

RITIN Accomplishments

Since receiving a planning grant from the Department of Labor and Training's Real Jobs RI, project funding Rhode Island Commerce Corporation, and program management from Polaris MEP, RITIN has:

- Partnered with Polaris MEP and the RI Marine Trades Association/Composites Alliance to submit an Innovation Campus proposal for the Advanced Materials Innovation Center for Design and Manufacturing. The proposal, chosen as a finalist, brings together textile and composite companies, community organizations and university faculty and students to support applied research and create collision and design thinking space that fosters development of new materials, components, processes and products.
- Created networking events to bring industry leaders together at tours of Hope Global, Cooley Group and Kenyon Industries to foster industry collaboration.
- Worked with CK Communications to conduct interviews with textile industry leaders, university administrators and faculty to understand the challenges and opportunities within the industry, and hosted a focus group with high school students to understand how the industry is perceived by the next generation workforce. Armed with those findings, we partnered with Walsh and Associates to create a website that presents a compelling story of the modern textile sector in Rhode Island. The careers page of the RITIN website will be powered by the We Make RI job board.
- Partnered with Dr. Ji Hye Kang of URI's Department of Textiles, Fashion Merchandising, and Design and her students to conduct deeper research into what students think about careers in the textile manufacturing industry. This research will be presented in early 2019.
- Collected "career stories" from 12 textile employees who demonstrate that the textile industry offers opportunities for hands-on learning and advancement to people with or without college degrees. Several career stories follow at the end of this document. Three additional stories are featured in video interviews on our website, www.ritin.org. (The site will be live shortly before the event on September 24.)
- Conducted outreach to raise the profile of the textile sector, including hands-on exhibits at the Providence Mini-Maker Faire in 2017 and 2018, and panel discussions during the DesignXRI's Design Week. These events introduced a new generation to textile technology, research, design and manufacturing. The efforts led to a new business opportunity for a company affiliated with RITIN (note: the company does not wish to be named publicly.)
- Partnered with the Cities of Pawtucket and Central Falls, Polaris MEP and the Rhode Island Manufacturing Association on two Pawtucket-Central Falls Manufacturing Industry Forums.
- Developed relationships with the Chafee Center at Bryant University and the Rhode Island Israel Collaborative, and hosted a visit from the US Trade Representative to promote export opportunities for textile manufacturers.