

Gov. Walker: Proclaims June 6 as Project SEARCH Day during visit to Kalahari Resorts

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Wisconsin ranked among top 10 states for employing people with disabilities

WISCONSIN DELLS - Governor Scott Walker joined Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Georgia Maxwell and Department of Health Services (DHS) Secretary Linda Seemeyer at Kalahari Resorts in Wisconsin Dells today to congratulate the latest class of Project SEARCH graduates. To highlight the success of the Project SEARCH program in connecting Wisconsin youth with disabilities with gainful employment, Governor Walker has also proclaimed today as Project SEARCH Day throughout Wisconsin. A copy of his proclamation is attached.

“Project SEARCH is a nationally-recognized talent development solution providing young adults with disabilities the opportunity to demonstrate their many skills for community employers,” Governor Walker said “We recognize the value Project SEARCH brings to our workforce, and with 96 percent of enrollees completing the program since 2011 and nearly 9 out of 10 graduates gaining employment before or shortly after graduation, it’s clear Wisconsin employers recognize the value these individuals bring to work every day as well.”

Project SEARCH, which was developed by the Cincinnati Children’s Hospital, has undergone significant expansion in Wisconsin since Governor Walker took office, growing from a single site with 11 graduates during the 2010-2011 school year, to

17 sites with 160 graduates during the 2016-2017 school year.

The cornerstone of Project SEARCH is total immersion in the business environment. Each intern interviews for multiple 10-week internships based on their areas of interest. Combined with on-site classroom instruction, the work-based learning experience provides Project SEARCH graduates with the tools needed to acquire gainful employment, which leads to a self-sustaining lifestyle and the pride that the dignity of work provides.

Project SEARCH is administered through a partnership between DWD's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, DHS, school districts, local care organizations, and Wisconsin businesses.

In 2014, Governor Walker significantly expanded Project SEARCH when he launched the year of A Better Bottom Line initiative in support of overcoming obstacles to employment for individuals with disabilities. Wisconsin will have 27 licensed Project SEARCH sites by the end of 2017.

Governor Walker's 2017-2019 biennial budget includes several initiatives to promote employment for people with disabilities, including:

- **\$185 million for DWD's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation**
- **\$5.9 million for Special Education Transitions Incentive Grants**, which reward districts that help disabled students connect to the workforce
- **\$1.5 million for Special Education Transitions Readiness Investment Grants**, which help districts start programs that connect disabled students to the workforce
- **\$4.1 million to support Medicaid Purchase program reforms** that help people with disabilities transition to the workplace by eliminating the premium cliff and strengthening the work requirement.

For more information on Project SEARCH and other services offered through DWD's DVR, please visit <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/>.

- [Project_SEARCH_Day.pdf](#)