



# WISCONSIN'S

# WORKFORCE INNOVATION GRANT PROGRAM

---



WISCONSIN ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

STATE OF WISCONSIN  
 **DWD**  
Department of Workforce Development

# WORKFORCE INNOVATION GRANT PROGRAM



# Program Materials and Instructions

<b>A. Program Information</b> .....	<b>4</b>
1. Purpose of the Grant Program .....	4
2. Eligible Use of Grant Funds.....	5
3. Ineligible Use of Grant Funds.....	6
4. Eligible Applicants, Partners, and Sub-Recipients .....	6
5. Ineligible Applicants .....	7
6. Contract Term and Availability of Funding .....	9
<b>B. Preparing and Submitting an Application</b> .....	<b>10</b>
1. Required Application Materials.....	10
2. Important Program Dates for Round One.....	10
3. Submission Deadline and Instructions .....	11
4. Components of Successful Applications .....	11
5. Scoring Rubric and Application Judging .....	12
6. Performance Reporting .....	12
<b>C. Grant Application Questions</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>D. Special Grant Agreement Terms and Conditions</b> .....	<b>16</b>
1. Record keeping .....	16
2. Order of Precedence .....	16
3. Grant Agreement.....	16
4. Public Disclosure.....	17
5. Compliance with the Federal American Rescue Plan Act.....	17
6. Miscellaneous .....	17
7. American Rescue Plan Act Funding.....	18
8. Indemnity.....	18
8. Venue for Dispute Resolution.....	18
9. Nondiscrimination .....	19

# A. PROGRAM INFORMATION

As the state recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic crisis it caused, Governor Evers is committed to revitalizing regional economies whose labor force challenges and workforce constraints persist during the recovery. Just as Wisconsin's economy differs regionally, so do the workforce challenges and appropriate solutions.

The Wisconsin Tomorrow Workforce Innovation Grant Program makes grants of up to \$10 million available to regional workforce development entities to design and implement innovative plans to tackle their region's most pressing workforce challenge. The grant program will respond to the negative economic impacts the COVID-19 pandemic has had on Wisconsin's workforce and industries by encouraging affected regions and communities to develop leading-edge, long-term solutions so businesses can find workers, and so workers can prepare for and connect to better, higher-quality and more family-sustaining careers.

For example, a particular region could address a child care desert to support parents to return and participate in the labor force or insufficient transportation options that connect available workers with open jobs. A local industry trade group might invest in and develop registered apprenticeship training opportunities as a strategy to attract or retain talent, while a rural municipality might invest in a broadband solution that allows its residents to work remotely and supports businesses in attracting and retaining talent.

The **Workforce Innovation Grant Program** will promote sustainable regional collaboration and foster local accountability and participation to address workforce challenges resulting from the negative economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This grant program will have two rounds of funding through the end of 2024. These application materials are for Round One.

## 1. Purpose of the Grant Program

- Support the implementation of collaborative and innovative plans and efforts to create better, higher-quality, and more family-sustaining careers to tackle a region's most pressing workforce challenge.
- Assist regional partners in funding workforce development efforts that aid Wisconsin employers and employees in recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Utilize existing relationships and forge new ones to leverage funding sources that encourage the development of coalitions to implement long-term, sustainable workforce development solutions.



Applications will need to present evidence-based solutions reasonably related and proportional to the pandemic-related impact. An application's proposed solution must address the region's most pressing workforce challenge and clearly draw a data-driven connection between the challenge and the proposed solution.

COVID-19 has exacerbated disparities that existed prior to the pandemic. Applications should consider how the proposed solution supports populations and communities disproportionately impacted by the health emergency. The potential for long-term consequences underscores the need for robust and bold proposals.

The term "region" is intentionally not prescribed, recognizing that workforce challenges and solutions may stretch across and include multiple counties but can also be more localized.

## 2. Eligible Use of Grant Funds

All use of funds shall be compliant with applicable provisions of the federal [American Rescue Plan Act](#) (ARPA), U.S. Treasury Interim Rule, any subsequently issued Final Rule and the grant program provisions.

Funds can be used in a variety of ways to address the key workforce challenge identified in the applicant's proposal. The following example categories are meant to be broadly defined to promote this variety, but applicants must clearly link the budget items of their proposed solution to their key workforce challenge. Eligible uses of funds include but are not limited to:

- Up-skilling and/or re-skilling initiatives for in-demand jobs (these programs can include educational classes and on-the-job training)
- Infrastructure investments in broadband systems, water or sewer that directly contribute to expanding access to job training, employment opportunities and workforce support
- Investments in child care or related supportive services to assist employees in accessing new training opportunities and/or expanding and supporting their participation in the labor force
- Providing career counseling or coaching services that aid employees in pursuing new training and employment opportunities
- Capital investments, capital purchases or leases for new or renovated space to support the applicant's proposed program



### 3. Ineligible Use of Grant Funds

Funds may not be requested for expenses reimbursed from any other state or federal government program.

Additional ineligible uses include but are not limited to:

- Fees incurred submitting an application
- Administrative, personnel and programmatic funding for existing operations of the lead applicant and sub-recipients (grant funds will only be awarded for an applicant's proposal for a new and innovative program, and may not be used to fund the continuity of an organization's operations)
- Taxes (except sales taxes on eligible expenses)
- Funding advocacy or lobbying efforts
- Other uses ineligible under ARPA
- Programs that propose work stipends or wage subsidies

### 4. Eligible Applicants, Partners, and Sub-Recipients

The program materials reference three general types of entities that may have roles in a grant application and its proposed solutions: applicants, partners, and sub-recipients. The "applicant" is the entity responsible for submitting the grant application.

A "partner" is any entity that will be an active participant in the applicant's proposed solution, regardless of the form of that participation. For example, a partner could be an employer who agrees to hire workers as part of an apprenticeship program or it could be an entity providing financial support for the project. A "sub-recipient" is a specific type of partner. A "sub-recipient" is a partner who will be receiving grant funds as part of the applicant's proposed solution.

All partners and sub-recipients must be identified in the applicant's application and provide individual letters of commitment. All sub-recipients (but not all partners) must complete the Due Diligence form and submit Attestations. Applications with supporting partners are strongly encouraged.



Applicants must be non-profit organizations or governmental entities. Organizations and entities may apply as applicants on more than one application when representing multiple coalitions. The cumulative award amount for an individual applicant is capped at \$10 million regardless of the number of applications it is party to or submits. Partners and sub-recipients may be any form of public, private, or non-profit entity. Organizations and entities may be identified as partners or sub-recipients on more than one application when participating in multiple coalitions.

If tuition or training costs are part of a proposed application, the applicant may not pay those funds directly to the individuals receiving the education or training; the funds must be paid to the organization providing the education or training.

The capacity of each applicant and sub-recipient will be evaluated to ensure it has the ability to manage one or more grant awards.

All applicants and sub-recipients, which are not government entities or partnerships, must be registered with the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions and have one of the following statuses as of the Grant Announcement closing date: "restored to good standing", "incorporated/qualified/registered", "organized", or "registered." Additionally, applicants and sub-recipients must conduct operations in Wisconsin and have an administrative presence in Wisconsin.

The Workforce Innovation Grant Program is federally funded under ARPA. The applicant and all organizations receiving grant funds as sub-recipients will be subject to State and Federal reporting and auditing requirements along with all other applicable Federal statutes, regulations, and executive orders.

## 5. Ineligible Applicants and Sub-Recipients

Ineligible applicants and sub-recipients include:

- Individuals
- Lobbying organizations as defined by the Internal Revenue Service
- Political organizations subject to tax under IRC section 527, such as political parties; campaign committees for candidates for federal, state or local office; and political action committees

If any of the statements below apply to an applicant or sub-recipient, that applicant or sub-recipient shall be automatically disqualified and their application will not be scored:

- The applicant has not been in operation for more than 24 months.



- Within the last 24 months, the applicant has been required to provide a Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) notice under 29 U.S.C. §2101 et seq. or a notice under Wisconsin's Business Closing and Mass Layoff Law, Wis. Stat. §109.07 (Layoff Notices can be found here: [dwd.wisconsin.gov/dislocatedworker/warn/](http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dislocatedworker/warn/)).
- Within the last 24 months, the applicant has been found to have violated the Unemployment Compensation laws, Wis. Stat. ch. 108.
- Within the last 24 months, the applicant has been found to have violated the Worker's Compensation Act, Wis. Stat. ch. 102.
- The applicant is on the Wisconsin Department of Administration's (DOA's) list of vendors who are not in compliance with Wis. Stat. §77.66, found here: [vendornet.state.wi.us/vendornet/wocc/CertList.pdf](http://vendornet.state.wi.us/vendornet/wocc/CertList.pdf). (Please note that applicants may demonstrate that they have come into compliance since the last posting date of the list. )
- The applicant's status is not registered as a Wisconsin business or otherwise not in good standing with the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions.
- Within the last 24 months, the applicant has been found to have violated the Wisconsin Fair Employment Act, Wis. Stat. §111.31 et. seq., or employment regulations under Wis. Stat. ch. 103.
- The applicant is listed as ineligible on the Department of Administration's Office of Contract Compliance Vendor Directory, found here: [vendornet.wi.gov/Procurement.aspx](http://vendornet.wi.gov/Procurement.aspx)
- The applicant is listed as a delinquent taxpayer with the Wisconsin Department of Revenue at [revenue.wi.gov/Pages/Delqlist/DelqSearch.aspx](http://revenue.wi.gov/Pages/Delqlist/DelqSearch.aspx).

Organizations are strongly encouraged to verify that there are no unresolved issues in these areas prior to submitting the application, or should provide a detailed explanation with the application. In addition, the applicant is responsible to complete the Due Diligence form for each of its proposed sub-recipients. Each sub-recipient must also meet the requirements of the Due Diligence form or will be disqualified from receiving grant funds.



## 6. Contract Term and Availability of Funding

Eligible applicants may apply for awards at a minimum of \$250,000 up to a maximum of \$10 million.

Funds will be awarded in two tranches. The contract term for Round One is a maximum of three years. For Round One of grant funding, funds must pay for expenses incurred no later than Dec. 31, 2024. Notice of the Round Two grant application opening dates and timeframe will be announced in 2022. Depending on demand under the first round of the program, the state may exercise its discretion to adjust the total amount available under this program and each round to ensure funds are used to maximum effect or to adjust to unforeseen changes in economic recovery efforts.

**The state reserves the right to:**

- make no award;
- postpone or cancel this grant announcement upon notification to all applicants;
- amend the grant announcement after its release with appropriate notice to all applicants;
- request that applicants present supplemental information clarifying their application in writing for transparency (applicants failing to respond to these requests during the time allotted may be eliminated from funding consideration);
- give applicants the opportunity to resolve minor or clerical errors; and
- negotiate with select applicant(s) prior to contract awards.



## B. PREPARING AND SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

### 1. Required Application Materials

All application materials must be submitted through the [applicant portal](#) on the DOA website. The items listed below will need to be completed and uploaded as part of the applicant's submission.

- W-9 Form
- Logic Model
- Letters of Commitment (all sub-recipients and partners identified in the application must submit a letter of commitment; the lead applicant must upload the letters in a single PDF)
- Due Diligence form (checklist for the applicant is included in the application form; and will also require that the applicant be responsible for answering the questions on behalf of sub-recipients.

### 2. Important Program Dates for Round One

The following list of key dates is subject to change, but should be consulted when preparing application materials for Round One of the grant.

- Grant program launch: 9/8/2021
- Visit [wedc.org/workforce-innovation-grant](http://wedc.org/workforce-innovation-grant) to register.
- Introductory webinar for applicants: 9/14/2021 and 9/22/2021
- Submission deadline for applicants: no later than 5 p.m. CDT on 10/25/2021
- Judging committee reviews applications: 10/26/2021-11/12/2021
- Award announcements: week of 11/15/2021



### 3. Submission Deadline and Instructions

Applications must be submitted no later than 5 p.m. CDT on 10/25/2021.

All applications must be submitted through the applicant portal on the [DOA](#) website.

### 4. Components of Successful Applications

Successful applications will propose a solution to the region's most pressing workforce development challenge that is related to the negative economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is expected that applicants will build coalitions and public-private partnerships to foster cooperation and engage with partners that are not traditionally included in workforce development efforts.

**Applications will be evaluated competitively. The program will prioritize applications:**

- Involving multiple relevant stakeholders. These include but are not limited to employers, local and regional economic development organizations and planning commissions, tribal nations, Wisconsin Workforce Development Boards, secondary and postsecondary educational institutions, private training providers, local and county governments and nonprofit organizations.
- Offering strategies that engage underserved populations and/or those disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, thereby expanding the workforce and supporting families. These populations include but are not limited to people with disabilities, veterans, justice-involved persons, low-and moderate-income individuals, individuals transitioning out of homelessness, women, workers with lower levels of educational attainment, workers of color and other minority groups.
- Discussing how unemployed and underemployed populations will benefit from the proposed program
- Piloting new solutions to longstanding challenges or implementing solutions with demonstrated success outside of the region
- Leveraging other funding sources

Grant funds cannot be used to supplant existing public resources.



## 5. Scoring Rubric and Application Judging

Applications will be scored competitively by an independent judging committee based on the applicant's written submissions. Applicants should include all relevant information in their application materials to effectively communicate their proposed solution to the judging committee.

All applications will be screened for conformance with ARPA's statutory and regulatory requirements and U.S. Treasury Guidance. The judging committee will assess the stated economic development needs of the affected region in which the proposed project will be located (or will service), as well as the capability of the applicant to implement the proposed project. The application will also be reviewed for the feasibility of the budget presented and conformance with program-specific evaluation criteria set forth in the applicable program guidelines and scoring rubric. The committee may also give weight to achieving a diversity of solutions and geographic distribution for the grant program as a whole.

The state reserves the right to reject any and all applications. The state reserves the right to negotiate the terms of the grant agreement(s) that result from this grant application, including the award amount, with the selected applicant prior to entering into a grant agreement.

## 6. Performance Reporting

All awardees must produce concrete, measurable impacts for workers in the region (e.g., employer commitments to hire, job placements, wage gain). These metrics should also be broken down by demographics in order to track progress against equity goals.

The metrics that will need to be tracked and reported may include the following: number of workers participating in the program broken down by key demographics, number of workers who complete the program broken down by key demographics, number of workers placed into jobs broken down by key demographics, average wages of job placements, average wage growth of job placements, retention of workers placed, amount spent on wraparound services, and total average cost spent per worker.

The DOA is developing additional performance metrics that grantees will be required to submit. Further details about metrics and method of submission will be shared after the awarding of grant funds.



# C. GRANT APPLICATION QUESTIONS

## Section 1: Project Needs Statement (20 points)

- **Project Need (10 points, 500-word limit)** - Identify the workforce challenge facing your region and how this challenge has been caused by and/or exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Identify who is impacted by this workforce challenge and how this challenge affects underserved populations and/or those disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. Describe and define the geographic extent of the challenge and the proposed solution; include the populations, municipalities and/or counties impacted. Provide data, research and/or evidence to support the project need and include how you engaged with affected stakeholders to support the project need.
- **Innovative Approach (10 points, 500-word limit)** - How did you determine that the identified issue is not being addressed (or fully addressed) through existing programs and/or funding in your region? Explain how this project provides an innovative solution to minimize the workforce issue and goes beyond the status quo in your region. If your project is based on solutions that have been successfully implemented in other regions, provide information about those outcomes. If your project is a completely new approach, explain why you believe it will be successful. Provide data, research and evidence to support your proposed approach to address the workforce challenge.

## Section 2: Project Description and Implementation (20 points)

- **Project Description (10 points, 600-word limit)** - Describe the proposed project and how it meets the stated need and critical workforce issues of the region and/or industry. Explain how the proposed program implements a long-term solution to permanently mitigate or remove workforce participation issues. Include information on how the proposed program is reflected in the region's comprehensive economic development strategy (CEDS) or other economic development planning efforts. How will the proposed program impact underserved populations and/or those disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and promote economic opportunity enhancements in their region?
- **Implementation (10 points)** - Using the [logic model](#) attachment, describe the activities and outcomes of the proposed program. The logic model will be scored with the section and should represent all inputs, activities and outcomes and detail how success will be measured.



### Section 3: Partnerships and Collaborations (20 points)

- **Partner Experience and Commitment (10 points, 600-word limit)** - Describe the regional partners involved in the proposed workforce solution; describe each partner's experience and expertise providing relevant services/solutions in the region and how that experience will benefit the project. What role will each partner play? How does this collaboration support objectives and outcomes? What assurances are there that each partner will maintain its commitment for the length of the project?
- **Partner Communication and Coordination (10 points, 600-word limit)** - Describe how the partners identified were involved in identifying the proposed workforce solution. How will communication and coordination with partners be maintained through the project period to maintain accountability and meet program objectives?

### Section 4: Applicant Capability and Staffing (10 points)

- **Grant Management (5 points, 500-word limit)** - Describe the organization's experience in managing local, state or federal grant programs within the last five years; please provide specific examples and details of the experience. Please indicate who specifically will be responsible for grant management activities as part of this project, and their grant management and reporting experience.
- **Workforce System Experience (5 points, 300-word limit)** - Describe your knowledge and experience of working within the regional workforce and economic development systems. Explain your familiarity and experience working with regional system stakeholders and leaders.

### Section 5: Future Outlook of Project Sustainability (10 points)

- **Sustainability (5 points, 500-word limit)** - Describe the resources and activities that the applicant will employ to ensure deliverables of the workforce project will continue beyond the grant period. Be specific about the financial and human resources that will continue and who will be responsible for ensuring continuation.
- **Capacity Building (5 points, 300-word limit)** - Describe how the proposed project could be easily duplicated or adapted in other regions to address similar workforce issues or needs. How will information about the lessons learned and successful implementation of the project be shared with others?



## Section 6: Project Budget (20 points)

Complete the budget template included in the application materials.

Additionally, please address the items below.

- Provide a narrative of each budget line item that includes a description of the activities proposed for the use of funds.
- Describe match funding or in-kind support provided by partners to complete the program. If other funding sources will be leveraged, include them as additional private, public, other ARPA, or federal funding in the project budget. If match funding is not being provided, describe how the proposed program fits within the existing efforts of partner organizations.



# D. SPECIAL GRANT AGREEMENT TERMS AND CONDITIONS

## 1. Recordkeeping

The organization has, and will maintain for at least five years, records sufficient to demonstrate that the expenses were compliant with applicable American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 provisions.

## 2. Order of Precedence

In the event of grant agreement award(s), the contents of the grant announcement (including all attachments), grant announcement addenda and revisions, and the application of the successful applicant(s), and additional terms agreed to in writing by DOA and the applicant(s) shall become part of the grant agreement. Failure of the successful applicant(s) to accept these as a contractual agreement may result in cancellation of the award. The following priority for grant agreement documents will be used if there are conflicts or disputes:

1. American Rescue Plan Act provisions
2. Applicable State of Wisconsin statutes and regulations
3. The terms of the resulting grant agreement
4. The terms of the applicant's response as accepted by the state
5. The terms of the grant application as amended

## 3. Grant Agreement

A grant agreement between the grantee and DOA will cover the period of performance, payment requirements, document requirements, reporting requirements and budget. Grant agreements cover a pre-determined period after the date DOA signs the contract. Applicants must agree to abide by applicable state and federal rules and regulations.



## 4. Public Disclosure

Copies of the application materials, excluding materials deemed to be confidential and proprietary information on Designation of Confidential and Proprietary Information (DOA-3027), will be made available for public inspection in accordance with applicable Wisconsin law. Applicants wishing to maintain the confidentiality of information meeting the definition of a “trade secret” must complete and submit form DOA-3027 as part of their application.

## 5. Compliance with the Federal American Rescue Plan Act

The organization is solely responsible for demonstrating that payments it receives under the program meet the eligibility requirements set forth under this document, state law, federal law and federal guidance. The organization will hold the Department of Administration and the state harmless for any audit disallowance related to the eligibility of costs or revenues, irrespective of whether the audit is ordered by federal or state agencies or by the courts, and will be solely responsible for repaying the ineligible amounts (plus any assessed interest, costs or fees) to the state or the federal government.

## 6. Miscellaneous

The State of Wisconsin reserves the right to audit any grantee. The organization will cooperate and provide any relevant information or records requested by the Department of Administration, any of its authorized representatives, the State of Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau or the Department of the Treasury Office of Inspector General at any time relating to the expenses.



## 7. American Rescue Plan Act Funding

The program utilizes federal funds provided under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. The Department of Administration provides the following information regarding the source of funds:

Federal Award Identification Number: N/A

Federal Award Date: N/A

CFDA #: 21.027 Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

Federal Awarding Agency: Department of the Treasury

Total Amount of the Federal Award: \$2,533,160,626.50

Amount of Federal Funds Obligated by this Award: Refer to Allocation Amount

Total Amount of Federal Funds Obligated: Refer to Allocation Amount

Research & Development: No

Indirect Cost Rate: 1.70%

## 8. Indemnity

By providing funds to the organization, the state assumes no liability for any acts or omissions of the organization or any of its officers, employees, contractors or agents which are in any way related to the costs for which the organization seeks funding. The organization will indemnify and hold harmless the Department of Administration and the state and all of its officers, agents and employees from all suits, actions or claims of any character brought for or on account of any injuries or damages received by any persons or property resulting from the operations of the organization, or of any of its contractors, in performing the activities for which the organization seeks funding.

## 9. Venue for Dispute Resolution

All legal proceedings regarding applicant's use of program funds shall be venued in the state or federal courts located in Dane County, Wisconsin.



## 10. Nondiscrimination

As required by Wis. Stat. §16.765, the applicant and its sub-recipients will not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of age, race, religion, color, handicap, sex, physical condition, developmental disability as defined in s. 51.01 (5), Wis. Stats., sexual orientation as defined in s. 111.32 (13m), Wis. Stats., or national origin. This provision shall include, but not be limited to, the following: employment, upgrading, demotion or transfer; recruitment or recruitment advertising; layoff or termination; rates of pay or other forms of compensation; and selection for training, including apprenticeship. Except with respect to sexual orientation, the applicant and its sub-recipients will take affirmative action to ensure equal employment opportunities. The applicant and its sub-recipients will post in conspicuous places, available for employees and applicants for employment, notices to be provided by the contracting officer setting forth the provisions of the State of Wisconsin's nondiscrimination law.

Pursuant to 2019 Wisconsin Executive Order 1, the applicant and its sub-recipients will hire only on the basis of merit and will not (and did not) discriminate against any persons performing any work for which funding is sought on account of their military or veteran status, gender identity or expression, marital or familial status, genetic information or political affiliation.





To submit the application and view additional details,  
please visit [wedc.org/workforce-innovation-grant](https://wedc.org/workforce-innovation-grant)