

Dept. of Workforce Development: DWD joins other workforce leaders to recognize partner collaborations, successes & future initiatives during workforce development month

Posted on Tuesday, Sep 13, 2022

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JANESVILLE – During Workforce Development Month, Gov. Tony Evers’ Council on Workforce Investment (CWI) on Monday held its regular meeting in Janesville, where members learned about the positive impacts of the governor’s historic investments in developing Wisconsin’s workforce. Council members witnessed regional collaborations in action during a tour of the Rock County Job Center.

“Gov. Evers has [proclaimed](#) September as Workforce Development Month in Wisconsin, and this a great time to recognize the successful collaborations among the state and our educational institutions, regional and local workforce agencies, labor unions, and diverse employers to build an economy that works for all Wisconsinites,” Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary-designee Amy Pechacek said. “This year Wisconsin hit record low unemployment, an historic low in the filing of weekly unemployment claims and a record high in the number of people employed, and yet we know there is still a worker quantity shortage due to trends that have been decades in the making. Under Gov. Evers’ leadership including the recommendations of this Council, we are investing in programs that really move the needle for those who are still recovering from the pandemic, as well as others who are facing barriers to employment.”

The CWI, chaired by S. Mark Tyler, consists of 36 members including Secretary-designee Pechacek as well as business leaders, other workforce representatives,

state legislators, local elected officials, and leaders representing education, community, and labor organizations throughout the state. The council works closely with DWD in developing strategies to meet the needs of employers and workers. The CWI [approved](#) its 2022-26 [Strategic Plan](#) earlier this year and received an update on several innovative programs that are helping job seekers overcome barriers such as child care and transportation, and involvement in the criminal justice system.

“Based on the great initiatives of the governor and the allocation of discretionary funds, it is pretty clear the administration is listening to what we are recommending,” CWI Chairman Tyler said. “It is gratifying to know our work is valued.”

During the meeting, council members learned about ways in which Wisconsin’s 11 workforce development boards are maximizing the investment of Gov. Evers’ Workforce Advancement Initiative (WAI). The \$20 million WAI is supported through the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars on projects that reduce employment barriers and help some 2,300 Wisconsin workers get back to work post-pandemic. The WAI is one of multiple programs included in the governor’s historic \$150 million investment into solutions to address the state’s post-pandemic workforce needs and grow the economy.

The [WAI program](#) was announced less than one year ago and already includes close to 900 participants in projects and solutions that help remove barriers related to race/ethnicity, low income, limited work history, justice involvement and other areas, according to a presentation to the CWI by the Wisconsin Workforce Development Association.

In Rock County, the Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board (SWWDB) is investing \$1.6 million in WAI funding on subsidized training, support and incentives to connect job seekers with opportunities in its region, which includes Grant, Green, Iowa, Lafayette, Richland and Rock counties.

The CWI toured the Rock County Job Center located at the Daniel Hale Williams Rock County Resource Center in Janesville and received a firsthand look of the services delivered to customers in the region. The board’s Job Center partners include DWD-administered programs along with Forward Service Corporation, the U.S. Department of Labor/Job Corps, and Community Solutions of Wisconsin.

Monday’s meeting and tour is one of several workforce-themed events during



Workforce Development Month, with additional events being planned.

Learn more: <http://www.wi-cwi.org/>.