



# Introduction

## **National competitiveness and regional prosperity are possible if communities:**

- Link knowledge resources with business and innovation assets
- Train workforce in the skills and knowledge required to work effectively in new and emerging industries

## **ETA's Initiative supports working regionally towards two national goals:**

- to develop strong linkages between industry and the education, economic development and workforce systems; and
- to transform the workforce system into an integrative, forward-looking talent development system.

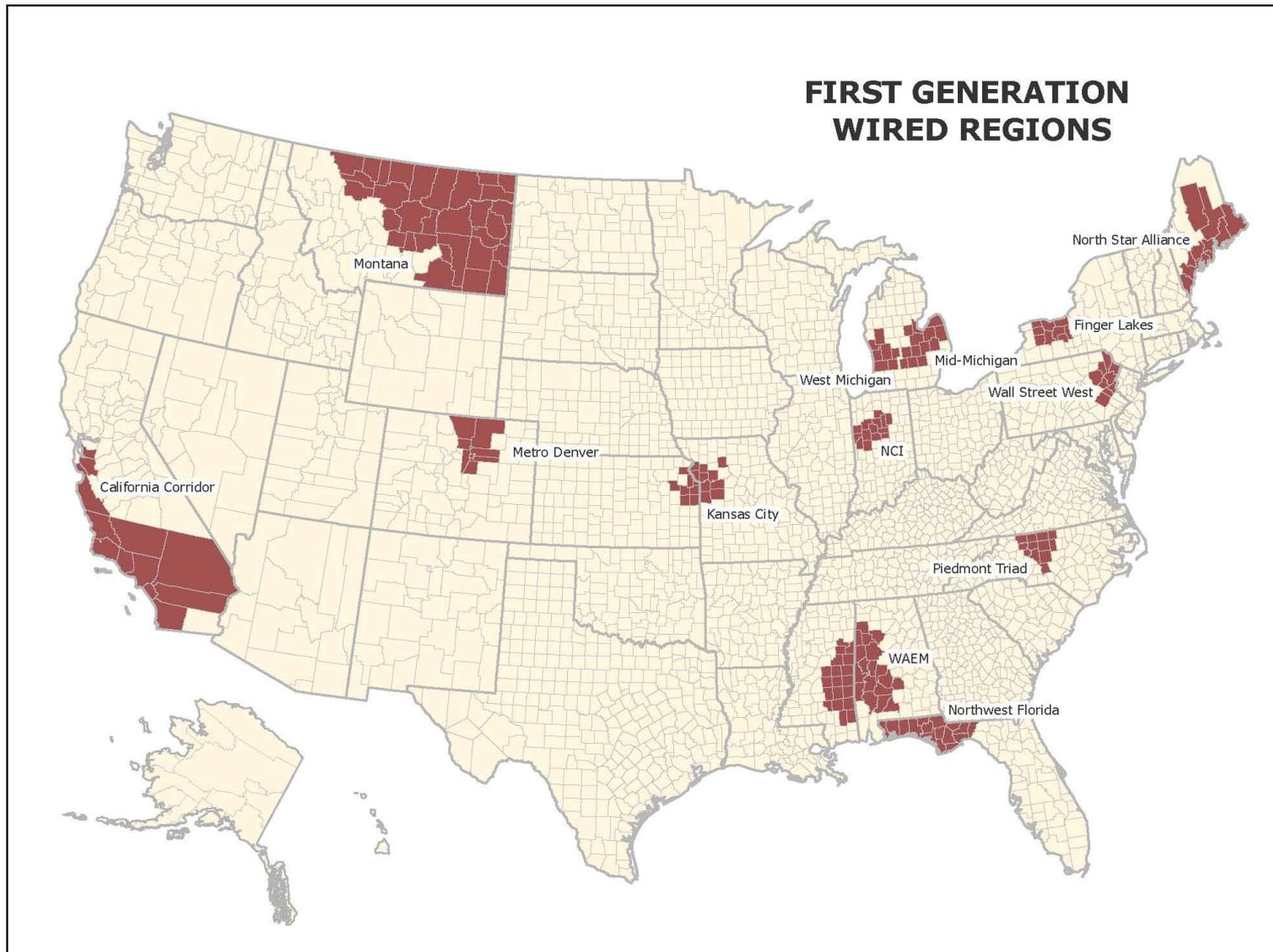


# Evaluation Goals

- Provide key insights into dynamics of regional social change and identify enablers and barriers
- Accumulate new knowledge about effective implementation of regional collaborative efforts for systems change and economic transformation
- Document achievements and value of ETA's investment in regional initiative
- Understand roles of federal, state and local governments and key industry, education, community and other public and private stakeholders in strengthening the nation's economic health and global competitiveness



# The First 13 Regions – Generation I



# Evaluation design

## Four major study components:

1. Site Visits – 4 days, 2 staff, 3 times over 3 years
  - Development and quality of collaboration and partnerships
  - Change in institutional practices
  - Development of regional identity
  - Commitment of time and resources
  - Risk-sharing among partners
2. Social network analysis
3. Partner survey
4. Secondary analysis of national data
  - **Workforce Employment and Wages** – National Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Internal Revenue Service, WIASRD.
  - **Measures of Innovation and Commercialization** – Dun and Bradstreet, National Science Foundation, National Institutes of Health
  - **Education and Talent Development Measures** – US Department of Education Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)



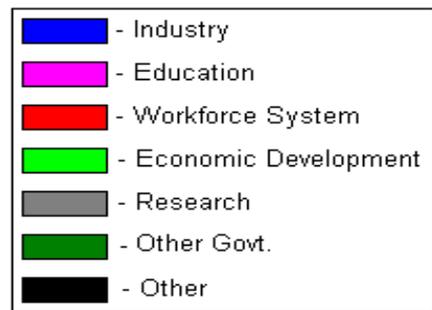
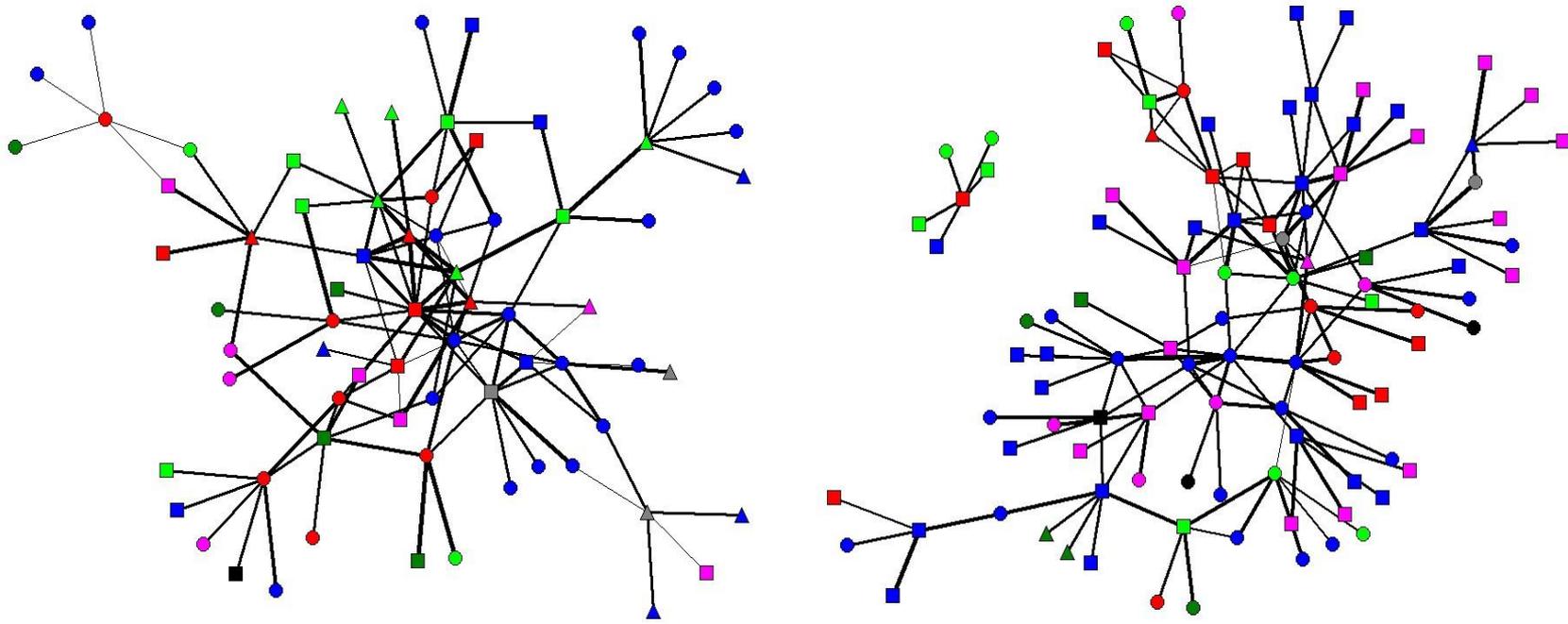
# Social Network Analysis

**Identify “five individuals with whom you have significant contact in the context of the Initiative, outside of your own organization,” and provide:**

- Name
- Organization
- Job title (later coded as “level in organization”)
- Frequency of contact



# Social Network Maps



# Challenges in building region-wide collaboration

- Geographical isolation, and lack of a history of positive interaction
- History of inter-jurisdictional competition and friction
- Lack of trust
- Insularity of various systems
- Reluctance to discuss problems or share ideas with individuals outside one's own organization
- Tradition of self-reliance and a lack of history of collaborating
- Lack of regional identity or regional perspective



# Strategies for building effective partnerships

- Think creatively about common goals
- Allow relationships to develop over time - “Trust. Can’t force it; can’t rush it; can’t regulate it; can’t mandate it.”
- Focus collaboration on activities and tasks
- Build on personal relationships
- Make expectations clear, expect the best, establish guidelines for working together



# Evaluation design challenges

- Systems change and economic transformation are long-term processes. Measurable outcomes may not manifest themselves within the time frame of the evaluation.
- Regional collaboratives are dynamic and flexible with changing partnerships, strategies and external circumstances.
- Regions differ dramatically from one another -- evaluation needs flexibility to accommodate variation, and caution in making comparisons across regions.
- Regional partnerships are complex with multiple political jurisdictions, labor markets, education systems, business communities, as well as multiple social and cultural environments.



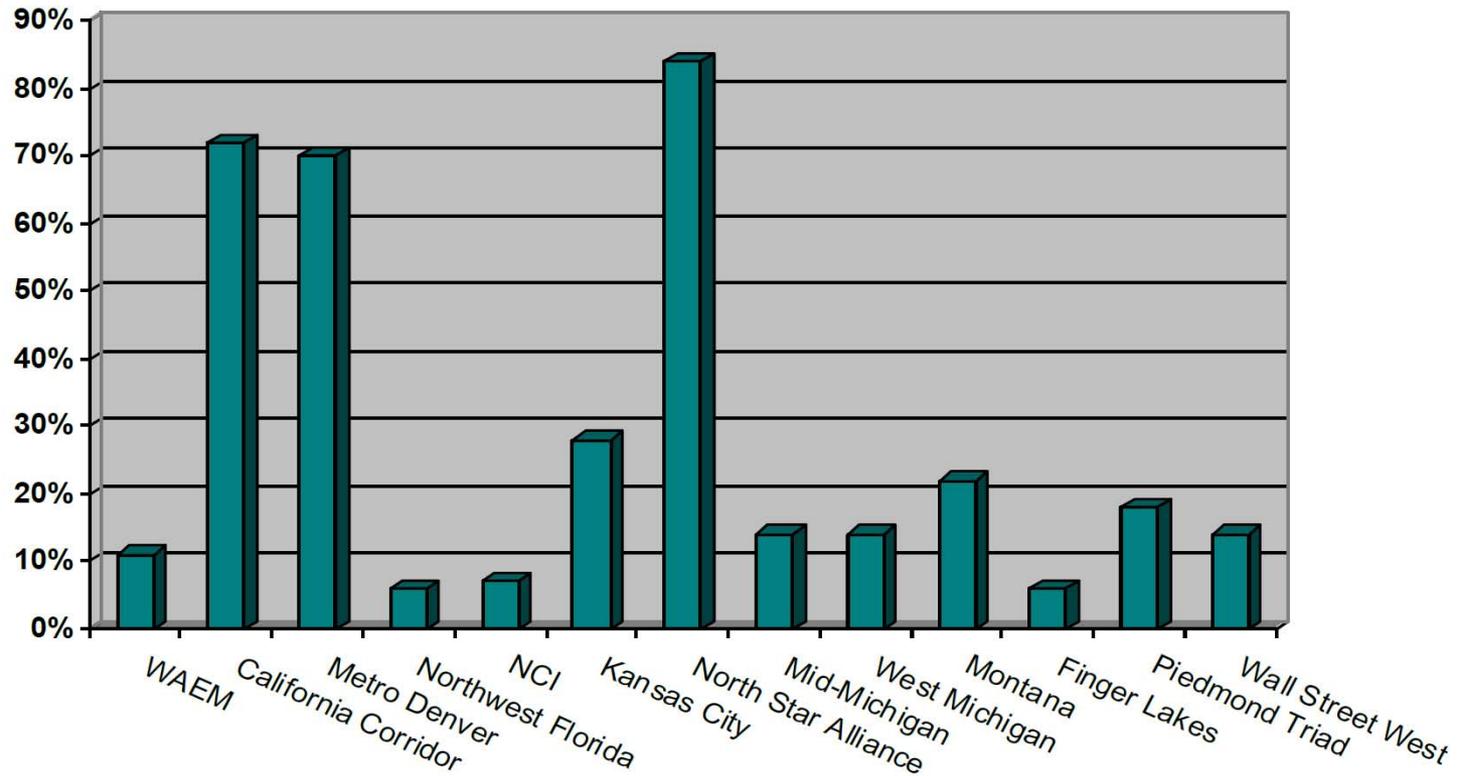
# Variation among regions

- Economic needs they address
- Regional assets and gaps
- Particularities of local political and jurisdictional boundaries and policies
- Readiness for WIRED vis-à-vis inter-organizational/ cross-jurisdictional collaboration and identities
- Extent to which civic institutions, private funders and key business leadership are involved
- Extent to which social and cultural values are congruent with the requirements of economic transformation



# Variation among regions— how big are they?

## % of State Population



Values for two-state regions (WAEM and KC) are calculated by averaging



# Changes in the national economic context

## Montana Agro Energy Program:

- Encouraged farmers to grow potentially more lucrative oil seed for bio-diesel production when wheat prices were low.
- Spike in oil prices during Summer 2008 sparked demand for corn to produce ethanol. The decline in the amount of corn on the market increased the demand for wheat, a complementary good.
- Increased demand for wheat increased wheat prices that, coupled with federal crop insurance available for wheat but not for oil seed, served as a disincentive to growing the safflower and canola seeds needed for bio-diesel production.



# Changes in the national economic context

## Wall Street West:

- Planned and started soliciting funds to build a fiber optic cable network that would enable synchronous back-up operations for Wall Street
- This galvanized significant energy for collaboration, especially among economic development agencies
- Shrinking revenues in the private sector make capital investment in this effort unlikely in the near future
- The initiative expanded its target industries to include information technology, STEM occupations, and business continuity services, and increased its focus on workforce training and talent pipeline development.
- Vision centered primarily on strengthening the existing and emerging workforce is less attractive to original partners



# Addressing evaluation challenges

- Build large team of senior staff
- Broad range of substantive knowledge – workforce system, economic development, education, innovation, technology transfer, etc.
- Breadth of methodological expertise – evaluation design, site visits, survey, analysis of extant data, social network analysis
- Stable team – need continuity of knowledge about each region
- Supplement traditional data sources -- attend national academies and conferences, listen in on ETA meetings with grantees, attend regional events, read ETA and key stakeholder communications.
- Retain flexibility to adapt to moving target – national policy changes, innovation, national economy, implementation challenges



# For more information

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– click on Publications, Workforce and Small Business Development

