

WWDA Newsletter
Bay Area Workforce Development Board
April 24, 2008

Work Certified Pilot Programs

Work Certified is a 90 hour work readiness training program that has demonstrated phenomenal success in several states. It was developed by the Workforce Board of the Treasure Coast in Florida and is an employer-focused, employer driven curriculum for individuals lacking the basic tools for success in the workplace. The curriculum includes modules on reading and math as well as customer service, business knowledge, business writing, and job retention skills.

Bay Area Workforce Development Board has purchased the license for this curriculum, described by the National Skills Standards Board as “the best program of its type in the country,” and will be conducting three pilot programs in the Bay Area beginning May 27, 2008.

The need for this type of work readiness training was made apparent last fall when employers in the Marinette area rejected 76 of 100 applicants for a specialized training program called Basic Industrial Skills Training because they judged those applicants inadequately prepared for fulltime employment.

The three projects will include close partnerships with area businesses. The Green Bay project will partner with Humana to add customer service skills to the Work Certified training. In Manitowoc, the Manitowoc Company Cranes Division will focus on industrial painting skills upon completion of Work Certified. The third project in Marinette will enroll a group of recent high school graduates who will go through Work Certified and then receive training in computer numerical control (CNC) skills that are in demand by area employers.

As the pilot projects have developed, ideas for the application of Work Certified in a variety of contexts have arisen. Business leaders, educators, job center staff and the Bay Area WDB board are all eager to get the pilots underway and see if Work Certified can be as successful in NE Wisconsin as it has been in other states.

NEW Manufacturing Alliance

The **NEW Manufacturing Alliance** is now a year old! It began in January 2007 with six area companies deciding to get together to address the shortage of skilled workers in the area manufacturing sector. Now it is 40 members and growing. Member companies pay dues that are used for workforce development efforts that will meet their needs. A number of initiatives are on-going:

- The **Communications Task Force** is surveying college students, especially students in manufacturing related training, to better understand what attracts young people to various career paths. The plan is to produce a series of videos that will appeal to young people promoting manufacturing as a career. The task force is especially interested in students who drop out of four year colleges who are reexamining their career paths.
- The **K-12 Task Force** has arranged for business leaders to speak with all the area school district superintendents in CESA #7 and CESA #8 to raise awareness of employment opportunities in the manufacturing sector.
- The **Executive Committee** has authorized funds to support the filming of a documentary on manufacturing in northeast Wisconsin.
- A working relationship has been established with **Michigan Tech** to better connect students there in Marquette MI to internships, employment opportunities, and research projects with member companies in the NEW North.

The NEW Manufacturing Alliance recently was the subject of the lead article in a new quarterly publication called *Insight on Manufacturing* (www.insightonmfg.com) that goes out to 5,000 companies statewide. A sister publication, *Insight on Business*, has since followed.

Partnering with the Wisconsin Department of Corrections

The Bay Area Workforce Development and the Wisconsin Department of Corrections combine funding for the **Windows to Work** program in partnership with the Oshkosh Correctional Institution. This program serves as a bridge to promote successful reintegration for offenders returning to Green Bay, Manitowoc and Sheboygan. This program grew out of the old Workforce Attachment and Advancement (WAA) program and has provided services to 31 individuals in PY 2007 with solid success in meeting WIA performance goals.

Similarly the Bay Area WDB funds **Transitions**, a reintegration program for youth returning from incarceration at the Lincoln Hills Juvenile Correctional Institution returning to the Bay Area. Fourteen young people have been enrolled in that program in PY 2007.

In September 2007, all the Community Corrections agents in Brown, Door, and Kewaunee Counties were given a tour of the Northeast Wisconsin Job Center in Green Bay to acquaint them with the services available and create stronger partnerships. Since that time, bi-monthly group orientation sessions are conducted at the job center for offenders and a special job seeking workshop for offenders is provided weekly. The Door County APS also provides group orientations for offenders.