SECTORAL RESEARCH OVERVIEW: What do we need to know?

THE BIG PICTURE:
Nationally and locally: What constitutes the industry? What is happening in the industry? TRENDS, not just snapshots.

- What is the basis for industry profitability? “FOLLOW THE MONEY!”
- employment size, number of firms, wage trends, size of establishments
- significance to the whole region, to the industry nationally
- technology
- restructuring of work (occupational structure, outsourcing, temps, etc.)
- locational shifts (e.g., to surrounding counties, other states, “off-shore”)
- locational concentrations
- mergers and acquisitions, new firms
- regulatory framework (domestic, international)
- public subsidies

HOW? Use public data about the industry – California EDD LMID, United States BLS, U.S. Economic Census
Interview industry experts (trade associations, union researchers, stock market analysts)
Track down industry info on the Web
Bibliographic searches – for books, articles, reports, analyses
Read the industry trade magazines (pay attention to the ads!)
Attend industry conferences, industry association meetings

THE SPECIFICS:
Develop company lists – identify the top companies in the region, the nation
Ownership structure (branch offices/plants/sites)
Identify the companies and determine significant segments (for services and for products)
- by markets / clients (types of products/services)
- by materials / types of services used

HOW? Use the industry’s company lists (directories, web)
Make use of Dun & Bradstreet, UNICORE (AFL-CIO)
Interview companies and associations
Interview suppliers, clients (e.g., major retailers, mfrs.)
Use quick and dirty phone surveys – esp. to cross-check lists for accuracy
Talk to workers, unions

THE CLOSE-UP:
(related to company targeting/corporate research—AND to provide qualitative context for big picture and specifics)

Get inside key or representative companies:
- determine what their business plans are
- research all aspects of their business relations
- what are the issues for workers?
- who are their competitors?
- who are their clients?
- who owns them?
- Financial issues?

HOW?
- Survey trade periodicals for stories, reports (and Web searches)
- Do in-depth company and management searches with Nexis
- Do searches of companies on various data bases
- Make use of Dun & Bradstreet, UNICORE (AFL-CIO)
- Track down info about public companies via SEC filings
- Do quick phone calls to get basic info about many companies
- Talk to workers
- Arrange for on-site visits of companies (cold call, snow-ball, use contacts: Industry Assn or Econ Dev org or through the union for organized sites)