

Gov. Walker: Announces Wisconsin Career Creator Plan to Support Long-Term Workforce Development Needs

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\$20 million investment will improve worker training and education opportunities

MADISON – Governor Scott Walker today announced Wisconsin Career Creator, a \$20 million initiative at the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) aimed at improving educational and training opportunities for Wisconsin’s current and future workforce. As part of 2017 Act 58, DWD was allocated \$20 million for the 2019-21 biennium to support workforce development for electronics manufacturing jobs and to address long-term workforce development needs.

“With a multitude of businesses expanding in Wisconsin and offering outstanding opportunities for our workforce, it’s crucial we help our workers get the skills they need to find rewarding, family-supporting careers,” said Governor Walker. “To help meet our current and future workforce needs, we’re investing in programs such as dual-enrollment, scholarships for employees learning new skills and earning credentials, and job search and training resources for high-demand fields.”

Wisconsin Career Creator was developed by DWD and has the support of the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS), University of Wisconsin (UW) System, and the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU).

Dr. Rolf Wegenke, president of the WAICU, praised the Wisconsin Career Creator initiative. He stated, “talent development and attraction has to be a top priority if Wisconsin is going to be competitive in the Knowledge Economy. Part of the genius

of the Wisconsin Career Creator proposal is that it avoids the pitfalls of having the government pick 'winners and losers' by empowering employers to direct the investments in upskilling their workforce in ways specifically directed to their employment opportunities. All colleges and universities in Wisconsin's postsecondary education sectors are willing and able to respond."

"Businesses across the state need employees who work collaboratively and possess critical problem-solving skills needed to succeed in today's workplace. About 85 percent of UW System graduates stay in Wisconsin, and the more we can connect students and alumni with employers, the stronger our economy will be. The Wisconsin Career Creator initiative will give high school students the opportunity to complete one year of college while in high school, which saves them money and helps get them into the workforce more quickly," said UW System President Ray Cross.

Governor Walker is visiting Milwaukee Area Technical College, the University of Wisconsin - Green Bay, and Northcentral Technical College in Wausau today to discuss the plan. The Governor is joined at the visits by DWD Secretary Ray Allen, UW System President Dr. Ray Cross, and WTCS President Dr. Morna Foy.

"Wisconsin's demographic challenges make it an imperative that our colleges help to maximize the talent of every Wisconsinite," Dr. Morna Foy said. "This investment will significantly advance our ability to do just that."

"The UW System is in the business of responding to the needs of the community," said University of Wisconsin - Green Bay Chancellor Gary Miller. "We are excited to have Governor Walker on campus to announce initiatives to allow us to be more responsive to the needs of area businesses."

"Apprenticeships, business partnerships, dual enrollment opportunities, re-entry training, scholarships, and support for veterans are all critical to Milwaukee Area Technical College's strategy to educate the students who will close the region's skills gap," said Milwaukee Area Technical College President Dr. Vicki J. Martin. "By increasing investments in these programs and in training for high-demand careers in advanced manufacturing and health care, the state will help us drive this important work forward."

Wisconsin Career Creator: Enhancing Wisconsin's Current and Future Workforce

College Head Start

Provide \$5,000,000 to expand Dual Enrollment course offerings (one year of college in high school). UW System, WTCS, and WAICU schools will be eligible to participate.

Scholarships for Training and Education

Provide \$7,000,000 to address the need to match high demand employers with open positions with the necessary worker credentials. Scholarships could be provided to the company to allocate to their Wisconsin employees, or to potential employees who need to “upskill” their current credentials to meet the position requirements or obtain an additional credential to advance to a higher position. UW System, WTCS, and WAICU schools will be eligible to participate.

Flexible Technical College Funds

Provide WTCS \$2,000,000 to maximize workforce participation by helping to recruit, retain and successfully credential some of the hardest-to-serve populations.

Upskill Initiative

Provide the DWD \$6,000,000 to fund innovative workforce development programs including developing Sector Centers, launching Middle School Youth Apprenticeship, purchasing mobile job centers, preparing the incarcerated population for the workforce, upskilling military veterans, and providing transportation to training and employment.

Sector Centers

In response to the unprecedented growth of the advanced manufacturing industry, the DWD will establish two Advanced Manufacturing Sector Centers to address the recruitment, training, and attraction needs of advanced manufacturing employers. Working with partners such as technical colleges, workforce boards, local Economic Development Corporations, and others, the Department will create a high-tech environment that reflects the innovation driving the industry while helping employers develop talent pipelines through customizable training, industry awareness and education, and tailored job services.

Middle School Youth Apprenticeship

Establish a pilot program to expand the Youth Apprenticeship model to serve middle school through 12th grade. The pilot would incorporate career awareness, job shadows, academic and career planning and possible internships to demonstrate viable career pathways through Youth Apprenticeship at an earlier age.

Mobile Job Centers

Adding additional mobile job centers would allow access more individuals in both rural and urban areas. We will be able to take our services such as short-term training, GED programs, assessments, and career consultations to the areas of most need. This allows our job services to be more robust and fluid to meet the needs of populations served and local businesses.

Re-Entry Training Initiative

To prepare the incarcerated population for work upon release, the DWD will expand upon efforts already in place to provide training and credentials within Department of Corrections (DOC) facilities. Currently, partnerships with Oak Hill and Red Granite Correctional Facilities exist, but the DWD will allocate funding to grow the number of DOC facilities participating in training programs or inner-facility job centers to reach a larger number of incarcerated individuals.

Veterans Training Program

Rockwell Automation currently funds a 12-week training program to upskill military veterans for digital manufacturing roles. With a successful model and employment opportunities already established, the DWD proposes additional funding to expand this venture to include the general population. Doing so would increase the number of skilled workers available to fill the advanced manufacturing talent gap.

Transportation

The DWD will allocate funding to implement a multi-county transportation plan through partnerships with local governments and the Department of Transportation to incentivize coordination of transit services and reduce route gaps.