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DWD Secretary Announces Up to \$8 Million in Wisconsin Fast Forward Grants Available to Employers for Customized Worker Training

Nine categories for employers, partners to submit proposals in Round 4

MADISON – Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Reggie Newson today announced up to \$8 million is available for new customized worker training grants in nine occupational areas as part of Round 4 of Governor Walker's *Wisconsin Fast Forward (WFF)* initiative.

"Wisconsin Fast Forward is fueling business growth and the state's economy through effective workforce solutions that are benefitting hundreds of employers and thousands of employees," Secretary Newson said. "In Round 4, we are seeking innovative and collaborative grant proposals based on employer demand for customized skilled worker training projects that provide trainees with portable skills and industry recognized credentials."

The DWD Office of Skills Development set Round 4 categories based on a comprehensive analysis of pressing workforce needs that included skilled worker labor market employment projections and immediate worker training needs of employers. Application deadlines and a range of possible grant awards follow:

- July 2: Manufacturing and Related Occupations, \$5,000 to \$400,000
- August 20: Financial Services and Related Occupations, \$5,000 to \$400,000
Information Technology, Systems Security, Data Analytics and Related Occupations, \$5,000 to \$400,000
Human Services, Customer Service and Related Occupations, \$5,000 to \$400,000
Health Science, Health Care and Related Occupations, \$5,000 to \$400,000
- October 1: Transportation, Logistics, Distribution and Related Occupations, \$5,000 to \$400,000
Architecture, Construction and Related Occupations, \$5,000 to \$400,000
Agriculture, Food, Natural Resources and Related Occupations, \$5,000 to \$400,000
- October 8: Wisconsin Small Business Occupations with 50 or fewer full-time employees, \$5,000 to \$50,000

All applications are due by 5 p.m. Funding is subject to state budget approval. For Round 4 details and dates for informational webinars about the application process, visit: <http://www.wisconsinfastforward.com/grants.htm>.

Governor Walker's WFF program was quickly approved with overwhelming bipartisan support from lawmakers in 2013 to address the skills gap through a \$15 million investment in grants to employers for customized skills training to fill current job openings and ongoing skill requirements. The program is administered by OSD, which has developed an effective process that enables businesses to easily apply for grants and ensures that unemployed trainees are hired and incumbent trainees receive a pay raise.

WFF has awarded 145 grants to provide in-demand worker training to nearly 13,800 workers at more than 300 businesses to date. View intent to award summaries at: <http://www.wisconsinfastforward.com/reports.htm>.

To learn how to apply for grants or for more information, visit www.WisconsinFastForward.com.

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