

Department of Workforce Development Tribal Action Plan

Updated August 2025

The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) recognizes and appreciates the State of Wisconsin's unique legal relationship with the 11 federally recognized Tribal Nations 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 Tribal Nations, highlights mutually agreeable short- and long-term strategies to address issues of interest to Tribal Nations. DWD and the Tribal Nations 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 Tribal Nations 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 June 11, 2025, DWD Tribal Consultation meeting, Tribal leaders and DWD reviewed important progress on workforce development collaborations and service delivery. At the same time, Tribal leaders expressed continued concerns about the workforce challenges they are experiencing. The issues included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee recruitment and retention. Many Tribal enterprises are considered the employers of choice in their neighboring communities and beyond, however, they continue to face challenges with employee recruitment and retention. • 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, childcare, and broadband access. • Lack of data to demonstrate the economic impact the Tribes have on the state. • Challenges connecting younger generations with in-demand skills that will lead to rewarding, family-sustaining careers. • 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>In summary, while progress is being made, Wisconsin's Tribal Nations are experiencing uneven results in addressing workforce challenges in Tribal government and Tribal services, as well as in Tribal-owned businesses including gaming and hospitality sectors. The 2025 Consultation highlighted opportunities to collaborate to support DWD, Tribal communities, and Tribal employers.</p>

To help address the workforce issues raised, DWD's Division of Employment and Training will work closely with the local Workforce Development Boards, the technical colleges, and other state agencies to continue reducing workforce barriers and addressing workforce needs in Tribal communities.

Outcome/ Update Workforce Solutions Initiative

Gov. Tony Evers's investment of over \$158 million in the Workforce Solutions Initiative continues to make an impact on the state's workforce. Through this funding, 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:

Through grants to local workforce development boards and community organizations, the Worker Advancement Initiative offers workforce resources, training programs, and supportive services to help workers overcome barriers to employment. To date, approximately 291 Tribal citizens have accessed over 1,454 training and supportive services through targeted outreach and opportunities created in collaboration with the local Workforce Development Boards across the state.

The Workforce Innovation Grant (WIG) Program

The WIG Program provided grants to regional organizations to develop and execute plans that address local workforce challenges. More specifically, grants supported the development of innovative, long-term solutions that helped businesses find qualified workers and empowered individuals to prepare for and access family-supporting careers. The following WIG programs are in collaboration with Tribes:

- Lac Courte Oreilles received \$4.5 million and technical support to complete the construction of water and sewer infrastructure for a workforce housing complex.
- Chippewa Valley Technical College received funding and technical support to create advanced manufacturing training hubs, a mobile welding lab, and provide manufacturing training in these spaces. Through a partnership with Northwoods Technical College, the mobile welding lab is extending access to welding training to St. Croix Tribal citizens.
- UW Stevens Point received funding and technical support to expand forestry education and training programs. Menominee Nation Schools were included in this project as part of the effort to extend forestry awareness and education to high schools.

The Worker Connection Program

The Worker Connection Program offers personalized navigation services to help job seekers and workers enhance their local career opportunities. Career Navigators within the program assist individuals in identifying their interests and work conditions, and guide them in exploring resources, training, and in-demand career paths available in

their area. The program is available in Milwaukee County and 11 counties in Northeast Wisconsin.

In January 2024, Worker Connection collaborated with the Bay Area Workforce Development board to initiate a partnership with Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin and the College of the Menominee Nation. The group focused on resource coordination to address a local need for Certified Nursing Assistants. The partnership led to developing a Certified Nursing Assistant cohort training program for the Wolf River Community Based Residential Facility. DWD highlighted this collaboration at its virtual check-in with the Tribes on March 26, 2025.

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. During the period of September 1, 2024, through June 1, 2025, OVES provided 246 services to Tribal members.

In WDA 2 and 3, staff continues to maintain its relationship and regular contact with the Potawatomi Hotel & Casino (PHC) by regularly attending PHC hiring events and job fairs to provide outreach about OVES services. OVES regularly connects job seeking veterans to employment at PHC.

In WDA 5, OVES continued its collaboration with the three major Native American Nations within its district: Oneida, Menominee, and the Stockbridge-Munsee. OVES staff often engage with the Tribes through career fairs, Tribal Veterans Services, and by providing case management to Native American veterans with significant barriers to employment.

Additionally, OVES staff in WDA 8 and 9 regularly participate in hiring events with the Ho-Chunk Nation.

Support to Communities Grant

DWD was a proud recipient of the federal Support to Communities grant, which fostered 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 served approximately 57 Tribal citizens throughout the grant, connecting them to a total of 701 services. This grant concluded on Aug. 31, 2024.

Fostering Opioid Recovery Through Workforce Development (FORWD) Grant

DWD received a \$4.3 million grant to serve 305 individuals directly impacted by the opioid crisis. The program aims to help these individuals reintegrate into the workforce, providing them employment and training services to prepare them for self-sustaining employment critical to a stable recovery. Five boards are participating in FORWD and implementing the grant's programming:

- Employ Milwaukee, Inc.
- Fox Valley Workforce Development Board.
- Northwest Wisconsin Workforce Investment Board, in partnership with the North Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board.
- West Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board.
- Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board.

DWD anticipates that this new FORWD grant will serve Tribal citizens impacted by the opioid crisis. More information will be available in future updates.

WIOA Title 1 Programs

WIOA Title 1 programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs) help people find employment and may fund training when needed for an individual to gain or retain employment.

- The Adult Program serves people who are least 18 years old and provide training and career services that require personalized attention from a career planner.
- The Dislocated Worker Program serves individuals who have lost their jobs and who fit into one of the dislocated worker categories defined in WIOA.
- The Youth Program serves in-school youth (ages 14-21) and out-of-school youth (ages 16-24) who need assistance with training or education to enter the workforce successfully. The focus is on young people with barriers to success.

572 individuals who self-identified as American Indian or Alaskan Native received WIOA Title I services between September 1, 2024, and June 1, 2025.

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, job services staff conducted targeted outreach to Tribal members in Wisconsin Rapids and the Superior area. This resulted in increased Tribal participation in job fairs in March and April 2025.

Resources

Workforce Solutions Initiative: dwd.wisconsin.gov/workforce-solutions

Eligible Training Provider List: dwd.wisconsin.gov/ETPL

Job Center of Wisconsin: jobcenterofwisconsin.com

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 At the June 11, 2025, DWD Tribal Consultation meeting, Tribal leaders expressed interest in sponsoring apprenticeships or expanding apprenticeship opportunities to engage more Tribal citizens.

DWD's Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards (BAS) will meet with interested Tribes to provide information about Registered Apprenticeship, Youth Apprenticeship, and Certified Pre-Apprenticeship.

Apprenticeship opportunities can help job seekers build the skills necessary for higher wage employment while helping employers find qualified applicants. DWD's Bureau of Apprenticeship can also support the Tribes in encouraging Tribal citizens to pursue diverse and expanding career pathways through apprenticeship programming.

Outcome/Update On Feb. 29, 2024, DWD Bureau of Apprenticeship Deputy Director Liz Pusch presented on Wisconsin Apprenticeship during a virtual meeting open to all tribes and attended by members from Bad River, Oneida, Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council, Oneida, Menominee, Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, Sokaogon Chippewa Community and Ho-Chunk. Pusch provided a high-level overview of Wisconsin Apprenticeship and its recent record performance. She also explained the roles and responsibilities of employers and apprentices and discussed the successful partnership with the Wisconsin Technical College System to adapt training programs to employer needs.

Trina Schofield, Ojibwe, who gained work experience and management skills at the Potawatomi Casino Hotel in Milwaukee, also presented on efforts by Wisconsin Apprenticeship to expand career pathways into emerging fields. Apprenticeship programs offer a powerful pathway for Indigenous communities to strengthen their workforce, preserve and pass on traditional skills and knowledge, while also providing valuable opportunities for economic development and self-sufficiency. Through these programs, Tribal citizens can gain hands-on experience and attain nationally recognized credentials in a wide range of fields, empowering individuals and enhancing the collective capacity of our tribes. In her role as an Apprenticeship Training Representative, Schofield supports and facilitates these opportunities, ensuring they align with Tribal communities' needs and aspirations.

	Daniel Webster, an Oneida Tribal citizen and Director of Diversity and Inclusion for the Walbec Group, shared information on his career path and provided a spotlight on how Apprenticeship can lead to success in construction and other careers.
Resources	Apprenticeship Website: dwd.wisconsin.gov/apprenticeship

Item 03	
Item Name	Access to Resources
Responsible Party	DWD
In collaboration with	Tribal Leaders, Tribal Government Staff, Agency Tribal Liaisons
History	<p>At the June 11, 2025, DWD Tribal Consultation meeting, Tribal leaders expressed an interest in learning more about workforce programs. DWD strives to increase the accessibility of programs for 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 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 hosted its second virtual check-in with Tribes on July 26, 2024, to share resources about DWD's Unemployment Insurance Program and the work of the Equal Rights Division to make Wisconsin a fair and just place for all people to live and work. • DWD hosted its third virtual check-in with the Tribes on March 26, 2025, to highlight the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin's partnership with DWD's Worker Connection program and DVR's Summer Youth Program. • DWD updated its Tribal Affairs webpage to provide additional resources to Tribal nations in a more accessible format.
Resources	Tribal Affairs Website: dwd.wisconsin.gov/tribalaffairs

Item 04	
Item Name	Investing in Tribal Youth

Responsible Party	DWD
In collaboration with	Tribal Leaders, Tribal Government Staff, Local Workforce Development Boards
History	<p>At the June 11, 2025, 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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work-readiness courses; • Career counseling; and • Youth Apprenticeships. <p>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.</p>
Outcome/Update	<p>Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Updates</p> <p>DWD's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (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.</p> <p>Throughout 2024 and 2025, DVR worked in partnership with the Lac Courte Oreilles Vocational Rehabilitation program and the Vocational Rehabilitation for Native Americans program offered by the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council. The focus of the collaboration was youth engagement and the Tribal summer youth program.</p> <p>In summer 2024, the Tribal summer youth program served 80 students. This included three from Lac Courte Oreilles, seven from Red Cliff, 30 from St. Croix, and 40 from Bad River. For summer 2025, 61 youth have enrolled in the program with 14 from St. Croix, seven from Red Cliff, and 29 from Bad River.</p> <p>By collaborating with Tribal partners, DVR can support comprehensive programs like these in Bad River, Red Cliff, and St. Croix, contributing to DWD's commitment to serve potentially eligible students in underserved areas, including tribal communities. Some of the work sites have included Bad River Dental Clinic, Bad River Legal Department, St. Croix Maple Plain Community Center, and Red Cliff Boys & Girls Club.</p> <p>DWD provided an update on the Tribal summer youth program its virtual tribal check-in on March 26, 2025.</p> <p>Youth Apprenticeship</p>

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 at dwd.wisconsin.gov/apprenticeship/contacts.

Resources

Tribal Affairs Website: dwd.wisconsin.gov/tribalaffairs
 Youth Apprenticeship Website: dwd.wisconsin.gov/apprenticeship/ya

Item 05

Item Name **Workforce Data**

Responsible Party DWD Division of Employment and Training (DET)

In collaboration with Tribal Leaders

History At the June 11, 2025, DWD Tribal Consultation meeting, Tribal leaders identified the need for labor and workforce data specific to Tribal Nations. Leaders noted that the data would help to communicate the impact tribes have on the Wisconsin economy and workforce.

DWD's Division of Employment and Training 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.

Outcome/Update 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.

DWD's 2025 County Workforce Profiles provide snapshots of the labor market for every Wisconsin county. Each profile includes analysis of population and population change, industry employment, occupational patterns within industries, labor force dynamics, and employment projections. The 2025 profiles feature a section on the impact of artificial intelligence. Tribal

leaders are encouraged to explore the profiles on Wisconomy. The profiles are also available under the Programs and Services button on the Tribal Affairs website.

To continue progress on this item, DWD's Tribal Liaison will connect with the Department's Bureau of Workforce Information and Technical Support to explore opportunities for data sharing with the tribes, while recognizing and maintaining data sovereignty.

Resources Employment and Training Dashboard: dwd.wisconsin.gov/det/dashboard/main
WisConomy Website: jobcenterofwisconsin.com/wisconomy
Tribal Affairs Website: dwd.wisconsin.gov/tribalaffairs

Item 06

Item Name **Connections to Vocational Rehabilitation**

Responsible Party DWD Division of Vocation Rehabilitation (DVR)

In collaboration with Tribal Leaders, Tribal Government Staff, and Vocational Rehabilitation Services

History At the June 11, 2025, 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.

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.

Outcome/Update On April 30 and May 1, 2024, Menominee Tribe, Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council, Lac Courte Oreilles, and Oneida VR programs co-sponsored an event with DVR, leading to a two-day substance use conference for tribal VR staff and state liaisons. This conference promoted understanding of addiction and substance use challenges that the Tribes and their members are facing. Approximately 50 people attended and benefited from this training.

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.

DVR also invited Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation partners to present to a meeting of DVR staff and others attended by some 300 people. Presenters included Myrna Warrington, Director of

	<p>Vocational Rehabilitation for the College of Menominee Nation; Julie Murray of GLITC VRNA; and Ernest Oberst, Oneida VR. The presenters covered historical trauma and informed care.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>DVR and Tribal VR Staff are discussing opportunities for joint training in Fall 2025.</p>
Resources	DVR Website: dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr

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	<p>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.</p> <p>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).</p>
Outcome/Update	<p>DWD's Tribal Liaison, in collaboration with the Department's Employee Engagement Team, is working to plan a Native American Heritage Month webinar for November 2025. The webinar will be available for all DWD staff.</p> <p>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.</p>
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 June 11, 2025, 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 citizens' 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, 15 correctional job labs have opened, including one mobile job lab. Two community job labs are located Division of Community Corrections locations in Milwaukee and Janesville. In 2024, the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) and the Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) assisted 10,868 persons in DOC care through the correctional job labs.</p> <p>The DET Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards is working with the Department of Corrections to plan a presentation for incarcerated Native Americans about apprenticeship opportunities.</p>
Resources	--

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 June 11, 2025, DWD Tribal Consultation meeting, attendees discussed opportunities to foster relationships and improve coordination between DWD and the Tribes. Increased collaboration would help to better serve Tribal job seekers, employers, and workers.</p> <p>DWD will provide engagement opportunities on a quarterly basis for Tribal leaders or their designees to receive updates on resources and opportunities, connect with technical</p>

assistance, and develop relationships that support deeper engagement. Additionally, the Secretary strives to visit each of the Tribes over the course of the year.

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 Ho-Chunk Nation on March 28, 2024, Menominee Nation on June 12, 2024, Red Cliff on June 25, 2024, Oneida Nation on July 12, 2024, and the Forest County Potawatomi on Aug. 29, 2024. Scheduling for other visits is in progress.

The department held a virtual event, Forward Together: An update on Wisconsin's workforce, for Tribal leaders and representatives on Wednesday, March 26, 2025. This event highlighted the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin's partnership with the Worker Connection program and the DVR summer youth employment program. Other events hosted in 2024 featured updates on apprenticeship, economic statistics, unemployment insurance, and more.

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 also participated in the department's virtual check-in on Feb. 29, 2024, to discuss his experience with apprenticeship.

Additionally, Vanessa Miller, Food & Agriculture Area Manager for the Oneida Nation, was appointed to the Wisconsin Agricultural Education and Workforce Development Council in Spring 2025.

DWD is seeking applicants for other council and committee vacancies.

Resources

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