

2014

# Annual Report



Career      Jobs  
Talent      Strategy      Innovation  
**TRAINING &  
DEVELOPMENT**  
Learn      Concept      Success  
Goals      Employee





**G**reetings!  
**O**n behalf of  
the Board  
of Directors  
and staff of  
Workforce

*Connections, Inc., I am pleased to present the 2013-2014 annual report. Thank you for taking the time to read it!*

**W**orkforce Connections, Inc. staff have spent the past year working through a number of transitions including the move to our new location, the move of our information technology, and the transformation of some funding streams. Throughout it all, staff

have worked hard to improve the lives of those we serve while partnering with other local organizations to provide excellent services. We are pleased that we continue to impact the communities that we serve.

**T**he organization is ideally poised to move forward into 2014-15, and move towards our dynamic future.

**T**hank you for the part each of you continue to play in our success!

*Teresa A. Pierce*

**Teresa Pierce**  
Executive Director

## **Wishing best of luck to outgoing board members**

**T**hree members of the Workforce Connections, Inc. Board of Directors are retiring from their posts. Rocky Shepherd has served on the board since 2006 and Bruce Ardelt and Bob Hillary since 2009.

**W**orkforce Connections, Inc. wishes to thank each of them for their service and dedication to the organization and wishes them well in their future endeavors.

## **Table of Contents**

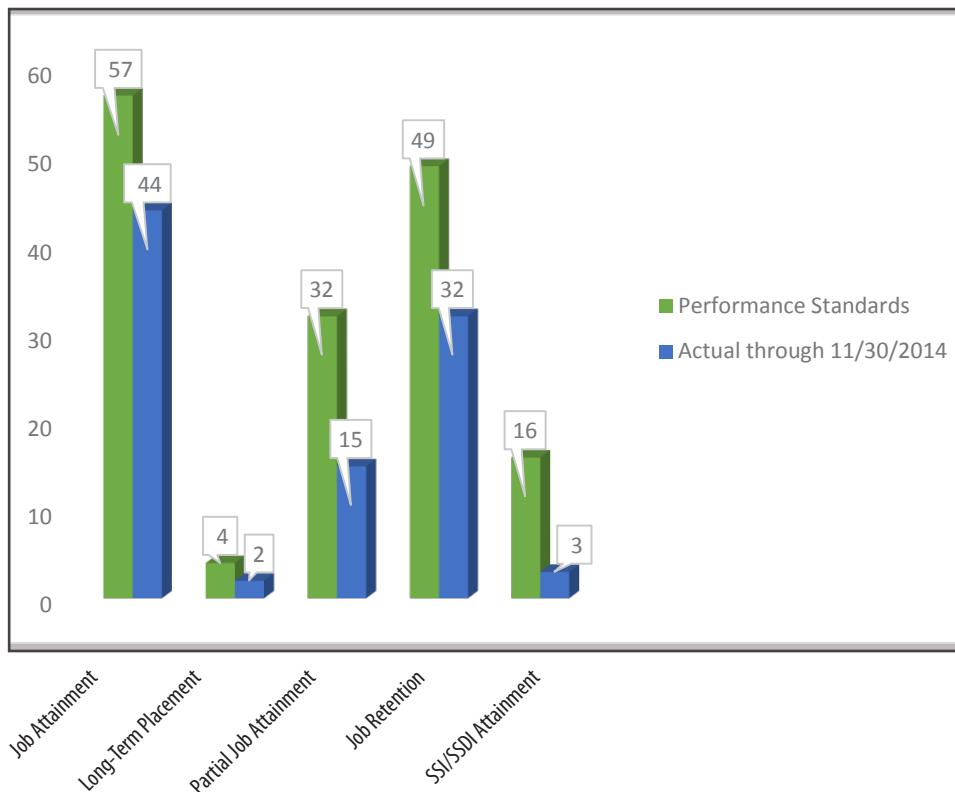
Executive Director Letter .....	1	Office Relocation .....	4
Wisconsin Works .....	2	Equipment and Metal Manufacturing Association .....	4
Building Opportunities .....	2	Financials .....	5
On The Job Training .....	3	Workforce Investment Act .....	6
Title V .....	3	Job Centers .....	6
Department of Corrections .....	3	Staff Listing .....	7

# Wisconsin Works aims to exceed performance standards

The Wisconsin Works (W-2) program has been a mainstay of Workforce Connections, Inc. for more than 15 years. The organization is currently contracted with the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families to provide services in Buffalo, Crawford, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Pepin, Trempealeau and Vernon counties.

W-2's goal is to provide services to prepare individuals for self-sustaining employment.

From January 1, 2014 through November 30, 2014 Workforce Connections, Inc. staff has served 2,054 individuals and processed 471 emergency assistance payments in a timely manner. The graph to the right shows other areas of performance. W-2 is on track to meet performance through June, 30, 2015.



## Helping build the La Crosse Community one home at a time



The Building Opportunities program has been busy at work on two projects over the last year. Participants were responsible for the framing and siding of a house that was completed in the early fall of 2014 (seen below). Program participants also worked on building a garage at a second location.

The program's Construction Trainer, says it's been nice to see the participants grow throughout the program. "They'll remember in passing these homes and the areas they helped construct," he says.



## On The Job trainings aid local businesses

**B**ill Potter of The Print Shop in Black River Falls has experienced first hand the benefits of using the On The Job (OJT) Training program. The OJT program is administered through Workforce Connections, Inc. and made possible through the Workforce Investment Act.

**O**JT funds are available to help Wisconsin businesses train new employees. The training is hands-on, occurring at the place of work while the employee is performing the job. Businesses then receive a reimbursement to help offset training costs.

**"**The OJT Program has been a great opportunity for our business," Potter says. "The

program is great especially if it's for a position that needs some extensive training because it helps lighten the expense of hiring that person."

Potter says Workforce Connections, Inc. has been really helpful and he would encourage others to check into the program.

**B**usinesses that choose to do an OJT can either have their own applicant to hire or Workforce Connections, Inc. can provide someone to interview for the position.

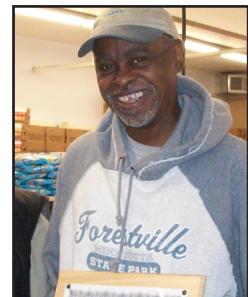
**T**he process of setting up the OJT is simple, requires little paperwork and can usually be completed in as little as a few business days.

## Leading older workers throughout Wisconsin

**T**wo individuals who are participants in Workforce Connections, Inc.'s Title V program were honored as 2014 Outstanding Older Workers of the Year.

**W**illie McGee works at WAFER Food Pantry and is described as the "heart and soul of WAFER." Willie spends his days showing new volunteers the ropes, and tackles any task.

**R**ose Kasprzyk is at The Parenting Place where she is "friendly and helpful" to all who enter. Rose sets high goals for herself and works steadily to reach each one of them.



## Life after prison leads to unbelievable blessings

**W**ith a definitive certainty, Duane says he has been blessed and it is nothing short of miraculous how some of the blessings in his life have come to be.

**D**uane was first released from incarceration in 2009. He came out with a chip on his shoulder and feeling that he should never have been locked up in the first place. Three years later he found himself back in prison, but this time was different. Duane says he had a change of heart and a change of attitude. He was also going to change his life.

**J**ust prior to being released in March 2014, Duane began meeting with a Workforce Connections, Inc. Employment Coordinator who explained to him how the organization could help him. Workforce Connections, Inc., through a Department of Corrections grant, provided Duane with rent assistance and helped him get his driver's license back.

**D**uane lived with his best friend and was able to find a job within nine days of being released. He

also started focusing on his hobby of body building and preparing for competitions. His friend was right there with him in the gym nearly every day. That all changed in late September when Duane's best friend died of a heart attack.

"He was instrumental in helping me with a lot of things in my life," Duane says. "He was just an incredible man."

**D**espite the tragedy in his life, Duane kept alive his dream of being a butcher again. That dream came true a short time ago when he was hired at Gordy's County Market as a butcher in La Crosse, Galesville and Arcadia. Duane is also engaged to be married by the end of 2014.

**H**e says alcohol was previously a problem for him and a big part of why he did time in prison, so he is also focusing on his sobriety.

**"**Sobriety has not been an issue," Duane says. "I have no need, want or desire to drink at all. I have way too much going on."



**J**uly marked a big milestone for Workforce Connections, Inc. with the moving of its corporate office from its 8th Street location to the East Ward Commerce Center, located at 2615 East Avenue on the southside of La Crosse (pictured above, left). The 8th Street location was torn down shortly after Workforce Connections, Inc. moved out (pictured above, right).

**T**he East Ward Commerce Center is now home to several employment and training organizations and makes for a collaborative location to serve businesses and job seekers in Western Wisconsin.

## Providing support to industry partnerships



**W**orkforce Connections, Inc. has played an important role in the Equipment and Metal Manufacturing Association over the past year. EMMA is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing resources and information to equipment, machinery and metal manufacturers in Western Wisconsin, Eastern Minnesota, and Northeast Iowa.

**O**ne of the highlights of the year was a bus tour in October that Workforce Connections, Inc.

assisted with planning and coordination. The bus left the La Crosse area and ended with a tour of McNeilus Steel, Inc., a full-line metals service center located in Dodge Center, Minnesota. More than 30 people took part in the event.

**T**he tour was a great networking opportunity and also included an overview of the roles different agencies play in the Workforce Development System.

# Financials

## Statement of Activities Year Ended June 30, 2014

	Temporarily Restricted			Total
	Unrestricted			
Revenue:				
Grant and contract revenue	\$ 3,155,363	\$ 0	\$ 3,155,363	
Fee for service	52,999	0	52,999	
Other income	75,405	0	75,405	
Interest income	2,570	0	2,570	
Net assets released from restriction through satisfaction of program restrictions	27,235	( 27,235)		0
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>3,313,572</b>	<b>( 27,235)</b>	<b>3,286,337</b>	
Expenses:				
Program services:				
Adult programs	1,362,664	0	1,362,664	
Youth programs	1,004,058	0	1,004,058	
Dislocated worker and incumbent worker programs	439,674	0	439,674	
Other	106,027	0	106,027	
Employer services	85,991	0	85,991	
Job center services and support	19,126	0	19,126	
<b>Total program services</b>	<b>3,017,540</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3,017,540</b>	
Management and general	382,580	0	382,580	
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>3,400,120</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3,400,120</b>	
Change in net assets	( 86,548)	( 27,235)	( 113,783)	
Net assets at beginning of the year	443,552	218,431	661,983	
<b>Net assets at end of the year</b>	<b>\$ 357,004</b>	<b>\$ 191,196</b>	<b>\$ 548,200</b>	

# Unemployment sparks new dream for WIA participant

**A**ngie has set some high goals and expectations for herself. They're goals that a few years back she didn't see for herself. After Angie was laid off from her job, she was devastated and had never found herself in a similar situation.

**A**fter meeting with a Workforce Connections, Inc. Workforce Investment Act Employment Coordinator her life was set on a new path. Angie had previous experience in the banking and customer service industries, but

decided she had a desire to help people.

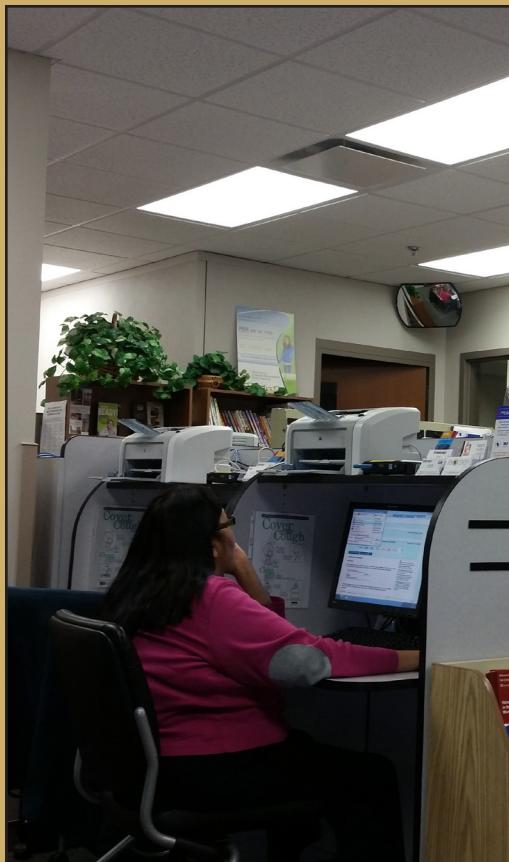
"It was a calling that I was supposed to be a RN," she said. "I love helping people. It's my whole purpose of going to school for it."

**A**ngie started out by becoming a Certified Nursing Assistant and then attended the nursing program at Southwest Wisconsin Technical College in Fennimore. Her first semester she worked full time as a CNA and attended school full time online.

While Angie was in school, Workforce Connections, Inc., through the Workforce Investment Act, provided her with nursing board fees and transportation assistance.

**A**ngie is now a Registered Nurse and employed at Sannes Skogdalen Heim in Soldiers Grove. She also has enrolled at Franklin University to earn her Bachelor of Science in Nursing and plans to eventually finish her Master's degree so she can become a nursing instructor.

## Job Centers: a place of connection and collaboration



**J**ob Centers continue to be an important community resource. They are a place of collaboration that connect job seekers directly to employers through workshops, referrals and other resources.

**W**orkforce Connections, Inc. is a part of two comprehensive Job Centers in Western Wisconsin.

**T**he Job Center located in Tomah had 6,458 walk-ins and phone calls from July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014.

**T**he Workforce Development Center of Western Wisconsin, located in La Crosse, had 22,401 walk-ins and phone calls. Staff are looking forward to serving even more people in its new location at the East Ward Commerce Center.



*Connecting People, Work, and Training.*

## Staff

### **Pamela Amundson**

Accounting Coordinator

### **Autumn Bergerson**

Employment Coordinator

### **Ashley Bermudo**

Employment Coordinator

### **Sharon Bliss**

Employment Resource Coordinator

### **Gina Brown**

W-2 Program Manager

### **Andrea Brownlee**

Employment Coordinator

### **Sarah Felix**

Employment Coordinator

### **Jessie Foss**

Accounting Coordinator

### **Shannon Franek**

Operations Coordinator

### **Amy Gernetzke**

Employment Resource Coordinator

### **Wade Kohls**

Assistant Construction Trainer

### **Shay Mahoney**

Construction Trainer

### **Dolores Marusarz**

Employment Coordinator

### **Jacie Meier**

Job Developer

### **Gina Merrell**

Planning Coordinator

### **Frankie Mezera**

Employment Coordinator

### **Brad Myhre**

Website/Database Coordinator

### **Kelly Norsten**

WIA Program Manager

### **Wanda Palmer**

Employment Coordinator

### **Caitlin Phillips**

Employment Coordinator

### **Teresa Pierce**

Executive Director

### **Sarah Rick**

Employment Coordinator

### **Sarah Robinson**

Intern

### **Amy Scarborough**

Operations Coordinator

### **Della Snyder**

Employment Resource Coordinator

### **Tom Stark**

Employment Coordinator

### **Pam Taylor**

Employment Coordinator

### **Carmin Trillo**

Employment Coordinator

### **Lisa Turnbull**

Director of Finance

### **Sandy Turner**

Employment Coordinator

### **Chong Vang**

Employment Coordinator

### **Emily Vieth**

Employment Coordinator

### **Carol Wagenson**

Workforce Development Manager

### **Sarah Westbrook**

Administrative Coordinator