

WEDC: Four state agencies poised to launch new marketing initiative as legislation authorizing \$6.8 million for effort is signed into law

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Campaign to focus on attracting veterans, Wisconsin alumni and millennials to the state

MADISON, WI. – The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) and three other state agencies are moving forward with plans for a \$6.8 million marketing campaign aimed at attracting talent to Wisconsin after Governor Scott Walker today signed legislation authorizing funding for the initiative.

The governor's signature on Assembly Bill 811 gives the go-ahead to WEDC, the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD), the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) and the Wisconsin Department of Tourism to develop the collaborative effort aimed at addressing the state's current and future workforce needs.

The marketing campaign will focus on three specific audiences: transitioning military service members and their families; Wisconsin university alumni now living in other states; and Midwest millennials living outside Wisconsin.

"Now that the legislation has been signed, WEDC and its agency partners can build upon the successes of in-state talent-oriented marketing and a recent paid-media campaign in Chicago. Our marketing efforts are designed to shift the perceptions people outside of Wisconsin have about the vast opportunities our state offers," said Tricia Braun, deputy secretary and chief operating officer of WEDC. "To

maintain Wisconsin's strong workforce, we must enact a proactive strategy to attract and retain people whose skills and passions align with Wisconsin's career and quality of life attributes. This legislation gives us the tools to do just that."

The legislation, co-sponsored by state Rep. Rohrkaste of Neenah and state Sen. Feyen of Fond du Lac, provides funding to WEDC to develop and implement talent attraction and retention initiatives. The bill requires WEDC to collaborate with state agencies in the development and implementation of those initiatives.

While the four state agencies are still developing the marketing strategy, it is expected to include:

- Promoting Wisconsin as the best state for veterans to work and live through a national campaign directed specifically at military personnel and their families as they prepare to leave active duty. The state will engage with military service members nationwide through transition summits held at military bases across the country. WEDC and its partners will leverage these events and targeted paid media channels to promote Wisconsin as an ideal location for veterans and their families.
- Continuing collaboration with educational partners throughout the state to encourage graduates of Wisconsin's higher educational institutions who have moved away to considering returning to the state.
- Expanding WEDC's existing marketing campaign to reach millennials in other Midwest cities looking for the best place to pursue their passions.]
- Purchasing and staffing a mobile job center to help residents and non-residents take advantage of career opportunities in Wisconsin.
- Using existing Department of Tourism marketing platforms to proactively promote Wisconsin as more than just a great place to visit.

The first major push of this new campaign—social media advertisements targeting out-of-state Wisconsin alumni—is already underway and will be expanded in the coming weeks with funds made available from this bill.