

DRAFT
5-50 in 5 years

Wisconsin's Challenge No Different than US Challenge

Wisconsin's challenge for growing our economy is no different than the challenge our nation faces to compete in a global economy. The level of our talent will dictate how far our economy will grow. To grow this talent we must develop a workforce investment portfolio that objectively assesses our current workforce and makes the necessary system changes that will deliver the desired outcomes for a skilled workforce.

The state, with guidance from economic development and business leaders, must set the framework for regional innovation and talent development, providing the tools necessary for upgrading our workforce to meet the needs of our leading employers in the global competition for talent.

Career guidance and development must continue throughout the work life cycle. Work cannot be separated from learning and learning can no longer be separated from work. Career guidance and development must start at the earliest stages in our educational system, guided by the needs of business and the innovation they bring to our economic sectors.

Business Needs a Talented Workforce

The biggest barrier to Wisconsin achieving the most talented and globally competitive workforce is our lack of coordination and access to training. To meet the needs of our leading economic sectors, we must first take a hard look and assess the current skills of the available workforce. Many of Wisconsin's nearly 700,000 disadvantaged workers lack a high school education or any training beyond a high school degree. Today's economy and our leading businesses need and demand a highly skilled workforce, adaptive to the changing global economy and the quick-paced nature of technological advances. Wisconsin's workforce system must play the lead role in using the appropriate tools to leverage existing educational and training resources, delivering the talent employers need from our state's available labor pool. But, this effort will take a strong commitment from all sectors---a new joint venture with economic development experts, business and education leaders and workforce professionals systematically changing our current resources to assess, change and progress as a team with one outcome—a talented and skilled workforce.

Joint Venture and Regional “Quarterbacks”

The state must act as coach, helping to make the resources available and guiding the team in a strategic direction. The regional leaders included in the joint venture must act as a team with the regional Workforce Development Board (WDB) serving as the quarterback. Assessing the team's strength, knowing how to move the team forward and

marshalling the resources will be critical to the success of the regional team in meeting the needs of the region and of that of the state.

The directors of each WDB, in this quarterback role, will be responsible for knowing where the talented workers are and how employers can obtain them. If workers are not available, the directors would work with the existing labor pool, establishing or connecting them to training to most or well meet the need's of regional economic sectors.

State and Business Must Drive the Effort

To ensure that the joint venture is successful, the state must also provide the needed resources to the regions. Sharing relevant labor force and labor market data with the regions is of vital importance. The state must also develop the structure and boundaries for the regions, establishing the rules of engagement for the workforce development boards. The workforce development board in turn, must reach out to the regional economic development organizations to populate their governing boards with the voice of active and leading business representatives. Nominations or referrals by the regional economic development entities must be instituted in order to give business a true leadership role and voice to guide the regional strategy.

All GROW Wisconsin workforce initiatives, such as Skills Jump Start, Opportunity Grants, customized labor training and additional training resources must flow through the WDB, with guidance and monitoring by state to ensure that the rules of engagement are being followed.

WDBs must have the tools to meet the needs of existing employers and those wishing to locate businesses within the region.

But, the regions must reflect and jointly plan within the frameworks of the GROW regions. In the greater Milwaukee area, M-7 and the Regional Workforce Alliance must plan together for their employment and economic outcomes, jointly submitting their workforce plan for the 3 workforce development boards. In the New North and Thrive economic regions, the 2 workforce boards must also jointly submit their plans to the state to ensure that regional economic interests and needs are met and at the heart of workforce development plans.

5 to 50 in 5 years

To augment the current education and training resources, the state will strategically plan to increase from an initial investment of \$5 million in 2009-11 to \$50 million over the ensuing 5 years, providing the needed training resources WDBs can leverage to move and shape the system to meet the needs of their regional economic sectors.

- *The CWI Executive Committee recommends that the Governor increase training grants (amount?) and set common criteria for all training programs operated by the Department of Commerce, DWD and the Wisconsin Technical*

College System, ensuring that training programs are meeting the employment needs of the regional economic sector industries. Additionally, other training programs operated through W-2 and the Department of Corrections should be coordinated and directed toward demand occupations. Once again, coordination and agreements must be developed regionally with workforce development interaction.

Within this framework and with the workforce development boards at the center, much effort must be made to live up to this profound responsibility. Business must be at the heart of this effort, articulating their needs with informed and facilitated guidance by the regional workforce professionals. In turn, the workforce professionals must use the resources and tools to assess the available talent, leverage the needed resources to produce that talent and deliver that talent and a skilled workforce to the businesses and regional economic sectors.

The state, for its part, will provide the needed infrastructure, enriching, informing and enabling the regions of the available pipeline, through labor market data, labor market exchanges and targeted resources.

Workforce Development Boards to Carry out Governor's GROW Wisconsin Vision

Workforce development boards, will play the lead regional workforce development coordination role, coordinating with applicable partners, including technical colleges, K-12 schools and economic development entities. In addition to developing and overseeing the Workforce Investment Act planning, the state envisions that they will be key coordinators and are to be consulted with for all workforce related activities, including educational activities that affect workforce development. The Governor's GROW Initiatives, most notably the Opportunity Grants, the Skills Jump Start grants, the expansions of MSSC, youth apprenticeship and adult apprenticeship should also be coordinated with the WDBs with the Governor and the DWD setting the vision and the WDBs carrying out implementation as articulated by regional businesses.

- *The CWI Executive Committee recommends that the Governor's DWD Grow Initiatives, including the establishment of Opportunity Grants, Skills Jump Start grants, expansions of MSSC, and youth apprenticeship, be supported by the Legislature, increasing state resources to enhance and grow these programs to meet the needs of low skilled workers for obtaining the skills needed by employers. The CWI Executive Committee also recommends that more resources be added to programs including Project Lead the Way and prisoner training to ensure that every available worker is tapped for the jobs of the future.*

Consideration should also be given to other federally funded programs that help to develop the workforce development pipeline of talented workers, such as Perkins Act resources, Workforce Advancement Training Grants and economic sector and training dollars.

Enhanced Skills Assessment and Career Guidance

WDBs will need to provide a more consistent and reliable skills assessment analysis and career information in order to carry out and fully develop a comprehensive regional workforce development system. Using the state's labor market data and the regional employment sector needs analysis, workforce development boards to provide employment and career information within their regions and must reach out, in addition to their own workforce system enrollees, to educational entities, and training providers.

- *To further this collaboration, the CWI Executive Committee recommends that pilots be established, demonstrating the importance for a standard skills assessment tool. Target pilot groups to include: dislocated workers; prison re-entry participants; low-skilled workers; and, graduating high school seniors. Working with employers, the WDBs will develop a certificate of work readiness, assisting employers in finding and developing the entry level workforce needed to meet their hiring needs.*
- *The CWI Executive Committee will also recommend that pilots be established for career information and career pathway outreach. Working with local school districts, WDBs will establish pilots on the appropriate tools to increase the awareness and interest in demand occupation employment opportunities available in the region and the pathways to achieving employment. Pilots such as Career 101 or other such mechanisms will help connect schools with the workforce boards, linking them to employers with demand occupations and job openings.*

Virtual Job Center: Tool for Recruiting and Assisting the State's "Farm Team"

With the State's investment in a virtual job center, called Job Center of Wisconsin, the state will allow workforce development boards, employers and job seekers with an important tool to capture, assist and connect job seekers with employers. The site will also assist job seekers in career guidance, labor market information and education and training opportunities available in their regions so they may pursue their talent development and upgrade their skills to meet the needs of hiring employers.

- *The CWI Executive Committee recommends that the Unemployment Insurance Program, through DWD and the Unemployment Insurance Advisory Council, require all unemployment claimants required to conduct a job search enroll in the Job Center of Wisconsin system. By connecting the unemployed with resources and skills match capability, job seekers and employers can quickly connect with each other, reducing UI claims and assisting employers with experienced workers.*

