

Department of Workforce Development Tribal Action Plan

September 2023 – September 2024

The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) recognizes and appreciates the State of Wisconsin's unique legal relationship with the 11 federally recognized Tribes with elected or appointed Tribal governments in the state. As affirmed by [Gov. Tony Evers' Executive Order #18 of April 9, 2019](#), state and tribal governments play key roles in efficiently delivering effective services to all the citizens of Wisconsin. This action plan, informed by consultation with the Tribes, highlights mutually agreeable short- and long-term strategies to address issues of interest to Tribes. DWD and the Tribes headquartered in Wisconsin agree to collaborate on these strategies and provide staff support as required to successfully achieve these outcomes.

Item 01	
Item Name	Assist Tribes with Addressing Workforce Challenges
Responsible Party	DWD's Division of Employment and Training (DET)
In collaboration with	Tribal Leaders, Tribal Departments of Labor, Tribal Human Resources, Workforce Development Boards, Agency Tribal Liaisons
History	<p>At the Aug. 16, 2023 DWD Tribal Consultation meeting, Tribal leaders expressed their concerns about the workforce challenges they are experiencing. The issues identified included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Issues of inflation and the costs to pay workers competitive wages without funding increases.• Issues of job seeker work readiness, including a mismatch in skills and training, and the lack of soft skills.• Barriers to employment such as the lack of affordable housing, transportation, and broadband access.• High cost and limited availability of childcare, particularly during second and third shifts.• Issues with recruitment and retention of workers for Tribal businesses and within Tribal communities. Highlighted challenges especially with the younger generations of workers and certain professions such as doctors, counselors, and substance use disorders specialists.• Issues with incarceration and substance use disorder rates in Tribal communities.• Lack of access to mental health care and lack of funding to support or expand existing mental health resources. <p>Wisconsin's Tribes are experiencing significant workforce challenges in Tribal government and Tribal services, as well as in Tribal-owned businesses including gaming and hospitality sectors. The Tribes also noted a lack of familiarity with DWD workforce development services.</p> <p>To help address the workforce issues raised, DWD's Division of Employment and Training (DET) will work closely with the local Workforce Development Boards, the technical colleges, and other state agencies to ensure that workforce barriers are addressed in Tribal communities and opportunities for training and upskilling are provided.</p>

Outcome/ Update Thanks to Gov. Tony Evers's groundbreaking investment of over \$158 million in the Workforce Solutions Initiative, the administration is working to address the state's workforce needs, including the worker quantity shortage and barriers to entering the workforce among Tribal nations. DWD collaborates with the Tribes on the following Workforce Solutions Initiative programs:

Worker Advancement Initiative

The Worker Advancement Initiative (WAI) serves people whose jobs have not come back since the pandemic, as well as those who were not attached to or were not successful in the labor market prior to the pandemic, by offering subsidized employment and skills training opportunities with local employers. The program builds on the success of current transitional job programs in the state by launching a new, statewide effort to provide subsidized work opportunities to individuals. To date, approximately 200 Tribal members have accessed over 1,000 training and supportive services through targeted outreach and opportunities created in collaboration with the local Workforce Development Boards across the state.

- In Workforce Development Area (WDA) 5, the New Boost Project is partnered with the College of Menominee Nation to provide digital literacy training and career services to Tribal members in collaboration with New North, African Heritage, and Abaxent. Data on the program's success will be available upon participants' completion of the program.
- In WDA 7, a Construction Management Certification program was created in partnership with the Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe College. At Northwood Technical College, there were cohorts participating in programs on Machine Tool Basics. These programs primarily serve Bad River, Lac Courte Oreilles, and St. Croix.
- In WDA 9, two programs were created in partnership with Ho-Chunk Nation. In the TRANs Training program, participants earn an OSHA 10 certification and apprenticeship pre-test upon program completion. Participants also learn Commercial Drivers' License flagger duties, first-aid and CPR training, proper tool usage, and resume-building skills.
- The Empowerment Training program is derived from the Mending Broken Hearts approach to address intergenerational trauma for Tribal communities. The training program provides financial literacy and workforce readiness skills while considering the specific barriers to entering the workforce that Tribal communities face.

The Workforce Innovation Grant (WIG) Program

WIG helps communities solve their most pressing workforce challenges by financially supporting collaborative, sustainable, and innovative pandemic-recovery plans developed by regional organizations led in collaboration with WEDC. The following WIG programs are in collaboration with Tribes:

- Lac Courte Oreilles received \$4.5 million in WIG funding to develop water infrastructure that will ultimately support the development of Tribal workforce housing units serving 80-120% area median income (AMI) residents.
- Northwoods Technical College, in partnership with the St. Croix Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin, funded a new mobile welding lab that extends access to welding education to St. Croix Tribal members.

The Worker Connection Program

The Worker Connection program provides free career navigation services aimed at expanding career opportunities to job seekers in the greater Milwaukee and Green Bay areas. The program targets organizations that work with justice-involved individuals including adults on probation and parole, inside jails and other correctional facilities, and individuals affiliated with other community-based organizations. Since enrollment began in March 2022, the program has enrolled 65 Tribal members.

Through the Worker Connection program, career navigators offer coaching that meets clients where they're at and quickly connects them with career, training, and supportive services. Navigators use motivational interviewing techniques combined with a trauma-informed lens to guide job seekers through a process to identify strengths and skills that match with job opportunities.

Career navigators have been in touch with the Oneida Nation regarding additional services available to Tribal members. Additionally, career navigators attended the business services meeting for the Menominee Nation in January 2024. Recently, navigators have been collaborating with faculty and conducting monthly outreach at the college.

Tribal Colleges and WIOA-Funded Tuition Assistance

The College of Menominee Nation and Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe College each have a program that qualifies for the Workforce Opportunity and Innovation Act (WIOA)-funded tuition assistance and is listed on the state's Eligible Training Programs List.

- At the College of Menominee Nation, the 90-hour Home Health Aide course was developed to provide students with a basic core of specialized instruction and practical health care experience in preparation for employment in-home health care. Students also have the opportunity to progress into a more advanced health care training, such as nursing assistant, practical nursing, and ADN nursing programs.
- At the Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe College, the Associate Degree of Nursing program educates students in the art of caring and prepares them with evidence-based knowledge and clinical experience to take the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) for Registered Nurses upon graduation. This fundamental level of nursing helps students to earn a career foundation in the health care field and provides opportunities to work in entry-level nursing positions.

Veteran Outreach and Employment Services

DWD's Office of Veteran Employment Services (OVES) is committed to advancing employment opportunities for Wisconsin veterans through targeted business engagement and services for the veteran community. In WDA 5, OVES has noted a higher population of Tribal members that are veterans in WDA 5. The Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) is currently making a strong effort to continue to build relationships with the Tribal communities within the area.

In WDA 4 and 5, staff are meeting at the Oneida Nation Tribal Veteran Service Officers Meeting on April 19, 2024 to provide a presentation about OVES and its programs. The OVES team will

continue to discuss OVES services with the President of the County Veterans Service Officers Association of Wisconsin (CVSOA) and the CVSOA of Menominee Nation and Menominee County.

In WDA 2, OVES staff has formed relationships with Potawatomi Casino and several Tribal veterans who are employed there. OVES will continue to work with Tribal partners to be active in the American Indian Chamber of Commerce (AICC). Staff will continue efforts to partner with AICC for OVES to provide employment assistance for Tribal veterans in these areas.

Support to Communities Grant

DWD is also a proud recipient of the federal Support to Communities grant, which fosters opioid recovery through workforce development. Through this U.S. Department of Labor grant program, DWD was awarded funding to provide training, career services, and supportive services to individuals affected by the opioid crisis. This program has served approximately 50 Tribal members this past year, connecting them to a total of 574 services.

Job Service Outreach

Job service managers continue to work with Tribal communities to partner in engagement and outreach efforts with the goal of meeting constituents where they are at. For example, the Oneida Nation created a space in their library for constituents to access virtual job service resources offered by DWD.

Resources	Workforce Solutions Initiative (wisconsin.gov) Home Page - ETPL (wisconsin.gov) Job Center of Wisconsin - Where Talent & Opportunity Meet
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Item 02	
Item Name	Apprenticeships
Responsible Party	DWD's Division of Employment and Training Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards (BAS)
In collaboration with	Tribal Leaders, Tribal Government Staff, and Tribal Employers
History	<p>At the Aug. 16, 2023 DWD Tribal Consultation meeting, Tribal leaders expressed interest in sponsoring apprenticeships or expanding apprenticeship opportunities to engage more Tribal members.</p> <p>DWD's Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards (BAS) will meet with interested Tribes to provide information about Registered Apprenticeship, Youth Apprenticeship, and Certified Pre-Apprenticeship.</p> <p>Apprenticeship opportunities can help job seekers build the skills necessary for higher wage employment while helping employers find qualified applicants. DWD's Bureau of</p>

	Apprenticeship can also support the Tribes in encouraging Tribal members to pursue diverse and expanding career pathways through apprenticeship programming.
Outcome/Update	<p>On Nov. 29, 2023, BAS staff presented on apprenticeship to the Forest County Potawatomi Human Resources team. There were discussions about setting up apprentice programs in IT, HR, electrician, arborist, and other career pathways.</p> <p>BAS staff also provided a high-level overview of registered apprenticeship and shared an update on their outreach plan at the department's virtual check-in on Feb. 29, 2024.</p> <p>BAS staff will conduct outreach to all of the Tribes in 2024 and conduct meetings with those interested in learning more about opportunities in apprenticeship.</p>
Resources	Apprenticeship – Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

Item 03	
Item Name	Access to Resources
Responsible Party	DWD
In collaboration with	Tribal Leaders, Tribal Government Staff, Governor's Office, Agency Tribal Liaisons
History	<p>At the Aug. 16, 2023 DWD Tribal Consultation meeting, Tribal leaders expressed difficulties navigating state resources and programs and determining which programs best fit their needs. DWD's divisions will explore how to best increase their programs' accessibility to Tribal nations at the statewide and regional level. DWD staff will share information about resources during the ongoing DWD and Tribal virtual check-ins between consultations.</p> <p>The department will continue to work with the Governor's Office and other agencies on how to streamline access to state services.</p>
Outcome/Update	<p>Department-wide Updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DWD hosted its first virtual check-in with Tribes on Feb. 29, 2024 to share resources about apprenticeship and economic/labor market information. DWD's webpage that is catered specifically towards outlining more information about DWD's resources for Tribal nations is live. <p>Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Update</p> <p>DWD DVR Tribal Liaison staff are attending a one and a half day training on substance use disorder and co-occurring mental health diagnoses that is co-hosted by American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation (AIVR) projects at Menominee Casino and Resort on April 30, 2024 and May 1, 2024. The training will educate staff about substance use disorders and statistics related to co-occurrence with other disabilities in addition to providing information for resources through</p>

the Tribes, community-based organization, and the state. The trainings and learning objectives were jointly developed with DVR and AIVR staff.

Resources [Tribal Affairs \(wisconsin.gov\)](http://wisconsin.gov)

Item 04

Item Name **Investing in Tribal Youth**

Responsible Party DWD

In collaboration with Tribal Leaders, Tribal Government Staff, Local Workforce Development Boards

History At the Aug. 16, 2023 DWD Tribal Consultation meeting, Tribal leaders emphasized the importance of serving the Tribal youth population to invest in the state's future workforce. The following youth resources and services were discussed:

- Financial literacy courses;
- Work-readiness courses;
- Mental health resources;
- Career counseling; and
- Youth Apprenticeships.

Participants emphasized the importance of culturally competent services and programs for Tribal youth. Tribal members who currently work with Tribal youth discussed the success and engagement in existing programs, the need to expand current programs, and the need to evaluate additional program opportunities. DWD will conduct outreach to the Tribes to outline current services available to Tribal youth. DWD's divisions will explore how to best increase their programs' accessibility to Tribal youth and improve overall cultural competency at the statewide and regional level.

Outcome/Update **Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Updates**

DVR offers work-based learning opportunities to eligible/potentially eligible students. Participation in the program is voluntary, and parental consent is required for all participants.

In the summer of 2023, DVR worked with Bad River, Red Cliff and St. Croix students. DVR served 36 students from Bad River, five from Red Cliff, and 40 from St. Croix. Work permits were obtained for 16 students in Bad River, two in Red Cliff, and 27 in St. Croix, due to the participants being under the age of 16.

The program is operated by the tribal community and is tailored to meet their specific needs. For example, in St. Croix, a six-week program was implemented that extended beyond DVR's involvement. The St. Croix program covered various topics such as spiritual wellness, traditional arts and language, healthy relationships, Narcan training, immersion into the Korean culture, a canoe trip, and concluded by holding a ceremonial Powwow. In Red Cliff and Bad River, similar

programs are in the planning stages, including opportunities for CPR training, work safety, and ATV safety courses.

By collaborating with tribal partners, DVR can support comprehensive programs like these in St. Croix, Red Cliff, and Bad River, contributing to our commitment to serve potentially eligible students in underserved areas, including tribal communities. Some of the work sites included Bad River Health Clinic, Bad River Boys and Girls Club, Bad River Maintenance Department, Bad River Legal Department, Bad River Admin Department, Red Cliff Health Clinic, Red Cliff Food Distribution, Red Cliff Library, Red Cliff Youth Center, St. Croix Tribal Office, St. Croix Clinic, and St. Croix Maintenance Crew.

Staff are working with Bad River and St. Croix to extend the Summer Youth Programs to the fall and winter, and to include options for students to work nights and weekends throughout the school year. The overall goal is to grow future leaders through Tribal employment opportunities and show students that professional careers are possible on the reservation after they complete their post-secondary education.

In WDA 5, DVR is discussing a 2024 Summer Youth Program with the Oneida Nation, which will be based on the Job Explorer Program. WDA 9 is utilizing Explore Work online training with Ho-Chunk youth. This provides students flexibility and demonstrates that they can pursue in-demand occupations such as healthcare and administration on the reservation post-secondary education.

Youth Apprenticeship

A Youth Apprenticeship is a one- or two-year “earn while you learn” program for high school juniors and seniors consisting of work and related classroom instruction in a chosen occupation. Training is received on-the-job where the employer teaches the skills of the occupation. This is augmented by taking courses that are related to that occupation. Youth Apprenticeship (YA) opportunities are organized into 16 broad YA Program Areas. Within each Program Area are a number of more specific Occupational Pathways. Those Program Areas include agriculture, food, and natural resources; architecture and construction; finance; health sciences; hospitality and tourism; information technology; manufacturing, etc. Schools that are interested in offering the YA program, as well as interested employers and students, can find their local YA consortium by contacting the Department of Workforce Development YA staff at YA@dwd.wisconsin.gov, or by looking up your local consortium here: <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/apprenticeship/contacts.htm>.

Resources [Tribal Affairs \(wisconsin.gov\)](http://wisconsin.gov)
[Youth Apprenticeship \(wisconsin.gov\)](http://wisconsin.gov)

Item 05

Item Name **Workforce Data**

Responsible Party DWD Division of Employment and Training (DET)

In collaboration with	Tribal Leaders
History	<p>At the Aug. 16, 2023 DWD Tribal Consultation meeting, Tribal leaders identified the need for labor and workforce data specific to Tribal nations. HR specialists noted that the data would inform the development and evaluation of recruitment and retention strategies.</p> <p>DET includes regional labor market economists who are skilled in assembling and interpreting local data on workforce trends, wages, housing, transportation, and demographics for use in strategic planning and workforce recruitment and retention. The economists are available for Tribal meetings and may provide specific data to support the Tribes in community development and employment success. DWD's Tribal Liaison can facilitate these meetings.</p>
Outcome/Update	<p>DET's Lead Economist Dennis Winters gave a presentation on labor market information and the state of the economy at the department's virtual check-in with Tribes on Feb. 29, 2024.</p> <p>DWD's Tribal Liaison is gathering information about past efforts to share data to inform initial discussions about potential data sharing with DWD and Tribal governments.</p>
Resources	<p>Employment & Training Dashboard (wisconsin.gov)</p> <p>WisConomy.com</p>

Item 06	
Item Name	Connections to Vocational Rehabilitation
Responsible Party	DWD Division of Vocation Rehabilitation (DVR)
In collaboration with	Tribal leaders, government staff, and vocational rehabilitation services
History	<p>During the Aug. 16, 2023 DWD Tribal Consultation meeting, DVR leadership shared information about the division and Vocational Rehabilitation for Native Americans (VRNA) connections and collaboration on services offered. Both DVR and Tribal leaders expressed the need to keep supporting and enhancing this shared work.</p> <p>DWD will continue efforts to support and expand vocational rehabilitation connections, services, and relationships. DWD will assess the feasibility of continuing to expand DVR Summer Youth Services to other Tribes. In addition, DVR will expand efforts to incorporate culturally specific elements into its rehabilitation services to help counselors work with individuals on their needs related to their disability and intergenerational trauma.</p>
Outcome/Update	On Sept. 20, 2024, approximately 20 DVR staff attended the joint annual meeting and training with staff from AIVR partner programs and Lac Courte Oreilles Casino and Resort. The meeting focused on staff networking with partners, program updates, history of Lac Courte Oreilles, and next steps.

Four DVR staff members attended the National Consortia of Administrators of Native American Rehabilitation Conference in December 2023 to learn and apply cultural competency to their work alongside WI AIVR partners. The conference was a great opportunity to learn national best practices and network with Tribal partners.

Additionally, in January 2024, DVR helped fund an event for Tribal youth with disabilities in collaboration with the College of Menominee Nation to have Bronson Koenig, former UW basketball player and member of the Ho-Chunk Nation, discuss resilience, mental health, and career success.

Resources [Vocational Rehabilitation \(wisconsin.gov\)](http://wisconsin.gov)

Item 07

Item Name **Improving Cultural Competency**

Responsible Party DWD

In collaboration with Governor's Office, Tribal Liaisons, Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council (GLITC)

History DWD recognizes the need to expand the department's cultural competencies to improve collaboration with the Tribes and best serve Tribal communities. DWD will evaluate how to best train and educate non-native staff to improve understanding of Tribal histories, cultures and customs, ways of working, shared and individual trauma experiences, Tribal languages, and Tribal services.

DWD's Tribal Liaison can assist with these efforts in consultation with agencies' Tribal Liaisons, the Governor's Office, and the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council (GLITC).

Outcome/Update DWD's Tribal Liaison attended the Department of Transportation (DOT) Tribal affairs and cultural competency training on March 6-7, 2024, and is exploring the opportunity to adapt that training for DWD's staff.

Four DVR staff members attended the National Consortia of Administrators of Native American Rehabilitation Conference in December 2023 to learn and apply cultural competency to their work alongside WI AIVR partners. The conference was a great opportunity to learn national best practices and network with Tribal partners.

Resources --

Item 08

Item Name **Resources for Justice-Involved Individuals**

Responsible Party	DWD Division of Employment and Training (DET), DWD Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), Local Workforce Development Boards
In collaboration with	Tribal Leaders, Tribal Governments, the Department of Corrections (DOC)
History	<p>At the Aug. 16, 2023 DWD Tribal Consultation meeting, Tribal leaders expressed the need for resources for adults and youth who are justice-involved. Incarceration and re-entry barriers significantly impact individuals' ability to obtain and maintain employment. Conversely, employment is key to combatting recidivism.</p> <p>DWD will conduct outreach to the Tribes to outline current services available to individuals that are justice-involved. As part of the department's increasing accessibility and improving cultural competency efforts, DWD will emphasize evaluating the expansion of these services to Tribal communities and how to cater to Tribal members' needs.</p>
Outcome/Update	<p>In 2017, DET identified strategies to prepare justice-involved individuals for employment when re-entering their community after release. A year later, in 2018, the first correctional job lab opened at Oakhill Correctional Institution in Oregon, WI.</p> <p>Since 2018, 11 correctional job labs have opened, including one mobile job lab and 10 classrooms inside correctional facilities. In 2023, DWD and the Department of Corrections (DOC) assisted nearly 8,729 persons in DOC care through the correctional job labs.</p>
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Item 09	
Item Name	DWD's Overall Engagement with Wisconsin's Tribes
Responsible Party	DWD Secretary's Office
In collaboration with	Tribal Leaders
History	<p>At the Aug. 16, 2023 Tribal Consultation meeting, improving communication between DWD leadership and Tribal leadership was discussed. DWD is dedicated to fostering these relationships to improve coordination and better serve Tribal job seekers, employers, and workers.</p> <p>DWD will provide virtual engagement opportunities on a quarterly basis, or more frequently as mutually determined, for Tribal leaders or their designees to receive updates on resources and opportunities, connect with technical assistance, and develop relationships that support deeper engagement. Additionally, the Secretary plans to visit each of the Tribes over the course of the year.</p>

DWD is also interested in increasing Tribal representation on its various councils and boards to provide more opportunities for engagement and increase collaboration. The department will continue this discussion with Tribal leaders and communities to gauge interest and identify potential appointees.

Outcome/Update

Secretary Pechacek visited Bad River Band on Oct. 3, 2023, and Stockbridge-Munsee Community on Oct. 4, 2023. The secretary's visit with the Ho-Chunk Nation is scheduled for March 28, 2024, and her visit with the Menominee Nation is scheduled for June 12, 2024. Scheduling other visits are in progress.

The department held a virtual check-in with Tribal leadership and their staff on Thursday, Feb. 29, 2024.

Regarding DWD's councils, Daniel Webster, who is the Director of Diversity and Inclusion for the Walbec Group and a member of the Oneida Nation, was appointed to Wisconsin's Apprenticeship Advisory Council at the end of 2023. He will also participate in the department's virtual check-in on Feb. 29, 2024 to discuss his experience with apprenticeship.

Resources

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