State of Wisconsin
Department of Workforce Development

Creation of a Task Force on Transitional Jobs

As the State of Wisconsin is committed, through its Wisconsin Works (W-2) program, to assisting low-income parents with minor children to become economically self-sufficient through the provision of different levels of employment opportunities and training services; and

As the current W-2 program, for those participants not ready for unsubsidized employment, provides employment opportunities with monthly grants, for participants, primarily in community service jobs and secondarily in a small number of trial jobs; and

As in states across the country, including Pennsylvania, Vermont, Washington, California, Illinois and Minnesota, wage-paying transitional jobs have emerged as a successful option for assisting low-income individuals to experience the responsibilities and rewards of paid employment, including access to the increased family income provided through eligibility for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), while also learning real workplace skills, thereby increasing opportunities for successful future unsubsidized employment; and

As transitional jobs, through providing participants eligibility for the EITC, would leverage hundreds of thousands of federal dollars, bringing such support into Wisconsin and into areas of economic distress; and

As Governor Jim Doyle, to increase employment and earnings opportunities for low-income families, and based upon the positive research produced regarding other comparable models across the country, has included in his 2004-2005 biennial budget a new voluntary W-2 employment and training category for use by participants, transitional jobs, with access to capacity for work site mentoring, education and training and transportation services; and

As the design and initiation of a new transitional jobs W-2 program should be advised by external stakeholders with knowledge of successful efforts to transition low-income individuals to unsubsidized employment, this document establishes a Task Force on Transitional Jobs. This Task Force shall be comprised of 15 members including legislators representing both houses and both major political parties, business, labor and external stakeholder groups such as community organizations, W-2 agencies and Workforce Development Boards. Additionally, 3 non-voting research experts shall serve on the Task Force as technical advisors.

I, Roberta Gassman, Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, set forth that:

1. There is created a Task Force on Transitional Jobs (hereinafter "Task Force"); and

2. The Task Force shall consist of thirteen (15) members, appointed by the Secretary; and

3. The Secretary shall designate one (1) member on the Task Force to serve as chair from among the members of the Task Force; and

4. The Task Force shall have the following purpose and mission:

   a. Review and analyze existing research on transitional jobs.

   b. Research data and programs from other states on transitional jobs.

   c. Identify best implementation strategies for ensuring that the new transitional jobs program meets the following goals:

      1.) provide real world of work opportunities for W-2 participants;

      2.) increase earnings available to W-2 participants through eligibility for the Earned Income Tax Credit;

      3.) preserve W-2 participant incentives for moving into unsubsidized employment;

      4.) prevent displacement of non-W-2 workers by subsidized W-2 workers;

      5.) during participation in transitional job placements, participants remain eligible for W-2 benefits including food stamps, medical assistance, child care subsidies and other supportive services;

      6.) encourage employers to provide transitional job work sites for W-2 participants; and,

      7.) build upon existing Wisconsin workforce investment initiatives already in place.

   d. Identify a set of recommended attributes for the creation of transitional job placements addressing issues such as:

      1.) likely participants to target for program;

      2.) role of Job Centers;

      3.) maximum placements per participant to best encourage transition to unsubsidized employment;

4.) merits of targeting specific sector/s of the labor market for transitional job placements;

5.) guidelines for setting referral rates to transitional jobs;

6.) maximum funding sources;

7.) coordination with other employment and training programs;

8.) required standards for participation by employers as a transitional job site;

9.) labor shortages in specific sectors of the Wisconsin economy;

10.)required operational and performance standards for entities placing participants in transitional jobs.

e. Identify best delivery models and/or combination of models for implementing transitional jobs;

f. Identify best practices for implementing support services for transitional job participants including work site mentoring, education and training and transportation;

5. The Department of Workforce Development shall provide technical and administrative support services and sums of money from existing resources as are necessary for travel and operating expenses; and

6. Policy staff from the Department of Workforce Development shall provide lead staffing to the Task Force with policy staff representatives of the Department of Health and Family Services and the Wisconsin Technical College Board also included on the staff team; and

7. The Task Force shall submit to the Secretary a final report with final recommendations by August 1, 2003; and,

8. The Task Force shall dissolve after the Secretary has accepted its final report.

Roberta Gassman
Secretary
Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development