

Jim Doyle
Governor

Roberta Gassman
Secretary



State of Wisconsin
Department of Workforce Development

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
201 East Washington Avenue
P.O. Box 7946
Madison, WI 53707-7946
Telephone: (608) 266-3131
Fax: (608) 266-1784
<http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/>
e-mail: dwdsec@dwd.state.wi.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, February 21, 2008

CONTACT: Dick Jones, Agency Liaison, 608-267-4780

Secretary Gassman Unveils \$400,000 Milwaukee Employment and Training Pilot as part of Governor's New *Grow Wisconsin* Plan

*State Labor Secretary Highlights Joint Partnership with Corrections,
Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board*

MADISON – Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Roberta Gassman today announced a new \$400,000 employment and training pilot project in partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) and the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board (MAWIB) to train unemployed and under-employed individuals for demand-driven jobs in the Milwaukee area, such as in advanced manufacturing, and health care.

“With this innovative partnership, we build on the success of our employment and training programs, developing a comprehensive approach to help reduce unemployment, address labor shortages and connect employers with skilled workers,” Secretary Gassman said. “As part of Governor Doyle’s *Grow Wisconsin – The Next Steps* plan, this collaborative effort will help place unemployed and under-employed Milwaukee residents, including those on probation and parole, into demand-driven jobs with benefits, while meeting the hiring needs of area employers.”

At least 100 individuals under the pilot project will be served over the course of one year, with a target of having all participants placed in jobs paying \$12 per hour, or more, with the capacity to move up to higher-paying work. To fund the project, DWD and MAWIB will each contribute \$100,000, with DOC contributing \$200,000.

DOC Secretary Rick Raemisch added: “By providing individuals, including those under the supervision of the Department of Corrections, with the opportunity to learn marketable skills and become gainfully employed, we’re working together to make Milwaukee a stronger and safer community. We know that steady employment is critical to an offender’s success at becoming a productive, law-abiding member of the community. We view this project as an investment in community safety.”

Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board President Donald Sykes added: “This project provides an opportunity to learn to connect unemployed and under-employed individuals with employment, while advancing partnerships and coordination between governmental agencies.”

The partners will work collaboratively through a competitive bidding process to identify eligible private and non-profit community organizations to implement the pilot project in Milwaukee. MAWIB will then administer and monitor the release of funds to the selected organizations, which will provide training, case management, support, and retention services to help participants succeed in the project.

Building on best practices and successful pieces of other employment and training efforts, this project seeks to create a comprehensive model that will be replicable and sustainable beyond the initial length of the pilot.