

PLEASE SUPPORT FUNDING FOR TALENT ATTRACTION

Encourage Military Veterans to Relocate to Wisconsin

PRIORITY STATEMENT:

The Wisconsin Economic Development Association (WEDA) **SUPPORTS** a key initiative that would help address the state's growing workforce shortage crisis by marketing Wisconsin as a great place to live and work for veterans and military personnel leaving active-duty. The biggest challenge currently facing Wisconsin employers – across nearly all industries – is their inability to find enough workers to fill open jobs. This proposal will expand Wisconsin's work-ready population, support businesses looking to fill talent gaps, and help drive future economic growth.

BACKGROUND:

Wisconsin businesses are competing for an extremely tight supply of workers, which is negatively impacting production and future growth. There are numerous reasons behind the state's growing worker shortage, but with much of it rooted in demographic and workforce shifts, there is no easy remedy. However, the data does show that policymakers must act quickly on both short-term and long-term solutions to this growing crisis. A recent report by *Forward Analytics* found that over the past decade, Wisconsin has lost 106,000 workers under the age of 26 to other states, while attracting less than 89,000. The same report shows that based on current trends, the number of working-age Wisconsin residents will fall by about 130,000 by 2030.

One effective strategy to help fill the state's talent pipeline is to spread the message that Wisconsin is a great place to live and work - with tremendous amenities and an excellent quality of life. Wisconsin has a particularly good story to tell military veterans, as Wisconsin is consistently ranked as one of the top states to live for veterans. Almost 200,000 U.S. military service members leave active-duty each year, and these new veterans, who provide a fertile talent pool for employers and are comfortable relocating to new places, have the skills, training, and leadership qualities needed to help address the state's talent gap.

BILL SUMMARY:

This proposal would provide \$5 million in Fiscal Year 2023-24 to WEDC to administer a statewide talent attraction campaign focused specifically on veterans and active-duty military personnel transitioning out of the U.S armed forces. This initiative would require WEDC's efforts to include digital marketing, direct outreach to military personnel, and grants to local and regional economic development organizations for talent attraction initiatives focused on veterans and transitioning active-duty military personnel.

ACTION REQUESTED:

Please support much-needed funding for a state-led talent attraction campaign that prioritizes efforts to encourage highly skilled, work-ready military veterans and their families to move to Wisconsin for career opportunities and a great quality of life. If passed, the proposal will quickly help grow the state's labor force.