreach to increase the number of construction apprenticeships; championed new outreach to local students to build awareness of construction careers, including an Internship Day at Casper College; worked with Casper College to develop new construction specialties as part of the curriculum; local schools successfully secured funding for a mobile classroom for hands-on skill development critical to construction.
- **Tri-County Healthcare Alliance:** Published for the first time a directory of healthcare resources across Goshen, Niobrara, and Platte Counties to connect providers, facilitate referrals, and reduce the need to go outside the region for health care; initiated a new adult education project management course at Eastern Wyoming College to train young people, resulting in a first-ever in-person gathering of providers to learn about each other's capabilities, resulting a growing number of intra-region referrals.
- **Healthcare Sector Partnership of Fremont County:** Completed a new unified health care assessment, held career health days, and collaborated with the Fremont County CNA Association to focus on retention of nurses; now working on expanding the local nursing pipeline and strategies to attract and retain outside health care talent.
- **High Altitude Manufacturing Partnership (Albany County):** Launched a new introductory manufacturing course at Laramie County Community College, held manufacturing plant tours for students and counselors, worked with the city and chamber on business mentorship and the issue of trailing spouses; held a manufacturing exposition and career fair, showcased companies and attracted new talent to the industry; and a member manufacturer helped spearhead efforts to help health care providers with supply shortages during early months of COVID-19.
- **Laramie County Construction Sector Partnership:** Launched a new dual enrollment program in the skilled trades involving local school districts and the community college; initiated a new referral system for high school students to connect directly with interested employers; held a first-ever construction industry-specific job fair with the local workforce center; raised concerns about providing

internships to 16-17 year-olds, leading to changes in Wyoming's student learner agreement clarifying and encouraging such worksite experiences; raised interest in preparing construction talent to work on the upcoming implementation of the Ground Based Strategic Defense (GBSD), leading to state agencies and the Partnership business chair starting to work directly with Northrup Grumman on this challenge.

- **Laramie County Hospitality Sector Partnership:** Created a new “Experience Cheyenne” training for front-line hospitality staff and hospitality jobs website; produced a new employee recruitment video for the career-minded (Passionate People for a Cool Industry), showcasing employees from multiple companies.
- **New West Manufacturing Partnership (Sheridan/Johnson Counties):** Created a manufacturing roundtable to share best practices, hosted manufacturing facility tours, encouraged local buyer-supplier connections, resulting in new business partnering, and hosting a manufacturing festival to showcase the industry.
- **Northeast Finance and Insurance Sector Partnership:** Supported development of video (Live Gillette, Love Gillette) to promote local assets and existing community initiatives to improve air service and market the region; established a new relationship with a local high school and the community college to align curriculum, help attract students to classes, provide internships, and create financial certifications.
- **Northeast Construction Sector Partnership:** Helped launch a new construction technician program and hosted a bus tour of construction sites.
- **Southwest Wyoming Manufacturing Partnership:** Launched a new manufacturing operator program (now educating a third cohort, with all prior graduates employed locally, and with a persistent waiting list to enroll); developed new marketing packets for local manufacturers to give potential employees describing benefits of living in Southwest Wyoming; publishes monthly newsletter promoting local manufacturers; established COVID-19 support group among manufacturers to share strategies for health, safety, and working from home; supported alignment of local high schools and community manufacturing-oriented programs; began video compilation of manufacturing employee testimonials to promote local career options, sharing with local schools and workforce development system.

State Investment in Regional, Industry-Driven Priorities

Wyoming's state agencies have also been a strong supporter of regional priorities, encouraging and rewarding grassroots, industry-driven initiatives. These are important steps supporting systems change and support for regional industry sector partnerships.

- A total of 22 grants totaling \$1.2 million have been invested through June 2021 in Next Gen-affiliated projects and programs (the last time an agency analysis was completed), including funding from Workforce Development Training Grants, Adult Education Special Projects Grants, Workforce Discovery Grants, Next Generation Partnership Grants, Department of Education Collaboration Grants. These investments were prioritized by state agencies, providing preference points for Next Gen affiliated projects and programs.
- A Next Gen State Support Team was created to coordinate state agency efforts and promotion of Next Generation Sector Partnerships in Wyoming. The Department of Workforce Services with the Team's support has produced a web site listing resources available to regional partnerships, an Ambassadors Kit with promotional materials and regional videos showcasing Next Gen. The Team also implemented a coordinated effort to provide Next Gen preference points across state agency grant programs.
- The Wyoming Workforce Development Council has also prioritized industries represented by Next Generation Sector Partnerships. In 2020 (the last time an agency analysis was completed), the Council distributed 333 grants totaling \$2.44 million to health care, manufacturing, construction, finance and insurance, and hospitality industries in alignment with regional partnership priorities to train a skilled workforce.
- The Next Gen State Support Team received input from industry champions leading Wyoming's Next Gen Partnerships, leading to changes in state policy. For example: responding to concerns about accessibility of 16-17 year-olds for construction internships, the Department of Education updated its Student Learner Agreement to clarify and encourage such internships. In response to the need to develop construction talent for GBSD, the Team sought guidance and approval from the Governors' Office to work with Northrup Grumman to understand the needs and make preparations to meet them. The Team also hosted a listening session of Next Gen industry champions to provide input into the Department of Education's "Portrait of a Graduate" initiative to inform

changes in K-12 curriculum and graduation requirements, resulting in recommendations reflecting the views of Wyoming's growing industries.

- The Next Gen State Support Team also supports capacity-building of regional and state-level professionals in the Next Gen methodology. The Workforce Development Council has underwritten both expert technical assistance and an annual Academy since 2018. Other agencies have worked to incorporate the Next Gen approach into their operations, including creation of a teaching video for CTE professionals, tutorials for state staff, and facilitated sessions with agency decisionmakers.
- The Next Gen State Support Team also coordinated recommendations for the Governor's Drive and Thrive initiative to invest federal stimulus funds, prioritizing projects that will benefit Next Generation Sector Partnerships across Wyoming. One prominent example is an approved Talent Transition Initiative, which would allow for the scale-up of initial efforts to produce and distribute employee testimonial videos in an effort to build awareness and attract talent to promising careers in growing industries represented by Next Generation Sector Partnerships.

How Next Gen Has Changed the Way Wyoming Businesses and Government Work Together

Regional teams have been asked about the lasting impact of their Next Gen sector partnership-building: how those who participate change the way they work together, getting better results and creating new opportunities that would not otherwise have been possible. Wyoming's regions report that because of their experience with Next Gen, businesses are working together, businesses are working with public partners, and public partners are working with each other in new ways.

Businesses are Working Together, Many for the First Time, as a Regional Industry Sector

While individual businesses and business leaders have been active in their communities, most have not worked together with their peers to identify and advance industry sector priorities, actions that benefit multiple businesses and that would not happen unless multiple businesses collaborate. Some regions have noted a shift among companies that are industry competitors:

"This Partnership is changing the culture. Having competitive for-profit entities in the same room tackling challenges shoulder-to-shoulder is not instinctive to most. But, all have bought into the Partnership's mission and have been willing

participants, as they begin to realize that there is not that much overlap as previously sensed and that perhaps there is a common challenge that can be addressed to raise the tide.”

Fabian Lobera, Healthcare Sector Partnership of Fremont County

Some regions report that businesses have gotten to know each other better through the partnership, which has helped stimulate more business-to-business interactions (e.g., Albany’s manufacturers touring each other’s plants), new buyer-supplier relationships (e.g., Sheridan/Johnson), and new opportunities for smaller companies to participate (e.g., Laramie County).

Regions also point to the formal commitments by multiple businesses to sustain their partnerships as business co-chairs or board members as tangible examples of a new level of business collaboration.

Public Partners are Stepping Up to Work with Businesses and Other Public Partners

At a basic level, participation in regular Next Gen sector partnership meetings have given workforce, education, and economic development partners better awareness of each other’s missions and resources—and provided businesses a direct line of communication to public partners. This greater awareness has helped accelerate collaboration among the parties, including new, direct business involvement with:

- the workforce system and educational institutions (e.g., Laramie County’s construction industry job fair; curriculum review in Southwest, Northeast, and Albany County)
- economic development entities (e.g., Southwest, Albany, and Northeast working with chambers and regional economic development organizations to promote their regions)
- multiple levels of education simultaneously (e.g., Laramie County’s dual enrollment program in the skilled trades spanning high school and community college).

At the same time, regions also report that they have only just begun to see the benefits of collaboration between business and public partners, and among public partners. The first phase of Wyoming’s Next Gen sector partnership-building helped surface and secure a core of regional business leaders, generated an initial set of tangible initiatives that are getting results, and set the stage for broader collaborations that will more fully leverage the public and private sector resources of Wyoming’s regions.

The first phase began to bridge the divides among businesses and public partners that keep communities from realizing their potential. It has demonstrated that Wyoming's regions can organize around important sectors, identify priorities to grow those sectors, and follow-through with new levels of collaborative action. The next phase will extend and sustain these collaborations, connecting business and public partners within regions, across regions, and between regions and state government.

Surviving the Pandemic

Like other places, Wyoming's regions were hit hard by the global pandemic and its aftermath. Enormous pressure was put on business and as well as public sector operations. Some partnerships, despite their record of success, could not weather this period. However, several partnerships did not only survive but continued to build on their early success. And, that is a hallmark of Next Gen: resilience. Even if a partnership cannot be sustained because of changes in business leadership or other factors, it does not mean that the region abandons the methodology for that industry or other industry sectors.

In fact, today, seven of the original nine regions still have active Next Gen partnerships, with the remaining two planning to launch a new partnership in 2023. The 2023 Academy acted as an important catalyst to re-energize existing partnerships and stimulate the formation of new partnerships. In addition, growing collaboration with the Governors' Health Care Task Force is leading to new possibilities for partnerships.

2023 Academy Action Steps and Post-Academy Progress

The Wyoming Next Gen Academy was held in March 2023, and was attended by regional teams from Albany/Laramie, Big Horn Basin, Converse/Natrona, Fremont, Northeast, Southwest, and Tri-County. Each team identified and committed to specific actions to be taken after the Academy, working with their Next Gen coach John Melville. Below is an update of progress through August 2023.

Albany/Laramie

The two-county High Altitude Manufacturing Partnership (HAMP) continues to meet regularly and work closely with Laramie County Community College (LCCC) and local schools to promote manufacturing careers and educate more students in manufacturing fields. At the Academy, they specifically committed to securing a fiscal agent to house HAMP finances, complete a website to enhance HAMP's visibility and communication, and expand participation in upcoming career fairs and other educational activities.

Since the Academy, they have had local students (juniors and sophomores) tour the College, especially the CNC lab, and learn about their educational options. HiViz,

Avvid, and Ancient Elements have all offered tours. And, they are working on setting up a trade day at a local high school, perhaps during manufacturing week, as well as looking into expanding internships. They have received a quote from Crux on the website, including updating the HAMP logo. Sean Schaub of Manufacturing Works is working with Gustave of Avvid to develop a new website. Mandy of HiViz met with Brittany Ashby from "The Align Team" and they have agreed to house HAMP funds.

They had 275 people attend the grand opening of the Advanced Manufacturing and Materials Center at LCCC, an effort informed and supported by HAMP, followed by a 3rd printing camp and a family night, attended by 51 people. The first class started with 11 students, with the idea to keep the class small for now to ensure the curriculum is on target and equipment is functioning well. The AMMC facility is broken down into 3 functions: educational/student, community (concept forge area of AMMC), and industry (customized training for employers).

At present, the Partnership is planning a Trade Day at a Cheyenne High School or the Advanced Manufacturing and Materials Center at LCCC on October 6. The Partnership is collaborating to hire interns from the Center's program. The Partnership is also looking into the potential of a pre-hire grant to help fund tuition. The next meeting of the Partnership is scheduled for September 25.

In addition, the Laramie County Construction Partnership received a grant from the WWDC to document and promote their successful approach to working with local schools to encourage students to enter construction careers. The document was published in 2023, and the Chair of the Partnership is currently engaging with construction executives across Wyoming to encourage them to pursue this model. To date, construction executives in Laramie County have agreed to implement the model.

Big Horn Basin

Christi Greaham, director of Center for Training and Development at Northwest College stepped forward to be a new convener for the Big Horn Basin region. She agreed to work with Cody Mayor Matt Hall and Rebekah Burns of the Powell Chamber of Commerce to launch a new hospitality partnership. She also agreed to explore the possibility of a construction partnership, and subsequently other industries (i.e., health care, manufacturing). Christi and Mayor Hall are working with John Melville to plan the launch a new hospitality partnership on October 25, 2023.

Converse/Natrona

Jeff McCarty of Casper College agreed to become the new convener for the Converse/Natrona region, focusing on launching a new health care sector partnership. Shantel Moore, Vice President of Human Resources of Banner Wyoming Medical Center and Anna Kinder, Executive Director, Casper Natrona County Health Department agreed to be the employer co-chairs for the new partnership. After the Academy, they moved quickly to create an invitation list of the top health care leaders in the region, culminating in a launch meeting on June 1 with more than 30 participants. Industry champions chose shared priorities, were organized into Action Teams, and met June 24 to decide on their first deliverables (early wins).

In July and August, the Convening Team working with Action Team members is organizing for two Fall events: one on October 25 for local youth and one on November 18 for local adults. Both will be held at Casper College, with opportunities to hear from industry leaders and employees in key occupations about their experiences, as well as visit laboratories and classrooms to get an overview of specific health care career programs. Lance Porter, CEO of Banner Wyoming Medical Center has replaced Shantel Moore as employer co-chair. The next meeting of the full Partnership is scheduled for September 19, where commitments will be secured for the two events as well as plans made for the next Partnership deliverables. John Melville will facilitate.

Fremont County

The regional team identified and confirmed a new convener (Tracy Rue, former business owner and executive director of the Lander Economic Development Association). The team committed to re-launching their health care sector partnership, and subsequently held a community meeting to solicit interest and identify issues that the partnership could help address. They are now collecting and organizing health care access and capacity data in advance of a second community meeting in the Fall, at which they anticipate organizing action teams around shared priorities.

Northeast Wyoming

The Northeast region confirmed a new convening team and committed to launching a manufacturing sector partnership. The new convening team is Kendra Anderson of Transform Gillette (based at Gillette Community College District) and Mike Stober, Vice President of Operations at Energy Capital Economic Development. Both agreed to work with John Melville to recruit industry co-chairs, identify attendees, and host a launch meeting. Subsequently, they have confirmed co-chairs from L&H Industrial, Neiman, and Komatsu, and are in the process of working with those leaders to compile an invitation list and set a launch meeting date for the Fall, which John Melville will facilitate.

Southwest Wyoming

The regional team spent most of their time at the Academy planning for the launch of a new hospitality partnership, but is also committed to continuing and expanding their manufacturing partnership.

The existing Southwest Wyoming Manufacturing Partnership (SWMP) meets regularly, getting results in terms of building awareness of careers among local high school students as well as expanding manufacturing programs at Western Wyoming Community College. One of the SWMP's most significant achievements is the creation of the Powerline Pre-Apprentice Program, which provides hands-on training for powerline skills. The program is a collaboration between the SWMP and Western Wyoming Community College (WWCC), with funding from the Wyoming Workforce Development Council. The program has been instrumental in providing the manufacturing industry with skilled workers who are job-ready and able to meet the industry's needs.

In addition to the Powerline Program, SWMP has created initiatives that focus on education and workforce development at all levels. The partnership supported a Manufacturing Day event for high school students, where they can learn about the industries in southwest Wyoming and participate in hands-on activities. The SWMP has also worked with WWCC to create a pathway for students to earn an associate degree in operational technology, with courses that align with the skills needed by regional manufacturers. SWMP has also worked with local economic development agencies to promote the manufacturing industry and attract businesses to the region.

SWMP is preparing to hold an executive committee meeting in September, and a full Partnership meeting on November 3, which John Melville will help plan and facilitate.

Also at the Academy, two hospitality industry leaders agreed to spearhead the effort to explore interest and ultimately launch a hospitality sector partnership: Dan Burau, owner of Firewater Public House, and Don McGee of the PEG Hospitality Group. After the Academy, Burau hosted an exploratory meeting with local leaders interested in helping support a new hospitality partnership, and both are now working on individual outreach to prepare for a launch in the Fall after the high season. They are currently targeting and working towards inviting industry champions to a November 3 launch meeting, which John Melville will facilitate.

Tri-County Region

The region secured new conveners and new industry champion, and made the commitment to re-launch the Tri-County Health Care Alliance. The new conveners are

Brayden Connour with Goshen Economic Development and Lisa Johnson, consultant to Goshen Economic Development. The new industry champion is Essie McCall with Volunteers of America. Former convener Callie Allred of Eastern Wyoming College remains engaged assisting the convening team.

At the Next Gen Academy, the team committed to: communicate the value of the partnership using current labor market data to update talking points; confirm that talent development, patient marketing/education, and care coordination are still shared industry priorities (through surveys, focus groups, and local/regional meetings); engage industry partners by understanding needs, demonstrating value, and regular communication, regional and county meetings, and quarterly reports on progress toward priorities and objectives identified by the Healthcare Sector. The team is applying for a Next Gen Support Grant to help underwrite professional and administrative capacity to implement these actions.

Resumes

John Melville is CEO of Collaborative Economics, and an advisor to civic leaders nationwide. Over the past 40 years, he has worked with public and private leaders in over 100 communities across the U.S. and abroad, helping them launch concrete partnerships to improve workforce development, regional innovation, economic development, and quality of life.

He has led the Next Gen Sector Partnership effort in Wyoming since 2018. He has led the design and facilitation of the Wyoming Next Gen Academy (modeled after similar Next Gen state academies in Colorado, Arizona, Oregon, Montana, Nebraska, Texas, Louisiana, California, North Carolina, South Carolina, New Jersey, Connecticut, Iowa, and Pennsylvania). He has been the lead facilitator and coach for nine Wyoming regions, helping regions launch and grow Next Gen Partnerships. He has served as advisor to the Wyoming Workforce Development Council, including how to connect state programs to regional grassroots efforts.

He is a national leader in the design and application of "next generation" employer engagement as a distinct departure from traditional employer engagement practices. He works directly with business leaders, supporting them as they chair industry-led partnerships. He also supports partners from workforce development, economic development, education, and other community institutions, helping them work productively with business leaders to achieve shared outcomes.

With this approach, he has helped design, launch, and support over 100 regional industry-led partnerships focused on talent development and other economic development priorities, including sector-based partnerships in diverse industries such as

manufacturing, health care, construction, information and communications technologies, financial and business services, logistics, defense/aerospace, biotechnology/life sciences, electronics and computer manufacturing, energy, professional services, agriculture, food processing, health services, water technology, digital media, tourism, software, semiconductors, apparel, forest products, “experience industries” (e.g., specialty food, beverage, retail products and services, tourism), and others.

He has also helped design, launch, and manage more than 10 learning networks of regional partnerships, ranging from several U.S. Department of Labor grantee-based peer learning exchanges to state-level networks involving 10-20 regional partnerships to national networks for regional economic and community development leaders. Through this work, he has helped pioneer a new peer-based technical assistance model, one that will be used in this effort and that is a departure from less-effective expert-centered models.

Beginning in 2010, John was Collaborative Economics' project leader working with the U.S. Department of Labor and the National Governors' Association, designing and providing technical assistance to over 150 regional and state grantees in energy efficiency, renewable energy, health, logistics, and other industry areas in every region of the country. As part of that effort, he has helped design and implement several peer learning networks, grantee guidance materials, institutes, webinars, and site-specific technical assistance. He also served as state technical assistance lead for Massachusetts, helping that state develop its advanced manufacturing strategy (including support for regional manufacturing partnerships) as part of the National Governors' Association six-state policy academy on advanced manufacturing.

He has also led multi-year technical assistance projects focused on industry-driven talent development partnerships for the Arizona Commerce Authority, the Colorado State Workforce Investment Board, and the California Workforce Investment Board and California Energy Commission, advising state-level leaders on strategy, as well as working directly with regional teams to design and launch sector strategies around specific clusters industries, with specific focus on talent development.

He also specializes in the design of diagnostic data packages for decision-makers, learning experiences, curriculum, how to guides, best practice assessments, tool kits, action clinics, academies, summits and other modes of customized technical assistance to ensure effective launch and implementation of transformative processes at the local and regional levels. His work in Wyoming, Arizona, and Colorado involves on the ground facilitation, working directly with business leaders and aligning workforce development, economic development and community partners to strengthen the regional economy, as well as managing peer learning networks, including industry-specific exchanges around manufacturing, energy, and health care.

He has led the Collaborative Economics team working with the California State Workforce Development Board, designing and supporting the multi-year Regional Industry Clusters of Opportunity (RICO) program and Slingshot Initiative. RICO has been California's sector partnership building strategy beginning in 2009. He was primary designer of the RICO four-stage collaborative process, Action Clinics, and related templates, lead author of the Clusters of Opportunity Users Guide, and designer of the Clusters of Opportunity Training Sessions.

Through his work with industry-led regional talent partnerships, he has developed a wide range of guidance materials for practitioners, including the *Conveners Guide to Next Generation Sector Partnerships* (2014) and a *Step-by-Step Guide to Sector-Based Career Pathways* (2014), as well as *Transforming Technical Assistance: A New Approach to Helping Grantees Innovate and Succeed* (2015 for the National Governors' Association) and online sector partnership-building toolkits for specific states (e.g., Colorado's sectorsummit.org). He is co-author of the Next Gen Training manual and toolkit (2021 and 2023) and an article on innovative collaborative approaches, featuring Next Gen for the Brookings Institution (2021).

Overall, he has led or supported transformational processes and partnerships in a wide variety of regions across the country including Wyoming, Pittsburgh PA, Scranton PA, Harrisburg/York PA, Richmond VA, Fresno CA, St. Louis MO, Orlando FL, Omaha NE, Iowa, North Dakota, San Diego CA, Sonoma County CA, San Luis Obispo CA, Hampshire County MA, and many more. All these projects have included elements focused on talent development, economic development, quality community development--and the intersections among these attributes. He also led the Collaborative Economics team on the Kellogg Foundation's Stewards of Place project, working directly with college and university leaders and teams.

Based on his experiences working with civic leaders at the regional and community level, John co-authored two books, *Grassroots Leaders for a New Economy: How Civic Entrepreneurs are Building Prosperous Communities* (Jossey-Bass, 1997), and *Civic Revolutionaries: Igniting the Passion for Change in America's Communities* (Wylie and Sons/Jossey-Bass, 2004). He also co-authored The Brookings Institution's *The Intersector* (2022), focusing on the approach and results of the Next Generation Sector Partnership model. His work has helped shape the focus of several Federal programs, including the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, the Good Jobs Challenge, the CHIPS Act, and the National Science Foundation's Regional Innovation Hubs initiative, all of which promote a sector-based, industry-led, community-supported approach.

He is also author of more than 50 strategic plans for regions and communities, published articles on education and benchmarking, and a report for the Presidents' Commission on Industrial Competitiveness. Prior to founding Collaborative Economics in 1993, he served for a decade as senior policy analyst at SRI International (Stanford Research Institute), and is an honors graduate of Stanford University.

References

Southwest Wyoming Manufacturing Partnership (2018-ongoing). Fred Von Ahrens and Ron Wild, co-business champions. John Melville has facilitated the region's Academy team, the sector partnership launch meeting, and continues to be asked to help facilitate subsequent leadership meetings, including the next one scheduled for November 2, 2023.

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Northwest Connecticut Next Generation Sector Partnerships in Health Care and Manufacturing (2021-ongoing). Winner of an U.S. Economic Development Administration Good Jobs Challenge grant. John Melville helped build and train the regional public partner support team, coached the convening team on recruiting co-chairs and other industry champions, facilitated the launch meetings and subsequent action team meetings, worked with action teams to achieve deliverables, and continues to provide ongoing facilitation, coaching, and training.

Catherine N Awwad
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North Texas Next Generation Sector Partnership in the Biomedical industry (2023-ongoing). Winner of an U.S. Economic Development Administration Good Jobs Challenge grant. John Melville help build and train the regional public partner support team, coached the convening team on recruiting co-chairs and other industry champions, facilitated the launch meeting and subsequent action team meetings, worked with action teams to achieve deliverables, and continues to provide ongoing facilitation, coaching, and training.

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Single Point of Contact

John Melville, Chief Executive Officer of Collaborative Economics, will serve as the Project's single point of contact. His resume is submitted with this proposal. He can be reached at 201 Mimosa Way, Portola Valley CA 94028. Telephone number is 650-799-2298, and email address is melville@coecon.com.

Proposer's Project Work Plan

Collaborative Economics proposes to continue to provide administrative assistance, project management, and facilitation support to Wyoming's existing and proposed Next Gen Sector Partnerships. Below, the specific tasks are identified. Collaborative Economics proposes an overall budget for all the activities, with specific allocations for specific activities to be determined in collaboration with WWDC staff and responsive to changing regional and state conditions. Mr. Melville will be responsible for all work products and deliverables that will be collaboratively determined.

Based on prior experience working with Wyoming's Next Generation Sector Partnerships, Collaborative Economics estimates that over one year that John Melville will require a budget of, on average, 24 hours per month (288 hours per year) at \$215 per hour for a total of \$61,920, plus reimbursable travel expenses up to \$15,000. In addition, based on the experience of prior years, the budget will include \$15,000 for honoraria and travel expenses for Next Gen facilitators for a proposed Wyoming Next Gen Academy in 2024. Altogether, Collaborative Economics estimates a project budget of \$91,920.

The Project Work Program will consist of the following activities. The allocation of time per activity will be determined in collaboration with WWDC staff and will be responsive to the evolving needs of Wyoming's regions and Next Generation Sector Partnerships.

Working with WWDC and the Staff Support Team to Provide Industry Data

As has been the case three times in the past five years, John Melville will work with the Wyoming's labor market information staff to provide updated regional employment data to regional Next Gen support teams for the purpose of informing their existing sector partnerships and the choice of potential new sector partnerships. Mr. Melville has both defines the specifications for the dataset and works with staff to ensure the regional datasets are user-friendly for regional team members. Mr. Melville would work with WWDC and the Staff Support Team to provide the next update of the regional data sets prior to the next Wyoming Next Gen Academy in 2024.

Assisting Regional Teams in Launching and Growing Their Sector Partnerships

As he has for the past five years, Mr. Melville will continue to work with Wyoming's nine regional teams, providing a mix of facilitation, coaching, best practice information, and connections to other Next Gen practitioners so that they can move forward effectively. Regional teams have different kinds and level of needs over time, and Mr. Melville has been on-call to provide what they need when they need it. This assistance is on request vs. forced onto regions regardless of their readiness. Mr. Melville helps them voluntarily implement the Next Gen methodology, rather than choosing a sector focus, dictating a specific timeline, or insisting on adherence to a specific state government agenda, other than the successful launch and sustainable operation of one or more sector partnerships of their choice.

Working with Community Partners to Recruit Business Champions

Mr. Melville will continue to work regularly with regional convenors (i.e., the public partners who lead the regional support teams) to identify potential business champions from targeted sectors, orient them to the Next Gen model and their potential role, and actively recruit them to serve in a leadership role. He is responsible for helping recruit more than 30 business champions to help lead Next Gen Sector Partnerships across the nine regions of Wyoming.

Assisting Sector Partnerships in Defining Goals, Opportunities, and Actions

Mr. Melville will continue to assist Wyoming's regional sector partnerships not only to define and update their goals and opportunities, but to decide on and implement specific actions to achieve those goals and opportunities. Every Wyoming Next Gen Sector Partnership is expected to have a written action plan with deliverables and champions committed to implementing those actions. This approach has produced a continuing set of outcomes since 2018, and provides the disciplined framework for new partnerships to move forward. Mr. Melville helps regional teams through facilitation of launch meetings, action team meetings, and coaching sessions with public sector convenors and industry champions.

Providing Technical Support and Administrative Assistance to Help Sector Partnerships Move from Ideas to Action Plans and Implementation

Mr. Melville actively works with Wyoming's regional teams to provide technical support in the form of expert facilitation and coaching, best practice information, and connections to other experienced Next Gen practitioners (through one-on-one connections as well as the Wyoming Next Gen Academy and other training offerings since 2018). Consistent with the Next Gen methodology, this technical support focuses on moving ideas to action, then evaluating results, adapting, and moving to a new level of action.

Mr. Melville also advises regional convenors and teams on how best to address the administrative needs of sector partnerships, including meeting setup, invitations, follow-ups, written action plans, newsletters, and other communications and staff support roles. He emphasizes the staff role as responsive and supportive of industry needs, rather than driving their own agenda.

Launching New Sector Partnerships

Mr. Melville was not only the facilitator at every one of Wyoming's Next Gen Sector Partnership launches since 2018, but continues to work with regions to identify and facilitate new launches or relaunches of sector partnerships. For example, since June 2023, he has launched one new sector partnership (the Central Wyoming Health Sector Partnership) and is working with regional conveners to plan three more launches by the end of 2023 (in Southwest Wyoming, Big Horn Basin, and Northeast Wyoming).

Providing Training and Technical Assistance to Sector Partnerships as a Whole in Wyoming

Mr. Melville has provided more than 10 Next Generation Sector Partnership orientation trainings for individual regional teams and state government agency staff since 2018. He has designed and been the lead facilitator for five Wyoming Next Generation Sector Partnership Academies, which bring together regional teams to receive training, expert technical assistance, and peer support. He will design and serve as lead facilitator for a proposed sixth Wyoming Next Generation Sector Partnership Academy in 2024.

Continue Working with the WWDC Staff Support Team to Provide Coaching in the Sector Partnership Model and Assist with State Policy Development When Necessary

Mr. Melville has worked with and will continue to work with WWDC, Department of Workforce Services, Department of Education, Business Council, and Community College Commission staff to provide guidance in the Next Gen model, but also to identify how best to support regional Next Gen Sector Partnerships from the state level.

This approach has already resulted in important policy support, including but not limited to dedicated grants for Next Gen Sector Partnerships, preference points in grant competitions for those who are affiliated with Next Gen Sector Partnerships, clarifications to workplace learning requirements that have helped more 16-17 year-olds get hands-on work experience, significant new resources for promoting the transition of talent to Next Gen industries, and greater alignment with the Governor's Health Care Task Force in promoting Next Gen Sector Partnerships in that industry in regions statewide. Mr. Melville will continue to work with state agency staff as new opportunities arise to build a stronger state-regional collaboration, helping to advance regional goals while also advancing larger state goals for economic growth and community vitality.

Working with Other Stakeholders Regarding Sector Partnerships Which Could Include the Wyoming Innovation Partnership

Mr. Melville has already provided information and discussed possible connections with Wyoming Innovation Partnership principals and staff. He is also working with the Governor's Health Care Task Force to explore potential opportunities for new Next Gen health care partnerships across Wyoming. These opportunities for collaboration will be one of the priorities for 2024, with Mr. Melville working with principals and staff to identify specific opportunities to leverage Wyoming Innovation Partnership, Health Care Task Force, and other resources and support.

Developing a Performance Metrics Report in Collaboration with the Next Generation Sector Partnerships and Career Pathways Committee

Development of a performance metrics report will be one of the top priorities for 2024. As Wyoming's Next Gen Sector Partnerships evolve, we need to continue to raise the bar for outcomes. It is not enough to have created a partnership—though it must be said that many regions across the country do not yet have one. And, to be fair, Wyoming's Next Gen Partnerships have many tangible results to report. That said, regions must be rigorous in holding themselves accountable for progress against their own metrics, whether that be promoting awareness of career opportunities in their industry among youth and career-changing adults, or educating and training more people to enter career pathways, or taking other steps to increase the growth and competitiveness of their key industries. Collaborative Economics proposes to design and implement a new regional performance metrics report in 2024.

Reporting

Collaborative Economics will provide a monthly progress report on the activities of the Next Generation Sector Partnerships, including the facilitator's activities with regions and state agencies. Mr. Melville will also report to the Next Generation Sector Partnerships and Career Pathways Committee on a regular basis regarding facilitator activities and the regional performance metrics. Collaborative Economics will also invoice monthly.

Project Management Plan

As has been the case since 2018, John Melville, Chief Executive Officer of Collaborative Economics, will personally serve as facilitator and take full responsibility

for the completion of the project scope of work. He will enlist the support of experienced Next Gen facilitators from time to time, especially for the annual Next Gen Academy.

Project Delays

Collaborative Economics would work closely with the State to anticipate and plan for potential project delays, rather than react after the fact. Mr. Melville has deep experience both in Wyoming and other states managing complex projects, including anticipating potential project delays. A good example from Wyoming is the annual Next Gen Academy, which involves the coordination of facilitators, regional teams, and logistics with State personnel—and creating contingency plans for potential delays and other disruptions.

Contract Exceptions

Collaborative Economics accepts all General Provisions described in the RFP, with no exceptions.

Staffing and Project Organization

As has been the case since 2018, John Melville will be the staff for the Project. He will from time to time enlist the support of experienced Next Gen facilitators, particularly for the annual Next Gen Academy.

Proposer Checklist

This proposal meets and exceeds all the RFP requirements that will be used as a basis for evaluation, specifically addressing each of the Technical Proposal sections: Proposer Background and Experience, Staffing and Project Organization, Proposer's Project Work Plan, and Approach to Contract Performance.

In addition, in terms of Value Added, this proposal distinguishes itself from other proposals in that it commits John Melville, CEO of Collaborative Economics, to personally staff the project (as opposed to a mix of senior and junior consultants, or mostly junior consultants). Mr. Melville has not only extensive Wyoming and national experience specifically in launching and supporting sector partnerships, but was co-founder of the national Next Generation Sector Partnership network, and continues to serve as coach to its national community of practice.

As in years past, Wyoming's Next Generation Sector Partnership efforts will be supported personally by one of the nation's most recognized and effective individuals working in this field, who will also provide a conduit to practitioners nationally who in turn have and will continue to be a resource to Wyoming practitioners.