



→ BLUEPRINT FOR PROSPERITY

JUNE 2014

Training Workers with Disabilities Grant Program Announcement (GPA)

Grants of \$5,000 to \$100,000

Applications must be submitted no
later than 11:59 p.m. on
September 16, 2014

Grant Program Announcement
GPA #BP142PWD



Contact Information

Linda Cottington

Primary

WFFTrainingWorkersWithDisabilities@dwd.wisconsin.gov

Secondary

(608) 266-0177

Applications may be downloaded from:
www.WisconsinFastForward.com/wff/prosperity

COMPLETED APPLICATIONS MUST BE EMAILED TO:
WFFTrainingWorkersWithDisabilities@dwd.wisconsin.gov

Applications must be submitted no
later than 11:59 p.m. on
September 16, 2014

Office of Skills Development

Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

201 E. Washington Ave.

P.O. Box 7946

Madison, WI 53707-7946

WisconsinFastForward.com

WISCONSIN FAST FORWARD - BLUEPRINT FOR PROSPERITY

In March 2013, Governor Scott Walker signed 2013 Act 9, also known as Wisconsin Fast Forward, into law with strong bipartisan support from both houses of the Wisconsin legislature. The original Wisconsin Fast Forward program included \$15 million to provide employer-focused worker training grants, enabled the creation of the Office of Skills Development (OSD) at the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) to administer the grant program, and provided resources to expand the state's labor market information system.

In March 2014, Governor Walker signed legislation under his "Blueprint for Prosperity" initiative to invest an additional \$35.4 million into the Wisconsin Fast Forward program. The additional funds will support training grants to technical colleges, grants for collaborative projects among school districts, technical colleges, and businesses, as well as grants to enhance employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.

As with the original Wisconsin Fast Forward worker training grant program, DWD will be the lead state agency overseeing the Wisconsin Fast Forward–Blueprint for Prosperity initiative, and OSD will remain the point of contact for employers interested in Wisconsin Fast Forward and Wisconsin Fast Forward – Blueprint for Prosperity. OSD administers and oversees the grant program through a transparent and accountable process. Additionally, OSD works to encourage the development of innovative solutions at the local and regional level that bring together employers, educators, workforce development boards, and economic development organizations to meet area workforce demands.

The original Wisconsin Fast Forward program supports initiatives that provide sustainable short and medium-term training and placement of workers in positions which offer trainees long-term professional growth and economic opportunity. Wisconsin Fast Forward-Blueprint for Prosperity further incentivizes employers to incorporate technical college pupils, high school pupils and persons with disabilities into their workforce training strategies. The long-term goal of Wisconsin Fast Forward is to encourage partnerships between businesses and local or regional economic development organizations, workforce development boards, secondary and post-secondary educational institutions, private training providers, and other stakeholders. It is anticipated that the relationships developed through Wisconsin Fast Forward and Wisconsin Fast Forward-Blueprint for Prosperity will continue to flourish after the conclusion of each grant.

Department of Workforce Development → Office of Skills Development

TRAINING WORKERS WITH DISABILITIES GRANT PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT (GPA)

Recruiting employees who align with your business' culture and mission has never been more important to Wisconsin business owners than in today's economy. Developing a recruitment and hiring strategy that includes persons with disabilities can help businesses improve their bottom line. Persons with disabilities are major contributors to the workforce in Wisconsin communities.

Persons with disabilities have diverse skills, strengths, and interests, and are an asset to any workplace setting. For example, Walgreens has conducted research showing that persons with disabilities add to their bottom line through increased productivity, reduced staff turnover, and lower absentee rates.

The Office of Skills Development (OSD) provides financial and technical assistance to businesses to meet their labor needs in partnership with worker training organizations throughout the state. As the administrator for the Wisconsin Fast Forward program, OSD is responsible for establishing funding priorities, developing application criteria, awarding and disseminating grants, monitoring grant outcomes and assessing program goals.

OSD, in partnership with DWD's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and Office of Veterans Services (OVS), is seeking applications from Wisconsin businesses that are looking to train and hire persons with disabilities. DVR Business Service Consultants and OVS Local Veterans Employment Representatives are available to assist employers.

Funds available through this GPA are intended to provide a flexible funding source to respond to the workforce needs of Wisconsin businesses, diversifying their workforce, and increasing productivity by hiring persons with disabilities and veterans. WFF funds can be used to develop and deliver training for persons with disabilities and veterans. In addition, DVR and OVS can provide resources to address traditional barriers to employment sometimes faced by persons with disabilities and veterans.

OSD will ensure accountability and transparency of program outcomes by partnering with the Grantee to monitor grant expenditures and program outcomes.

About DVR Business Service Consultants (BSCs) and OVS Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs):

DVR Business Service Consultants can assist by:

- Enabling businesses to tap into highly reliable and qualified job applicants;
- Supporting businesses to build strategies to ensure employee retention;
- Developing a comprehensive assessment of employer needs, including specific skills, tasks, and positions that are in demand;
- Developing customized on-site or off-site training based on identified workforce needs.

The Office of Veterans Services specializes in assisting disabled veterans prepare for the job market and find employment. Our network of Local Veteran Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists help prepare veterans for employment and connect them with employers through targeted business engagement.

To be contacted by a DVR Business Service Consultant (BSC) or Local Veteran Employment Representative (LVER) near you, please contact:

Linda Cottington

office: (608) 266-0177

email: WFFTrainingWorkersWithDisabilities@dwd.wisconsin.gov

Targeted Business Size: Any

Types of Trainees:

Unemployed, underemployed, or incumbent workers in at least one of the following categories:

- Persons receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI).
- Veterans with a service-connected disability.
- Persons who are eligible DVR consumers.

Consultation is available to identify and recruit eligible trainees. Inquiries may be emailed to Linda Cottingham at: WFFTrainingWorkersWithDisabilities@dwd.wisconsin.gov

Duration of Training: Short- to medium-term training with each course or module lasting no longer than 6 months.

Project Period: The entire process, including curriculum development, training, pre- and post-training activities, and closeout, cannot exceed 2 years.

Total Funds Allocated to the GPA: Up to \$1,000,000

Grant Amount: The amount provided to each Grantee will be between \$5,000 and \$100,000. Grant expenditures must be incurred during the project period. All eligible grant expenditures will be reimbursed when grant expenses are documented by the Grantee and approved by OSD. If awarded, a percentage of the grant may be retained until Grantee is in compliance with all conditions of the grant as stipulated in the contract.

The applicant must be a legal entity in order to be considered eligible for a grant. Each application must include at least one employer that employs or is willing to hire workers who receive training under this grant. This employer may also work in collaboration with any of the following partners to submit an application:

- For-Profit Businesses
- Veteran Service Organizations (Disabled American Veterans, American Legion, etc.)
- Technical Colleges and/or other private/public educational institutions
- Workforce Development Boards
- Economic Development Organizations
- Chambers of Commerce
- Trade Associations
- Non-Profit Organizations
- Recognized workforce development or technical training organizations

The primary product(s) described within a grant application should be curriculum development and/or the training delivery system of curriculum to persons with disabilities.

Grant Eligible Expenses:

- Curriculum Development for customized training defined by the employer(s)
- Instructor/Trainer
- Training materials (consumable and non-consumable)
- Facilities (off- site)
- Pre-screening assessment, recruitment, and marketing
- Coordination and project management

Examples of Projects That Could Be Funded With WFF Grants:

- The development and delivery of on or off-site training to meet the workforce needs of a local business or consortium of businesses.
- Curriculum development customized to industry standards meeting the specific business or business's needs.

Application Process: The department shall solicit applications for grants by preparing and publishing a notice of the availability of the GPA on the department's website, and distributing copies of the GPA on request. The GPA and application can be found at <http://WisconsinFastForward.com/wff/prosperity>.

Opportunity Category: Competitive

Important Dates:

- Grant Application Due Date: **September 16, 2014** no later than 11:59 p.m.
- Anticipated award announcements: **October 2014**

Outcomes: OSD will work with the Grantee on reporting pre- and post-training skills attainment of all participants, wages and permanent job placements for each participant.

Applications should include a sustainability plan, which outlines a strategy to continue comprehensive training and placement of persons with disabilities that addresses the common employment barriers persons with disabilities might face (e.g. transportation, reasonable accommodations).

Grant Scoring and Evaluation:

OSD will rate applications on a 50 point scale, based upon the following point values:

- Project Need (up to 15 points)
- Training Program Design, Cost and Implementation (up to 20 points)
- Goal and Objectives (up to 15 points)

Successful Applications Will Include the Following:

- Engagement of businesses in determining workplace training needs
- Development of a comprehensive assessment of employer needs, including the specific skills, tasks and positions that are in demand.
- Performance-based assessment of trainees' skills and competencies both pre- and post-training to assess training impact.
- Data collection and reporting that includes wage information for training participants after training completion.

The following criteria will be given extra consideration in the grant application review process:

- Strategies to work with a DVR Business Service Consultant or OVS Local Veteran Employment Representatives in the recruitment of trainees;
- Recruitment and training provided to persons with significant disabilities as defined by the DVR Order of Selection functional assessment;
- Businesses offering integrated community-based employment at a competitive wage;
- Statement of commitment to continue recruitment and hiring practices that are inclusive of qualified persons with disabilities after the end of the grant period.

Employer Letters of Commitment

Letters of Commitment will be required from each participating employer, which must contain:

- The number of persons with disabilities the employer is willing to hire and/or the number of incumbent workers who will receive a wage increase as a result of successfully completing the training.
- Timeframe
- Potential employee wages by occupation

Training Provider and/or Other Partner Letters of Commitment may also be submitted to show support for the project.

Post-Award Terms and Conditions/Reporting Requirements:

Grant applications that are funded under this announcement will be required to execute a binding contract with DWD. Grantees may also be required to submit documentation of match contributions, progress reports, and a final project report.

In addition to these conditions, please note the following:

1. Grantees will be required to verify that each trainee meets at least one of the eligibility requirements as identified under the Types of Trainees section of this GPA to receive reimbursement under the grant.
2. All grant applications funded under this announcement will be subject to program evaluation.
3. All grant funds will be disbursed through an Automatic Clearing House (ACH) payment (direct deposit). ACH payments will be deposited into the Grantee's account. To begin receiving ACH payment, you will be required to complete an ACH set-up form which will be provided with your grant award materials.
4. All grant recipients are subject to audit of related expenditures by DWD staff and/or by an independent certified public accountant.
5. To the extent feasible and permissible by law, an applicant's request that trade secrets or other confidential information submitted remain confidential will be honored and the information will be treated as confidential only if: (i) the information is in fact protected confidential information such as trade secrets or privileged information, (ii) the information is specifically identified as confidential by the applicant, and (iii) no disclosure of the information is required by law or judicial order. If the application results in a grant, the honoring of confidentiality of identified information shall not limit the right to disclose the details and results of this award to the public.
6. Unless otherwise specified in the contract, the training curriculum developed with Wisconsin Fast Forward grant monies will become the property of the State of Wisconsin.