



# DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

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# WISCONSIN FAST FORWARD

## WEBSITE

[wisconsinfastforward.com](http://wisconsinfastforward.com)

## INCEPTION

2013 Act 9

## PROGRAM GOAL

The Wisconsin Fast Forward standard grant program funds customized skills training for currently employed workers and job seekers through Wisconsin employers and their partners. The goals of the program include:

- Increasing high-demand skills attainment in the local and regional workforce
- Influencing the number of new jobs created
- Reducing layoffs due to skilled labor shortages
- Helping unemployed and underemployed people gain full-time employment
- Providing current workers with wage increases, increased skills, and job security.

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The standard Wisconsin Fast Forward program is designed to provide demand-driven worker training grants to employers in collaboration with training providers and their local workforce and economic development partners. The program accepts grant proposals for customized, short- and medium-term skilled worker training projects for all sectors. Qualifying proposals must be supported by current and projected labor market information, demonstrate the need for training, and state the intent to hire trainees or raise current worker wages. The long-term goal of the program is to encourage statewide economic growth by assisting employers to train workers and fill positions, as well as to ensure meaningful economic advancement for trainees. The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development's Office of Skills Development (OSD) administers the program through a transparent and accountable process. Since the program's inception, the Office of Skills Development has awarded grants to support worker training demands in the following industry sectors and occupational areas:

- Agriculture and related fields
- Construction trades and related occupations
- Customer service
- Financial services
- Health care and related fields
- Information technology
- Manufacturing
- Transportation, logistics and distribution
- Wisconsin small businesses with 50 or fewer full-time employees

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Wisconsin Fast Forward grant opportunities are available to any public or private organization with documented workforce training needs in all industry sectors. Allowable expenditures include curriculum development, instructor or trainer costs, instructional materials and supplies, consultant fees, contractual services, facility costs, and administration costs up to 10 percent of the grant award.

## INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

Grant awards for sector grants range from \$5,000 to \$400,000 and require a cash or in-kind match equal to 50% of the award amount. A grantee serving as an applicant for a consortium of employment placement partners may apply for more than \$400,000.

## EXPECTED OUTCOMES

To date, the Office of Skills Development has issued more than \$50 million in grant contracts. The Wisconsin Fast Forward grants have supported more than 460 workforce training projects, benefiting more than 930 businesses and more than 30,000 trainees at an average cost of \$1,496 per trainee.

## PROGRAM ACTIVITY

During FY25, the office awarded 32 standard Wisconsin Fast Forward grant contracts totaling \$3,974,200. These grants helped 51 businesses train 1,825 trainees.

## EXPANDED WISCONSIN FAST FORWARD

During FY25, the Office of Skills Development also awarded grants under the programs initiated through the 2023-25 biennial budget. These program awards included:

- **Technical Education Equipment Grant Program:** This grant program was made available to Wisconsin school districts or a consortium of school districts to enhance or improve their technical education facilities or acquire equipment used in advanced manufacturing or construction fields. It also included software necessary to operate the equipment and any instructional material necessary to train students to operate the equipment. Grant amounts varied from \$5,000 to \$100,000. At least one-third of the grant funds awarded in a fiscal biennium are provided to applicants that are eligible for sparsity aid or consortia that include at least one eligible school district. The Office of Skills Development awarded 19 grants to school districts, of which 10 were to sparsity aid school districts and nine were to non-sparsity aid school districts, totaling \$1 million.
- **Teacher Training and Recruitment Grants:** This grant opportunity was made available to organizations that operate under 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code and are exempt from taxation that can demonstrate a critical need to recruit, train, and prepare individuals to teach in low-income or urban Wisconsin schools. The Office of Skills Development awarded three grants totaling \$1 million.

## RECOMMENDED CHANGES

The program continues to evolve as the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development develops its vision for Wisconsin Fast Forward. There are no other current recommended changes.