

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Career EXCErate program helps place 200 in jobs

With success, WI Workforce Innovation Grant that supports program extended

Menasha, WI—On March 7, Career EXCErate Wisconsin celebrated reaching a significant milestone of 200 participants employed. Since its beginning in 2022, with support from a Workforce Innovation Grant from the state of Wisconsin, students enroll to earn educational certificates through this collaborative program operated in partnership with Goodwill North Central Wisconsin (NCW), Fox Valley Technical College and Rawhide Youth Services.

"Education and training programs like Career EXCErate create opportunities for people to get skills they need for a good job, and we're pleased to see the program's remarkable success," said Department of Workforce Development Secretary Amy Pechacek. "Under the leadership of Gov. Tony Evers, we've funded projects across the state through Workforce Innovation Grants that allow regional partners to address workforce challenges facing their communities. And these innovative workforce solutions are not one-and-done efforts. These successes can be replicated in communities across the state."

An initial goal of the program was to reach 460 individuals served through the life of the grant. As of March 2025, that goal has been surpassed by 150 individuals (610 overall). In addition, the goal of participants securing a one-year employment retention rate of at least 55% in the field or sector of their studies has been exceeded by 19 percent (74% overall). Due to this success, the grant has been extended one year, until June 2026. One key update is that the program will be open to all unemployed or underemployed individuals.

"We are very excited to continue to serve our communities through Career EXCErate," Chris Hess, President and CEO at Goodwill NCW said. "The success of the program has surpassed our expectations. Each semester we celebrate with job seekers who are given a chance through Career EXCErate to build the skills needed to pursue a career path that

fits their interests and strengths, sustain meaningful employment in high-demand fields, and earn a wage that improves financial stability for themselves and their families. The transformative impact of this program is felt not only by the individuals we serve but also by entire communities.”

Career EXCELerate is a comprehensive career-training program that is offered at no cost to individuals who want to launch a lasting career but are struggling and would benefit from individualized support to advance in their profession, enter a career or return to the workforce. The goals of the program are to support individuals as they seek in-demand careers in specific areas of study and create a pipeline of job seekers who have the credentials to fill vital roles in Wisconsin.

“Goodwill and its partners are succeeding at helping Wisconsinites meet workforce needs and launch family-sustaining careers because this program truly considers the whole person,” said Sam Ridders, Deputy Secretary of the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation. “By developing an approach that considers a person’s mental health needs, Career EXCELerate is able to help participants overcome past challenges and succeed in today’s workforce.”

The program focuses on providing tracks that have future career development options. Enrollment takes place on an ongoing basis for all educational certificate programs. Educational tracks offered by Career EXCELerate include:

- Certified Nursing Assistant, (online and in classroom)
- Patient Care Tech
- Manufacturing Technician
- Welding Fundamentals
- Professional Truck Driving - Class A
- Retail Essentials
- Certified Direct Care Professional (online)

For job seekers: Those interested in earning a certificate through Career EXCELerate can complete the online application form at [CareerEXCELerateWI.org](https://www.CareerEXCELerateWI.org).

For local employers: Employers can partner with Career EXCELerate to recruit qualified candidates. Contact careerexceleratewi@goodwillncw.org to learn more.

For referrals: Prospective students can be referred by a local agency, nonprofit, employer or personal contact.

Career EXCELerate Wisconsin, a collaborative program from Goodwill North Central Wisconsin, Fox Valley Technical College and Rawhide Youth Services, offers free job training for high-demand careers, assistance to find a job after completion and supportive resources for the first year of employment, with personalized support throughout the journey. Career EXCELerate is being supported, in whole or in part, by federal award number SLFRP0135 awarded to Goodwill via the Wisconsin Workforce Innovation Grant Program by the U.S. Department of the Treasury. Learn more at: CareerEXCELerateWI.org

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