



# **FORWARD TOGETHER:**

## An update on Wisconsin's workforce

Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development | 03/26/2025

# TRIBAL ACTION PLAN

## Focus areas:

- Assisting with workforce challenges.
- Expanding apprenticeship programs.
- Improving access to DWD resources.
- Investing in Tribal youth.
- Strengthening connection to vocational rehabilitation services.

Scan the QR  
code or visit

[dwd.wisconsin.gov/  
tribalaffairs](https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/tribalaffairs)



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# Agenda

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- Division and Employment and Training's support for CNA training.
- Wisconsin's Vocational Rehabilitation program.
- DVR Summer Youth Employment Program.
  - Overview.
  - Outcomes.
  - Feedback.
- Resources and next steps.
- Q & A.



# 2024, a Record-Breaking Year

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Near  
Record-Low  
Unemployment  
Rate

Record-High  
Employment  
for Eight  
Consecutive  
Months

Record-High  
Employment  
for People with  
Disabilities

# IMPACT OF FEDERAL ACTIONS ON WISCONSIN'S WORKFORCE

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# Governor Evers' 2025-27 Budget

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## Workforce proposals:

- Supporting the healthcare workforce.
- Investing in the agriculture industry.
- Preparing Wisconsin's workforce to harness artificial intelligence.
- Addressing Wisconsin's generational workforce challenges by recruiting, training, and retaining talented workers.





# Division of Employment and Training **TRAINING PARTNERSHIP**

DET Council on Workforce Investment Analyst, Emily Hein

# Local Workforce Development Meetings

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Starting in January 2024:

- Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin and Bay Area Workforce Development Board hold monthly meetings at the College of Menominee Nation.
- Focus: Networking, activity discussions, and resource coordination to address local challenges.
- Challenge: How to fill open Nursing Assistant positions?





# Success Built on Partnerships

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## Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin:

- Wolf River Community Based Residential Facility (CBRF).

## Bay Area Workforce Development Board:

- Convened partners and coordinated resources.

## Northeast Wisconsin Technical College (NWTC):

- Corporate Training and Economic Development.

## Worker Connection Services:

- Navigational services supporting short-term training.

# About WorkAdvance

Sectorial training model with five subcomponents:

**1:** Screening before enrollment

**2:** Sector appropriate pre-employment and career readiness services

**3:** Sector specific occupational skills training

**4:** Sector specific job development and placement services

**5:** Post employment retention and advancement services

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# Nursing Assistant Cohort

## Wolf River CBRF

**December 2024**

Recruitment  
began

**January 2025**

Pre-employment  
screening  
Funding eligibility  
determination

**February 2025**

NWTC  
registration  
Classes began  
mid-February

**March 2025**

Clinical  
rotations start  
Final exam

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# Division of Vocational Rehabilitation **SUMMER YOUTH PROGRAM**

DVR Administrator, Meredith Dressel



# What is DVR?

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The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) is a federal/state program that:

- Offers individualized services to eligible people with disabilities who want to work.
- Provides training and technical assistance to employers regarding disability employment issues.
- Actively engages with roughly **18,000 consumers** at any given time who are working toward an employment goal.



# DVR Mission

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To obtain, maintain and improve employment for people with disabilities by working with VR consumers, employers and other partners.



Find a Job.  
Keep a Job.  
Get a Better Job.

# DVR Consumer Services

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- DVR provides individualized services to people with disabilities who want to work.
- Services include but are not limited to:
  - Vocational counseling
  - Skills development
  - Internship / temporary work experiences
  - Supported employment
  - Education necessary to achieve career goals



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"The Vocational Rehabilitation for Native Americans and Great Lakes Inter Tribal Council has had a relationship with our DWD/DVR partners for 25 years...We invite each other to conferences and trainings and attend cultural events together. Attending events together shows the community how important our relationship truly is. We look forward to continuing to work with our state partners."

Kim Milek, VRNA Program Director  
Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council

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"Working with DVR offers significant benefits. Dual enrollment can facilitate a smoother and faster transition to the workforce by prioritizing resources, saving both time and emotional strain...Each consumer is unique, and each VR Counselor brings different techniques to achieve successful outcomes. By understanding each other's resources and case management approaches, we enhance our collective ability to serve consumers effectively."

Ernest L Oberst, Manager  
Oneida Vocational Rehabilitation Services

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# Summer Youth Program: Overview

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- Primary focus: work-based learning
- Students with disabilities
- Services available – Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), including:
  - Job exploration counseling
  - Work-based learning
  - Counseling on opportunities for transition or post-secondary
  - Workplace readiness training
  - Instruction on self-advocacy, which includes peer mentoring





# Summer Youth Program: How it Started

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- Program began in 2018 following conversations between DVR and Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council staff.
- DVR had the capacity to:
  - Serve more underserved population of Native Americans
  - Serve more tribal employers
  - Provide soft and hard skills to native youth living on reservations
  - Provide more VR services on reservations



# Summer Youth Program: Partners

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- Agency partners:
  - DVR's Vocational Rehabilitation for Native Americans (VRNA)
  - Northwest Wisconsin Concentrated Employment Program, Inc.
- Tribal partners:
  - Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa (since 2018)
  - Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council (since 2018)
  - Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin (since 2024)
  - Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa (since 2018)
  - St. Croix Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin (since 2023)
- Regional schools

# DVR and AIVR Roles

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- For recruitment:
  - Attend recruitment activities at each reservation or school to recruit students.
- For students:
  - Contact schools and assist students to enroll in DVR / complete necessary paperwork.
  - Work with home school coordinators to assist those students.

# DVR and AIVR Roles (cont.)

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- At work sites (DVR):
  - Educate work site supervisors and students on payroll and time sheets.
  - Monitor and follow up with students and sites.
- Transportation (AIVR):
  - Arrange bus passes and gas vouchers to parents and students who do not have access to transportation.



# Number of Students Served

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	<b>2024</b>
Bad River	40
Lac Courte Oreilles	3
Red Cliff	7
St. Croix Chippewa	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>

# Student Participants and Costs

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	<b>2024</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Bad River	40	\$165,684
Lac Courte Oreilles	3	\$18,407
Red Cliff	7	\$49,431
St. Croix Chippewa	30	\$66,520
<b>Totals</b>	80	\$307,995

# Program Outcomes

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- Participating businesses:
  - Grow local workforce
- Participating students:
  - Gain awareness of job positions available on the reservations
  - Likely to continue participating year over year
  - Learn soft skills such as teamwork, accountability, and responsibility
  - Earn wages that bring funding into the community



# Youth Wages Earned

Wages Brought into the Community





## Summer Youth Program Feedback

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"...the two young people over here...are outstanding...They are so polite, on time every morning, they do great work, and they are a joy to be around. So, kudos to their parents and to you, for giving them a chance. I know custodial work is not the most glorified of work (I did it for a year), and yet they are both efficient, pleasant and again I must say, so polite. Thank you for sharing them with us!"

Ron Telisczacak, HR Manager – Bad River Band of the  
Lake Superior Tribe of Chippewa Indians

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## Summer Youth Program Feedback

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“The experience was great and glad to have the opportunity to collaborate with the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, Ashland CEP and GLITC-VRNA Programs to bring such a wonderful learning Youth Employment program to Red Cliff and the Community.”

Nathan Gordon, Former Vice-Chairman  
Red Cliff

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## LEARN MORE:

Visit DWD's Tribal Affairs website to view DWD's tribal action plan and explore resources and programs.

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