



To: Members of the Legislative Council Study Committee on Reducing Recidivism and Removing Impediments to Ex-Offender Employment

From: Members of the Wisconsin Workforce Development Association

Date: October 19th, 2016

Re: Regional Workforce Development Organizations – Role in Reducing Recidivism and Removing Impediments to Ex-Offender Employment

The Wisconsin Workforce Development Association (WWDA) is committed to promoting, enhancing, and servicing the interests of local workforce investment agencies (and system partners in Wisconsin). WWDA represents the state's eleven Workforce Development Areas that administer the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs, as well as other federal, state and local workforce development initiatives critical to Wisconsin.

WWDA knows the importance of the Legislative Council Study Committee's work and seeks to support their efforts by providing insights on how Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) across Wisconsin can help advance the goals of the committee.

In Wisconsin and throughout the country, specific communities and ex-offenders are experiencing acute long-term unemployment and extremely low rates of labor force participation by working age men. The level of services needed to support these population can be extensive.

The challenges ex-offenders face as they seek employment stem from their own attributes and behaviors, as well as the employment practices of employers. Common barriers include "mismatches" in job skills, limited job openings, place of residence, lack of peer support upon exiting the criminal justice system, and the general unwillingness of employers to hire individuals with a criminal record.

Wisconsin's WDBs are dedicated to addressing the challenges noted above. In fact, they are proud to be a part of the Department of Corrections (DOC) implementation of the Windows to Work (WtW) program through its individual contracts. Through this program, the WDBs provide a direct connection back to the home community while the offender is still incarcerated and preparing for release.

Moving forward, the members of the WWDA view the following efforts as vital to advancing the goals of the Study Committee:

- **Utilize existing WDBs employer strategies and services** that meet the needs of local labor markets while reducing common barriers that ex-offenders face in the workplace. This is especially important, as several WDBs are experiencing increased demand from employers with an interest in hiring at point of release.

- **Identification of regional training needs and partnerships** to advance the goals of the private sector and DOC objectives.
- **Alignment of DOC transition from incarceration services with the local WDBs services** to provide common services focused on employment training, employer engagement at the county and state populations.
- **Enhanced job seeking and employment skills training while monitoring the shifting economic conditions in Wisconsin's regional economies.**
- **Allow WDBs to set up On-Site and Virtual Job Center Services** mechanism at appropriate sites to address common workforce challenges and to build awareness of workforce system services.
- **Increase state-funded programming designed to assist the WDBs in connecting people with transitional employment, on-the-job training and placement.**
- **The WDBs resources should be focused on the initial months and up to a year of supervision,** when the risk of recidivism is the highest.
- **Funding flexibility is vital to the success to ensure adequate class sizes in rural or counties with limited DOC populations.**
- **Expansion of Transitional Jobs efforts should focus on using the existing WDBs network** that can add this population to their well-developed business relationship management system.
- **WDBs provide wrap-around support services including personal supports, pre-employment services** that can help an ex-offender initially gain employment, and post-employment services that can help a person remain engaged in the labor market.
- **Employ Milwaukee and other partners are working toward "no wrong door" system for reentry services in Milwaukee.** This effort is of great value to the entire WDB network as a means to coordinate the significant number of reentry referrals.

In closing, the WWDA would also like to advise Study Committee members about or joint effort with the Wisconsin Counties Association to focus on workforce and employment programming aimed at populations in county jails. We would be happy to provide more information about this effort upon request.



NEW EFFORT: JOINT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Building a Stronger Workforce

WWDA is approaching the **Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA)** to create the **Joint Workforce Development Committee** to target needs of specific populations that impact county budgets:

- Health and Human Services Population
- Incarcerated Population
- Vulnerable Youth

WWDA Targeted Populations include:

- Adults, particularly those with health and human services needs
- Incarcerated Workers and Offenders Re-entering the Workforce
- Dislocated Workers
- Vulnerable Youth, particularly those in foster care, G.E.D candidates, and youth in need of after school programming and apprenticeships



For more information visit: www.wwda.org

MEMBERSHIP LIST

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA	WDB DIRECTORS	CHIEF LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS	WDB CHAIRPERSONS
Southeastern Wisconsin Workforce Development Board <i>WDA 1</i>	Doug Bartz (262) 697-4586	Jim Kreuser	Nicholas Galich
Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board <i>WDA 2</i>	Earl Buford (414) 270-1700	Mayor Tom Barrett	Don Layden
Waukesha-Ozaukee-Washington Workforce Development Board <i>WDA 3</i>	Laura Catherman (262) 695-7880	Paul Decker	John Heyer
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board <i>WDA 4</i>	Anthony E. Snyder, MBA, CAE, IOM (920) 720-5600 ext. 302	Jack Meyers	Margaret Winn
Bay Area Workforce Development Board <i>WDA 5</i>	James Golembeski (920) 431-4100	Thomas Nelson	Michael Troyer
North Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board <i>WDA 6</i>	Rene Daniels (715) 204-1640	Ed Wagner	Kent Olson
Northwest Wisconsin Workforce Investment Board <i>WDA 7</i>	Mari Kay-Nabozny (715) 682-9141	Bill Kacvinsky	LeRoy Forslund
West Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board <i>WDA 8</i>	Jon Menz (715) 232-1412	Colleen Bates	Alison Page
Western Wisconsin Workforce Development Board <i>WDA 9</i>	Beth Sullivan (608) 789-5944	James Ehram	James Hill
Workforce Development Board of Southcentral Wisconsin <i>WDA 10</i>	Pat Schramm (608) 249-9001	Andy Ross	Alan Langeteig
Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board <i>WDA 11</i>	Rhonda Suda (608) 342-4220	Art Carter	Richard Gruber

WISCONSIN'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREAS & WORKFORCE BOARDS

