Industry Sectors Worker Training Grants
Questions and Answers

The responses to Questions 2, 4, 10, and 26 have been updated as of 2/26/2020.

1. I am reviewing the Grant Proposal Announcement and have a question on Incumbent Worker Training. In hiring new Field Service Technicians that are recent trade school graduates or have minimal experience, we offer training that we have always funded privately as a company. Successful passing of these courses does result in higher level technician classifications as well as salary increases. Would this be eligible or since we already offer these classes at company expense, they would be excluded from consideration?

    The training must be new, not an ongoing training or routine business training that has been previously funded by other sources. If training modalities have changed, please describe in the application how the training is different.

2. For applications with multiple employers addressing a skill set that does not have access to local technical college programs, can the partner companies attest that the skills learned provide an industry recognized credential?

    Maybe. An industry certification is a credential recognized by business and industry at the local, state or national level. It could be an assessment, an examination or a license that is administered and recognized by an industry third-party or governing board. Industry certificates measure competency in an occupation, and they validate the knowledge base and skills that show mastery in a particular industry. Districts determine which certifications to authorize for students.

3. Past WFF grants had a dollar-to-dollar match requirement. The current GPA has changed to .50 per dollar match. Please confirm that is correct and also confirm if .50 is the new standard for WFF grants and will be the future match requirement.

    The match is defined in each GPA; it is .50 per dollar for this GPA.

4. Do you have a timeline for future grant applications (in the past it was each calendar quarter, will that be the future timeline)?

    WFF funds are only available annually and lapse to the general fund if not used. It is the goal of the Department to distribute the annual allocation as soon as possible and with one single GPA offering per year. If, however, the funds have not been committed, the Department may issue a subsequent GPA within the same year.

5. Can final grant reports be submitted within 30 days of the project period?

    All work and required compliance on the grant must be completed by the end of the grant period. The final report needs to be submitted within the two-year grant period.

6. On page 3 of the GPA, it says to apply online (however, we attempted to start an application and received a message that the request could not be processed) and page 4 says to apply

by email. What is the process to apply and is there a sample application to assist applicants with collecting data to submit?

The application must be completed online in the WFF system. There is an online application that is accessible through https://webapps.dwd.state.wi.us/WFFGrantApplication/Default.aspx, please contact WFF staff if you are having technical difficulties. Also, there are Application Instructions that are accessible by clicking on the help button or can be downloaded from the Wisconsin Fast Forward website under Program Resources at http://wisconsinfastforward.com/wff_standard.htm .

7. Will WFF confirm receipt of applications? The WFF system will send an email after the grant application has been submitted. If you do not receive an email, double check your application for any missing items and try to submit again.

8. Is there a sample Pre-Award Risk Assessment? Additional details are needed on this step in the process to plan related activities (for example, will we need BOD approval, etc.).

The WFF application requires applicants to complete a Due Diligence Checklist, Appendix C, and upload the completed form as part of the online application. Applications that meet the eligibility and due diligence criteria will then be required to complete a Pre-Award Risk Assessment and submitted online. Below is a copy of the questions from the Pre-Award Risk Assessment that will need to be completed in the WFF online system as part of phase II.

9. The GPA speaks to early disqualification of applicants. Are there a number of distinct steps in the application process (i.e., due diligence followed by review, then the application) or is there one step (apply for the grant) with several sub-steps?

Please see above. An applicant must meet the eligibility criteria to be further considered for a grant.

10. A new form, Bureau of Labor Statistics multiple worksite survey form is required. Can a copy of this form be added to the WFF website so applicants know what must be submitted (does this happen via email, online, etc.)?

The Bureau of Labor Statistics multiple worksite survey has been a contractual requirement for WFF grantees to complete. The form will be sent to contracted grantees. DWD will mail or email requests with the standard Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) forms. If DWD doesn't get a response from the initial solicitation, then DWD will send the attached form.

11. How detailed do you expect the match by each partner/employer to be? Is this a statement in the letter of commitment or does a detailed budget with each partner need to be submitted?

The letter of commitment should detail the type of match, cash or In-kind, and the amount of funding provided by budget category. A sample Letter of Commitment can be referenced on page 17 of the application instructions which can be accessed by clicking on the help button or can be downloaded from the Wisconsin Fast Forward website under Program Resources at http://wisconsinfastforward.com/wff_standard.htm.

12. Will workforce boards be required to budget for independent audits?

Grant specific project audits are no longer required but all grantees may be subject to a Department Project Audit. Grantees who also receive over $750,000 in federal funds are required to submit a State Single Audit. Audit expenditures are an eligible expenditure for the WFF program but all program funds have to be incurred and expended within the defined training project period.

13. In the past, WFF has worked with workforce boards to identify a process to pay grant bills with WFF funds and then submit proof of payment (since typical WIOA funding cannot be used to pay WFF training for non-WIOA trainees). Will workforce boards continue to be able to pay grant bills with WFF funds and provide proof of payment?

    Workforce boards can apply for a reimbursement processing waiver from the Department.

14. It appears there is a significant amount of interest in these grants to be targeting underserved populations. For companies that will send incumbent workers (and, some training will take place a year and a half from now so those workers might not even be hired yet), how does WFF recommend we speak to those priority populations?

    Individual grantees can define their recruitment plan and timeline for the training program within the training project period. The grant contract cannot exceed two years and all training activities, reimbursements, and reports need to be completed within that time frame.

15. Is a qualified employee eligible to be the trainer? If yes, are there specific certification requirements?

    Yes, the trainer competencies and certification depend on the needs of the individual grantee and the measures they are using to determine the efficacy of the training.

16. Do you have overall per participant spending guidelines? Are these specific to industry sectors? Could these be shared?

    According to historical WFF data from November 2013 through February 2020, $1,203 is avg cost per trainee in awarded grants. For manufacturing $1,178, transportation $2,387, construction $1,479, health care $631, information technology $1,318, customer service $928, financial services $2,014, and agriculture $862.

17. (p.2) Under the Grant Program Announcement Summary – the 6th bullet states that application propose a training program the "*does not include owners.*" Can you please clarify what "does not include owners" means?

    WFF will not pay for the cost of training the owner of a company.

18. (p.5) Under the Risk Assessment section, it states: "*If an application achieves a score that would be awarded, but the costs are not reasonable or the skills are not transferable, WFF program reserves the right to reject the application.*" Can you please clarify how "not reasonable" is defined?

Grant staff will look at cost per trainee, allowable costs, reasonable costs and program specificities and the financial and legal status of an organization in making this assessment.

19. (p.5) in the Financial Information / Match Requirements it states, "*Letters of Commitment from the employers, partners, and/or Applicant documenting match are required in the application.*" Are employers and/or partners required to make financial contributions to the program (beyond a commitment to employ trainees)?

    A financial or in-kind contribution of at least 50% of the amount of the award is required. If an employer's trainee wage is being used as a match, then it must be addressed in a letter of commitment. Other items used as cash or in-kind match must be verified by the source of the match.

20. (p.6) Eligible Expenses states: "*Wisconsin Fast Forward funds shall be used for training-related expenses, which may include curriculum development, instructor salaries, consultant/contractual expenses, and training materials and supplies.*" Do Grant Funds need to be matched at a line item level, or at the program level?

    The match of $0.50:$1.00 can come from any area of the program budget, it need not be line by line item.

21. (p.7) Under the Grant Evaluation Guidelines section it states: "*Points are given for clearly describing the economic impact to employers and the communities within the region via job creation, expansion of industries, and greater consumer spending power.*" Can you please clarify what is meant by "expansion of industries"?

    It means the growth of the particular business or businesses involved in the grant project.

22. (p.8) Under Practicality / Potential for Employment it references: "*level of business commitment to program*" and "*appropriateness of program design to meet business needs.*" Can you please clarify if this is referencing the applicant's business, the employer / partners' businesses, or both?

    This could be either or both depending on the specific grant project, whom it impacts, and how outcomes will be achieved.

23. (p.8) Under Accessibility for Under-represented/Displaced/Economically Disadvantaged Workers it states, "*readiness level of skill training.*" Can you please clarify what is meant by this?

    If your project is targeting workers with specific barriers, describe how will you measure training needs and success in the application. Different grantees are likely to use a wide variance of approaches.

24. (p.8) Under Deliverables, it references a requirement that a minimum of 75% of trainees "*received industry recognized credential.*" Can you please confirm how an "industry recognized credential" is defined?

If a specific grant's training outcome requires credentialed level of skills, describe in the application how a specific industry uses the credentialing to measure mastery or successful completion of the training. OSHA 10 is an example. Question 2 above provides more details about industry-recognized credentials.

25. (p.10) in Section 6, it requests a "*break out of match by each partner/employer*." Are material contributions (e.g., a forklift to be used as part of the training) considered financial contributions (matches)?

    A forklift used in the training would not be considered match unless it was leased and paid for by a grant partner during the training. WFF would not pay for the use of an existing piece of equipment. If the leased equipment was donated and the training was in donated educational space, these items could be an in-kind match. For additional detail on eligible budget expenses by budget category, please review the Application Instructions that are accessible by clicking on the help button or can be downloaded from the Wisconsin Fast Forward website under Program Resources at http://wisconsinfastforward.com/wff_standard.htm .

26. Will you have this same grant opportunity in the future?

    WFF funds are only available annually and lapse to the general fund if not used. It is the goal of the Department to distribute the annual allocation as soon as possible and with one single GPA offering per year. If, however, funds have not been fully committed, the Department may issue a subsequent GPA within the same year.

27. If UW – Green Bay is working with an employer that meets this criteria and UW is going to do the training, can UW be the entity that writes the grant?

    Potentially yes, but the trainee data entry will need to be coordinated with the employee placement partner or partners. The applicant would be required to meet all the training deliverables of the contract.

28. Will a grant be competitive if the industry does not have a certification/credential?

    It depends on the specific project and projected outcomes as well as the number of other applications that are requesting funding. See the grant evaluation guidelines for the rating scale.

29. For the deliverable percentages, are the percentages applicable to the total original group of trainees or, for example, does the 65% placed into employment only pertain to those who completed training?

    The 65% placement rate is based upon the original contracted number of trainees.

30. Is an organization eligible to run two Wisconsin Fast Forward grants simultaneously?

    Yes, but no grantee may receive more than $400,000 in any combination of grants during a calendar year. See Wis. Admin. Code § DWD 801.10(4).

31. To clarify, according to the grant period definition, the grant period is no longer than two years. If we start executing the grant contract on April 30, 2020 we have until April 30, 2022 to request reimbursement?

    Reimbursements must be submitted at least quarterly and no more than monthly. All training must be completed by the end of the training project period and all required compliance on the grant must be completed by the contract end date.

32. Can projects start later than April 30, 2020?

    Training must begin no later than three months from the date of the grant award letter. See GPA page 11.

33. Can you please provide a definition of 'placement into employment'? Would movement into a new position such as a promotion count under this measure?

    Unemployed individuals would need to be hired to fill vacant or new positions. Underemployed individuals would need to gain new or better employment, higher wages, more hours, and/or more permanent employment. Incumbent trainees would need to receive increased compensation, more hours, or new credentials or increased functionality. A new position or improvement of employment circumstance, such as a promotion, would be considered a placement for all three employment types.

34. If an employer were to be reimbursed from the grant recipient for training-related costs under this funding announcement, would this count as a subcontract? It is unclear from the question whether the employer is a partner of the applicant. Without the specifics of the application, we are unable to answer this question.

35. Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, a federal program, Social Security Numbers are not required to be collected. Is there an exemption under WFF for the collection of Social Security Numbers? If not, what is the process for if an individual does not want to disclose their Social Security Numbers?

    Mandatory reporting includes the number of trainees, identified by social security number, that successfully complete the training. See Wis. Admin. Code § DWD 801.11(3)(f) and GPA page 7.

36. If a proposal were to have a Program Manager position who was responsible for outreach to businesses for the training, selection of training, check-ins during the training, placement services, etc. would the cost of this position be considered direct program costs or administrative cost?

    These would be direct program costs. For additional detail on eligible budget expenses by budget category, please review the Application Instructions that are accessible by clicking on the help button or can be downloaded from the Wisconsin Fast Forward website under Program Resources at http://wisconsinfastforward.com/wff_standard.htm .

37. Can you please provide a definition of 'curriculum'? What would count as curriculum? Would an in-house employer developed or designed training count as curriculum?

    Curriculum are the content which will be taught in a training program that is funded by Wisconsin Fast Forward. It includes instructional materials, software, and equipment developed for a grant funded project. See Wis. Admin. Code § DWD 801.09(4). It is the total package of learning activities designed to achieve the objectives of the training program. Designed or in-house training would count. Curriculum will be designed or customized to meet the needs of a specific employer and training regimen or goals. If WFF funds pay for curriculum development, the curriculum developed would be owned by the State of Wisconsin and as such may be made available for other organizations to use.