



Wisconsin Fast Forward-Blueprint for Prosperity Wisconsin Technical College System Grants Frequently Asked Questions July 2014

What is the Wisconsin Fast Forward (WFF) worker training program?

Governor Scott Walker signed 2013 Act 9 into law in March 2013 with the near-unanimous support of the State Legislature. Wisconsin Fast Forward helps address the state's need for skilled workers. The program created worker training grants and makes other investment to prepare workers for jobs available today and in the years to come.

Up to \$15 million in grants is available to support employer-led worker training. The Department of Workforce Development's Office of Skills Development (OSD), established shortly after the passage of the legislation, will administer the program.

What is the Blueprint for Prosperity aspect of the WFF program?

Governor Walker signed into law 2013 Act 139 as part of his "Blueprint for Prosperity" initiative in March 2014. The legislation provides \$34.5 million in additional funding to expand the WFF worker training program.

DWD's Office of Skills Development administers the WFF – Blueprint for Prosperity program with various partners, including the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, Wisconsin Technical College System, Department of Public Instruction, and others, to ensure that funds are disbursed quickly, efficiently, and transparently.



The grants build on the strengths of the WFF program by engaging businesses to develop and deliver training programs who commit to hire individuals who acquire the targeted in-demand skill sets.

How are Technical Colleges involved in the blueprint program?

Highlights of the "Blueprint for Prosperity" initiative include:

- Grants for the Wisconsin Technical College System to reduce waiting lists for enrollment in programs and courses in high-demand fields.
- Grants to support projects that bring together school districts, technical colleges and businesses to provide high school pupils with industry recognized certifications in high-demand fields.

- Grants to enhance employment opportunities by providing employer-driven training for persons with disabilities.

How will the reduction in wait lists work?

Each technical college identified programs that, due to capacity constraints, had greater demand for courses than was currently available. Along with a list of programs for funding consideration by DWD, each college submitted the projected number of students to be trained through the request, along with other relevant data such as project scope, duration of training, and occupational title information.

DWD cross-matched the submitted data with additional labor market information and other sources to identify programs that have the greatest economic impact and result in employment for graduates. DWD shared the results with the technical colleges and, based on this analysis, worked with the colleges to revise and finalize individual program wait lists for grant funding consideration.

How were the grant applications evaluated?

Each technical college gave a presentation on its submission before the Governor's Council on Workforce Investment (CWI). The CWI is charged with aiding Wisconsin employers in finding the workers they need and providing resources to enable workers to access training for in-demand careers. The CWI provided feedback on all presentations to DWD's Office of Skills Development (OSD) for consideration prior to OSD evaluating and scoring each application.

OSD staff, in consultation with DWD's Office of Economic Advisors, developed nine criteria to objectively evaluate each program submission. A total of 37 points were available for the highest priority program for each technical college. The technical college name was removed from the scoring sheets to ensure anonymity.

Criteria	Description
Technical College Priority	Technical colleges used perceived employer demand and the potential impact upon the local economy to prioritize submissions.
Employer Commitment to Hire	Strength of regional employers' commitment to hire graduates based on existing surveys or other evidence of employer support, lists of employers with stated skilled labor demands, documented regional cluster or workforce sector strategies, employer letters of support, or other evidence.
High-Demand Fields	Based on 10-year job projections; skill sets noted in regional economic development and growth plans; wage progression for occupational titles as determined by labor market economists.
Job Openings	Potential for hires determined through annual projections based on occupational codes and job titles in counties and regions.

Regional Economic Development – Sector Strategy	Job title and sector demands as documented in regional economic growth plans or workforce sector strategies.
Return on Investment – Payback Period	Higher points for quicker payback periods as calculated by labor market economists.
Per-Student Cost	Number of students to be trained divided by total funding request of specific program.
Credential/Diploma/Degree Awarded	Points assigned based upon the type of credential, diploma or degree awarded to graduates of each program.
Duration of Training – Time to Hire	Short-duration programs to complete training or to secure a credential (e.g. boot camps or one semester programs) received more points than programs that required 1-2 years to complete.

How Were Award Decisions Made?

DWD applied the nine criteria to objectively score each application and recommended approval of funding requests based on aggregate scores. Approved requests totaled \$28 million to train 4,908 students in 100 programs.

Individual student tracking, program monitoring, reporting, etc., will be the responsibility of the technical college, and DWD will oversee the reduction of wait list activities via reports submitted by the technical college.

Are these competitive grants?

Technical college grants were awarded on a competitive basis. Unlike the previous grant award programs available to any business or other entity under Wisconsin Fast Forward, per Special Session AB 2, this grant program identified Wisconsin's 16 technical colleges as potential recipients. DWD reached out directly to the technical colleges with specific instructions and information requests to apply for the competitive grants and undergo evaluation.

What can and can't the grant money be used for?

The focus of this funding is to provide grants for the Wisconsin Technical College System specifically to reduce waiting lists for enrollment in programs and courses in high-demand fields.

This grant money will not cover capital projects, new curriculum development, remediation-related coursework, financial aid and other non-direct program related expenditures.