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Governor Doyle Announces W-2 Pilot Project

“Real Work for Real Pay” pilot in Milwaukee, Kenosha and Marathon counties will help W-2 participants gain work experience with opportunity to stay employed, become self sufficient

MADISON – As part of his *Grow Wisconsin - The Next Steps*, Governor Jim Doyle announced today the start of the “Real Work for Real Pay” pilot project that will place W-2 participants in real jobs, where they can earn a pay check, gain work experience and develop the skills needed to remain employed and become self sufficient.

“This pilot will enable W-2 participants to take an all important step toward becoming employed and self sufficient by working in a real job, developing their skills and gaining valuable work experience,” Governor Doyle said. “By earning a pay check, rather than receiving a W-2 stipend or grant, these individuals will be eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit, a benefit that will help them support their families.”

The “Real Work for Real Pay” pilot will serve up to 100 W-2 participants in Kenosha, Marathon and Milwaukee counties from June 1, 2008 through December 31, 2009, targeting those who have been on assistance for at least 60 days and have been unsuccessful in finding employment. Policy Studies, Inc. in Milwaukee will serve up to 80 RWRP participants; Kenosha County will serve up to 13 RWRP participants and Marathon County will serve up to 7 RWRP participants.

“By working with employers and W-2 providers, we can help make it possible for W-2 participants to achieve the economic independence they seek,” Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Roberta Gassman said. “At the end of the pilot, it is our expectation that employers involved in the project will continue to employ these individuals.”

The participating W-2 agencies in the three counties will partner with high demand employers to provide a wage subsidy to participating businesses. The W-2 agencies will also provide mentoring and work supports to help each worker succeed and establish themselves in Wisconsin’s growing economy.

The pilot will assist DWD in identifying successful strategies to help W-2 participants succeed in securing their economic independence. The lessons learned from the pilot will inform future decisions on how to expand the effort. The Wisconsin Works agency will pay an employer that employs a RWRP participant the wage subsidy. RWRP participants will receive a wage from the employer and intensive job coaching and on-site support for an average of 4 months. When the wage subsidy ends, the employer is expected to retain the RWRP participant as an unsubsidized employee.