



## Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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May 21, 2001

Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #1032

### **Governor's Work-Based Learning Board -- Career Counseling Centers (DWD -- Employment, Training and Vocational Rehabilitation Programs)**

[LFB 2001-03 Budget Summary: Page 730, #16]

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#### **CURRENT LAW**

The career counseling center program was created in 1993 Wisconsin Act 16 to provide grants to nonprofit corporations and public agencies to develop career counseling centers. The Division of Workforce Solutions in the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) administers the program.

#### **GOVERNOR**

Provide that the Governor's Work-Based Learning Board (GWBLB) would be responsible for planning, coordinating, administering and implementing the career counseling center program.

#### **DISCUSSION POINTS**

1. The career counseling center program was created to provide grants to nonprofit corporations and public agencies to develop career counseling centers. State grants, including funds transferred from the unemployment insurance interest and penalty appropriation, were provided to career counseling centers from 1994-95 through 1998-99. The program was administered by the Division of Connecting Education and Work. However, under the provisions of 1999 Act 9, state funding for the centers was eliminated and DWD was directed to consolidate the career counseling center functions with job centers. The career counseling center program is administered by the Division of Workforce Solutions, which is also responsible for job centers.

2. Career counseling centers provide pupils with access to comprehensive career

education and job training information, including information regarding technical college programs. The centers also assist pupils in locating apprenticeship and other work experience opportunities related to the pupil's education. The centers are required to coordinate services with the counseling and guidance activities and school district education for employment programs.

3. Career counseling centers are operated by teams that include groups such as workforce development boards, WTCS districts, school districts, chambers of commerce, nonprofit organizations, business and labor. Center services include use of: (a) computerized databases of job opportunities, training agencies and career libraries; (b) career planning computer software; (c) career exploration videos, laser discs and video conferencing facilities; (d) Job Net and internet and self-service computer workstations to view job listings; (e) a 1-800 telephone information hotline; (f) access to the DWD internet career development system; and (g) seminars. Career counseling centers are places where employers and educators pool resources to assist young people in examining their skills and interests, learning about occupations and job opportunities in various career fields, exploring career options and planning careers.

4. There are eleven career counseling centers located in Appleton, Ashland, Green Bay, La Crosse, Madison, Milwaukee, Pewaukee, Racine, Watertown, Wausau and West Bend. About 78,000 youth and 20,000 adults visit the centers during the year.

5. Job centers provide a single location for employers to meet workforce recruitment, training and development needs and for job seekers to obtain career planning, job placement and training services that can assist them in getting jobs. Job centers are locally developed and managed and combine the resources of state, county, education and private sector entities to provide services to individuals who are looking for work and businesses that are looking for workers. Job centers also provide access to the Wisconsin Works program. There are 78 job centers in Wisconsin.

6. Prior to Act 9, DWD was authorized to award grants to nonprofit corporations or public agencies to operate career counseling centers. The grants could range from 25% to 75% of the total cost of operating the center, but after three years of receiving grant funds, the grant could not exceed 50% of the total cost of operating the center. The grant recipient was required to provide the remaining share of project cost. Grant recipients were not guaranteed funding in the second or subsequent years of operation of the centers.

7. As noted, under the provisions of Act 9, the career counseling center grant program was eliminated and DWD was directed to consolidate career counseling center functions in job centers. Currently, the coordination between career counseling centers and job centers varies from center to center. Some career counseling centers are located and work with job centers while others have continued to operate alone. Historically, career counseling centers have resisted consolidating activities with job centers, because job centers and career counseling centers are viewed as having a different focus. Job centers are targeted toward adults and provide information and job skills training. Career counseling centers are targeted towards students and provide videos related to careers, computerized career information and multi-media information. In areas where there is both a job center and a career counseling center, there is referral of persons between centers.

8. Under current statutory provisions, DWD is required to provide career counseling

centers as part of the job center network. However, since the state grant program was eliminated, the administrative support provided by DWD staff to career counseling centers has been limited. DWD staff have worked to coordinate career counseling and job center functions, provide technical assistance and collect data on career center usage. Under Act 9, the career centers were placed within the Division of Workforce Solutions (formerly the Division of Workforce Excellence) because the Division administers the state job centers program. Prior to Act 9, the career counseling center program was administered by the Division of Connecting Education and Work as part of DWD's school-to-work activities. The Governor proposed transferring the career centers to the Work-Based Learning Board in the 1999-01 budget bill. The Legislature modified the bill to direct DWD to administer the centers as part of job centers.

9. The bill would return administrative responsibility for career counseling centers to DWD's school-to-work staff. The GWBLB indicates that it would provide technical assistance to the career centers to maintain websites and to develop independent funding sources. The Board has retained the reporting structure to collect data on career center usage. Periodically, GWBLB staff attend meetings of the directors of career centers.

10. Career counseling center grants were initially viewed as seed money with the local sponsors of the centers obtaining other funding for the costs of operating the centers after three years. Since the state funding was eliminated in 1999, the career centers have managed to obtain funding to continue various levels of operations. Schools send students to the career centers and some charge a per pupil fee for services provided. However, even though the centers are able to generate varying degrees of local financial support, there is little consistency from center to center and it is unclear if most would be able to generate sufficient revenue for a sustained period. From this view, an administrative connection with DWD provides the career centers with technical assistance and staff support to help keep the centers operating.

11. On the other hand, state financial support for the career centers has not been available for two years. The amount of administrative support the Department can provide is limited and there are no statutorily required administrative services for the career centers. Moreover, career counseling centers were originally envisioned as self-supporting entities. An argument could be made that DWD should not have any administrative responsibilities for career counseling centers.

## **ALTERNATIVES TO BILL**

1. Approve the Governor's recommendation to provide that the Governor's Work-Based Learning Board would be responsible for planning, coordinating, administering and implementing the career counseling center program.

2. Delete the Governor's recommendation and, instead, eliminate all DWD responsibilities for administering career counseling centers.

3. Maintain current law.

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