

☞ **07hr_SC-LEUA_Misc_pt21d**



☞ July 8, 2008 ... Informational Hearing ... DWD Job Center Consolidation

(FORM UPDATED: 08/11/2010)

WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE ... PUBLIC HEARING - COMMITTEE RECORDS

2007-08

(session year)

Senate

(Assembly, Senate or Joint)

Committee on ... Labor, Elections and Urban Affairs (SC-LEUA)

COMMITTEE NOTICES ...

- Committee Reports ... **CR**
- Executive Sessions ... **ES**
- Public Hearings ... **PH**

INFORMATION COLLECTED BY COMMITTEE FOR AND AGAINST PROPOSAL

- Appointments ... **Appt** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Clearinghouse Rules ... **CRule** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Hearing Records ... bills and resolutions (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
(**ab** = Assembly Bill) (**ar** = Assembly Resolution) (**ajr** = Assembly Joint Resolution)
(**sb** = Senate Bill) (**sr** = Senate Resolution) (**sjr** = Senate Joint Resolution)
- Miscellaneous ... **Misc**

* Contents organized for archiving by: Mike Barman (LRB) (November/2010)

07-08-2008

Packet



State of Wisconsin
Department of Workforce Development

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Laura Dresser
1344 Jenifer Street
Madison WI 53703

Members of the Committee on Labor, Elections, and Urban Affairs
Wisconsin State Senate
Testimony regarding Job Center consolidation
7/8/2008

Dear Members of the Committee on Labor, Elections, and Urban Affairs,

I'm writing today as a Wisconsin resident, an economist who studies Wisconsin's economy and labor market, and as a practitioner who has worked with local and state leaders to improve the state's workforce development system. I welcome your interest in the issues facing Wisconsin's workforce development system and appreciate this opportunity to add my observations to this important discussion.

The most important fact that frames this discussion is the long-term decline in federal funding for workforce development. In 2004, two reports documented the dramatic federal decline in funding for workforce

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The most important fact that frames this discussion is the long-term decline in federal funding for workforce development. In 2004, two reports documented the dramatic federal decline in funding for workforce development, and the ways that shifts in funding, especially declines in W2 funding, were having a negative impact in Job Centers across the state. (Reports both from Center on Wisconsin Strategy. See *The Impact of Budget Cuts on Wisconsin's Job Centers: Staff Losses and Service Declines* and *Declining Federal Support for Wisconsin Workforce Development* both available at www.cows.org) As those reports make clear, the writing has been on the wall for some time that the federal government has been, and likely will continue to be, committing fewer and fewer dollars to workforce development in the state. As the federal commitment has fallen, the infrastructure for workforce development has suffered in ways large and small.

At this point in the process, and given the severe federal cuts, it is important that the state take stock of what is working and what is possible in such a constrained situation. If the state doesn't consolidate centers, it is inevitable that the services offered by the centers will continue to shrink. That approach – Job Centers never die, they just fade away – may be politically easier, but it will certainly never build a system that can connect workers to the training and skills they need to move ahead. More money committed to rent, in the context of shrinking resources, necessarily means less money to the training and education that our workforce desperately needs.

The consolidation plan before you today is a necessary response to the federal financial reality. It is easy to identify the costs of this plan of proactive consolidation and greater use of technology. But the costs of not consolidating infrastructure are no less critical, just because they are harder to observe. At this point, given the long-term funding decline, the consolidation proposed is the best option in a difficult situation. The proposal will not create only winners, but in the long run, the new system will hopefully have the efficiency and resources to reach workers with the mix of resources they will need in order to build skills and obtain family-supporting jobs in the 21st Century.

This moment, however, is a critical one also to consider the state commitment to workforce development infrastructure and systems. The state of Wisconsin could and will lead and innovate in this area, especially if state resources were committed to a system of training and skill development for all the state's workers.

Thanks for your time and consideration,

Laura Dresser
1344 Jenifer Street

To: Whom It May Concern:

Re: Testimony for the Record on behalf of the Department of Workforce Development

I am Phyllis Wilhelm, Chair-elect of the Workforce Development Board of South Central Wisconsin (WDBSCW). As Director of Economic Development, Madison Gas & Electric, I have been a business sector representative on the WDBSCW Board and a member of the Executive Committee since WDBSCW was established. Based on my professional and community involvement, I am keenly aware of the challenges we face as a region and State in providing employment and training opportunities for the constituents we serve while ensuring we have a competitive workforce for our economic future.

After the enactment of the Workforce Investment Act, I was involved in the process of revising the established workforce model and forging partnerships to create a regional workforce development organization and Job Center system. Change was not easy but commitment to the goal of creating a better system led to new collaborations and positive results. Throughout the years we've been called on to modify our programs to meet changing needs, take advantage of new sources of funding or to respond to cuts to our budget.

Flexibility and innovation are hallmarks of an effective organization. We must continually scan the environment to identify opportunities to be more effective and efficient in delivery of services and be prepared to adapt and change as situations warrant or legislative mandates require. While the traditional Job Center model served us well in the past, the future looks quite different. Clearly, current fiscal, demographic and economic trends threaten our ability to meet the demands and deliver quality services going forward unless we make changes to the model.

We have anticipated the impact of shrinking federal dollars and have been engaged in a strategic planning process for about sixteen months to realign our resources. In preparing for the future, we are using technology to increase efficiencies and better serve the needs of our clients, both job seekers and employers. Advances in technology provide opportunities to reduce our overhead costs while offering new strategies to serve our clients without compromising program services quality or accessibility.

The changes proposed by the Department of Workforce Development are beneficial and totally aligned with what we are doing. For these reasons, I strongly support the proposed changes to Wisconsin's Employment and Training services. This reorganization will help us continue building a network of partners and aligning efforts focused on engaging individuals to participate in the economy of the future and developing the skilled workforce necessary to expand the competitiveness of area employers. Through these efforts and partnerships we will build a strong regional economy.

Thank you for your support.

Phyllis Wilhelm
Chair-elect, Workforce Development Board of South Central Wisconsin
Director of Economic Development, Madison Gas & Electric

HERZING COLLEGE

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July 2, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

Re: Testimony for the Record on behalf of the Department of Workforce Development

I am Don Madelung, President of Herzing College in Madison, WI and Chair of the Workforce Development Board of South Central Wisconsin. I also serve a Vice President of the Wisconsin Workforce Development Association representing all of the Wisconsin workforce boards.

Improvements to Wisconsin's Employment and Training Services:

I have been an observer and a participant in the restructuring of the Workforce Development Board and its initiatives in the South Central region for the past 16 years. I have witnessed good years, lean years and years where we wondered if we could exist and provide the needed services to our clientele.

I am in total support of the current transformation of the employment and training services that needs to be provided to the Wisconsin workforce and its employers to meet 21st century demands. The current job service system was created over 25 years ago and was initially a very loose federation of service providers and in recent years the DWD has assisted regional workforce boards to centralize the services under the one-stop provider system. With Federal support being decreased almost every year and accumulating to over 56% in the past 20 years, it is now time to be prudent with every dollar spent on workforce development and employment training.

The goal is to provide each employer and job seeker the best possible opportunity to maximize their time, money and resources to make sure everyone in every community has access to the best services we can provide. We are not eliminating services, but re-organizing them to maximize efficiencies. We need to act more like the businesses we serve and be good stewards of shrinking Federal and State resources.

This re-direction will assure the state the best possible results that will be sustainable for many years to come. We are not making changes just to make changes. The South Central Workforce Development Boards started re-designing its strategic goals for our region over a year and a half ago and are well on our way toward implementation.

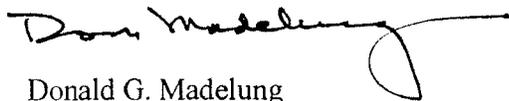
The DWD is going to create a Virtual Job Center. This new approach, one we will see more and more in our daily lives, will provide an opportunity to reach out to employers and job seekers in ways we could not in the past and will allow the people access to services 24/7 and still give people the face to face job assistance through web cameras. More opportunities will be provided through on-line job fairs, video job interviews, on-line workshops, seminars and offer career advice and counseling. If you can't come to us, we will go to you.

Job seekers will be the ultimate beneficiaries of these improvements. The opportunities to consolidate resources will reduce overhead costs on internal technical support, rent and other services we provide without sacrificing quality and allow the savings to be put into client services and support. We will coordinate our efforts more with already existing entities such as local technical colleges, libraries, community organizations, childcare centers and our staff will be mobile and more flexible to reach out to companies and individuals we need to serve.

The benefits employers will see are is a more aggressive approach to meet their needs for a strong, well prepared workforce. We will match their needs for employees with qualified and ready-to-work job seekers and will be the bridge between employers, the technical colleges and private colleges that can provide individuals the precise training job seekers need to earn a living wage and a life changing career.

Thank you for your support as we move forward.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Don Madelung", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right and a loop at the end.

Donald G. Madelung
Chair, Workforce Development Board of South Central Wisconsin
President, Herzing College

The Journal Times

MAKE A CONNECTION

Friday, June 27, 2008

Commentary

DWD's new focus benefits Wisconsin's workforce

[Print Page](#)

BY CHRISTOPHER A. RUUD

Friday, June 27, 2008 9:47 PM CDT

I am writing to express my strong support for changes the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) is making to improve state employment and training services.

These changes are necessary to meet the needs of job seekers, workers and employers not only in Racine, but throughout Wisconsin. We are competing in a high-tech, fast-paced global economy, and we need 21st Century employment and training services that work for all communities, urban and rural.

Wisconsin's job center system was created nearly 25 years ago with a \$10 million federal start-up grant. Since then, Wisconsin's federal employment and training funds have been cut by more than half. At the same time, we see an ever increasing need with definite shortages of skilled workers. We must be more proactive in our efforts to connect employers and workers with the right skills.

The state's shrinking resources and staff have been spread so thin that too little state support has been going to actually serving job seekers and employers with skills assessment, career advising and training. Funds have been consumed with overhead such as rent, computer lines and publications.

It is time for improvements, and the steps DWD is taking will make better use of resources by providing higher quality services to jobseekers and employers. As a businessman, and as a member of the Council on Workforce Investment, I strongly support the direction the department is taking.

I appreciate that DWD is committed to serving every community, large and small. Rather than wait for job seekers to come to them, its staff will reach out and serve customers through a variety of sites including technical college campuses, community organizations and libraries. Employers should be better served with a proactive staff, reaching out to them and working to connect them with an expanded pool of qualified jobseekers.

DWD is developing an innovative, easy-to-use virtual job center with access statewide, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Jobseekers will be able to post resumes and get online job search assistance. Employers will be able to post job orders, screen candidates and conduct interviews. Online job fairs and conferences will also be possible. Staff and technical support will be available to help visitors use these features.

Given the challenges we face and the opportunities DWD has presented, I strongly support DWD's work to improve Wisconsin's employment and training services. We all share the same goal — ensuring that every single job seeker and employer has access to the resources they need to be successful. I am encouraged that the revised vision and plan will result in a stronger employment and training program serving more communities, jobseekers and employers.

Ruud is the Executive Vice President of Ruud Lighting & a member of the Wisconsin Council on Workforce Investment.

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customer service they deserve.

Sally Cutler is the executive director of the North Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board in Wisconsin Rapids. Her e-mail is scutler@ncwwdb.org

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2>[New Job Service Will Benefit All](#)

Wisconsin State Journal :: OPINION :: A10

Thursday, June 19, 2008

By DON MADELUNG and JIM CAVANAUGH

We write to state our strong support for steps the Department of Workforce Development is taking to improve state employment and training services.

This will help us meet the needs of job-seekers, workers and employers throughout the six counties of our South Central Wisconsin Workforce Development area. We are competing in a high-tech, fast-paced global economy, and we need a 21st century employment and training program that works for all communities, urban and rural. Wisconsin's job center system was created nearly 25 years ago with a \$10 million federal start-up grant.

Since then, Wisconsin's federal employment and training funds have been cut by more than half. At the same time, we see an ever increasing need for skilled workers.

The state's shrinking resources and staff have been spread so thin that too little state support has been going to actually serving job seekers and employers with skills assessment, career advising and training.

State funds have been consumed with overhead such as rent, computer lines and publications. It is time for improvements, and what DWD is doing will make better use of resources by providing higher quality services to job seekers and employers.

By the end of the year, DWD's job service and veterans staff will be assigned to 12 regional sites. While staff in our region will be based in Madison, they will circulate throughout the area, holding office hours in communities and serving all job seekers.

We appreciate that DWD is committed to serving every community, large and small. Rather than wait for job seekers to come to them, its staff will reach out and serve customers through a variety of sites including technical college campuses, community organizations and libraries.

Employers should be better served with a proactive staff, reaching out to them and working to connect them with an expanded pool of qualified job seekers.

Another major development in recent years is the widespread use of computers, and the advent of the Internet.

More job seekers now search the Internet for jobs. DWD is developing an innovative, easy-to-use virtual job center with access statewide, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Job seekers will be able to post resumes and get online job search assistance. Employers will be able to post job orders, screen candidates and conduct interviews. Online job fairs and conferences will also be possible. Staff and technical support will be available to help visitors use these features.

Given the challenges we face and the opportunities DWD has presented, we are in strong support and pleased to work with DWD to improve Wisconsin's employment and training system.

Our goal is for every job seeker and employer to have access to the resources they need to be successful. We see no loss of state positions or services, but rather a stronger employment and training program serving more communities, job seekers and employers.

Madelung is president of Herzing College and chairman of the Workforce Development Board of South Central Wisconsin. Cavanaugh is treasurer of the WDB of South Central Wisconsin and president of the South Central Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO.

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Wisconsin State Journal :: OPINION :: A11

Tuesday, June 10, 2008

Job Service offices will serve even more

Regarding the State Journal's May 31 article on changes in the state employment and training services, I support these improvements by the Department of Workforce Development.

DWD Job Service staff will be based in 12 regional hubs, but move throughout their regions visiting our centers, holding office hours and providing services. More importantly, they will do this in many other communities, and they will meet the needs of all who require services, including veterans and those with disabilities.

Our Web site (www.wdbscw.org/index.asp) lists our job centers, their locations and hours. The state doesn't run our centers. The Workforce Development Board, with our partners, financially support and operate job centers throughout our region. They will remain open, with the help of our many partners, including the state.

This fall DWD will open a virtual job center, providing easy Internet access to information. Its features will include online posting of job resumes and job orders, and the ability to conduct job interviews and hold job fairs and workshops.

DWD has been planning the virtual job center feature for over a year. The new technology combined with a more efficient organization of staff teams is a solid response to continued loss of federal funding. DWD consulted us for input throughout their system development.

We believe it's time to do things differently. We live in an information age and compete in a global economy. We need a 21st century employment and training system, and the state's plan will take us in that direction.

- Pat Schramm, executive director, Workforce Development Board of South Central Wisconsin

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Original Story URL:

<http://www.jsonline.com/story/index.aspx?id=761965>

New steps for work force group

By TIM SULLIVAN

Posted: June 14, 2008

I strongly support the steps the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development is taking to improve state employment and training services. The improvements DWD is making will help meet the needs of job-seekers, workers and employers, not only in southeastern Wisconsin, but across the state. We are competing in a high-tech, fast-paced global economy, and we need a 21st-century employment and training system that works for urban and rural areas.

Wisconsin's job centers were created nearly 25 years ago with a \$10 million federal start-up grant. Since then, Wisconsin's federal employment and training funds have been cut by more than half. At the same time, we see an increasing need for skilled workers.

The state's shrinking resources and staff have been spread so thin that too little state support has been going into actually serving job-seekers and employers with skills assessment, career advising and training. State funds have been consumed with overhead such as rent, computer lines and publications. Whatever we can do to reduce such overhead expenses and invest in employment and training services will be to everyone's best interests now and in the future.

It is time for improvements, and as chair of the Wisconsin Council on Workforce Investment, I believe what DWD is doing will make better use of resources by providing higher quality services to job-seekers and employers.

By year end, DWD's job service and veterans staff will be assigned to 12 regional sites. Staff in southeastern Wisconsin will be assigned to two sites in Milwaukee and sites in Pewaukee and Kenosha. Based at those sites, they will circulate within our region, holding office hours in communities large and small, serving all job-seekers, including veterans, people with disabilities and dislocated workers.

Rather than wait for job-seekers to come to them, staff will reach out to customers at sites that include technical college campuses, community organizations and libraries. Employers should be better served with a proactive staff, reaching out to them and working to connect them with qualified job-seekers.

In recent years, more job-seekers are searching the Internet for jobs. DWD is developing an innovative, easy-to-use virtual job center. Job-seekers will be able to post resumes and get online job search assistance. Employers will be able to post job orders, screen candidates and conduct interviews. Online

job fairs and conferences also will be possible. Staff and technical support will be available for visitors.

Our goal is for every job-seeker and employer to have access to the resources they need. With these changes, there will be no loss of state positions or services but rather a stronger employment and training system serving more communities, job-seekers and employers.

Tim Sullivan is chief executive of Bucyrus International Inc. and chairs the Wisconsin Council on Workforce Investment.

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From the June 15, 2008 editions of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
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**Employment & Training Services for All
Wisconsin Workers, Employers & Communities**

**Secretary Roberta Gassman
Department of Workforce Development**

July 8, 2008

**Senate Committee on Labor, Elections and Urban Affairs
Informational Hearing**

Overview

- **Key Bottom Line Facts**
- **Workforce System Basics**
- **Workforce System Challenges**
- **DWD's Two-Phase Plan**
- **Packets & Q/A**

The Bottom Line

- DWD is *NOT* closing job centers
- DWD is
 - Realigning DWD staff
 - Reducing overhead
 - Extending our services
 - Serving more communities
 - Improving our online services
 - Collaborating with our partners to provide better services



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The Bottom Line

- On-going DWD commitment to collaboration
 - Statewide Virtual Job Center Advisory Committee
 - State investment in technology, laptops
 - Statewide standards committee with Workforce Development Board (WDB) & tech college reps
 - Regional public listening sessions
 - Honoring long-term lease agreements
 - Directing future federal discretionary \$ to training



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The Bottom Line

- Why change employment & training services?
 - Current workforce system not meeting employer needs or reaching enough workers
 - Decreasing federal resources
 - Current tools antiquated



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Workforce System Basics

Main DWD Job Center Programs – PY08

Workforce Investment Act = primary \$ for workforce dev <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core services for all, intensive & training services for eligible adults, dislocated workers, youth • 85% of \$ to 11 WDBs • Requires one comprehensive job center in each WDA 	\$47.7 M federal
Wagner Peyser Act created in 1931 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established nationwide system of public employment offices • Funds 113 FTE (state staff), technology, facilities • Provides: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labor exchange to connect job seekers & employers • Job assistance, referral & placement for job seekers & employers • No eligibility requirements for service 	\$13.4 M federal
Veterans Employment & Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30+ state staff, case management, job placement 	\$3.0 M federal

64.7
9
+2.3

not providing services that ought to



6

Workforce System Basics: State Roles

• Federal law defines state role:

- 1) Oversight of system, Workforce Investment Act local plan approvals, Council on Workforce Investment & compliance
- 2) Collaboration with local workforce development boards in job centers through Wagner Peyser Job Service & Vets staff, DVR



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Workforce System Basics: Reg'l Workforce Dev Bd Roles

• Federal law defines WDB role:

- Oversee local one-stop system
- Set local workforce investment policy
- Develop & submit comprehensive 5-year local plan to state
- Assist employers in meeting hiring needs
- Select local service providers
- Direct disbursement of local WIA funds
- Negotiate local performance measures w/ local elected officials & Governor



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Workforce System Challenges

Changes Needed – For Job Seekers

- € Job center system created almost 25 years ago with one-time start-up federal \$
- € Too much current \$ goes to “bricks & mortar” – not training
- € More people using Internet for job search while state system outdated:
 - 73% of those looking for a job this year used Internet – up from 44% in 2000

→ *monster.com*



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Workforce System Challenges

Change Needed – For Employers

- € #1 employer complaint:
Job center system not providing qualified candidates
 - Must update system & online resources to successfully match job seekers & employers
 - Workers do not have adequate skills

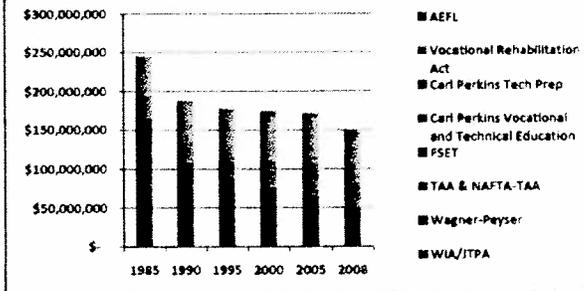


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Workforce System Challenges

Federal funding for Wisconsin workforce development is shrinking

Chart 4: Federal funding for workforce development, by major program area, 1985-2008



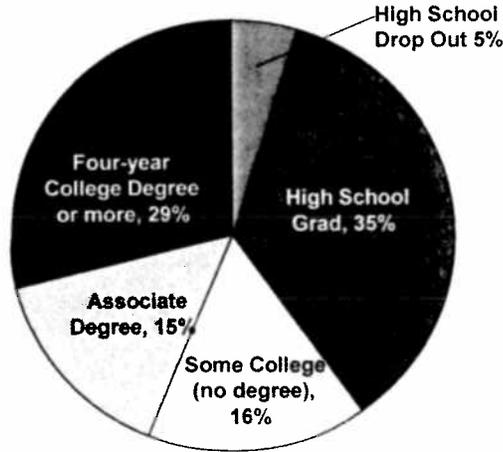
- 73% decline in funding from 1985 through FY08, adjusted for inflation

Source: Public Policy Forum



Workforce System Challenges

Wisconsin Workers Ages 26 & Over, by Education



2.8 m workers in WI

Source: UW-Madison COWS, 2008



Workforce System Challenges

Skills Shortages

- Time is now to get more people into training
- Recent publications & calls for action:
 - UW-Madison Center on Wisconsin Strategy
 - Office of Economic Advisors' forecasts:
 - "Average Annual Job Openings and Average Earnings"
 - Wisconsin Council on Children and Families report on need for access to tech colleges
 - Others



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Workforce System Challenges

How Most Citizens Access State Services Now

- More users find state services via Internet vs. in person
 - Job seekers
 - 10 million hits on JobNet a year
 - Only 106,000 registered users in job centers a year
 - COWS estimates 700,000 Wisconsin workers lack HS diploma or post HS training to compete in today's job market
 - Employers
 - Serve only 17% of employers (27,000 a year out of possible 160,000 statewide)
- Current state JobNet site
 - Antiquated
 - Limited functionality
 - Needs major update to be useful



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*reach more people/employers
better trained workforce*

DWD'S TWO-PHASE PLAN

- To achieve greater efficiencies
- To improve services
- To ensure that every job seeker & employer has access to the resources they need to be successful

PHASE 1

- As of December 31, 2008 redirect DWD's Job Service and Vets staff to provide mobile services out of 12 comprehensive hub sites
 - Selection based on population, need, efficiencies
- Reduce fixed costs – rent & facilities
- Redirect savings to service improvements without cutting any staff positions



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Agreements and Leases

PHASE 1

- DWD will honor long-term, legal obligations & seek ways to minimize costs
 - Sub-leases
 - DVR taking over space
 - Other creative strategies to reduce state costs



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** met w/ dozens of
dozens of people
* sent out more
than 1200 communications*

*→ gain from
38 or 39*

DWD'S TWO-PHASE PLAN

Phase I: Job Service Staff Locations

WDA Hub	Current DET Staff	DET Staff Coming to Hub	Total Staff	Managers
Kenosha	7	7.3	14.3	1
Milw SE	13	2.5	15.5	1.5
Milw NE	4.9	8	12.9	1.5
Pewaukee	6	1.6	7.6	1
Menasha	6	6	12	1
Green Bay	8	8.4	16.4	1
Superior	3	2.5	5.5	1
Eau Claire	5.7	4.2	9.2	1
La Crosse	7.5	1	8.5	1
Madison	10	5	15	1
Janesville	8.5	5.8	14.3	1
Wausau	4	4	8	1
Totals	83.6	56.3	139.2	13

Population, need, & efficiency based



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DWD'S TWO-PHASE PLAN

PHASE 2 – With regional partners

- Create new state-funded, easy-to-use virtual job center available everywhere, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Serve every community, large or small, rural or urban, with mobile staff, outreach, network of community office hour sites
- Increase connections to tech colleges, employers, citizens, including vets, dislocated workers, those with disabilities
- Establish baseline measures, service targets, evaluation standards

new virtual job center

list resumes online for employer review

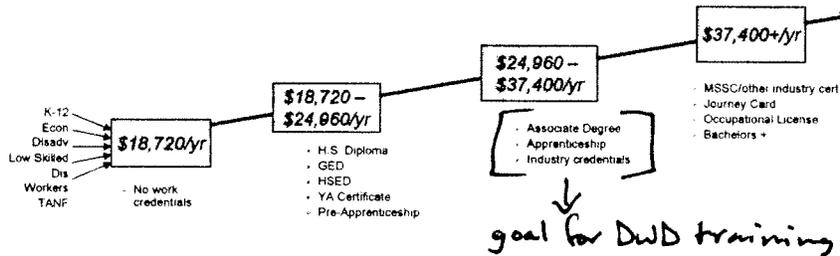


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DWD'S TWO-PHASE PLAN

PHASE 2

Move More Workers Up the Pathway to Skills, Better Jobs & Earnings



- Background materials & stakeholder comments
- Pleased to answer any questions

Thank you!





UPCOMING IMPROVEMENTS TO WISCONSIN'S EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING SERVICES

- The Department of Workforce Development (DWD) is transforming its employment and training services to best meet the needs of Wisconsin's workers and employers in the 21st century.
- The existing job center system was created almost 25 years ago – before computers and the Internet were commonplace.
- Federal financial support for Wisconsin's employment and training system has decreased 73% since 1985 according to a new analysis done by the Public Policy Forum– at the very same time that these services are more important than ever before.
- We must do things differently, using our precious resources to best deliver workforce services to employers and job seekers. We want to be a state where every single employer and job seeker, in every community, has access to the resources they need to be successful.
- We look to being a national leader in ensuring a workforce system that is comprehensive, technologically advanced, effective and efficient.
- By December 31, 2008, we will be redirecting Job Service and Veterans staff to 12 strategic regional hubs across the state in the following locations: Kenosha; two in Milwaukee, given its size; Pewaukee; Menasha; Green Bay; Wausau; Superior; Eau Claire; La Crosse; Madison; and, Janesville. The sites were selected based on population, workforce needs, available resources and efficiencies.
- Though our staff will operate out of 12 home office hubs, they will be mobile throughout the region, having the capacity to hold office hours in other locations as needed.
- Persons with disabilities, veterans, and dislocated workers will continue to be served in the communities in which they reside with our mobile staff.
- DWD will not close any job centers. Regional workforce development boards are responsible for the designation of job centers and their management locally. The state is only one of many service providers in job centers.
- There will be no position cuts because of this effort.
- In addition to reassigning DWD's staff to twelve job center sites, DWD is also creating a statewide career and skill center advisory group to assist with collaboratively establishing new program improvements and service standards.
- DWD will also hold regional meetings to gain additional input on developing program improvements including siting and scheduling office hours at a variety of locations and organizations.

DWD WILL CREATE A VIRTUAL JOB CENTER

- We will reach out to employers and job seekers in new ways, including using new technology to create an exciting new statewide virtual job center.
- This will allow us to reach people across Wisconsin anywhere, anytime, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- The virtual job center will allow us to provide face-to-face job search assistance through web cameras; conduct online job fairs; host video job interviews; run online workshops and seminars; and, offer career advising.
- DWD has created a statewide virtual job center advisory group to assist the department in developing the new technology.

BENEFITS TO JOB SEEKERS

- We will be able to redirect overhead savings that would have been otherwise spent on rent and IT to career advising, training and career advancement for workers.
- We will aggressively reach out to our customers and special populations wherever they may be, including technical colleges, libraries, community organizations, childcare centers, etc. Our staff will be mobile instead of only being physically located in job center buildings.
- We will provide improved tools for assessment and referrals to jobs.
- We will focus on enrolling our customers in training and pathways to higher wage work

BENEFITS TO EMPLOYERS

- We will reach out to employers more aggressively to establish strong relationships to meet their workforce needs.
- We will do a better job of matching qualified job seekers to employers.
- We will become a bridge, connecting individuals to technical college and other training to best meet employer needs.

WISCONSIN NEEDS TO BE MORE EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT IN REACHING MORE PEOPLE WHO HAVE EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING NEEDS

- Best estimates show that current job centers in Wisconsin serve approximately 106,000 citizens annually.
- According to a recent UW-Madison Center on Wisconsin Strategy (COWS) study, an estimated 700,000 Wisconsin low-wage workers lack either a high school diploma or the skills needed beyond a high school diploma to compete in today's job market.
- Approximately 15% of those needing advanced skills beyond a high school diploma are being served in our job centers.

July 8, 2008

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State of Wisconsin
Department of Workforce Development
Jim Doyle, Governor
Roberta Gassman, Secretary

June 5, 2008

Name
Title
Organization
Street address
City, state, zip

RE: UPCOMING IMPROVEMENTS TO WISCONSIN'S EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES

Dear :

I write to share information about the steps the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) is taking to transform our employment and training services to best meet the needs of Wisconsin's workers and employers in the 21st century. First, let me give you some background.

BACKGROUND

Wisconsin's job center system was created almost twenty-five years ago, with a short-term \$10 million federal start-up grant. Not only are those one-time dollars long-gone, but also according to a 2004 analysis by the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Center on Wisconsin Strategy, federal employment and training funding to Wisconsin was cut by 56% between 1984 and 2004. Furthermore, since 2004, our federal funding has been cut even more.

Neither the state nor DWD oversee or operate job centers – the designation of job centers and their management are conducted locally by regional workforce development boards. The state is only one of many service providers in job centers. Therefore, the state does not open or close job centers. We are not now closing any job centers.

When the system was created, supported by federal funding, the state had far more Job Service and Veterans staff than now, located in dozens of centers statewide. On top of this, the system was, of course, created before widespread use of computers, and the advent of the Internet. The world has now changed. Technology is everywhere and, additionally, at the very time we need more skilled workers than ever before, few citizens actually visit Wisconsin's job centers. The same holds true for our employer community. Employers often seek job candidates elsewhere because the technology our staff has been using in centers is not cutting-edge or user-friendly compared to what job seekers and employers can find using other Internet sources.

Because our shrinking resources have been spread so thin, too little of our funding has been going into actually serving job seekers and employers with skills assessment, career advising and training. Too much of our capacity has been consumed with overhead costs such as rent, computer lines and publications.

States everywhere are facing such challenges. Now is the time to do things differently, to better use our precious resources to provide the highest quality workforce development services possible to job seekers and employers. I very much appreciate all the helpful feedback we have received on the improvements we are making from many of our partners around the state including leadership from workforce development boards, technical colleges, the Council on Workforce Investment, business, labor, counties and W-2 agencies. We believe that Wisconsin can be a national leader in providing services that are comprehensive, technologically advanced, effective and efficient.

STRENGTHENING SERVICES THROUGH TWELVE COMPREHENSIVE REGIONAL CAREER AND SKILL CENTER HUBS AND AN ADVANCED NEW VIRTUAL JOB CENTER

To redirect more funds to assessment, career advising, training and advancement opportunities for workers, by December 31, 2008, we will be stationing our current Job Service and Veterans staff in twelve comprehensive regional sites across the state: Kenosha; two in Milwaukee, given its size; Pewaukee; Menasha; Green Bay; Wausau; Superior; Eau Claire; La Crosse; Madison; and, Janesville. The sites were selected based on population, workforce needs, available resources and efficiencies. We will work closely with our regional partners to implement these changes, which will involve seven key elements:

1. REDIRECTING STAFF TO PROVIDE MOBILE SERVICES OUT OF REGIONAL HUBS

Though our staff will operate out of twelve regional office hubs, they will be mobile throughout the region, having the capacity to travel to and hold office hours in other locations as needed.

2. CREATING A NEW VIRTUAL JOB CENTER

We will fund and implement an innovative new and easy to use virtual job center, which will give job seekers and employers the ability to reach DWD and each other across Wisconsin anywhere, anytime, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The virtual job center will offer features such as posting of resumes and job orders; initial screening of job candidates; online personal job search assistance and job interviews; online job fairs, workshops and seminars; and, videoconferencing. This will expand our ability to reach thousands of new customers all over the state. We will have staff and technical support available to help individuals who may be new to using computers and technology, and we will offer that assistance in small communities and neighborhoods throughout Wisconsin.

3. REACHING OUT TO ALL OF WISCONSIN PROACTIVELY

We are committed to serving every community, whether large or small and urban or rural. We will not just wait for job seekers to come to us; we will reach out to our customers around the state through a variety of sites including technical colleges, community organizations and libraries. We will be able to reach more communities and individuals, including unemployed and underemployed workers, something we know is now more important than ever before.

4. INCREASING CONNECTIONS OF WORKERS TO JOB TRAINING AND TECHNICAL COLLEGES

We will increase our enrollment of workers in training and pathways to higher wage work. We will re-train our own staff so that they can deliver needed assessment, career advising and training services to customers. Our staff will increase the connection of workers to skills through technical college training.

5. ESTABLISHING STRONGER RELATIONSHIPS WITH EMPLOYERS

We will reach out more aggressively to employers to meet their workforce needs and connect them with qualified job seekers. We will also improve our referrals to employers and expand their pool of workers to consider for future hiring needs.

6. CONTINUING STRONG SERVICES TO WORKERS WITH DISABILITIES

DWD's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) will continue to serve its caseload of consumers with disabilities based on where those individuals live. Some of our DVR counselors will be stationed in the twelve comprehensive sites, and others, depending upon where their consumers reside, will remain in other community sites, including other existing job center locations.

7. CONTINUING EXCELLENT SERVICES TO VETERANS AND DISLOCATED WORKERS

Providing the best services possible to veterans and dislocated workers continues to be a top-priority for DWD, particularly given these challenging times in our nation and around the world. Using our twelve sites and our capacity for mobile and virtual services and office hours, we will help all dislocated workers get connected to all of the assessment, re-training support and placement services they need. We will give the same strong attention to the needs of veterans, many of whom are now returning from service with special challenges or disabilities.

WORKING TOGETHER

All of us at DWD look forward to working with you and all of our statewide partners over the weeks and months ahead as we work, in a time of great need, to transform and strengthen our employment and training services. Our goal is for every single job seeker and employer to have access to the resources they need to be successful. We believe that by consolidating services, reducing overhead and offering an expanded scope of assistance via innovative staffing, increased service hours and cutting-edge technologies, we will strengthen Wisconsin's employment and training system.

Given the opportunities and challenges we face, we are working to responsibly address our own staffing and space plans while meeting the needs of workers, employers and the state. And in our commitment to those we serve, we will not be cutting any staff positions as we make these changes.

I hope that you find this information helpful. If you have any questions, please contact Rex Loehe, Executive Staff Assistant at DWD, at Rex.Loehe@dwd.state.wi.us or 608-266-1756.

Best regards,



Roberta Gassman
Secretary