

Wisconsin's Regional Industry Skills Education (RISE) Guidelines

Updated March 23, 2008 (see end note)

I. RISE Vision

By 2013 - Educational, workforce development and economic development institutions, employers, and labor are supporting an array of career pathways and bridge programs with the following benefits:

- ◆ For low income adults: higher skills and better jobs through more accessible and navigable training and career advancement systems
- ◆ For employers: a reliable supply of workers whose skills are geared to industry needs
- ◆ For workforce training and education: More effective engagement with industry and more efficient alignment of resources

II. RISE Mission

By 2009 - A convincing case has been made to establish career pathways and related bridge programs as important strategies for meeting employer worker skill needs and worker career advancement needs with:

- ◆ Policies and processes at the state and regional level that support career pathway development and enable low wage, low skilled workers to participate in them.
- ◆ Replicable career pathways in at least two key industry sectors.
- ◆ Bridge programs in at least several areas of the state to streamline the transition of adult learners from basic skills to the postsecondary steps of career pathways as they explore careers and prepare for and engage in occupational training.

III. Definition of RISE Career Pathways

A RISE Career Pathway will offer low income adults clear and reliable courses of action for building skills to progress in their careers. The career pathway is a new way of organizing a postsecondary program as a sequence of modules that leads learners in steps toward a degree or technical diploma. Each step increases skills and improves the learner's career and earning opportunities. Industry sectors that are appropriate for pathway development are those that need skilled workers and contribute to the economic growth of the region.

Bridge instructional programming helps adults with basic skills or English Language Learning needs take the first step onto career pathway learning and work. Bridge programs explicitly link adult basic education (ABE) and ELL instruction with preparation for postsecondary education and occupational skill attainment.

To support low-income workers in career pathway learning, employers, workforce development agencies, educational institutions, and other community organizations actively collaborate to provide training resources and wrap-around support services to the learner as well as reinforce the value of continuing along the pathway.

IV. RISE Initiative Outcomes

- A. Higher number of low-income working adults enroll in postsecondary education
- B. Higher proportion of low-income working adults attain degrees, technical diplomas, and/or certificates

- C. Higher proportion of Adult Basic Education (ABE), English Language Learners (ELL), development and remedial adult learners transition into and complete associates degrees, technical diplomas, and/or certificates.
- D. Increases in earnings and job quality for low-income adults engaged in career pathways work.

V. RISE Career Pathway Operational Elements

The following elements define the RISE career pathway model and are intended to inform state and local workforce development and education leaders as they plan related efforts. These elements will be used to review related proposals and activities and to target the use of the current Joyce Foundation RISE resources.

A. Industry Engagement

1. A core group of employers from an industry sector has agreed to be involved in developing and supporting the pathway.
2. Employers involved in Career Pathways show that there is a predictable progression in compensation or job security for workers as skill levels expand, and they examine their patterns of organizing work and filling jobs to see if pathways can be built where none currently exist.
3. Organized labor is involved if a significant number of workers in any of the targeted occupations in the region are included in a collective bargaining agreement.
4. Regional businesses participate in recruiting individuals to pursue career pathways education and commit to hiring, retaining or advancing successful pathways participants.
5. Employers actively support participation of their employees in pathway education.

B. Career Pathway Instructional Design

1. The choice of industries and occupations for RISE Career Pathway development is based on data and employer input showing compelling need for higher-skilled workers and good employment opportunities for individuals who increase their skills.
2. The Career Pathway curriculum is organized as a sequence of modules, each of which is associated with a specific job or job advancement opportunity.
3. The modularized curriculum enables working adults to pursue postsecondary occupational education in manageable increments. The organization of the modules allows workers who move in and out of their studies to accumulate skills and credits with minimal inefficiencies and disruptions.
4. The RISE Career Pathway leads learners toward a technical diploma or applied associate degree in an occupation that pays family-sustaining wages.
5. Employers are engaged on an ongoing basis in identifying competencies for pathway curricula and validating pathways design and credentials.
6. Completion of each module in a pathway by a learner is associated with a credential recognized by employers within the industry and region.
7. Career Pathway curricula are linked, whenever possible, to industry skill standards, certifications or licensing requirements.
8. As with other technical college programs, the Career Pathway curriculum incorporates “learning by doing” opportunities through projects, laboratories, simulations, work experience and internships.

9. As with other technical college programs, the Career Pathway curriculum explicitly accounts for granting credit for work experience.
10. The Career Pathway is visually summarized by a “road map,” jointly produced by educators, workforce professionals and employers, that shows multiple entry and exit points and depicts vertical and lateral movement within an occupation or career cluster.
11. The fully developed pathway includes a bridge program that assists basic education and English-Language-Learning students matriculate and succeed in postsecondary Career Pathway instruction.

C. Adult Basic Education/English Language Learning Bridge Instructional Design

1. Bridge programming reflects active cooperation between postsecondary and non-postsecondary divisions within the college.
2. The bridge program integrates basic skills or ELL development with industry or sector specific occupational skill development and preparation for postsecondary level technical training.
3. The bridge program employs contextualized learning strategies.
4. Bridge instruction emphasizes applied learning strategies, such as labs and simulations.
5. Occupational skills instruction in bridge programs results in college credit where possible.
6. The curriculum incorporates appropriate career development activities.

D. Pathway Support for Life Long Learning

1. Career planning services, including assessment and the development of a lifelong learning plan, are provided to learners.
2. Multiple agencies coordinate with each other and with employers to provide wrap-around support services—e.g., case management, coaching and mentoring, child care, financial aid, job placement, and referral to community resources—to help learners succeed in their combined education and work responsibilities.
3. Help with developing soft skills, e.g., workplace behavior and interpersonal skills, is provided.
4. Employers support employees’ lifelong learning plans and incorporate the pathway design into employee development (e.g., tuition reimbursement) and advancement opportunities.

E. Systems and Partnerships

1. At least one technical college district and one workforce development board are involved in a Career Pathway project.
2. The roles and expectations of each organization involved in a Career Pathway project is clearly defined.
3. Public and private funding (e.g., technical college, WIA, TANF, state/federal financial aid, employer tuition reimbursement) is coordinated to the maximum extent possible.

Version History

Original version distributed December 19, 2007

March 21, 2008 update: Operational elements for ABE/ELL Bridge programs added.