

# Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development Major Accomplishments 2003-2010

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During challenging times, Department of Workforce Development Secretary Roberta Gassman has led DWD and its more than 1,600 employees in support of Governor Jim Doyle's economic and workforce development agenda, Grow Wisconsin. Governor Doyle entered office facing a record \$3.2 billion state deficit. Since 2007, the nation has experienced the toughest economic times in generations, a pounding national recession that has spared no state. Facing such challenges, DWD has accomplished much to the benefit of Wisconsin's residents. The accomplishments include efforts to:

- Build a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Workforce;
- Protect and Sustain Working Families in Challenging Times;
- Put Wisconsin Back to Work; and
- Serve Wisconsin Citizens with Effective, Efficient, Transparent Government.

## Building a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Workforce

### Focusing training resources on growth industries within Wisconsin's regions

- Wisconsin Industry Partnerships were launched in 2009, representing a new approach to training workers: Industry-led, regional partnerships that target resources more effectively on growth areas such industries as advanced manufacturing, health care, technology and clean energy.

- ✓ Governor Doyle has allocated over \$6 million in Workforce Investment Act funds to Industry Partnerships since 2009.
- ✓ DWD has already announced grants that will train more than 2,000 workers to meet employer needs.
- ✓ Initial support of sector-based strategy formation came from Governor Doyle's Grow Wisconsin Grants in 2004 that led to \$10 million in federal Workforce Innovations in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) grants.
- ✓ National Governors Association Center for Best Practices selected Wisconsin in 2008 as one of six states to participate in Policy Academy on Regional Sector Strategies.



### Creating career opportunities for low-wage workers

- Collaboration between DWD, the Joyce Foundation and the Wisconsin Technical College System led to Governor Doyle's workforce initiatives to help low-skill, low-wage workers begin pathways to better jobs through bridge programs:

- ✓ Since 2009, DWD has provided \$2 million in Opportunity Grants of up to \$1,000 per person for individuals who have a high school degree and seek technical college training for careers in demand sectors. DWD's regional partners, the Workforce Development Boards, have awarded nearly 500 grants so far.
- ✓ Since 2009, DWD has provided \$400,000 for Skills Jump Start grants to assist individuals without a high school diploma in completing their basic education while learning job skills in demand occupations. DWD's regional partners recruit and help register eligible individuals at technical colleges.

### Connecting job seekers and employers through online job center

- DWD launched JobCenterOfWisconsin.com, a free, user-friendly, Internet employment site, in 2008.
  - ✓ Since its launch, nearly 225,000 job openings have been posted.
  - ✓ Just in 2010, over 96,500 job openings were posted, as were tens of thousands of resumes. Moreover, almost 5,600 additional employers registered with the site in 2010.

### Creating a highly skilled advanced manufacturing workforce

- In 2006, Wisconsin became the first state to formally embrace Manufacturing Skill Standards Certification (MSSC), an industry-led, standards-based training, assessment and certification system focused on building the core skills and knowledge needed by today's production workers.
  - ✓ Governor Doyle provided \$685,000 in WIA discretionary dollars since 2006 to support workers' training in advanced manufacturing to achieve the MSSC credential.
  - ✓ Since then, individuals have earned 2,600 certificates in MSSC's four modules: safety, quality, manufacturing processing, and maintenance awareness.



### Helping workers earn while they learn, and prepare for skilled occupations

- During the past eight years, DWD has worked to expand the adult Apprenticeship Program, including creating more opportunities for minorities. It also secured a \$6 million competitive grant, the maximum available under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), to "green up" apprenticeship programs through the Sector Alliance for the Green Economy (SAGE) project.
  - ✓ The three-year project will provide green skills to 4,500 apprentices and 2,200 journeyworkers in the construction, renewable energy and clean water sectors.
  - ✓ SAGE also includes three new apprenticeship training programs: weatherization technician, energy auditor, and wastewater treatment.



### Providing work and skill-building opportunities for youth and young adults

- Under Governor Doyle's leadership, Youth Apprenticeship funding increased to more than \$2 million per year, providing nearly 2,300 high school juniors and seniors the opportunity to gain work experience and explore career options while earning a paycheck.

- DWD-funded programs also provided work-readiness training and career exposure to almost 7,000 economically disadvantaged youth. This includes ARRA-funded employment of over 4,000 youth and young adults in 2009 summer jobs paying an average wage of \$7.25 per hour.

### Ensuring a quality healthcare workforce

- DWD developed and launched the 2010 Registered Nurse Renewal Survey in collaboration with the Wisconsin Department of Regulation and Licensing and other partners. The survey provided crucial information about the supply, demand, location and skill needs of Wisconsin’s nursing workforce of nearly 80,000 individuals.



### Sharing best practices of state workforce agencies

- DWD planned, managed and served as host for the 74<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the National Association of State Workforce Agencies in 2010. More than 250 workforce and labor department leaders from 44 states gathered in Madison to exchange ideas on strengthening workforce systems and services.

## Protecting and Sustaining Working Families in Challenging Times

### Assisting working families during periods of unemployment

- Unemployment Insurance helps people who are laid off from their jobs, through no fault of their own, to stay in their homes and feed their families while they look for work.
  - ✓ During the national recession, DWD went from running one state program with up to 26 weeks of benefits to seven state and federal programs with up to 99 weeks of benefits.
  - ✓ To respond, DWD added staff to the Unemployment Insurance program, expanded services to expedite payments, and took additional steps to maintain program integrity.
  - ✓ In 2007, nearly 333,000 individuals in Wisconsin received benefit checks totaling less \$908 million. In 2009, 566,000 individuals received checks totaling \$3.2 billion. Those funds also add valuable spending to local economies.
  - ✓ So far in 2010, the Unemployment Insurance program has paid more than \$2.7 billion to 518,000 from January through October 2010.

### Helping workers retrain after a dislocation

- DWD secured nearly \$19.3 million in National Emergency Grant funding. This includes \$13.6 million in federal ARRA funds awarded in 2010 to assist more than 2,800 dislocated workers statewide with re-training and re-employment.



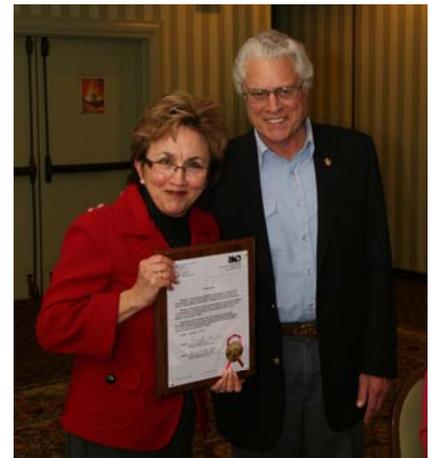
### Making sure workers are paid for their labor

- Each year, DWD successfully collects \$2.9 million, on average, through almost 4,000 wage claims on behalf of workers with unpaid wages.

- Since 2003, under Governor Doyle’s leadership, Wisconsin has implemented three minimum wage increases, with the support of business, labor and community leaders, from \$5.15 an hour to \$5.70 in 2005, to \$6.50 an hour in 2006, and to \$7.25 an hour in 2009. The 2005 increase (the first since 1997) benefited an estimated 250,000 workers, many of them single mothers.
- DWD worked to ensure workers are paid prevailing wages for work on public building projects. A 2009-11 budget provision requires contractors to file monthly certified payroll reports electronically. DWD posts the data on its website as part of its efforts to strengthen enforcement of prevailing wage laws.
- DWD took another important step to ensure fair compensation of construction workers. Working with the construction industry and labor unions, DWD helped craft legislation to ensure proper classification of workers as employees, protecting their rights and benefits.

### Protecting workers on the job

- DWD implemented the traveling sales crew law, the first of its kind in the nation, to protect work crews recruited from Wisconsin or working in Wisconsin. Known as Melinda’s Act, the new law was motivated by an auto accident that claimed the lives of seven young adults in Janesville in 1999.



### Protecting workers’ rights

- Individuals file more than 4,400 civil rights complaints per year, on average, with DWD’s Equal Rights Division. Ninety percent of these claims involve fair employment issues. DWD provided individuals with the option to file complaints online, starting in 2009, and 600 have been filed online so far.

### Providing compensation for injured workers and their families

- DWD’s Division of Worker’s Compensation maintained a strong Uninsured Employer Fund over the years to compensate injured workers in instances where employers failed to provide required coverage. In 2010, the fund balance totaled \$11.3 million after paying \$1.9 million on injured worker claims.

## Putting Wisconsin Back to Work

### Helping the unemployed return to work

- DWD expanded Re-Employment Services (RES) with \$7 million in federal ARRA funds in 2009 to provide people on Unemployment Insurance with employment and training services in order to return to work at the earliest opportunity.



- ✓ Since July 2009, RES has served more than 18,000 individuals, helping them search for jobs, update resumes and improve their job skills.
- ✓ Due to their faster re-employment, individuals in RES received Unemployment Insurance benefits for an average of 25% less time (10 weeks less) than claimants who did not participate in RES.
- ✓ The RES program saved an average of \$2,000 per RES participant in state and federal UI Trust Funds, or a total savings of \$43.4 million.

## Linking people with disabilities to meaningful work

- Nearly 25,000 Wisconsinites with disabilities gained employment since 2003, thanks to assistance from DWD, including almost 2,800 individuals so far in 2010. Their resulting wages represent a return on investment of more than 220 percent.
  - ✓ The On-the-Job Training Hiring Initiative, launched in 2009 with more than \$2 million in federal ARRA funding, has placed more than 760 individuals with disabilities in jobs. The program pays 50 percent of wages and benefits for up to 90 days of the 690 individuals hired by private employers. It pays 100 percent of wages and benefits up to 90 days of the more than 70 hired as limited term employees by the state.

## Serving those who have served their country

- DWD expanded services to help Wisconsin military personnel return to work, including those returning from duty in Afghanistan and Iraq.
  - ✓ With federal ARRA funding, DWD has hired 122 veterans since March 2009, including 112 disabled veterans, to serve other veterans.
  - ✓ At its national 2009 convention, the American Legion honored DWD for hiring veterans with its national Award to Enhance the Lives of Disabled Persons.
  - ✓ In collaboration with partners, DWD held 21 Veteran Job Fairs in communities throughout the state. Over 500 employers took part, and more than 300 veterans received job offers after attending the job fairs.
  - ✓ In collaboration with national piping industry, DWD helped launch the Veterans In Piping program, the first in the Midwest and only the third nationally of its kind, to train veterans in piping industry trades. The program allows graduates to achieve second year standing in a related apprenticeship program.



## Serving Wisconsin Citizens with Effective, Efficient, Transparent Government

### Providing greater access to workforce data

- In addition to JobCenterofWisconsin.com, DWD used technology to expand access to workforce and job market information to job seekers, employers, and others:
  - ✓ WORKnet, launched in late 2003, offers arrange of information and data on careers, employment protections, census data, county profiles, publication and workforce links.
  - ✓ Recovery Dollars in Action web site launched in 2009 lets the public know how ARRA-funds are being used, the number of people being served by region, and workforce programs involved.



- ✓ DWD Dashboard web site, soon to be launched, this web site will offer the public a look at DWD employment and training programs and results.

### Using information technology to improve services

- DWD has made it easier for the public to access a variety of services through electronic filing, speeding process, reducing paperwork and saving dollars.



- ✓ DWD expanded staff and capacity to handle Unemployment Compensation benefit claims, including federal emergency benefits available due to the national recession.
- ✓ DWD strengthened enforcement of prevailing wage law on over 1,600 public construction projects through its Certified Payroll Web Application.
- ✓ DWD added video conferencing capabilities at 11 Division of Vocational Rehabilitation sites to allowing staff, partners and customers to connect electronically by video conference, saving time and travel. These new capabilities earned DWD a national award in 2010 from *InformationWeek*, the IT industry magazine.

- ✓ In 2010, DVR completed and deployed a paperless case management system for Vocational Rehabilitation cases, improving accountability.
- ✓ DWD launched computerized work permits in 2008, helping ensure that worker permits are issued to eligible youth and denied to those who are truant.

### Saving state tax dollars

- DWD's Division of Equal Rights, under contract with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), helped the EEOC enforce civil rights laws by handling discrimination complaints. Over the years, this arrangement has earned the Division revenue, approximately \$500 per case, to help support its budget at a savings for state taxpayers of \$1 million per year for eight years.



### Promoting diversity in the workplace

- DWD received the highest diversity award in Wisconsin three times – in 2004, 2006 and 2008 – from the Wisconsin Council on Affirmative Action for its diverse workforce and career opportunities for women, minorities and people with disabilities.

## Conclusion

By any measure, DWD and its partners, under the leadership of Governor Doyle, Secretary Gassman and their team, have made great strides in building a 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce and creating rewarding opportunities for workers and employers going forward.