

How Employers Win Meeting Business Needs Through the Industry Partnerships Project

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**Jobs With a Future
Center on Wisconsin Strategy**

Introduction

In an increasingly competitive economy, companies in South Central Wisconsin — like so many elsewhere in the state and across the country — find themselves under growing pressure to improve productivity while continuing to provide quality goods and services to their customers. In order to meet these challenges, firms need skilled workers who are highly motivated, productive, and able to take on increased responsibility on the job.

Jobs With a Future (JWF) has helped many employers in South Central Wisconsin to address these pressing concerns. Created in 1996, JWF brings together leading stakeholders in South Central Wisconsin — including the City of Madison, Dane County, Madison Area Technical College (MATC), the Workforce Development Board of South Central Wisconsin (WDB), and the Center on Wisconsin Strategy (COWS) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison — to build and pursue a strategic vision for workforce development in the region. Ultimately, the partners are investing together in building “jobs with a future” for all residents of the region. The partners know that such work requires both stronger shared vision among the institutions, and a stronger role for the region’s leading employers in implementing it.

As a strategic collaboration of leading institutions in the region, JWF allows partners to pursue joint efforts to make our workforce development system more efficient and responsive to area workers and employers. Understanding that employers need to be brought into the system, JWF partners have also invested heavily in building stronger employer organization in the region — partnerships of local employers and leading industries that are working with key institutions on solving practical skill, training, recruitment, and retention problems.

From strategic discussion to on-the-ground training development, JWF is building a stronger workforce system for South Central Wisconsin.

JWF Key Strategic Collaborators

- City of Madison
- Dane County
- Madison Area Technical College (MATC)
- Madison Gas and Electric Economic Development Services
- Moraine Park Technical College (MPTC)
- Regional employers
- South Central Federation of Labor
- United Way of Dane County
- University of Wisconsin-Madison, Center on Wisconsin Strategy (COWS)
- Workforce Development Board of South Central Wisconsin (WDB)



The Industry Partnerships Project

JWF was able to significantly expand its efforts to provide workers with pathways to career advancement through “Industry Partnerships: Developing Workers for Jobs with a Future.” This project was made possible by a two-year, \$1.14 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) to the WDB, a key JWF partner. The Industry Partnerships Project had three main goals:

1. To provide training to incumbent workers that would enable them to take on new responsibilities and/or advance beyond entry-level positions in health care and manufacturing. The project aimed to overcome skill gaps in these industries by bringing together employers and public-sector educators to develop curriculum and deliver training relevant to incumbent workers’ needs.
2. To improve employment opportunities for the growing number of dislocated workers in the region. With plant closings and mass layoffs on the rise in South Central Wisconsin, the project adopted strategies to increase dislocated workers’ awareness of and access to job training. In particular, the WDB and its collaborators sought to connect these workers to training that could lead to new jobs in health care and manufacturing, in areas of occupational and skill shortage.
3. To build and strengthen relationships between employers and institutional partners. By bringing public- and private-sector stakeholders together, the project intended to help key collaborators better coordinate strategies and align resources for delivering effective workforce training in the region.

The DOL grant enabled JWF to extend its geographic reach throughout the six counties of South Central Wisconsin — Columbia, Dane, Dodge, Jefferson, Marquette, and Sauk — and to involve new employers along with those already active in JWF. The project focused on manufacturing and health care because their share of employment in the region is significant, there is a range of jobs available in each field, and both industries have brought strong leadership to the table.

Between March 2003 and October 2004, the Industry Partnerships Project involved 102 health care and manufacturing employers and delivered free training to 987 area residents. (For a complete list of employers, see Appendix 1.) The vast majority of those trained — 823 (83 percent) — were incumbent workers, or those currently employed, although the project did serve 164 dislocated workers, or workers who lost their jobs due to plant closings or mass layoffs. Workers participated in 41 different courses — on topics ranging from business writing and leadership development to electrical controls and phlebotomy — accounting for 28,803 hours of training. MATC and Moraine Park Technical College (MPTC) worked extensively on curriculum development and provided all of the training. (For a complete list of courses offered by JWF, see Appendix 2.)

In this report, we look closely at the gains that area companies made based on their involvement in the Industry Partnerships Project. Overall, participating employers expressed a high level of satisfaction with the training provided to their employees, the exchange of ideas and best practices they engaged in with peer firms, the knowledge they gained about the public-sector workforce development resources available to them. As a result of these positive experiences, participating employers are enthusiastic about continuing to work together to improve efficiency and productivity in the workplace, provide better labor market opportunities for employees, and strengthen the region's workforce development system — and ultimately the regional economy — as a whole.

An Overview of Employer Participation

Of the 102 employers involved in the Industry Partnerships Project, there were 46 health care firms and 56 manufacturers. Of these, 74 sent at least one worker to project-sponsored training. As Table 1 shows, these 74 firms varied significantly in size and were widely distributed throughout South Central Wisconsin. Not surprisingly, Dane County, the largest county in the region, had the greatest number of firms participating in training. The table also illustrates that, with the exception of Sauk County — where nearly four times as many manufacturers as health care firms were involved in project training — each county experienced relatively equal levels of participation from the two sectors.

In addition, Table 1 illustrates that participating health care organizations — which included some very large hospitals and clinics — had more personnel, on average, than the manufacturing firms involved in project training. However, a larger number of manufacturers sent employees to project-sponsored training, and more workers in that industry received training (491) than did health care workers (320). Interestingly, employees in health care spent twice as many hours in training, on average, as their counterparts in manufacturing. (It is important to remember that Table 1 only includes incumbent workers — those sent by their employers. Dislocated workers also took training classes but are not represented in the table.)

Table 1 also shows how employers in health care and manufacturing utilized training, based on different levels of skill. Employers had a range of training needs, identified at the outset of the project, that were reflected in four distinct types of skill areas:

- *Basic skills* courses helped workers to master elementary knowledge in such areas as math, writing, or computers.
- *Academic/employability skills* courses offer general education in a range of areas — from algebra concepts to communication to college success — and also cover computer skills at a more advanced level than a basic skills course would provide. (With one exception, Foundations for Health Care, these courses were attended exclusively by dislocated workers.)
- *Technical skills* courses focused on transmitting job-specific knowledge applicable in either the health care or manufacturing sector, such as phlebotomy or electrical maintenance.

Table 1

Employer Participation in Industry Partnerships Project Training

	Health Care		Manufacturing		Total				
	# of Firms	Avg. Firm Size	# of Firms	Avg. Firm Size	# of Firms	Avg. Firm Size			
By County									
Columbia	3	173	5	195	8	187			
Dane	15	867	15	262	30	541			
Dodge	3	511	3	292	6	379			
Jefferson	7	541	6	313	13	417			
Juneau/Marquette*	1	75	2	29	3	44			
Sauk	3	205	11	315	14	291			
Total	32	X	42	X	74	X			
Average	X	395	X	234	X	310			
By Size Range									
0-50	3	X	7	X	10	X			
51-100	2	X	1	X	3	X			
101-200	7	X	10	X	17	X			
201-500	5	X	18	X	23	X			
501 or more	9	X	5	X	14	X			
	# of Firms Utilizing	# of Workers Trained	Training Intensity	# of Firms Utilizing	# of Workers Trained	Training Intensity	# of Firms Utilizing	# of Workers Trained	Training Intensity
By Skill Level									
Basic	4	34	48 hrs	3	16	10 hrs	7	50	36 hrs
Academic/ Employability	2	5	7 hrs	10	24	8 hrs	12	29	8 hrs
Technical	23	94	75 hrs	14	41	45 hrs	37	135	66 hrs
Soft	19	192	10 hrs	41	419	14 hrs	60	610	13 hrs
Total**	31	320	X	68	491	X	73	810	X
Average	X	X	33 hrs	X	X	17 hrs	X	X	23 hrs

*One firm in Juneau County was included in the Industry Partnerships Project because of its prior involvement with WDB projects.

**Numbers in columns do not add up because some workers took more than one type of class.

Note: "Training intensity" refers to the average number of hours workers spent in training.

- *Soft* skills courses helped students to build interpersonal skills, such as communicating effectively, promoting teamwork, or negotiating complex legal issues in the workplace.

Looking at Table 1, we can see that health care firms were much more likely than manufacturers to utilize technical skills training. Of the 37 firms that used technical skills training, 23 (62 percent) were health care organizations, which sent more than twice as many employees to these courses as did manufacturing firms (94 compared to 41). Further, health care workers spent 40 percent more hours, on average, in technical skills training than did their counterparts in manufacturing. Technical skills courses in health care were offered more frequently under the project, and they tended to be longer in duration than those in manufacturing.

Because the health care industry has been strained by frontline labor shortages, it is not surprising that the development of technical skills in specific health care occupations was a high priority among companies that participated in the Industry Partnerships Project. As members of a contracting industry, by contrast, manufacturers were unlikely to face a shortage of workers who possessed the technical competencies needed to keep plant operations running smoothly.

In addition, health care workers sent a greater number of employees to basic skills courses, and those employees spent much more time, on average, in those courses than did workers in manufacturing. As Table 1 shows, more than twice as many health care employees participated in basic skills training, logging an average of 48 hours in these courses, compared to just ten hours for manufacturing workers. This difference can be attributed largely to Foundations for Health Care, a comprehensive, 51-hour basic skills course offered to health care workers. By comparison, the basic skills courses taken by manufacturing employees were of much shorter duration, with none exceeding a total of nine hours.

The picture for academic/employability skills is different, as Table 1 illustrates. Ten manufacturing companies utilized courses in this category, as opposed to just two health care firms. Manufacturers sent a total of 24 workers to academic/employability skills training, while just five health care employees attended. Taken together, employees in each industry spent just eight hours, on average, in these courses.

Although soft skills courses were extremely popular in both sectors — 75 percent of all employees sent to training attended soft skills courses — Table 1 makes it clear that manufacturers made much more extensive use of these courses than did health care firms. In fact, 69 percent of all incumbent workers attending soft skills courses came from manufacturing, and fully 85 percent of all manufacturing employees who were trained attended classes in this skill category. This suggests that, despite workforce attenuation, manufacturing firms were willing to invest in building employees' interpersonal and leadership skills — a critical strategy for successfully promoting from within. Indeed, in personal interviews, HR representatives consistently stressed the need for soft skills to supplement the technical abilities of workers in supervisory jobs.

In both health care and manufacturing, larger numbers of employees attended soft skill courses than basic or technical skills courses. However, workers in the two industries combined spent just 11 hours, on average, in soft skills training — far less time than they spent, on average, in basic (22 hours) or technical (59 hours) skills courses, but slightly more than they spent in academic/employability skills courses (8 hours). Nearly all soft skills courses were offered as a series of distinct modules, and many workers took just a few modules in a particular series.

Noticeable Gains from Worker Training

Final survey data make clear that employers in health care and manufacturing found training very effective at improving employee job performance, productivity, and in particular, confidence. For example, as Table 2 shows, 96 and 93 percent of employer respondents indicated that technical and soft skills training, respectively, boosted employee confidence, while 83 percent said this was the case for workers who took basic skills courses.

The sentiments of one manufacturer summarized the importance of improved confidence among employees:

“Training builds confidence and helps employees achieve company goals as well as personal goals. The return on investment outweighs the time they are away from the job. Employees make that time up through their increased ability to perform on the job.”

Table 2 also makes clear that employers saw a noticeable improvement in job performance among workers who attended Industry Partnerships Project training. This was particularly the case for health care organizations that utilized technical skills courses; 93 percent of them agreed that this type of training boosted employees’ performance on the job. There was also strong agreement among health care firms that technical skills training improved workers’ productivity, with 71 percent of industry respondents indicating this was the case.

In comparison with health care firms, a smaller share of manufacturers saw improvement in employees’ job performance and productivity as a result of technical skills training (77 and 62 percent, respectively). However, employers in the two sectors reported similar outcomes among workers completing basic skills courses. Further, with the exception of job performance, where a higher proportion of health care firms reported gains from soft skills training, health care and manufacturing employers witnessed improved outcomes for employees who learned soft skills at about equal rates.

Table 2

Employer Satisfaction with Training, by Major Type

	Basic Skills			Technical Skills			Soft Skills		
	Health	Mfg	Total	Health	Mfg	Total	Health	Mfg	Total
# of respondents	6	12	18	14	13	27	16	25	41
% agreeing that training improved workers’:									
Job performance	80%	75%	72%	93%	77%	85%	81%	64%	78%
Productivity	80	67	67	71	62	67	69	76	66
Confidence	100	75	83	100	92	96	94	92	93
% agreeing their firm would pay for training in future									
	60%	67%	61%	43%	69%	55%	69%	72%	71%

Note: Workers may have taken more than one type of class.

Course Accessibility

Employers are more likely to value training if they can see measurable improvement in workers' performance on the job. It is also critical that training be provided in ways that are convenient and easily accessible. From the perspective of employers, flexibility in course scheduling, location, and format were key to making the Industry Partnerships Project a success.

Scheduling

In both health care and manufacturing, course scheduling presents a major obstacle to training. When training takes place during the work shift, it can be difficult for employers to find workers who can cover for absent staff. On the other hand, when training occurs on "off" hours, workers may be unable or unwilling to attend on their own time. Employers expressed high levels of satisfaction with the scheduling of courses offered through the project. When asked in follow-up course assessments whether the course schedule had been convenient for their organization, 75 out of 76 HR representatives (99 percent) said yes.

Location

The ability to get to training is a critical issue. Many employers are understandably reluctant to send workers to training if they must travel long distances and lose additional work time, and workers are less likely to be willing to put in extra time for training if a long commute is involved. The project catered to participating employers by holding classes in multiple locations and in sites that were accessible to a large number of participants. For example, the Legal Issues for Supervisors series was offered in both Dane and Sauk counties, and Foundations for Health Care was offered in Columbia, Dane, and Jefferson counties. When asked in follow-up course assessments whether the course location was convenient for their organization, 74 out of 77 respondent employers (96 percent) said yes.

Format

To make training even more accessible, a number of courses were organized into a series of short modules, usually three or four hours in length, that were offered over a period of six to ten weeks. Since attendance at every module in a given series was not required, employers were able to match workers to the specific modules most relevant to their needs. Of the 41 unique courses offered, 12 consisted of a series of modules.

One of the difficulties faced during the Industry Partnerships Project was limited space in training courses. Course registration was offered on a first-come, first-served basis, but employers could only send a certain number of employees to a given course. Of the employers that responded to a follow-up survey question about sending more people to training, 21 out of 74 (28 percent) indicated that they had wanted to send someone to a course but were unable to do so. When asked why they could not send the employee, seven out of the 21 (33 percent) reported that space was unavailable.

Growing Commitment to Training

Beyond providing one-time training opportunities at no cost, the project's institutional collaborators hoped to bolster employers' commitment to skill development and career advancement for incumbent workers. One important measure of this commitment is employers' willingness to cover the cost of training, similar to that offered through the project, in the future.

When asked in the final survey if they would consider paying for classes available under the Industry Partnerships Project, a majority of respondent employers said yes. The rate of positive responses varied according to skill type and sector, as Table 2 shows. Interestingly, nine out of 13 respondent manufacturers (69 percent) indicated a willingness to pay for technical skills courses in the future, while just six out of 14 (43 percent) of health care firms did so — despite the fact that health care firms utilized technical skills courses, and reported positive outcomes for employees who participated in them, at higher rates than did manufacturers. While the cost of offering technical skills courses may be prohibitive for many firms, the reason for the discrepancy between the two sectors is unclear. (Willingness to pay was not related to firm type or workforce size in either health care or manufacturing.)

Table 2 also shows that a majority of the health care and manufacturing employers we surveyed — 61 percent and 67 percent, respectively — would be willing to pay for basic skills courses similar to those offered under the project in the future.

Finally, it is apparent from Table 2 that, among respondents, soft skills training is the most likely candidate for further employer investment; 71 percent of all firms sending workers to soft skills training under the project expressed willingness to assume the cost of this type of training in the future. Recall that Table 1 shows large numbers of workers in both sectors receiving soft skills training, with a relatively short number of training hours per worker, on average. Unlike technical skills courses, soft skills courses do not require special equipment or much one-on-one instruction, and can be taught in just about any location. With the vast majority of final survey respondents agreeing that soft skills courses improved workers' confidence, performance, and productivity, it makes sense that employers would be most willing to pay for this type of training, where per-worker investment tends to be relatively light.

In addition to paying for training, nearly 40 percent of respondent firms (19 out of 51) indicated that they would offer courses available through the Industry Partnerships Project "in-house" — at their own worksite — in the future. When asked which category of training they would offer on-site, almost half (eight out of 19) cited soft skills training.

The Importance of Soft Skills Training

These data suggest particularly strong support for soft skills training. This is not surprising, given that in initial surveys of employers, respondents identified a strong need to boost workers' ability to lead, communicate, work as part of a team, and otherwise develop "people" skills. Some employees who attended soft skills training were being groomed for supervisory positions; many already held such positions, but needed training to smooth the rough edges in their management style so that they could communicate more effectively with those under their supervision.

The benefits of soft skills training were very clear to Tom Graves, Administrator at Maplewood of Sauk Prairie, a nursing home in Sauk County. In an interview, he noted: "We have a lot of people who are really good at what they do, who have the personality to lead, but that isn't enough. They need to learn how to lead." His views were shared by Kevin Wallesar, Senior HR Administrator at Spacesaver, a storage systems manufacturer in Jefferson County: "If you haven't been taught supervisor skills, you don't just know them. You have to work at it, and it takes a lot of effort."

Several other employers we interviewed offered positive observations about the impact of soft skills training under the Industry Partnerships Project. Many consistently pointed to stronger communication skills as one of the most important improvements workers showed after training. "For each [worker sent to training], we have seen an increase in confidence," said Debbie Sidell of Humane Manufacturing. "They understand now... more of the detail of how to build a team, what do you do in a meeting," Managers at Central Wisconsin Center also noticed positive changes once employees were equipped with some formal soft skills training: "The tools they learned in the training are helping them do their jobs much better, with communication, how they communicate, how they interact with people," noted Terri Rankin.

Improved communication and management skills for supervisors can also improve retention among those who are being supervised. Humane Manufacturing's Debbie Sidell summed up the phenomenon this way: "Since training, our supervisors are less likely to quickly terminate someone, which has helped our retention." Although determining how many employees do not leave or are not fired from a firm is a tricky proposition, it is no mystery to HR personnel when a supervisor does a better job and the employees they supervise are more satisfied. Debbie noted that, since training, one employee "has become much more participative in terms of his management style. He is really willing to take a step back to figure out what he can do to make this employee-supervisor relationship work. We always try to monitor employee turnover, and I think this has made a real difference for us."

Thus, the positive effects of workforce training are not limited only to those who attended training themselves. Employees return from training with new skills and perspectives, which they often share with coworkers. This transfer of new knowledge is something employers hope will occur. As Jeni Risgaard, Training and Development Coordinator at Teel Plastics in Sauk County, said, "We want the people we send to training to come back and teach others, to have the information learned flow through our organization and breed enthusiasm for training." By sending even a fraction of their workforce to training, employers can reap gains across their entire staff, a process noted by Terry Wostal of Cellox Corporation: "Sending our supervisors to training pulls everyone else up because they are more effective leaders."

Some employers were so impressed with the tools their employees acquired in soft skills courses that they have incorporated elements of the training in-house or are requiring all new supervisors to attend specific courses. The following comments are illustrative:

"The soft skills training our staff attended in the area of cultural competence provided information and resources that [are] being shared with other staff and [have] been built into staff's core competencies." (Health care firm)

"We have instituted a policy of sending all newly promoted supervisors to a series of leadership courses." (Manufacturing firm)

A willingness to offer soft skills and other types of courses on-site and/or pay for classes that had been available for free under the Industry Partnerships Project indicates a commitment among employers to utilize training as a tool for employee development. When asked if their approach to employee development had changed as a result of participation in the project, a majority of employers responding to our final survey (57 percent) said yes. In their responses, many emphasized the importance of training:

"We more fully understand how important training and development are as a company such as ours grows." (Manufacturing firm)

"We are more proactive in looking for tools to help train and develop the skills needed." (Manufacturing firm)

"[Our participation in the project] gave us new ideas for training and development in new areas of the organization." (Health care firm)

"We will continue to promote a variety of training courses at [our company]." (Manufacturing firm)

"It helped to formalize a training process." (Health care firm)

As a result of the improved skills, increased confidence, and superior performance employees typically brought to their jobs after attending project-sponsored courses, most employers expressed a commitment to offering training in the future.

The Importance of Interfirm Networking

In addition to providing skills training, the Industry Partnerships Project enabled employers to come together to share industry knowledge and brainstorm solutions to common problems. Through both industry-specific and all-partnership meetings, health care and manufacturing firms had a number of opportunities to engage with one another over the course of the project.

Participating employers' impressions of engagement with other firms through these meetings were overwhelmingly positive. For example, 88 percent of final evaluation survey respondents (44 out of 50) agreed that sharing best practices with peer firms benefited her or his company. And when asked what was most beneficial about the various meetings held over the course of the project, 82 percent of respondents (36 out of 44) cited networking with other firms.

As employers exchange information about the challenges they face, discussion naturally turns to the solutions to these problems. Employers benefit from learning about other firms' approaches. Amy Jo Owen Gillingham, Manager of Administrative Services at ETC (Electronic Theatre Controls, Inc.), a theater lighting manufacturer in Dane County, summed up this benefit when she said, "ETC's partnership with JWF has offered a chance to share best practices, to learn from what others are doing, and to share resources and class space." Sue Spitz of Sunny Industries agreed. "I personally hate to reinvent the wheel. It is a total waste of time," she said. "If somebody has a policy or a way of doing something better and they are willing to share, I'll use it. I have no compunction about sharing with others. If I do something well, I am happy to share it. I mean, everybody is swamped. Why should we sit down and write policy after policy and labor over something that is already done?"

Not only did employers feel that working together was beneficial, but their experiences in the Industry Partnerships Project assuaged earlier fears about information-sharing or competition with peer firms. In phone interviews conducted at the outset of the project, 24 out of 68 organizations (35 percent) expressed concerns about working with other employers, including confidentiality, competing agendas, or addressing different needs. Final survey responses indicate that the project succeeded in alleviating these concerns, with the vast majority of respondents saying there were no disadvantages to partnering with other firms. A few respondents addressed the need to balance concerns about competition with the benefits of working together:

"Each company has something unique to offer its employees and it's time we stop feeling threatened about sharing that information. It can only make us better employers as we compete for the best employees." (Manufacturing firm)

"We need to maintain confidentiality, but I think this experience proved that it is possible to maintain that goal, but also to work together as businesses to the mutual benefit of our firms and the larger community." (Manufacturing firm)

Stronger Connections to Public-Sector Institutions

In addition to networking with one another, employers had the opportunity to connect with staff at local technical colleges, Job Centers, and the WDB through the Industry Partnerships Project. At the outset of the project, most participating employers were not fully aware of the workforce development resources available to them through these institutions. In fact, initial employer surveys found that less than one-quarter of the 54 responding firms knew of the public-sector resources available to them, and that fewer still felt that a good working relationship existed between their firm and these institutions (see Table 3).

Clearly, firms' knowledge about and relationships with these institutions was anemic prior to the Industry Partnerships Project. Our final survey of employers indicates vast improvement on both counts. Table 3 shows that, of 52 employers responding to our final survey, 80 percent or more gained a better understanding of the resources available to them through area technical colleges, Job Centers, and the WDB. Relationships between employers and these agencies also improved markedly over the course of the project as well.

Employers' ties to the technical college system, in particular, showed great improvement. At the start of the project, the technical colleges received low marks from employers, who complained that course curricula did not meet their needs, that classes were offered at inconvenient times or locations, and that the system's bureaucracy was difficult to navigate. By the end of the DOL grant period, 71 percent of final survey respondents felt that their relationship with the technical colleges had improved.

Table 3

Employer Links to Public-Sector Institutions

	Technical Colleges	Job Centers	WDB
Initial Survey (April 2003)			
% of respondents agreeing with following statement:			
I understand the resources offered to my firm by the:	7%	23%	16%
I feel there is a good working relationships between my firm and the:	7%	16%	9%
Final Survey (October 2004)			
% of respondents agreeing with following statement:			
I gained a better understanding of the resources offered to my firm by the:	92%	87%	80%
Over the duration of the project there was improvement in the relationship between my firm and the:	71%	52%	64%

Reflecting on her company's experience, Ann Stefonik, HR representative at Non-Metallic Components (a Columbia County manufacturer) noted, "We have a much better sense of what MATC has to offer us, and not having to fill a whole class really made it work for us." This sentiment was echoed by HR representatives at Central Wisconsin Center: "We learned a lot. We didn't know MATC partnered with companies to work out specialized trainings that would meet our needs. Although we don't utilize them right now, I think it is important for us to know what MATC has to offer. If we do use them in the future, we will know what is out there for us."

Final survey data make clear that the Industry Partnerships Project also served as a bridge between employers and Job Center staff. For example, Terry McGinnity, Administrator at Lodi Good Samaritan Center, a long-term care facility in Columbia County, felt his company's needs would be better served in the future because of relationships forged with area Job Centers during the project: "The Job Centers have always been a source of potential employees for us, but now that we have worked with them up close I feel like they will be even more responsive to our needs."

Under the project, relationships between employers and the WDB were also strengthened. Sue Spitz of Sunny Industries noted that just knowing whom to call is useful. Speaking about the WDB, she said: "The best thing that the partnership does is it opens up your resource avenue. And you have met the person. It's not like just calling up the Department of Workforce Development and talking to someone you have never met before."

Marilee Crosby of Cardinal Glass summed up the benefits of developing relationships with public-sector institutions:

"Getting to know people at the WDB and MATC, and hearing what they're working on, and learning what is happening across the country, has inspired and challenged us. It has also given us connections to meet some of our needs in the future. I am so grateful to have had a chance to interact with people who are 'in the know' about state dollars and training in industry. What an invaluable asset to be able to connect with them."



Lasting Impacts

The Industry Partnerships Project succeeded in addressing the key training challenges of its participating employers by offering relevant and accessible training, providing a forum for networking among employers, and building relationships between firms and regional workforce development institutions. New methods of delivering training were developed, employers bought into the concept of working collaboratively, and area workforce development organizations and employers worked together more efficiently.

For a majority of participating firms, the combination of worker training and networking offered through the project was very useful. Fully 76 percent of final survey respondents indicated that the project helped their organization meet its key human resource and training challenges. Nearly three-quarters of respondent employers agreed that project training enhanced their employees' job performance, while 86 percent indicated that the project improved their knowledge of the resources available to them through local workforce development institutions.

Based on these positive experiences, employers that participated in the Industry Partnerships Project intend to continue working collaboratively. Out of 51 final survey respondents, 82 percent said they are more likely to pursue shared training because of their involvement in the project, while fully 90 percent said they were more apt to collaborate on projects with industry peers. Not surprisingly, then, 94 percent of responding employers indicated that they will continue to participate in Jobs With a Future, which will act as the locus for coordinating industry and institutional partners going forward.

Appendix 1

Industry Partnerships Project, Participating Employers

Company Name	Industry	County
Agnesian Healthcare	Health care	Dodge
Alta Genetics	Manufacturing	Jefferson
Apache Stainless Equipment Corp.	Manufacturing	Dodge
B&G Food	Manufacturing	Dane
Beaver Dam Care Center	Health care	Dodge
Beaver Dam Community Hospital	Health care	Dodge
Bethesda Lutheran Homes	Health care	Jefferson
Black Hawk Senior Residence	Health care	Jefferson
Briggs & Stratton	Manufacturing	Jefferson
Capitol Warehousing	Manufacturing	Dane
Cardinal Glass	Manufacturing	Columbia
Cartonplast	Manufacturing	Dane
Central Wisconsin Center	Health care	Dane
Christian Home and Rehabilitation	Health care	Dodge
Clack Corp.	Manufacturing	Dane
Columbia Health Care Center	Health care	Columbia
Columbia ParCar Corp.	Manufacturing	Sauk
Columbus Community Hospital	Health care	Columbia
Community Living Alliance	Health care	Dane
Community Living Connections, Inc.	Health care	Dane
ConAgra Foods, Inc.	Manufacturing	Dodge
Country Nurses, Inc.	Health care	Jefferson
Countryside Home	Health care	Jefferson
Custom Care	Health care	Dane
Dane County Home Care Registry	Health care	Dane
Dean Health Systems	Health care	Dane
Del Monte Foods	Manufacturing	Columbia
Divine Savior Health Care	Health care	Columbia
Electronic Theatre Controls, Inc.	Manufacturing	Dane
Evco Plastics	Manufacturing	Dane
Fiskars Brands, Inc.	Manufacturing	Sauk
Flambeau Plastics	Manufacturing	Sauk
Fort Atkinson Memorial Health Services	Health care	Jefferson
Gerber Products	Manufacturing	Sauk
Grede Foundries	Manufacturing	Sauk
Group Health Cooperative HMO	Health care	Dane
Hammond Power Solutions	Manufacturing	Sauk
Hope Health and Rehabilitation	Health care	Dodge
Humane Manufacturing	Manufacturing	Sauk
Independent Living, Inc.	Health care	Dane
ITW Paslode	Manufacturing	Columbia
Jefferson County Countryside Home	Health care	Jefferson
L.A. Darling Company	Manufacturing	Dane
Lands' End	Manufacturing	Sauk
Legacy Gardens of Madison	Health care	Dane
Lodi Good Samaritan Center	Health care	Columbia
Madison (City of), Dept. of Public Health	Health care	Dane
Maplewood of Sauk Prairie	Health care	Sauk
Maysteel	Manufacturing	Dodge
Mayville Engineering Co.	Manufacturing	Dodge
Medical Associates	Health care	Sauk

Company Name	Industry	County
Meriter Health Services	Health care	Dane
Meriter Retirement Services	Health care	Dane
Metal Container Corp.	Manufacturing	Jefferson
Middleton Village Nursing and Rehabilitation Center	Health care	Dane
Milwaukee Valve	Manufacturing	Sauk
Montello Care Center	Health care	Marquette
NASCO	Manufacturing	Jefferson
Nazareth House	Health care	Dane
Nestlé Purina PetCare	Manufacturing	Jefferson
Non-Metallic Components	Manufacturing	Columbia
Northland Home Health	Health care	Marquette
Opportunities, Inc.	Manufacturing	Jefferson
Our House I, II & III Assisted Living	Health care	Marquette
Penda Corp.	Manufacturing	Columbia
Perry Judd's, Inc. – Baraboo Division	Manufacturing	Sauk
Pivot Point Inc.	Manufacturing	Dodge
Placon Corp.	Manufacturing	Dane
Plastic Ingenuity	Manufacturing	Dane
Pleasant Company	Manufacturing	Dane
Prairie Clinic, S.C.	Health care	Sauk
Reedsburg Area Medical Center	Health care	Sauk
Reedsburg Physicians Group	Health care	Sauk
RFDF, Inc.	Health care	Dane
Robbins Manufacturing	Manufacturing	Columbia
Royle Communications Group	Manufacturing	Dane
Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics	Manufacturing	Columbia
Seats, Inc.	Manufacturing	Sauk
Spacesaver Corp.	Manufacturing	Jefferson
St. Coletta of Wisconsin	Health care	Jefferson
St. Mary's Hospital Medical Center	Health care	Dane
Stoughton Hospital	Health care	Dane
Stroh Controls	Manufacturing	Juneau
Sunny Industries	Manufacturing	Dane
SYSCO	Manufacturing	Sauk
Teel Plastics	Manufacturing	Sauk
The Wisconsin Cheeseman	Manufacturing	Dane
TriEnda	Manufacturing	Columbia
TW Design and Manufacturing	Manufacturing	Marquette
Twin Rivers Assisted Living, LLC	Health care	Jefferson
UW Health	Health care	Dane
UW Hospital and Clinics	Health care	Dane
Valley Packaging	Manufacturing	Dane
Watertown Area Health Services	Health care	Jefferson
Webcrafters, Inc.	Manufacturing	Dane
William S. Middleton Memorial VA Hospital	Health care	Dane
YWCA Employment and Training Annex	Health care	Dane

Appendix 2

Industry Partnerships Project, Training Courses

Basic Skills

- ESL Math Measurement
- Foundations for Health Care
- Key to Writing
- Key to Writing/Basic Computer Skills

Academic/Employability Skills

- Gen Ed: Algebra Concepts
- Gen Ed: Intro to College Math
- Gen Ed: Windows 2000
- Gen Ed: Keyboarding
- Gen Ed: College Success
- Gen Ed: Communication Skills I
- Gen Ed: Contemporary American Society
- Gen Ed: Psychology of Human Relations
- Gen Ed: Communication Skills II
- International Computer Drivers License
- Introduction to Computers

Technical Skills: Health Care*

- Aspects of Aging
- Body Structure and Function
- Certified Nursing Assistant
- Community-Based Residential Facility
- Health Unit Coordinator
- Medical Terminology
- Medication Assistant
- Phlebotomy

Technical Skills: Manufacturing

- Advanced Electrical Maintenance
- Blueprint Reading
- Electrical Controls
- Fluid Power
- Programmable Logic Controllers
- Technical Math

Soft Skills

- Aligning for Workplace Success
- Business Writing I
- Business Writing II
- Customer Service
- Diversity and Change Management
- Leadership, Problem Solving, and Meetings
- Leadership Development
- Legal Issues for Supervisors
- Supervisory Human Resources Skills
- Team Building and Problem Solving
- Workplace Motivation and Morale (FISH)
- Workplace Motivation and Morale (Whale Done)

* An online Mammography course was also offered; it is not included here, however, because it was ongoing when the DOL grant period ended on October 30, 2004.

Jobs With a Future Partnership Center on Wisconsin Strategy

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