

# Youth in Transition & Employment

## YOUTH IN TRANSITION

**DRW supports effective preparation of youth with disabilities to get a community job or go on to postsecondary training.**

***Why:** Youth with disabilities in Wisconsin have historically poor employment outcomes. Wisconsin data shows certain categories of students (e.g. autism, intellectual disabilities, and emotional behavioral disabilities) typically end up either not working at all or working in sub-minimum wage jobs, entirely dependent on public supports, after leaving high school.*

- Proposal: Schools must be held accountable and supported to improve postsecondary outcomes for youth with disabilities. The Better Bottom Line Transition Incentive Fund has been successful in its first year, but is underfunded. This fund rewards schools that move more students into community employment at a competitive wage and into postsecondary training. (\$7.2 million over the biennium).
- Proposal: Ensure that all youth receive new employment supports mandated through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Invest in one-time, mandatory, local training of DVR, education and local long-term supports professionals to prioritize employment planning for youth. Invest in training supports for parents to understand their role in promoting employment outcomes for their child. (\$100,000 in the first year of the biennium).
- Proposal: School staff need specialized supports to partner effectively with private sector employers and ensure they are meeting local workforce needs. Support the bi-partisan proposal of the Assembly Youth Workforce Readiness Committee to develop a pilot program to provide designated and specially trained job developers to work with area businesses. (\$1.5 million in the second year of the biennium).

## EMPLOYMENT

**DRW supports proposals that promote competitive wage community employment.**

***Why:** People with disabilities want to work, however, publicly funded programs in Wisconsin – including schools, the long term care system and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation – have not worked collaboratively to maximize use of taxpayer dollars to move people from unemployment or government subsidized employment into competitive wage jobs. There is a severe lack of employment support providers statewide who specialize in job development in the community. Many states have adopted Employment First policies to reverse this trend. The Wisconsin Department of Health Services has indicated that a focus on employment supports for individuals results in improved health outcomes (lower Medicaid costs) and is essential to the fiscal viability of Wisconsin's long-term care programs.*

- Proposal: Require State agencies (DPI, DHS, DWD, DVR) to adopt Employment First policies and report on progress toward improving employment outcomes, in typical community-based competitive wage jobs, of people with disabilities. (No increased cost).

(more)

- Proposal: Promote and incentivize private sector hiring of workers with disabilities by investing in supports to expand the *Partners with Business* model statewide. This model is proven to save money and allows a typical co-worker to be paid with public funds (often time-limited) to help a person with a disability be successful on the job. (One-time \$350,000 technical assistance investment).
- Proposal: Fund technical assistance and support to counties operating Individualized Placement and Support (IPS) programs. IPS is an evidence-based practice that promotes the recovery of people who have experienced serious mental illness through competitive work related to their employment preferences. Increase the responsiveness of IPS programs to the needs of individuals moving to work under the Medical Assistance Purchase Program (MAPP). (\$594,000 per year to support 3 regional trainers and incentive funds to 20 sites statewide.)
- Proposal: Reallocate existing funds to create a targeted fund and strategy to increase employment service provider capacity statewide. Ensure that no matter where a person with a disability lives, there is a skilled agency available to support them to secure a good job match and put supports in place with the goal of fading supports as needed. New Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requirements must not result in a wait list for DVR services due to limited provider capacity. (No increased cost; reallocation).
- Proposal: Reform the outdated State Use program that prohibits private businesses that employ or want to employ more individuals with disabilities from bidding on state contracts. (No increased cost).