

Institute for Reforming Government: Wisconsin's conservative reforms to prepare students for the jobs of tomorrow

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Contact: press@reforminggovernment.org

Governor Walker and the legislature invested in the workforce of today for the jobs of tomorrow.

Madison, Wis. — The Institute for Reforming Government issued its fourth policy paper, “Wisconsin’s Workforce Development Programs: Training for the Jobs of Today and Tomorrow.” In order for Wisconsin to move forward after Governor Walker was elected, he and the legislature advanced policies to equip students and the state’s workforce for the jobs of today and tomorrow. By growing the internship and apprenticeship programs, Wisconsin helps to provide workers with the necessary skills to succeed in a career.

“Giving students the opportunity to grow and learn is the foundation to a thriving career. In Wisconsin, Governor Walker and conservative leaders in the legislature developed innovative opportunities for companies and students alike. Through internship and apprenticeship programs students are able to learn the necessary skills that companies right here in Wisconsin need. Workforce development programs like this should be a beacon of hope to other states that are struggling to build their workforce and keep their economy growing,” said Rob McDonald, Chairman of the Board for the Institute for Reforming Government.

Highlights from the “Wisconsin’s Workforce Development Programs: Training for the

Jobs of Today and Tomorrow” policy paper are below:

Internship Programs:

DWD’s Office of Skills Development (OSD) “...launched WisConnect, a free, mobile-responsive online resource available at InternshipWisconsin.com to help Wisconsin employers meet their workforce needs by growing tomorrow’s talent today through internships...” WisConnect allows students to “Search for Employers” by selecting an industry or “Search for Wisconsin Internships” by selecting a major classification. When looking for an internship, students can see information on the internship such as: location, full-time or part-time, and the hourly wage.

The National Association of Colleges and Employers have provided the following statistics on business internships, which have been highlighted by DWD:

- “75.2% — The percentage of businesses that use internships to recruit full-time entry-level positions”
- “67.1% — The percent of businesses that extend a full-time offer of employment to an intern if a position at the company is open”
- “76.4% — The percent of interns who were offered a full-time job and accepted it”
- “65.5% — The percent of interns who become full-time employees and are still with the company after one year; the one-year retention rate for external hires is 46.2%”
- “51.8% — The percent of interns who become full-time employees and stay with the company for at least five-years; the five year retention rate for external hires is 35.8%”

Apprenticeship Programs:

Wisconsin’s Youth Apprenticeship program has also grown, since it first began. As noted by DWD in 2018, “...During the 2017-2018 fiscal year, there were 3,091 businesses and 4,362 youth apprentices - more than have ever participated before...”

In 2018, U.S. Department of Labor published a case study on Wisconsin’s Youth

Apprenticeship Program. This study noted that

“The Wisconsin Youth Apprenticeship (YA) program combines real-world work experience with classroom education so students can explore and gain skills in a career field of their choice. The YA program prepares youth for success after high school – whether they plan to continue their education, enter the workforce, or both. Launched in 1991 as the first statewide youth apprenticeship program in the nation, the YA program is also helping to create the pipeline of future workers that businesses in the state need to thrive...”

The “Wisconsin’s Workforce Development Programs: Training for the Jobs of Today and Tomorrow” policy paper can be found [here](#).

IRG has also issued policy papers on [Medicaid reform](#), [regulatory reform](#), [policy proposal for state-based tax reform](#), and [manufacturing policy](#) based on successful policies not only in Wisconsin but across the country.