

# Dept. of Workforce Development: Helping small contractors & suppliers expand qualified workforce

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MADISON – The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) is spearheading a multi-agency state effort to equip small construction businesses and suppliers with the tools they need to access both capital and qualified workers to compete for Wisconsin Valley-related projects. Two Wisconsin Valley Small Business Capacity Building Sessions targeting smaller contractors — including those owned by women, minorities and veterans — will be held in Milwaukee and Racine later this month.

“Competition for job candidates is at an all-time high in construction,” said Brian Mitchell, president of Choice Construction, Inc. and the National Association of Minority Contractors-Wisconsin Chapter. “It is imperative that the public and private sectors work together to attract and train more individuals for family-supporting careers in this industry in order to continue building Wisconsin.”

DWD Secretary Ray Allen pointed out that the construction of the Wisconsin Valley Science and Technology Park is expected to create tens of thousands of direct and indirect construction-related jobs.

“With Wisconsin’s unemployment rate at historic lows, it will require innovative public-private partnerships to expand the number of residents in the labor market and ensure they have quality training in construction trades,” Secretary Allen said.

The capacity building sessions – targeting certified small and disadvantaged businesses, lending institutions, chambers of commerce and other business associations and resources – are scheduled for:

- Wednesday, August 15, from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. at UMOS, Inc., [2701 S. Chase Ave., Milwaukee](#).
- Friday, August 24, from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the SC Johnson iMET Center, [2320 Renaissance Blvd, Sturtevant](#).

The capacity building sessions have been organized by DWD and the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA), in conjunction with the National Association of Minority Contractors (NAMC), the Legacy Redevelopment Corporation, Racine County, and the Racine County Economic Development Corporation.

“These capacity building workshops are designed to help level the playing field for our small certified and disadvantaged businesses by ensuring they have the tools they need to hire and retain qualified workers,” Secretary Allen said. “The State of Wisconsin offers an array of valuable resources and tools that can help businesses of every size and sector compete more effectively for talent.”

The Wisconsin Valley Small Business Capacity Building Sessions will provide business owners and other attendees with step-by-step instructions on how to access:

- Publicly supported online talent recruitment through [www.jobcenterofwisconsin.com](http://www.jobcenterofwisconsin.com), the state’s premier web-based platform for connecting job seekers with employers.
- Customized recruitment events allowing employers and job candidates to meet in person
- Job candidates who are enrolled in, or have completed, pre-apprenticeship training funded by DWD to bring more individuals into the construction sector.

- A dollar-for-dollar match up to \$400,000 to support innovative training efforts focused on upskilling existing employees or preparing new hires.
- Subsidized wages to incentivize employers to give eligible, previously underemployed individuals a chance to reenter the workforce.
- Tax credits that can reduce a company's tax liability by as much as \$12,000 for each eligible individual hired and retained.

The capacity building sessions are intended to help the State, Foxconn, Racine County, City of Racine, Village of Mount Pleasant, and other partners achieve the Wisconsin First business inclusion goals of at least 10 percent of project contractors being certified small and disadvantaged businesses and a 10 percent of total contracts being Racine County-based contractors.

The sessions are free, but registration is required. Go to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CapacityBuildingWI> to register. More information about the sessions can be found at <https://wisconnvalley.wi.gov/Pages/events.aspx>. More information about WHEDA's CLG program can be found at [www.wheda.com](http://www.wheda.com).