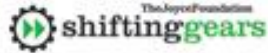


# Transmissions

The quarterly e-newsletter for Shifting Gears



**WINTER 2012  
Special Edition**

The Shifting Gears initiative was developed in 2007 to help six Midwest states work across agency borders and re-engineer adult education, workforce development and postsecondary education policies to support economic growth and expand job opportunities for low-skilled workers in the Midwest. Over the past five years, the Joyce Foundation and Shifting Gears partners have seen transformational system change in many of these states, and we'd like to think that the initiative played a key role in jump-starting new national models of cross-agency collaboration and career pathways. The initiative came to a formal close in December 2011, but we hope that other states and the federal government can benefit from the lessons learned from this groundbreaking work.

In this special edition, you will find:

- Updates on future plans of Shifting Gears states;
- Key Takeaways on Federal Actions to Support Cross-Agency Partnerships and Pathways that came out of our final Shifting Gears convening in January 2012;
- Updates from the White House and Congress on the President's budget proposal for FY2013, new grant opportunities and a request for information from the Department of Education;
- New research and reports from experts in adult education, postsecondary education, developmental education and workforce development; and
- A Thank You to Shifting Gears states and partners.

We hope you enjoy this final issue of **Transmissions**. To keep up-to-date on the type of information typically found in this newsletter, such as promising state strategies to align basic skills and workforce training, and federal education and training updates, [sign up for updates](#) from CLASP's Center for Postsecondary and Economic Success. For more information on other Joyce Foundation employment program initiatives, visit [www.joycefdn.org](http://www.joycefdn.org).

## **CLASP**

*Shifting Gears Partner and Technical Assistance Provider*

## PROGRESS IN MOTION

Shifting Gears states have come a long way since the initiative began in 2007 and they are continuing to build on their momentum. Read below to find out more about each state's plans for after Shifting Gears as well as a January 2012 convening with federal government administrative staff about how Shifting Gears states can inform federal administrative policy.



### **Federal Administrative Actions to Support Cross-System Collaborations and Pathways to Postsecondary Credentials for Low-Skilled Workers**

The Shifting Gears initiative formally came to a close at the end of December 2011, but the lessons learned through these successful cross-agency collaborations should continue to inform national efforts to bridge agency silos and build partnerships to improve student outcomes and efficiency.

To facilitate this process, in January 2012, the Joyce Foundation and CLASP hosted a half-day forum featuring Shifting Gears states and staff from the Departments of Education, Labor, Health and Human Services and the White House Domestic Policy Council. The forum, *Working Better*

*Together: How States are Using a Cross-System Approach to Improve Outcomes for Lower-Skilled Adults in the Shifting Gears Initiative*, provided state teams and federal agency staff an opportunity to discuss the lessons learned from the Shifting Gears experience about effective ways to support cross-system partnerships and build pathways to postsecondary credentials and career advancement for low-skilled workers.

Forum attendees had the opportunity to learn from an opening plenary session on how Shifting Gears states' activities aligned with the Six Key Elements of Career Pathways framework developed by the Departments of Labor, Education, and Health and Human Services. They also attended focused topical discussions during four breakout sessions on issues such as:

- Improving Federal Rules and Regulations Across Programs
- Building and Using Data Systems to Support State Success
- Developing Interagency Partnerships
- An Early Conversation about Measuring the Success of Career Pathways and Bridge Efforts

CLASP developed a paper that summarizes key recommendations by Shifting Gears states that emerged from these discussions regarding actions the federal government should take to best advance the goals of building cross-agency partnerships and building pathways to postsecondary credentials for low-skilled workers. [View the paper with takeaways from the convening.](#)

### **State Efforts Moving Forward After Shifting Gears**

As the **Illinois** Shifting Gears Initiative winds down, the partnerships will still be a integral part of the new Accelerating Opportunity Initiative, in which Illinois was one of four states selected to participate. Shifting Gears pioneered the beginnings of a new direction in adult education beginning with the development of Bridge Programs. The ICCB Adult Education will continue along this path to not only expand bridge programs throughout the state, but to add another layer and include the Accelerating Opportunity Initiative as a way to enable more adults to access postsecondary education certificate and degree occupational programs. The partnerships and relationships established under Shifting Gears will remain a critical part of the success of the Accelerating Opportunity Initiative.

The Office of Community College Research and Leadership (OCCRL) at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign just released the 2011 Illinois Online Bridge Directory. Aligned with Illinois' [Shifting Gears Initiative](#), the Directory presents information about current bridge instruction offered by Illinois' community colleges and adult education providers. Bridge programs listed in this online Directory are based on the Illinois Bridge Status Survey administered by OCCRL in September and October 2011. The profiles included in this Directory are based entirely on self-reported data from administrators of the bridge programs.

The Directory is intended to serve as a resource for practitioners, policy-makers, and others. Please direct questions about bridge programs to the contact person identified in the program profile. This work was conducted by the OCCRL and funded by the Illinois Community College Board.

Click [here](#) for the complete 2011 Illinois Bridge Directory.

**Indiana** continues to develop solid linkages between adult education, workforce development and post secondary training through the new GED+ program, where students pursue a GED and a career certification concurrently. By the end of the 2011-2012 academic year, approximately 62 occupational training programs will be fully operational among five key growth sectors in Indiana: Healthcare, Information Technology, Business, Advanced Manufacturing, and Transportation, Distribution and Logistics.

Inherent to building new programs is the discovery of new opportunities and challenges. Consequently, the Indiana Department of Workforce Development (DWD) will hold a statewide GED+ Summit on March 7. DWD will bring together key stakeholders across adult education, workforce development, career and technical education, and post-secondary institutions to discuss opportunities for policy and program improvement. Topics will include: the expansion of occupational certifications, student recruitment strategies, removal of policy barriers to increase levels of collaboration among key partners, and more.

**Michigan** is continuing to build on the momentum established during the Shifting Gears initiative by supporting local collaboration through Regional Planning Grants. This grant opportunity was made available to each of the Adult Learning Regions earlier this year to promote and support continued regional strategic planning, creation of regional resource materials, data collection and evaluation, and professional development.

In **Minnesota**, Governor Dayton recently invited a FastTRAC participant to his State of the State address. He publically recognized Antoinette McCarthy's accomplishment and called for a FastTRAC program on every Minnesota community and technical college campus. Minnesota FastTRAC has put forth legislative proposals to seek to provide a sustainable funding mechanism to support scaling up Minnesota FastTRAC adult career pathways across the state (see [Minnesota House File 2181](#) and [Minnesota Senate File 1751](#)). FastTRAC staff and leadership are continuing to refine the message that FastTRAC is both a local program producing better results for low-skill, low-wage adults and a system redesign seeking to impact "business as usual" for our public education and employment systems.

Two examples of Minnesota's continually evolving messaging:

- FastTRAC is a Career Pathway education and employment initiative for Minnesota's adults without a postsecondary credential. FastTRAC pairs a postsecondary technical instructor and an adult basic education (ABE) instructor and provides supports services and navigation all along the pathway to employment.
- FastTRAC is a system redesign that combines the strengths of local adult basic education (ABE), Minnesota state community and technical colleges, and workforce development in partnership with multiple employers to provide coordinated workforce and education funding and services.

**Ohio** is carrying forward its Shifting Gears efforts by solidifying a statewide vision of success for low-skilled adult students through continued dialogue on collaboration and a review of funding streams. On May 2, the state will convene Adult Basic Literacy Education (ABLE), career-technical center, community college, and university regional campus leaders. The event will be an opportunity to re-emphasize the value of institutional collaboration focused on educational attainment for low-skilled, low-wage adult students; share plans to develop policies and reshape metrics to incent partnerships; and showcase effective examples of collaboration to implement. The May 2 event will be followed by a series of regional meetings for practitioners to further embrace statewide goals for more partnerships across adult education and post-secondary sectors to increase educational attainment for low-skilled adults.

Ohio is also examining how performance outcomes can influence student success for developmental education, ABLE programs, and adult workforce education at career centers. With data and lessons that have been drawn throughout the Shifting Gears initiative, the state has identified key levers to yield greater success for adult students and reward institutions for positive outcomes.

In **Wisconsin**, RISE Career Pathways are a product of the partnership of workforce development and technical college systems at the state and local levels. Since 2006, these systems have worked together to develop and refine Wisconsin's concept of Career Pathways; adjust state policy and procedures; listen to local college and workforce development professionals as they experimented with Career Pathway Bridges and engaged with local industry; and learned how to improve upon the original design. The RISE partnership continues to stimulate learning about how to create institutional and system-wide change within multiple state agencies and in networks of colleges and workforce development agencies across the state.

To date, there are 72 Career Pathway Bridges in Wisconsin's Technical Colleges and more are in the planning phase. In addition, all of Wisconsin's Workforce Development Boards and Technical Colleges have made the commitment to

implement the Career Pathway strategy in their communities. Additional state agencies and their regional systems are expressing interest in supporting and utilizing the Career Pathway strategy to benefit the citizens they serve. Encouraging, supporting, and facilitating the growth of this strategy across the State's agencies and throughout their local systems is the primary objective as the RISE partnership continues.

## THE NATIONAL FRONT: A FEDERAL POLICY UPDATE

***President Calls for Major Education and Training Investments in FY2013 Budget Proposal*** In mid-February, President Obama submitted his FY2013 budget proposal to Congress. The proposal includes significant investments in training for unemployed and disadvantaged workers, as well as increased funds to ensure that low-income adults and youth maintain access to the postsecondary credentials they need to compete in the job market.

Investments in workforce and training programs include:

- The development of an \$8 billion *Community College to Career Fund* to train 2 million workers for jobs in high-demand and high-growth fields;
- Increased funding for the *Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF)* to \$125 million, which is expected to be invested in service delivery strategies and/or system-level reform efforts that improve employment and educational outcomes for workers, create efficiencies in the workforce system, and foster strong cooperation across adult education, postsecondary education, workforce training, and human services systems; and
- Creation of a \$12.5 billion *Pathways Back to Work Fund* which would provide subsidized employment and training to help unemployed workers and youth enter the workforce and gain new skills for long-term employment.

Read more about these proposals in [CLASP's summary of basic skills and workforce training provisions](#) in the President's budget.

Investments in higher education include:

- \$36.1 billion to fully fund the Pell grant program through the 2014-2015 academic year and preserve access for working and nontraditional students whose eligibility was threatened in budget debates last year;
- Development of a \$1 billion *Race to the Top: College Affordability and Completion* fund aimed at helping states make systemic reforms to reduce college costs and increase the value students get from college programs plus \$55 million for a *First in the World* competition for colleges and nonprofit organizations to support similar goals at the institutional level; and
- Increase in funding for work study by \$150 million that specifically targets providing students jobs that align with their individual career goals.

Read more about these proposals in [CLASP's summary of postsecondary provisions](#) in the President's budget.

### ***Department of Labor releases request for solicitations for Workforce Innovation Fund***

In December 2011, the Department of Labor released a request for solicitations for applications to the [Workforce Innovation Fund \(WIF\)](#). WIF is a grant competition that will provide state workforce agencies and local workforce boards (or consortia of these groups) a total of \$98.5 million to invest in service delivery strategies and/or system-level reform efforts that improve employment and educational outcomes for workers, create efficiencies in the workforce system, and foster strong cooperation across education, training, and human services systems. Applications are due March 22, 2012 and should follow the requirements found in the [Solicitation for Grant Applications](#).

CLASP has developed a [resource center](#) for states and local applicants applying for funding under the WIF. Included in the resources center are materials featuring promising state- and local-level models that align with the goals of the WIF and help create pathways to postsecondary and economic success for low-skilled workers.

### ***Department of Education Requests Examples of Promising Strategies to Increase Postsecondary Success***

In late January, the Department of Education released a broad request for information on promising practices, strategies, and programs to improve the rates of postsecondary success, transfer, and completion. Successful submissions will be included on a public website and in a toolkit developed by the Department to share best practices and strategies to advance the President's goal of increasing the number of Americans who earn postsecondary degrees and certificates. According to the request, *"The Department is interested in strategies emphasizing the quality of what students learn, and*



*timely or accelerated attainment of postsecondary degrees or certificates. These include industry-recognized credentials that lead to improved learning and employment outcomes."*

This request is an excellent opportunity to direct national attention to the types of programs that Shifting Gears states and others are pursuing to help low-skilled adults access the postsecondary credentials they need to get a better job and advance in their careers. It is important to flag these programs as important higher education strategies in addition to adult education and workforce strategies. States and programs that have developed adult career pathway approaches or bridge models, which could include the use of contextualization, dual enrollment, comprehensive support services, stackable credentials, and strong connections to employers should particularly consider submitting information and evidence of their program's success.

Those who wish to make submissions to this request should do so by April 30, 2012 to be included in the first round of review and should take note that the submission requirements are substantial. Submitters are required to provide a detailed description of the promising strategy, a history of its development, and data and/or evaluation results that attest to its success. For more detailed information on how to submit ideas, [view the official announcement in the Federal Register](#).

## TOOLS OF THE TRADE

The latest research and reports from experts in adult education, postsecondary education, developmental education, and workforce development.

### **Pathways to Success: Integrating Learning with Life and Work to Increase National College Completion.** Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance (February 2012)

This report to Congress and the Secretary of Education from the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance (ACSFA) contains recommendations for improving college completion based on written and oral testimony received during an ACSFA hearing on September 30, 2011. [View the report](#).



### **Completion by Design Knowledge Center and Toolkits** (February 2012)

This knowledge center includes "toolkits" in topical areas that pull together relevant and related resources to help institutions improve college completion rates. The toolkits feature a number of areas such as Initiating and Scaling Innovation, Achieving Stakeholder Engagement, and Hosting Student Focus Groups. [View the toolkits](#).

### **Adult Education Funding Levels and Enrollment: State and Federal Funding Woes Spell Trouble for Low-Skilled Students Seeking Further Education.** CLASP (February 2012)

One of the most significant federal funding streams dedicated to this purpose is Title II (the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) of the Workforce Investment Act. States receive these federal funds and then distribute grants to local providers to help low-skilled adults improve their basic skills and English language proficiency. Although federal adult education has traditionally been supplemented by sizeable state-level matching funds, a decline in federal and state funding for adult education has resulted in states serving only a fraction of the students—2 million out of 93 million—who could benefit from services. [View the brief](#).

### **Data Briefs on National Educational Attainment.** U.S. Census Bureau (February 2012)

Five new briefs were released from the U.S. Census Bureau that include information from data collected from the Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement (CPS ASEC). Some of the briefs released include:

- [Educational Attainment in the United States: 2009](#). This report shows the monthly employment rates by educational attainment from January 2008 to December 2010, along with other information on education from the American Community Survey (ACS), the Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement (CPS ASEC) and the monthly Current Population Survey. National-level data for 2011 was released in a separate report, the [Educational Attainment in the United States: 2011](#).
- [What It's Worth: Field of Training and Economic Status in 2009](#), a report that examines the relationship between educational attainment, fields of study, and eventual occupation and earnings. The statistics were collected between January and April 2009 from the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP).
- [Measurement of High School Equivalency Credentials in Census Bureau Surveys](#) working paper.

### **Get With the Program: Accelerating Community College Students' Entry into and Completion of Programs of Study.** Community College Research Center (January 2012)

This paper, updated from the April 2011 version, provides evidence that to improve completion rates on a substantial scale, community colleges must ensure that new students enter a coherent college-level program of study as soon as

possible. The paper offers research-based suggestions for ways community colleges can rethink their practices at key stages of the student experience to accelerate program entry and completion. [View the report.](#)

*Thank you to all of our Shifting Gears States and Partners for your collaboration and dedication to creating economic and educational opportunity for workers in the Midwest!*



Photo taken at the Shifting Gears dinner and Awards Celebration at Zola in Washington, D.C. in January 2012.