

Training

Knowledge
professional development
teaching of vocational
skills prov



2012 ANNUAL REPORT

Workforce *connections*
Inc

Connecting people, work and training.

Workforce Connections, Inc.

Workforce Connections, Inc. offers services through several programs in 15 counties throughout Wisconsin.

Counties where services are offered are Buffalo, Columbia, Crawford, Douglas, Jackson, Juneau, La Crosse, Monroe, Pierce, Sawyer, St. Croix, Trempealeau, Vernon, Washburn and Wood.

Please enjoy reading the successes of each program.

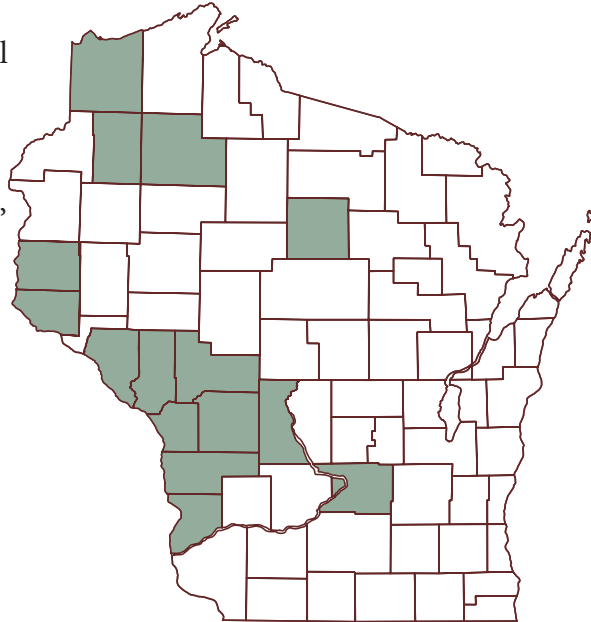


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Letter from the Director & Chairman of the Board

Dear Friends

On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff of Workforce Connections, Inc., we are pleased to present the 2011-2012 annual report. The year was not without its challenges, but we are proud of our program accomplishments.

It is our mission to help our local and regional businesses access a well-skilled workforce by offering placement and training services. We are proud to partner with our local economic development organizations, the technical colleges, the Western Wisconsin Workforce Development Board, the State of Wisconsin and the United States Department of Labor to help our local citizens overcome barriers to employment to reach self-sufficiency. In doing so, we impact not only the lives of our citizens, but also the productivity of our businesses and the communities in which we operate.

Within the pages of this annual report, you will meet real people who are better off because of the services we provide. We hope you enjoy reading about them.

Sincerely,



Teresa A. Pierce
Executive Director



Rocky Shepherd
Chairman of the Board

Workforce Investment Act

Number of Adults served	165
Entered Employment.....	77.6%
Employment Retention	80.7%
Average Earning Gains	\$9,887

Number of Dislocated Workers Served

Number of Adults Served.....	247
Entered Employment	88.7%
Employment Retention	95.0%
Average Earnings Gains	\$15,124

Workforce Connections, Inc. provides adult and dislocated worker services in the Western Workforce Development Area comprised of Buffalo, Crawford, Jackson, Juneau, La Crosse, Monroe, Trempealeau and Vernon Counties. Services are funded by the Western Wisconsin Workforce Development Board and the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development with funding from the Workforce Investment Act.

Melanie - Dislocated Worker

When Melanie was laid off from her job in September 2011 she came to Workforce Connections, Inc. to help face her own fears of being unemployed.

Melanie was working at Fort McCoy through a contract with Eagle Systems and Services, which is based in Lawton, Oklahoma.

In addition to help with resume writing and job searching, Melanie said she was assisted with guidance on “being unemployed and the things to be prepared for.”

Melanie, along with the help of a WCI Employment Coordinator, was able to find a full-time job with the Veterans Assistance Foundation.

“My Employment Coordinator was very helpful and patient answering any questions or concerns I had,” Melanie said. “She was always very supportive and positive even when I was discouraged.”

Melanie plans to continue her education and finish her degree in human resources/business management.

“My Employment Coordinator was very helpful and patient answering any questions or concerns I had,”
Melanie said.

Mark - Adult Participant

Mark was facing several employment barriers when he came to Workforce Connections, Inc. He was a convicted felon who spent more than 2 years in prison, did not have his driver’s license, and was facing the stresses of raising a young daughter alone while collecting unemployment.

“My future was in distress and I knew it,” Mark said. “My future, in a financial sense, was of great concern to me.”

Mark and his Employment Coordinator created a resume and e-mail address. Mark worked on

regaining his driver’s license and also worked on his self-confidence.

“The Employment Coordinator encouraged me with her confidence,” Mark said.

The two were able to find job opportunities that were a good fit for Mark. He was able to secure two interviews and was ultimately hired at MasterMold in Mauston. Mark is happy to be employed, but has aspirations and hopes to eventually advance in his career.

Transportation Program (WETAP)

Zachary

Zachary Webber had a job at Ashley Furniture in Arcadia and had just landed a second job at Applebee's in Onalaska. The problem was he needed reliable transportation to travel to and from his places of employment.

Zachary applied for and was approved for a vehicle loan through Workforce Connections Inc.'s revolving loan program.

Zachary purchased a 2000 Mitsubishi Galant at The Toy Box in La Crosse and was very pleased with his vehicle.



Zachary Webber with his car.

Connections to Independence

Linda

Linda knew she wanted to change careers, but she wasn't sure where to begin. After being referred to Workforce Connections, Inc. by the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation she started working with an Employment Coordinator.

The two narrowed down what type of job Linda would like to do, created her resume and prepared for interviews. Meanwhile, Linda took workshops through the Job Center of Wisconsin and worked hard searching for jobs.

Linda was hired at Gundersen Lutheran with a full-time position as an environmental specialist.

Transportation Connections

The Wisconsin Employment Transportation Program (WETAP) assists individuals with employment related transportation needs. The program provides car repairs and no or low interest loans to individuals who need reliable transportation.

WETAP Loans.....21

WETAP Repairs..... 56

Number of Jobs Accessed215

WETAP is funded through the Wisconsin Departments of Transportation and Workforce Development.

Connections to Independence

In cooperation with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Western Wisconsin Cares, Workforce Connections helps individuals experiencing disabilities find and retain employment.

Older Worker Program (Title V)

Title V

The Title V Program helps individuals aged 55 and older find and retain employment. Individuals are placed at community service work sites to gain employment skills. WCI operates the program in La Crosse, ADD Other counties

Community Service	99.8%
Entered Employment	37.5%
Employment Retention	100%
Average Earnings.....	\$6,896

Title V is funded through the Department of Health Services Division of Long Term Care Bureau of Aging and Disability Resources.

Donald

Donald Schmitt is a participant in The Older Worker Program who works at a shelter for adults with disabilities. While the job was quite different for him, he embraced it and helps in whatever way he can. Donald faced his own physical limitations in the form of a blood disorder that makes it difficult for him to stand for long periods of time. He has been able to adapt and does not let his limitations impact his job. "He is always kind, caring and he shows patience while

working as a job coach trainee at Riverfront," said his Employment Coordinator.

Donald also faced financial difficulties when his hours were cut to 8 hours a week to due to program funding cuts. He was forced to live off the lower income but was able to live frugally and managed to pay his rent and other bills. He never complained and always kept a smile on his face.



Donald Schmitt enjoys his job at Riverfront.



Wisconsin Works Program (W-2)

W-2 Client

She came to Workforce Connections, Inc. as a shy, insecure young woman. After a few months she is now a woman who knows she wants more for her family and has a plan to accomplish her goals.

The young mother of three came to WCI dealing with domestic abuse, had very little work experience and needed assistance with childcare. She was able to receive counseling, found daycare and began working at a local thrift shop. She gained the manager's approval and soon found herself with more responsibilities at her work.

She also began taking certified nursing assistant classes and was hired part time at Dollar General. She now plans to attend Western Technical College and work on a degree in nursing.

"After leaving an abusive relationship, I found myself homeless, jobless and raising two kids on my own. The W-2 program made it possible for me to become a productive member of society. With the help of my worker I was able to overcome obstacles standing in my way and was given the tools I needed to achieve goals and beyond." –A W-2 Participant

Wisconsin Works (W-2)

- Wisconsin Works (W-2) served 517 individuals.
- Wisconsin Shares in Juneau County, a program designed to help eligible families with the cost of adequate and reliable childcare options, served 70 families monthly.
- Emergency Assistance, provided to help secure permanent housing, served 485 adults and 777 children.
- Food Share Employment Training (FSET), a voluntary program that helps find, maintain or advance in employment, served 76 individuals in Buffalo, Columbia, Douglas, Jackson, Juneau, Monroe, Pierce, St. Croix, Vernon and Washburn Counties.
- Children First, an employment program that helps non-custodial parents meet their child support obligations, served 48 individuals in Buffalo, Jackson, Juneau, Monroe, Pierce, Sawyer, Trempealeau and Vernon Counties.

W-2 is funded by the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families with federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families funding. FSET is funded with US Department of Agriculture funding to the State of Wisconsin.

Meeting Business Needs

Workforce Connections, Inc. helps to align a variety of workforce development and economic development services. The work is intended to meet the needs of businesses in the area while providing career opportunities for individuals.

- Workforce Connections, Inc. and partners attended a session with Scott Sheely, of the Lancaster Pennsylvania Workforce Investment Board, to learn how cooperative sector strategies can assist both businesses and job seekers.
- Work to strengthen regional workforce development, through the AIM2WIN Initiative continued. Partners and collaboration resulted in the Department of Labor awarding Northeast Iowa Community College \$12 million to address training needs of the healthcare industry. Regional partners in Bridges to Health Care include 12 community and technical colleges, three workforce development agencies, and health care employers. The AIM2WIN Leadership includes Workforce Connections, Inc., the Western Wisconsin Workforce Development Board, Inc.; Workforce Development Inc. of Rochester, MN; Iowa Works; Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission, Decorah Iowa; Northeast Iowa Community College (Calmar, Iowa) and Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, Winona, MN.



- During the past year, staff worked with local industry partnerships to address workforce needs
 - **Equipment & Metal Manufacturing Association (EMMA)** – 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. www.emmatrystate.org
 - **Food Resource and Agri-business Network (FRAN)** – FRAN is a network of agri-businesses working together to improve the competitive advantage of our businesses and the economy of our region. Members share common technology, markets, suppliers or workforce skills in western Wisconsin, eastern Minnesota and northeast Iowa. www.frannetwork.org
 - **Coulee Region Long Term Care Workforce Coalition** – The Coulee Region LTC Workforce Coalition addresses significant workforce issues within the field of long term care. Leadership development programs, programs on recruitment and retention and legislative outreach are employed to stem the looming workforce crisis. www.uwlax.edu/conted/humanservices/couleeregionltcworkforcecoalition.html



Funding Streams

Thank You

We wish to acknowledge the organizations and businesses that enable us to provide services to our communities

- City of La Crosse Wisconsin
- Franke Foundation
- La Crosse Community Foundation
- La Crosse County
- U.S. Department of Agriculture
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- U.S. Department of Labor
- U.S. Department of Transportation
- Western Wisconsin Workforce Development Board, Inc.
- Western Wisconsin CARES
- Wisconsin Department of Children and Families
- Wisconsin Department of Corrections
- Wisconsin National and Community Service Board
- Wisconsin Department of Health and Human Services
 - Department Health Services Division of Long Term Care Bureau of Aging and Disability Resources (Title V)
 - Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards (SAGE)
- Wisconsin Department of Transportation
- Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development
 - Bureau Apprenticeship Standard
 - Division of Employment and Training
 - Division Vocational Rehabilitation
- The Women's Fund of La Crosse
- YWCA of the Coulee Region





Board of Directors, Elected Officials and Staff

Workforce Connections, Inc. Board of Directors

Rocky Shepherd, Chair, Freundenberg-NOK
Catherine Kolkmeier, Vice Chair, La Crosse Medical Health Science Consortium
Melissa Bechtel, Secretary/Treasurer, Gundersen Lutheran
Bruce Ardelt, Oakdale Electric Cooperative
Kurt Bear, Mid-City Steel
Martin Gaul, IAMAW, District Lodge 66
Bob Hillary, Mayo Clinic
Rocky Lisowski, Gold'n Plump Poultry
Bruce May, University of Wisconsin – La Crosse
David Ring, Kwik Trip

Board Member who served during the year

Jenny Kuderer, Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation
Rick Mischkl, IAMAW Representative
Bud Miyamoto, Retired

Local Elected Officials

Jim Ehram, Chief Local Elected Official, La Crosse County Representative
Del Twidt, Buffalo County Board Chair
Pete Flesch, Crawford County Board Chair
Dennis Eherhardt, Jackson County Chair
Ed Brown, Juneau County Board Representative
Sharon Folcey, Monroe County Board Representative
Ernie Vold, Trempealeau County Board Chair
Herbert Cornell, Vernon County Board Chair
Tara Johnson, La Crosse County Board Chair
Alan Peterson, Juneau County Board Chair
Bruce Humphrey, Monroe County Board Chair

Workforce Connections, Inc. Staff

La Crosse Corporate Office

Pamela Amundson, Accounting Coordinator
Amy Felber, Director of Finance
Jessie Foss, Accounting Coordinator
Rebecca Grapes, Director of Administration
Julie Mitchell, Assistant Director of Development
Teresa Pierce, Executive Director
Beth Sullivan, Director of Development
Carol Wagenson, Workforce Development Manager

Buffalo/Jackson/Trempealeau Counties

Gina Brown, W-2 Programs Manager
Lisa Burnham, Employment Coordinator
Kim Lenning, Employment Coordinator
Pam Taylor, Employment Coordinator

Columbia County

Jane Considine, Employment Coordinator
Rachel Hudson, Employment Coordinator

Crawford/Vernon Counties

Brad Myhre, Website/Database Coordinator
Kathy Neidert, Employment Coordinator
Jonathan Ward, Employment Coordinator

Douglas County

Jessica Flores, Employment Coordinator
Dannielle Lane, Employment Coordinator



Workforce Connections, Inc. Staff Continued...

Juneau/Monroe Counties

Sheri Butler, Employment Resource Coordinator

Shannon Franek, Operations Coordinator

Amy Gernetzke, Employment Resource Coordinator

Jacie Meier, Employment Coordinator

Donna Miller, Employment Coordinator

Sarah Rick, Employment Coordinator

Carmin Trillo, Operations Coordinator

Sandy Turner, Employment Coordinator/Mobility Manager

La Crosse County

Sharon Bliss, Employment Resource/Transportation Coordinator

Sarah Jackson, Job Developer

Chris Magnuson, Employment Coordinator

Gina Merrell, WIA Programs Manager

Danita Muller, Building Opportunities Program Manager

Kelly Norsten, Employment Coordinator

Chong Moua Vang, Employment Coordinator

Wanda Palmer, Operations Coordinator

Amy Scarborough, Operations Coordinator

Anne Schroeder, Employment Coordinator

Pierce/St. Croix Counties

Isabel Schneider, Employment Coordinator

Sawyer/Washburn Counties

Sally Schrader, Employment Coordinator



employment

HELP

locate

WORK

improve

SKILLS

help business

GROW



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