
W3 Offers Employers Opportunities to Build Winning Team

Pilot Part of Governor Walker's Plan to Get Wisconsin Working Again

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What do Clay Matthews and Mark Tauscher have in common besides their Green Bay Packer glory days? Both were college walk-ons, Matthews at Southern California, and Tauscher, at Wisconsin. Given a tryout, they went on to become not just starters, but key players on winning teams in college and the NFL. An All-Pro linebacker, Matthews continues to play, while Tauscher now has a shot at a spot in the NFL broadcast booth.

Thanks to an innovative program, job seekers now have walk-on opportunities, and employers, like coaches, can build winning teams. The program is called Wisconsin Workers Win (W3). We at the Department of Workforce Development recently unveiled W3, another example of Governor Walker's efforts to get Wisconsin Working again, advance the economy and keep Wisconsin moving forward.

Here is how W3 works. The program will provide Unemployment Insurance claimants with up to six weeks of training, and it will match the claimants with employers who have suitable job openings. W3 passed the legislature unanimously earlier this year. Governor Walker signed the legislation in March to give UI claimants an opportunity to work, learn job skills that employers need, and if their tryout is successful, gain full-time employment.

The pilot is called Wisconsin Workers Win, but employers win, too. First, W3 trainees continue to receive their unemployment benefits, plus a \$75 weekly stipend during their temporary placement. The only cost to a participating employer is the cost of providing Worker's Compensation Insurance to trainees, as trainees do not receive wages.

The W3 trainees are recent UI claimants who are currently receiving state-funded unemployment benefits (the first 26 weeks) and have at least six weeks remaining on their state benefits at the time of their placement. Actively seeking a new job, they volunteered for the W3 program. The six-week placement provides enough time for employers to fill even medium-skill and managerial positions with qualified workers.

W3 is a great opportunity for UI claimants to demonstrate their skills and abilities, as well as learn new skills. The pilot is equally a great opportunity for employers to give job seekers a tryout and build a winning team.

I encourage employers to welcome W3 trainees into their workplace, particularly those employers frustrated by the "skills gap." You will never know what a walk-on can do for your team unless you give that person a chance, and W3 gives you that opportunity.

You can learn more about W3 by visiting DWD's website at <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/wiworkerswin/default.htm>. This website contains information about eligibility for job seekers, frequently asked questions, and contact information for local service providers.