



Making Connections


 Your connection to work and training.

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Area Business Pays It Forward

by Carol Wagenson

Empire’s company newsletter highlights the company’s commitment to their core values of Respect, Integrity, Responsibility, Continual Improvement and Knowledge. These corporate values have rung true throughout our experience with Empire.

Doug Billings, Vice-President of Marketing, and Alexis Marsh, Customer Service Manager, indicated that partnering with Workforce Connections, Inc., (WCI) is a great way to invest in the community without a substantial cost up-front while making an impact on someone’s life.

Empire provides work experience opportunities with flexible, part-time hours. Ron, a WCI client was looking for the opportunity to get re-acquainted to the workforce. His work experience through Wisconsin’s FoodShare Employment and Training (FSET) program enabled Ron to learn job skills that included order processing and assistance with scheduling. A work experience provides individuals the opportunity to become more marketable by

learning new skills on the worksite. When the worksite opportunity came to an end with FSET, Ron applied for a full-time position. Although Empire knew that Ron did not have all the skills to perform the job, they recognized his willingness to learn and agreed that he was a good fit. WCI enrolled Ron into an on-the-job training program through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which provided the resources for Ron to receive the necessary training to become proficient in his new job and minimize the cost of training for Empire.

If your business is searching for Business Solutions in Western Wisconsin and would like to learn more about how work experiences through FSET or on-the-job-training through WIOA may be beneficial to your company, contact WCI.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact: Carol Wagenson at 608-792-3836 or wagensonc@workforceconnections.org



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Workplace Essential Skills Training – COMING SOON

by Teresa Pierce

Are your employees or potential new hires lacking basic workplace skills and professionalism? Workforce Connections, Inc. (WCI) introduces Workplace Essential Skills Training. Weekly essential skills training classes will provide opportunities for individuals to learn the skills they need to become more valuable employees.

10 Soft Skills You Need – Effective soft skills contribute to more efficient, more harmonious, and a more productive workplace, job happiness, and satisfaction.

Goal Setting & Getting Things Done – Managing time and setting goals increases success, productivity, and helps you achieve your dreams.

Conflict Resolution – Learn the six-step process to help you resolve conflicts, and learn anger management techniques.

Interpersonal Skills – Make an impact and leave a lasting impression by learning

communication and negotiation techniques; networking and conversation starters.

Job Search Skills – Learn the latest strategies for resume writing, job searching, interviewing, and networking.

Organizational Skills – Being organized can increase productivity, project management, and affect memory and retention.

Social Media in the Workplace – Finding the proper balance between staying connected and completing daily tasks in the workplace.

Stress Management – Acquire methods for handling stressful situations, including routines, relaxation techniques, and a stress log system.

Work Life Balance – Stress caused by imbalance is costly and damages productivity and health risks. Learn to create balance.



Time Management - Begin by setting goals and breaking them down into a project, an action plan, or simple task list. Then, rate based on urgency, importance, priorities, and deadlines.

WCI will design customized training opportunities to meet your business needs.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact: Carol Wagenson at 608-792-3836 or wagensonc@workforceconnections.org

“Best in Class” Award

by Kenda Fluegge

The “**Best in Class**” classification is awarded to the service provider in Wisconsin that exceeded other contractors in helping participants obtain and keep employment. “**Highest performing**” is awarded to the highest performing W-2 contractor in both Milwaukee and state-wide.

The Wisconsin Works (W-2) program is a job training program available to parents (both custodial and non-custodial) with minor children, low assets, and low income. Margaret McMahon with the Department of Children and Families states, “As you know this is a particularly difficult population to employ. Kudos to your team for achieving this incentive.” W-2 program objectives

include job attainment, job retention, and long-term participant job attainment. W-2 services are available at the Workforce Connections offices in Alma, Tomah, Durand, Black River Falls, Prairie du Chien, Viroqua, Independence, and La Crosse.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact: Gina Brown at 608-386-1629 or browning@workforceconnections.org



Gina Brown of Workforce Connections, Inc. accepts award from Justine Girard, Department of Children and Families.

WCI Receives Healthcare Grant

by Kenda Fluegge

WCI is partnering with Northwest Wisconsin Concentrated Employment Program, Inc., (NWCEP) for a project titled Wisconsin Coverage Connections. The project will collaborate with Navigators, advocates, and educators to improve and optimize child health coverage through innovative outreach and enrollment strategies.

The Wisconsin Coverage Connections is an initiative to create awareness and accessibility to a mostly rural population in 27 western and northwestern counties of Wisconsin. WCI is one of eight agencies that will collaborate to perform extensive outreach and enrollment assistance.

Emphasis will be given on the year-round enrollment to the BadgerCare Plus program. Services are free to consumers.

Although more and more children are getting enrolled into Medicaid and CHIP (Children’s Health Insurance Program), there are still many without health insurance. In the 27- county area to be served, data supports that there are an estimated 16,888 children under age 18 and an estimated 74,093 adults age 18-64 without health insurance.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact: Wanda Palmer at 608-790-8136 or palmerw@workforceconnections.org



Save Money with On-the-Job Training Program

by: Kenda Fluegge



Having a hard time filling that job opening? Do you have great candidates who don’t have all the skills you need?

Training new employees can be expensive and time consuming. Your business may be eligible to receive funds to help offset the cost of training. Through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) there may be opportunities to help reduce training costs, supervise employee development, train onsite,

and screen applicants. On-the-Job trainings (OJTs) occur within normal working environments, allowing employees to gain the skills necessary to perform the job well. The goal is to teach specific workplace skills and instill aspects of the workplace culture and performance expectations in the new employee. The OJT process is simple and requires minimal paperwork.

Questions and answers:

Q: Can I choose the applicant to hire or does WCI send me someone?

A: It’s your choice! Send us someone to prescreen or ask who we might already have.

Q: Is every job seeker and local business eligible?

A: No. Contact WCI for more information.

Q: Who pays the employee during the training period?

A: You do. WCI helps offset the training costs through reimbursement.

Contract Inclusions:

- The position description the OJT trainee will assume
- The skills and competencies to be learned.
- The reimbursement amount (must include regular hours, no overtime, holiday/PTO).
- The written contract must be established before official offer of employment is in place.
- The business will retain the employee after the contract period ends.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact: Kelly Norsten at 608-789-6094 or norstenk@workforceconnections.org

Making an Impact

by: Kenda Fluegge



Meet Travis.

He's a coach for the Connecting to Second Chances program. The Second Chance Act program provides individuals who have been recently incarcerated

with the tools necessary for reintegration into the community through case management, connections to community resources, and mentoring partnerships.

Travis decided to become a coach/mentor based on a wish to meet people and a desire to give back to the community. Upon encouragement from a WCI employee, he decided to give mentoring a try. He is now mentoring individuals and impacting their success to become employed, responsible citizens.

Travis is an excellent coach because he is motivated, excited, and has a willingness to keep an open mind and learn about others. WCI is grateful for his dedication and appreciates his enthusiasm.

If you are the type of individual who believes in second chances and enjoys mentoring others, contact BethAnn Zenk for more information at 608-433-2771 or zenkb@workforceconnections.org.



Meet Tim. Tim attended a WCI dislocated worker informational meeting. He had been job

searching on his own since being laid off in August of 2015. Even with extensive Quality Management experience Tim felt his lack of a college degree was preventing him from obtaining employment.

Tim enrolled in WIOA in February of 2016, to partner with an employment coordinator who assisted with job searching, resume development, and transportation costs. Tim wasn't interested in pursuing a degree but discovered an online National Certification for Quality he felt would enhance his employability. WIOA funded this pre-vocational service.

While recently attending an employment expo, Tim landed an interview and subsequent job offer as a Quality Manager. Tim reported that the employer hired him as a result of the certification he is pursuing. Tim believes the WIOA services provided by WCI had a huge impact on his new career opportunity.

Workplace Culture Breakfast Event

by Kenda Fluegge



On September 14th, WCI hosted a **Workplace Culture Breakfast** event at Stoney Creek Conference Center in Onalaska. More than 100 business people listened intently to **Jerry McGeorge** of Organic Valley and **Anne Finch** of Logistics Health as they discussed company culture and the effects culture can have on employee retention and productivity. The event was held in celebration of Workforce Development Month.

"It was a very good seminar. My coworker and I felt empowered when we left the conference."

FOR INFORMATION ON FUTURE EVENTS

Contact: Carol Wagenson at 608-792-3836 or wagensonc@workforceconnections.org

Making Connections
 2615 East Avenue South
 La Crosse, WI 54601
www.workforceconnections.org

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