

Wisconsin's Joyce Shifting Gears / Regional Industry Skills Education (RISE) Initiative

Wisconsin's proposal to the Joyce Foundation for "Shifting Gears" funding would establish a "Regional Industry Skills Education" (RISE) initiative led by the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) and the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS), in partnership with Wisconsin's eleven Workforce Development Boards and sixteen technical college districts.

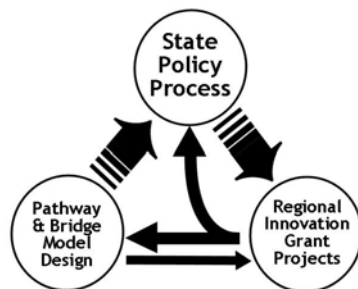
The RISE initiative will dedicate resources specifically to aligning regional partnerships, sector-based programs, and state systems around a career pathways model; to bringing industry-driven career pathways to scale throughout the state; and to providing new career-ladder footholds to low-wage workers with limited skills.

In close consultation with the Center on Wisconsin Strategy (COWS) and the Wisconsin Association of Job Training Executive (WAJTE), and with technical assistance and implementation guidance from other key experts and stakeholders, the RISE partnership will establish a structured collaboration between state-level programs and regional partnerships. This collaboration will pursue three core strategies for beginning to organize Wisconsin's workforce systems around a career pathways paradigm:

1. *Developing persuasive and replicable career pathway models* for improving access, by workers and jobseekers at varying skill levels and career stages, to employer-demanded skills and credentials in high-wage, high-growth industries.
2. *Improving career-pathway access specifically for low-wage, low-skilled adults* through industry-driven programs bridging Adult Basic Education (ABE), English as a Second Language (ESL), and General Educational Development (GED) study to post-secondary vocational education.
3. *Propagating adult career pathways and basic education bridges to pathways throughout the state*, through "innovation investment" grants to regional inter-agency and public-private partnerships formed to integrate regional economic, workforce, and education strategies.

The policy innovation "cycle" established through this collaboration, supported by strategic targeting of Joyce "Shifting Gears" funds, and coordinated by a RISE Steering Committee would work essentially as follows:

- Those regions already furthest along in building career pathway and bridge-to-pathway structures through existing regional partnerships will take the lead in working with the state to establish a prototype pathway model or set of models.
- That prototype design process will inform initial efforts to identify state-level program and policy barriers, needed state-level policy incentives, and strategic priorities for targeting state level program resources to advance a career pathways agenda.
- As a new state policy context takes shape through these efforts, initial rounds of state-funded regional innovation grants to regions just embarking on career pathway projects will provide fresh experience and expand the knowledge base from which to pursue further refinement of both the regional pathways model and the state-level policy framework.



**Triangular
RISE
Information
Flow/Cycle**