

Expanded Wisconsin Fast Forward Program

Advanced Manufacturing Technical Education Equipment Grants

Grant Program Guidelines

The Wisconsin Fast Forward program is a State funded grant program to provide employer-focused worker training grants. The Office of Skills Development (OSD) at the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) administers the grant program. Initiated by 2013 Wisconsin Act 9, the State of Wisconsin's investment in the Wisconsin Fast Forward (WFF) program serves as a national best practice model for assisting hundreds of employers and thousands of employees with addressing the skill gap through customized skills training grants.

The Wisconsin Fast Forward grant program cultivates a strong environment for private sector job creation by helping businesses train highly skilled workers to fill current job openings and meet ongoing skill requirements. As a catalyst for talent development, the program encourages increased collaboration between Wisconsin's businesses and workforce training partners for the development and implementation of customized and sustainable short- and medium-term training programs that place workers in long-term positions with opportunities for professional growth and economic advancement. WFF also seeks to fund innovative workforce training solutions at the local and regional level that bring together employers, educators, workforce development entities and economic development organizations to meet area workforce demands.

Program Overview

Wisconsin Career and Technical Education (CTE) develops students who are prepared for stable careers and success in a modern, global, and competitive economy. The technical and vocational training provided through Wisconsin's school districts is critical in preparing the next generation of students for workforce success and a key contributor to the skilled worker pipeline. By accelerating students into the workforce, training more high school students in advanced manufacturing fields can help to address Wisconsin's skilled worker shortage. By offering employers access to a highly-skilled pool of workers ready to make immediate contributions, employers turn to CTE as an important source of needed talent to fill skilled positions within their companies. Delivering work skills education in high school also provides a strategic opportunity for students and their families to reduce the costs of post-secondary education.

WFF will award grants from \$5,000 to \$50,000 to Wisconsin school districts for the acquisition of equipment used in advanced manufacturing fields in the workplace, together with any software necessary for the operation of the equipment and any instructional material necessary to train pupils in the operation of the equipment. Funds may also be used to support modifications to technical education buildings that are made to accommodate the equipment.

Purpose: The WFF Technical Education Equipment Grant Program will award grants to reimburse school districts for the purchase and installation cost of equipment, software, instructional material and any related facility improvements and renovations necessary for installation and use of such equipment to support vocational and technical training in advanced manufacturing fields.

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Grant Program Highlights:

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| Total Grant Program | Up to \$500,000 available per year, pending final budgetary authority |
| Grant Size | Minimum Grant: \$5,000 - Maximum Grant: \$50,000 |
| Eligible Applicants | Wisconsin school districts that provide vocational training and technical education for advanced manufacturing fields |
| Use of Grant funds | Reimbursement of the purchase and installation cost of equipment, software, instructional material and related facility improvements necessary for installation and use of said equipment to support vocational training and technical education for advanced manufacturing |
| Goals | Applications must support high quality college and career pathways by meeting two of the following goals: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase the count of students able to participate in an <i>existing</i> program 2. Create a new program to meet a demonstrated employer demand, as supported by labor market data and partnerships with employers 3. If no increase in the number of participating students is projected, the applicant must demonstrate a significant improvement in the skills of the students who are able to participate in the program because existing equipment will be replaced or updated, as validated by relevant employers |
| Terms of Award | Grants will be awarded as cost reimbursement contracts, with an anticipated contract start date of June 30, 2019. All purchases of equipment and grant expenditures must be completed by June 30, 2021. |
| Matching Funds | Applicants must demonstrate cash match equal to 200 percent of the awarded grant amount, which may be in the form of money or the monetary value of equipment, that is contributed from private sources, the school district, or both |

A. Target Populations: This program is intended to benefit students who are enrolled in school vocational training and technical education for advanced manufacturing fields, who are preparing and training to enter the workforce. The program seeks to support eligible school districts that are providing workforce skills training for the high demand fields in advanced manufacturing. Applicants are required to identify the specific target occupations for their training and to demonstrate the demand for jobs and career opportunities in that advanced manufacturing industry.

B. Application Schedule: Email complete applications and attachments to: wisconsinfastforward@dwd.wisconsin.gov by **3 p.m. on Friday, May 31, 2019.**

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| GPA Released | April 25, 2019 |
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| Proposals accepted via email | Email complete application and all attachments to wisconsinfastforward@dwd.wisconsin.gov by 3 p.m. on Friday, May 31, 2019 |
| Projected Grant Awards Announcement | June 10, 2019 |
| Anticipated Contract Start Date | June 30, 2019 |
| Funding Disbursement | On a rolling basis, upon verification of approved submitted purchases, purchase orders, invoices, and related installation costs, subject to available funding. |
| Contract End Date | June 30, 2021 |

General Contracting Information

- A. Program Administration:** This program is offered by the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development and funded by State of Wisconsin general program revenues. The grant application process is administered by the Wisconsin Fast Forward Grant Program.
- B. Grants Range and Matching Requirement:** Applicants may submit applications requesting grants between \$5,000 and \$50,000. Applicants must limit their funding request to support one advanced manufacturing field. Applicants must secure cash match equal to 200 percent of the grant amount awarded from employers or other resources besides state funding.
- C. Eligible Purchases:** The intent of the program is to allow Wisconsin school districts to purchase advanced manufacturing training equipment. One-time installation costs may be included in the request, as well as requests for minor facilities renovations necessary for the successful installation and use of the equipment. As the main purpose of funding is to purchase equipment, facility renovations are limited to a maximum of twenty percent of requested funds.
- D. Reimbursement**
- a. Awards are structured as cost-reimbursement grants, meaning that recipients are expected to incur expenses before receiving any funds from WFF. Upon contract execution recipients will be allowed to incur costs. Costs, including match, must be incurred between contract execution and end dates. WFF will accept purchase orders for capital equipment as ‘incurred expenses’ to help facilitate cash flow for recipients who may have difficulty meeting expenses before receiving funds. WFF will provide online invoicing and instructions. Documentation matching contributions of 200 percent

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- of total costs for the technical equipment must be provided prior to receiving reimbursement under this grant.
- b. Upon submission of complete invoices with proper documentation, payments will be disbursed via Automated Clearing House (ACH) transactions.
 - c. In compliance with the Office of the State Comptroller rules and regulations, no grant recipient shall expend grant funds until a contract has been fully executed with WFF. Upon contract execution recipients will be allowed to incur costs. Costs must be incurred between contract execution and up to (and including) June 30, 2021. No expenses incurred after June 30, 2021 will be reimbursed by this program. Requests for reimbursement may be submitted to WFF no later than September 30, 2021.
 - d. Grantees will forfeit any remaining award unused after the contract expires. WFF shall give due consideration to any extenuating circumstances presented in writing by the applicant and may waive this restriction at its discretion.
 - e. As a condition of funding WFF will require that awardee provide enrollment, partnering and number of credentials awarded information related to programs supported by the grant for the next three state fiscal years.
- E. Reporting:** School districts are required to file a report with DWD by September 1 of each of the first three state fiscal years following the state fiscal year in which the grant was received that describes how the grant moneys were expended; describes the outcomes achieved as a result of receiving the grant; shares the best practices employed by the school district regarding the training of pupils in the use of the equipment acquired (including a plan for the sustainability of the training) and other information as required.

Grant Program Details

A. Eligibility

- a. A Wisconsin school district must be the applicant
- b. Applicants may apply for no more than one grant for this GPA round of funding
- c. Applicants must limit their funding request to no more than one Advanced Manufacturing field
- d. Applicants must include a plan to secure cash match equal to 200 percent of the grant amount awarded from employers or other resources besides state funding
- e. Matching dollars must be in the form of money or the monetary value of new equipment contributed from the school district, private sources or both

B. Review of Applications

- a. The department and an impartial evaluation committee will evaluate grant applications for compliance with grant guidelines and specifications cited in this document and assign a score based on the selection criteria below.

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C. Selection Criteria

- a. Applications will be selected based on overall scores in the following areas, with a possible total of 100 base points and 10 bonus points.

| Selection Criteria | Base Points | Bonus Points |
|--|-------------|--|
| Demand-Driven, based on labor market data and employer partnerships | 20 | NA |
| Leverages Partnerships with Employers & Non-State Matching Funds | 20 | Up to 5 additional points: Describe program related current and future partnerships and roles with businesses, other school districts, technical colleges or training providers in the region. |
| Optimizes Regional Training Capacity and the Number of Skilled Workers, as validated by relevant employers | 20 | Up to 5 additional points: if focusing on individuals facing barriers to employment and demonstrating regional collaboration and capacity building. |
| Builds on Proven Programs | 20 | NA |
| Demonstrates Sustainability | 20 | NA |

- a. **Demand-driven:** Applicants should show strong evidence that the program for which they will be purchasing and installing equipment to support, is meeting the needs of employers in their region. Strong evidence includes regional labor market data available from DWD, research-based report or study, a letter of support from the Regional Workforce Development Board confirming that there is a high demand in the specified program or letters of support from two or more employers confirming a workforce need and the role(s) they will play in partnering activities.
- b. **Leverages Partnerships and Matching Funds:** Applicants should show strong evidence that the program for which they will be purchasing and installing equipment is reflective of, and aligned to, the needs of local/regional employers. Applicants should explain how the proposed funding will complement or leverage other funding. Additionally, applicants must demonstrate cash match to support programs supported by the grant request.

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- c. **Optimizes Regional Training Capacity and Significantly Increases Supply of Skilled Workers in Advanced Manufacturing Industries:** Applicants must explain how the grant funding will improve the skills of the students and provide for two of the following:
 1. Increase in number of students able to participate in an *existing* program.
 2. Creation of a new program to meet demonstrated demand.
 3. If no increase in the number of participating students is projected, the applicant must demonstrate a significant improvement in the skills of the students who are able to participate in the program because equipment will be replaced or updated, as validated by at least two employers.

- d. **Builds on Proven Programs:** Applicants should demonstrate that their funding proposal will improve the capacity and quality of a program that has achieved high quality and consistent results, or that the program is based on other programs that have achieved such results. For example, the program is accredited, or has been evaluated by a third party to determine its effectiveness. The applicant should also demonstrate the ability to successfully implement new initiatives and expend grant funding on a timely basis.

- e. **Demonstrates Sustainability:** Applicants should show evidence of the ability to providing resources to maintain and operate the new equipment as well as to sustain the enrollment and number of credentials awarded by an expanded or improved program.