

DOC Media: Employers meet with Gov. Evers, Departments of Corrections and Workforce Development secretary-designees at Oakhill Job Center

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Employers meet with Governor Evers, Wisconsin Departments of Corrections and Workforce Development Secretary-Designees at Oakhill Job Center

MADISON – Governor Tony Evers, Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) Secretary-designee Kevin A. Carr and Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary-designee Caleb Frostman joined employers from across Wisconsin on March 26th to discuss how they can work together to provide sustainable employment for individuals released from prison.

“I believe in second chances and the power of redemption,” said Governor Evers. “We need to empower returning citizens who have worked hard and paid their debts to society with the skills and support they need to succeed. This kind of investment will help to reduce recidivism and make our communities safer and stronger.”

“This Job Center is a great example of connecting the dots between DWD and DOC.” said DOC Secretary-designee Kevin A. Carr. “It’s about a partnership with employers that is changing the lives of individuals re-entering their communities.”

More than 90% of incarcerated individuals in Wisconsin will return to their communities. Providing previously incarcerated individuals with employment is proven to increase their lifetime earnings which lowers recidivism.

“Employment and the dignity returned to these individuals with a quality wage is one of the strongest antidotes to recidivism,” said DWD Secretary-designee Caleb Frostman.

The Job Center is staffed by individuals from the Workforce Development Board of South Central Wisconsin, as well as local DWD Job Service Staff. Inmates can use the Job Center for career readiness programs, job search assistance, resume development, veteran services, registered apprenticeships, and assistance for individuals with disabilities.

Employers from across Wisconsin were able to see the Job Center first-hand and make connections with DWD and DOC stakeholders to determine how they can hire individuals upon their release. It’s a win-win for employers who are able to give a second-chance to people and fill an important position at their business.

“[Inmates] did their time,” said Erik Anderson, the president of Basin Precision Machining in Jefferson. “They came out [of prison] legitimately having done their punishment. It’s on us to contribute to society by offering help to those people.”

Governor Evers is continuing to advocate for programs like the model at Oakhill Correctional Institution. The governor’s budget proposes more than \$10 million in funding for reentry programming, including funding for four more job centers within correctional facilities. Additionally, he is also proposing an extension of the Opening Avenues to Reentry Success (OARS) program, the Windows to Work program, and technical mobile labs at correctional institutions.