



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Local Workforce Board Receives Grant to Retrain Dislocated Shopko Employees and Other Retail Workers

The Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (FVWDB), based in Neenah, has received an initial \$65,000 grant from the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development to serve individuals permanently laid off from area retail stores.

“Retail stores continue to make up a huge part of our local economy, but with the recent closures of Shopko, Sears and several others, it’s clear that the long-term future of many retail roles simply isn’t there,” said Anthony Snyder, CEO of the Fox Valley Workforce Development Board. “Besides layoffs due to closures, retail stores are also ramping up their use of technology to replace workers, including the growing use of self-serve checkouts. Although primarily being done to deal with labor shortages, eventually a retail store cashier will be as uncommon as someone to fill up your car or check your oil at the local gas station.”

The grant received by the Fox Valley Workforce Development Board will be used to cover the costs to train displaced retail workers in jobs critical for our region. It will also be used to cover needed support to ensure the training period can continued uninterrupted, including

mileage, childcare and other financial assistance. Up to \$15,000 in training expenses and \$15,000 in support may be offered to each individual accepted into the program. Once the initial \$65,000 has been exhausted, the Board will have the ability to apply for additional dollars in amounts of \$100,000 until the final pool of financial dollars are gone.

Areas of critical needs and in-demand occupations in the Fox Valley region include:

- Manufacturing roles, such as welding, press brake operation, industrial maintenance and food processing and packaging;
- Roles in healthcare, such as CNAs/nursing technicians, medical coding and other care-giving roles;
- Information technology roles, including coding, security analysts and infrastructure architects; and
- A myriad of other roles across multiple sectors and employers.

The primary eligibility for individuals is being permanently laid off, or soon to be laid off, from a local retail establishment. Retail includes both brick and mortar stores such as Shopko, Dress Barn, Sears and Younkers or call centers that sell products directly to consumers.

To determine if you are eligible for this grant, individuals should contact their local American Job Center to schedule an appointment with a Fox Valley Career Planner to discuss their most recent job and determine if training for one of the in-demand roles for our region fits your career plan. Individuals will be eligible for training as soon as the fall 2019 semester.

“The amount being awarded to those eligible for this grant is generous, but it also is not unlimited as our region is competing with the rest of the state to get laid off retail workers into

training,” said Snyder. The faster you get to your local American Job Center, the faster we can determine your eligibility and reserve training dollars for you this fall.

Besides this retail grant, staff at the local American Job Center can also evaluate you for other training and support programs including Pre-Apprenticeship Training and training paid for by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

For more information on this grant, visit your local American Job Center. A complete list is found at <http://www.wisconsinjobcenter.org/directory/default.htm>. You can also contact the Fox Valley Workforce Development Board at 920-720-5600.

Local Job Centers Include:

Berlin

237 Broadway Street
Berlin, WI 54923
920-361-3400

Fond du Lac

349 N. Peters Ave.
Fond du Lac, WI 54935
920-929-3900

Menasha

1802 Appleton Road
Menasha, WI 54952
920-997-3272

Oshkosh

219 Washington Ave, #107
Oshkosh, WI 54901
920-232-6273

Waupaca

1979 Godfrey Drive
Waupaca, WI 54981
715-258-8832

Wautoma

556 South Cambridge St.
Wautoma, WI 54982
920-787-3338

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Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (FVWDB) is a not-for-profit working to build a world-class workforce in northeast Wisconsin. Serving six counties — Calumet, Green Lake, Fond du Lac, Waupaca, Waushara and Winnebago — FVWDB collaborates with a number of state and local agencies to help job seekers gain the skills needed to find employment, and to help businesses find the highly skilled workers they need.

FVWDB is an Equal Opportunity Employer and Service Provider.

A proud partner of the  American Job Center network