



February 26, 2021

Expanded Wisconsin Fast Forward Program

Technical Education Equipment Grant Program Announcement

Award Amount \$5,000 to \$50,000

Applications are due by 3 p.m. CST on Thursday, April 8, 2021
Email Applications to WisconsinFastForward@dwd.wisconsin.gov

The Wisconsin Fast Forward (WFF) grant program encourages increased collaboration between Wisconsin's workforce, employers, local or regional economic development organizations, workforce development boards, post-secondary institutions, and private training providers to develop and implement business-led training programs.

The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD or the Department) is now accepting applications for WFF Technical Education Equipment Grants. This opportunity is open to applications from Wisconsin school districts that can demonstrate that the Career and Technical Education program for which they will be purchasing and installing Advanced Manufacturing equipment:

- meets the needs of employers in their region;
- leverages partnerships and matching funds;
- optimizes regional training capacity;
- increases the supply of skilled workers in advanced manufacturing fields;
- builds on proven programs; and
- includes mechanisms for sustainability.

Legislative Authority: Legislative authority for this grant is found at Wis. Stat. § 106.275 and Wis. Admin. Code ch. DWD 802 (EmR2001).

Program Overview

Definitions: The following definitions are used throughout the Grant Program Announcement (GPA):

- **Advanced Manufacturing** refers to a family of manufacturing activities that (a) depend on the use and coordination of information, automation, computation, software, sensing, and networking, and/or (b) make use of cutting-edge materials and emerging production capabilities enabled by the physical and biological sciences, for example nanotechnology, chemistry, and biology. This involves both new ways of manufacturing existing products and manufacturing new products emerging from new advanced technologies.¹
- **Applicant** means a school district in this state that applies to the Department for a grant.
- **Contract** means a legal document that sets forth the grant terms and conditions.
- **Grant** means an agreement between the Department and the grantee whereby the Department provides funds from the appropriation under Wis. Stat. § 20.445(1)(cg) for the purposes specified in Wis. Stat. § 106.275(1)(b).
- **Grantee** means a school district awarded a grant by the Department.
- **School District**, per Wis. Stat. § 115.01(3), means a territorial unit for school administration. School districts are classified as common, union high, unified, and 1st class city school districts. A joint school district is one territory of which is not wholly in one municipality.
- **State** means State of Wisconsin.

Technical Education Equipment Grant Program Announcement Summary: The purpose of this grant opportunity is to train high school students in advanced manufacturing fields to help address Wisconsin's skilled worker shortage. This grant is also intended to accelerate the transition of students into the workforce by preparing them for stable careers and to provide students and their families the means to reduce higher education costs by providing dual enrollment credits, industry-endorsed certificates, and technical endorsements on high school diplomas.

¹President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology Report to the President on Ensuring American Leadership in Advanced Manufacturing. (2011). Retrieved from <https://www.manufacturing.gov/sites/default/files/2018-01/pcast-advanced-manufacturing-june2011.pdf>

For this grant opportunity, eligible advanced manufacturing fields include, but are not limited to:

Smart Manufacturing	Additive Manufacturing
Machining and Controls	Robotics
Digital Manufacturing and Design	Photonics
Electronics	Materials and Composites
Chemical and Thermal Processes	Healthcare and Medicine
Biotechnology	Bioenergy
Bioproducts	Biomanufacturing

Matching funds equal to 200 percent of the awarded grant amount are required per Wis. Stat. § 106.275(1)(c) and Wis. Admin. Code § DWD 802.06. Match may be in the form of money or the monetary value of equipment that is contributed from private sources or the applicant or from both private sources and the applicant.

School districts are required to:

- (1) Track outcomes related to the vocational and technical education programs for grant supported equipment purchases, and
- (2) File an outcomes report with DWD by September 1 of each of the three fiscal years after receiving the grant. In each report, the grantee shall do the following:
 - a. Describe how the grant moneys were expended;
 - b. Describe the outcomes achieved as a result of receiving the grant;
 - c. Share the best practices employed by the grantee regarding training of pupils in the use of the equipment acquired with the grant moneys;
 - d. Include a plan for sustainability of the training described in par. (c); and
 - e. Provide such other information as the Department may require in the GPA.

Recipients of previous awards from this program may apply but must demonstrate how the proposed project differs from the project funded by a prior award.

Grant Program Highlights

Individual Awards	Minimum \$5,000 up to \$50,000
Eligible Applicants	Wisconsin school districts
Use of Grant funds	Reimbursement of costs for the acquisition of equipment that is used in advanced manufacturing fields in the workplace, together with any software necessary for the operation of that equipment, and any instructional material necessary to train pupils in the operation of that equipment.

Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train high school students in advanced manufacturing fields to help address Wisconsin's skilled worker shortage. • Accelerate the transition of students into Wisconsin's workforce. • Provide students and their families with a way to reduce higher education costs by providing dual enrollment credits, industry-endorsed certificates, and technical endorsements on high school diplomas.
Terms of Award	Grants will be awarded as cost reimbursement contracts with an anticipated contract start date of June 1, 2021. All grant expenditures must be completed by June 1, 2023.
Leveraged Funding	Applicants are encouraged to leverage additional funding.

Important Dates: Applications are due by 3 p.m. CST on Thursday, April 8, 2021.

Application packages must be emailed to WisconsinFastForward@dwd.wisconsin.gov.

GPA Released	February 26, 2021
Application Submission	April 8, 2021 Email application package (application, required forms, and supporting documents) to WisconsinFastForward@dwd.wisconsin.gov by 3 PM CST
Projected Grant Awards Announcement	May 21, 2021
Anticipated Contract Start Date	June 1, 2021
Funding Disbursement	Reimbursement basis (upon verification and approval of submitted documentation of purchases, purchase orders, invoices, and related project expenses).
Contract End Date	June 1, 2023

GPA and Application Process Questions & Answers:

Any questions or clarifications related to this Grant Program Announcement may be submitted in writing via email to WisconsinFastForward@dwd.wisconsin.gov. We will respond to your inquiry promptly.

Responses will also be posted at http://www.wisconsinfastforward.com/wff_standard.htm.

In the event that it becomes necessary to provide additional clarifying data or information, it will be posted at http://www.wisconsinfastforward.com/wff_standard.htm.

Additional Information

Application Form and Instructions:

Access the application, evaluation rubric, and reporting template at:

http://wisconsinfastforward.com/wff_standard.htm

CONTENTS. An applicant for a grant shall describe the following:

- (a) The purpose and need for the grant;
- (b) The projected outcomes that the applicant is seeking to achieve as a result of receiving the grant;
- (c) The amount, form, and source of the matching funds required under Wis. Admin. Code § DWD 802.06; and
- (d) Any other information required in the GPA.

Letters of Commitment:

Partner Letters of Commitment or Support must:

- Be on letterhead,
- Include attestation regarding partnership expectations, the need for employees trained in advanced manufacturing, and any other elements that inform the program, and
- Include a description of any leveraged funds, clearly indicating the source of the funding and a description of how it supplements the project.

Project Period: The project period for this GPA is June 1, 2021 through April 30, 2023.

Grant Amount: Not less than \$5,000 nor more than \$50,000 is available per grantee. Grant expenditures must be incurred during the project period. All eligible grant expenses will be reimbursed, per individual contract specifications when expenses are:

- Included in the award application;
- Supported by a 200 percent match;
- Paid and documented by the grantee; and
- Approved by DWD's Office of Skills Development.

Disbursement of grant funding will be made on a rolling basis when the grantee complies with all conditions of the grant as stipulated in the contract. Reimbursements may be pro-rated or withheld based on the extent to which contract conditions are met.

Cost-Sharing: Matching funds equal to 200 percent of the awarded grant amount are required. Match may be in the form of money or the monetary value of donated equipment that is contributed from private sources, the school district, or both. Documentation of the type(s) and source(s) of leveraged funds should be submitted with the application.

Eligibility: For an application to be considered for funding, the following conditions must be met:

- Applicant is a Wisconsin school district;
- Applicants may apply for no more than one grant for this round of grant funding;
- Applicants must limit their funding request to one Advanced Manufacturing field;
- Applicants must include a plan to secure match from employers or other resources equal to 200 percent of the grant amount awarded; and
- Match must be in the form of money or the monetary value of new equipment that is contributed from the school district, private sources, or both.

Due Diligence: All applicants are required to complete the Risk Assessment Form and Due Diligence checklist. If any of the statements below apply to an applicant, that applicant may be automatically disqualified and not be scored:

- Applicant has not been in operation for more than 24 months.
- Within the last 24 months, the Applicant has been required to provide a Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) notice under 29 U.S.C. § 2101 et seq., or a notice under Wisconsin's Business Closing and Mass Layoff Law, Wis. Stat. § 109.07 (Layoff Notices found here: <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dislocatedworker/warn/>).
- Within the last 24 months, Applicant has been found to have violated the Unemployment Compensation laws, Wis. Stat. Ch. 108.
- Within the last 24 months, Applicant has been found to have violated the Worker's Compensation Act, ch. 102.
- Applicant is on the Wisconsin Department of Administration's list of vendors who are not in compliance with Wis. Stat. § 77.66, found here: <http://vendornet.state.wi.us/vendornet/wocc/CertList.pdf>.
 - Please note that Applicants may demonstrate that they have come into compliance since the last posting date of the list.
- Applicant's status is not registered as a Wisconsin business or otherwise not in good standing with Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions.
- Within the last 24 months, Applicant has been found to have violated the Wisconsin Fair Employment Act, Wis. Stat. § 111.31 et seq., or employment regulations under Wis. Stat. ch. 103.
- Applicant is listed as ineligible on the Department of Administration's Office of Contract Compliance Vendor Directory, found here: <https://vendornet.wi.gov/Procurement.aspx>.
- Applicant is listed as a delinquent taxpayer with the Wisconsin Department of Revenue, at <https://www.revenue.wi.gov/Pages/DelqList/DelqSearch.aspx>.

Organizations are strongly encouraged to verify that there are no unresolved issues in these areas prior to submitting the application or should provide a detailed explanation with the application.

Eligible Expenses: Funds awarded under this GPA shall be used to reimburse expenses related to the acquisition of equipment that is used in advanced manufacturing fields in the workplace, together with any software necessary for the operation of that equipment, and any instructional material necessary to train pupils in the operation of that equipment.

Ineligible Expenses: WFF funds may not be used for the purchase of real estate, facility construction or substantial remodeling, traditional public or private Kindergarten-12th grade education, trainee wages, or fringe benefits.

Supplement not Supplant: All funding identified as "match" or "in-kind" must be new funds and cannot replace existing federal, state, or local government funding. Substituting existing funds with state grant funds will result in additional fiscal monitoring and may result in an audit. Violations of permissible expenses may result in suspension of current or future funds under this program, repayment of monies awarded under this grant, and possible civil and/or criminal penalties.

Grant Evaluation Rubric and Scoring: Wisconsin Fast Forward is a competitive grant program. The evaluation committee will evaluate grant applications for compliance with the grant eligibility requirements and specifications cited in this document. Grant proposals will be rated on a 100-point scale, based upon the following point values:

Selection Criteria	Points
Demand-Driven, based on labor market data and employer partnerships	20
Leverages Partnerships with Employers and Non-State Matching Funds	20
Optimizes Regional Training Capacity and the Number of Skilled Workers, as validated by relevant employers	20
Builds on Proven Programs	20
Demonstrates Sustainability	20

Grants will be ranked by high score and awarded based upon ranking and availability of budgeted funds. Grants that score below 50 points will not be eligible for funding. It is strongly recommended that applicants consult the Grant Evaluation Rubric and Scoresheet to address all scoring criteria when writing proposals. The Grant Evaluation Rubric and Scoresheet is available for download at www.wisconsinfastforward.com/wff_standard.htm.

Contract: The WFF Technical Education Equipment Grant applications that are funded under this GPA are required to execute a binding contract with DWD **before any expenses are incurred** for which reimbursement is expected.

Reimbursement

- Awards are structured as cost-reimbursement grants, meaning that recipients are expected to incur expenses before receiving any WFF funds. WFF will accept purchase orders as ‘incurred expenses’ to help facilitate cash flow for recipients who may have difficulty meeting expenses before receiving funds. WFF will provide access to an online invoicing system and reimbursement instructions.
- Upon submission of complete invoices with proper documentation, payments will be disbursed via Automated Clearing House (ACH) transactions.
- 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) April 30, 2023. No expenses incurred after April 30, 2023 will be reimbursed by this program.
- Grantees will forfeit any remaining award unused after the contract expires.
- As a condition of funding, WFF will require that the grantee provide outcome reporting as determined by the individual grant contract, including quarterly and final reports.

Grant Reporting Requirement: Grant recipients must meet the program reporting requirements, including submission of project updates to document reimbursement requests, and annual reports. A reporting template is available for download at www.wisconsinfastforward.com/wff_standard.htm.

The grantee is responsible for tracking and monitoring enrollment counts, partnering counts, awarded credentials counts, budget, and any other required information related to the advanced manufacturing vocational and technical education programs for which the grant supported the purchase of equipment.

School districts are required to file a report with DWD by September 1 of each of the three fiscal years after receipt of the grant that: (1) describes how the grant moneys were used and the

outcomes achieved as a result of receiving the grant; (2) 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 (3) other information as required.

Additionally, school districts may be subject to program and fiscal audits by DWD as defined in the contract. Reports should justify quantifiable outcomes and impacts for the school district, training participants, employers, and the State of Wisconsin, including progress towards addressing two of the three grant program goals below:

1. Increase the count of students able to participate in an existing program;
2. Create a new program to meet a demonstrated employer demand, as supported by labor market data and partnerships with employers; and
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.