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CONTACT: DWD Communications, 608-266-2722

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Departments of Workforce Development, Corrections Receive Diversity Award for Collaborative Training to Encourage Positive, Inclusive Workplace

State Office of Employment Relations, State Council on Affirmative Action present awards

MADISON – A collaborative and cost-effective training initiative to encourage a positive, inclusive and diverse workplace today earned the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) and Department of Corrections (DOC) top honors at the 2013 Diversity Award Ceremony sponsored by the State Council on Affirmative Action and the Office of State Employment Relations (OSER).

“Under Governor Walker’s leadership, we at DWD are committed to building the workforce to move Wisconsin forward,” DWD Secretary Reggie Newson said. “As we work to empower job seekers with skills and meet the workforce needs of employers, we also aim to set an example as an agency with a dedicated, talented staff that’s diverse and inclusive. We were pleased to collaborate with the Department of Corrections on this initiative, and we are grateful for the honor and recognition from the council and OSER.”

The collaborative initiative, "Respect and Inclusion in the Workplace Training," was developed by the DWD Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity Office (AA/EEO) and the DOC Office of Diversity and Employee Services (ODES). Staff from both agencies participated in training sessions. As partners in training, the two agencies were able to meet their training goals and provide the training in a lean, cost-effective manner.

“The Department of Corrections is honored to be recognized with the Department of Workforce Development for our tremendous efforts in creating a safer and more positive work environment for our diverse workforce throughout Wisconsin,” said DOC Secretary Ed Wall. “Through innovation joint diversity training programs, we are able to more effectively and efficiently utilize resources to better educate staff on issues related to Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity and other workplace issues.

DWD and DOC staff held a series of meetings over a five-month period to develop the enhanced, interactive AA/EEO training for their employees working in locations throughout the state. A major goal was to provide staff strategies that encourage a positive work environment and, at the same time, identify behaviors to avoid.

During sessions in Eau Claire and Milwaukee, staff from both agencies received a full day of interactive training included group and practical exercises with video clips. The training focused on what contributes to a respectful and inclusive workplace. The training also addressed how perception and bias can influence the work environment. In addition, it served to empower to take individual responsibility. More sessions are planned for 2014.

The award is the seventh DWD has received in 10 years. Last year, DWD was received a Program Achievement Award for an On-the-Job Training initiative of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.