

Gov. Walker: Highlights economy, workforce development investments in Milwaukee

Posted on Friday, Jun 23, 2017

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Contact:

Tom Evenson

(608) 266-2839

MILWAUKEE - Governor Scott Walker joined Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Ray Allen, Department of Health Services Secretary Linda Seemeyer, and Department of Children and Families (DCF) Secretary Eloise Anderson today in visiting Word of Hope Ministries, Inc. in Milwaukee to highlight Milwaukee's record low unemployment rate as well as over \$1.6 million in Wisconsin Fast Forward (WFF) - Manufacturing Grant Awards.

In May 2017, the City of Milwaukee tied for its lowest unemployment rate on record at 4.0 percent. Additionally, Milwaukee County is at its lowest unemployment rate on record for the month of May.

"When we first took office, our unemployment rate was 8.1 percent, so our top priority was connecting people to good-paying jobs," Governor Walker said. "Now, the unemployment rate for our state is 3.1 percent, and our priority has shifted from jobs, jobs, jobs to workforce, workforce, workforce. Now is the time for us to continue investing in our workforce to ensure the success of Wisconsin for generations to come."

Word of Hope Ministries, Inc. is a pillar of the Milwaukee community and a key resource for workforce development. Last fall, Word of Hope received a \$200,000 grant from the WFF Milwaukee Grant Program. Working with two separate

employers - Patrick Cudahy and Quad Graphics - Word of Hope is contracted to train 300 total employees. Word of Hope has already held two training sessions and 38 individuals completed job training.

The new round of WFF grants Governor Walker announced today continue to benefit Milwaukee and surrounding areas, including \$185,862 to Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership, Inc. (WRTP/BIG STEP), a Milwaukee non-profit, and a \$98,617 grant that includes Milwaukee Area Technical College as a training partner. Altogether, the new WFF grants total more than \$1.6 million and will go towards funding 16 worker training projects that will benefit nearly 1,300 workers and more than 40 manufacturers statewide.

During the past four years, Governor Walker has invested more than \$200 million of state funding in workforce development, including \$30 million in WFF grants to Wisconsin employers for customized skills training to fill current job openings and ongoing skill requirements. DWD has awarded more than \$20 million in WFF grant contracts to date, supporting more than 200 worker training projects, benefiting hundreds of businesses and thousands of workers throughout Wisconsin.

“The future success of our state depends upon our ability to provide our next generation of workers with the practical skills and knowledge they need to thrive in the 21st-century workforce,” Governor Walker added. “With the help of state agencies like DWD and other workforce partners throughout the state, we’re making crucial investments in workforce development. Job opportunities exist in Milwaukee and all throughout the state - now we’re focused on bridging the skills gap and empowering Wisconsin’s workers.”