

A worker wearing a plaid shirt and a white hard hat is working on an electrical panel. The worker is looking up and to the right, and their hands are near the panel. The background is dark and out of focus. The entire image has a blue tint.

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# Legislative Council Study Committee on Increasing Offender Employment Opportunities Briefing

Department of Workforce Development  
August 30, 2022

# About the Department of Workforce Development

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## DWD's Mission

The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) efficiently delivers effective and inclusive services to meet Wisconsin's diverse workforce needs, and advocates for the protection and economic advancement of all Wisconsin workers, employers, and job seekers.



DWD advocates for and invests in the protection and economic advancement of all Wisconsin workers, employers, and job seekers through six divisions – Employment and Training, Vocational Rehabilitation, Unemployment Insurance, Equal Rights, Worker's Compensation and Administrative Services.



# Briefing Overview

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- Review DWD Programs:
  - Correctional Job Labs
  - Educational and Workforce Preparation Programming
  - Mobile Job Labs
- Employer Incentives:
  - Fidelity Bonding
  - Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)
- Success Story
- Worker Connections Pilot Program
- Recommended Legislative Changes



# Correctional Job Labs

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**2017:** DWD-DET leadership identified strategies to prepare justice-involved individuals for employment after release.

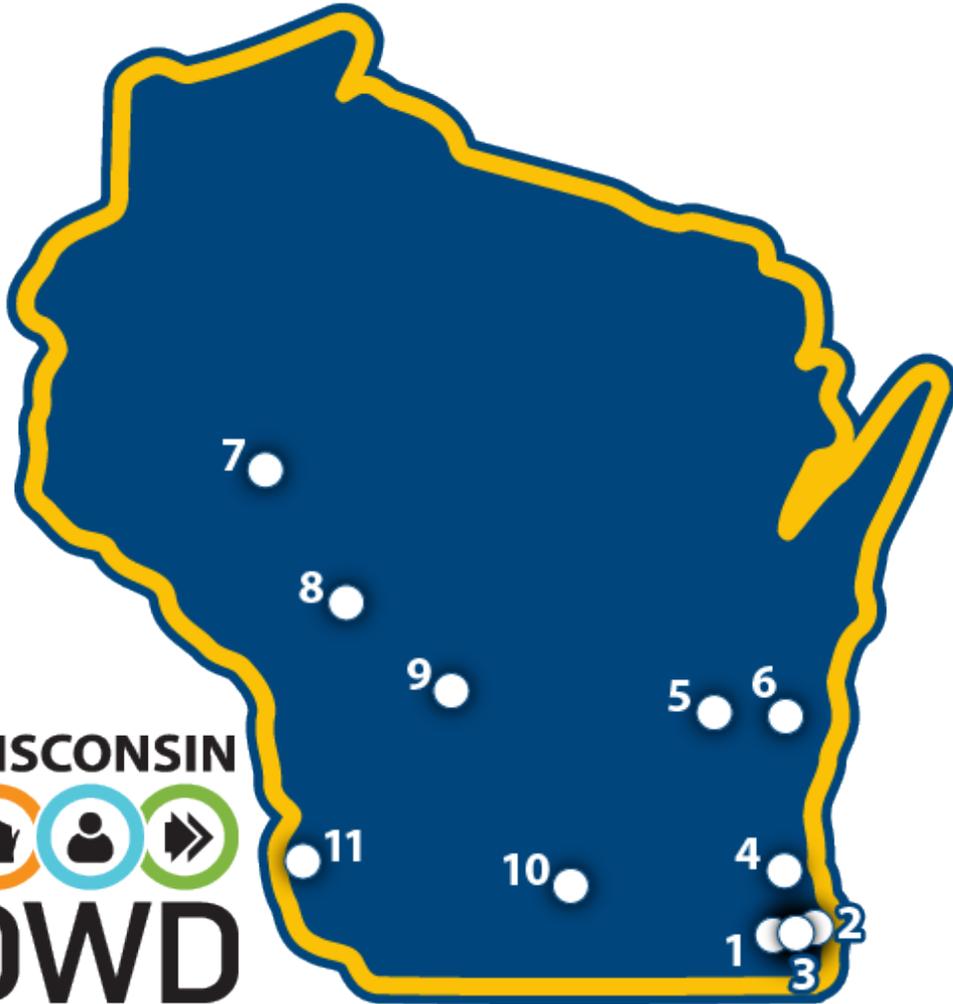
**2018:** First correctional job lab opened at Oakhill Correctional Institution in Oregon, WI.

**Since 2018:** 11 correctional job labs have opened, including one mobile Job Lab and 10 classrooms inside correctional facilities.

**In FY 2022:** DWD and DOC assisted nearly 525 persons in care through our Job Labs.

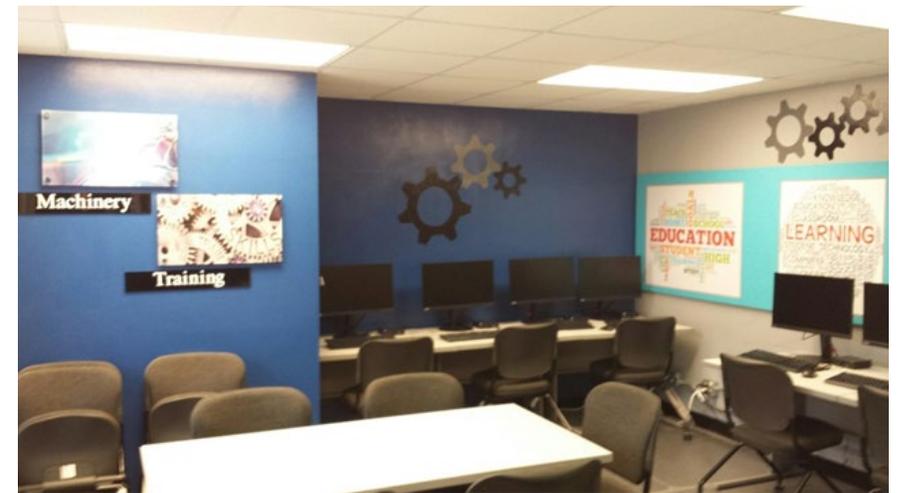


# Job Lab Locations



1. Robert E. Ellsworth Correctional Center (REECC)
2. Racine Youthful Offender Correctional Facility (RYOCF)
3. Racine Correctional Institution (RCI)
4. Milwaukee Women's Correctional Center (MWCC)
5. Taycheedah Correctional Institution (TCI)
6. Kettle Moraine Correctional Institution (KMCI)
7. Chippewa Valley Correctional Treatment Facility (CVCTF)
8. Jackson Correctional Institution (JCI)
9. New Lisbon Correctional Institution (NLCI) – Mobile
10. Oakhill Correctional Institution (OCI)
11. Prairie du Chien Correctional Institution (PDCI)

# DWD | DOC Job Labs



# Job Lab Roles & Teamwork

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- DWD trains DOC staff on Job Center of Wisconsin.
- DOC trains DWD staff on security protocols and procedures for working in its facilities.
- DWD provides on-site staffing from local/regional Job Service offices.
- Both coordinate on-site scheduling of Job Service staff.
- DWD collaborates with external partners, for example, the local Workforce Development Boards.



# Job Lab Roles & Teamwork

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- DWD and Workforce Development Boards deliver Job Readiness Workshops on-site in the Job Labs.
- DWD ensures alignment with DOC's Windows to Work programming.
- DWD ensures that veterans connect with DWD's Veterans Services.
- DWD connects disabled individuals with counselors from DWD's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.
- DWD shares Fidelity Bonding and Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program information.



# Educational & Workforce Training Programming

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- DOC Division of Adult Institutions Primary Programs
- Cognitive Based Interventions for Employment
- Second Chance Pell Programs
- Career Technical Education Programs
- Entrepreneur in Training Program
- Apprenticeship Opportunities
- Mobile Training Labs



# Mobile Training Labs



- RCI: **CNC** Mobile Lab (Gateway Technical College)
- JCI: **CNC** Mobile Lab (Western Technical College)
- TCI: **Welding** Mobile Lab (Moraine Park Technical College)\*
- NLCI: **Electrical Mechanical** Mobile Lab (Western Technical College)\*
- RYOFC: **Mechatronics** (Gateway Technical College)\*

\*Funded by DWD's Wisconsin Fast Forward funds.



# Employer Incentives | Fidelity Bonds

## What is Fidelity Bonding?

- Business insurance policy that protects the employer in case of any loss of money or property due to employee dishonesty.
- Bond coverage is provided for the following groups, including:
  - Individuals with record of arrest or imprisonment
  - People who have suffered from addiction and have been rehabilitated through treatment for substance abuse

## Number of bonds issued per year for justice-involved individuals

Year	Bonds
2019	41
2020	12
2021	8
2022	10



## What is the Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program?

- Federal income tax credit helps people gain on-the-job experience and achieve better employment outcomes.
- Federal tax credits for employers as an incentive to hire people in several specific target groups, including justice-involved individuals.

### Number of WOTC applications certified for justice-involved individuals

Year	Certified WOTC
2019	4,304
2020	4,125
2021	2,552
2022	2,379



**Services, programs, teamwork, partnerships -  
all can make a huge difference and bring success!**

**Let's meet Shawna...**





<https://www.youtube.com/embed/XazehcaiHNY>



# Worker Connection Pilot Program

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- Serving Milwaukee, Florence, Marinette, Oconto, Outagamie, Menominee, Shawano, Brown, Kewaunee, Door, Manitowoc, and Sheboygan Counties.
- Career Navigators work one-on-one with clients, including justice-involved and formerly justice-involved individuals, to connect them to resources, trainings, and in-demand career pathways.
- Partners with community-based organizations and businesses to provide support and help employers with their workforce needs.



# Recommended Legislative Changes

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- **Work Opportunity Tax Credit** – Create a Wisconsin state income and franchise tax credit to supplement the federal WOTC.
  - The tax credit would be available to employers who hire individuals from target groups such as formerly justice-involved individuals.
- **Job Applicant Conviction History** - Prohibit employers from inquiring into a conviction record of an applicant before the applicant has been selected for an interview.
  - Employers would still be able to notify applicants that an individual with a particular conviction record may be disqualified by law or under the employer's policies from employment in particular positions.



# Questions?

