



March 1, 2018

Expanded Wisconsin Fast Forward Program

**Advanced Manufacturing Technical Education Equipment
Grant Program Announcement**

Award Amount \$5,000 to \$50,000
((\$500,000 available))

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Advanced Manufacturing Technical Education Equipment Grant Program Announcement

Wisconsin Fast Forward program: The Wisconsin Fast Forward (WFF) program is a state funded grant program to provide employer-focused worker training grants. The Office of Skills Development (OSD) at the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) administers the grant program. Additionally, OSD works to encourage the development of innovative solutions at the local and regional level that bring together employers, educators, workforce development entities and economic development organizations to meet area workforce demands. Under Governor Walker's leadership, 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.

This grant opportunity is to reimburse **Wisconsin school districts** for purchasing and installing technical equipment for advanced manufacturing Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs. Funds may also be used to reimburse the school district for the expense of modifications to technical education buildings that are made to accommodate the equipment. Grants are intended to train more high school students in advanced manufacturing fields to help address Wisconsin's skilled worker shortage and accelerate the transition of students into the workforce by preparing them for stable careers and success in a modern, global, and competitive economy. Delivering work skills education in high school also provides a strategic opportunity for students and their families to reduce the costs of higher education by providing dual enrollment credits, industry-endorsed certificates, and technical endorsements on high school diplomas.

The long-term goal of the WFF worker training grant program is to encourage partnerships between employer(s) and local or regional economic development organizations, workforce development boards, post-secondary institutions, and private training providers. It is anticipated that the relationships developed through WFF funded training programs will continue to flourish after the grant has ended.

Legislative Authority: Find WFF legislation in state statutes at:

https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/misc/lfb/budget/2017_19_biennial_budget/045_comparative_summary_of_budget_recommendations_governor_and_joint_committee_on_finance_by_agency/workforce_development.pdf.

Grant Program Announcement Summary: This Grant Program Announcement (GPA) is **only available to Wisconsin school districts** for the acquisition of equipment used in advanced manufacturing fields in the workplace, together with any software necessary for the operation of the equipment and any instructional material necessary to train pupils in the operation of the equipment. Funds may also be used to support modifications to technical education buildings that are made to accommodate the equipment.

School district applications must demonstrate that the program for which they will be purchasing and installing equipment meets the needs of employers in their region; leverages partnerships and matching funds (including cash match equal to 200 percent of the awarded grant amount); optimizes regional training capacity and significantly increases supply of skilled workers in advanced manufacturing fields; builds on proven programs and demonstrates sustainability. Grant proposals

that leverage partnerships with employers and/or non-state matching funds are eligible to receive bonus points during evaluation.

School districts are required to track outcomes related to the vocational and technical education programs for grant supported equipment purchases and to file a report with DWD by September 1 of each of the first three fiscal years (following the fiscal year in which the grant was received).

Application Forms, Instructions, Checklists, and Process:

Access the application, along with the application instructions, informational webinars, related guidelines, and checklists at: http://wisconsinfastforward.com/wff_standard.htm

Email complete applications and attachments to: wisconsinfastforward@dwd.wisconsin.gov

Project Period: The project period for this GPA is June 30, 2018 through June 30, 2020.

Grant Amount: From \$5,000 to \$50,000 is available per grantee. Grant expenditures must be incurred during the Project Period. All eligible grant expenses will be reimbursed as per individual contract specifications when expenses are:

- Documented by grantee per their contract
- Approved by OSD

Final disbursement of grant funding will be made when the grantee complies with all conditions of the grant as stipulated in the contract and may be pro-rated or withheld based on the extent to which contract conditions are met.

Cost-Sharing: Grant proposals that leverage partnerships with employers and/or non-state matching funds are eligible to receive bonus points in the grant evaluation rubric. Documentation of the leveraged funds is required in the application.

Grant Evaluation Rubric and Scoring: WFF is a competitive grant program. All applications are reviewed by internal and external reviewers and rated on a 100-point scale, based upon the following categories and related point values:

- Demand-Driven, based on labor market data and employer partnerships (up to 20 points)
- Leverages Partnerships with Employers and Non-State Matching Funds (up to 20 points, with up to 5 additional points)
- Optimizes Regional Training Capacity and the Number of Skilled Workers, as validated by relevant employers (up to 20 points, with up to 5 additional points)
- Builds on Proven Programs (up to 20 points)
- Demonstrates Sustainability (up to 20 points)

The Grant Evaluation Rubric and Scoresheet is available online at:

http://wisconsinfastforward.com/wff_standard.htm

Application Deadline: Grants are due by Tuesday, May 15 at 3 p.m. Email complete applications and attachments to: wisconsinfastforward@dwd.wisconsin.gov

Eligibility: For an application to be considered for funding, the following conditions must be met:

- A Wisconsin school district must be the applicant
- Applicants may apply for no more than one grant
- Applicants must limit their funding request for no more than one Advanced Manufacturing field
- Applicants must include a plan to secure cash match from employers or other resources equal to 200 percent of the grant amount awarded
- Matching dollars must be in the form of money or the monetary value of new equipment contributed from the school district, private sources, or both

Eligible Expenses: Expanded WFF funds shall be used to reimburse expenses related to the purchase of advanced manufacturing training equipment, related software and instructional supplies. One-time installation costs may be included in the request, as well as requests for minor facilities renovations necessary for the successful installation and use of the equipment. Facility renovations are limited to a maximum of twenty percent of requested funds from WFF.

Ineligible Expenses: WFF funds may not be used for the purchase of real estate, facility construction or substantial remodeling, traditional public or private Kindergarten–12th grade education, trainee wages, or fringe benefits.

Supplement not Supplant: All funding identified as "leveraged" or "in-kind" must be new funds and cannot replace existing federal, state, or local government funding. Substituting existing funds with state grant funds will result in additional fiscal monitoring and may result in an audit. 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.

Letters of Commitment: Partner Letters of Commitment or Support must include attestation regarding partnership expectations, the need for employees trained in advanced manufacturing, and any other elements that inform the program. Any source of leveraged funds must also clearly indicate the source of the funding and describe how it supplements the project.

Contract: The expanded WFF Advanced Manufacturing Technical Education Equipment Grant applications that are funded under this GPA will be required to execute a binding contract with DWD before any expenses are incurred for which reimbursement is expected.

Grant Reporting Requirement: The grantee is responsible for tracking and monitoring enrollment counts, partnering and awarded credentials counts, budget and any other required information related to the vocational and technical education programs for which the grant supported equipment purchase.

School districts are required to file a report with DWD by September 1 of each of the first three fiscal years following the fiscal year in which the grant was received that describes how the grant moneys were expended; describes the outcomes achieved as a result of receiving the grant; shares the best practices employed by the school district regarding the training of pupils in the use of the

equipment acquired (including a plan for the sustainability of the training) and other information as required.

Additionally, school districts may be subject to program and fiscal audits by DWD as defined in the contract. Reports should justify quantifiable outcomes and impacts for the school district, training participants, employers and the State of Wisconsin, including progress towards addressing two of the three grant program goals below:

1. Increase the count of students able to participate in an existing program
2. Create a new program to meet a demonstrated employer demand, as supported by labor market data and partnerships with employers
3. If no increase in the number of participating students is projected, the applicant must demonstrate a significant improvement in the skills of the students who are able to participate in the program because existing equipment will be replaced or updated, as validated by relevant employers