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Secretary Newson Highlights Success in Connecting Individuals with Disabilities to Employment Opportunities

Vocational Rehabilitation surpasses 1,000 hires through On-The-Job Training program

MADISON – Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Reggie Newson today recognized the agency's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation for recently surpassing its 1,000 placement in the innovative On-the-Job Training (OJT) Hiring Initiative. The program covers 50 percent of an individual's wages and benefits for up to 90 days when participating employers hire and provide on-the-job training to people with disabilities.

"The On-the-Job Training has encouraged employers across the state to make new hires, advancing job creation and providing opportunities for individuals who face barriers to employment due to a disability reach their goals," Secretary Newson said. "This program is truly a win-win for job seekers, job creators, and Wisconsin's economy."

The OJT Hiring Initiative, which began in 2009, works with both employers and job seekers. It offers an opportunity to hire and train a DVR job seeker who is qualified for the job. The employer then places the new employee on the payroll and processes their employment as with any other new employee. Upon completion of a hiring agreement, the new employee can receive the on-the-job orientation and training provided to other new employees.

The employer benefits from no cost recruiting and pre-screened DVR referrals. In addition, employers receive payment from DVR for half of all salary and fringe expenses for up to 90 days of training and may be eligible for other tax incentives. The program has an 85 percent retention rate, meaning employers kept the OJT hires on staff after completion of the program.

DVR provides employment services and counseling to people with disabilities who face substantial barriers to employment. In 2011, DVR served 40,383 individuals with disabilities, placed 2,905 people in jobs and supported OJT hires throughout the year.

Approximately \$525,000 was invested in the OJT program in federal fiscal year 2011.

For more information: <http://www.dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/>