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**Agency leaders outline details for proposed
\$6.8 million talent attraction campaign**

*Part of Governor Walker's Workforce Agenda, initiative would create a mobile
jobs center and attract veterans transitioning to civilian life*

Jan. 10, 2018 — Leaders of four state agencies today outlined the details of [a proposed \\$6.8 million national talent campaign](#) that would focus on attracting transitioning veterans to Wisconsin and providing a new mobile job center to provide workforce support services within and outside of the state.

The initiative, part of Governor Scott Walker's Workforce Agenda, also would expand upon a campaign launched this week aimed at attracting Midwestern millennials and Wisconsin alumni.

Testifying before the Assembly Committee on Jobs and the Economy, key officials with the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC), the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD), the Wisconsin Department of Veteran Affairs (DVA) and the Wisconsin Department of Tourism described the role each agency would play in the collaborative effort to attract talent to the state to help address Wisconsin's current and future workforce needs.

A key component of the plan would be promoting Wisconsin as the best state for veterans to work and live through a national campaign directed specifically at military personnel as they prepare to leave active duty. The effort would raise awareness of the state's generous veteran programs, benefits and services.

It calls for growing the network promoting professional opportunities for veterans in Wisconsin by collaborating with veteran stakeholder organizations, such as veteran service organizations, veteran business groups, student veteran groups and others.

The proposal also includes attracting veterans to Wisconsin as a destination for personal, social and recreational opportunities through partnerships with tourism, community and military organizations.

Ken Grant, administrator of Division of Veterans Services for DVA, said the agency would expand efforts to recruit military personnel to the state before they leave active duty and would focus on targeting them at the nation's largest military transition centers.

Grant explained that the centers were chosen because of the specific training and technical expertise military personnel from that area are known to have. For instance, at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas, home of the Army medical command, DVA would specifically target nurses. In San Diego, recruitment efforts would focus on Chinese linguists, and at Wright Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio and Pensacola Naval Air Station in Florida, the agency would target service members with high electronic skillsets.

"The goal is to reach them directly, to touch them before they leave the service. Having veterans talking directly to veterans is a key component to this effort," he testified. "At these events, we will have the capability to allow veterans to immediately register with Job Center of Wisconsin, ask questions, and receive information about specific Wisconsin jobs."

DWD Deputy Secretary Christopher Hagerup provided lawmakers with details on the agency's plans to purchase and staff a mobile job center to help residents and non-residents take advantage of career opportunities in Wisconsin. The center would deliver support and provide rapid attachment to services in rural and urban areas in Wisconsin where access to services can be challenging.

It would also enable DWD to bring rapid attachment services to events outside the state, including military bases, veteran-specific talent recruitment events and college campuses, to connect out-of-state talent to resources, employment and internship opportunities in Wisconsin.

"The mobile job center would serve not just out-of-state talent, but Wisconsin residents in rural and urban areas who may face transportation or other barriers to accessing a brick-and-mortar job center," he said. This mobile job center would also help to provide rapid attachment to those services and individuals by allowing DWD to gather information instantaneously."

The \$6.8 million in funding also would be used to expand an aggressive marketing campaign to make millennials in other Midwestern metro areas aware of personal and professional fulfillment opportunities in Wisconsin. In addition, WEDC will work with alumni organizations from Wisconsin colleges and universities to encourage out-of-state alumni to consider returning to the state.

"With more people working in Wisconsin than ever before, our state needs a proactive strategy to attract and retain top talent," WEDC Deputy Secretary Tricia Braun told committee members. "This legislation allows us to further expand the campaign launched this week in the Chicago market to shift the perception people outside of Wisconsin have about our state."

The hearing came the same week that WEDC announced [its \\$1 million marketing campaign](#) that primarily uses social and digital media to reach young professionals in Chicago. Part of the funding in AB811 would be used to expand that upon that campaign, which began this week.

Tourism Deputy Secretary Sarah Klavas said the agency will use its existing marketing platforms to proactively promote Wisconsin as a great place to live and work. Those efforts would include utilizing the Travelwisconsin.com website, reaching out media nationwide and working with local chambers of commerce and visitors bureaus to help develop attraction campaigns.

“Outdoor recreation, natural resources, attractions, arts and culture and so much more provide the quality of life backdrop that is so important to people who live and work in Wisconsin,” she told the committee. “This is a selling point when people choose where to live or retire, or when companies make decisions about where to locate and expand.”

Also testifying before the committee on Tuesday were representatives from Wisconsin Manufactures & Commerce, the Wisconsin Economic Development Association and the Fox Cities Chamber.

The talent initiative also has widespread support from business, education and economic development leaders throughout Wisconsin ([See testimonials from more than a dozen leaders](#)).

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