

# SlingShot

Accelerating Income Mobility through Regional Collaboration

# What Is SlingShot?

What are we trying to accomplish?

- Increase intergenerational income mobility
- Move the needle on big employment, education, and jobs issues
- Increase prosperity and agility of regions, businesses and workers

How will SlingShot do that?

- Regional SlingShot partnerships or coalitions
- Focus on a vexing employment, education, and jobs issue
- Undertake bold solutions
- Combine proven approaches and experimental new ones
- Measure and adapt
- State Accelerator Grants combined with local match supports the work

Why will SlingShot work?

- Aligns economic, workforce development & education strategies
- Engages the creativity of diverse partners to come up with "move the needle" solutions
- State provides flexible seed capital for innovative strategies and remove barriers -- creating the space to take risks & accelerate innovation
- Tackles a big, potentially transformative issue through short-term actions, measurement and adjustment
- Builds momentum from early wins

What will be different?

- Robust, lasting regional coalitions tackling tough systemic challenges rather than working at the margins and proliferating boutique programs
- Leveraging investments through a venture fund approach
- Creating flexibility and incentives to align existing and new funding toward shared outcomes, not focusing on outputs – i.e. regionalism is not an end but a means to an end
- Focusing on regional goals impacts, not those of agencies or programs
- Creating a culture of rapid, ongoing experimentation -- using solid measurement to make course corrections

# SlingShot

## Accelerating Income Mobility through Regional Collaboration

### The Challenge

Despite our state's overall prosperity, too many Californians are in danger of being left behind, not making ends meet and unable to create a middleclass life for themselves and their families. Many Californians face substantial challenges in finding good jobs and supporting themselves and their families in an era with volatile, rapidly evolving labor markets. As a result, regions across California face a combination of shortages of skilled workers in key industries and cohorts of students and workers ill equipped to compete for mid- to high-skilled jobs. All of this places increasing strain on equality of opportunity, a core component of the American Dream, and the ability of this generation and the next to rise above the economic and social station of their parents. Equal opportunity is at risk of becoming myth for whole generations of young Californians.

Traditional workforce, education, and economic development strategies have not had sufficient impact in helping enough workers to build needed skills, find good jobs and realize positive economic mobility. And even promising strategies lack the speed and agility in execution needed to respond to current and emerging skills and job demands. We need to bring the creativity for which California is known to bear and create new strategies that achieve scalable impact.

### What Are We Trying to Accomplish?

SlingShot seeks to seed collaborative efforts by workforce, economic development, and education stakeholders within a region to identify and then work to solve employment challenges that slow California's economic engine -- with regionally-selected solutions to regionally-defined problems.

This guiding premise contains four dimensions:

- **We can make the greatest impact on major jobs and employment issues at the regional level.** California is a collection of distinct regional economies; aligning our work at that level will be more effective than either city/county/district level efforts or statewide strategies.
- **We must turn the tide on income inequality in California.** Our systems must accelerate education, employment, and economic development for those Californians in danger of being left out of our State's prosperity.
- **We need to tackle big issues.** California's regions face no shortage of vexing workforce challenges. Slingshot offers an opportunity to take on a tough issue that if solved would meaningfully move the needle on employment.
- **We need to measure what we undertake.** All strategies need to be grounded in effective use of data and metrics.
- **We must create the space to take risks.** In an era of perpetual economic volatility, traditional programs don't solve tough workforce challenges. Slingshot encourages regional partnerships to prototype new ideas, based on strong research and development, without fear of "failure" if the effort falls short of expectations. For every impactful practice that emerges, there will be others that are tried and then dropped for lack of sufficient impact.

## Implementation Game Plan

### Stage 1: Action Plan

A regional partnership will develop and submit a brief (2 page) Action Plan to CWIB seeking initial funding. This will qualify the partnership to be considered for development and implementation support (both funding and increased administrative flexibility) from the state. A successful Action Plan will include:

- A clear logic that the geography proposed reflects a shared base of economic activity -- an Employment Zone;
- Commitments from key partners within the region to the SlingShot Coalition work, such as education, workforce, economic development, community development, labor, industry and civic leaders;
- Identification of at least one major employment, education, or jobs issue the region faces, and a commitment to develop strategies that could result in large-scale impacts on the targeted issue; and
- A plan for a research, design and development phase of work that would result in implementation-ready strategies.

### Stage 2: Research, Design and Development

SlingShot coalitions whose Action Plans are approved will receive up to \$20,000 grants that will be matched 1:1 by funds from within the region for a total of up to \$40,000, with the exact amount based on budgets submitted as part of the action plan.

During this phase, regional partners will deepen their research as needed about key workforce issues and possible strategies to undertake, and then design and develop a mix of selected strategies for implementation.

### Stage 3: Implementation

Implementation grants will be awarded to regional coalitions with well-crafted strategies coming out of stage 2. Expectations include:

- The issue being targeted is a large-scale employment, education, jobs challenge in the region that will take substantial collective effort and innovative strategies to impact. Examples of large-scale challenges (illustrative not exhaustive): increasing literacy rates, reducing youth disconnection from school and work, reducing youth offender recidivism, increasing educational attainment levels, increasing income levels, reducing long-term unemployment.
- Metrics to be employed will include total population scale change (e.g. educational attainment among all working age adults in the region), not only the results with program enrollees.
- The coalition will craft an overall, long-term approach for tackling the chosen issue, and will seek initial funding for initial strategies in service of that long-term game plan.
- Coalitions are encouraged to treat this as an R&D approach – to adopt initial strategies that take risks – to try approaches and ideas that go beyond the “usual suspects,” those that the partners believe have a chance of being game changers. Our assumption is that coming out of initial implementation of specific strategies, Slingshot coalitions will determine either: a) the strategy is scalable; b) the strategy is helpful but one of several needed; or c) the strategy isn’t sufficiently promising and should be dropped in favor of focusing on other strategies.

#### **Stage 4: Sustain & Grow**

The California Workforce Investment Board is interested in working with state partners to assemble a much larger, multi-agency pool of funding that can be used to support continuing strategy development in support of impacting the big issues that the regional coalitions identify. Based on what can be assembled, we envision the Slingshot coalitions periodically seeking additional funding as strategies are implemented and next stage approaches are timely to sustain and grow the impact of their efforts.

## Stage 1: Action Plan

### What's The Work?

Building the coalition and deep buy-in around the targeted employment, education, jobs issue that needs to be solved and paving the way for creative solutions (this is not about existing favorite programs)

### When Can I Start?

Anytime!

### What Needs To Be In Place?

Coalition stakeholders committed to tackling income inequality & to collaborating regionally for maximum impact

Local Workforce Investment Boards to catalyze initial convening

### What Resources Are Available?

SlingShot toolkit for getting started

Action Plan development and facilitation assistance by state and regional partners

## Stage 2: Research, Design & Development

### What's The Work?

The "deep dive"-- developing strategies designed to solve the targeted regional issue

### When Can I Start?

When the initial Action Plan is completed and match funding committed

### What Needs To Be In Place?

Regional leadership team members with decision-making authority who can bring real resources to the table

Staffing and expertise for Research, Design & Development work

Process for communicating and iterating ideas and concepts across disciplines

### What Resources Are Available?

\$20,000 from State, to be matched 1:1 with regional coalition dollars

Technical assistance team and State Board working groups

## Stage 3: Implementation

### What's The Work?

Moving into action on identified strategies

### When Can I Start?

When the Research, Design and Development Process is Completed

### What Needs To Be In Place?

Targeted employment, education, jobs issue

Large-scale metrics that impact income mobility

Strategies that mix innovation and risk-taking with proven models

Strong leadership and intermediary commitment

### What Resources Are Available?

Up to \$1 million to be matched with aligned regional resources (funding, in-kind, or leveraged)

Technical assistance team and State Board working groups

## Stage 4: Sustain & Grow

### What's The Work?

Expanding and sustaining action on identified strategies

### When Can I Start?

To be determined by regional approach, lessons, and opportunities

### What Needs To Be In Place?

Lessons from design testing and implementation

Strategies for moving to scale and sustained action

Evidence that the set of strategies can meaningfully impact the issue of focus. Strong leadership and intermediary commitment

### What Resources Are Available?

Second-stage funding to be matched with aligned regional resources (funding, in-kind, or leveraged)

## Stage 1 Goal

Regional leaders commit to creating solutions to economic mobility and growth challenges in their community.

## Action Plan

Regional coalitions develop brief SlingShot Action Plans that define the regional scope, challenges, and vision for success, and establish a baseline framework for the Research, Design and Development stage. Action Plan Steps:

1. Convene regional leaders committed to working toward a common goal
2. Develop consensus regarding the industry economic drivers for the region
3. Identify at least one major employment, education, jobs issue the regional coalition is committed to solving

The Action Plan should address 3 questions:

### 1. What is the issue we want to solve?

- Describe the regional issue to be addressed and the vision for success
- Define the regional geographic scope of the effort
- Identify the metrics that will be used to measure impact

### 2. Who will get us there?

- Identify the SlingShot Coalition - regional, local, and community stakeholders
- Define the leadership commitment to the effort
- Describe the decision-making structure for Stage 2

### 3. How do we get there?

- Describe the plan for the Research, Design, and Development (Stage 2) work, including:
  - Evidence that the issue impacts jobs, employment, and income mobility
  - Potential target industries and their employment trends
  - Prospective opportunities to create economic and community competitiveness for the region
  - Employment and jobs pipeline gaps that may be addressed- institutional, demographic, or geographic
  - Strategies to generate new ideas and solutions, and for mapping and evaluating current assets
  - Process for including emerging partners and stakeholders
  - Identification of intermediary functions (broker, convener) needed in Stage 2

## Stage 1

### Action Plan

## Coalition Stakeholders

- Chambers of Commerce
- Community Colleges
- Community- and Faith- Based Organizations
- Corporate and Community Foundations
- Economic Development Agencies
- Industry Associations & Business Leaders
- K-12 System
- Labor Organizations
- Local, Regional, & State Officials
- Regional Planning and Government Associations
- Workforce Investment Boards

## Leadership

SlingShot coalitions are led by committed, creative, invested decision-makers with broad regional, community and industry influence.

## Funding

Awards will be made to regional SlingShot coalitions that successfully complete the Stage 1 Action Plan. These resources (including regional match) will fund the “deep dive” into the Stage 2 work: Research, Design, & Development.

## Stage 2 Goal

Coalitions deepen their understanding of the regional challenge they are committed to solving, and design strategies to address the problem.

## Research, Design & Development

Regional coalitions that have successfully completed Stage 1 put their Action Plan into motion and take a “deep dive” into the challenges and potential solutions. By researching and assessing the selected issues from worker, industry, and institutional perspectives, coalitions will identify underlying causes, asset strengths and gaps, and needs and opportunities for action. As the coalitions develop SlingShot project strategies capable of “moving the needle” on their targeted employment/education/jobs issue, members will mutually commit to sustained partnerships to align their efforts for integrated, collaborative action.

Stage 2 outcomes will include:

### Research: Crisp Economic and Resource Analysis

- Assessment of income mobility in the region, i.e. ability of next generation to improve economically relative to its parents
- Evidence provided that addressing targeted issue moves the needle on employment and affects larger-scale income mobility
- Regional economic drivers identified, target industry(ies) established, and opportunities for significant job openings and growth prioritized
- Jobs pipeline gaps are articulated, and the downstream effect – *of action and of inaction*- are defined
- Regional assets and resources are mapped, and deficits are agreed upon

### Design: Goals & Commitments for Sustained, Large-Scale Change

- Regional economic mobility objectives and short-term indicators of success are established
- Coalition leadership commitment is refined, and regional intermediary role is established
- Resources, activities, and outcomes are aligned in support of the regional goals
- Two-year, at least, implementation timeline established
- Existing regional partnerships and programs are leveraged, and duplication of efforts is reduced

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## Stage 2

### Deep Dive: Research, Design & Development

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## Metrics

SlingShot coalitions will have flexibility and freedom in defining success and determining how to achieve it. In order to ensure that regional collaboratives can measure with confidence the outcomes of their efforts, a working group of the CWIB will assist regions in defining rigorous outcomes and key indicators of progress towards desired outcomes.

## Strategies

Regional coalitions are encouraged to take an “R&D” approach to trying strategies that can accelerate or “slingshot” a region to success. Funding will support creative, agile, and fast-paced implementation of new ideas and scaling up of what works in each region. There is no “one size fits all” solution for SlingShot!

## Stage 2 Product

The purpose the Research, Design and Development work is for coalitions to develop a product that clearly articulates the strategies, objectives, commitments and timeline for implementation. Regions will pitch their ideas for up to \$1 million in Accelerator Grant funds to regional SlingShot coalitions to deliver on their SlingShot project.

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## Development: Strategies to Accelerate Progress

- Solutions are continually revisited and vetted by the SlingShot coalition , and those that can make a “move the needle” impact on the targeted issue are adopted
  - Project initiatives are designed, including the flexibility to course correct as needed
  - Innovative, unique, or untested strategies that could be “game changers” are tried, and lessons learned from both what works *and* what doesn’t
  - Regional collaboratives will “take risks” on strategies that work smarter and faster in solving their challenges
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# SlingShot

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## Stage 3 Goal

Regional SlingShot coalitions implement new strategies, test for effectiveness, determine what is working, and learn from what does not.

## Implementation

Regional coalitions use Accelerator grants to put their strategies into play, and begin working through institutional and administrative barriers with State partners.

## What's Different About SlingShot?

- Coalitions are working with new ideas and approaches, many of which may be un-tested, and “out of the box” solutions. SlingShot projects may look to other disciplines and industries to find innovative strategies to apply to their targeted employment, education, jobs issue.
- Accelerator grants are designed to let coalitions move beyond “business as usual.” Funds can be used to fill gaps in the education and training pipeline that traditional public resources do not support, and to bring existing initiatives, grants, formula dollars, and other funding streams into alignment with the regional SlingShot coalition project.
- SlingShot encourages “risk-taking” by regional coalitions, and includes mechanisms to learn from those ideas that do not work, and to embrace and support those that do. SlingShot supports regions in taking bold action in order to make real headway on big issues.

## Stage 4 Goal

Bring good ideas to scale and additional resources to bear.

## Sustain & Grow

SlingShot is only successful if it leads to lasting change in the way we do business in the State and in moving the needle on income mobility for Californians.

- SlingShot’s State partners are dedicated to assembling a larger, multi-agency, public-private “venture fund” to continue to support strategy development at the regional level.
- SlingShot will also create opportunities for the State to learn from the regions and integrate what works into existing systems and funding streams.

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## Stages 3 & 4

## Implementation/Sustain & Grow

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### Regional Role

- Identify Challenges
- Develop and Convene Regional Leadership
- Design & Develop Strategies
- Deliver Quality, Tailored Services
- Test Innovations & Replicate Successes
- Fine Tune Goals
- Recalibrate Strategies
- Measure & Evaluate

### State Role

- Eliminate Barriers
  - Align Resources
  - Expedite Processes
  - Create Flexibility
  - Invest in Innovation
  - Integrate into Systems & Bring to Scale
  - Measure Collective Impact
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### What Makes A Region?

One of the overarching principles of Slingshot is to encourage regional collaboration that is effective and outcome driven. Regional approaches can get workers into middleclass jobs, help employers close skills gaps, and combat regionally defined economic problems.

Regions are not set in stone and should reflect the way industry sectors and clusters operate; how companies in key sectors recruit, develop talent, and hire; and how workers seek and commute to jobs. Coalition partners should resist the temptation to define regions based on political or program jurisdictions. It may happen that a region or “employment zone” is encompassed in a particular political jurisdiction. However sectors, economies, and labor markets tend to cross multiple cities, counties, colleges, schools, WIBs, etc. The aim of SlingShot is to align multiple funding streams and programs in service to a broader regional vision for jobs and income mobility.

Action Plans may want to consider these pre-existing models that are data-driven and instructive for how a region may be defined:

- California Workforce Association “Employment Zones”
- The Community College Chancellor’s Office Sector Navigator
- Employment Development Department’s Labor Market Information Regional Cluster Analysis

Regions may emerge that look a lot like regions in the above models, however, these are only models, and while helpful, may not illustrate how your region is configured.

### Criteria to Consider:

- Geography that reflects a shared base of economic activity
- Data-driven, fluid labor markets organized around infrastructure and commute patterns.
- Feasibility of education, training, and jobs services administered and delivered within local political or program jurisdictions.
- A shared economic or social problem
  - Regions should be able to strategically align and mobilize resources from a diverse set of partners, including, but not limited to community colleges, economic development, workforce, and employers.

### Process

The State SlingShot partners will help provide guidance on how a region may be defined, including:

- What, if any, are the criteria of a region?
- Can a local workforce investment area belong to more than one region?
- Can a local workforce investment area be a region?
- Can a single county be a region, especially if it is a Metropolitan Statistical Area?
- Will regions be prescribed based-on existing models?

### What Does Success Look Like?

A central principle of SlingShot is that a regional coalition should have freedom in defining success and determining how to get there. Metrics and outcome measures will be defined based on the targeted issue the coalition aims to address, the opportunities to drive economic growth, and existing or impending gaps in workforce, training, and education pipelines.

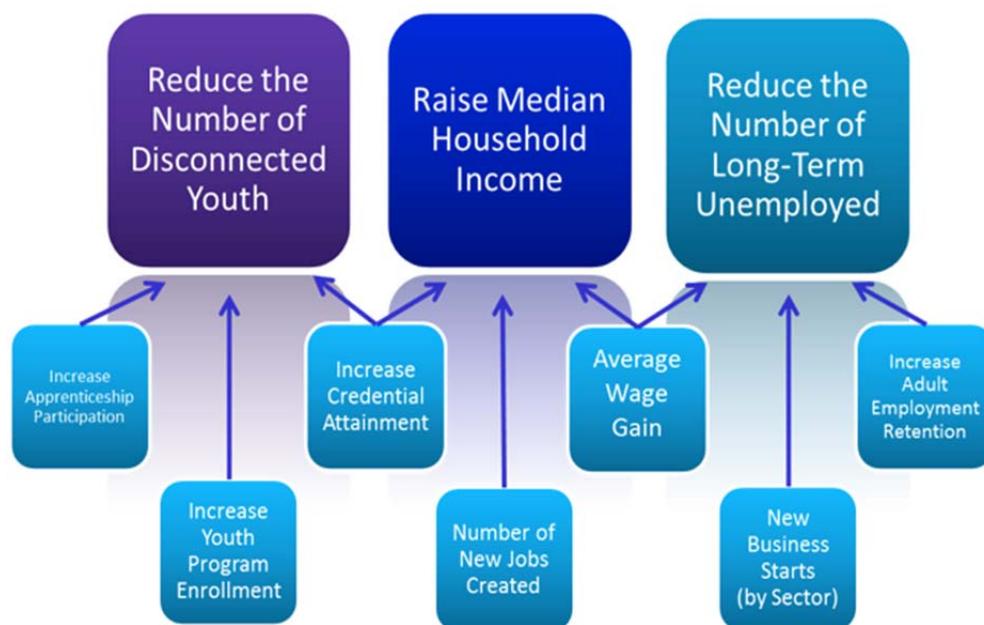
SlingShot is **not** about measuring individual program success – it **is** about creating large-scale, regional change that significantly improves economic outcomes and increases income mobility. How do you measure large-scale change? Complimentary sets of interim outcome measures help show **how** you are moving the dial.

### Process

The CWIB will convene a working group to serve as a resource to SlingShot coalitions in developing their outcome measures, and creating regional and State level “dashboards” to track interim progress, and capture strategic momentum points.

### Examples of Potential SlingShot Metrics:

#### Long-Term Regional Impact



#### Interim Outcome Measures

# SlingShot FAQs

## **What is SlingShot?**

*What It Is:* Regional Coordination and Alignment, Implementation Support, Cutting Red Tape, Increasing Flexibility, Encouraging risk and Innovation, Rewarding Outcomes

*What It Isn't:* A New Program, Duplication of Existing Efforts, A State Requirement, A New Layer of Bureaucracy

## **How is SlingShot different from previous regional coordination efforts the State has promoted?**

There are two crucial differences: First, the end game for SlingShot is not regional coordination; that's just a means to an end. The end game is moving the needle on a major employment related issue that if successfully addressed can affect greater income mobility for that region. Second, the desired result is not a new program but the retooling and alignment of existing programs in service to a broader regional economic vision.

## **How is SlingShot different from other things that are happening at the State (Career Pathways Trust Fund, Chancellor's Office Sector Navigators, Local WIB strategic plans, etc.)?**

We expect that Slingshot projects may incorporate Career Pathway Trust Fund programs and resources, or expand on Local WIB strategic plans, while others will engage Sector Navigators. The intent with SlingShot is to add convening ability at the regional level around existing and new programs or initiatives for the broader, longer-term aim of affecting greater income mobility.

Related to this, the State Board and its state-level partners (incl. GO-Biz, the Chancellor's Office, and the Superintendent's Office) are committed to aligning new program funding around our shared principles of regional coordination, sector strategies, quality training, and career pathways.

## **Who must be involved?**

Local Workforce Investment Boards will be the initial conveners and catalysts in each region. After the initial Action Plan meeting, willing regional partners will lead SlingShot efforts. Two critical leadership functions must be in place for the Implementation stage: Regional leadership team of dedicated, creative decision-makers with the ability to commit or guide resources (see Stage 1 description of Coalition Stakeholders and Leadership) and an organization that can deliver the crucial functions of an intermediary for the SlingShot effort.

## **Who is in charge in the regions?**

Local Workforce Investment Boards will act as catalysts and will initiate the Slingshot process. After an initial meeting, the leadership will be determined based on the specific focus of each SlingShot coalition project and the unique strengths or capacities of the coalition partners.

The optimal intermediary should be an "honest broker" that doesn't have a vested interest in a particular program silo or funding stream. Strong intermediaries must provide the

leadership capacity and expertise to do the convening, development work, evaluation, ongoing communication and framing, etc. It can be an industry association, chamber of commerce, labor organization, community group, formalized alliance of multiple public and/or private organizations across a region, etc. See *Collective Impact* by the *Stanford Social Innovation Review* for a good description of an effective “backbone” organization: [http://www.ssireview.org/pdf/2011\\_WI\\_Feature\\_Kania.pdf](http://www.ssireview.org/pdf/2011_WI_Feature_Kania.pdf)

## **What is the role of the State in the regional process? What is the timeline?**

Slingshot is an open, iterative process. The State will help to facilitate the initial meetings and ensure that all relevant stakeholders are present. After this initial convening, the State can offer technical assistance and broker connections for the regions that desire a high level of state involvement. Other regions may choose to forego this state assistance.

## **Is SlingShot just one more thing local Workforce Investment Boards are required to do?**

NO- Participation is voluntary. Many local boards see their primary role as convening broad regional and local partnerships to solve difficult employment and jobs challenges. If a WIB does not see this as its primary work, that’s OK. That WIB, however, is encouraged to offer its core competency (strong youth, adult, or dislocated worker programs or administrative capacity) to the coalition as a key partner.

Slingshot can help to propel other initiatives forward by providing extra resources for planning, research and alignment. SlingShot resources can help WIBs to expand the scope of local innovative programs. But SlingShot participation is voluntary, not mandatory.

## **How much money is involved?**

The State has committed \$20,000 in development funds for regions that successfully complete Action Plans, which must be matched by the regional SlingShot coalition. SlingShot will also fund “Accelerator” grants of up to \$1million per region for implementation. Successful SlingShot projects will also leverage funds from other State, regional and local sources and programs.

## **How can this amount of money make a difference?**

The initial \$20,000 development grant will help regions access larger funding sources later in the process. Successful programs will be eligible for funding from the Slingshot Accelerator fund. Successful Slingshot regional strategies will also be used to leverage funding from other state agencies.

## **What can SlingShot money be used for?**

This is not funding for “business as usual.” Accelerator grants are to be used to implement innovative new strategies and to better coordinate and connect existing resources. This is more like venture capital to allow the coalition to try new approaches and take risks that existing silos don’t allow.

Funding is not intended to expand existing programs or for new programs. An important outcome is to retool existing program silos for greater scale and to invite greater employer commitment and investment for long-term sustainability by investing in new ways of doing the work in regions, new service delivery innovations, and more effective and effective ways

of meeting regional goals. Funding cannot be used to cover funding shortages in pre-existing programs.

**How can we take risks? What happens if we fail?**

Slingshot funding will allow regions to take risks that they may not be able to take with their typical funding sources. The state will encourage ambitious yet un-tested projects. Promising but ultimately unsuccessful Slingshot programs will allow regions to learn, adjust, and adopt more effective strategies.

