

Expanded Wisconsin Fast Forward Program High School Student Certifications

Grants to Technical Colleges to Certify High School Students in Industry-Recognized High Demand Fields

Grant Program Guidelines

The Wisconsin Fast Forward (WFF) 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 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.

The State of Wisconsin has invested over \$200 million over the past four years and over \$140 million in the current biennial budget to support workforce development, including additional support to expand the WFF program. The expanded Wisconsin Fast Forward program is a series of additional targeted programs which were added to the grant opportunities available through the standard Fast Forward program.

Program Overview

Wisconsin technical colleges, in collaboration with school districts, employers, and/or other partners may apply for this reimbursement funding opportunity to provide sophomores, juniors, and seniors enrolled in Wisconsin high schools the opportunity to earn industry-recognized certification(s) in a high-demand field. Young and low-income workers would benefit by gaining exposure to the skills that are currently valued by employers, receiving their technical certifications and entering the workforce more quickly.

Projects must only select certifications from the following five categories within the Class of 2019 Certifications List at http://wisconsinfastforward.com/prosperity/pupil/2019_cte_certification_list.pdf:

- State Certified Work-Based Learning Programs – DWD Youth Apprenticeship (YA)
- State Certified Work-Based Learning Programs – DPI Cooperative Educational Skill Standards (Skills Co-Op)
- Business and Industry Recognized Certifications
- Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) Certifications*
- Wisconsin Certified Pre-Apprenticeship Programs

***NOTE:** WTCS Certifications must be “State-Approved” Career Pathways Certificates (CPCs) or “State-Approved” Embedded Technical Diplomas (ETDs). CPCs and ETDs are approved sets of classes that offer a stackable credential. The applicant must provide the course number assigned by a Wisconsin technical college for the CPC or ETD that can be verified with the WTCS.

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Grant Program Highlights:

Grant Size	Minimum Grant: \$5,000 - Maximum Grant: \$100,000
Eligible Applicants	A Wisconsin technical college must be the applicant, with only one application being accepted from each technical college. The certifications selected to be trained on this application cannot be the same certifications funded under the High School Student Certifications Wisconsin Fast Forward grant program that was announced March 30, 2018.
Use of Grant funds	Reimburse grantees for expenses incurred after the contract has been executed (signed by grantee and OSD and returned to OSD). No more than 10 percent of the total line-item budget may be expended on administrative expenses.
Goals	Offer high school students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of up-to-date skills in a career field by earning industry recognized certifications and credentials. The use of credentials increases the likelihood of becoming more marketable to employers who are looking to invest in long-term, qualified workers and can help students earn higher wages when they enter the workforce. Students are better able to align their educations, and subsequently their skills, with their preferred career pathways.
Terms of Award	Grants will be awarded as cost reimbursement contracts, with an anticipated contract start date of August 30, 2018. All grant expenditures and match must be completed by June 30, 2020. The grant award is intended to support activities completed within the program timeframe.
Matching Funds	In the proposal, applicant technical colleges should detail their ability to leverage financial support for the project as a demonstration of commitment. Match may be in-kind and/or cash match equal to 50 percent of the grant amount awarded.

A. Target Populations: Sophomores, juniors, and seniors at Wisconsin high schools to earn industry recognized certifications in high demand fields.

B. Application Schedule: Email complete applications and attachments to: wisconsinfastforward@dwd.wisconsin.gov by **3 p.m. on Monday, July 30, 2018.**

GPA Released:	June 19, 2018
Proposals Accepted Via Email:	Email complete applications and attachments to WisconsinFastForward@dwd.wisconsin.gov by 3 p.m. on July 30, 2018

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Projected Intent to Award Announcement:	August 15, 2018
Anticipated Contract Start Date:	August 30, 2018
Funding Disbursement:	On a rolling basis, upon verification of approved submitted purchases, purchase orders, invoices, and related project costs.
Contract End Date:	June 30, 2020

General Contracting Information

- A. Program Administration:** This program is offered by DWD and funded by State of Wisconsin general program revenues. The grant application process will be administered by the Office of Skills Development (OSD) in the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development under the WFF grant program.
- B. Grants Range and Matching Requirement:** The grantee is required to provide matching funds equal to 50% of the grant amount awarded. Match may be from any combination of cash and/or in-kind sources that are necessary and reasonable to operate the program related to budget categories and associated *eligible* expenses and may come from any participants in the collaboration.
- C. Eligible Purchases:** The intent of the program is to provide sophomores, juniors, and seniors enrolled in Wisconsin high schools the opportunity to earn industry-recognized certifications in high demand fields. These include: The proposed budget will be examined to determine the extent to which expense projections are reasonable, necessary and allowable for the operation of the project. Priority will be given to budgets that minimize administrative costs in favor of direct program costs. Expanded WFF funds shall be used for high school student certifications project direct expenses.

Allowable costs include:

- Instructional delivery and related materials.
- Costs associated with certification testing.
- Supplies and materials for training and/or instruction (an item must cost less than \$5,000 and have a lifespan of less than one year).
- Activities associated with overall project coordination, recruitment, marketing to stakeholders and mentor training.
- Travel, associated with instruction for trainers only.
- General grant administration activities (not to exceed 10% of grant amount requested).

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Ineligible Expenses (See Budget Guidelines for details):

WFF 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 (existing and/or general core curriculum).
- Student incentives/rewards.
- Trainee transportation costs.
- Student wages and fringe benefits (may use this expense as cash/in-kind match).
- Tuition reimbursement (may use this expense as cash/in-kind match).

D. Reimbursement

- a. Upon submission of complete invoices with proper documentation, payments will be disbursed via Automated Clearing House (ACH) transactions.
- b. 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 OSD. Upon contract execution, recipients will be allowed to incur costs. Costs must be incurred from the date of contract execution through June 30, 2020. No expenses incurred after June 30, 2020 will be reimbursed by this program. Requests for reimbursement may be submitted to WFF no later than September 30, 2020.
- c. Grantees will forfeit any remaining funds that are 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.
- d. As a condition of funding, OSD will require that the awardee report data and information about participation, partnerships, supportive services, program referrals and placements for the next three fiscal years for both auditing and pilot evaluation purposes.

Grant Program Details

A. Eligibility

Wisconsin technical colleges may apply. Applicant technical colleges may apply as the lead organization of a consortium of several local employers and private, public and non-profit organizations. Proposals submitted on behalf of a consortium of providers must include in the application a description of the roles and responsibilities of the lead applicant and each co-applicant.

B. Review of Applications

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.

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C. Selection Criteria

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

Selection Criteria	Base Points	Bonus Points
Project Need	20	NA
Economic Impact	15	NA
Training Program, Design, Cost & Implementation	20	NA
Capacity Building	10	NA
Training Outcomes & Objectives	20	NA
Economic Opportunity Enhancements	15	NA

- a. **Project Need:** Applicants should describe the nature and scope of the critical workforce need that the High School Certifications grant program will address. Project need should address the specific needs of students, businesses and industries aligned with economic and workforce opportunities impacted by the project, including supporting data and examples. The extent of the problem, including if the workforce issue is limited to a single business or affects an entire region and/or industry sector should also be addressed.

- b. **Economic Impact:** Applicants will describe the economic impact of the increased number of trained and certified workers on the project partner(s) involved, the communities they will be living and working in and the surrounding region. This section should include the estimated number of students that will be trained in this project, a description of the impact upon local businesses and the relevant industries, a quantification of the impact for both students and partners and supporting economic and labor data as appropriate.

- c. **Training Program, Design, Cost & Implementation:** Applicants will list the training certifications and skills that students will work towards obtaining in this program and the strategic rationale for focusing on these areas. Applicants will describe the number and type of credits being earned. In this section, applicants will outline the plan to recruit and select trainees, how the program will support them and monitor their success and will also define the target population(s) for this project. In addition to the project budget, the applicant will provide a narrative which includes the cost per trainee, explanation of all major budget items and information on the financial commitments of each program partner.

- d. **Capacity Building:** The applicant will describe how the project will build the capacity to continue the High School Certifications grant program beyond the life of the grant. How will

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the technical college structure the program to foster partnerships that will continue to evolve and address the pressing workforce needs of the target area?

- e. **Training Outcomes & Objectives:** The applicant will estimate the number of certifications that will be received by students after training. The objectives and goals of the program are listed and strong evidence to support the achievement of the stated goals will be provided and supported.

- f. **Economic Opportunity Enhancements:** Applicant describes how the partnerships and areas of impact are aligned to the design and the goals of the program and how the funds will maximize economic impact in the community and the region. Programs which engage under-resourced populations should outline their strategy and methodology for doing so in this section.