



EAMA REGIONAL SECTOR PARTNERSHIP (RSP) MEETING

September 13, 2022

MEETING REPORT

A) Welcome: Committee Co-Chairs

- EAMA RSP Co-Chairs Chris Jewell (*Collins & Jewell*) and Andrew Bond (*Electric Boat*) welcomed members and facilitated introductions.
- Mr. Jewell announced that Tony Benoit is serving as the Director of the EAMA RSP, and reminded the group that the April 26, 2022 EAMA RSP meeting notes had been distributed for informational purposes.

B) EAMA RSP Establishment: A New Path Forward

- Mr. Jewell and Mr. Benoit provided three simple reasons why EAMA is transitioning to a recognized EAMA Regional Sector Partnership (*EAMA RSP*):
 - Eastern manufacturing partnerships have a history of evolving and the new EAMA RSP unified group streamlines the time commitment of employers
 - The EAMA RSP fits the Connecticut Office of Workforce Strategy (*OWS*) definition of an RSP perfectly, positioning the EAMA RSP to take advantage of new (*and future*) funding opportunities.
 - The EAMA RSP preserves the belief that a unified voice gets heard.
- Mr. Benoit explained that the EAMA RSP is charged, under the new *OWS Strengthening Sector Partnerships Initiative (SSPI)*, with 1) leveraging the RSP framework to expand its Youth MPI (*YMPI*) program; 2) update YMPI curriculum to ensure alignment to RSP employer needs; and 3) deliver the YMPI at existing high schools while also expanding into new schools.
- Mr. Jewell shared highlights of recent media coverage of EAMA RSP programming, noting that the state is now replicating the EAMA RSP approach with \$60M of a program called CareerConneCT.

C) EAMA RSP – Our Region’s Oversight Responsibilities

CareerConneCT Statewide Launch

- EWIB Special Advisor John Beauregard reported that three of the items discussed during the April EAMA RSP meeting have become funded initiatives and, as a result, the RSP’s responsibilities for these initiatives will be supported, in part, through grants administered by EWIB. The State’s press conference referenced by Mr. Jewell for the unveiling of CareerConneCT is modeled after the E/CT MPI, so everyone is looking towards the East for guidance as the program rolls out statewide in a range of industries. A subset of EAMA RSP partners are designing a robust CareerConneCT portal under EWIB to accommodate a tenfold increase in customer traffic compared to our current MPI portal. The portal will have a new assessment platform that will be more flexible for EAMA RSP employers design oversight. He continued by saying he envisioned Community Colleges delivering the majority of CareerConneCT training classes as we do here in the East. A video on our MPI program was shown that was prepared for a visit by U.S. Labor Secretary Marty Walsh and CT Governor Ned Lamont (*among others*) which was organized by Congressman Joe Courtney. The video highlighted the MPI as the foundation for the CareerConneCT program.

Eastern Advanced Manufacturing Alliance – A Connecticut Regional Sector Partnership

Good Jobs Challenge – Expansion of YMPI

- EWIB CFO Guy Saporito reported that EWIB joined OWS and numerous others in an application to the U.S. Economic Development Administration *Good Jobs Challenge (GJC)* program. EWIB's portion of the application supports E/CT's healthcare & manufacturing RSPs and expands the YMPI. Mr. Saporito briefly described the history of the YMPI since its 2018 launch, including a variety of funding support, most recently supplemental state resources secured by CT Sen. Cathy Osten (19th Dist.) that will sustain the YMPI until the GJC funds begin to flow.
- Carol LaBelle stated that EWIB partnered with ReadyCT (a CBIA affiliate that works to deepen the education-workforce connection) to support efforts to ensure consistency in the delivery of the YMPI curriculum across schools. Employers will be engaged to review and validate that the YMPI curriculum responds to their needs. The goal is for each YMPI school to sustain the program themselves after launching the program with seed funding. The YMPI is also expanding to reach into middle schools to expose younger students to manufacturing careers.

D) EAMA RSP Highlighted Initiatives

Plastics Program Review Work Group

- Steve LaPointe reported that the CT State Community College merger is in progress and should enable Quinebaug Valley & Three Rivers Community Colleges to more easily share resources to accomplish the region's collective goals. The Colleges rely on businesses to dictate training needs, and the agencies in the public workforce system along with applicants to employers that require upfront training to drive enrollment. Manufacturers, particularly in the Northeast, expressed a need for a Plastics training program. Mr. LaPointe has been working with a group of six companies to find out their needs and to start to design a short-term pilot program to launch in early 2023. The group welcomes participation from more companies. A highly qualified instructor has been identified. The group engaged Ms. LaBelle to discuss EWIB involvement.
- David Young asked when a curriculum outline might be available for review.
- Mr. LaPointe responded that more business input is needed to understand what the common components are and what specialized training companies can provide post-hire. The group is also reviewing the community colleges' facilities capacity.
- David Parmelee updated the group on Plastics trainings occurring in other regions of the state and said that the Plastics work group hopes to have cohorts of 12 students who can complete the classroom and lab portions of the program within the Eastern region.

Business-to-Business Connections

- Charles Daniels reported that manufacturers have identified a desire to keep their supply chains in Connecticut, which would have a profound impact on local communities and the local economy. Reaching out to other groups in the state (e.g., CBIA, AMEP) revealed sales trainings and databases listing CT suppliers. To date, EAMA RSP Business-to-Business efforts have focused on supporting those efforts and increasing awareness of them among regional companies. A comprehensive approach will be required to move the needle. Mr. Daniels asked members to encourage colleagues who may be interested to contact him at charles@wepcoplastics.com.

E) Next Steps

EAMA RSP Member Survey

- Mr. Benoit said the previous two discussion topics highlighted the importance of business engagement to achieving RSP goals. Businesses will soon receive an RSP survey asking about their company priorities and their ideas for organizing the EAMA RSP to best accomplish its work.
- Paul Lavoie, CT Chief Manufacturing Officer, reported that he is supporting an application to the CT Manufacturing Innovation Fund (MIF) to get every CT manufacturer a license to a database of manufacturing companies. Mr. Lavoie said the EAMA RSP should think about workforce development for offshore wind. He added that digital transformation within the supply chain is coming, and model-based definitions will be rolled out soon based on the results of a recent pilot program.

F) Next Meeting – November 9th

- Mr. Jewell announced that the next EAMA RSP meeting is tentatively scheduled for November 9, 2022. He expressed hope that this would be a hybrid meeting. Mr. Jewell said companies must participate to show the state why E/CT is the model. He said every manufacturer faces hiring challenges, and the RSP is a place to come together to work towards solutions.
- Mr. Bond thanked the speakers and congratulated the group on its many recent achievements.