



FACT SHEET: *Wisconsin Path to Prosperity Program*

Wisconsin workers have been hit hard by the economic crisis:

- February 2009 unemployment is 8.8% statewide. The Department of Revenue projects unemployment will peak at 9.8% and remain above 7% until at least the fourth quarter of 2011.
- There were 46,600 more workers collecting unemployment insurance in December 2008 than in December 2007.
- Wisconsin saw nearly 200 mass layoffs from October 2008 thru March 2009.

The economic crisis has also shone a light on several long-standing structural problems within the labor market. For example:

- Over 155,000 working-age adults in Wisconsin have no high-school diploma. On average, these workers earn \$10.83 per hour. Workers with associate degrees earn 59% more, \$17.22 per hour.
- Racine; Beloit; Milwaukee and several rural communities in Northern Wisconsin have long struggled with high unemployment, relatively low educational attainment and below average earnings.

Proposal: *provide a targeted investment in Wisconsin's technical colleges. As one of the state's primary workforce development tools, the technical colleges are well-equipped to provide the training dislocated workers and others need to find family supporting employment in high-demand and emerging occupations.*

Wisconsin Path to Prosperity Program could be used to:

- Serve dislocated workers enrolled in technical college programming;
- Serve adults enrolled in technical college General Equivalency Diploma (GED) or High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED) programming;
- Create or expand capacity in programs with waiting lists (e.g. nursing);
- Create or expand capacity in programs that train for high-demand occupations.

Grant eligibility is based on local labor market conditions. A technical college is eligible for a grant if it serves an area with an:

unemployment rate that exceeds 6%

OR

unemployment rate that exceeds 120% of the state unemployment rate

OR

unemployment rate that has increased 2% points in the last year

Grants would be awarded to technical college districts by the WTCS State Board, with preference to districts serving areas with the highest unemployment.