

St. Louis Regional Industry Training Group

www.umsl.edu/rcew/ritg

The St. Louis Regional Industry Training Group (SL-RITG) is a membership-based and industry-driven effort to identify current and future manufacturing workforce skill needs and collaborate with area education and training providers to design the required skill training programs. The SL-RITG is focused on training both recent hires and experienced workers with the goal of increasing their productivity, performance and job skills. The program also works with local colleges to build the core competencies necessary for new job applicants and career advancement for the next generation of industry workers.

The SL-RITG:

- is directed by area manufacturing employers,
- serves as a data base and clearinghouse for manufacturing training resources and a pool of pre-screened applicants for entry level manufacturing employment,
- leverages public and private sector funding to reduce costs/improve efficiencies,
- coordinates regional certified and skilled technical and skill training providers,
- delivers trainings that meet national certifications, college articulated requirements and employer defined needs, and
- is supported by an independent arm of a local state university.

Training Information Clearinghouse

SL-RITG serves as an information clearinghouse and database (Resource Directory) for members on current course offerings (classroom and online), related training resources, qualified trainers and pre-screened applicants interested in careers in manufacturing. The Resource Directory identifies local course availability and helps members match their training needs to available local training.

A related objective of the clearinghouse is to inventory member company skill training needs, identify training gaps, and facilitate needed training resource planning. The clearinghouse inventories available training resources including local colleges and other training providers who have a proven track record and expertise needed to meet member company training needs. The clearinghouse also catalogues member employer resources (facilities and skill training staff) that are available to other regional employers for specialized training.

Cost Savings

SL-RITG through its partnership with area colleges and state vocational education providers identifies available state and federal training funds. The SL-RITG's current partnership with the federal government supported Pathways Program, for example, can be combined with area community colleges and state Customized Training Funds to significantly reduce or even eliminate the costs of incumbent worker training. Member

companies also provide instructors and facilities to supplement the resources of the local academic community and fill resource gaps critical to the membership.

Member companies, particularly smaller companies expect significant cost savings as a result of consolidating member skill training needs to achieve the “*critical mass of students*” needed to make training both affordable and available. By pooling demand, the SL-RITG fills needed courses, reduces the costs for individual members and assures availability. SL-RITG helps member companies’ understaffed and overworked human resource and training staffs to identify training resources and/or develop new ones.

Proposed Organizational Structure

Missouri and Illinois industrial companies in the St. Louis region have come together to create the SL-RITG to expand available skill training for their current employees and to define, for secondary and post-secondary educators, the skill sets necessary for career ladder employment in manufacturing.

The SL-RITG currently operates as an arm of the Regional Center for Education & Work (RCEW) at the University of Missouri-St. Louis and serves as a training catalyst and workforce development resource center for manufacturing and related production industries within the St. Louis region. It serves as a clearinghouse, independent of local training providers, for matching member company skill training needs with training available through local colleges and other training providers.

The SL-RITG works with representatives of area community colleges and other network training partners who deliver training services and develop new training offerings to leverage available public and private sector resources. The SL-RITG also partners with community training, employment and business related organizations. These organizations include area Workforce Investment Boards, State Supported Career Centers, economic development agencies and area Chambers of Commerce.

To ensure a coordinated regional focus, the SL-RITG serves as an independent regional coordinator. The University and RCEW do not participate as training resources thereby retaining their independence and objectivity. The RCEW identifies and solicits public sector funding; recruits new member companies; provides outreach and education to secondary and post-secondary schools, informs the media on careers and opportunities in manufacturing, and provides day-to-day administrative support such as meeting facilities, clerical assistance, telephone and teleconferencing, webinars, postage and stationary and printing. First year costs have been subsidized by the Pathways Program. The SL-RITG supplements these funds through membership fees and/or from usage-based-fees associated with course offerings.