

Partners with Business Annual Report to the Legislature, October 2025 – June 2026

The Wisconsin Legislature established the Partners with Business initiative to assist businesses interested in employing people with disabilities using an evidence-based coaching model. During the past state fiscal year, Partners with Business provided grant funds and coaching to five Supported Employment agencies¹.

Cost Savings through Stronger Partnerships with Employers

The Partners with Business initiative collected employment data from 17 participants with disabilities to assess the impact on Medicaid savings when service providers and employers invest in stronger partnerships. We found that strong partnerships are associated with a 30% reduction in the number of publicly funded job-coaching supports needed. This saved the public system an average of **\$4,001** per person annually, or about **\$68,016** for this cohort alone this year.

Before Partners with Business		After Partners with Business	
Average Annual Cost to Public System for On-The-Job Support per Person	Average Hours per Month Employee with a Disability Received Publicly Funded Job Coaching Support	Average Annual Cost to Public System for On-The-Job Support per Person	Average Hours per Month Employee with a Disability Received Publicly Funded Job Coaching Support
\$13,177	22.9 hours/month	\$9,176	15.9 hours/month

Partners with Business Success Story

Tricia Frey has been employed as a Production Associate at Goodwill of South Central Wisconsin's Middleton store since June 2014. Working three days per week for two hours per shift, Tricia plays an important role in Goodwill's production process by rotating older merchandise for transport to the Goodwill Outlet. This process helps ensure a steady flow of new products for customers while providing additional opportunities for donated items to be purchased before they are sent to recycling partners, reducing waste and supporting Goodwill's mission.



¹ AchieveAbilities, Employment Resources, Essential Connections, Goodwill North Central Wisconsin, Goodwill of South Central Wisconsin

Prior to the Partners with Business initiative, Tricia received job coaching support during all her shifts, as well as transportation assistance. A comprehensive review of job coaching utilization showed that Tricia had developed strong job skills and was consistently performing her duties successfully with minimal support.

Working collaboratively with Tricia, her support team, and workplace staff, Goodwill identified assistive technology solutions and strengthened natural workplace supports to promote greater job independence. As a result, Tricia now requires only a brief weekly check-in from Goodwill staff rather than ongoing on-site job coaching.

This increased independence has enabled Tricia to continue thriving in her role while significantly reducing the need for paid support services. The reduction in job coaching hours has also expanded Goodwill's capacity to serve more individuals with disabilities seeking competitive, community-based employment. Tricia's success demonstrates how the Partners with Business initiative can help individuals achieve greater workplace independence while maximizing resources to support more job seekers across the community.

Wisconsin's Assistive Technology Program (WisTech)

The Partners with Business initiative partnered with Wisconsin's Assistive Technology Program, known as [WisTech](#), to provide assistive technology education and resources to this year's grantees. This partnership helped grantees identify practical technology solutions that support workplace independence, including those highlighted in Tricia's success story. WisTech helps people with disabilities and older adults explore, try, borrow, obtain, and reuse assistive technology for use at home, work, school, and in the community. The program also provides training, technical assistance, and information about funding resources.



Partners with Business Training for Service Providers

The WI Department of Health Services worked with Employment Resources, Inc. and the Partners with Business grant coach to develop a free, self-paced online training for Supported Employment service providers about Partners with Business co-worker supports. This [2-hour training](#) provides employment professionals with a step-by-step guide on how to use Partners with Business paid coworker support to create workplace supports that benefit employees with disabilities, strengthen workplace teams, and reduce reliance on traditional job coaching.



The Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities (BPDD) mission is to help people with developmental disabilities become independent, productive, and included in all facets of community life.