



WISCONSIN'S

WORKFORCE INNOVATION GRANT PROGRAM



WISCONSIN ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

STATE OF WISCONSIN



Department of Workforce Development

WORKFORCE INNOVATION GRANT PROGRAM ROUND TWO



**WISCONSIN ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

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REVISIONS

This document was revised on February 17, 2022. On page 10, the Attestations language was updated to align with the final Application form. On page 12, the W-9 was removed from the Required Application Materials. On page 16, the questions for Innovative Approach were corrected to align with the final Application form.

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A. PROGRAM INFORMATION

As the state recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic crisis it caused, Governor Tony Evers is committed to revitalizing regional economies whose labor force challenges and workforce constraints persist. 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 partners 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.

There are two rounds of funding for this grant program. Enclosed are the application materials for Round Two. Governor Evers announced the Round One grant awards on December 14, 2021. The twelve projects from across the state received approximately \$59.5 million. Approximately \$40.5 million is available in Round Two.

Among the projects funded in the first round of grants are public-private partnerships to train and attract healthcare workers throughout rural Wisconsin; develop next-generation advanced manufacturing employees in west-central and southeast Wisconsin; expand affordable, high-quality childcare in northeast, south, and south-central Wisconsin; create pipelines of young, educated workers in Milwaukee; train construction and skilled craft workers throughout the state; foster a culture of entrepreneurship in southeast Wisconsin; and enable incarcerated individuals to earn undergraduate degrees from the University of Wisconsin.

The **Workforce Innovation Grant Program** continues to 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.



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 in recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 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 comply with applicable provisions of the federal [American Rescue Plan Act](#) (ARPA), U.S. Treasury Interim 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)
- 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
- 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
- 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, Sub-Recipients and Partners

The program materials reference three general types of entities that may have roles in a grant application and its proposed solutions: applicants, sub-recipients and partners. The “applicant” is the entity responsible for submitting the grant application. A “sub-recipient” is a partner who will be receiving grant funds as part of the applicant’s proposed solution.

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.

All sub-recipients and partners must be identified in the applicant’s application and provide individual letters of commitment. All sub-recipients (but not all partners) must complete the Attestations form. 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 has been awarded, is party to or submits. Sub-recipients or partners may be any form of public, private or non-profit entity. Organizations and entities may be identified as sub-recipients or partners on more than one application when participating in multiple coalitions.

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, 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



The applicant attests that the following statements are true, accurate, and complete to the best of its knowledge:

- The applicant has been in operation since January 1, 2020
- Since January 1, 2020, the applicant has not 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/).
- Since January 1, 2020, the applicant is in compliance with all applicable requirements of the Unemployment Compensation laws, Wis. Stat. ch. 108.
- Since January 1, 2020, the applicant is in compliance with all applicable requirements of the Worker’s Compensation Act, Wis. Stat. ch. 102.
- The applicant is not listed 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. (Please note that applicants may demonstrate that they have come into compliance since the last posting date of the list.)
- For nonprofit applicants: The applicant is registered as a Wisconsin business or is otherwise in good standing with the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions.
- Since January 1, 2020, the applicant has not 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 not listed as ineligible on the Department of Administration’s Office of Contract Compliance Vendor Directory, found here: vendornet.wi.gov/Procurement.aspx
- The applicant is not listed as a delinquent taxpayer with the Wisconsin Department of Revenue at 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. In addition, the applicant is responsible to complete the Attestations form for each of its proposed sub-recipients. Each sub-recipient must also meet the requirements of the Attestation form or the entire application 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 Two is a maximum of three years. For Round Two of grant funding, funds must pay for expenses incurred no later than Dec. 31, 2024. 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.

- 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)
- Attestations 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 Two

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

- Grant program launch: Week of February 7, 2022
- Visit wcdc.org/workforce-innovation-grant to register.
- Introductory webinar for applicants: Tuesday, February 15, 2022
- Submission deadline for applicants: no later than 5 p.m. CDT on April 15, 2022
- Award announcements: Summer of 2022

3. Submission Deadline and Instructions

Applications must be submitted no later than 5 p.m. CDT on April 15, 2022.

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, innovative solutions to longstanding challenges or implementing innovative 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. The rubric that the judging committee will use to score the applications can be found on the Workforce Innovation Grant webpage.

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 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

Project Needs Statement (25 points)

■ Project Need - (15 points)

- a. Identify the workforce challenge facing your region and how this challenge has been caused by and/or exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. (5 points)
- b. Identify who is impacted by this workforce challenge, including the impacts to underserved populations and/or those disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, and explain why this workforce challenge needs to be addressed. Describe and define the entity(ies) and population(s) that experienced negative economic impacts from the workforce challenge and the geographic extent of the challenge, including the 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 identify the need to address the workforce challenge. (10 points)

■ Innovative Approach - (10 points)

- a. How did you determine that the identified issue is not being addressed or fully addressed through existing programs and/or funding in your region? Provide data, research, and evidence to support your proposed approach to address the workforce challenge. (5 points)
- b. Why will your project be successful? Explain how this project provides an innovative solution to immediately minimize the workforce issue. If your project is based on solutions that have been successfully implemented in other regions, provide information about those outcomes. (5 points)



Project Description and Implementation (25 points)

■ Project Description - (15 points)

- a. Describe the proposed project and how it meets the stated need and critical workforce issues of the region and/or industry. How will the proposed program impact and expand opportunity for underserved populations and/or those disproportionately impacted by the pandemic as referenced in the 'Project Need' section? (10 points)
- b. Explain how the proposed project implements a long-term solution to permanently mitigate or remove the region's identified workforce challenge. Include information on how the proposed program is reflected in the region's economic development planning efforts. (5 points)

■ Project Timeline, Activities and Outcomes - (10 points)

Using the fields below, describe the activities and outcomes of the proposed project in each project period. This section demonstrates how the project will be managed over the period of the grant. The outcomes should be logical, achievable, measurable, and meet the intent of the project.



Project Period: Start-Up Through End of Calendar Year (CY) 2022

Project Activities

Detailed Outcomes

Project Period: CY 2023

Project Activities

Detailed Outcomes

Project Period: CY 2024

Project Activities

Detailed Outcomes



Project Budget (10 points)

Complete the budget template included in the application materials. Additionally, please address the items below.

- a. Provide a narrative of each budget line item that includes a description of the activities proposed for the use of funds.
- b. 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.

Capital Expenditure Justification (This item is not scored.)

If you are proposing a capital expenditure over \$1 million, you will need to provide additional justification for the expense in the budget narrative. The written justification must include:

- a. An explanation of why a capital expenditure is appropriate to address that workforce need.
- b. A comparison of the proposed capital project against at least two alternative capital expenditures and a demonstration of why the proposed capital expenditure is superior.

*Tribal governments are not required to provide this justification.

Partnerships and Collaborations (20 points)

■ Partner Experience and Commitment (10 points)

Describe each partner's experience and expertise in providing relevant services/solutions in support of objectives and outcomes. How does each partner's experience benefit the project? What role will each partner play? What assurances are there that each partner will maintain its commitment for the length of the project?

■ Partner Communication and Coordination (10 points)

- a. How will communication and coordination with partners be ensured and maintained through the project period to maintain accountability and meet program objectives? How will all partners' responsibilities be communicated and achieved? (5 points)
- b. How will data be shared amongst applicant and partners for reporting and outcome purposes? What will be the data collection process? (5 points)



Applicant Capability and Staffing (15 points)

■ **Grant Management (10 points)**

- a. Describe your 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. (5 points)
- b. Please indicate who specifically will be responsible for grant management activities as part of this project, and their grant management and reporting experience. Identify the system that will be utilized for collecting data and reporting outcomes for this project. (5 points)

■ **Workforce System Experience (5 points)**

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.

Future Outlook of Project Sustainability (15 points)

■ **Sustainability (10 points)**

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)**

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?



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

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