

WISCONSIN FAST FORWARD APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENT GUIDELINES

Applicants must meet the following eligibility and requirement guidelines to be considered for a Wisconsin Fast Forward grant. The Wisconsin Fast Forward applications that are funded will be required to execute a binding contract with DWD.

I. PROJECT REQUIREMENTS:

- Will train and employ (or retain) Wisconsin workers;
- Proposed training has not been previously offered by the Applicant/consortium; and
- Must be a newly-developed training program that is customized to address a documented business need.

II. APPLICANT REQUIREMENTS:

- Must be a business (or private entity) or a consortium of businesses that employs workers in Wisconsin;
- Must be a legal entity registered with the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions;
- Must be a financially viable organization, and current on all federal and state tax obligations;
- Must be able to match grant funds dollar for dollar (or fifty-cents on the dollar for Small Businesses) with cash and/or in-kind contributions for the project as specified in the related Grant Program Announcement (GPA); and
- Is prepared to be responsible for managing the grant funds, keeping receipts and records, submitting reimbursements, preparing for financial audits, and submitting the final report.

III. EMPLOYER/EMPLOYER PLACEMENT PARTNER(S) REQUIREMENTS:

All Wisconsin Fast Forward (WFF) grant applications **must include at least one employer to be eligible**. Employers should meet the criteria set forth in Section II of the application, *Project Eligibility*. The employer may be the Applicant and may use an internal or external training provider. **Letters of commitment to hire trainees from the proposed training program or to raise wages for incumbent workers will be required from the participating employers. Partner letters of commitment should include an attestation regarding match resources that are available to contribute to the project.**

- Each Placement Partner (employer) is committing to:
 - Providing a wage increase to incumbent workers who successfully complete the training;
 - Hiring, training and retaining new workers (after the GPA release date);
 - Hiring and training unemployed workers to fill new or vacant positions; and/or
 - Training and providing better employment to underemployed (part-time, temporary, or seasonal) workers.
- The Employer Placement Partner(s) must also meet the following criteria:
 - Has/will have a presence in Wisconsin;
 - Will train employees who are/will be based out of the Wisconsin location;
 - Will not train owners;
 - Has a documented, unmet need for worker skills and is creating a new, customized training program to train workers to meet this need;
 - The training will not replace existing, routine business training and will be short- to medium-term training lasting no more than 12 months. Contracts may be awarded for up to 2 years to cover multiple cohorts of trainees in short- to medium-term training; and
 - If applying under the Small Business GPA, the employer has 50 full-time employees or less.

IV. PROJECT EXPENSES:

- **Eligible Expenses:** Wisconsin Fast Forward funds shall be used for training-related expenses, which may include instructor salaries and fringe benefits, consultant/contractual expenses and training materials and supplies.

- **Ineligible Expenses:** Wisconsin Fast Forward funds may not be used for the purchase of real estate or other capital assets/equipment, facility construction or remodeling, traditional public or private Kindergarten–12th grade education, trainee wages, stipends 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. 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.

V. **EXTERNAL TRAINING PROVIDER PARTNER REQUIREMENTS:**

External Training Providers must be named in the application as Project Partners. They may also be the Applicant.

VI. **OTHER ORGANIZATION PARTNERS:**

In some circumstances, alignment with other organizations in the local area, region, or state can be beneficial to the success of the training program. Any of these organizations may be the Applicant or a Project Partner.

VII. **ADDRESSING EMPLOYMENT NEEDS:**

The most important part of defining demand-driven employer needs is clearly understanding and communicating the challenge facing the employer(s) in the application. A clear explanation of the skills need facing the employer(s) and how it is not currently being met is necessary.

VIII. **PROJECT CURRICULUM/TRAINING:**

- The training project should produce quantifiable outcomes and impacts for the employer, training participants and the State of Wisconsin. The applicant should address projected outcomes for the proposed training program, such as: training new hires, incumbent workers retaining employment, earning higher wages, increasing their skill attainment and/or receiving industry-recognized credentials;
- A training provider, educational institution, economic or workforce development organization, nonprofit, or an industry association may apply for a consortium training grant in partnership with an employer or multiple employers with the same training needs. The proposal for the common training should:
 - Serve employers who require the same type of occupational training;
 - The application should include all required information for each employer;
 - If applying as a consortium of employers under the Small Business GPA, each employer must meet the Small Business definition in Section II of Eligible Applicants; and
 - Include training descriptions and trainee outcomes that address the need from each employer impacted by the proposed common training.
- The employer chooses its training and training provider;
- The training can be provided by Wisconsin's public or private educational institutions, a private training company or private instructor, an internal employee, or a combination of training providers;
- The training may be at the company's facility, at the training provider's facility, or a combination of facilities;
- Training must:
 - Be short- or medium- term;
 - Have goals that are accomplishable in the time allotted;
 - Give the worker transferable, career building/enhancing skills;
 - Provide a return on investment in higher wages, living wages, and people gaining employment; and
 - Address an unmet need that is not already being addressed elsewhere; and
 - Result in a new curriculum/certification/credit program that can be replicated elsewhere or be reused to provide or enhance future training.

IX. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

You will be required to track the number and type of individuals you train, as well as where you plan to place those individuals after the training.

- Unemployed individuals who will gain employment: Total numbers of individuals who are not employed at the time of training and find jobs as a result of the training.
- Underemployed individuals who will gain new and better employment: Total number of individuals who find a job at an employment placement partner as a result of the training and currently work below skill level or part-time but desire full time work at the time of training.
- Incumbent workers who will receive increased compensation: Total number of individuals who received increased compensation due to training who were employed by the employment placement partner on or before the GPA release date and will continue to work after training.
- New hires that retain employment at the employment placement partner after the training: Total number of individuals newly hired by an employment placement partner after the GPA release date and complete training and retain employment.
- The difference between pre-training and post-training wages for all trainees.

The WFF program looks for a minimum 85% placement rate for all workers who successfully complete training. Additionally, 100% of existing incumbent workers who successfully complete training should receive a wage increase. You will be required to report on any failure to achieve these goals.

X. GRANT REPORTING REQUIREMENT:

The Grantee will be responsible for tracking and monitoring individual workers receiving training under the grant through the completion of pre-and post-training reports and a final report on the net jobs; including type of trainee served as defined in the Type of Trainees section of the GPA and their related wages and/or wage increases.

Grantees will also be required to submit regular project updates with reimbursement requests, documentation of match contributions, progress reports, pre-and post-training reports and a final project report. Additionally, applicants and their partners may be subject to program and fiscal audits by the Department of Workforce Development as defined in the contract.