

Letter Report

Educational Programs for Working Adults

August 2011



Legislative Audit Bureau

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Joe Chrisman
Interim State Auditor

August 18, 2011

Senator Robert Cowles and
Representative Samantha Kerkman, Co-chairpersons
Joint Legislative Audit Committee
State Capitol
Madison, Wisconsin 53702

Dear Senator Cowles and Representative Kerkman:

As requested by the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, we have completed an evaluation of educational programs for working adults within the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS). Full-time equivalent enrollment increased 16.9 percent from fiscal year (FY) 2007-08 through FY 2009-10. WTCS attributes the increase to an increase in the number of new students, as well as students enrolling in more credit hours.

To help meet the local needs for the occupational education, training, and re-training of working adults, 31.8 percent of associate degree courses held in the Spring 2010 semester by the 16 technical college districts were scheduled after 5:00 p.m. or on weekends, or were available as online courses. Twenty-one associate degree programs are offered entirely online, and the number of online associate degree courses increased 46.4 percent over the six-semester period we reviewed, reaching 2,822 in Spring 2010. Current district policies allow other educational institutions to provide training and occupational programming in rented district facilities, which may help improve access to needed services. However, we include a recommendation for district boards to determine whether such programming could be offered by the technical colleges.

In June 2010, 259,643 individuals were unemployed, including some who were dislocated from their employment as a result of plant closings or mass layoffs. Some dislocated workers are eligible for training services funded by two federal programs, the Workforce Investment Act and the Trade Adjustment Assistance program. We estimated 7,000 students in the technical colleges were supported by these two programs in FY 2009-10. However, given the uncertainty of future federal funding levels and the likelihood of continued demand for training services, we include recommendations for updating information on funding, training needs, and employment outcomes after training.

We appreciate the courtesy and cooperation extended to us by WTCS, the 16 technical college districts, and the Department of Workforce Development.

Sincerely,

Joe Chrisman
Interim State Auditor

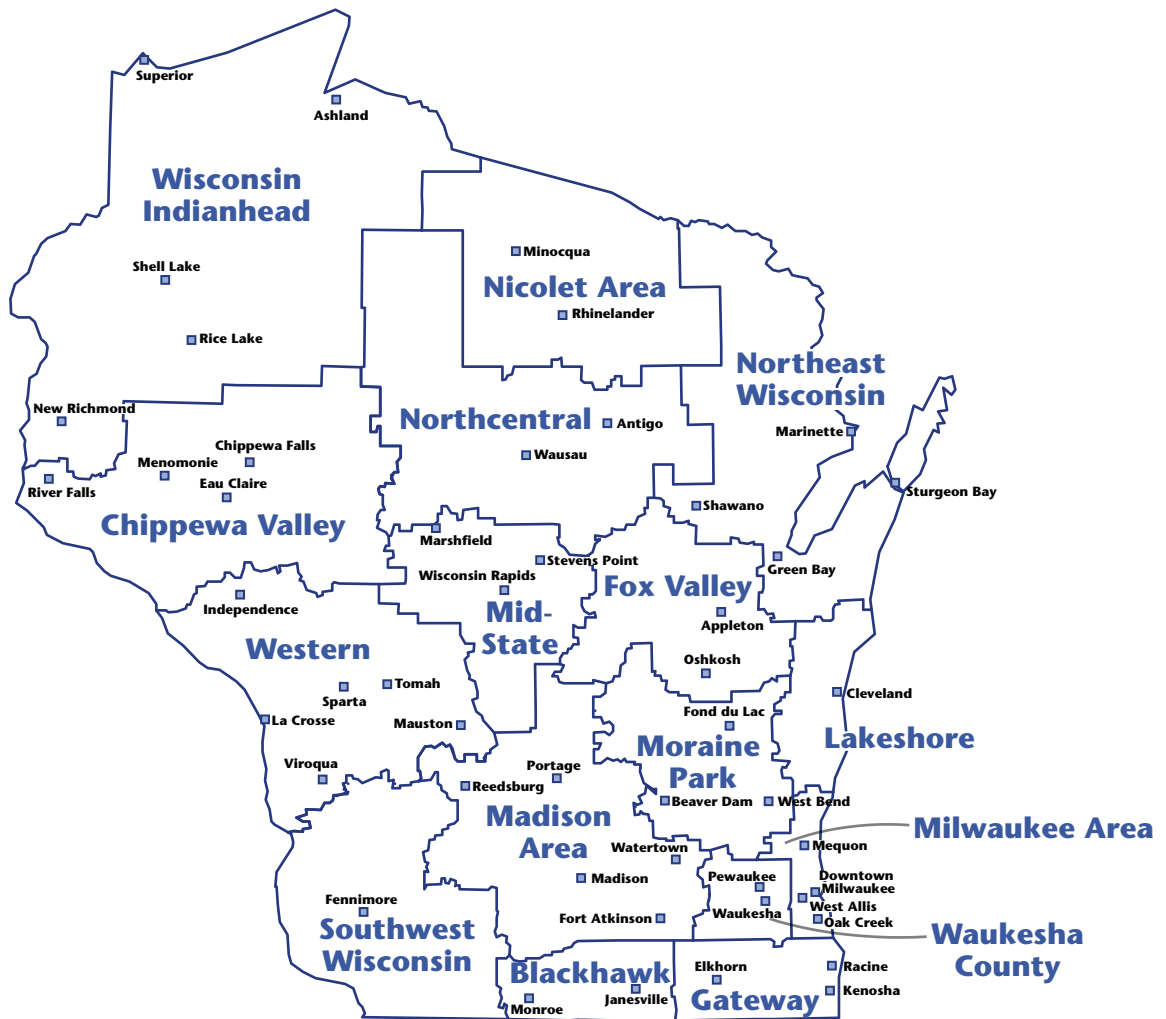
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EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR WORKING ADULTS

The Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) includes 16 technical college districts, each of which delivers education through occupational skills training below the baccalaureate level and is governed by a local board. Figure 1 shows the districts and 49 campus locations.

Figure 1

WTCS Districts and Campus Locations



Statutes prescribe the duties and structure of the State's 13-member Technical College System Board, which include setting uniform rates for tuition and fees and supervising district operations through reporting and audit requirements. WTCS policy requires districts to

develop occupational programs with guidance from WTCS staff and input from program advisory committees made up of employers and employees from related business and industry. Districts design program content to meet area employers' needs and to assist persons preparing for entry into, remaining in, or advancing in an occupation. The System Board and a district's local board must approve proposals for new programs before the district may begin implementation.

Enrollment in technical colleges decreased from 390,272 students in FY 2007-08 to 382,006 students in FY 2009-10. Many students are enrolled on a part-time basis, and WTCS uses full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment for its reporting and audit requirements. Each FTE student represents enrollment in 30 credit hours per year. As shown in Table 1, FTE enrollment during the three-year period increased 16.9 percent. WTCS officials note this is an indication of an increase in the number of new students as well as students enrolling in more credit hours in FY 2009-10 than in FY 2007-08.

Table 1
WTCS FTE Student Enrollment

District	FY 2007-08	FY 2008-09	FY 2009-10	Percentage Change
Blackhawk	1,905	2,358	2,915	53.0%
Chippewa Valley	4,623	4,407	4,575	(1.0)
Fox Valley	6,101	6,486	7,413	21.5
Gateway	4,833	5,188	5,984	23.8
Lakeshore	2,073	2,242	2,660	28.3
Madison Area	9,428	9,605	10,812	14.7
Mid-State	2,096	2,287	2,564	22.3
Milwaukee Area	12,573	13,464	14,618	16.3
Moraine Park	3,094	3,233	3,648	17.9
Nicolet Area	1,062	1,093	1,211	14.0
Northcentral	2,951	3,167	3,692	25.1
Northeast Wisconsin	6,504	6,677	7,453	14.6
Southwest Wisconsin	1,595	1,617	1,740	9.1
Waukesha County	4,114	4,249	4,832	17.5
Western	3,757	3,783	4,137	10.1
Wisconsin Indianhead	2,921	2,933	3,148	7.8
Total	69,630	72,789	81,402	16.9

Concerns have been raised regarding the number of technical college courses offered during the evening because these courses are important to working adults. Questions have also been raised

about efforts taken by WTCS to respond effectively to the needs of dislocated workers or others negatively affected by the economic recession. Therefore, at the direction of the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, we analyzed scheduling policies and practices within WTCS, including the time of day and format in which courses were held; the policies and practices of technical college districts in renting district facility space to other educational organizations; and services available to dislocated workers. We interviewed staff at the WTCS office and in each of the 16 districts. In addition, we interviewed staff and obtained data from the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) and spoke with local workforce development board staff.

Course Offerings

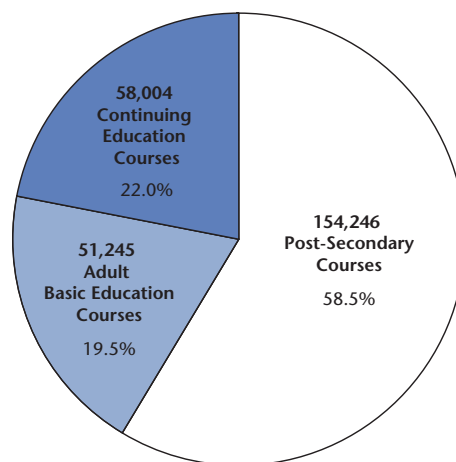
The technical college system provides occupational education, training, and re-training that enables students to obtain knowledge and skills for employment in technical, paraprofessional, skilled, or semiskilled occupations. These courses are often referred to as post-secondary courses, which are above high school level and include associate degree, technical diploma, and apprenticeship courses.

The technical college system also provides adult basic education courses in order to prepare students for post-secondary coursework, as well as continuing education courses. These courses may enhance an individual's employability, but they are not necessarily part of degree or diploma programs and include courses as varied as introductory courses for word processing, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and responsible beverage service.

Using data provided by the technical colleges, we analyzed courses held from Fall 2007 through Spring 2010. We identified 263,495 courses that were available to the general public and note that 58.5 percent were post-secondary courses, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Technical College Courses Fall 2007 through Spring 2010



In order to determine the accessibility of technical college district courses to individuals who work during traditional business hours, we reviewed evening courses that started at 5:00 p.m. or later, courses held on weekends, and those that were delivered entirely using online content. As shown in Table 2, the percentage of courses delivered in the evening, on weekends, or online varied by course type. Among post-secondary and adult basic education courses, associate degree courses were the most accessible to adults working a traditional schedule. For example, 32.0 percent of associate degree courses were held in the evening, on weekends, or online, compared to only 16.1 percent of adult basic education courses.

Table 2
Daytime, Evening/Weekend, and Online Course Offerings
 Fall 2007 through Spring 2010

Course Type	Daytime		Evening ¹ /Weekend	Online	Combined Percentage
	Number	Percentage	Number	Number	
Post-Secondary					
Associate Degree	85,416	68.0%	24,239	15,901	32.0%
Technical Diploma	19,996	82.2	3,725	595	17.8
Apprenticeship	3,874	88.6	470	30	11.4
Adult Basic Education	43,015	83.9	7,781	449	16.1
Continuing Education	29,320	50.5	28,181	503	49.5

¹ Evening courses begin at 5:00 p.m. or later.

We combined evening and weekend courses in our analyses, as both had in-person attendance requirements but were likely available to adults working traditional business hours. Evening courses represented 85.5 percent of those in the combined category.

The technical college districts have other delivery methods that may increase access for working adults, including open classrooms, independent studies, and clinical and internship courses. Districts reported that open classrooms are available to students during various daytime, evening, and weekend hours and that they are staffed by an instructor who assists students as requested. Required course times for independent studies and for clinical and internship courses are typically arranged by the course liaison and the student. We note, however, that we categorized courses delivered through these other methods as daytime courses because we could not verify that they did not have daytime attendance requirements and districts varied in how they recorded course information. Some course types may lend themselves to these flexible scheduling methods more than others. For example, at Lakeshore 76.8 percent of adult basic education courses were held through these flexible methods compared to 8.6 percent of associate degree courses.

Associate degree courses, which lead to two-year degrees, represent 81.4 percent of post-secondary courses statewide, and at least 73.5 percent of courses at each of the technical college districts. To the extent these courses are held only during traditional business hours, many working adults will be challenged to complete degree programs without altering their work schedules. Therefore, we reviewed the availability of associate degree courses for working adults in more detail.

The technical college districts increased the number of associate degree courses statewide by 13.2 percent from the Fall 2007 semester through the Spring 2010 semester. As noted, FTE enrollments increased 16.9 percent over this period. As shown in Table 3, while daytime courses continue to be the most common scheduling choice, the districts increased the number of courses held online during this period from 1,928 to 2,822, or by 46.4 percent.

Table 3

Associate Degree Courses Held by Semester¹
Fall 2007 through Spring 2010

Semester	Daytime	Evening ² /Weekend	Online	Total
Fall 2007	12,986	3,850	1,928	18,764
Spring 2008	12,914	3,861	2,219	18,994
Fall 2008	13,162	3,639	2,202	19,003
Spring 2009	13,344	3,852	2,477	19,673
Fall 2009	14,102	3,797	2,478	20,377
Spring 2010	14,480	3,930	2,822	21,232

¹ Excludes summer courses.

² Evening courses begin at 5:00 p.m. or later.

As shown in Table 4, the technical college districts varied in the percentage of associate degree courses held in the evening, on weekends, or online during the Spring 2010 semester. For example:

- at 28.3 percent, Waukesha County held the largest percentage of associate degree courses in the evening or on weekends;
- at 44.6 percent, Gateway held the largest percentage of courses in the evening, on weekends, or online; and
- at 1,151 courses, Milwaukee Area held the most courses in the evening, on weekends, or online.

Table 4

**Associate Degree Courses Held by District
Spring 2010**

District	Daytime	Percentage	Evening ¹ /Weekend	Percentage	Online	Percentage
Blackhawk	522	74.7%	112	16.0%	65	9.3%
Chippewa Valley	843	79.9	120	11.4	92	8.7
Fox Valley	2,026	74.8	415	15.3	267	9.9
Gateway	785	55.4	375	26.5	256	18.1
Lakeshore	619	72.9	140	16.5	90	10.6
Madison Area	1,533	64.8	508	21.5	323	13.7
Mid-State	494	68.5	97	13.4	131	18.1
Milwaukee Area	1,707	59.7	674	23.6	477	16.7
Moraine Park	739	63.2	221	18.9	210	17.9
Nicolet Area	287	78.2	38	10.4	42	11.4
Northcentral	999	71.8	233	16.8	159	11.4
Northeast Wisconsin	1,325	60.4	488	22.3	380	17.3
Southwest Wisconsin	310	82.9	20	5.3	44	11.8
Waukesha County	587	63.1	263	28.3	80	8.6
Western	853	79.6	136	12.7	83	7.7
Wisconsin Indianhead	851	80.0	90	8.4	123	11.6

¹ Evening courses begin at 5:00 p.m. or later.

During the Spring 2010 semester, four districts—Mid-State, Nicolet Area, Southwest Wisconsin, and Wisconsin Indianhead—chose online scheduling more often than evening and weekend scheduling. For example, Mid-State held 18.1 percent of its associate degree courses online, compared to 13.4 percent in the evening or on weekends. Mid-State officials indicated to us that students expressed an interest in online course offerings and that online course formats often meet enrollment limits before the same course offered in-person. However, district officials noted that not all course content is well-suited to online presentation and that some students may prefer the traditional classroom environment. Many districts offer, and in some cases require, online orientation sessions for students enrolling in their first online course.

Scheduling Policies

Because statutes place operational authority for the technical colleges with the districts, there is no statewide policy regarding course scheduling. Operationally, once the System Board approves a district's request to offer a program and program curriculum is determined, the

district arranges for course delivery within its array of program offerings and available faculty and facility resources.

Gateway is the only district with a formal, written policy regarding course scheduling. However, all of the districts reported following a similar model for scheduling courses each semester. Generally, each educational department develops a course schedule that considers curriculum needs and faculty availability, specifies desired time and location for course offerings, and determines the method of course delivery. The departmental deans typically use data on past course enrollment, course sequencing, course waiting lists, and local employer needs to determine demand. In addition, each district solicits student feedback using satisfaction surveys. Districts stated they attempt to respond to student needs when scheduling courses. For example, Northeast Wisconsin stated that in response to student comments it is changing the length of its Fall and Spring semesters from 17 weeks to 15 weeks.

District scheduling staff typically compile departmental requests and prepare a district-level semester schedule, which is returned to the departments for review. Any necessary changes are made before the schedule is published for student registration. Faculty, space, and time constraints that affect scheduling vary among the technical college districts. For example, staff at Fox Valley, Gateway, Lakeshore, and Madison Area indicated classroom constraints have led to the addition of more flexible courses, such as online courses. All districts reported that course sections may be added or cancelled as demand is monitored throughout registration.

Program Review

Given the breadth of post-secondary offerings and the multiple scheduling criteria considered by district staff, we conducted a detailed review of course schedules for selected programs to understand the effects of scheduling decisions on students. In selecting programs, we considered:

- the number of program graduates, selecting programs with relatively larger numbers of graduates;
- the duration of the program, selecting both one- and two-year programs;
- programs associated with high growth projections in the number of job openings; and
- programs associated with occupations in areas of noted focus, including science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

We analyzed programs in six districts and determined whether required occupational-specific courses were accessible to individuals working traditional business hours. We reviewed technical college district Web sites to determine the courses required to complete selected programs and then identified the number of courses that were held in the evening, on weekends, or online from Fall 2007 through Spring 2010 for each of the selected programs.

Table 5 shows that while several districts might offer a particular program, they varied in their course delivery methods. For example, while Gateway and Milwaukee Area held all courses in the evening for the criminal justice-law enforcement program, the other four districts held between 58.8 percent and 92.9 percent of the required courses in the evening, on weekends, or online.

Table 5
Percentage of Required Courses Held Evenings, Weekends, or Online^{1, 2}
 Fall 2007 through Spring 2010

	Blackhawk	Chippewa Valley	Gateway	Mid-State	Milwaukee Area	Northeast Wisconsin
Associate Degree						
Criminal Justice-Law Enforcement	83.3%	92.9%	100.0%	58.8%	100.0%	71.4%
Air Conditioning, Heating, and Refrigeration Technology	92.9	72.2	92.9	–	85.7	0.0
Mechanical Design Technology	7.1	–	100.0	–	93.3	55.6
Nursing	0.0	56.3	68.8	37.5	62.5	62.5
One-Year Technical Diploma						
Dental Assistant	8.3	0.0 ³	16.7	–	57.1 ³	8.3
Welding	42.9	86.7	77.8	0.0	45.0	90.0

¹ Evening courses begin at 5:00 p.m. or later.

² Includes only the occupational-specific courses and excludes, for example, required general education courses.

³ The program may be completed in less than one year.

Consistent with scheduling practices they described, districts indicated they offer evening, weekend, or online courses when there is sufficient student interest and when faculty and facility resources are available. These considerations explain some of the variation among the districts. For example:

- Northeast Wisconsin indicated courses for the air conditioning, heating, and refrigeration technology program are not held in the evening because laboratory space needed for the program is occupied at that time by apprenticeship-related courses. However, the district noted it added a third daytime section of the program for the 2010-11 academic year in response to high student demand.
- Blackhawk offered only one of the required courses for the mechanical design technology program in the evening. A Blackhawk official stated the district does not have sufficient resources to offer all programs during the day and in the evening. In addition, it was noted the mechanical design technology program often enrolls recent high school graduates, who are able to attend daytime courses.

- Mid-State indicated there was insufficient student interest to have an evening section for the welding program and noted the welding shop is occupied in the evening by apprenticeship-related courses.

Compared to the other four programs in our analysis, the districts consistently offered fewer required courses for dental assistant and nursing programs in the evening, on weekends, or online. As was noted when this audit was requested, this scheduling choice is partly governed by scheduling constraints for required clinical experience courses, which place students in a professional setting to further develop their skills. District officials indicated clinical schedules are set by the clinical agencies, such as hospitals, and there are a limited number of evening clinical opportunities. However, all nursing theory courses were available in the evening or online at three of the six districts reviewed, and Blackhawk officials indicated two nursing theory courses are now available online. Mid-State officials noted that if the college does not offer a theory course online, students may take the course online through another district and transfer the credit to Mid-State.

In addition to offering evening, weekend, or online courses to increase accessibility for working adults, technical college districts noted that all courses for some programs are available entirely online. According to the 2010-11 *WTCS Guidebook*, 29 programs were offered entirely online in at least one technical college district, including 21 associate degree programs. For example, accounting, paralegal, and early childhood education associate degree programs are offered entirely online in at least one technical college district. Moraine Park offered nine programs entirely online, the most of any technical college district, and indicated that flexible scheduling methods are part of the district's focus on environmental sustainability by decreasing commuting times for students. Appendix 1 lists the programs offered entirely online by each district. Because online courses and programs may not be a good fit for every student, 23 of the 29 programs offered entirely online are also available in a traditional classroom setting in the same technical college district.

Rental Policies

Questions have been raised about the extent to which technical college districts may have been renting space to private educational organizations rather than scheduling their own courses in response to growing enrollment during the economic downturn. Section 38.14, Wis. Stats., permits technical college district boards to rent facility space not needed for school purposes. Because each board is responsible for establishing its own operational policies, we reviewed available policies related to facility rentals. We also requested data on facility rentals for the Fall 2007 through Spring 2010 semesters and focused our analysis on rental agreements with private educational institutions that are approved to operate by the State of Wisconsin Educational Approval Board. These institutions award trade, technical, and career-specific degrees, some of which are similar to those awarded by technical college districts.

Each of the technical college district boards except Southwest Wisconsin has adopted formal policies regarding renting campus facilities to other organizations. Typically, a policy will specify that the district will rent facility space only if it is not being used by the district. Nine of the 16 districts' facility rental policies indicate the purpose of a rental must not compete with the mission of or the services offered by the district.

While the districts varied in how frequently they rented space to other organizations, including those approved by the Educational Approval Board, they generally did so on a limited basis. However, four districts had more extensive histories of facility rentals to private educational institutions during the three-year review period:

- Gateway rented space to National Louis University and Upper Iowa University, generating \$32,300 in revenues. The two schools held 50 courses from April 2008 through June 2010, including 23 evening courses.
- Blackhawk rented classroom space for 150 evening courses as well as office space to Upper Iowa University, generating \$61,200 in revenues.
- Nicolet Area rented space to Upper Iowa University at no charge for 27 full-day weekend events, with the final event occurring in 2008.
- Northcentral reported classroom and office space rentals to Upper Iowa University. Although rental data for our review period were not readily available, we note that Upper Iowa University offered more than 15 courses in Northcentral facilities during March, April, and May 2011.

The facility rental policies adopted by the Blackhawk, Gateway, and Northcentral boards all prohibit rentals that would conflict with district academic or extracurricular activities. While the policy for Nicolet Area does not specify that rentals cannot compete with district services, Nicolet Area officials stated that first preference for rentals is given to organizations located within the district.

Of the 11 districts that rented space to educational institutions approved by the Educational Approval Board, 7 indicated these arrangements expand student and community access to higher education opportunities. However, in a review of Spring and Summer 2011 semester schedules, we found Upper Iowa University offered or planned to offer courses on a technical college campus that appear similar to those offered by the technical college, including:

- business and sociology courses at Gateway and Northcentral;
- a philosophy course at Gateway;
- a statistics course at Northcentral; and
- a computer introduction course at Blackhawk.

In each of these instances the technical colleges had established credit transfer agreements with Upper Iowa University, which agreed to accept certain technical college course credits. In addition, Upper Iowa University had previously agreed that it would offer only higher-level degree courses that are not offered by the technical college in Gateway facilities.

Officials at Blackhawk, Gateway, and Northcentral do not believe Upper Iowa University courses are competing with technical college courses. For example, Northcentral officials indicated Upper Iowa University may offer a similar course in district facilities if the district's own technical college course sections are full and additional sections cannot be offered. Consequently, these rental arrangements may promote access to higher education. However, officials at Blackhawk, Gateway, and Northcentral stated they do not review courses Upper Iowa University intends to offer in district facilities and were unaware of whether courses were similar to district courses. Technical colleges may be able to better meet the needs of students in the district by reviewing whether other educational organizations are renting technical college facilities and enrolling students in courses similar to those provided by the technical college.

Recommendation

We recommend each technical college district board review its facility rental policies and develop and implement procedures to determine whether educational programming offered by other educational institutions under those policies represents programming that could be offered by the district.

Services for Dislocated Workers

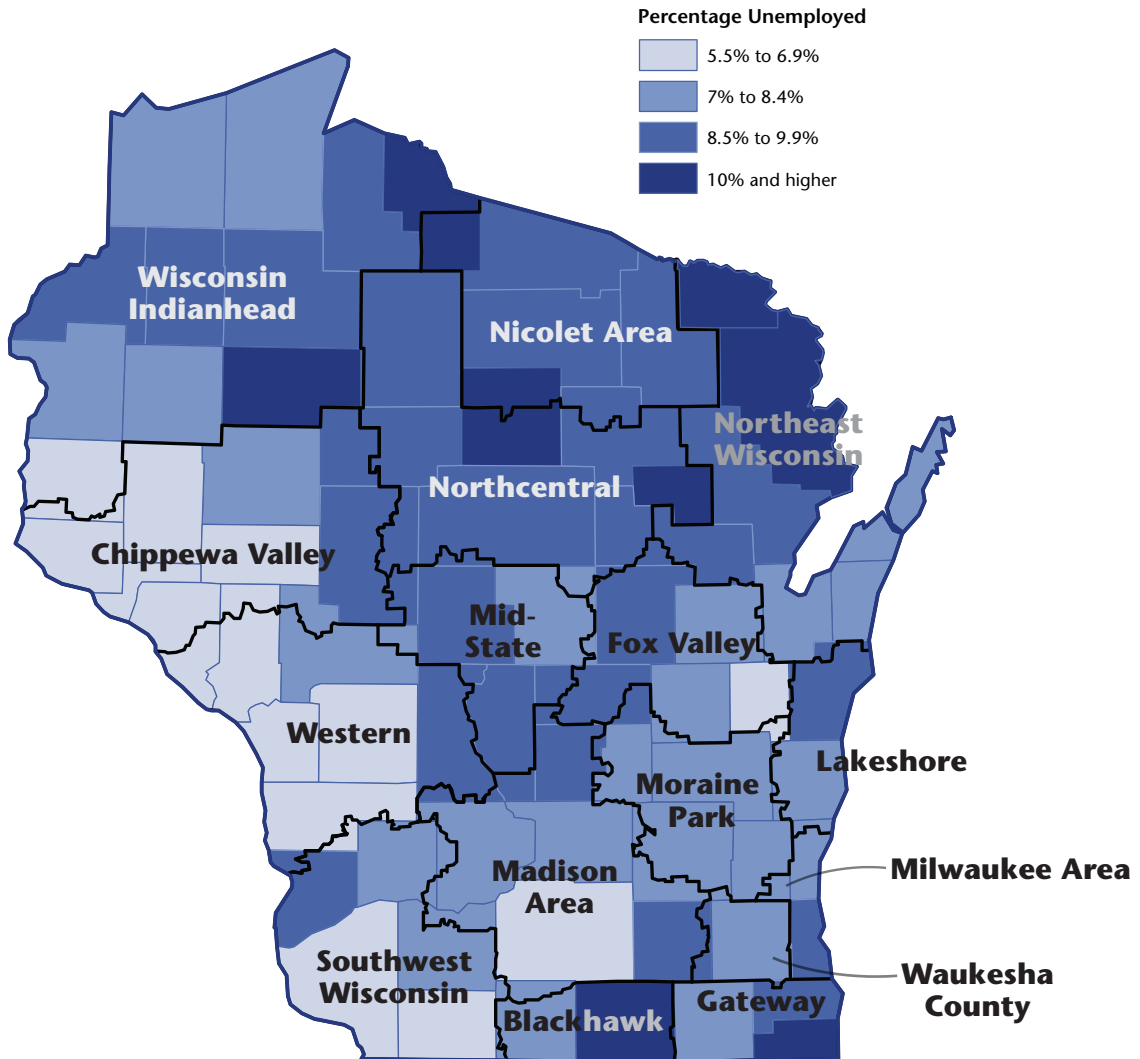
Technical college FTE enrollment has increased during the economic recession as residents sought to expand or update their skills in order to find employment. As noted, some increases may have been attributable to enrolled students registering for additional credits, others were likely attributable to the initial enrollment of newly unemployed adults. We reviewed services provided to dislocated workers by the technical college districts, focusing on training supported through two federal programs, the Workforce Investment Act and Trade Adjustment Assistance.

Assessing Demand for Services from the Technical College Districts

Statewide, unemployment increased from 4.7 percent in July 2007 to 8.4 percent in June 2010, representing an increase of 111,266 individuals and a total of 259,643 individuals. As shown in Figure 3, the unemployment rate in June 2010 varied considerably among Wisconsin's counties and technical college districts, exceeding 8.5 percent in many central and northern Wisconsin counties.

Figure 3

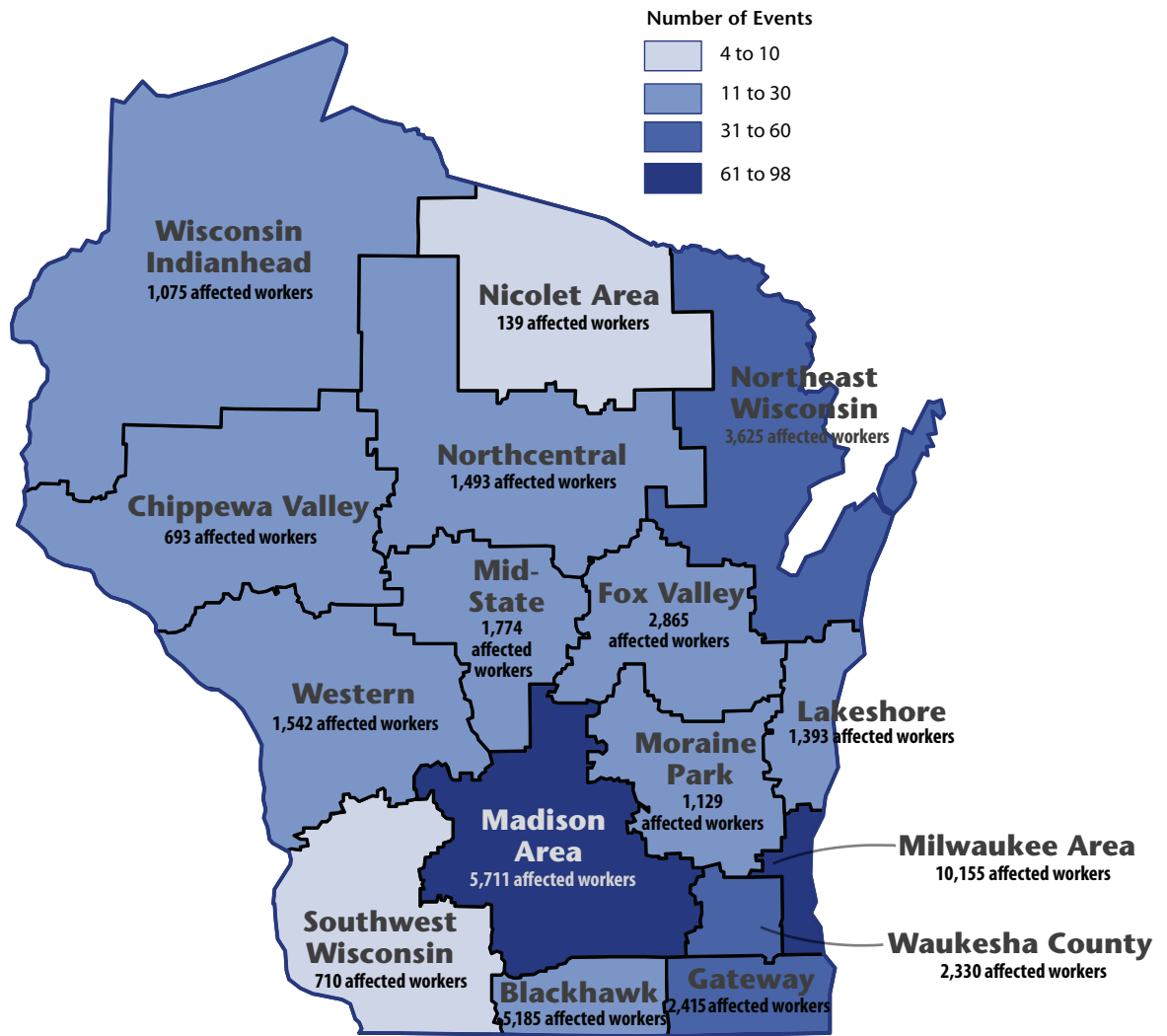
County Unemployment Rates
June 2010



Plant closures or mass layoffs may significantly affect unemployment rates, and statutes require employers of more than 50 individuals to notify the State of a closure or layoff prior to the event. From July 2007 through June 2010, DWD received notice of 481 plant closings or mass layoffs, affecting an estimated 42,521 workers. As shown in Figure 4, the largest numbers of workers affected by these events were in the Milwaukee Area, Madison Area, and Blackhawk technical college districts.

Figure 4

Plant Closings, Mass Layoff Events, and Worker Displacement¹
July 2007 through June 2010



¹ The location of six plant closings or mass layoff events that affected 287 workers could not be determined.

We conducted analyses to identify the number of individuals recently displaced from employment who have sought services from the technical college system. We found a uniform, consistent means of identifying displaced workers has not been established within the technical college system. Moreover, most measures that WTCS and district officials use for identification and estimating purposes are incomplete. For example, the districts are required to provide the WTCS office with self-reported work status information for students enrolled in post-secondary and adult basic education courses, with “unemployed” or “dislocated worker” as two self-reporting options; however, this information is not collected for students enrolled in

continuing education courses. Federal law defines a dislocated worker as a person who has been terminated or laid off and is unlikely to return to a previous occupation, or a person whose prior place of employment has permanently closed or has laid off a large number of people. Other federal definitions of dislocated worker apply to those who were self-employed but have experienced hardship as a result of general economic conditions and those who were dependent on income from another family member who no longer provides that support and who cannot find employment themselves.

As shown in Table 6, the number of enrolling students who self-identified as either “unemployed” or “dislocated worker” increased in 15 of the 16 districts. We note, however, that more than 25.0 percent of students in nine districts did not provide their work status.

Table 6
Enrollment of Self-Reported Unemployed or Dislocated Workers¹

District	FY 2007-08	FY 2008-09	FY 2009-10	Percentage Change
Blackhawk	1,340	2,091	2,425	81.0%
Chippewa Valley	1,148	772	671	(41.6)
Fox Valley	2,468	2,688	4,489	81.9
Gateway	1,867	2,027	6,015	222.2
Lakeshore	1,201	1,688	2,474	106.0
Madison Area	3,127	4,002	5,913	89.1
Mid-State	966	1,213	1,576	63.1
Milwaukee Area	5,544	6,449	6,011	8.4
Moraine Park	824	1,368	2,437	195.8
Nicolet Area	358	364	630	76.0
Northcentral	2,163	2,751	4,069	88.1
Northeast Wisconsin	3,293	3,439	4,643	41.0
Southwest Wisconsin	1,044	1,152	1,398	33.9
Waukesha County	1,678	1,968	2,175	29.6
Western	1,051	1,236	1,657	57.7
Wisconsin Indianhead	1,474	1,680	1,971	33.7
Total	29,546	34,888	48,554	64.3

¹ Shading indicates more than 25.0 percent of students did not provide their work status.

District officials identified ongoing programs or specialized services structured to meet the needs of recently unemployed adults, and some officials also identified new programming developed specifically for dislocated workers. For example:

- Lakeshore established a temporary office at a manufacturing plant that was scheduled to close. Lakeshore staff provided plant employees information about the district's educational programs, application and eligibility requirements, and some remedial skill training.
- Milwaukee Area is one of several service providers at the Help In Re-Employment Center in Milwaukee, which provides re-employment and retraining services for dislocated workers. Other service providers include the Milwaukee County Labor Council, Wisconsin Job Service, United Way of Greater Milwaukee, AFL-CIO Labor Education and Training Center, and the Milwaukee Workforce Development Board.
- Madison Area opened the Center for Adult Learning in 2009, in partnership with the Workforce Development Board of South Central Wisconsin and other organizations. The Center offers a variety of short-term career programs for dislocated workers, including business technology, medical reception, information technology, manufacturing, welding, patient care, dental assistant, accounting, insurance, quality management, supervisory management, and retail management. During the summer of 2011, eight workshops were available to dislocated workers considering enrollment in Madison Area Technical College.

Services heavily used by dislocated workers are open to all students. For example:

- 15 of the 16 technical college districts indicated many adults who have recently become unemployed need adult basic education courses and computer literacy training.
- Many districts also attributed an increase in the use of counseling services to an increase in enrollment by dislocated workers. For example, Western established a new career center in part to provide counseling services to the large number of displaced workers in the district. In contrast, some other districts, such as Chippewa Valley, indicated they have been able to meet the demands of dislocated workers within existing services available to all students.
- WTCS officials stated each of the 16 technical college districts offers training programs that combine adult basic education with required program coursework.

Workforce Investment Act and Trade Adjustment Assistance

Two federal programs provide financial support specifically for dislocated workers or persons who have lost their jobs as a result of international competition. The Workforce Investment Act and the Trade Adjustment Assistance program both fund training and other employment-related services, although their eligibility requirements vary. To analyze trends in technical college enrollment and service delivery supported by these programs, we reviewed state-level

program data maintained by DWD and reported to the federal government, as well as data available from the technical college districts.

The Workforce Investment Act allocates funding for dislocated workers to states based on a number of factors, such as their unemployment level relative to all other states, and supports a range of pre-employment “core” and “intensive” services, as well as training services. Core services include skills assessment and assistance with job search and placement. Intensive services include developing individualized employment plans and short-term training in skills such as communication and interviewing techniques for individuals unable to find employment after participating in core services. Core and intensive services are provided through Wisconsin’s job centers in cooperation with independently operated workforce development boards. Appendix 2 shows job center locations and workforce development board service areas. Training services are intended to be directly linked to local job needs and are for individuals who remain unemployed after participating in both core and intensive services. Training services may include adult education courses, occupational skills training, and skills upgrading, and technical college districts are among the authorized providers.

During our three-year review period, both expenditures and participation in the Workforce Investment Act dislocated worker program approximately doubled, as shown in Table 7. In FY 2008-09 and FY 2009-10, \$14.1 million provided through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act helped to fund expenditures.

Table 7

Workforce Investment Act Dislocated Worker Expenditures and Participation

	FY 2007-08	FY 2008-09	FY 2009-10	Percentage Change
Expenditures ¹	\$12,389,200	\$18,175,200 ²	\$24,518,400 ³	97.9%
Participants ⁴	6,824	10,763	14,266	109.1

¹ Workforce development board expenditures, excluding administrative costs.

² Includes \$307,400 in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds.

³ Includes \$13,770,800 in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds.

⁴ Individuals may have participated in multiple fiscal years.

As shown in Table 8, the number of dislocated workers who participated in training services through the Workforce Investment Act increased during our three-year review period.

Table 8

Participation in Training Services through the Workforce Investment Act¹

Fiscal Year	Dislocated Workers	Change
2007-08	2,192	-
2008-09	3,668	67.3%
2009-10	4,890	33.3

¹ Individuals may have participated in training services in multiple fiscal years.

The federal Trade Adjustment Assistance program also serves dislocated workers. Funding supports services for unemployed individuals who worked for an employer certified by the federal Department of Labor to have lost jobs because of an adverse effect of foreign trade. In Wisconsin, the Department of Labor contracts with DWD to administer the program, which provides training services, job search and relocation assistance, and extended unemployment benefits for eligible individuals receiving training services from an authorized provider. Expenditures for training have increased more rapidly than training participation, as shown in Table 9.

Table 9

Trade Adjustment Assistance Expenditures and Participation in Training

	FY 2007-08	FY 2008-09	FY 2009-10	Percentage Change
Expenditures ¹	\$8,512,800	\$13,650,100	\$21,840,200	156.6%
Participants ²	2,182	3,248	4,317	97.8%

¹ Includes training expenditures and excludes, for example, administrative and extended unemployment benefit costs.

² Individuals may have participated in training services in multiple fiscal years.

Trade Adjustment Assistance recipients are typically also eligible to receive Workforce Investment Act dislocated worker funding. In such instances, DWD staff indicated a dislocated worker generally receives core and intensive services funded by the Workforce Investment Act and training services funded by Trade Adjustment Assistance.

Training at the Technical Colleges

Based on data maintained by DWD, Wisconsin technical college districts enroll more than 70.0 percent of the dislocated workers participating in training funded by Workforce Investment Act dislocated worker and Trade Adjustment Assistance programs, and the estimated enrollment increased each year of our review period. In FY 2009-10, the two programs supported 3,563 and 3,344 technical college students, respectively. As shown in Table 10, the rate of enrollment increase was greatest at Blackhawk, where it was 351.8 percent. Milwaukee Area enrolled the largest number of dislocated workers in FY 2009-10, at 965.

Table 10

Estimated Dislocated Worker Enrollment¹

District	FY 2007-08	FY 2008-09	FY 2009-10	Change
Blackhawk	141	423	637	351.8%
Chippewa Valley	256	281	292	14.1
Fox Valley	316	507	649	105.4
Gateway	359	363	451	25.6
Lakeshore	284	461	671	136.3
Madison Area	198	214	564	184.8
Mid-State	125	271	320	156.0
Milwaukee Area	406	638	965	137.7
Moraine Park	218	308	528	142.2
Nicolet Area	24	21	33	37.5
Northcentral	150	286	435	190.0
Northeast Wisconsin	339	275	371	9.4
Southwest Wisconsin	196	287	322	64.3
Waukesha County	132	164	258	95.5
Western	74	113	252	240.5
Wisconsin Indianhead	173	188	253	46.2
Total	3,391	4,800	7,001	106.5

¹ Individuals may be counted more than once if they attended more than one technical college in a fiscal year or received funding through both the Workforce Investment Act dislocated worker and Trade Adjustment Assistance programs.

Technical college students whose training is funded by the federal programs we reviewed likely represent only a portion of all dislocated workers enrolled in WTCS. For example, Workforce Investment Act funding may be used only when other grant assistance, such as federal Pell Grants, is unavailable or the student requires assistance beyond what is provided by other grant programs. Additionally, individuals must enroll in training programs directly linked to

occupations that are in demand or have a high potential for sustained demand or growth in the local area. Therefore, individuals who qualify for other funding or who have enrolled in programs not related to local employer needs may not appear in dislocated worker data maintained by DWD.

While data maintained by DWD allowed us to determine Trade Adjustment Assistance funding amounts disbursed to the technical college districts, similar information was not readily available for Workforce Investment Act dislocated worker funding. However, in response to our request, technical college districts provided us with data related to Workforce Investment Act funding they received for dislocated workers who enrolled directly as individuals. Table 11 shows the estimated combined funding to train dislocated workers received by each technical college district during our three-year review period. Blackhawk and Milwaukee Area, two of the districts with the most workers affected by plant closings and mass layoffs, received the most funding.

Table 11

Estimated Training Funding
FY 2007-08 through FY 2009-10

District	Workforce Investment Act— Dislocated Worker	Trade Adjustment Assistance	Total
Blackhawk	\$ 1,563,000	\$ 2,835,000	\$ 4,398,000
Chippewa Valley	463,100	515,300	978,400
Fox Valley	1,099,600	2,110,300	3,209,900
Gateway	781,600	1,749,200	2,530,800
Lakeshore	917,000	2,167,200	3,084,200
Madison Area	378,800	472,800	851,600
Mid-State	780,100	788,900	1,569,000
Milwaukee Area	1,428,400 ¹	2,774,900	4,203,300
Moraine Park	1,080,500	1,989,600	3,070,100
Nicolet Area	97,500	48,500	146,000
Northcentral	1,078,600	761,600	1,840,200
Northeast Wisconsin	769,100 ¹	1,596,700	2,365,800
Southwest Wisconsin	216,700	1,351,600	1,568,300
Waukesha County	581,000 ²	635,100	1,216,100
Western	385,100	386,000	771,100
Wisconsin Indianhead	755,900 ²	799,900	1,555,800
Total	\$12,376,000	\$20,982,600	\$33,358,600

¹ FY 2007-08 data were not available.

² Includes Workforce Investment Act adult and youth funding.

While some dislocated workers enroll directly as individuals in technical college programs, others enroll through a group contract between a local workforce development board and a technical college district board. For example, the Waukesha-Ozaukee-Washington Workforce Development Board oversaw contracts with four technical colleges to provide welding training to 56 dislocated workers in FY 2007-08. Workforce development board staff noted these group contracts allow technical college districts to dedicate courses to dislocated workers. The funds for these group contracts are not reflected in Table 11 because contracts may include Workforce Investment Act adult funding in addition to dislocated worker funding; as a result, the funding totals are understated, particularly in districts with more contract activity.

Future Considerations for Dislocated Worker Training at the Technical Colleges

The technical colleges may reasonably expect heightened demand for services to continue as unemployment remains above 2007 levels. Funding levels increased for both the Workforce Investment Act and the Trade Adjustment Assistance program during the three-year period we reviewed. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and National Emergency Grants provided additional Workforce Investment Act funding for dislocated workers in areas that experienced large increases in unemployment. Although funding received through both programs may be spent in the fiscal year it is received or in the following two fiscal years, the combined total of approximately \$33.2 million available at the beginning of FY 2010-11 is less than the two programs' dislocated worker expenditures of \$46.4 million in FY 2009-10. Furthermore, an expansion of the Trade Adjustment Assistance Act that allowed for extended eligibility periods expired February 15, 2011, and the President's budget proposal for the federal fiscal year that begins October 1, 2011, includes reduced funding for the Workforce Investment Act.

In response to likely continued demand for services and the anticipated decline in federal funding, some workforce development boards have established waiting lists for intensive and training services. For example, during the three-year period of our review, nine workforce development boards reported using waiting lists to ensure that available funding is first directed to support core and intensive services, which must be received before training services are provided.

The federal Health Care and Education Rehabilitation Act signed into law on March 30, 2010, authorized \$2.0 billion through federal fiscal year 2013-14 for Community College and Career Training Grants, which provide funding to expand and improve the ability of two-year educational organizations to serve workers eligible for training under the Trade Adjustment Assistance program. Initial awards are to be determined by September 30, 2011, and will range from \$2.5 to \$5.0 million for individual institutions and from \$2.5 to \$20.0 million for consortia.

All 16 technical college districts have applied for Community College and Career Training Grants. As the districts continue to assess and serve dislocated workers' needs, timely information on the availability of additional federal funds may help to inform policy actions and the identification of fiscal priorities.

☑ Recommendation

We recommend the Technical College System Board report to the Joint Legislative Audit Committee by November 1, 2011, on:

- *initial award notifications received by technical college districts and district consortia through the Health Care and Education Rehabilitation Act; and*
- *strategies to evaluate educational and training needs of individuals who are seeking services and have recently become unemployed.*

Tracking Outcomes

We note the importance of collecting and reporting information on training and employment outcomes to ensure that training funds are being spent effectively and so that prospective participants can consider employment prospects when reviewing available training programs. In testimony before a congressional committee in April 2011, the United States Government Accountability Office also highlighted the need for improved performance data related to federally funded employment and training programs. The federal government currently requires states to report on the numbers of dislocated workers who exit the Workforce Investment Act and Trade Adjustment Assistance programs, as well as the percentages who find and retain employment.

As shown in Table 12, Wisconsin most recently reported employment retention rates after six to nine months that approached 90.0 percent for both programs. A larger percentage of individuals were employed within three months of exiting the Workforce Investment Act dislocated worker program. However, because some individuals receive services through both programs, it is difficult to attribute performance outcomes to participation in either program.

Table 12

Federally Reported Outcome Measures in Wisconsin

	Workforce Investment Act— Dislocated Workers ¹	Trade Adjustment Assistance ²
Individuals Exiting Program	3,114	1,064
Percentage Entering Employment within Three Months	80.4%	51.5%
Percentage Retaining Employment after Six to Nine Months	88.7%	87.6%

¹ July 1, 2009, through June 30, 2010.

² October 1, 2009, through September 30, 2010.

In addition to federally required outcome measures, DWD collects other training and employment outcome information in its case management system for Workforce Investment Act participants. DWD staff noted case managers are not required to record all outcome information and that sometimes information is improperly entered or omitted entirely from the system.

The available data show that from FY 2007-08 through FY 2009-10, 1,604 individuals funded with Workforce Investment Act funds completed programs at technical colleges. As shown in Table 13, while 778 of these individuals reported finding employment in a field related to their training, outcomes for 440 individuals had not been reported as of February 2011, more than six months after they completed their training.

Table 13

**Workforce Investment Act
Dislocated Worker Training Outcomes in WTCS
FY 2007-08 through FY 2009-10**

	Number of Individuals	Percentage of Total
Employment—Training Related	778	48.5%
Employment—Not Training Related	216	13.5
No Employment	170	10.6
Pending	440	27.4
Total	1,604	100.0%

Recommendation

We recommend the Department of Workforce Development report to the Joint Legislative Audit Committee by November 1, 2011, on employment outcomes for the 1,604 Workforce Investment Act–funded individuals who completed programs in the Wisconsin Technical College System from July 1, 2007, through June 30, 2010.

As noted, only a portion of federal dislocated worker funding supported training services at the technical college districts during our review period. The estimated \$33.4 million in training expenditures we reported in Table 11 are approximately 33.7 percent of the \$99.1 million expended through the two dislocated worker programs included in our analyses. The balance of expenditures likely supported other training services, as well as core and intensive services delivered by the workforce development boards. In the future, the Legislature may wish to consider further review of the services and funding provided by workforce development boards in collaboration with DWD and other employment and training programs.



Appendix 1

Post-Secondary Programs Offered Entirely Online

Program	Blackhawk	Chippewa Valley	Fox Valley	Gateway	Lakeshore	Madison Area	Mid-State	Milwaukee Area	Moraine Park	Nicolet Area	Northcentral	Northwest Wisconsin	Southwest Wisconsin	Waukesha County	Western	Wisconsin Indianhead
Associate Degree																
Accounting		✓*		✓*				✓*	✓*							✓*
Administrative Professional		✓*	✓*													
Applications Developer									✓							
Business Management		✓*						✓*	✓*							
Criminal Justice—Law Enforcement			✓*													
Early Childhood Education												✓*				
e-Business Technology Specialist								✓*								
Emergency Management					✓											
Forensic Science			✓													
Health Information Technology		✓*														
Instructional Assistant												✓*				
Liberal Arts Transfer (Associate of Arts)								✓*								
Marketing		✓*	✓*		✓*	✓*		✓*								✓*
Meeting and Event Management			✓*			✓*										
Paralegal		✓*														
Programmer/Analyst		✓*						✓*								
Real Estate						✓*										
Supervisory Management			✓*	✓*		✓*			✓*			✓*			✓*	
Technical Communications				✓*												
Veterinary Technician									✓							
Web Analyst/Programmer																✓*
1-Year Technical Diploma																
Accounting Assistant									✓*							
Business Software Applications Specialist						✓*										
Medical Transcription									✓				✓			
Office Assistant			✓*													
Optometric Technician						✓*										
Water Quality Technician									✓							
Web Designer/Developer									✓*							
Less than 1 Year																
Computerized Accounting Assistant								✓*								
Total	0	7	7	3	2	6	0	7	9	0	0	3	1	0	1	3

- ✓ Program offered entirely online
- ✓* Program also offered in the classroom

Workforce Development Areas and Comprehensive Job Center Locations

