

The Joyce Foundation

Improving the quality of life in the Great Lakes region and across the country.

Dear colleague,

There is a growing gap between the skills demanded by employers and the skills possessed by workers in our area. The effects of this skills gap have wide-reaching implications for the national economy. And, too many working-age adults are unable to adequately support themselves and their families because they don't have the skills necessary to compete.

That's why the Joyce Foundation developed and invested over \$8 million in [Shifting Gears](#), an ambitious project designed to spur new ways of thinking among state policymakers and lead practitioners at adult basic education agencies, community and technical colleges and workforce development programs.

Cross-agency teams from six Midwest states accepted our challenge: to develop and make changes throughout these systems to help low-skilled adults obtain in-demand skills and post-secondary credentials.

Visit www.joycefdn.org/shifting-gears to see the results of these efforts and read stories of people from our community whose lives have been changed by this work. You'll also find on this site a more [detailed evaluation of Shifting Gears](#) by our partners, Brandon Roberts and Derek Price.

This is just the beginning. We have more to learn and do to help low-skilled workers succeed in the 21st century economy. In the coming months, we will conduct extensive polling of workers and employers to hear directly from people on the front lines about the current employment situation and opportunities to advance, and we look forward to sharing the results of these continued conversations with you in the months ahead.

Thank you,

Ellen S. Alberding
President, The Joyce Foundation

The [Joyce Foundation](#) supports the development of policies that both improve the quality of life for people in the Great Lakes region and serve as models for the rest of the country. We encourage innovative and collaborative approaches with a regional focus and the potential for a national reach.

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The Joyce Foundation 321 North Clark Street, Suite 1500 Chicago, Illinois 60654
Phone: (312) 782-2464 | Fax: (312) 595-1350
www.joycefdn.org