

Gov. Walker: Wisconsin launches first-ever national campaign to attract veterans transitioning to civilian life

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\$1.9 million initiative includes sending Wisconsin delegation to military bases nationwide to highlight state's career opportunities and quality of life

MENOMONEE FALLS – Governor Scott Walker announced today that the state has launched a \$1.9 million national marketing campaign to encourage military personnel and their spouses who are transitioning to civilian life to live and work in Wisconsin once they leave the service. “As our dedicated members of the military prepare to return to civilian life, they are looking for the best place possible to start a new career, raise a family and enjoy an outstanding quality of life. We are going to make a strong case that Wisconsin can meet all those needs – and more,” said Governor Walker, who will discuss the new initiative at Lippert Flooring and Tile in Menomonee Falls today. “Through social media, online ads and personal engagement with veterans transitioning to civilian life, this innovative campaign will share the message that there is no better place than Wisconsin for veterans to start their post-military lives.”

The campaign, a collaborative effort between the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC), the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD), the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) and the Wisconsin Department of Tourism, is a part of the state’s new \$6.8 million marketing campaign aimed at attracting talent to address Wisconsin’s current and future workforce needs.

This marks the first time the state has launched a comprehensive talent attraction campaign aimed at military personnel and spouses.

“Wisconsin leads the nation in how states attract and employ veterans and their spouses after military service,” WDVA Secretary Daniel J. Zimmerman said. “We don’t wait for veterans and their families to find out on their own why Wisconsin is the ideal place to be. We are going out to where they’re stationed and, in collaboration with Wisconsin’s great employers, will get service members and their spouses jobs before they leave military service and help them transition their families into Wisconsin’s communities.”

“Between 200,000 and 250,000 members of the military leave the service every year, and this campaign provides us with a unique opportunity to reach out to them and raise their awareness of the career and lifestyle opportunities Wisconsin offers,” said Lt. Governor Rebecca Kleefisch, who will visit four veteran-friendly businesses in Green Bay, Madison, Rothschild and Minong to announce the campaign. “This innovative attraction strategy will play an important role in ensuring Wisconsin’s employers have enough talented workers to fill the jobs of today and tomorrow.”

A key element of the campaign will be the visits made by a delegation of state officials and representatives of veteran-friendly Wisconsin businesses to transition summits at more than a dozen military installations throughout the U.S. and overseas. The summits, hosted by the nonprofit Hiring our Heroes organization, are two-day events that help service members and their spouses prepare to transition to civilian careers. Wisconsin will have an exhibit and other interactive opportunities at the summits, and members of the delegation will engage one-on-one with the service members to talk about all the state has to offer.

Wisconsin is the first and only state to nationally and internationally partner with Hiring our Heroes, part of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation. The Wisconsin delegation’s first summit will be August 29 and 30 at Camp Pendleton Marine Corps Base in California. Other bases that will be visited over the next year are in Washington, North Carolina, Hawaii, Missouri, Texas, Georgia, Germany, and Japan.

The delegation also will engage with spouses of veterans transitioning to civilian life by participating in spouse symposiums, roundtables, networking events and similar opportunities around the country. Military spouses are heavily involved in post-military decisions and bring unique and valuable skills to the workplace.

Other components of the campaign include:

- A paid media campaign that will run through June 30, 2019, that includes social media posts targeting veterans transitioning to civilian life; geo-targeted digital ads focusing on the bases being visited by the Wisconsin delegation and additional bases nationwide; print ads and online ads in publications and websites targeting veterans transitioning to civilian life and their spouses; and social media posts targeting transitioning military personnel.
 - A new, content-rich veterans section of InWisconsin.com where veterans transitioning to civilian life can explore both career and lifestyle opportunities in the state. The page includes a job search and home search tools.
 - A new military occupation code (MOS) search tool on DWD’s WiscJobsForVets.com website, including a search bar that gives veterans, and those exiting service, the ability to seek out jobs that fit the skills they learned in the military.
 - A new blog targeting veterans transitioning to civilian life and spouses.
 - Expanding DVA’s existing concierge service to Wisconsin military veterans to include service members transitioning to civilian life throughout the country.
 - The Department of Tourism will engage with veterans by distributing talent attraction promotional materials in Welcome Centers, military history museums and at other attractions catering to veterans and will promote the state as a travel destination for veterans.
- Governor Walker, Lt. Governor Kleefisch, WEDC Secretary and CEO Mark R. Hogan, WDVA Secretary Zimmerman, DWD Secretary Ray Allen, Tourism Secretary Stephanie Klett and other key state leaders will visit veteran-friendly businesses throughout the state Friday to announce the new campaign.

“Thanks to the economic policies and reforms we’ve put into place over the last few years, Wisconsin’s unemployment rate is at a historic low, and we outpace the nation in labor force participation. While that’s outstanding news, Wisconsin employers are now challenged to find skilled talent to fill good-paying jobs,” DWD Secretary Allen said. “This proactive strategy to attract veterans to Wisconsin complements the many other investments the state is making to help meet employers’ labor market needs.”

“Tourism plays a key role in recruiting and attracting talent by highlighting the outstanding quality of life we have in Wisconsin,” added Tourism Secretary Klett. “Our tourism industry welcomes veterans with promotions and attractions that show appreciation for their service. Transitioning service families will not only find work in Wisconsin, they will also find fun and recreation that is an important part of a thriving economy and community.”

“To maintain Wisconsin’s strong workforce, it is imperative that we continue to implement a proactive strategy to attract and retain people – including veterans – whose skills and passions align with Wisconsin’s career and quality of life attributes,” said WEDC Secretary Hogan. “WEDC looks forward to working with other state agencies and our many partners to increase awareness among veterans nationwide of the vast opportunities our state offers.”

Attracting veterans transitioning to civil service is a component of Governor Walker’s Workforce Agenda, which focuses on enhancing Wisconsin’s workforce, removing barriers to work, and meeting the state’s current and future workforce needs.

As part of the Workforce Agenda, the state legislature last spring approved Governor Walker’s proposal to fund a \$6.8 million targeted, multiagency unified platform designed to promote the state’s business, career and lifestyle attributes: Think-Make-Happen In Wisconsin®. The initiative comprises an integrated marketing strategy targeting three specific audiences: Midwestern millennials, Wisconsin college and university alumni, and military personnel and spouses who are transitioning to civilian life.

The state launched the alumni component of this campaign in June. The Midwestern millennial component is an expansion of a campaign from earlier this year that targeted millennials in Chicago. That campaign will be expanded to other markets and will be launched this fall.

A digital press kit with ad samples, videos and images is available at wedc.org/newsroom/veteran. Follow along to discussions about the campaign on social media with #WisVetsForward.

- [Wisconsin_Vets_Campaign_Fact_Sheet_1.pdf](#)
- [Wisconsin_Vets_Campaign_Fact_Sheet_2.pdf](#)