

GREATER CHIPPEWA AND ST.CROIX VALLEY  
REGIONAL PK-16 CONSORTIUM

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN – EAU CLAIRE  
UNIVERSITY OF WICSONSIN – RIVER FALLS  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN – STOUT

Consortium Representative to the West Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board

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REQUEST FOR FUNDS:

USING BROADBAND AND OTHER SYSTEMS TO ADDRESS  
COMMUNITY-BASED HEALTH CARE EDUCATION NEEDS

**ORGANIZATION:** The Greater Chippewa and St. Croix Valley Regional PK-16 Consortium was established in 2002 using base budget dollars from UW System. The Consortium includes: UW-Barron County, UW-Eau Claire, UW-River Falls, UW-Stout, Chippewa Valley Technical College, Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College, Cooperative Education Service Agency 10, Cooperative Service Agency 11, Momentum Chippewa Valley, West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, and West Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board. Administrated through University of Wisconsin-Stout, this regional organization blends the resources of the full spectrum of educational service providers and aligns existing planning groups into a structure for supporting workforce planning and economic development initiatives. Consortium projects leverage the institutional strengths of participating entities and align resources to meet the needs of regional businesses. The consortium provides seamless access to knowledge dissemination, technical support, and research services for employees and employers in the nine counties of the region.

**DESCRIPTION:** A Consortium project known as “Synergy: Positioning for Economic Growth” provides an ongoing process for the region to examine critical workforce and economic development needs. At the Synergy planning event in September, 2004, the need to leverage the region’s broadband infrastructure to provide public educational offerings aimed at addressing the region’s health care needs (specifically the issue of changing personal behaviors related to increasing obesity, and consequently the insurance costs of employers) was identified as a target for project development in 2005-2006. This project will collaboratively address this need and include the region’s higher education system, its primary health care providers (including Mayo affiliated Luther-Midelfort and Marshfield Clinics), and local public health departments to improve the health of the region’s citizens, positively affecting the cost of health care insurance for employers. Over the one-year demonstration period, this project will:

- Develop a training curriculum and public awareness program designed to motivate and sustain healthier behaviors to reduce obesity in our communities
- Recruit and involve employers in motivating employees to participate in obesity reduction programs
- Establish a web-based system that documents practice and effects on employment, earnings, health, satisfaction, and the need for public subsidy of obesity programming
- Establish a system to track changes in employment, benefits reliance, and economic participation over a multi-year period
- Formulate public policy recommendations related to health behaviors and obesity
- Disseminate reports that describe practices and provide obesity and public health policy recommendations for Congressional purposes

TIMETABLE: The Consortium (through its fiscal entity, UW-Stout) requests funding for Fiscal Year 2006 and plans to implement a program using the following tentative timetable:

October	Engage partners (Consortium members, health care entities, public health departments, and broadband providers)
November-December	Develop curriculum public awareness offerings
December-January	Continue offering development and market series
January-September	Provide awareness and intervention offerings
July-August	Evaluate initial offerings
July-September	Track project
July-August	Document and disseminate demonstration practices
September	Present recommendations to agencies and the Congress on impacts and savings achieved for communities and the U.S.

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PAST FUNDING: *Years Federal Agency and Program Amount of funds*

**NONE RECEIVED FOR THIS PRIORITY AREA**

COSTS:	Total Costs in FY 2006:	<u>\$ 480,000</u>
	UW Personnel Committed to Project (3 @ 50,000)	150,000
	Subcontracts:	
	Collaborating Community Entities (5 @25,000)	125,000
	Infrastructure Entities (5 @5,000)	25,000
	Curriculum development and distance learning	85,000
	Practice and Policy Reporting and Dissemination	35,000
	Website development and maintenance	25,000
	Other (supplies, travel, data collection)	10,000
	Anticipated Funds from Other Sources in FY 2006:	<u>\$ 30,000</u>
	Consortium In-Kind Supplement:	15,000
	Sale of Products and Services (e.g., training programs)	15,000
	<u>Federal Funding Requested in FY 2006:</u>	<u>\$ 450,000</u>

SIGNIFICANCE: According to the July 5, 2003, issue of the Journal Sentinel, the percent of obese Wisconsinites nearly doubled in the decade ending in 2001, from 12.7% of adults to 21.9%, 1% more than the national average. Further, obesity is expected to kill about 6,000 people in Wisconsin every year. The fiscal impact is also high, an estimated \$2.3 billion, in Wisconsin alone, and these costs are passed on to businesses, individuals, and taxpayers alike. Wisconsin's obesity problems are largely a result of the behaviors individuals have chosen to engage in, but individuals can also choose to be a part of the solution. This project is designed to arm businesses and individuals with the necessary knowledge, tools, and strategies to change behaviors, reduce obesity, improve health and quality of life, and ultimately save health care dollars. Even a 1 percent decrease in the percentage of obese Wisconsinites will have a large impact on the region's health care bill.

CONTACTS WITH CONGRESS: Congressman Kind, Obey, and Senators Kohl and Feingold will be contacted regarding this project.