

WOW Workforce Development is now Forward Careers

Nonprofit hopes new name clears up confusion, better defines its scope

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If you've ever lived in Waukesha, Washington or Ozaukee counties and found yourself looking for a job, you may have received some assistance from Waukesha-Ozaukee-Washington (or WOW) Workforce Development, Inc.

Established in 1990, the nonprofit has been providing job training and employment services for the region's Workforce

Development Board as part of the federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998, and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2015, for close to 30 years.

Now the organization is hoping its new name — Forward Careers, Inc. — will help it differentiate itself from similar sounding entities, like the state Department of Workforce Development, while better defining the kinds of services it provides.

"We were established in 1990, that's more than 20 years ago, and since WOW Workforce Develop-

ment, Inc. is so similar to 'Department of Workforce Development,' we thought it was time to maybe try to reduce that confusion," Forward Careers President Cindy Simons said this week.

"Our old name also contains geographic locations, and while some of the services we provide are specific to those counties, we have a lot of other programs that don't have any county restrictions."

Simons added that the nonprofit it has always been continually "looking ahead" and the name

Forward Careers seems to better capture that focus.

Different from the Department of Workforce Development, where you might apply for unemployment benefits, Forward Careers' mission is to provide employment and training programs to individuals and to help businesses attract, train, and retain the talent needed to succeed and grow.

The nonprofit currently has three offices, all of which are located in multi-purpose Workforce Development Centers. Its

main office can be found at the Waukesha County Technical College Campus in Pewaukee. Washington County residents can find them at Moraine Park Technical College in West Bend, and their Ozaukee County office is located at Milwaukee Area Technical College's Mequon campus.

Since the nonprofit doesn't have its own signage in those locations, Simons said clients will mostly notice the name change on its branded materials, like fliers, and on its website, www.forwardcareers.org.