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CONTACT: DWD Communications, 608-266-2722

On the Web: <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dwd/news.htm>

On Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/WIWorkforce>

On Twitter: @WIWorkforce

## **Secretary Newson Announces \$579,000 Grant to Empower Workers, Provide Career Pathways & Bridges to Better Jobs**

### ***Joyce Foundation award continues RISE initiative for low-wage workers***

MADISON – Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Reggie Newson today announced the state has received a \$579,000 grant from the Joyce Foundation to empower low-wage working adults with new skills and set them on career paths to better jobs.

“We are grateful to the Joyce Foundation for supporting our collaborative efforts to empower low-wage workers with skills necessary to compete for better jobs,” Secretary Newson said. “This grant will help fund our partnership with local technical colleges in meeting Wisconsin’s workforce needs. Employers have good jobs available. This will help us address the skills gap, provide career opportunities for workers, and keep our economy moving forward.”

The grant will fund Regional Industry Skills Education (RISE), DWD’s innovative partnership with the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) and the business community. RISE focuses on low-skill working adults, who could benefit from career advancement opportunities that lead to better wages and individual economic stability.

“We appreciate the Joyce Foundation’s support of the Wisconsin RISE project and our continuing drive to be a leader in the development of career pathway opportunities” WTCS President Dan Clancy said. “This grant provides tangible affirmation that all the hard work and commitment of Wisconsin’s technical college and workforce development faculty and staff is producing positive results for our citizens and our economy.”

RISE participants are 25 to 54 years old and earn less than the median wage. They either lack a college credential or are not proficient in English. RISE consists of Career Pathways and Bridge programs. The RISE Bridge programs help adults in need of basic skills or English language to succeed in a Career Pathway. With Career Pathways, they follow a series of steps that lead to a technical degree or diploma and build skill sets wanted by an industry or industry sector.

Wisconsin’s RISE initiative was launched previously with Joyce Foundation support, and the latest grant will expand its Career Pathways and Bridge programs. An immediate goal is to provide RISE participants training opportunities in every technical district. With the latest grant, DWD and its partners intend to support 115 total career pathway programs and help 2,700 individuals earn a credential with at least 12 college credits. The project also will take steps to better measure results.

The Joyce Foundation supports efforts to reduce poverty and ensure individuals and families have access to educational opportunities so they can obtain higher-wage, higher-skilled jobs.