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**Wisconsin Council on Children and Families Applauds *Jump Start* Pilots**  
Technical Colleges to Offer Promising Basic Education/Job Skills Programs

MADISON – The Wisconsin Council on Children and Families (WCCF) applauds the announcement today by the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) and Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) regarding the first steps in the Jump Start Program. The program is aimed at helping more individuals access adult basic education *and* short-term workforce training programs.

WCCF Executive Director Jill Jacklitz stated, “Many low-income adults and their families will benefit from the development of these programs. It shows strong leadership and vision on the part of Governor Doyle, Secretary Gassman and WTCS President Clancy.”

DWD announced that \$240,000 in competitive grants will be available as a first step toward developing the Jump Start pilot programs.

Efforts to combine adult basic education and short-term training have been successful in other states, increasing students’ motivation, making the programs more workable for adults, and in the end improving completion rates.

For example, similar efforts in the state of Washington improved completion rates dramatically. Participants there were five times more likely to earn college credits and 15 times more likely to complete workforce training than students in traditional programs.

“We all want more of our residents to obtain useful job skills *and* to be ready to move on toward higher educational credentials,” added John Keckhaver, WCCF research analyst. “In today's economy, it's much harder than it used to be for low-skilled workers to find jobs that pay family-supporting wages, and better wages are closely linked to better outcomes for kids. Completing postsecondary occupational programs can be a route to success for many Wisconsin’s families.”

For more information on the value of such programs, see *Bridges, Pathways & Leadership: Programs and Policies to Move More Low-Skilled Adults Into and Through Postsecondary Education*, available at [http://www.wccf.org/pdf/bridges\\_fullreport\\_200707.pdf](http://www.wccf.org/pdf/bridges_fullreport_200707.pdf)