


**2010 WWDA
Members**

November 16, 2010

Art Carter

Dear Governor Elect Walker:

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The Wisconsin Workforce Development Association (WWDA) congratulates you on your election as Wisconsin's next Governor. We welcome you as you begin your transition to this important new role and wish to introduce you to the WWDA and inform you of our interest in working closely with your administration for the benefit of Wisconsin's job seekers, workers and businesses. The WWDA represents Wisconsin's eleven Workforce Development Areas and is comprised of the Business Leadership of each region's Workforce Development Board, the Chief Elected Official and Chief Executive Officer from each of these diverse regions.

These representatives are joined at the local level by over 200 other business leaders, elected officials from each of Wisconsin's 72 counties and partners from economic development, education, labor, community-based organizations and workforce development in each region that provide a unique platform for state and local collaboration. The WWDA provides an effective and efficient forum to interact with these regional partnerships to achieve locally responsive, state-wide objectives for the benefit of Wisconsin's economy. To this end we believe our common interests include the following:

- Strengthen Wisconsin's Workforce to be responsive to the skill needs of a growing business sector.
- Increase the number and quality of job and career opportunities to attract, retain and make effective use of Wisconsin's most important economic resource - its Workforce.
- Maximize the resources available to match worker and job seeker skill development to business skill requirements and increase efficiency and effectiveness with which such resources are utilized.

The WWDA has five key recommendations to strengthen our collective efforts in addressing these common interests. Accompanying addenda provide additional detail for addressing each recommendation.

Key Transition Workforce Development Recommendations

1. Support rapid reauthorization and adequate funding for the federal Workforce Investment Act to provide the necessary foundation for Wisconsin's Workforce Development efforts – Addendum 1.
2. Assure sufficient Federal and State resources to effectively train and prepare workers for Wisconsin's economy including emerging 21st century occupations – Addendum 2.
3. Enhance collaboration and transparency in the acquisition, alignment and allocation of federal discretionary and formula resources. When necessary supplement with State revenues to better address Wisconsin's workforce development needs – Addendum 3.
4. Strengthen state-local collaboration in Workforce policy development and implementation through effective, inclusive, integrated and responsive communication strategies – Addendum 4.
5. Utilize the WWDA as a major vehicle to support state-local Workforce initiatives while limiting or reducing reliance on State employees – Addendum 5.

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Background

Authorized and supported by the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA), the Workforce Development Board/Local Elected Official partnership achieves objectives far beyond the Youth, Adult, Dislocated Worker and Job Center service initiatives funded directly by WIA. Their majority business leadership coupled with comprehensive membership representing the critical juncture of economic development, education and workforce development equips Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) to provide the strategic direction and resource mobilization necessary to achieve essential economic growth objectives. Workforce Boards utilize their core federal support to secure and mobilize a wide array of other resources to carry out local objectives well in excess of what their federal base funding is able to support. Workforce Boards have become the focal points for industry sector alliances and other strategic regional efforts that benefit regional, and by extension, the entire Wisconsin economy.

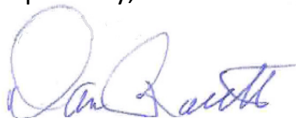
Wisconsin's eleven Workforce Development Boards, melded together through the WWDA, provide a potent but not yet fully realized resource to enhance Wisconsin's business climate and overall economy by strengthening its most essential element – Wisconsin's excellent Workforce. We are eager to partner with your administration to realize this full potential and, therefore, we provide these constructive suggestions to achieve this promise and move Wisconsin Forward.

The membership of the WWDA believes that a strong business and local government led Workforce Development System is integral to the success of the Wisconsin economy. The Workforce Development System performs many functions separate and distinct from the education and economic development providing the key bridging and brokering functions between business, education, economic development, workers and job seekers. The Workforce Development System is the gathering point of information on worker supply and employer demand. The Workforce Development system through its business connections and network of Job Centers is closest to the needs of job seekers/workers and employers and has the responsibility of translating the needs of both customer bases into strategic mobilization of the entire array of education, training and related workforce services to effectively address these needs. The Workforce Development System's demand driven approach, business leadership, strategic outlook, awareness of local needs and resources, responsiveness to local conditions and neutrality in seeking the best solutions to workforce development needs make it an essential element when developing a Wisconsin Economic Growth Agenda.

We look forward to a productive relationship with you as our next Governor and pledge our collective energies and resources to meeting the challenges that the current economy presents and the promise that the future holds. We know the Workforce Development System is an integral part of the solution, and we welcome the opportunity to work with you and your administration to move Wisconsin Forward.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our views as you transition to becoming our next Governor.

Respectfully,



Dan Racette, WWDA Chairman

Workforce Development Transition Recommendation

Addendum 1

Support rapid reauthorization and adequate funding for the federal Workforce Investment Act to provide the necessary foundation for Wisconsin's Workforce Development efforts, directly through the Governor's Office and collaboratively through Wisconsin's Legislative Delegation, the National Governor's Association and other advocacy initiatives.

- Retain and strengthen regionally oriented, business-driven Workforce Boards responsive to local needs – Business lead, business majority boards appointed by local elected officials and certified by the Governor.
- Retain and strengthen the Governor's appointed State Workforce Investment Board (CWI) with increased interaction between the state board and regional boards to more effectively address regional needs within the context of state-wide objectives.
- Maximize the flexibility of the local/regional governance structure to determine needs, direct resources and implement appropriate locally-determined responses to address those needs.
- Strengthen the critical, strategic role of Workforce Boards in assuring worker training and education offerings are responsive to business needs and all workforce funding allocated within Board regions is responsive to strategic regional objectives.
- Implement appropriate, manageable performance measures designed to improve outcomes, assure accountability and enhance management and oversight capabilities.
- Develop manageable reporting standards that efficiently capture the impact of services to all One-Stop customers as well as all resources mobilized to address customer needs and provide accurate and timely performance measurement data.
- Incorporate funding allocation methodologies that provide optimum levels of system and governance support, are reflective of both urban and rural challenges, assure timely distribution of resources, and provide stability while being responsive to shifts in worker/job seeker needs and employer demand.

Workforce Development Transition Recommendation

Addendum 2

Assure sufficient Federal and State resources to effectively train and prepare workers for Wisconsin's economy including emerging 21st century occupations including:

- Adequate funding for One-Stop Career Center (Job Center) infra-structure.
- Separate Summer Youth and year-round Youth funding allocations to address the growing employment and career development needs of disadvantaged youth.
- Adequate re-training, re-employment and income support resources for all Dislocated Workers including recently separated veterans.
- Sufficient resources to provide work readiness, skills enhancement, support services and employment integration of unemployed disadvantaged adults.
- Sufficient resources to address the job retention and skills upgrade needs of low-income incumbent workers.

Workforce Development Transition Recommendation

Addendum 3

Enhance collaboration and transparency in the acquisition, alignment and allocation of federal discretionary and formula resources. When necessary, supplement with State revenues to better address Wisconsin's workforce development needs.

- Revise processes for allocating federal discretionary resources to be more transparent, strategically driven, integrated with local and state planning, cognizant of sustainability and administrative burden.
- Provide supplemental assistance from unemployment insurance fund allocations for the retraining and re-employment of Dislocated Workers to reduce periods of unemployment. Consider strategies similar to those used in Minnesota.
- Provide supplemental funding for Summer Youth Jobs program to address the high rate of youth unemployment. Consider use of TANF emergency assistance funding as well as State appropriations.
- Continue and expand Transitional Jobs funding using TANF emergency assistance funding to address the chronic unemployment preparation needs of disadvantaged adult populations including non-custodial parents, the disabled, ex-offenders and other hard-to-employ individuals.

Workforce Development Transition Recommendation

Addendum 4

Strengthen Workforce policy development and implementation through effective, inclusive, integrated and responsive state-local collaboration and communication strategies.

- Provide independent staffing for the Council on Workforce Investment (CWI) that directly reports to and is accountable to the Governor.
- Strengthen CWI membership through participation of the Governor and enhanced participation of Cabinet level officials, strong upper management business, labor and community organization representation to assure the strongest possible Workforce Development policy advisory structure.
- Expand the advisory role of the CWI to incorporate workforce development, economic development and educational collaboration to assure strategic integration of these related resources in economic growth policy development.
- Maintain and enhance CWI representation through continued appointment of a WWDA Executive Committee member. Assure adequate geographic representation by appointing CWI business members from each Workforce Development Board.
- Continue regular communication meetings between the Secretary of the Department of Workforce Development and the leadership of the WWDA.
- Expand WWDA communication strategies to include other key state departments with critical workforce development concerns including Commerce, Corrections, Children and Families as well as WTCS and DPI.

Workforce Development Transition Recommendation

Addendum 5

Utilize the WWDA as a major vehicle to support state-local Workforce initiatives while limiting or reducing reliance on State employees.

- Examine models of Michigan, New York., California and Minnesota.
- Increase Governor's recognition of and utilization of business leadership of local Workforce Development Boards as advisors on workforce policy using WWDA as intermediary.
- Enhance CWI effectiveness through WWDA and local WDB membership on CWI.
- Use federal WIA technical assistance funds to strengthen the WWDA as the primary vehicle for workforce system staff development and technical assistance to enhance service capacity and effectiveness.
- Utilize WWDA and WDB service and staffing capabilities to assist in meeting Governor's and CWI objectives while limiting or reducing State employee growth. Assure adequate funding support for any initiatives. Examples include:
 1. Contract with WWDA and WDB's for staff to support joint regional and state objectives such as Business Sector Initiatives.
 2. Staffing support for the CWI.
 3. Integration of Labor Market Information Specialists into local WDB structures.
 4. Integration of WIA and Trade Act functions for Dislocated Workers.
 5. Oversight and management of area Job Center staff.