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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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On the Web: <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dwd/news.htm>

## **Secretary Gassman: Nearly 1,300 Wisconsinites Earn Certificates Through Recovery Act-Funded Employment Readiness Training Program**

### ***Workers demonstrate job skill mastery through initiative currently available at no charge***

MADISON – Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Roberta Gassman today announced that since the fall, nearly 1,300 Wisconsin residents have earned credentials through the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) program, a nationally recognized training and certificate program that helps individuals show mastery in basic workplace skills for current and potential employers.

“In communities across the state, job seekers and employers alike are recognizing the benefits of these credentials, which help demonstrate that individuals are job ready,” Secretary Gassman said. “This program is one more way we are helping workers get back on their feet and helping put Wisconsin back to work.”

The NCRC is a nationally recognized credential demonstrating that a job seeker has workplace employability skills in areas such as reading and math. Participants use an online training system to build skills and measure their progress. They can earn a Bronze, Silver, Gold or Platinum certificate, depending on their level of achievement.

To earn their NCRC credential, participants can take WorkKeys tests at local Job Centers and other locations throughout Wisconsin. The WorkKeys Assessment System, created by ACT, Inc., measures “real world” skills employers believe are critical to job success. These skills are valuable for any occupation—skilled or professional—and at any level of education.

Typically, interested job seekers must pay a fee for testing. Starting last summer, DWD made the NCRC program free to job seekers who enroll through Wisconsin Job Service, as well as to employers that contact the Job Service in search of additional tools to assess prospective new hires.

Since October 2009 when the free testing went statewide, a total of 1,287 individuals have earned credentials at different levels, including 198 Bronze, 535 Silver, 508 Gold and 46 Platinum. The free testing service for job seekers and prospective new hires is funded in part by the \$7 million in federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds Wisconsin received for Re-employment Services (RES).

Since July 2009, RES has served more than 50,750 Wisconsinites receiving Unemployment Insurance. Results from 18,000 active RES participants show that the program reduced their period of Unemployment Insurance benefits by an average of 10 weeks, or 25 percent, compared to those who did not receive RES services. RES saved an average of \$2,000, per participant, in state and federal unemployment benefits, or \$43.4 million in total.

Job seekers can learn more about NCRC at [www.wisconsinjobcenter.org/ncrc/jobseeker](http://www.wisconsinjobcenter.org/ncrc/jobseeker) or by calling 1-888-258-9966. Employers can learn more about the benefits of NCRC at [www.wisconsinjobcenter.org/ncrc/employer](http://www.wisconsinjobcenter.org/ncrc/employer).