

Dept. of Workforce Development: Adjusts to changing workforce needs amid COVID-19 challenges

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DWD's Employment and Training staff adapt to changing environment to continue support of Wisconsin workers and employers during the global pandemic.

MADISON – The Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Division of Employment and Training transitioned to a virtual service delivery model soon after the Safer at Home Order went into effect to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Employment and Training staff continue to provide services to help Wisconsinites get back to work quickly by connecting them to open positions, community services, and other workforce training programs.

“Our staff have risen to the challenge and are meeting the needs of our customers who are looking for support in finding employment and other training opportunities during the pandemic,” DWD Secretary Caleb Frostman said. “COVID-19 continues to affect the way DWD delivers services, but we have been able to quickly adapt and transition to new service delivery models to help offer Wisconsin workers greater economic stability.”

DWD's [JobCenterofWisconsin.com](https://www.jobcenterofwisconsin.com) (JCW) is a free online employment website for people looking for jobs. It also provides other job search tools and assistance. Users can access it any time to:

- Update their resume
- Search for jobs
- Create a budget
- Review labor market information
- Utilize any of the other employment-related tools

DET staff are providing one-on-one assistance to job seekers with searching for jobs, registering on JCW, or using online tools via email or over the phone. Job seekers can email JobCenterofWisconsin@dwd.wisconsin.gov or call 888-258-9966 to access these job search services.

Staff are also reaching out to individuals who need extra assistance after being laid off. After taking the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment when registering on JCW, some individuals qualify for additional supportive services. DWD staff have contacted over 12,000 Unemployment Insurance claimants directly to provide job search tips and strategies, create reemployment plans, review and discuss labor market data, and assist them in their path to reemployment.

Local outreach services continue and DWD's Job Center staff participate in virtual meetings with local Chambers of Commerce, libraries, and community organizations. DWD's Office of Veteran Services (OVES) is also working directly with veterans who may need additional support finding employment. Between March 16 and August 4, OVES has reached out to over 5,800 veterans and worked with veterans to develop over 1,500 Individual Employment Plans for veterans.

Efforts to connect job seekers and employers have included virtual and drive-thru job fairs. DWD also awarded more than \$3.4 million in grants through the Wisconsin Fast Forward program to help employers train new and existing employees and incarcerated individuals and provide students with technical education. \$4.9 million in grants were also awarded to consortiums across the state to administer the Youth Apprenticeship program, connecting students and employers as they enter the workforce.

"Employment and Training staff are doing everything they can to help Wisconsin's workforce and employers during this uncertain time," said DWD's Employment and Training Division Administrator Michele Carter. "We are increasing our direct services to customers and applying for additional grants to invest in Wisconsin's economic infrastructure. We have already been awarded \$9 million to support and expand apprenticeship opportunities and nearly \$1 million to create temporary jobs for laid-off workers, including self-employed individuals whose businesses have been impacted by the public health emergency. We will continue to pursue funds to support Wisconsinites to pursue stable and fulfilling employment in family supporting jobs."

To learn more about DWD's workforce programs visit dwd.wi.gov.

Information on Wisconsin Fast Forward grants can be found at WisconsinFastForward.com

Additional online resources available to job seekers:

- JobCenterofWisconsin.com help and resources
- Information on the [Budget Planner Tool in JCW](#)
- Information on the [Career Exploration Tool in JCW](#)
- Videos on [DWD Programs](#) including Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)

and Unemployment Insurance (UI)