



# Workforce Development Award Nomination Wisconsin

## **Wisconsin Workforce Development Award Nomination: Innovative Workforce Services Delivery within Correctional Facilities**

Contact Information of Individual Submitting Nomination

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Agency Name: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

### **Innovative Workforce Services Delivery within Correctional Facilities**

Wisconsin Departments of Workforce Development (DWD) and Corrections (DOC) partnered with the South Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board to establish a job center at Oakhill Correctional Institution (OCI), a minimum-security state correctional facility. The OCI Job Center operates out of the facility's educational building for approximately 20 hours per week with integrated agency staff providing direct services to inmates, including career readiness programs, job search assistance, resume development, registered apprenticeships, Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) services, and assistance for veterans and individuals with disabilities.

This innovative service delivery method is the first job center in a Wisconsin correctional institution. Its innovative design creates a continuity of services from pre-release to post-release with an integration of reentry and workforce services. Most workforce services start for former offenders post-release. The OCI Job Center was the first to begin services pre-release, connecting inmates to the workforce system and its opportunities before reentry. Inmates are

released to their "home" community and may not stay in the area around Oakhill, but by connecting them to job center staff prior to release, inmates are referred to area WIOA Title I and III staff and appropriate Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) representative or Vocational Rehabilitation staff post-release.

**Provide a statement of results, accomplishments, impacts, and any other appropriate information that demonstrates why the nominee's efforts described in question #1 were an exceptional contribution. Response (400 word limit).**

Since the success of the OCI project, DWD and DOC have continued their partnership and opened a Job Center at Taycheedah Correctional Institution (TCI), a female-only state correctional facility.

In-facility Job Centers were developed using evidence-based practices, which found that inmates who were engaged in pre-release services and continued after their release had lower likelihood of being incarcerated again. Over 200 inmates at both OCI and TCI have received 2,220 different career services. Additionally, staff are connecting veterans with DVOPs, identifying if VR services are appropriate and completing proper referrals, and introducing pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship opportunities to inmates with interest in these programs.

Additionally, the creation of the in-facility job centers requires DWD and DOC to align technical and security needs to allow inmates to access the state's online labor exchange, allow non-DOC staff and employers to access the facilities, and connect case management data. Connecting the case management data will allow for longitudinal analysis of services provided pre-and post-release to determine successful customer outcomes. The alignment of these resources creates better partnerships, program development, and evaluation.

**Provide a brief description of the nominee's significant contributions in any one of the other two areas listed under "criteria" that you did not focus on above. Response (400 word limit).**

Job Center projects at OCI and TCI were created using the innovative service delivery model, establishing a customer-centered design that meets improved strategies/outcomes with integrated service delivery and partnerships. Employers working with OCI have indicated that they and other employers are willing to interview inmates prior to their release to potentially offer positions once released. Knowing this, DWD recently implemented the use of Microsoft Skype with employers throughout the state to facilitate interviews with soon-to-be released inmates. This meets the needs of employers using an innovative way to connect them to inmates pre-release.

In-facility Job Center partners have streamlined the delivery of services to both employers and soon-to-be employees (inmates) to meet the needs of businesses throughout the state and assist them in accessing an untapped talent pool. Innovations with partnership is key for this initiative. Partners using evidence-based practices and sharing resources, data, and outcomes have led to approval to implement additional correctional job centers around the state. This will include four new correctional job centers in the calendar year 2020, which will be modeled after OCI and TCI. More and more businesses across Wisconsin are also reviewing their hiring practices to be more inclusive to meet their operational demands.

### **Examples of work**

[WI - Oakhill Job Center NAWSA Award.pdf \(1.3MB\)](#)

[WI - Oakhill Job Center Recent Success Stories.docx \(13.4KB\)](#)

[WI - Sign up sheet.pdf \(489.8KB\)](#)

[WI - Appointment form.pdf \(466.5KB\)](#)

[WI - 81658 - Pre registration form.pdf \(661KB\)](#)

[WI - Statement of Approval Pinnacle Award 2020.pdf \(511.3KB\)](#)