

Governor's Council on Workforce Investment

Aligning Wisconsin's Workforce Needs with Its Economic Development Goals and Strategies



2022 – 2026 STRATEGIC PLAN



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May 15, 2022

Governor Tony Evers
115 East Capitol Drive #1
Madison, WI 53702

Dear Governor Evers:

On behalf of the Council on Workforce Investment (CWI), it is our honor to submit the 2022 – 2026 Council on Workforce Investment Strategic Plan for your review. Through the 2019 Executive Order #6, you tasked the CWI with aligning Wisconsin's workforce needs with its economic development goals and strategies. This Council exists to help Wisconsin employers find the skilled talent that they need while providing resources, training, and reskilling for workers to access in-demand careers necessary to obtain family-supporting jobs and help move Wisconsin's economy forward.

Much has changed since the CWI developed our last strategic plan four years ago; however, the charge of the CWI remains the same and the significance of our work has never been more important. Aside from difficulties finding and hiring new workers, there are several other issues impacting businesses such as lack of access to childcare, broadband, transportation, and housing. All these issues directly or indirectly impact employers and their ability to acquire and retain talent. As Governor, you have emphasized "connecting the dots" and that is exactly what we hope to accomplish through this plan.

The 2022 – 2026 CWI Strategic Plan outlines the key priorities and recommendations of the Council for outcome-based, workforce development strategies that are data-driven and reflective of employer demands. It is our intention that this plan will lay the foundation for continuing enhancements that will benefit Wisconsin businesses and workers.

With your support, the CWI intends to maintain the 2022 – 2026 Strategic Plan as a living document for use in continuing to shape and advance Wisconsin's workforce policies, strategies, and desired outcomes. Review and updates to the plan will be a standing agenda item at Council meetings throughout the course of the plan; and the recommendations may evolve over the next four years to ensure they reflect input from key stakeholders and incorporate new strategies to meet the state's ever-changing workforce and economic development landscape.

Under your direction, CWI members stand ready to serve as communication and implementation ambassadors for the 2022 – 2026 CWI Strategic Plan.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Mark Tyler". The signature is stylized and somewhat cursive.

S. Mark Tyler, Chair
Governor's Council on Workforce Investment

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STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS/BACKGROUND

In early 2021, to further advance its mission to align Wisconsin's workforce and talent development initiatives and investments with its economic development strategies, the Governor's Council on Workforce Investment (CWI) initiated the process for developing its next four-year strategic plan. The plan would be centered around outcome-based, workforce development strategies that are data-driven and reflective of the needs of employers and workers. The Council took several proactive steps to ensure its newly developed strategic plan would be as strong as possible and bring about a positive impact throughout Wisconsin.



(Left to Right: CWI Chair Mark Tyler, Governor Tony Evers, DWD Secretary-designee Amy Pechacek, DWD Deputy Secretary Pam McGillivray, and DWD Assistant Deputy Secretary Danielle Williams)

The Council collaborated with the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) and the University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh to conduct a business climate survey that was distributed to over 60,000 Wisconsin employers. The survey centered on gathering information about the needs and constraints facing Wisconsin businesses, as well as employers' input on potential recommendations for solutions to those issues. The CWI also enlisted the expertise of staff from the National Governors' Association to share best practices of innovative state workforce boards, offer federal-level insight, and help facilitate the discussion among CWI members to support the making of a high-performing strategic plan. These efforts culminated in a two-day strategic planning retreat where members of the CWI were joined by various program experts and key stakeholders to establish specific objectives and action items to advance the priorities of the strategic plan.

Leading up to the retreat, the CWI Executive Committee identified four priority areas to be the foundation of the Council's strategic plan and delegated to each CWI committee a priority to be their area of focus. Those focus areas include:

- Education
- Employers
- Workforce
- Organization & Resource Alignment

As the CWI committees met in the months that followed the retreat to work on the details for their respective focus areas of the strategic plan, they were tasked to not constrain themselves to things that have been done in the past, but to expand their thinking to issues not traditionally associated with workforce development such as improving access to child care, broadband, transportation, and housing.



(DWD Secretary-designee addresses members of the Governor's Council on Workforce Investment and program area experts at the two-day CWI Strategic Planning Retreat)

STATE OF THE ECONOMY

The COVID-19 pandemic has been the primary influence on the economy and workforce activity in Wisconsin since March of 2020. The two-month recession attributable to COVID-19 ended the longest economic expansion on record. Reactions to COVID-19 affected every industry and geography in the state. The results were evident in stark terms over the course of a few months and throughout the following year. Job numbers plummeted. Unemployment insurance claims skyrocketed. The workforce sagged but remained fairly intact. The state's unemployment rate dramatically increased from near record lows in March 2020, to over 14 percent the following month. As of this writing (March 2022), the state's unemployment rate is at a record low 2.8 percent.

The outlook for the state's economy is positive, although the ramifications of new viral strains are yet to be determined. Wisconsin's fourth quarter 2021 real gross domestic product (GDP) exceeded pre-Covid levels and state job numbers have returned to 98 percent of pre-pandemic levels. Other positive economic indicators are that employment levels in a few industries, such as manufacturing, construction, and professional business services, are back near pre-pandemic levels or higher; and, as of March 2022 data, Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) employment is above pre-pandemic levels. Wisconsin's employment-to-population ratio and labor force participation rate (LFPR) continue to exceed the national figures. After bottoming at 65.8 percent in April 2020, the state's LFPR is currently a seasonally adjusted 66.5 percent (March 2022), which is 4.1 percentage points higher than the national rate of 62.4 percent.

Wisconsin's labor force held relatively steady even at the onset of the pandemic, decreasing from 3.1 million in February 2020, to 3.087 million in April 2020. It has since increased to 3.145 million as of March 2022. The jobs situation, in contrast, was severely impacted by the pandemic and has not fully recovered. Total nonfarm jobs were 2.996 million on a seasonally adjusted basis for February 2020. By April 2020, 404,300 jobs had been lost. As of March 2022, jobs totaled 2.928 million, still down approximately 68,000 from February 2020 levels.

The unemployment rate path was equally volatile. Wisconsin's March 2020 seasonally adjusted unemployment rate tied a then historic low at 2.9 percent. By that April, it had risen to 14.1 percent. The unemployment rate has since decreased to a new record low 2.8 percent as of March 2022. All industries have been affected by COVID-19 in some manner, yet some (including manufacturing, construction, and warehousing and distribution) have recovered more quickly than others. Even so, workers are scarce. Businesses' pursuit of workers has brought about wage and benefit increases along with signing bonuses and other incentives to try to attract the talent they need. The identification of other workforce barriers such as transportation, dependent care, and housing affordability also needs to be addressed.

The primary long-term challenge facing Wisconsin's economic future is workforce quantity. The demographic situation facing Wisconsin, other upper-Midwest states, and most of the western economies will advance unaltered in the coming decades. While the state's population will continue to grow over the next 20 years, the workforce faces serious constraints. The labor force trend began to flatten in 2008 as the first Baby Boomers (those born in 1946) reached age 62 and began to leave the workforce. Baby Boomers continue to exit the workforce in great numbers; and, with home prices surging and investment portfolio values elevated, older workers may decide, as many did before the housing bubble burst in 2007, to leave the workforce now and permanently. The number of retiring Baby Boomers nearly matches the influx of new workers, resulting in a slow-growing workforce and placing constraints on the ability of employers across industries to secure talent. Many businesses report that the lack of available workers has hindered expansion, and in some cases, even curtailed the ability to meet current business needs.

According to the Current Population Survey, in 2021 (annual average), 1.57 million or 33.5 percent of the Wisconsin civilian, non-institutionalized population age 16 and over did not participate in the labor market. The large majority of this population (95.8 percent) indicated that they did not want a job, though barriers may exist that if addressed could decrease the "not want a job" share. This cohort includes 172,700 residents between the ages of 16 and 24, many likely not participating due to educational commitments. Additionally, there are 1,085,400 residents over the age of 55 who likely have largely gone into retirement. This demonstrates two key facts of labor force non-participation, namely that large numbers of age-eligible individuals have either not yet entered the active workforce or have aged out of it.¹²³

BUSINESS CLIMATE SURVEY

The strategies presented in this plan were developed to face the current economic conditions of the state and address the significant challenges expressed by Wisconsin employers. These challenges were identified not only by the expertise of the business representatives on the CWI, but reinforced through business climate surveys conducted by the CWI in collaboration with the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) and the University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh.

Among the questions in the survey, businesses were asked what they felt were their most significant resource constraints over the past year, what are their most immediate/pressing needs for their business to succeed, and what they anticipate being their largest resource constraint over the next three years. The results indicated that – regardless of past, present, or future – the most significant needs cited by employers were access not only to skilled workers but available workers in general. These responses reaffirm that the demand for workers pre-dates the pandemic and is a continued need to be addressed moving forward.

The survey also measured awareness among the employer community on a wide variety of workforce development services offered by DWD and other partner programs. The raw data reflected a general lack of awareness by employers of the workforce and education programs that the state offers to assist with worker recruitment, retention, and training needs. Follow-up questions related to employers' likelihood to utilize such programs indicated the respondents were more confident in their ability to hire individuals from populations with which they had previous experience, showing a correlation between lack of awareness of targeted programs and hesitancy to utilize available workers from underutilized populations (e.g., justice-involved individuals, individuals with disabilities, etc.).

The survey results also indicated a lack of access to child care and affordable healthcare as the two most common policy and services concerns cited by respondents. However, several other issues ranging from transportation to

¹ WI Department of Workforce Development, Office of Economic Advisors. "2021 County Workforce Profiles: 2021 Wisconsin Overview." January 2022.

² Source: Office of Economic Advisors, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (Feb. 2022)

³ U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL), Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Current Population Survey Data*, URL: <https://www.bls.gov/cps/>

substance abuse and the presence of a criminal record were also frequently noted. While some of these issues may present bigger challenges than others, they need to be approached holistically to address the underlying causes and develop a workforce system that is sustainable and connects the dots to provide opportunities for everyone to move the state forward.

Fast Facts

Education

Early Childhood Education

- The average price of infant care represents 18.5 percent of the median family income in Wisconsin (\$67,786), and 83.3 percent of the yearly wages of a minimum wage worker (\$15,080).⁴
- The average annual income of Wisconsin child care workers was \$2,000 less than the national average.
- A Wisconsin child care provider with an associate degree in early childhood education earns less than other professions with a similar degree.
- These low wages have led to an annual turnover rate of 40 percent in the workforce, making it difficult for child care providers to sustain high-quality programs.⁵
- According to a fall 2021 survey of employers, participants reported that employees' lack of access to childcare over the previous 12 months contributed to:⁶
 - Employees changing or reducing hours: 45%
 - Difficulty hiring new employees: 43%
 - Employees taking more paid leave: 43%
 - Employees taking more unpaid leave: 42%
 - Employees leaving the workforce (temporarily or permanently): 34%
 - Employees working remotely: 31%
 - Lost revenue due to staffing shortages: 20%
 - Employees changing roles for greater flexibility: 19%
 - Reduced hours or business closures due to staffing shortages: 15%
 - Other impacts (primarily reduced productivity or bringing a child/children to work): 4%

Career Pathways

- In 2020, Wisconsin had 185,736 companies, but only 944 (0.5 percent) are reported as supporting Regional Career Pathways (Source: DPI data)
- Eighty-five percent of students participating in dual enrollment in Wisconsin are taking a dual credit course offered at their high school, and only 15 percent are taking a dual credit course that takes place at a college campus. However, Early College Credit Program funding only applies to courses taken on a college campus.
- For the 2020-21 school year, the 4-year graduation rate for all Wisconsin high school students was 89.5 percent, while the 4-year graduation rate for Career and Technical Education (CTE) Concentrators (a student who has completed at least two CTE courses in a single career pathway throughout high school) was 95.9 percent (Source: DPI data).

Career Pathways – Adults

- The most economically disadvantaged students, those who persistently qualify for free and reduced-price lunch, are 35 percentage points less likely to attend a baccalaureate (4-year) college than students who never qualify.

⁴ Center for American Progress. "Wisconsin Early Learning Factsheet." September 16, 2019.

⁵ WI Department of Children and Families. "Preschool Development Grant Birth to 5: Statewide Needs Assessment Summary." October 2020.

⁶ WI Department of Children and Families, Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation. "Project Growth's 2021 Wisconsin Employer Perception of Early Care and Education Survey: Comprehensive Research Findings." January 28, 2022.

Even adjusting (or controlling) for differences among students in high school academic achievement, the most economically disadvantaged students are 12 percentage points less likely to attend a baccalaureate college.⁷

- Member institutions of Wisconsin Private Nonprofit Colleges and Universities (WAICU) awarded over 13,000 degrees in 2019-20, which accounted for 23 percent of all bachelor's degrees and 34 percent of all advanced degrees in the state.⁸
- In FY2020-21, the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) granted a total of 26,731 credentials⁹ (see below):

Fiscal Year	Associate of Arts/ Associate of Science ¹	Applied Associate Degree	Two-Year Technical Diploma	One-Year Technical Diploma	Short-Term Diploma	Total ¹⁶	Percent Change
2011-12	387	10,969	526	4,767	11,518	28,167	1.2%
2012-13	460	10,745	522	5,000	10,667	27,394	-2.7%
2013-14	390	10,160	578	5,205	10,563	26,896	-1.8%
2014-15	453	10,063	590	5,582	11,385	28,073	4.4%
2015-16	443	10,175	604	5,679	10,637	27,538	-1.9%
2016-17	420	9,679	617	5,839	11,318	27,873	1.2%
2017-18	528	9,554	602	6,237	11,615	28,536	2.4%
2018-19	527	9,516	571	6,180	12,189	28,983	1.6%
2019-20	546	9,255	433	6,344	11,103	27,681	-4.5%
2020-21	658	9,102	395	6,107	10,469	26,731	-3.4%

⁷ UW-Madison School of Education, Wisconsin Center for Education Research. "WCER Working Paper No. 2018-6; College Attendance among Low-Income Youth: Explaining Differences across Wisconsin High Schools." April 2018.

⁸ Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges & Universities (WAICU). "2022 WAICU-pedia." January 24, 2022.

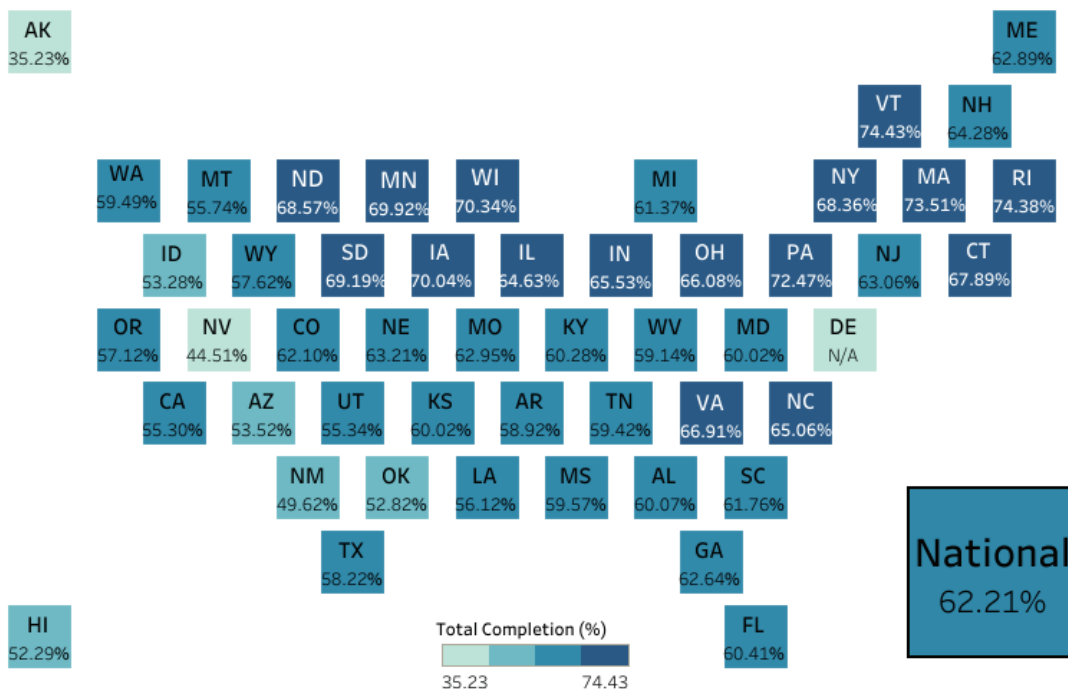
⁹ Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS). "2020-21 WTCS Fact Book: Student Data." November 2021.

- The Wisconsin six-year completion rate for the fall 2015 beginning cohort is 70.34 percent, surpassing the national average of 62.2 percent.¹⁰



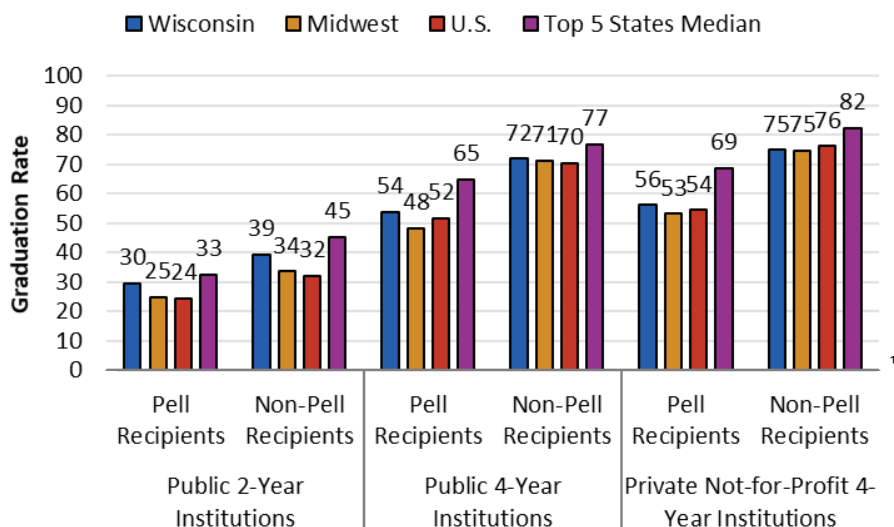
Six-year college graduation rates at Wisconsin colleges and universities surpassed the national average

Graph: Six-year college completion rates by state at first entry: 2015 entering cohort



Source: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, Completing College: National and State Reports, 2022 (Delaware's data is not available)

- The graduation rates of both low-income and higher-income colleges and universities in Wisconsin are above the Midwest and national averages. However, the graduation rates of low-income students lag the graduation rates of higher income students at both two- and four-year institutions.



¹⁰ National Student Clearinghouse. "Completing College: National and State Reports." February 3, 2022.

¹¹ Midwestern Higher Education Compact. "2021 State Performance Update – Wisconsin." 2021.

Employers

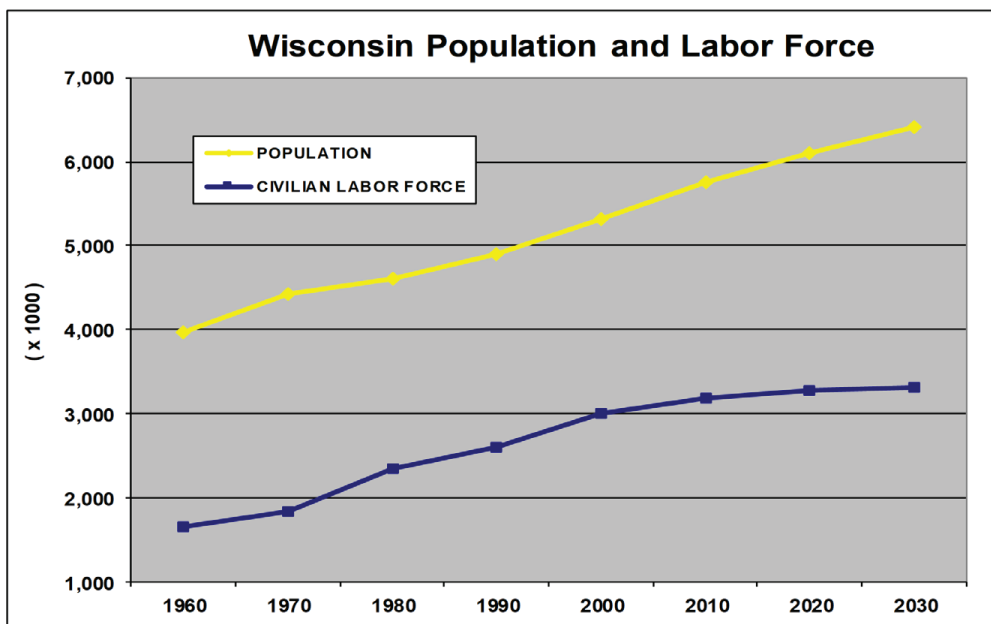
- Upon completion of their programs, Wisconsin apprentices earn an average of \$80,000. Apprenticeship opportunities are available in the traditional construction, manufacturing, utility, and service sectors, as well as emerging areas like health care, information technology, finance, transportation, biotech, and agriculture.¹²

Job Openings

- In WIOA PY2020, there were 212,942 internal job postings on Job Center of Wisconsin representing 396,040 job openings.¹³
- As of February 2022, there are more than 2.5 job openings per unemployed person in Wisconsin – a near record high.¹⁴

Working Age Population

- Wisconsin’s working age population is expected to remain relatively stable from 2010 to 2040, while the share of Wisconsin’s population that is elderly is projected to increase.
- State projections show virtually no growth in the state's working-age population (ages 25 - 64) through 2040. A decline in the ratio of employed people to the working-age population, reflects a long-term trend in Wisconsin — an aging population that is leaving the workforce in greater numbers than new workers are arriving.



- The percentage of Wisconsin's population 65 years and older was 18 percent in 2020, and that percentage is expected to increase to 23.7 percent in 2040. Meanwhile, the percentage of the working age population (ages 18 – 64) goes from 60.4 percent in 2020 to a projected 55.1 percent in 2040.

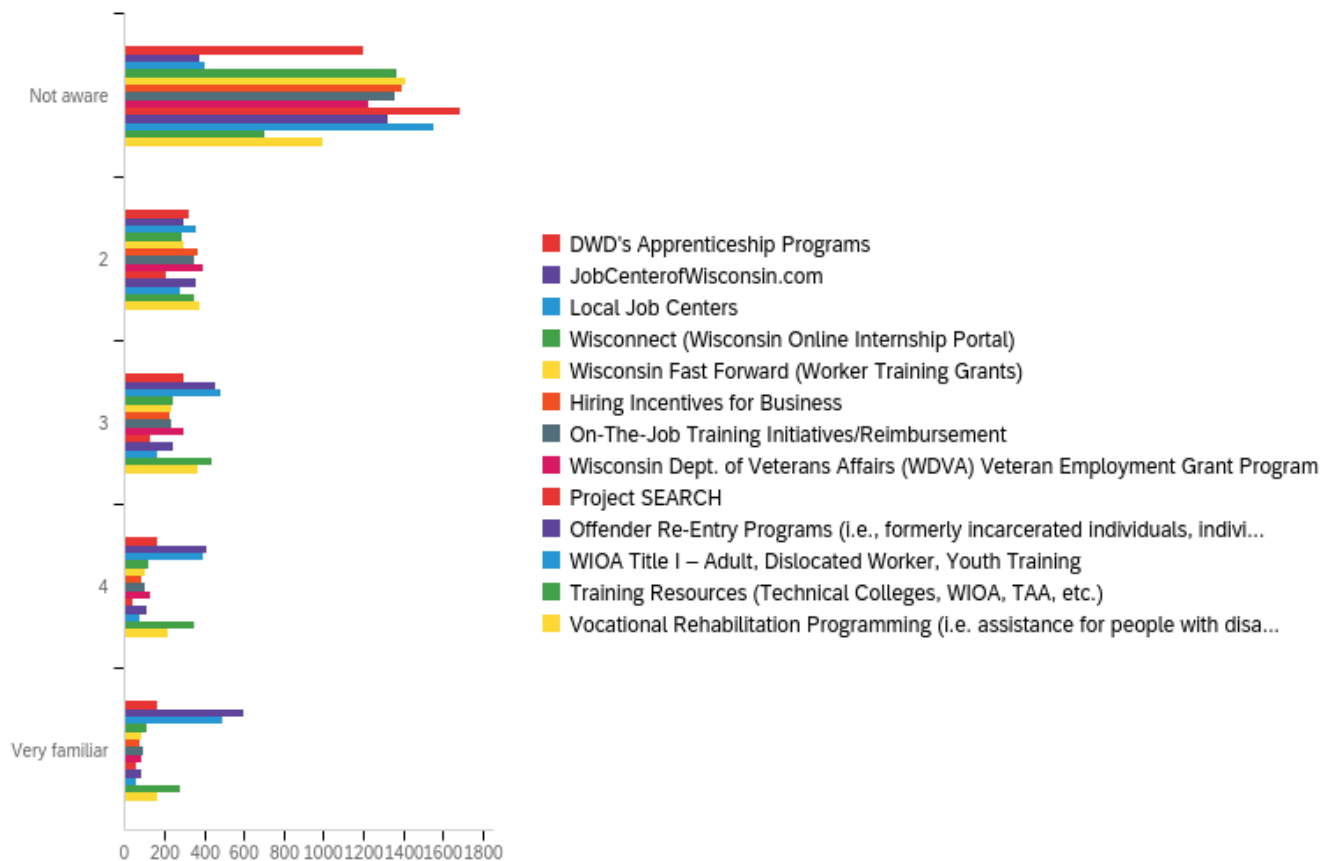
¹² WI Department of Workforce Development. "Press Release: DWD Announces a New Resource for Wisconsinites: Apprenticeship Navigators." May 10, 2021.

¹³ WI Department of Workforce Development, Governor’s Council on Workforce Investment. "Wisconsin's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Annual Report: Program Year 2020." November 30, 2021.

¹⁴ WI Department of Workforce Development. "Job Center of Wisconsin: Wisconsin – Monthly Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey Data." February 2022.

Employer Feedback

- Results from a business climate survey conducted in July 2021 showed a significant share of businesses (42.59 percent) believe that the presence of incentives would increase hiring of selected populations.
- Results from the same survey also showed a low level of awareness among the business community of training and educational programs offered by the state.



Workforce

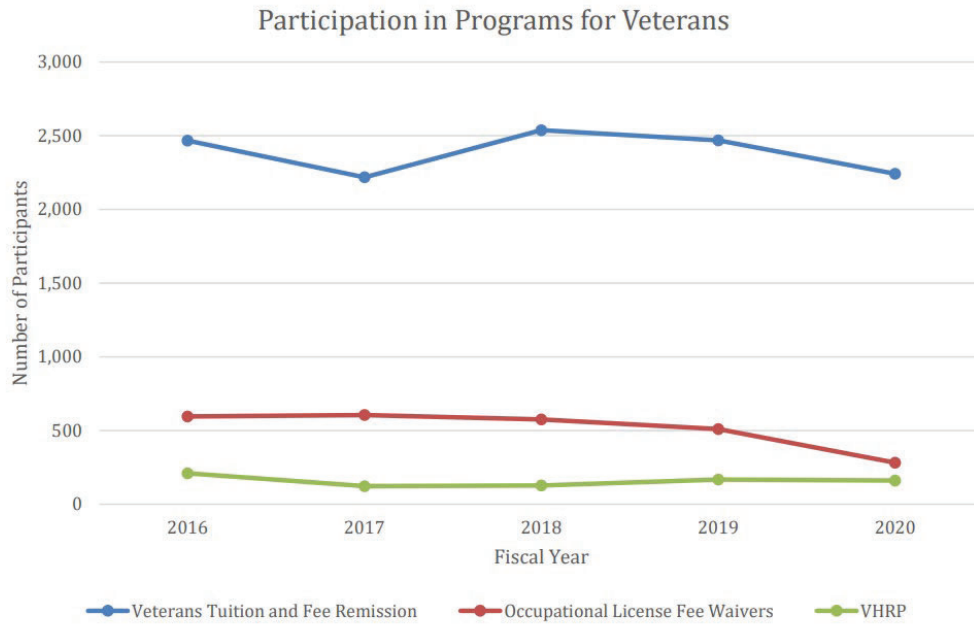
Individuals with Disabilities

- There are 677,250 individuals in the civilian, non-institutionalized population in Wisconsin that self-identify as having a significant disability, according to the 2019 American Community Survey.
- Almost half of these individuals (328,444) are of working age, generally defined as between the ages of 18 and 64. This constitutes almost 10 percent of the state's total working-age population. From that population, 144,156 individuals are employed and an additional 12,961 reported being unemployed (are actively seeking work). This results in an 8.3 percent unemployment rate within this group – a rate that is more than 2.5 times the state average over the same period.



Veteran Population

- Wisconsin's veteran population is a recognized priority in the provision of workforce development services. There are more than 140,000 veterans of working-age in Wisconsin, representing another vital potential workforce resource.
- The unemployment rate of Wisconsin's veteran population between the ages of 18 to 64 is slightly lower than that of the overall population (three percent compared to 3.1 percent - 2019 American Community Survey); however, that population's labor force participation rate is slightly lower than the state as a whole (by 1.4 percentage points).
- Over 16 percent of veterans in this age range experience some type of disability, compared to 9.1 percent for nonveterans.



Participation rates for service programs for veterans has been declining.¹⁵

Justice-Involved Individuals – Persons in our Care

- Another notable group that faces barriers to employment in Wisconsin is its incarcerated population. Over 23,500 inmates were under the custody of the Department of Corrections (DOC) at the start of 2020.
- Over 9,000 persons in our care (PIOC) are released back to their community each year.
- Of the PIOC population, 75 percent of the male population and 69 percent of the female population have a high school education or less.
- As of August 31, 2020, 591 PIOC completed a training in CTE/Vocational Programs to better prepare them for employment opportunities in high-demand fields (see details in table).¹⁶

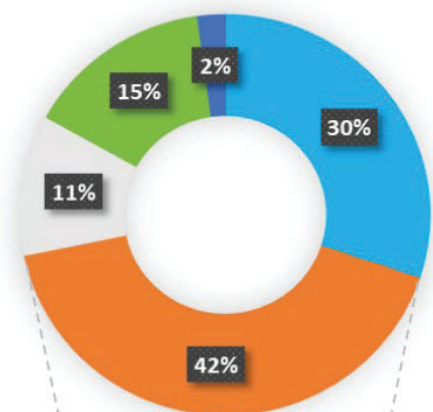
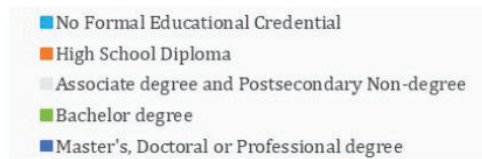
Number of Participants	Number of completions*	Released and eligible for work*	Employed at some point following release	Average Days to First Employment	First Average Starting Wage
CNC Operator (Gateway Technical College, MATC-Milwaukee)					
300	275	206	187 (91%)	58.4	\$14.01
Welding (SWTC, Nicolet Area Technical College, WITC, MATC-Milwaukee, Moraine Park Technical College)					
159	138	89	69 (78%)	53.4	\$14.67
Industrial/Mechanical Maintenance (Madison College, NATC, Gateway Technical College, NWTC, Western Technical College)					
150	133	62	49 (79%)	28.9	\$16.23
Construction/Carpentry (Madison College)					
24	23	14	12 (86%)	13	\$21.72
Dairy Worker Training (Moraine Park Technical College)					
16	16	15	13 (87%)	27.7	\$14.06
Refrigeration Essentials (Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College)					
6	6	1	1 (100%)	27	\$13.50
All Programs					
655	591	386	331 (86%)	51.2	\$14.67

¹⁵ Kelley, Margit; Lauer, Ethan & Koss, Tom. "The Organization of Wisconsin's Workforce Development System." Legislative Interim Research Report, Wisconsin Legislative Council. July 2021.

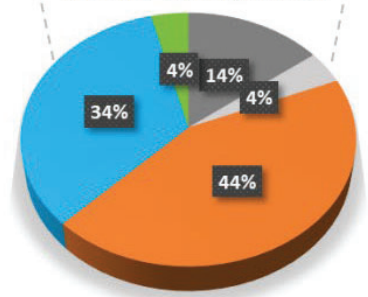
¹⁶ WI Department of Corrections. "Becky Young Community Corrections Recidivism Reduction Annual Report Fiscal Year 2020."

Projected Education and Training Needs

- Of the top 20 fastest growing occupations, those paying more than the state median annual wage of \$38,000 all require some post-secondary education such as technical college, university, apprenticeship, or professional degrees.¹⁷
- For the job openings that Wisconsin is projected to have through 2028, estimates for typical education or training that will be required are as follows:¹⁸
 - No formal educational credential – 30%
 - Associate, bachelor, master's, or doctoral degree education – 28%
 - High school diploma but no postsecondary education – 42%
 - For those job openings requiring only a high school diploma, about 86 percent will require some additional training as follows:
 - Apprenticeship – 14%
 - Short-term on-the-job training – 44%
 - Moderate-term on-the-job training – 34%
 - Long-term on-the-job training – 4%



High School Diploma Post-hire training needed



Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, Office of Economic Advisors, Wisconsin Employment Projections 2018-2028 and estimates from May 2018 BLS Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics data

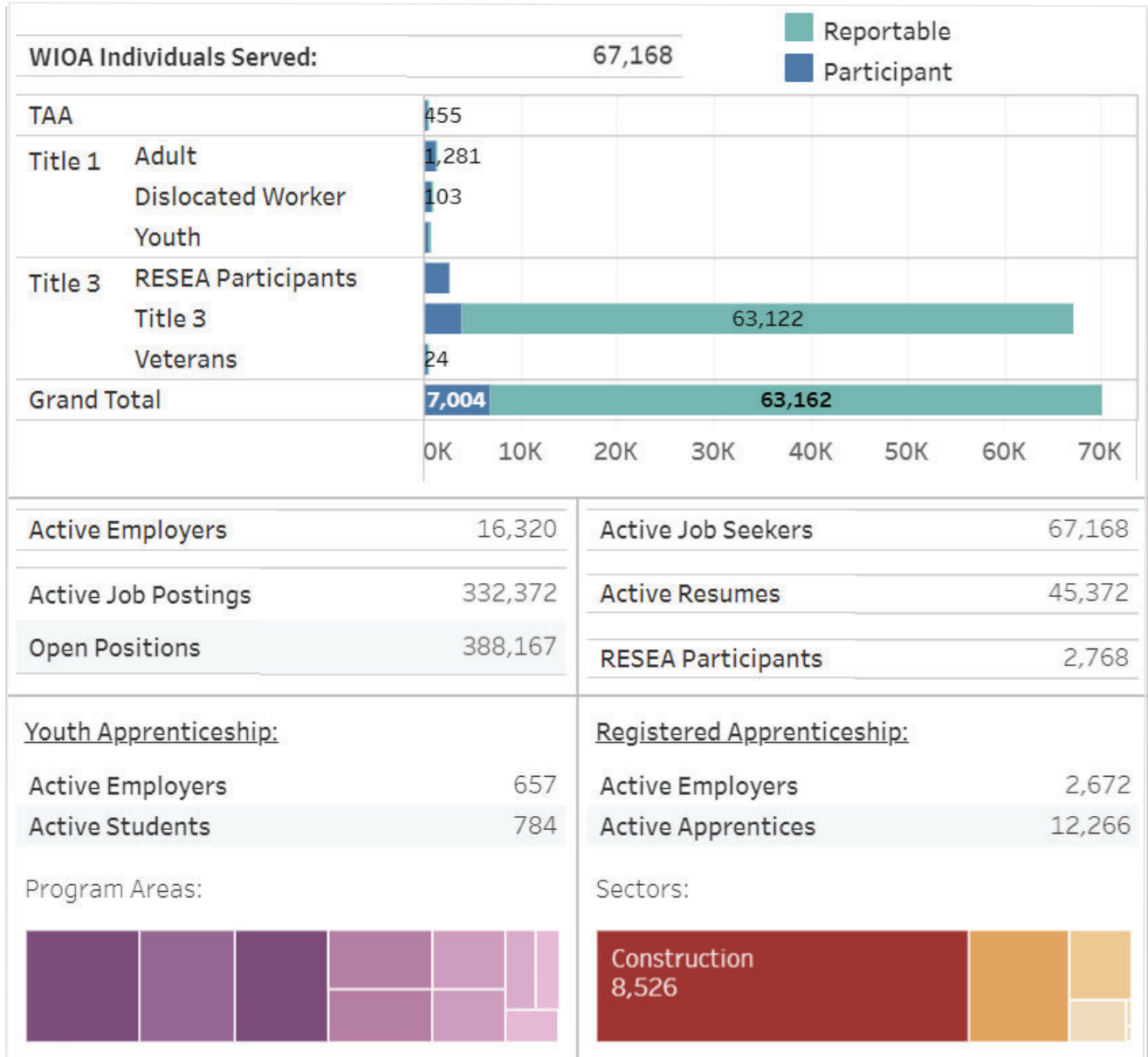


¹⁷ Kelley, Margit; Lauer, Ethan & Koss, Tom. "The Organization of Wisconsin's Workforce Development System; Appendix 1." Legislative Interim Research Report, Wisconsin Legislative Council. July 2021.

¹⁸ WI Department of Workforce Development, Office of Economic Advisors. "Understanding Wisconsin's Job Outlook: Industry & Occupation Projections in Brief." July 2021.

WIOA Participants

- In WIOA PY2020, Wisconsin served a total of 2,882 participants through WIOA Title I programming.¹⁹
- See table below for 2021 Q4 statistics of both the individuals served in DWD-run programs and the local employers who play an instrumental role in developing Wisconsin's Workforce (to view additional program-specific statistics for different time periods or geographic locations visit the Wisconsin Employment & Training Dashboard):



¹⁹ <https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/eta/performance/pdfs/PY2020/WisconsinWIOA%20AdultSPR.pdf>



Governor's Council on
Workforce Investment

2022 – 2026
Strategic Plan

FOCUS AREAS



Focus Area #1: Education

Reinvigorate Wisconsin's culture and value of education and innovation to fuel ideas, businesses, people, and the next generation for future economic well-being and ensure that individuals from all backgrounds have access to the education, training, and support they need to achieve their full potential.



Focus Area #2: Employers

Engage all employers to drive, build, and utilize Wisconsin's workforce development system.



Focus Area #3: Workforce

Increase Wisconsin's workforce participation by promoting infrastructure to improve access to job opportunities, incentivize workforce participation, and by improving the sustainability of work for individuals and families.



Focus Area #4: Organization & Resource Alignment

Advocate for resource alignment to maximize return on investment and use data for continuous improvement of the workforce system.



Focus Area #1: Education

Reinvigorate Wisconsin's culture and value of education and innovation to fuel ideas, businesses, people, and the next generation for future economic well-being and ensure that individuals from all backgrounds have access to the education, training, and support they need to achieve their full potential.

- **Objective 1A:** Early Childhood Education – Support the initiatives presented by the Departments of Public Instruction (DPI) and Children & Families (DCF) in the Preschool Development Grant Birth to 5 Statewide Strategic Plan to ensure that by 2023 all Wisconsin families will have access to high-quality, affordable, local early care and educational opportunities.
- **Objective 1B(i):** Career Pathways – Increase career exploration opportunities while students are in K-12 and provide all students the opportunity to participate in dual enrollment, earn a certificate/credential, or participate in work-based learning prior to high school graduation with emphasis on credentials where dual secondary and post-secondary academic credit is awarded.
- **Objective 1B(ii):** Career Pathways for Adults – Expand opportunities for adults from all populations to earn a certificate/credential, participate in work-based learning, and access other career pathway possibilities that allow fair and equitable access to meaningful, family-sustaining employment.
- **Objective 1C:** Entrepreneurship – Include or strengthen entrepreneurship as an outcome within workforce development and educational planning/programming.



Focus Area #2: Employers

Engage all employers to drive, build, and utilize Wisconsin's workforce development system.

- **Objective 2A:** Increase the number of employers that offer work-based learning experiences and lifelong training for all youth and adults.
- **Objective 2B:** Support employers' efforts to attract, hire and retain employees from all populations.
- **Objective 2C:** Expand opportunities for employers to provide input regarding their current and future workforce needs and requirements (e.g., specific skills, credentials, people, resources) to the workforce development system.
- **Objective 2D:** Improve employer awareness and utilization of the workforce development system.



Focus Area #3: Workforce

Increase Wisconsin's workforce participation by promoting infrastructure to improve access to job opportunities, incentivize workforce participation, and by improving the sustainability of work for individuals and families.

- **Objective 3A:** Strengthen collaboration and support the equity and inclusion plan to coordinate programs among public and private entities that can help historically underrepresented/under-resourced individuals and families overcome barriers to employment.
- **Objective 3B:** Incentivize workforce participation for individuals currently receiving public benefits in order to support their transition to sustainable employment.
- **Objective 3C:** Coordinate programs serving specific populations across the agencies to promote workforce participation.
- **Objective 3D:** Develop and promote strategies and programs for employers to attract and retain diverse talent/workforce.
- **Objective 3E:** Develop and target strategies that increase the number of individuals who are work and career ready.
- **Objective 3F:** Support policies that promote resilience of incumbent workers.



Focus Area #4: Organization & Resource Alignment

Advocate for resource alignment to maximize return on investment and use data for continuous improvement of the workforce system.

- **Objective 4A:** Identify and address the organizational and structural changes necessary to improve collaboration and accountability.
- **Objective 4B:** Continue developing a longitudinal data system and identify opportunity for collaboration and expand capacity to support evidence-based decision making.
- **Objective 4C:** Define and create an effective state and local partner communication strategy to increase awareness of workforce services.
- **Objective 4D:** Build a stronger, more coordinated relationship between state and local workforce partners.

OBJECTIVES, BENCHMARKS, AND ACTION ITEMS

**Focus Area #1: Education****Goal Statement**

Reinvigorate Wisconsin's culture and value of education and innovation to fuel ideas, businesses, people, and the next generation for future economic well-being and ensure that individuals from all backgrounds have access to the education, training, and support they need to achieve their full potential.

**OBJECTIVE
1A**

Early Childhood Education – Support the initiatives presented by the Departments of Public Instruction (DPI) and Children and Families (DCF) in the Preschool Development Grant Birth to 5 (PDG B-5) Statewide Strategic Plan¹ to ensure that by 2023 all Wisconsin families have access to high-quality, affordable, local early care and educational opportunities.

FUTURE (4-YEAR) BENCHMARK

- Successful implementation of the initiatives in the DPI/DCF Birth to 5 Statewide Strategic Plan
- Employers invest in improving access to early childhood care and education (*cross collaboration w/ Employer group)
- More state and federal funding invested for improving access to early childhood care and education - DCF conducting internal Key Performance Indicator process to determine appropriate benchmarks
- Child care centers that offer nontraditional models are available and accessible throughout the state - DCF conducting internal Key Performance Indicator process to determine appropriate benchmarks
- T.E.A.C.H. & REWARD benchmarks forthcoming (e.g., stipend recipients, total expenditures, avg. individual award amount annually)² – DCF conducting internal Key Performance Indicator process to determine appropriate benchmarks
- Children/families served by B-5 early care education (ECE) programs – DCF conducting internal Key Performance Indicator process to determine appropriate benchmarks
- Youngstar rating levels benchmarks forthcoming – DCF conducting internal Key Performance
- Average percentage of families' annual income spent on ECE in Wisconsin - DCF conducting internal Key Performance Indicator process to determine appropriate benchmarks
- Contracts with approximately 60 businesses via Project Growth's Partner Up! grant program
- Contract with 30 communities in Project Growth's Dream Up! grant program
- Expanded apprenticeship opportunities for early care education to more sites across the state
- Early Childhood Educator Apprentice Program will be offered at all schools in the Wisconsin Technical College System
- Ongoing monitoring, advocacy, and research to increase awareness, enrollment, and retention in WTCS ECE programs

¹ <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/childcare/pdf/pdg/b5-strategic-plan.pdf>

² WECA, Dec. 2021

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

Short Term Action Items (12 – 18 months)

- Develop "elevator speeches" on how to advocate/support the initiatives with succinct message on the various programs. Information/message will vary throughout the state based on geography and need. Action to make the elevator speeches as efficient as possible include:
 - Identify partners/audience
 - Craft message
 - Create outreach plan
 - Incorporate quantifiable metrics in outreach plan
- Engage in conversations with businesses and education leaders on how they can support early care and education training (e.g., promoting ways to reward the pursuit of early care and education training – including the T.E.A.C.H. program, providing salary supplements such as bonuses or promoting the REWARD program, supporting the true cost of care, providing on-site child care at businesses and educational sites, etc.)
- Promote with businesses and business stakeholders the availability of business/child care advocates to be hired at five regional sites in early 2022
- Promote the expansion of early care and education apprenticeships to more sites across the state
- Promote the need for alternate hours care among employers and find ways to incentivize those arrangements through public-private partnerships
- Promote participation in Project Growth's Partner Up! and Dream Up! grant programs

Medium Term Action Items (18 – 36 months)

- Evaluate what outreach methods were the most impactful/effective in the short-term action items
- Help identify funding locally or statewide that will help improve, reduce, or waive fees associated with entering the early care education profession (e.g., health and background checks)
- Advocate for the Governor and legislature to support DCF, DPI, and DHS biennial budget request for early childhood state system
- Promote the Wisconsin Early Education Shared Service Network (WEESN) to help early care and education programs create business plans that can help move them beyond 2- and 3-star ratings
- Supportive messaging and dissemination of research findings on the impacts and benefits of ECE programs

Long Term Action Items (3 – 4 years)

- Advocate for childcare subsidized based on actual operational costs of daycare facilities
- Invest in the early childhood labor market by advocating for wage standards based on education and qualification

OBJECTIVE 1B(i)

Career Pathways – Increase career exploration opportunities while students are in K-12 and provide all students the opportunity to participate in dual enrollment, earn a certificate/credential, or participate in work-based learning prior to high school graduation with emphasis on credentials where dual secondary and post-secondary credit is awarded.

FUTURE (4-YEAR) BENCHMARK

- School districts will fully implement Academic & Career Planning (ACP) so that all 8th and 12th graders have an academic and career plan upon middle school and high school graduation
- Students in 205 out of the 514 individual high schools (40%) will have access to at least one Regional Career Pathway (RCP) – over a 1.5x increase from current levels
- Increase awareness of dual enrollment opportunities and access for underrepresented populations

DPI Data Benchmarks, in 2024 – 2025:

- 4,321 Wisconsin employers (2.3%) will have provided a career based or work-based learning experience related to an RCP – a 4.6x increase from current levels
- 7% of high school students will have participated in work-based learning – a nearly 2x increase from current levels
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Focus – student participation in work-based learning will reflect the composition of the general high school population:
 - Individual from Economically Disadvantaged Families – 39.4%
 - Hispanic – 12.2%
 - Black – 8.1%
- 30% of high school students will have participated in a dual enrollment course – an increase of 7 percentage points from current levels
DEI Focus – student participation in dual enrollment will reflect the composition of the general high school population:
 - Individual with a Disability – 13.5%
 - Individual from Economically Disadvantaged Families – 39.4%
 - Black – 8.1%
- 9% of high school students will have earned an industry recognized credential – a nearly 2x increase from current levels
DEI Focus – student participation will reflect composition of the general high school population:
 - Individual from Economically Disadvantaged Families – 39.4%
 - Hispanic – 12.2%
 - Black 8.1%
- 35% of high school students will be Career & Technical Education (CTE) Concentrators – more than a 1.5x increase from current levels
DEI Focus – CTE Concentrators will reflect the composition of the general high school population:
 - Individual with a Disability – 13.5%
 - Individual from Economically Disadvantaged Families – 39.4%
 - Female – 48.5%
- 75% of students in 418 out of 421 Local Education Agencies (LEAs) will be actively engaged in Xello – a nearly 1.25x increase from current levels
 - Average number of student logins will be 10 per year – an average increase of nearly 2.5 student logins per year
- Increased state budget allocations for Academic & Career Planning, dual enrollment/Early College Credit Programs (ECCP), and career navigators/business and industry partnership consultants

2024 – 2025 State Funding Levels:

- ACP = \$2M (a nearly 2x increase from current levels)
- Dual enrollment = \$2M (current funding for ECCP is \$1.3M and only applies to dual enrollment at college. Increased funding would be applicable to dual enrollment at high school and college)
- Career navigators/business and industry partnership consultants = \$5M (no funding is currently allocated in the state budget)
- Every student is aware of these opportunities and comfortable interacting with these services/coaches
- Access for kids of all backgrounds and addressing the achievement gap
- Increased targeted education for all with a focus on minorities and disadvantaged youth

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

Short Term Action Items (12 – 18 months)

- Identify strategies and incentives that will encourage more employers to provide career-based and/or work-based learning experiences related to Regional Career Pathways (RCP) (e.g., job fairs, job shadowing, career fairs, classroom guest speakers, etc.)³ (*Cross collaboration w/ Employer Group)
- Learn and share best practices of employer supported career pathway models (i.e., what is the "gold standard")
- Identify barriers to school districts' abilities to fully implement ACP
 - Develop recommendations to address barriers
 - Celebrate success, give recognition, share best practices
- Identify barriers that prohibit students from participating and completing a dual enrollment course, industry-recognized credential, or work-based learning experience prior to graduation
 - Develop recommendations to address the identified barriers
- Review and analyze funding needs and amounts for PreK-12 career readiness. Develop recommendations that contain:
 - State Academic & Career Planning (ACP) allocation for software tools, evaluation, and professional development
 - Early College Credit Program (ECCP) allocation (current rules prevent school districts from fully utilizing this money)
 - CWI convenes the dual enrollment stakeholders that contributed to the Wisconsin Legislative Council Research Report on Dual Enrollment⁴
 - Identify and define role for career navigators
 - Explore return on investment (ROI) for providing career navigators and/or regional business and industry partnership consultants in the state
 - Develop model if evaluation show significant ROI
- Research current efforts to build awareness and utilization of Xello, Inspire, etc.
 - Compare Wisconsin school districts' utilization of Xello to school districts in other states to determine effective methods used by high performing states to increase awareness and utilization of Xello
 - Identify Wisconsin school districts that are using Xello/Inspire well and highlight the well performing districts as models of best practices
 - Make recommendations to increase the use of Xello and Inspire

Medium Term Action Items (18 – 36 months)

- Using the strategies identified in the short-term actions, work with employers to increase the number of individuals participating in employer-offered work-based learning experiences and lifelong training for all youth and adults (*Cross collaboration w/ Employer Group)
- Expand career pathways – with a focus on equity – to increase the number of students in a career pathway and ensure that every student has access to those pathways based on the RCP model
- Create advocacy talking points so the CWI can successfully advocate for new or amended legislation and additional state budget funding based on the recommendations related to:
 - Full ACP implementation to support all students having documented academic and career plans at the end of grades 8 and 12
 - Increasing participation in dual enrollment, industry-recognized credentials, and work-based learning
 - ACP budget allocation increase
 - ECCP budget allocation increase
 - New state funding for career navigators or regional business and industry partnership consultants

³ See DPI Career Based Experience Guide https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/acp/pdf/CBLE_guide_PC.pdf

⁴ https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/misc/lc/study/2020/2085/010_legislative_interim_research_report/liirr_dual_enroll

- Promoting the benefits of dual enrollment to Wisconsin families and employers, working towards equitable access and increased opportunities for currently underrepresented populations
- Advocate for the expansion of dual enrollment through increased funding and supportive measures on teaching qualifications
- Create advocacy talking points so the CWI can successfully advocate for the identified strategies/recommendations to encourage more students to become CTE Concentrators and close the equity gap
- Create a project plan to execute recommendations to increase the use of Xello and Inspire
- Create advocacy talking points so the CWI can successfully advocate for the use of Xello and Inspire
- Secure funding sources for career navigators or regional industry and business partnership consultants to execute communication/outreach efforts
- Increase awareness of career pathways and work-based learning among students, adults, parents, educators, guidance counselors, career counselors, American Job Center staff, supportive services program staff, and employers through RCP coordinators and collaborative partners

Long Term Action Items (3 – 4 years)

- Statewide expansion of career readiness efforts that are aligned with post-secondary industry needs and rooted in the ACP process

OBJECTIVE 1B(ii)

Adult Career Pathways – Expand opportunities for adults from all populations to earn a certificate/credential, participate in work-based learning, and access other career pathway possibilities that allow fair and equitable access to meaningful, family sustaining employment.

FUTURE (4-YEAR) BENCHMARK

- Survey results of American Job Center Staff show improved ease of use for adult career pathway customers
- Ongoing monitoring and research to increase awareness in support of gap mitigation for identifiable barriers
- Review of higher education data (e.g., enrollment patterns, attainment rate, WTCS Tableau dashboards, etc.) shows narrowing equity gaps
- Wisconsin nontraditional occupations⁵ (NTO) concentration is at or above the national labor market metric of 25%
- By 2027, 60% of the Wisconsin population between the ages of 25 and 64 will have a postsecondary credential⁶
- Expand Integrated Education & Training (IET) across all of Wisconsin and increase participation in career pathway programs
- Expanded participation and access for justice-involved populations in career pathways programs
- Improvements in inter-state license transfers (e.g., occupational license fee waivers for veterans)

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

Short Term Action Items (12 – 18 months)

- Provide tools for American Job Center staff that will allow them to help customers make informed choices on adult career pathway opportunities
- Promote Integrated Education & Training (IET) to WIOA partners, community-based organizations, families, employers, and other stakeholders to increase learner participation
- Advocate for increased General Purpose Revenue (GPR) funding for IET development in WTCS colleges
- Promote the hiring and training of justice-involved individuals and the work already being done to increase labor market participation
- Increase awareness of WIOA Title partner services for the justice-involved population to support a reduction in recidivism
- Support additional state investments in serving the justice-involved populations
- Identify and define what are considered "soft skills" – investigate whether employers' expectations take into account differing abilities; and examine employer policies that are considerate of barriers to employment in relation to soft skills (i.e., transportation issues connected to punctuality, child care availability in relation to schedule (in)flexibility, sensitivity regarding misconceptions of justice-involved individuals, etc.) (*Cross collaboration w/ Employer Group)
 - Review and analyze existing research and previously conducted reports
 - Include a section on soft skills and employer expectations when conducting next business climate survey
- Explore employer policies and evaluate whether they consider cultural nuances (e.g., religious differences in relation to schedules, holidays, accommodations, etc.) (*Cross collaboration w/ Employer Group)
- Analyze higher education data on enrollment patterns by student populations to try and determine potential causes of students from minority communities being overrepresented in programs and career clusters that may lead to lower wages
- Identify strategies to encourage more students to become CTE Concentrators and close equity gaps
 - Develop recommendations based on strategies identified

⁵ Nontraditional occupations (NTO) are defined by the US Department of Labor as jobs in which 25% or less of the workforce is either male or female and this particular gender is considered a minority in the field

⁶ <https://www.60forward.org/>

- CWI assist with supportive messaging and dissemination of findings within the WTCS action research projects
- Higher education efforts for justice-involved individuals – increase employer awareness of the value of these programs and a source for potential workers (*Cross collaboration w/ Employer Group)
- Ambassadors from the employer community to advocate to other employers for these programs/workers (*Cross collaboration w/ Employer Group)

Medium Term Action Items (18 – 36 months)

- Connect the K-12 career pathways work in objective 1B(i) to higher education career pathway programs
- Using the strategies identified in the short-term actions, work with employers to increase the number of individuals participating in employer-offered work-based learning experiences and lifelong training for all youth and adults (*Cross collaboration w/ Employer Group)
- Targeted promotion of NTO to high-wage, high-demand careers
- Educate employers regarding generational values and expectations regarding equity in pay, flexible schedules, and engagement in setting a workplace culture
- Educate employees/job seekers about conflict resolution, communicating expectations and needs, and the value of employee engagement and teamwork to support a positive workplace culture
- Increase license transferability across states

**OBJECTIVE
1C**

Entrepreneurship – Include or strengthen entrepreneurship as an outcome within workforce development and educational planning/programming

FUTURE (4-YEAR) BENCHMARK

- See an increase in the number of successful closed cases where the person has chosen an employment outcome that resulted in entrepreneur as their preferred career

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS**Short Term Action Items (12 – 18 months)**

- Document statewide partnerships for entrepreneurship (baseline data on partnerships and programs; and the projected growth of those programs for the future)
- Create a statewide cooperative of entrepreneurs that will share resources and information on entrepreneurship with those interested in becoming entrepreneurs
- Create an entrepreneurship mentorship program to encourage individuals to become entrepreneurs
- Explore collaboration opportunities with UW-Madison School of Business Entrepreneurship programs

Medium Term Action Items (18 – 36 months)

- Explore pursuing federal waivers to expand the amount of money local Workforce Development Boards are allowed to provide for entrepreneur training
 - Develop recommendations based on what is discovered
- Raise awareness to increase participation in the Governor's Business Plan Contest to encourage entrepreneurs in the startup stage of tech-enabled businesses in Wisconsin



Focus Area #2: Employers

Goal Statement

Engage all employers to drive, build, and utilize Wisconsin's workforce development system.

OBJECTIVE 2A

Increase the number of employers that offer work-based learning experiences and lifelong training for all youth and adults

FUTURE (4-YEAR) BENCHMARK

2-year Benchmark:

- Proposal brought to the Wisconsin Apprenticeship Advisory Council
 - Funding sources for proposal identified

4-year Benchmark:

- Increase participation beyond the current trajectory of the Youth Apprenticeship (YA) and Registered Apprenticeship (RA) programs
- Improved RA ROI for employers (e.g., RA extend term between education and hours that maximizes the return on investment for the employer) – fewer hours would be less money invested; however, any changes must be in compliance with apprenticeship standards
 - Work with the Apprenticeship Advisory Council to explore additional options to increase efficiencies
- Wisconsin Fast Forward training tied to college credit
- Increased utilization of WisConnect
- Increase in number of credentials obtained by WIOA Title I participants
- Increased wage growth for WIOA Title I participants

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

Short Term Action Items (12 – 18 months)

- Reduce burden on employers to participate in apprenticeship programs
- DWD Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards (DWD-BAS) conduct a lean assessment to find more efficiencies in the program for employers
- Introduce a lean process mapping to find short-term efficiencies to reduce paperwork for both YA and RA programs (e.g., a waiver system for the high school diploma or GED requirement)
- Identify companies with reduced involvement in the apprenticeship programs
- Identify companies with a RA program but not a YA program
 - Conduct outreach/communications with identified companies to solicit their participation and gather their feedback on reasons for their reduced involvement
- Coordinate with the Wisconsin Apprenticeship Advisory Council to identify solutions to address YA and RA misconceptions and employee retention concerns
 - Develop a proposal to implement the solutions identified for the Apprenticeship Advisory Council's consideration
- Strengthen connections between the YA program and RA program to support the "bridge" from YA to RA
 - Coordinate with DWD-BAS to determine what policy/procedure changes are needed for increased efficiencies in transferable credits/hours from YA to RA (e.g., transferable credits/hours from YA completer is identified for a bridge to RA, so it eliminates related instruction costs and time due to the "bridge effort")

- Support Wisconsin Fast Forward (WFF) funding efforts and possibly increase the amount of funding available to assist more employer/job seeker trainings tied to a career pathway
- Build on the initiatives from in 2017 Wis. Act 59 to continue the support and efforts to engage more schools in technical education (*Cross Collaboration w/ Education Group)
- Research Internship Draft Day (organized by the NEW Manufacturing Alliance) to replicate the model and implement statewide
- Highlight WisConnect's completely free functionality for both employers and students – a distinction from other internship posting sites

Medium Term Action Items (18 – 36 months)

- Develop a YA program specifically for at-risk youth
- Develop a strategy to introduce increase resources for YA and RA for the legislature to consider
- Coordinate with the University of Wisconsin System (UWS), Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU), and Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) to establish ways to connect WFF training to college credit

Long Term Action Items (3 – 4 years)

- Vertical integration of WisConnect – promote WisConnect to non-college students who could benefit from an internship (e.g., high school students and individuals exploring career transitions in which an internship or internship-like experience might benefit individuals and businesses)

OBJECTIVE 2B

Support employers' efforts to attract, hire, and retain employees from all populations

FUTURE (4-YEAR) BENCHMARK

- Reduction in the gap between Wisconsin's population and active civilian labor force
- Increased awareness of the availability and impact of Workforce Advancement Training (WAT)⁷ grant training and education so that more employers are able to take advantage of the training opportunities and more workers may advance their skills
- Development of a DEI certificate that is available to WTCS external stakeholders for participation
- Expanded Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) and similar student services/programs for veterans at higher education institutions across Wisconsin
- Increase in Fidelity Bonding Program utilization
- Increase in the number of Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) certifications
- Additional benchmarks established by ad hoc committees

Short Term Action Items (12 – 18 months)

- Develop ad hoc committees to focus on creating recommendations for child care and transportation needs
 - Research and develop legislation to assist with the addressing child care deserts in Wisconsin - including support for employers to establish on-site child care and subsidized assistance
 - Affordable housing strategy to provide an affordable rate for land (e.g., builders could be subsidized)
- Investment of coaches for persons with disabilities to retain more employees with additional supports that are needed
- Promote the benefit of Workforce Advancement Training (WAT) grant training to employers
- Promote the use of the DEI certificate with state agencies as well as employer partners
- Build awareness amongst employers of Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) to upscale their workforce with industry-recognized credentials
 - Promoting and messaging the positive impact that CPL can have on migration and retention for Wisconsin
- Support efforts and commitments to ensuring both active duty and military veterans receive the appropriate college credit for military education and training as applicable to their programs of study such as those demonstrated in the WAICU-member Joint Commitment to Accept Military Transfer Credit⁸

Medium Term Action Items (18 – 36 months)

- Targeted education to seasonal workers on other workforce programs such as WIOA Title I training and apprenticeship
- Incentivize current training programs (e.g., Wisconsin Fast Forward grant application incentives, incentives in Workforce Solutions Initiatives grants, etc.) to increase the number of participants from historically marginalized populations
- Submit legislative recommendation for child care to assist employers and employees
 - Submit legislative recommendations for transportation to assist employers and employees
 - Coordinate with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) for input on project lead
 - Examine the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) Flex Ride app program as a potential template/pilot project to consider

⁷ <https://www.wtcsystem.edu/workforce-solutions/customized-instruction/>

⁸ <https://www.wisconsinprivatecolleges.org/student-resources/veterans-wisconsins-private-colleges>

- Develop strategies to help employers train, hire, and retain justice-involved individuals
- Advocate for increased funding for WAT grants
- Increase technical assistance to colleges to positively impact the adoption of CPL

Long Term Action Items (3 – 4 years)

- Longer term project targeted towards the nursing schools – there is a huge demand for nursing programs and clinical sites, however there is little incentive to become a nursing instructor, which requires a doctorate, but generally is subject to academic pay scales below those for nurses employed in hospital management and having a bachelor's or master's degree. (*Cross-collaboration item w/ Education group)
- Proposed relocation tax credit for high-skilled workers and a tax credit for Wisconsin college graduates that remain in Wisconsin to work after graduation (*potential deliverable for an ad hoc committee)

**OBJECTIVE
2C**

Expand opportunities for employers to provide input regarding their current and future workforce needs and requirements (e.g., specific skills, credentials, people, resources) to the workforce development system

FUTURE (4-YEAR) BENCHMARK

- Employer input influences the training programs that are delivered throughout the state
- Improved collaboration between specific task forces, commissions, groups, etc. to coordinate and align services (e.g., rural broadband)
- Requirements tied to funding for regional development
- Sector partnerships established and regional sector champions identified

Short Term Action Items (12 – 18 months)

- Support efforts to increase visibility of Industry 4.0 –
 - Replicate St. Norbert occupational needs survey
 - Adjust training programs based on feedback from survey
- Take an inventory of occupational studies that are occurring within the state (e.g., state agencies, community-based organizations, etc.)
- Coordinate with Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) survey on occupations and use those results to build and expand opportunities to meet the future workforce

Medium Term Action Items (18 – 36 months)

- Build on inputs from regional employer champions to reinvigorate or revitalize a sector strategy approach and confirm “proof of concept” before expanding more broadly
- Engage key stakeholders/leaders from various state agencies, task forces, commissions, etc. to regularly participate in CWI meetings to hear input from CWI business members, employer champions, public comments, etc. regarding their workforce concerns and priorities
 - Develop productive working relationships among workforce partners, agency staff, local Workforce Development Boards, educational institutions, and employers to identify common goals and work towards continuous improvements
 - Development of a LEADERS group for businesses to be a "champion" to be a relationship builder and connector (i.e., think that businesses are mentors for other up and growing businesses)

Long Term Action Items (3 – 4 years)

- DWD-BAS build a strategic plan for both YA and RA in collaboration with employer and education involvement
- Align the number of new degree programs at WTCS, UWS and WAICU developed based on occupational study evaluations
- Include Industry 4.0 as a type of credential for which schools can receive additional funding for students earning credentials based on 2017 Wis. Act 59

OBJECTIVE 2D

Improve employer awareness of and utilization of the workforce development system

FUTURE (4-YEAR) BENCHMARK

- Business climate survey results show improved awareness and utilization of the workforce development system by employers
- Legislative funding secured for awareness/outreach campaign – campaign success measured by hits/engagement of social media posts, advertisements, etc.
- Grant funding received for outreach services
- DCF Market Penetration Rate⁹ at 10.5% - a 25% growth from current levels
- 1,500 TANF transitional job participants (including Transform Milwaukee Jobs)
- Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program performance measures - DCF conducting internal Key Performance Indicator process to determine appropriate benchmarks
- Improved Employer Penetration Rate¹⁰
- Improved Repeat Business Customer Rate¹¹

Short Term Action Items (12 – 18 months)

- Inventory of various trade shows/conferences attended by employers that can be used to target speaking engagements and information sharing
- Identify memberships with employer networks around the state and join (when possible) to build networks and relationships
- Engage and participate in sector strategies by sending speakers/individuals to meetings, events, etc.
- Connect with Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) organizations (local and statewide) to engage with workforce and educational systems
- Create messaging for businesses to share in their newsletters, sector organizations, chambers of commerce, etc.
- Assist in promoting and increasing the visibility of W-2, Transitional Jobs (including Transform Milwaukee), and Wisconsin Shares Programs

Medium Term Action Items (18 – 36 months)

- Advocate for marketing funding for workforce development services
- Develop strategies to interact with employers not typically connected to the workforce system (e.g., entrepreneurs, small businesses under 50 employees, etc.) at no cost to the employer
- Replicate the 2021 CWI/DWD/UW-Oshkosh Business Climate Survey after two years to evaluate if efforts are working effectively to have desired impact
- Encourage businesses to refer employees to early care and education resources that can assist employees in finding child care and other family supports/benefits, such as child care resource and referral agencies and Family Resource Centers

⁹ Market Penetration Rate (MPR) refers to the ability to successfully reach eligible participants and get them in the W-2 program. It is a better measure than caseload because it measures effectiveness as a program in reaching participants, and not just the economic conditions of the moment.

¹⁰ Employer penetration rate tracks the percentage of employers who are using the services out of all employers in the state

¹¹ Percentage of employers receiving services in a given year who also received services within the previous three years

Long Term Action Items (3 – 4 years)

- Create a marketing plan following the obtaining of funding
- Tie in the recommendations of the Job Center Task Force on branding and funding
- Conduct the CWI/DWD/UW-Oshkosh Business Climate Survey again after four years to see if progress has been made on the evaluation



Focus Area #3: Workforce

Goal Statement

Increase Wisconsin's workforce participation by promoting infrastructure to improve access to job opportunities, incentivize workforce participation, and by improving the sustainability of work for individuals and families.

OBJECTIVE 3A

Strengthen collaboration and support the equity and inclusion plan to coordinate programs among public and private entities that can help historically underrepresented/under-resourced individuals and families overcome barriers to employment

FUTURE (4-YEAR) BENCHMARK

- All programs have a DEI lens through which they are reviewed for equity and inclusion
- All customer service policies are neutral/culturally competent
- Cultural competency training, cataloguing resources for business and job seekers are implemented statewide
- Workforce Solutions Initiatives Grants measurables/outcomes
- Increased number of minority contracts in place with state agencies
- Increased number of businesses currently certified as Minority-Owned Business Enterprises (MBEs) or Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Businesses (DVBs)

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

Short Term Action Items (12 – 18 months)

- Division of Personnel Management (DPM) review existing policies with a DEI lens
- Coordinate with Governor Evers' Council on Equity and Inclusion for strategies to work with employers and businesses to increase minority contracts

Medium Term Action Items (18 – 36 months)

- Development of a catalogue or resource tool for business to help increase competencies statewide (could be built into subsequent contracts that require training)
- Governor Evers' \$130 million Workforce Solutions Initiatives Grants – highlight programs that focus on job seekers with barriers to employment

Long Term Action Items (3 – 4 years)

- Align efforts that are common across state agencies equity and inclusion action plans (created under the direction of Governor Evers' Executive Order #59¹²) to make practices more efficient and consistent across state government

¹² Executive Order #59, Relating to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in State Government

OBJECTIVE 3B

Incentivize workforce participation for individuals currently receiving public benefits in order to support their transition to sustainable employment

FUTURE (4-YEAR) BENCHMARK

- Increased labor force participation rates by demographic groups with historically lower rates (e.g., age, sex, race, educational attainment level, military service, disability status, Medicaid participation, etc.)
- Alleviate barriers to access of child care, transportation, and housing – additional benchmarks established by ad hoc committees
- Increase wage growth among WIOA Title I participants
- Achievement of Economic Self-Sufficiency (ESS) for WIOA Title I participants – measured by ESS data collected at the time a participant exits from WIOA Title I program due to them obtaining unsubsidized employment (this metric does not currently exist but would be implemented in the short-term through a policy change)

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

Short Term Action Items (12 – 18 months)

- Establish an outreach effort to educate employers throughout Wisconsin on methods to up-skill and/or hire individuals receiving public benefits
- Promote employer awareness of incentives to employ individuals with barriers to employment (*Cross collaboration w/ Employer Group)
- Establish policy in the WIOA Youth Program requiring use of the Economic Self-Sufficiency Calculator at required intervals – including program entry (aligned with existing Adult and Dislocated Worker Program policy) and program exit
- Establish policy in all WIOA Title I-B programs (i.e., Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) requiring the completion of an ESS calculation at the time a participant exits the program (assuming the exit is due to the participant obtaining unsubsidized employment)

Medium Term Action Items (18 – 36 months)

- Propose to the legislature increased funding for transportation assistance programs designed to get people back to work

Long Term Action Items (3 – 4 years)

- Create a work group/task force to discuss policy development for people to enter and remain in the workforce
 - Eliminate (as much as possible) benefit cliff issues that exist in public programs and policies that may discourage individuals from entering/advancing in the workforce
 - Prioritize which "benefit cliffs" to target
 - Promote a dynamic approach to policy to meet current needs
 - Foster a policy environment that encourages people to work

**OBJECTIVE
3C**

Coordinate programs serving specific populations across the agencies to promote workforce participation

FUTURE (4-YEAR) BENCHMARK

- Coordination among data collection systems – establish dashboards to demonstrate coordination and data collection
- Incentivized collaboration and increased accountability of partners for improved coordination

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS**Short Term Action Items (12 – 18 months)**

- Task the CWI ad hoc committees to develop a common understanding of the unique experiences of each priority population (e.g., individuals with disabilities, justice-involved individuals, foster care, substance abuse issues, etc.) in relation to the scope of the ad hoc committee

Medium Term Action Items (18 – 36 months)

- Educate employers, state agencies, etc. about the common understanding of unique experiences of each priority population based on ad hoc committees' information

Long Term Action Items (3 – 4 years)

- Improve effectiveness of co-enrollment in workforce programs
- Ensure that data/case management systems for all programs are interconnected and able to communicate with one another

**OBJECTIVE
3D****Develop and promote strategies and programs for employers to attract and retain diverse talent/workforce****FUTURE (4-YEAR) BENCHMARK**

- Increased employer awareness and education of available services, including translation services, especially for small businesses
- Improved measures on how employers are using services through tax deductions that support diversity training – increased utilization of work experience, training, On-The-Job-Trainings (OJTs), and bonding
- Increase the number of individuals receiving OJTs
- Increase the number of participants in the Wisconsin Fast Forward (WFF) Program
- Increase participation in DWD's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DWD-DVR) programs
- Be on track to reach the 5-year target for the DWD-DVR career pathways grant (5-year target is 500 consumers into STEM related career pathways)
- 550 W-2 participants recorded as having completed a vocational training while on the caseload – a 20% growth from current levels
- Established employer resource networks to increase worker placement and retention

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS**Short Term Action Items (12 – 18 months)**

- Promote and raise employer awareness of incentives to employ individuals with barriers to employment
- Educate the employer community on the benefits of hiring individuals with barriers to employment such as longer retention and equal performance of those without barriers (focus on Limited English Proficiency as part of the education/awareness)
- Assist in promoting and increasing the visibility of W-2, Transitional Jobs (including Transform Milwaukee Jobs), and Wisconsin Shares programs

Medium Term Action Items (18 – 36 months)

- Help employers be more effective with outreach to non-English speaking communities by providing translation of services that can assist employers in hiring a more diverse workforce
- Ensure job centers throughout the state have adequate staffing of bi-lingual persons
- Improve outreach to potential participants and employers regarding training programs and opportunities that are beneficial for both the worker and the employer
- Develop methods to increase efficiencies and remove obstacles so that it is easier to participate in available programs (e.g., standardizing and streamlining forms, contracts, templates, etc.)

Long Term Action Items (3 – 4 years)

- Ensure the success of DWD Division of Vocational Rehabilitation \$14 million innovation grant for increasing the number of people with disabilities to get into career pathways

**OBJECTIVE
3E**

Develop and target strategies that increase the number of individuals who are work and career ready

FUTURE (4-YEAR) BENCHMARK

- Enhanced re-entry programs by DWD and the Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC)
 - Increase in the number of re-entry participants receiving GEDs
 - Increase in the number of credentials earned by re-entry participants
- Manufacturing training – longevity in work participation, hard skills training
- Increase the number of programs with industry-validated Technical Skills Attainment (TSA)
- By 2027, 60% of the Wisconsin population between the ages of 25 and 64 will have a postsecondary credential

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS**Short Term Action Items (12 – 18 months)**

- Connect with Wisconsin Literacy Inc. to support job services resources
- Introduce students to workforce tools
- Evaluate components of successful Wisconsin Fast Forward Grant with Lakeshore Technical College to train people to maintain 40-50 hours a week of manufacturing (endurance training).
- Replicate successful training with other employers and tech colleges
- Promote relevant, industry-validated education and training that is provided by WTCS
- Promote the 60Forward initiative with Wisconsin families, employers, and WIOA partners

Medium Term Action Items (18 – 36 months)

- Submit proposal to the legislature for increased funding for re-entry programs by DWD and DOC
- Support state GPR investment and student financial aid to support continued innovation to reach credential attainment goal of 60Forward

Long Term Action Items (3 – 4 years)

- Increase awareness in correctional institutions about programs that help justice-involved individuals obtain credentials and GEDs
- Increase the number of individuals receiving credentials under WIOA Title I funds

OBJECTIVE 3F

Support policies that promote resilience of incumbent workers

FUTURE (4-YEAR) BENCHMARK

- Worker Connection Program (Workforce Solutions Initiatives Grant) successful outcomes
- Improve the availability of child care centers throughout the state (e.g., quantity, geographic distribution, affordability, etc.)
- Increased wages of child care workers - DCF conducting internal Key Performance Indicator process to determine appropriate benchmarks
- Address issues causing disparities in the number of women participating in the workforce
- Benchmark related to child care center availability and closures during the pandemic - DCF conducting internal Key Performance Indicator process to determine appropriate benchmarks

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

Short Term Action Items (12 – 18 months)

- Create a bridge between the work of Early Childhood Advisory Council and the business community
- Promote business investment in early care and education statewide by:
 - Promoting employers' investment in workforce engagement strategies presented in the Preschool Development Grant Birth to 5 Statewide Strategic Plan
 - Promoting innovative early care and education ideas that employers can use to help their employees access high-quality, affordable, local early care and educational opportunities (e.g., allowing employees opt-in choices to receive support with child care or other family-related benefits, setting up referral processes to connect employees to early care and education resources such as family navigators)
 - Utilizing business models such as those described in the Birth to 5 Statewide Strategic Plan Appendix D¹³ and participation in Project Growth

Medium Term Action Items (18 – 36 months)

- Measure success of Worker Connection Program – potentially duplicate successful/best practices
- Work with business and economic development leaders to identify:
 - Innovations and collaboration opportunities that will increase resources for families and decrease operating costs for programs and provide access to affordable child care, including connecting with the Supporting Families Together Association to promote business and child care partnerships such as Project Growth's Partner Up! grant program
 - Funding locally or statewide that will cover capital expenses to enhance or build new child care centers in communities where there is unmet need and a plan for expansion

Long Term Action Items (3 – 4 years)

- Address Wisconsin Shares System – research additional funding streams including K-3 and K-4, maternity leave, etc.
- Research incentives for employer sponsored benefit options to support child care/education (birth-12) (e.g., smart growth within business parks)
- Implement strategies to increase wages for child care workers

¹³ <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/childcare/pdf/pdg/b5-strategic-plan.pdf>



Focus Area #4: Organization & Resource Alignment

Goal Statement

Advocate for resource alignment to maximize return on investment and use data for continuous improvement of the workforce system.

OBJECTIVE 4A

Identify and address the organizational and structural changes necessary to improve collaboration and accountability

FUTURE (4-YEAR) BENCHMARK

- Benchmarks will focus on collaboration and accountability:
 - Strengthened partnerships and collaboration across state agencies and with community-based organizations and additional stakeholders
 - Defined measurement of accountability (i.e., is it determined by customer satisfaction, customer outcomes, or other metrics)
- Established a standard operating procedure for referrals
- Have a system in place for tracking and measuring referrals across agencies/organizations
- Maximize resources of agencies that are workforce development partners (e.g., SNAP, WIOA, W-2/TANF, WTCS etc.)
- Measures on the collaboration and referrals between community-based organization and state/federal programs – these measures could influence local planning planes (e.g., include in local planning guides, MOUs, etc.)

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

Short Term Action Items (12 – 18 months)

- Evaluate existing partnerships and collaboration in the workforce system to discover where there are gaps and opportunities for additional collaborations (i.e., determine where there needs to be collaboration where there is none currently and decide what additional collaboration is needed and how it needs to be done)
- Identify accountability for reaching out to these partners/associations – including private organizations as well as state agencies
- Collect baseline data on customer satisfaction/outcomes for related accountability measures

Medium Term Action Items (18 – 36 months)

- Create procedure for "common intake" – a standard operating procedure for how referrals are processed and tracked
- Include instructions on the standard operating procedures for common intake and referrals in the local planning guides and MOUs for local Workforce Development Board plans
- Develop Key Performance Indicators (KPI) measures

Long Term Action Items (3 – 4 years)

- Embed the KPI measures that were developed in the medium-term action items
- Measure customer satisfaction for both job seekers and employers

**OBJECTIVE
4B**

Continue developing a longitudinal data system and identify opportunity for collaboration and expand capacity to support evidence-based decision making

FUTURE (4-YEAR) BENCHMARK

- Complete sharing of data across partners
- Longitudinal data system that can track information from when people enter school onto their working life – what services, education, and training did they receive; what are the successful paths to a career and work life (e.g., earnings, advancement, self sufficiency)
- The CWI uses the data governance as a tool for policy work

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS**Short Term Action Items (12 – 18 months)**

- Review what other states are doing related to data governance and longitudinal data systems
- Identify gaps in data sharing and access
- Continued movement on data governance and advancement on a longitudinal data system

Medium Term Action Items (18 – 36 months)

- Work towards resolutions of the gaps identified in the short-term action items

**OBJECTIVE
4C**

Define and create an effective state and local partner communication strategy to increase awareness of workforce services

FUTURE (4-YEAR) BENCHMARK

- Increased utilization of business relationships – demonstrated through the number of contacts, job postings, engagement with job centers, apprenticeship participation, etc.
- Business climate survey results show improved awareness and utilization of the workforce development system by job seekers
- Measured effectiveness of WIOA Executive Committee/Job Center Task Force rebranding to businesses and job seekers
- Measured effectiveness of outreach and communications (e.g., elevator speeches)

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS**Short Term Action Items (12 – 18 months)**

- Identify target audiences and appropriate communication methods based on audience type (e.g., employers, educators, students, job seekers, etc.)
- Coordinate between all CWI Committees to ensure messaging is aligned but tailored to appropriately match each committee's focus area

Medium Term Action Items (18 – 36 months)

- Deliver communications on workforce programs to help promote services to partners within the workforce system including educational providers, community-based organizations, business partners, etc.
- Develop elevator speeches on workforce programs

OBJECTIVE 4D **Build a stronger, more coordinated relationship between state and local workforce partners**

FUTURE (4-YEAR) BENCHMARK

- Workforce Innovation Grants (Workforce Solutions Initiatives) successful outcomes
- Engagement with other community leaders and business owners to promote workforce services
- Share performance measures and "contextual" trainings offered (i.e., training delivered in a contextual format to achieve higher success) – measures of success could include bridge programs, Adult Basic Education (ABE) and skills training programs

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

Short Term Action Items (12 – 18 months)

- Develop communications on how to consistently collaborate and inform other stakeholders
 - Determine how to purposefully share information with a point of contact who can effectively and efficiently distribute it throughout their network
 - Access statewide organizations and chambers of commerce across the state to distribute messages
- Maintain strong collaborations (and shared accountability for performance) with traditional WIOA partners while improving collaboration with additional partners (e.g., HUD, WEDC, etc.)
- Invite new or potential partners from relevant groups to participate in CWI meetings to encourage regular sharing of information
- Capture examples of collaboration to showcase and share best practices (note: a data system is needed to help communicate this information)
- Identify best practices for integrated service delivery (i.e., collaboration) across the state and with local Workforce Development Areas
- Develop and implement a plan for communicating those findings
- Develop ways the CWI WIOA Compliance & Resource Alignment Committee will help showcase the benefits and successful outcomes from stronger/coordinated relationships (e.g., a report or combined report, WIOA conference or roundtable, an awards program or acknowledgement approach, referral systems outcomes, promising practices identified from longitudinal data following participant's workforce journey)

Medium Term Action Items (18 – 36 months)

- Formalize areas of collaboration/best practice and promote them statewide
 - Areas could include tools for developing policy, MOUs, procedures that can be replicated, etc.
- Promote contextual training and increase engagement/participation
- Decrease the number of qualifying tests and assessments across programs
 - Develop policy or guidance to allow scores to be accepted across programs

Long Term Action Items (3 – 4 years)

- Measure success of implementing these best practices and determine if they can be easily replicated and if they are appropriate in different regions of the state



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