

# Workforce Development Secretary Allen: Gov. Walker's investment in workforce vital to continued growth

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CONTACT: DWD Communications, [608-266-2722](tel:608-266-2722)

With a state unemployment rate at a 16-year low, the number of employed Wisconsinites at an all-time high and a labor force participation rate that is among best in the nation, our state's workforce and job creators are connecting talent with opportunity in every Wisconsin community.

Governor Scott Walker's 2017-19 budget further cements his commitment to develop Wisconsin's talent through solutions that address what is arguably employers' greatest challenge: finding skilled workers to fill openings today and in the months and years to come.

Examples of talent development innovations included in the Governor's budget proposal include:

- Funding increases for the Wisconsin Fast Forward worker training grant program by \$12.6 million, along with greater flexibility to increase support for existing programs like Youth Apprenticeship, Registered Apprenticeship and collaborative dual enrollment innovations. Also included are resources to launch community-based nursing training programs for middle and high school students, advance internships, expand summer job programs and partner with technical colleges to deliver in-demand skills training.
- Creation of a Teacher Development Program, which supports collaborations between schools of education and school districts to provide intensive curriculum and classroom training for certain school employees to earn a teaching license.
- Additional investments to prepare offenders who are in prison or returning to the community with skills to obtain good-paying jobs.
- Occupational licensing reform through a new panel that will review licenses to

determine whether they are necessary to protect the health and safety of the public.

- Increased investments in Fabrication Laboratories or Fab Labs to connect students with advanced manufacturing training while still in school.

Under Governor Walker's leadership, the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development is the state's premier talent development agency, providing employers and workers with proven solutions that match workers' skills with employers who have positions to fill.

I applaud the Governor for proposing a budget that will enable our agency, along with other state agencies, to build on the quality services we deliver to the people of Wisconsin while ensuring all programs operate as efficiently as possible.

For our part, we will remain committed to advancing a talent development system that supports a robust talent pipeline for employers and gives every person in Wisconsin who wants a job the skills and opportunity to find a job.