



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Workers Affected by Store Closures and Retail Layoffs Eligible for \$60,000 in Retraining and Support Grants**

Throughout North Eastern Wisconsin, large and small retailers are shutting their doors and laying off seasonal workers not needed after the holidays. From Pier One Imports in Fond du Lac, to pop up Christmas kiosks at our local malls, retail workers are quickly becoming the casualties in as consumers move from brick and mortar shopping to Amazon and other online sites.

One regional not-for-profit is working to ensure that every laid off worker has path to a solid career in a good paying industry. The Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (FVWDB), based in Neenah, and serving the counties of Calumet, Fond du Lac, Green Lake, Waupaca, Waushara and Winnebago, is prepared to assist anyone laid off from a retail store, retail warehouse or call center.

The FVWDB is the local administrator of a National Dislocated Retail Grant from the U.S. Department of Labor, offering up to \$15,000 in retraining and \$15,000 in support – including mileage, books, child care and payments to cover mortgage or rent while taking classes.

“This is an incredibly generous grant from the Department of Labor, which aims to train individuals for roles in sectors as varied as manufacturing, IT, healthcare, and transportation and get them off the retail roller coaster,” said Anthony Snyder, CEO of the Fox Valley Workforce Development Board. “Imagine a good paying career with nights, weekends and holidays off. Paid sick time and healthcare. There’s never been a better time to leave the retail sector behind.”

“Retail stores continue to make up a huge part of our local economy, but it’s clear that the long-term future of many retail roles simply isn’t there,” said Snyder. “Besides layoffs due to closures, some 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 a or someone to pump your gas and check the air in your tires at the gas station.”

If you have been laid off from another sector outside of retail, the FVWDB also has financial resources available in its Dislocated Worker Program. Any individual who has been laid off from an employer is strongly encouraged to visit the Menasha Job Center, 1802 Appleton Road, Menasha, or the Fond du Lac Job Center, 349 N. Peters Avenue, Fond du Lac. Any laid off individual will be evaluated for all the programs available at the Job Center and will have a plan developed to meet their employment needs.

For more information, visit <https://foxvalleyjobcenters.com/>, call 920-968-6373 or text 920-850-2032.

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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.*

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