



**July 2017**

**WORKER TRAINING GRANTS  
for  
Small Business Occupations**

Award Amount: \$5,000 to \$50,000

## Contact Information

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**Wisconsin Fast Forward Program:** The Wisconsin Fast Forward 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 will work 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.

This grant opportunity is for employers who can demonstrate a critical need for skilled workers and are seeking Wisconsin Fast Forward training grants for a customized skills training program. A skilled workforce is vital to economic development and community growth in Wisconsin. The need for skilled labor is typically driven by local and regional markets, requires specific expertise and/or skill credentials and must be readily available to meet work schedules and work plans.

The Wisconsin Fast Forward program will act as a catalyst, encouraging increased collaboration between Wisconsin's workforce trainers and employers to develop and execute business-led training programs. These training programs are designed to provide sustainable, short- and medium-term training and placement of workers in positions that offer trainees long-term professional growth and economic opportunity. To maintain a strong environment for private-sector job creation, Wisconsin must train workers to fill the employment demands of growing and expanding employer(s).

The long-term goal of the Wisconsin Fast Forward worker training grant program is to encourage partnership 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 Wisconsin Fast Forward funded training programs will continue to flourish after the Wisconsin Fast Forward grant has ended.

**Legislative Authority:** Find Wisconsin Fast Forward legislation in state statutes at: [Reports & Resources](#).

**Administrative Rules:** The rules governing the Wisconsin Fast Forward program are included in [Chapter DWD 801](#).

**Grant Program Announcement Summary:** This Grant Program Announcement (GPA) supports training for small business occupations. Applications must include a customized training program that mitigates an employer's critical workforce problem, addresses a documented workforce demand, is supported by local, regional, or statewide labor data and results in training participants finding and retaining employment and/or incumbent workers earning higher wages post-training completion. The training program must demonstrate that it will provide the education and skills determined necessary by the employer(s) to enhance the stability and growth of the business and provide opportunities for income and career growth for trainees. It must also include at least one employer committing to the employment of these workers and/or incumbent worker wage increases, unless precluded under in an existing union contract.

Employment categories and trainee cohorts to be identified in the application include: unemployed individuals, underemployed workers, new hires and incumbent workers. Definitions follow:  
Unemployed Individual: Trainees who are not employed at the time of training.

- **Underemployed Worker:** Trainees who currently work below skill level or part-time, but desire full-time work at the time of training. Underemployed worker trainees will gain new and better employment because of the training.
- **New Hires:** Trainees who are employed at an employer placement partner after the application date and will be on the payroll of the employer placement partner at the time the training starts.
- **Incumbent Workers:** Trainees who are employed at an employer placement partner at the time of training.

Grant applicants are encouraged to consider recruiting potential trainees from at-risk, vulnerable or special populations, such as: chronically unemployed individuals, economically disadvantaged individuals, ex-offenders, first time graduates, minorities, people with disabilities, veterans and W-2 recipients. If the trainee cohort includes individuals from these populations and effectively identifies strategies for recruiting and retaining these trainees, the grant review committee may award additional points when scoring the application. See specific definitions below:

- **Ex-Offenders:** Trainees who are ex-offenders reintegrating into communities when they are released after correctional time is served.
- **First Time Graduates:** Trainees who have received a high school diploma or equivalent within the last two years.
- **Veterans:** Trainees must have been discharged or released from active duty in the Armed Forces under honorable or general discharge conditions as defined in 5 U.S.C. 2101(2), "Armed Forces" is defined under 5 U.S.C. 2101(2) as the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and Coast Guard.

Successful grant applications will include customized training programs defined by employers and may include partnerships with local or regional economic development organizations, workforce development boards, public or private post-secondary institutions and/or private training providers to recruit trainees and deliver outcomes. *The OSD recommends that customized training programs focus on skills attainment and certifications.* Skills attainment develops skills that directly benefit the workers receiving the training by increasing their mastery of their occupation in their field of employment and/or provide new skills for new product lines or business expansion.

**Application Forms, Instructions, Checklists, and Process:** Applications must be submitted online. You can access the online application, along with the application instructions, informational webinars, related guidelines and checklists at: [WisconsinFastForward.com](http://WisconsinFastForward.com).

**Due Diligence:** All applicants are required to complete a Due Diligence form prior to submission of the application.

**Duration of Training Courses:** Grants support short- to medium-term training with each course or module lasting no longer than 12 months.

**Training Project Period:** The training project period, including curriculum development, training and pre- and post-training activities, can be no longer than 2 years.

**Grant Amount:** Grant awards range from \$5,000 to \$50,000 per Grantee. Grant and match expenditures must be incurred during the training project period. All eligible grant expenditures will be reimbursed when

grant and match expenses are documented by the Grantee and approved by OSD. If awarded, a percentage of the grant may be retained until the Grantee complies with all conditions of the grant contract.

**Match/Cost Sharing Requirement:** Cash or in-kind match equal to half the amount of the grant is required. Letters of commitment from the employers, partners and/or applicant documenting match will be required in the application.

**Grant Evaluation Rubric and Scoring:** Wisconsin Fast Forward is a competitive grant program. All applications will be reviewed by internal and external reviewers and rated on a 100-point scale, based upon the following point values:

- Project Need (up to 20 points)
- Training Program Design, Cost and Implementation (up to 20 points)
- Training Objectives and Outcomes (up to 20 points)
- Economic Impact (up to 15 points)
- Capacity Building (up to 10 points)
- Economic Opportunity Enhancements (up to 15 points)

The Grant Evaluation Rubric and Score Sheet is available online at: [WisconsinFastForward.com](http://WisconsinFastForward.com).

**Important Dates:**

- Online Grant Application available: July 1, 2017
- Grant applications remain open throughout the year with anticipated "Intent to Award" announcements occurring within 60 days of the end of each quarter as outlined below:

Submission Date	Intent to Award on or Before
January 1 – March 31	May 31
April 1 – June 30	August 30
July 1 – September 30	November 30
October 1 – December 31	February 28

**Eligibility:** Each application must include at least one employer with a stated commitment to hire successful trainees or to increase wages for successful incumbent worker trainees and a complete description of the customized training program and anticipated outcomes for individuals. The employer must have 50 employees or less, have at least one Wisconsin location and the trainees must be based at that Wisconsin location. Occupations trained must be occupations that are in-demand in Wisconsin now or will be in-demand within the next ten years, as determined by labor market information. Applications may include one or more partner(s), including: local or regional economic development organizations, workforce development boards, post-secondary educational institutions or private training providers. The applicant must designate a fiscal agent in the application.

**Eligible Expenses:** Wisconsin Fast Forward funds shall be used for training-related expenses, which may include instructor salaries and fringe benefits, consultant/contractual expenses and training materials and supplies. You can access the online application, along with the application instructions, informational webinars, related guidelines and checklists at: [WisconsinFastForward.com](http://WisconsinFastForward.com).

**Ineligible Expenses:** Wisconsin Fast Forward 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, tuition or trainee wages, stipends or fringe benefits. For details on ineligible expense, see these online resources: application instructions, related guidelines and Chapter DWD 801 rules.

**Supplement not Supplant:** All funding identified as "match" 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.

**Consortium applicants:**

**Employer Letters of Commitment to Hire:** Letters of commitment to hire trainees from the proposed training program or to raise wages for incumbent workers will be required from the participating employers. The letter should clearly indicate the number of successful trainees to be hired and/or incumbent worker wage increases. The employer's letter should also include commitment to any match funding and/or participation in the planning and implementation of the training program.

**Partner Letters of Commitment:** Partner letters of commitment should include an attestation regarding match resources that are available to contribute to the project. In addition, employers or partners who are not willing to commit to job placements, wage increases, or match funding, but support the training model, may submit a letter of support for the project.

**Grant Reporting Requirement:** The customized training project should produce quantifiable outcomes and impacts for the employer, training participants and the State of Wisconsin. The applicant should address projected outcomes for the proposed training program, such as: training new hires, incumbent workers retaining employment, earning higher wages, increasing their skill attainment and/or receiving industry-recognized credentials.

The Grantee will be responsible for tracking and monitoring individual workers receiving training under the grant through the completion of pre- and post-training reports and a final report on the net jobs; including type of trainee served as defined in the *Type of Trainees* section of this GPA and their related wages and/or wage increases. The anticipated result is a skilled workforce that is well-suited for employment and advancement opportunities in Wisconsin.

The Wisconsin Fast Forward applications that are funded under this GPA will be required to execute a binding contract with DWD. Grantees will also be required to submit regular project updates with reimbursement requests, documentation of match contributions, progress reports, pre- and post-training reports and a final project report. Additionally, applicants and their partners may be subject to program and fiscal audits by the Department of Workforce Development as defined in the contract.

**Grant Application Tools:** Information on submitting a grant application and other grant writing tools can be found on the Wisconsin Fast Forward website:

[http://wisconsinfastforward.com/wff\\_standard.htm#adminTools](http://wisconsinfastforward.com/wff_standard.htm#adminTools)