



Wisconsin Works for Everyone: Outline of Budget Initiatives

1. Encourage and Reward Work: Help People Move Toward Self-Sufficiency through Employment

Connect people to employment:

- Help more FoodShare recipients move toward steady employment:
 - Expand FoodShare Employment and Training (FSET) capacity and refer for voluntary participation all able-bodied adults with dependents or caring for an incapacitated person who may benefit from FSET services. *\$30 million AF*
 - On a pilot basis, require able-bodied adults with school-age children to participate in FSET if not working 80 hours per month, and expand FSET capacity to accommodate mandatory participants. *\$8.5 million AF*
- Increase investment in employment and training services for childless adult Medicaid participants and institute a requirement that those not employed or who are underemployed participate in available services. *\$19.7 million AF*
- Authorize WHEDA to seek a federal waiver to pilot work requirements for able-bodied adults receiving housing vouchers, as well as to offer voluntary case management and self-sufficiency services to recipients.
- Establish a five-county child support employment demonstration program to improve the earnings and child support payments of noncustodial parents struggling to pay their support. *\$1,128,600 AF*
- Strengthen the work requirements in the Medicaid Purchase Plan (MAPP) for individuals with disabilities who are working or interested in working by requiring proof of work or training and by eliminating “premium cliffs.” *\$4.1 million AF*

Strengthen offender reentry:

- Expand the Windows to Work and Vocational Training programs to provide ex-offenders with skills necessary for employment upon reentry to society. *\$2 million GPR*
- Provide funding for two new mobile labs to provide job skills training for inmates at correctional facilities. *\$1.1 million GPR*
- Dedicate a position at DWD to expanding and streamlining registered apprenticeship opportunities for inmates.
- Expand opportunities for inmates within six months of release to be housed at county jails in order to participate in work-release and related employment programs.
- Establish a mentorship pilot program to provide inmates with citizen mentors as they approach release and during the first year after their release. *\$555,400 GPR*
- Establish a five-year reentry demonstration project focused on noncustodial parents in Milwaukee. *\$437,500 TANF*

Prepare the homeless for employment:

- Strengthen employment-focused services to homeless families by establishing a grant program to ten homeless shelters for the provision of employment-focused case management. *\$1,000,000 TANF*
- Provide a matching grant for a municipality to initiate a pilot modelled on successful Albuquerque “Better Way” initiative, which deploys a van to pick up homeless individuals and pays for them to clean up public places. *\$150,000 GPR*

Reward work:

- Establish the Young Adult Employment Assistance Credit to reward work among young adults aging out of foster care or who leave the federal SSI-disabled children program at the age-18 redetermination. *2,000 filers/year, \$724,400 GPR*
- Establish a noncustodial parent EITC to reward work among low-income noncustodial parents who are working and paying their current child support on time and in full. *1,100 filers/year, \$230,000 GPR*
- Reform the Homestead Tax Credit to provide additional protection for the elderly and disabled by indexing their credit for inflation, while restructuring the credit for able-bodied adults to encourage and reward work. *\$9.7 million net GPR reduction, re-invested in EITC expansions.*
- Reward work and bring greater equity to the state EITC by raising the maximum benefit for parents with one child from \$135 to \$371. *131,000 filers/year, \$20.8 million AF*

Reduce barriers to employment:

- Require “Sunrise Reports” from the Department of Administration on any new proposed license and establish an Occupational Licensing Review Council to review and offer recommendations on the elimination of current licenses.
- Strengthen drug screening, testing, and treatment efforts for new W-2 participants in an effort to help more individuals overcome substance abuse barriers that stand in the way of employment.
- Conduct a feasibility study to determine whether a program to help the long-term unemployed move to areas of better economic opportunity would save taxpayer dollars and be a good candidate for a pay-for-success model.



Help workers move up:

- Eliminate the “benefit cliff” in the Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy program by replacing the cliff with a sliding scale contribution of \$1 for every \$3 earned in excess of 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level. *\$1.96 million TANF*
- Foster innovative employer-driven models for increasing the retention and success of workers leaving public benefit programs by making available Fast Forward funds for the development of employer resource networks.

II. Strengthen Families: Support Parental Effort and Positive Norms

Promote positive norms:

- Incorporate the Success Sequence (graduate from high school, then get a job, and wait until age 21 and after marriage before having children) into the Academic and Career Planning program. *\$50,000 TANF*
- Develop and implement a robust public messaging campaign around the Success Sequence and the importance of fathers in the lives of their children. *\$1,000,000 TANF*

Strengthen the expectation of parental responsibility:

- Ensure that both parents are asked to support their children by requiring custodial and noncustodial parents receiving FoodShare to cooperate with efforts to establish paternity and a child support order. *\$1.4 million AF*

Reduce disincentives to marriage:

- Establishing a “honeymoon period” in the state Earned Income Tax Credit that eliminates the credit’s marriage penalty for the first three years a couple is married. *8,000 filers/Tax Year 2018, \$1.5 million GPR*

Provide disadvantaged families with resources to help their children succeed:

- Expand the Family Foundations Home Visiting program to provide 390-550 additional families with evidence-based home visiting services shown to enhance child safety and development, and family self-sufficiency. *\$7.8 million TANF*

III. Invest in Success: Prioritize Education

Keep kids in school:

- Reduce chronic absenteeism in early grades by establishing a two-year performance-based grant program to schools to implement innovative strategies for reducing early-grade absenteeism. *\$500,000 TANF*
- Encourage regular attendance by strengthening the Learnfare requirement in W-2. Reforms would allow W-2 benefits to be sanctioned for the families of children who are habitually truant and do not cooperate with case management services aimed at improving attendance. Currently, benefits may be sanctioned only if a student is not enrolled.

Boost the success of disadvantaged students through technology:

- Establishing two pilot programs that use text-message interventions to:
 - Improve early literacy among pre-K students in Head Start (by texting their parents) and
 - Reduce “summer melt”—where students intend to attend postsecondary education but fail to matriculate. *\$214,000 AF*

IV. Stewardship: Enhance Program Integrity and Effectiveness

Target tax credits to those most in need:

- Establish a \$15,000 limit on business and investment losses that can be claimed for the purposes of eligibility for tax credits intended for low- and moderate-income households. Small family farms would be exempted. *\$2.58 million GPR savings.*

Ask those with resources to support themselves:

- Establish a \$25,000 liquid asset limit in both the Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy program and the FoodShare program for able-bodied, working-age adults. *\$3.7 million AF*

Improve coordination across programs:

- Direct DCF, DHS, DWD and DPI to conduct a study of the overlap of chronic absenteeism and the use of public benefits, with the goal of more effectively and efficiently targeting services to those families who are struggling most.