

# WORKFORCE

The biggest concern employers identify today is an inability to find workers, especially workers with the right skill set. Given our state's demographics trends, this challenge is unlikely to be resolved in the near future. The WMC agenda on workforce will ensure our homegrown talent pipeline has the skills necessary for the jobs available in Wisconsin. At the same time, we support the state continuing its efforts to market outside of Wisconsin so workers and their families in other states learn of the vast opportunities available here.



## ✓ **MARKETING WISCONSIN FOR WORKERS**

The biggest issue facing employers is the lack of workers. Wisconsin must continue to tell our story and market the opportunities that exist here for workers and families through a continued and sustained television, radio and digital marketing campaign in Chicago, Minneapolis/St. Paul, and other regions of the country. A focus on UW System graduates and military personnel should also be sustained.

## ✓ **BRAIN DRAIN & BRAIN GAIN**

In the past, too many college graduates would leave Wisconsin for job opportunities elsewhere. While that trend has slowed, we now need to reverse it and ensure that we keep our homegrown talent and also draw graduates from around the country to Wisconsin. To do so, the state should consider incentives such as tax relief to encourage recent graduates to stay in Wisconsin and to move here from other states.

## ✓ **OPPOSE MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE**

Younger and low-skilled workers need the opportunity to begin their climb up the career ladder by gaining experience through entry level jobs. Raising the minimum wage will increase the cost of employing entry level workers, resulting in fewer job opportunities for workers entering the workforce who need to build skills and experience for their career.

## ✓ **WISCONSIN FAST FORWARD**

The Wisconsin Fast Forward program has been a success story, using training grants to help employers train new and existing workers for current and upcoming jobs. This program should be continued and improved upon, reacting to the ever-changing needs of employers. Connected to Fast Forward is the Labor Market Information System, which aims to better connect employers and job seekers based on skills. This should also be continued in order to better connect workers with available jobs in real time.

## ✓ **IMMIGRATION REFORM**

Wisconsin is facing a worker shortage crisis. Immigration is one necessary piece of the workforce puzzle that needs to be solved. Although not a state issue, the business community believes we need smart and practical immigration reform that begins with securing our border, but also allows ample opportunities for the best and brightest who want to come to our country to work and be productive.

## ✓ **REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP EXPANSION**

Registered Apprenticeships started in Wisconsin in 1911, and provide real on-the-job training for employees while meeting the workforce needs of employers. While historically used primarily for construction, manufacturing and service sector jobs, in recent years Wisconsin expanded the program into healthcare and information technology. We should continue to expand the training model into new industries and encourage more employers to utilize the apprenticeship model.

## ✓ **BETTER PREPARE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS FOR WORK**

Too many students no longer have access to the industrial arts/tech education in high school, and are instead pushed toward college and four-year degrees. School districts should better prepare students for all career options, including entering careers in manufacturing and construction, by increasing access to coursework in the industrial arts/tech education, followed by hands-on learning through apprenticeships and internships. Connecting students to these pathways through career counselors, ensuring the public knows how schools are performing through the school report cards, and linking new school funding to these efforts are ways to ensure accountability and success.

## ✓ **OPPOSE LEGALIZATION OF RECREATIONAL MARIJUANA**

Employers take their obligation to ensure a safe workplace for both employees and customers very seriously. For many employers, maintaining a drug-free work environment is critical to ensuring the safety of their employees. WMC will oppose efforts to legalize the recreational use of marijuana because doing so will endanger the safety of workers.