



Wisconsin's Annual Report on Economic Development

Fiscal Year 2025

CONTRIBUTING WISCONSIN AGENCIES

Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC)
Department of Administration (DOA)
Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP)
Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
Department of Tourism (Tourism)
Department of Transportation (DOT)
Department of Workforce Development (DWD)
Universities of Wisconsin (UW)
Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA)
Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS)

LOOK FORWARD ➤

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WELCOME

Fiscal year 2025 was a year of record growth, innovation, and community impact for WEDC. We invested more than \$91 million through tax incentives, grants, and loans—the highest level in five years—helping communities and businesses across Wisconsin move forward with confidence.

From supporting entrepreneurs in rural communities to expanding housing opportunities, from revitalizing downtowns to welcoming global companies like Yaskawa to Wisconsin, FY25 demonstrated the power of strategic investment to propel communities forward. These projects are more than financial commitments; they are building blocks for stronger, more resilient communities where people want to live, work, and grow.

As we look ahead, we know challenges remain. But the momentum of FY25 proves that when we connect the dots—linking local leadership, state resources, and global opportunities—we can face headwinds together and continue to make Wisconsin a place where every community has the opportunity to thrive.



The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation's (WEDC's) commitment to creating an Economy for All means providing resources to communities in every corner of our state. In the past fiscal year, we have seen incredible creativity, innovation, and initiative from our local partners in creating communities where people and businesses want to live, work, and grow.

This commitment is reflected in WEDC's work over the past fiscal year.

In fiscal year 2025 (FY25), WEDC contracted for a total of 360 tax incentives, grants, loans, and other awards totaling \$197.7 million. These contracts included grants and loans to communities and businesses, as well as performance-based tax incentives to attract new businesses and enable existing businesses to grow. Of those awards, 259 were grants to businesses and communities, totaling \$41.2 million—the largest amount provided in the past five years.

Other community-focused highlights from FY25 include:

- The Small Business Development Grant pilot program exceeded expectations, providing nearly \$4.7 million—more than double its original budget—to 29 local partners in 25 counties. Nearly three-fourths of the grants went to communities with fewer than 15,000 residents, supporting rural revitalization and local entrepreneurship.
- Two grant programs—the Brownfields and Idle Sites Redevelopment grants—reached more communities than ever before, including first-time awards in Juneau, Vilas, Dodge, Langlade and Taylor counties.
- The Community Development Investment (CDI) Grant Program also expanded its footprint. Almost one-third of awards went to communities that had never received CDI funding, underscoring WEDC's commitment to statewide development.
- Brownfields, Idle Sites, and CDI grants helped spur the creation of affordable housing statewide. Community leaders have told us this is critical to meeting their local workforce needs.
- FY25 marked the highest year for housing-related grants since 2020, with 2,070 planned housing units across 16 counties. Projects ranged from the redevelopment of a former school in Dodge County to a mixed-use library and housing complex in New Richmond.

WEDC also took steps to attract new businesses and strengthen existing Wisconsin employers. This includes:

- Providing \$18 million in performance-based Enterprise Zone incentives to assist advanced robotics maker Yaskawa in moving its North American headquarters from Illinois to Franklin
- Assisting Worthington Cylinders with its expansion in Calumet County
- Assisting Associated Milk Producers with its rebuild in Columbia County

During a time of increased focus on global trade and investments, Governor Evers led his second international trade mission, this time to Germany and France. WEDC also helped Wisconsin businesses connect with potential partners during trade missions to Australia, China, and Mexico; hosted international delegations; and participated in SelectUSA events.

FY25 was a year of impact, growth, and teamwork. These accomplishments reflect the dedication of our staff, the strength of our partnerships, and our shared commitment to building a vibrant economy for all Wisconsinites.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sam Ridders". The signature is fluid and cursive.

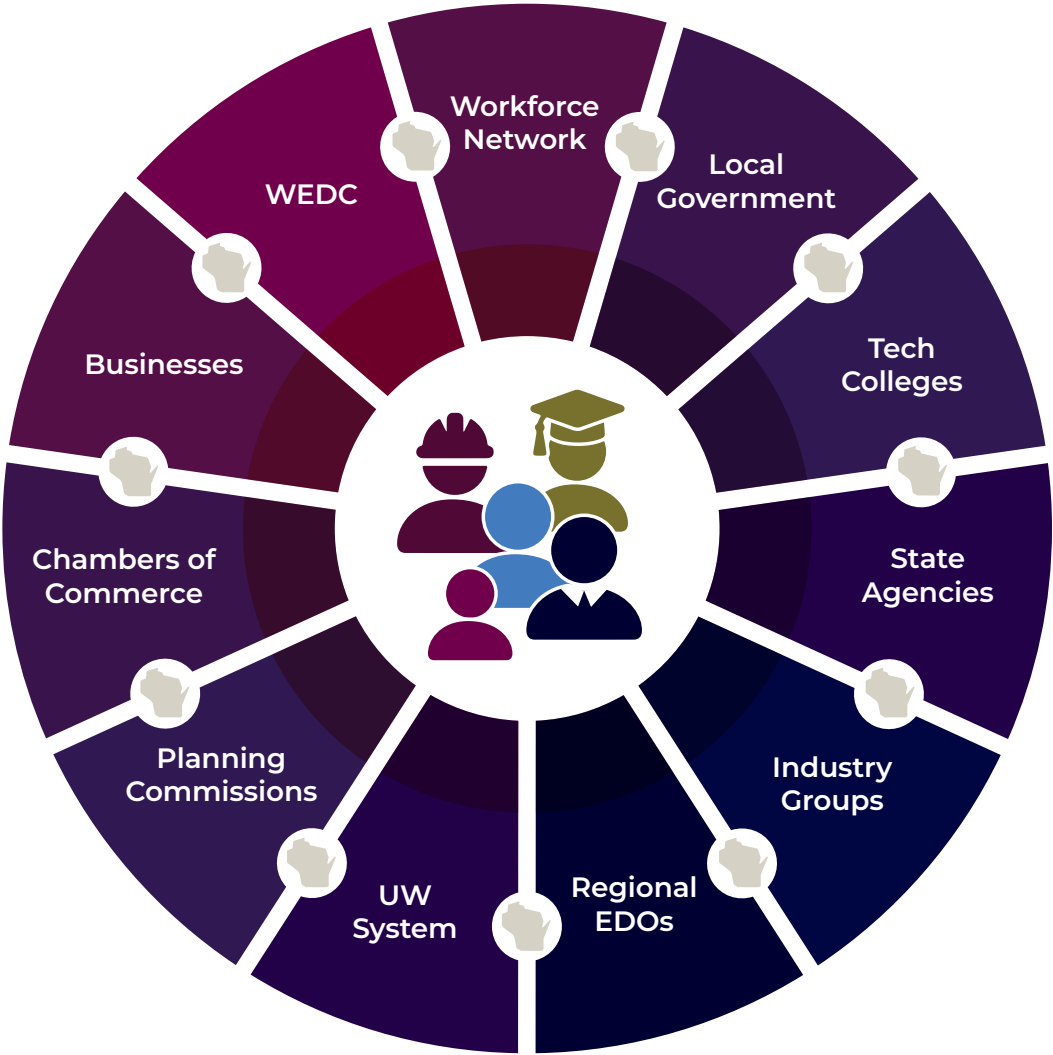
Sam Ridders
Deputy Secretary and COO

ABOUT THIS REPORT

The purpose of this Annual Report on Economic Development is to provide objective data to assist policymakers and other interested parties in evaluating the effectiveness of economic development programs of WEDC and other Wisconsin state agencies. The origin of this report is 2007 Wisconsin Act 125. Recognizing the importance of measuring the success of programs deploying taxpayer resources, the Legislature crafted Act 125 to require specified state agencies to report annually by Oct. 1 on the economic development programs they administered during the prior fiscal year.

WEDC collaborates with more than 600 economic development partners throughout the state in fulfillment of its mission:

To strategically invest in Wisconsin to enhance the economic well-being of people and their businesses and communities.



This report recognizes the contributions of economic development partner organizations throughout the state whose work at a local, regional, and statewide level contributes to Wisconsin's economic vibrancy. The agencies participating in this fiscal year 2025 (FY25) report are WEDC; the Department of Administration; the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection; the Department of Transportation; the Department of Tourism; the Department of Workforce Development; the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority; the Wisconsin Technical College System; and the Universities of Wisconsin.

WEDC, the state's lead economic development organization, works with each of these agencies to appropriately identify their economic development programs as defined by state statute and to report on those programs' performance goals.

Included in each agency's section of this report is information on that agency's programs, including each program's outcomes for the year. Note that these program reports reflect only a fraction of the initiatives undertaken by each agency, including WEDC, to build and sustain a healthy Wisconsin economy. Each agency participating in this report engages in numerous additional activities—from talent development and infrastructure investment to community development, industry development, and state and regional asset marketing—to help ensure the economic well-being of all Wisconsinites and invest in the future success of our state.

For FY25, each agency was required to provide the following information about its economic development programs:

- a description of the program;
- the location of each job created or retained;
- the industry classification of each job created or retained;
- a comparison of expected and actual program outcomes;
- the number of grants made under the program;
- the number of loans made under the program;
- the amount of each grant and loan made under the program;
- the recipient of each grant and loan made under the program;
- the total amount of tax benefits allocated, and each recipient of a tax benefit verified to the Department of Revenue, under the program; and
- any recommended changes to the program.

Agencies submit this information to WEDC using an online portal for compilation and publication. The award-level information for each agency is included in the online awards management system at wedc.org/transparency/annual-report-on-economic-development.

This collaborative approach makes reporting on the state's economic development programs more comprehensive, transparent, and accountable to the public.

HOW TO READ THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUMMARIES

Each agency includes summaries of its economic development programs. These summaries include information listed here with definitions for reference.

STATUS – Active or inactive

INCEPTION – Indicates either the incepting act, if the program was created by state or federal law, or the fiscal year the program was launched

PROGRAM GOAL – High-level description of the program’s intended purpose, policy goal, or objective

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION – A description of the program that includes all of the following, if applicable: the type of entity the program serves; the type of assistance the program offers; the funding source; and the target industry, area, or population

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS – Type of organization or activities eligible for award under the program, as well as stipulations relating to program requirements and qualifying uses of funds

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING – The total program budget for the fiscal year as well as the terms applicable to certain awards under the program

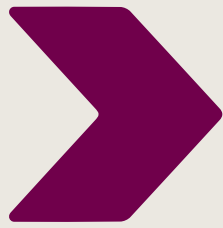
EXPECTED OUTCOMES – The agency’s goal for the program for the fiscal year

PROGRAM ACTIVITY – A report of the outcomes resulting from the program during the fiscal year

RECOMMENDED CHANGES – Changes to program specifications that are being considered

LOOK FORWARD ➤





WISCONSIN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

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A COMMITMENT TO TRANSPARENCY

Upon completion of the appropriate internal review and approval process, WEDC makes a financial award commitment to a company or organization whose proposed project fulfills the requirements of the program to which it has applied.

Many of the deliverables for projects that reach the contracting stage are completed over three to five years, on average. So, for example, if a company agrees to invest \$30 million over a five-year period, WEDC reports this capital investment in the year the contract is signed. Subsequently, WEDC monitors contract fulfillment and receives regular reports from companies receiving awards. These reports include capital expenditures, job creation and retention, and other performance data WEDC uses to track contract compliance and to gauge overall program effectiveness. The company's progress toward its obligations is reported online in WEDC's searchable database of awards at <https://wedc.org/transparency/annual-report-on-economic-development/>.

Note that the performance deliverables required in WEDC's contracts often do not reflect the total economic development gains of a project. For example, WEDC's contract may only require a certain capital expenditure, but the project also results in job creation not required by the contract. Or, WEDC's contract may stipulate a minimum job impact threshold required to receive a WEDC award, but the company delivers additional jobs as a result of the project. These jobs may or may not meet WEDC's salary requirements, for example, but they still represent positive outcomes from the investment. WEDC often includes these additional performance impacts, as attested to in performance reports submitted to WEDC by awardees, in this Annual Report on Economic Development.

WEDC continuously evaluates its awards administration process and implements enhancements designed to increase effectiveness.



PROGRAM DELIVERABLES

WEDC employs a variety of measures to gauge the effects of its economic development investments, which range from tax credits for investments in early-stage companies to export readiness programs, industry cluster advancement strategies and downtown redevelopment financing.

Tallied here are the total measurable outcomes of WEDC's FY25 economic development investments, including capital investment and job impact data as required in this report:

FY25 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INVESTMENTS		
Recipient	Assisted by WEDC	FY25 Goal
Businesses	1,595	4,562
Communities	184	182
Partners	69	83

Note: FY25 goal for businesses assisted included those assisted by WEDC's Key Strategic Partners. Strategic evaluation of KSPs determined that pass-through businesses assisted is not an impactful measurement of KSP's work. For future reports, WEDC will evaluate KSPs both quantitatively and qualitatively to ensure alignment with our mission and vision.

FY25 FINANCIAL AWARDS			
Award Type	Number of Awards	Award Amount	Leverage Ratio*
Bonds	3	\$16,455,000	–
Grants	257	\$39,059,664	18:1
Investor Credits	34	\$89,788,150	4:1
Loans	10	\$4,827,500	4:1
Tax Credits	53	\$47,591,575	19:1
Tax Exemption	3	–	–
Total	360	\$197,721,889	11:1
FY25 Leverage Goal			14:1

*WEDC includes a project's total project investment as reported by the company in this leverage ratio calculation in order to capture the complete impact of a project.

FY25 VENTURE CAPITAL			
	Number of Investments	Investment Amount	Leverage Ratio
Wisconsin Investment Fund	13	\$8,635,000	1.4:1



Capital investment supported by WEDC awards:

\$1.9 BILLION

A note about capital investment:

The benefits of WEDC's investments do not end with the capital investment made by the company receiving financial assistance. When a company spends millions of dollars on an expansion project, for example, much of that money is pumped into the local economy through the direct purchasing of contractor services.

FY25 JOBS IMPACT

	Jobs to be Created	Jobs to be Retained	Total Jobs Impacted*	FY25 Goal
Total	2,346	288	2,634	14,015

*Jobs impacted totals are derived from contracts executed between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025. These include executed contracts from both current and previous year commitments.



Jobs supported by WEDC awards:

2,634

A note about job impact:

Not all WEDC financial assistance contracts include a job impact requirement. For those that do, this measurement reflects the number of jobs that will be either created or retained as a direct result of the investment. That job impact number is recorded in the contract and the award is contingent upon its attainment.

It takes time—sometimes years—for the positive direct effects of a WEDC investment to be realized. The question, then, is when are the jobs in question actually impacted? And when do they get counted? WEDC reports the total impact of the jobs in the year the contract is executed, and tracks performance progress to that impact goal throughout the life of the project. Typically, a contract with job creation goals lasts five years.

KEY STRATEGIC PARTNERS

WEDC couldn't do what it does without an innovative strategy and strong relationships with an extremely capable economic development community in Wisconsin. To foster that community, we invest in Key Strategic Partners (KSPs) with specialized skills and a proven track record of success. Their combined strength and expertise amplify WEDC's efforts statewide and increase the economic impact of the funds we deploy. Their powerful work contributes significantly to the outcomes of our programs. Let's take a look at the KSPs, which are uniquely positioned to help WEDC meet its strategic goals.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS

TOTAL AWARDED FUNDING: \$800,000

WEDC provides funding for nine Wisconsin regional economic development organizations (EDOs): 7 Rivers Alliance, Centergy, Grow North, Madison Region Economic Partnership, Milwaukee 7, Momentum West, New North, Prosperity Southwest, and Visions Northwest. While each regional EDO is organized differently to meet the needs of its respective communities, they all demonstrate regional collaboration with county economic development organizations, municipal economic development organizations, regional planning commissions, workforce development representatives, educators, and private sector stakeholders.

WEDC works closely with the regional EDOs around the state to facilitate communication and coordinate support for local businesses and communities. Examples of such cooperation in FY25 include the following:

- Holding regular meetings with local and county EDOs and chambers of commerce
- Engaging, educating, and leveraging the local economic development partners within each region
- Establishing regional roundtables with key industry leaders to discuss key drivers, needs, and issues facing the region
- Employing a regular communication vehicle such as a newsletter or scheduled emails
- Issuing an annual state of the region report
- Educating elected officials and boards of directors on economic development
- Conducting, causing to be conducted, or coordinating the regular business retention and expansion initiatives throughout the region and coordinating the input of results shared with WEDC
- Conducting a marketing effort on behalf of the region and its partners; coordinating with WEDC on business and marketing initiatives incorporating the Wisconsin brand
- Reaching out to rural portions of the region and helping them develop economic growth strategies; addressing any housing, broadband, and/or child care needs
- Hosting and coordinating discussions on entrepreneurship resources and assisting in promoting WEDC's digital entrepreneurship platform
- Leading and working with local partners to develop and enhance diverse business development strategies for the region
- Working with local partners to identify what each region is doing to encourage investment in renewable energy systems or energy efficiency

In addition, the Regional Leadership Council, made up of the directors from the regional EDOs, identified key initiatives that could be deployed throughout the state in coordination with, and in advancement of, shared goals and strategies with WEDC.

BRIGHTSTAR WISCONSIN FOUNDATION

TOTAL AWARDED FUNDING: \$50,000

BrightStar is a 501(c)(3)-designated nonprofit foundation that manages an equity investment fund capitalized by private donations. BrightStar invests primarily in technology-based, high-growth, early-stage businesses to facilitate job creation and increase economic activity statewide. In FY25, BrightStar made six investments in early-stage companies. Brightstar continues to manage a portfolio of 80 companies.

CENTER FOR TECHNOLOGY COMMERCIALIZATION

TOTAL AWARDED FUNDING: \$540,000

The Center for Technology Commercialization (CTC) provides services delivered by staff and a statewide network of partners that include review and analysis of business models and commercialization plans; advice concerning patent, trademark, and copyright issues; and assistance to businesses in obtaining federal SBIR/STTR grants. In FY25, CTC provided counseling to 367 business clients—activity expected to assist in the creation of 79 new jobs and the retention of 359 jobs.

Note: In addition to this one-on-one assistance, CTC provides significant, in-depth consultation to numerous other businesses in its administration of WEDC's Entrepreneurial Micro-grant Program, SBIR/STTR Matching Grant Program, and the Idea Advance Seed Fund, which is supported through WEDC's Capital Catalyst Program. Outcomes of those activities are included within the respective program listings in this report.

DIVERSE CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

TOTAL AWARDED FUNDING: \$950,000

WEDC financially supports three statewide diverse chambers of commerce and their affiliated entities. This support is through funding the revolving loan funds and funding their provision of technical assistance to respective business communities.

- African American Chamber of Commerce of Wisconsin
- Madison Black Chamber of Commerce
- Wisconsin Black Chamber of Commerce
- First American Capital Corporation/American Indian Chamber of Commerce
- Wisconsin Indigenous Housing Economic Development Corporation
- Latino Chamber of Commerce of Dane County
- Latino Entrepreneurial Network
- Latino Chamber of Commerce of Southeastern Wisconsin
- Hmong Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce
- Wisconsin LGBT Chamber of Commerce

In FY25, 95 loans were processed by the chambers, providing \$5,261,972 in community development financial institution (CDFI) funding and leveraging \$36,741,177. This helped create and retain 490 jobs. In total, 2,510 businesses were supported by technical assistance.

WISCONSIN CENTER FOR MANUFACTURING AND PRODUCTIVITY

TOTAL AWARDED FUNDING: \$1,250,000

The Wisconsin Center for Manufacturing & Productivity (WCMP), working through the Wisconsin Manufacturing Extension Partnership and the UW-Stout Manufacturing Outreach Center, provides advisory and implementation services to small and midsize manufacturers throughout Wisconsin to implement next-generation manufacturing strategies, increase business performance, and improve competitiveness and profitability through programs such as ExporTech™ and the Transformational Productivity Initiative, the outcomes of which are included within the respective listings in this report. In FY25, WCMP reached 373 companies with services resulting in \$35.4 million in cost savings, \$115.5 million in new sales, and \$1,152.1 million in retained sales.

WISCONSIN PROCUREMENT INSTITUTE

TOTAL AWARDED FUNDING: \$450,000

The Wisconsin Procurement Institute (WPI) helps companies sell products and services to federal, state, and local agencies as well as prime contractors. WPI navigates the government procurement process for small firms and helps them develop competitive processes and technical capabilities to earn federal, state, and local government contracts. In FY25, WPI engaged with 1,333 companies, helping them obtain more than \$1.6 trillion in contracts, resulting in 925 jobs created and retained.

WISCONSIN TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL

TOTAL AWARDED FUNDING: \$310,000

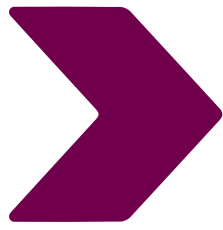
The Wisconsin Technology Council (WTC) contributes to the state's high-tech and entrepreneurial economy through its policy work, hands-on work with investors and companies, educational forums, and networking events. In FY25, key WTC events—with combined attendance of 2,090 entrepreneurs, investors, service providers, and others—provided select entrepreneurs with unique opportunities and training to advance their ventures. The 2024 Early Stage Symposium featured 41 young firms showcasing their companies to an audience of 28 investors and other advisors, while the 2025 Wisconsin Governor's Business Plan contest provided 52 of the 153 entrants with intensive "pitch" training and culminated in finalists presenting at the Wisconsin Entrepreneurs' Conference.

The Tech Council Investor Networks (TCIN), formerly known as the Wisconsin Angel Network and housed within WTC, organized 30-minute one-on-one sessions with the final 13 contestants of the 2025 Wisconsin Governor's Business Plan Contest and investment mentors, providing assistance and feedback on their pitches. The TCIN also held an investors-only event, with 20 investors representing 17 angel networks, to foster more connections among investors and increase awareness of investment trends and preferences.

WISCONSIN WOMEN'S BUSINESS INITIATIVE CORPORATION (WWBIC)

TOTAL AWARDED FUNDING: \$350,000

The Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation (WWBIC) provides small business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs with an array of educational programming, individual consulting, and microloan assistance. In FY25, WWBIC provided 1,400 clients with counseling services averaging more than seven hours per client. WWBIC's microloan program provided more than \$7.8 million in loan financing to small businesses, including 35 startups. Of the total loan amount, more than \$1,280,000 served businesses in rural Wisconsin. WWBIC's assistance is expected to facilitate the creation of 230 jobs and retention of 191.5 positions.



WEDC FY25 PROGRAM SUMMARIES

WEDC lives for Wisconsin's success.

Each of our programs is tailored to nurture a different type of economic success: businesses that are exporting, expanding, or just starting out; communities that are revitalizing or bringing new, shared spaces to life; schools that are preparing Wisconsin's future workforce; and many more.

BRANCH CAMPUS REDEVELOPMENT

STATUS

Active

INCEPTION

2023 Wisconsin Act 250

PROGRAM GOAL

The Branch Campus Redevelopment (BCR) Grant is designed to assist political subdivisions in repurposing and redeveloping former Branch Campus sites for the overall economic improvement and enhancement of their communities.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The grant was created by 2023 Wisconsin Act 250 to assist political subdivisions to repurpose former branch campus sites for the overall economic improvement and enhancement of their communities.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

BCR Grant applicants must be a political subdivision that own buildings and/or sites on a branch campus or former branch campus.

Grant funds may be used for costs, including planning costs and demolition costs, associated with the redevelopment of buildings or other sites owned by the political subdivision on a branch campus or former branch campus.

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

\$20,000,000

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Assist 10 communities.

FY25 PROGRAM ACTIVITY

During FY25 one community was assisted.

BCR AWARDS CONTRACTED IN FY25

	Awards	Award Amount	Leverage Ratio
TOTAL	1	\$2,000,000	1:1

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

None

BROWNFIELDS GRANT

STATUS

Active

INCEPTION

1997 Wisconsin Act 27; Wis Stat. §238.13

PROGRAM GOAL

The goal of the Brownfields Grant (BF) Program is to support community redevelopment in the state of Wisconsin.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Under the program outlined in Wis. Stat. §238.13, WEDC will grant funds to local governments, businesses, nonprofits, and individuals for redeveloping commercial and industrial sites that have been adversely impacted by environmental contamination.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Any individual, partnership, limited liability company, corporation, nonprofit organization, city, village, town, county, or trustee, including a trustee in bankruptcy, may apply for funds provided that the party that caused the environmental contamination and any person who possessed or controlled the environmental contaminant is unknown, cannot be located, or is financially unable to pay for the remediation of the soil and/or groundwater.

BF funds may be used for brownfield redevelopment or associated environmental remediation activities. Grant funds may typically be used for the following activities:

- The environmental investigation, remediation, and/or monitoring of the site
- The removal of hazardous waste containers
- Soil removal, capping, barrier installation, and vapor intrusion systems
- Demolition activities that will facilitate redevelopment in a brownfield project

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

\$2,000,000

The maximum award generally does not exceed \$250,000 unless the request for funds is for a project that, due to the size of the brownfield and the degree and extent of contamination, clearly justifies an award beyond normal parameters.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Assist 10 communities or businesses and achieve a 40:1 leverage of other investment.

FY25 PROGRAM ACTIVITY

During FY25, the program budget was amended up to \$2,790,700.

BF AWARDS CONTRACTED IN FY25

	Awards	Award Amount	Leverage Ratio
TOTAL	12	\$2,790,700	147:1

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

Add clarification that units of Tribal government are eligible for this grant.

BROWNFIELD SITE ASSESSMENT GRANT

STATUS

Active

INCEPTION

1999 Wisconsin Act 9; Wis. Stat. §238.133

PROGRAM GOAL

The goal of the Brownfield Site Assessment Grant (SAG) Program is to support community redevelopment in the state of Wisconsin.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The program under Wis. Stat. §238.133 provides grants of up to \$150,000 to local governments seeking to redevelop sites with economic or community development potential that are or may be adversely impacted by environmental contamination.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

SAG applications may be awarded for projects meeting the following criteria:

- The property or properties being redeveloped must be one or more contiguous industrial or commercial facilities or sites that are abandoned, idle, or underused.
- Potential expansion or redevelopment of the property is adversely impacted by actual or perceived contamination.
- The local governmental unit cannot have caused the environmental contamination that is the basis for the grant request.
- The person that caused the contamination must be unknown, cannot be located, or is financially unable to pay the cost of the eligible activities.
- The community has provided documentation that it has access to the project site to conduct SAG activities.
- A financial commitment has been provided to cover the eligible matching project investment.

WEDC may award grants to local governmental units to cover the costs of the following activities:

- The investigation of environmental contamination on an eligible site or facility for the purposes of reducing or eliminating environmental contamination, such as Phase I and II Environmental Assessments
- The demolition of any structures, buildings, or other improvements located on an eligible site or facility
- The removal of abandoned containers, as defined in Wis. Stat. §292.41(1), from an eligible site or facility
- Asbestos abatement activities, as defined in Wis. Stat. §254.11(2), conducted as part of eligible activities listed above on an eligible site or facility
- Removal of underground hazardous substance storage tank systems
- Removal of underground petroleum product storage tank systems

WEDC requires a minimum of 20% of matching funds of the grant award. Matching funds investment may include tax incremental financing funds, private party contributions, or other grant sources..

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

\$1,000,000

The incentives in this program are grants of up to \$150,000 per recipient per fiscal year (may be more than one grant but not exceeding the \$150,000 threshold) or 15% of the available funds appropriated for the fiscal year, whichever is less.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Assist seven communities and achieve a 6:1 leverage of other investment.

FY25 PROGRAM ACTIVITY

SAG AWARDS CONTRACTED IN FY25

	Awards	Award Amount	Leverage Ratio
TOTAL	7	\$914,510	1:1

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

Add clarification that units of Tribal government are eligible for this grant.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT TAX CREDIT

STATUS

Active

INCEPTION

2015 Wisconsin Act 55

PROGRAM GOAL

The goal of the Business Development Tax Credit (BTC) Program is to incent new and expanding businesses in the state of Wisconsin.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The program supports job creation, capital investment, training, corporate headquarters location or retention, and investment in workforce housing and employee child care programs by providing businesses located in or relocating to Wisconsin with refundable tax credits that can help to reduce their Wisconsin income/franchise tax liability or provide a refund, thereby helping to enhance their cash flow to expand the project's scope, accelerate the timing of the project, or enhance payroll.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

WEDC may certify a business as eligible to earn tax credits if the business does all of the following:

- Makes a capital investment in the business and either creates new full-time jobs or retains existing full-time jobs
- Does not decrease its net employment in Wisconsin below its net employment in Wisconsin in the base year
- Is operating, or intends to operate, in the state of Wisconsin
- Applies and enters into a contract with WEDC

There is no limit on the number of businesses that may be certified for tax credits under this program. Each certification may exist for up to 10 cumulative years. WEDC may cap the award and/or limit the number of years in which tax credits may be claimed by a certified business.

To be eligible for a BTC award, the applicant must offer the employees filling the full-time jobs to be attracted, created, or retained as part of the project at least 50% of the health insurance benefit costs to the employees or other equivalent health insurance benefits that are acceptable to WEDC. Recipients will be expected to continue to offer all eligible employees retirement, health, and other benefits through the duration of the agreement.

Tax credits may be awarded for any of the following eligible activities: job creation, training, capital investment, corporate headquarters location or retention, workforce housing as defined in Wis. Stat. §234.66(1) (i), and/or employee child care programs. Generally, the maximum amount of tax credits awarded for a project will be determined by calculating the greater of the amount a recipient could earn under either job creation or capital investment. WEDC is not required to award the recipient the maximum amount allowed by statute. A business may be awarded an additional amount of tax credits if the project meets any of the following criteria:

- The project is located in an economically distressed area or Opportunity Zone;
- Locating or retaining a corporate headquarters;
- Wisconsin is competing for the investment with one or more out-of-state locations;
- Fifty percent of eligible employees' wages are greater than 400% of the federal minimum wage;
- Industry jobs multiplier is greater than 2.0; or
- Any other criteria as approved by the Awards Administration Committee of the Board of Directors

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

\$22,000,000 tax credit allocation

- Subject to reallocation of additional funds up to \$10,000,000 and carry-forward of unused credits

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Assist 27 businesses to support the creation of 2,500 jobs and retention of 6,800 jobs, and achieve a 30:1 leverage of other investment.

FY25 PROGRAM ACTIVITY

BTC AWARDS CONTRACTED IN FY25					
	Awards	Award Amount	Jobs to be Created	Jobs to be Retained	Leverage Ratio
TOTAL	25	\$12,955,000	1,638	288	49:1

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

None

CAPACITY BUILDING

STATUS

Active

INCEPTION

WEDC FY13

PROGRAM GOAL

The goal of the Capacity Building (CB) Program is to support local and regional economic development efforts in the state of Wisconsin.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The program provides funds to assist local, regional, Tribal, and statewide nonprofit organizations and educational institutions to further the goals of WEDC in alignment with its mission and vision—to strategically invest in Wisconsin and support an economy for all where every Wisconsinite has the opportunity to thrive, respectively—to foster and advance economic development network in Wisconsin.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Eligible projects include, but are not limited to:

- Planning initiatives or assessments of the economic competitiveness of the area (e.g., workforce, infrastructure, sustainability, export capacity)
- Initiatives that will assist or enhance an organization's ability to develop or deliver economic development programming that helps to identify or address issues or challenges of an area or the state
- Implementation of pilot programs or economic development best practices
- Marketing by regional economic development organizations. Regional economic development organizations may receive grants not to exceed \$100,000 or the amount of matching funds the organization obtains from sources other than WEDC or the state, whichever is less, to fund marketing activities.
- Cooperative feasibility studies. For-profit or nonprofit entities looking to create or expand a cooperative are eligible to use grants for co-op feasibility studies or for professional services to create or expand current cooperative businesses.

CB funding may not be used for past costs, nor may past costs incurred prior to application be considered for matching funds, if applicable.

WEDC may take the following into account when evaluating CB applications:

- The likelihood the proposed effort will result in long-term benefits to the organization, its members, the region or state, or its clients
- The degree to which the organization can influence state or regional economic conditions (e.g., number of localities served, geography, membership size)
- The extent to which the problem has been approached through regional collaboration with other economic development groups and other local jurisdictions
- The extent to which the project will provide an impact to economically distressed communities or rural areas of Wisconsin
- The financial need demonstrated by the applicant
- The extent to which the proposed effort can be replicated throughout Wisconsin

WEDC may require matching funds depending on the project's attributes.

THRIVE RURAL WISCONSIN PILOT (CB-T)

Thrive Rural Wisconsin Pilot funds grants made to local economic development organizations, units of government and/or Tribal communities to access financial support that increases their capacity to develop community facilities, community economic development initiatives, and housing projects that will enhance the community as a thriving place to live. CB-T funds are only available to communities approved in concept prior to submittal of an application.

Eligible expenses include: professional services for predevelopment of projects including engineering services, design and architectural renderings, project management, legal fees, and environmental impact assessments; and professional services that increase the capacity of a community to apply for state and federal funding including financial management technical assistance and grant writing support.

COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT GRANT (CB-C)

Cooperative Development grants support the development of new and existing for-profit and nonprofit entities looking to create or expand a cooperative in Wisconsin, with a goal of fostering the success of current and future cooperatives by supporting planning and exploratory research in advance of making a large investment.

CB-C grants can fund the following activities:

- Operational costs related to the project
- Consultant costs related to the project

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

\$1,000,000

Capacity Building: \$550,000

Thrive Rural: \$250,000

Cooperative Development Grant: \$200,000

The amount of funding per project will generally be up to \$50,000. Projects that demonstrate significant regional or statewide impact may receive additional funding.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Capacity Building: Assist 8-10 organizations

Thrive Rural: Assist up to 10 organizations

Cooperative Development Grant: Assist 4-8 organizations

FY25 PROGRAM ACTIVITY

During FY25, the program budget was amended down to \$891,049.

- CB Grants amended down to \$435,000. Nine awards were contracted.
- CB-T Grant amended down to \$240,899. Nine awards were contracted.
- CB-C Grant amended up to \$215,150. Seven awards were contracted.

CB AWARDS CONTRACTED IN FY25

	Awards	Award Amount
TOTAL	25	\$871,739

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

Remove the pilot status for Thrive Rural.

CAPITAL CATALYST

STATUS

Active

INCEPTION

WEDC FY12

PROGRAM GOAL

The goal of the Capital Catalyst (CC) Program is to help communities, universities, nonprofits, and other Wisconsin-based organizations to establish pools of capital for investing in startups and early-stage businesses within their communities.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The program leverages non-profit and community-based partner organizations to provide funding to early-stage businesses seeking financial support needed to start and grow. It helps individual entrepreneurs and scalable startups become more successful, thus benefiting the founders, their families, communities, employees, and customers, fueling financial stability through growth and economic diversification. The program offers grants to eligible recipients to support the establishment or expansion of their seed and early-stage investment programs.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Applicants for CC funds must demonstrate organizational capability and the availability of entrepreneurial support to achieve the goals of their program. CC fund recipients may include nonprofit entities, units of government, educational institutions, community organizations, foundations, Tribal entities, or nonprofit entities acting as a fiscal agent on behalf of another organization.

Applicants should have an established investment/selection committee, investment/funding criteria, application process, and intended use of returns. Eligibility for the program requires a 1:1 match of the amount of funding provided by WEDC. This match must be documented prior to the disbursement of funds.

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

\$3,600,000

The program provides grants to approved CC recipients that establish seed funds and meet the eligibility requirements of the program.

WEDC: \$1,250,000

SSBCI: \$2,350,000

Federal State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI) funding has additional specific requirements for the company eligibility, private funding participation, reporting requirements, and other factors. The funding source utilized will be based on the ability of the applicant's proposed project and funding structure to meet federal funding eligibility requirements, policy guidance, and program objectives established by the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Award six organizations to support 25 businesses.

FY25 PROGRAM ACTIVITY

During FY25, the program budget was amended down to \$3,275,427.

WEDC amended down to \$925,427. Four awards were contracted.

Two SSBCI awards were contracted.

CC AWARDS CONTRACTED IN FY25

	Awards	Award Amount	Businesses to be Assisted	Leverage Ratio
TOTAL	6	\$2,745,000	35	1:1

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

Update language in the program purpose to reflect focus on high growth potential companies.

Clarify language around SSBCI requirements.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INVESTMENT GRANT

STATUS

Active

INCEPTION

WEDC FY13

PROGRAM GOAL

The goal of the Community Development Investment (CDI) Grant Program is to incent commercial corridor community development in the state of Wisconsin.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The program supports urban, small city, and rural community redevelopment efforts by providing financial incentives for catalytic, shovel-ready projects with emphasis on, but not limited to, commercial corridor driven efforts. Funded activities should lead to measurable benefits in job opportunities, property values, and/or leveraged investment by local and private partners.

The Vibrant Spaces Pilot funds are awarded through a competitive application process for communities to invest in public projects that will enhance the community as an attractive place to live. The projects must demonstrate a collaborative, community-driven effort, such as identified in a community plan or community document that has identified the project as a positive community investment, in order to be considered eligible. A minimum 1:1 match of other funds will be required.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Municipalities (including counties, cities, villages, and towns), Tribal entities, and other governmental authorities, or private developers designated by a municipality to apply on its behalf will be eligible to receive grant assistance under the following conditions:

- Grant recipients must provide a minimum 3:1 matching investment in project costs; projects located in an economically distressed community, Opportunity Zone, or rural community must provide a minimum 1:1 matching funds. Additionally, a project in which a key component is to provide child care services or expand housing availability may also be approved by WEDC to provide 1:1 matching funds.
- No more than 50% of eligible project costs may consist of other state and/or federal grant sources, excluding federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds; exceptions can be made for projects utilizing federal ARPA funds.
- Applicants must provide a signed resolution by the governing elected body authorizing the submittal of the application(s) to the CDI Grant Program.
- An applicant that was impacted by an event that has resulted in a state or federal Disaster Declaration within the 24 months prior to submitting an application may receive funds for mitigation or preparedness planning and will receive additional considerations including the following:
 - WEDC may reduce or waive the match requirements.
 - Applicants must demonstrate that other funding mechanisms (Community Development Block Grants, Wisconsin Disaster Fund, Federal Emergency Management Agency, etc.) have been evaluated and fully utilized before applying for WEDC CDI Grant funding.

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

\$7,750,000

CDI Grant - \$6,500,000

The maximum award generally does not exceed \$250,000 unless the request for funds is for a project that, due to the size and scope of the investment, clearly justifies an award beyond normal parameters.

No more than one grant per fiscal year shall be located within the boundary of a municipality, unless the applicant is located in an economically distressed community or Opportunity Zone, in which case applicants can apply for up to two CDI grants per fiscal year.

Vibrant Spaces Pilot (CDI-VS) - \$1,250,000

Awards will generally be between \$25,000 and \$50,000. Funds will be awarded through a competitive application process. Applicants may receive one CDI-VS grant in any fiscal year. Receiving a CDI-VS grant does not preclude a community from applying for one (or two, if in an economically distressed community or Opportunity Zone) CDI grant(s).

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

CDI Grant: Assist 26 communities and achieve a 15:1 leverage of other investment.

CDI-VS: Assist 30 communities in creating an open space for use in their commercial corridor.

FY25 PROGRAM ACTIVITY

During FY25, the program budget was amended down to \$6,779,551.

CDI budget was amended down to \$5,587,840. 25 awards were contracted.

CDI-VS budget was amended down to \$1,191,711. 27 awards were contracted.

CDI AWARDS CONTRACTED IN FY25			
	Awards	Award Amount	Leverage Ratio
TOTAL	52	\$6,779,551	16:1

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

Update CDI-VS to non-competitive.

Reduce CDI-VS match requirement for projects in economically distressed communities or communities with populations under 5,000.

Restrict number of applications per community.

DATA CENTER SALES AND USE TAX EXEMPTION

STATUS

Active

INCEPTION

2023 Act 19

PROGRAM GOAL

The goal of the Data Center Sales and Use Tax Exemption (DCSTE) Program is to implement the sales and use tax exemption for data centers in Wisconsin pursuant to 2023 Act 19.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

A business entity that purchases certain property for a qualified data center certified by WEDC will be eligible for sales and use tax exemption for eligible data center costs.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

WEDC will certify a qualified data center for the DCSTE if the data center seeking certification is one or more buildings or an array of connected buildings owned, leased, or operated by the same business entity or its affiliate and:

- The buildings are rehabilitated or constructed to house a group of networked server computers in one physical location or multiple locations in order to centralize the processing, storage, management, retrieval, communication, or dissemination of data and information.
- The buildings create a minimum qualified investment in this state of any of the following amounts within five years from the certification date:
 - For buildings located in a county having a population greater than 100,000: \$150,000,000
 - For buildings located in a county having a population greater than 50,000 and not more than 100,000: \$100,000,000
 - For buildings in a county having a population of not more than 50,000: \$50,000,000
 - For buildings located in more than one county, the amount indicated above for the most populous county in which the buildings are located

WEDC's certification of a qualified data center will include a description of the geographic location or locations and buildings of the qualified data center and an identification of the business entity.

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

The DCSTE provides qualified data centers with an exemption of Wisconsin Sales and Use Tax for eligible expenditures. There is no dollar threshold on the exemption; all qualifying purchases are exempt regardless of the amount.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Assist one or more businesses to locate a qualified data center in Wisconsin.

FY25 PROGRAM ACTIVITY

Three companies were certified in FY25.

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

Clarify that the certification date is set by WEDC.

DISASTER RECOVERY MICROLOAN

STATUS

Active

INCEPTION

WEDC FY19

PROGRAM GOAL

The goal of the Disaster Recovery Microloan (DRM) program is to provide short-term assistance to businesses affected by disaster events in the state of Wisconsin.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The program will provide grants to preapproved regional entities with the capacity to deploy rapid response microloans to businesses affected by disasters, either natural or man-made. The microloans are to assist the businesses with necessary restoration and operating expenses until more long-term recovery funding can be secured. Providing immediate recovery funding in this manner is a best practice in community economic disaster recovery and leads to improved odds of a business reopening and remaining open long-term. WEDC will contract with regional entities to distribute and administer these loans in their respective geographic areas of the state, as applicable.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

DRM program grants will only be made available to regional entities where WEDC has an agreement in place outlining the grant obligations and terms and conditions of the microloan program. Within 30 days following a natural or man-made disaster event, which may or may not include a corresponding State of Emergency or Disaster Declaration, the preapproved regional entity will request allocation of funding to make microloans in its respective region. WEDC will expedite review and approval of the request.

DRM program funds are available to businesses meeting the following criteria:

- Must be located in or directly adjacent to a region where the authorized regional entity has received an allocation
- Must have suffered measurable physical damage because of the disaster event
- Must attest to intent to resume business operations in the community as quickly as possible

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

The program is not being initially funded in FY25.

The program budget will be determined based upon a disaster event, the number of businesses in need of financial assistance, and the availability of funds. The incentives in this program are grants to preapproved regional entities based on need related to the disaster event to provide microloans to affected businesses under the following conditions:

- Amount: Up to \$25,000
- Term: 36 months with no early repayment penalty
- Deferral: Minimum of six months
- Interest Rate: 0%
- Collateral and guarantees should be considered.
- Local funding should be exhausted.

Loan repayments may be retained by the regional entity for other economic development uses, such as economic development programming, matching funds to partner programs, small business education programs, revolving loan funds, etc. The regional entity has the authority to make forgivable loans, as long as the provision for such is stipulated in the loan agreement. As part of the grant award the regional entity may receive up to \$5,000 for the cost to prepare a schedule of expenditures in accordance with Wis. Stat. §238.03(3)(a).

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Nine regional organizations are approved to administer the program covering all 72 counties.

FY25 PROGRAM ACTIVITY

No new awards made in FY25.

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

None

DIVERSE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT GRANT

STATUS

Active

INCEPTION

WEDC FY12

PROGRAM GOAL

The goal of the Diverse Business Development (DBD) Program is to support existing, new, and expanding minority-, women-, disabled-, LGBT-, and veteran-owned businesses in the state of Wisconsin.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The program is designed to support capacity building of diverse nonprofit organizations and minority, women, disabled, LGBT, and veteran business development through direct assistance to nonprofit organizations in Wisconsin. The funding is intended to promote investment and job retention and creation in diverse communities and underserved markets by increasing access to capital and business development training opportunities.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Eligible nonprofit grant applicants are organizations that provide business financing, training, or technical assistance to the diverse business community. The recipient must demonstrate professional capacity, financial stability and viability, and a demonstrated need.

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

\$500,000

The incentives in this program are grants to eligible nonprofit entities to provide technical assistance, training, and/or microloans to minority-, women-, disabled-, LGBT-, and veteran-owned businesses, as well as providing capacity building to diverse nonprofit organizations.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Award eight organizations to support 50 businesses.

FY25 PROGRAM ACTIVITY

DBD AWARDS CONTRACTED IN FY25

	Awards	Award Amount	Businesses Assisted
TOTAL	10	\$475,000	145

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

None

ENTERPRISE ZONE TAX CREDIT

STATUS

Active

INCEPTION

2005 Act 361, 2009 Act 266, 2009 Act 267; Wis. Stat. §238.399

PROGRAM GOAL

The goal of the Enterprise Zone (EZ) Program is to incent projects involving expansion of existing Wisconsin businesses or relocation of major business operations from other states to Wisconsin.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The program supports job creation, job retention, capital investment, training, and Wisconsin supply chain investment by providing companies with refundable tax credits that can help to reduce their Wisconsin state income tax liability or provide a refund, thereby helping to enhance their cash flow to either expand the project's scope, accelerate the timing of the project, or enhance payroll.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

A business may qualify for EZ certification where the business: (1) Begins operation in an EZ; (2) Relocates to an EZ from out of state; (3) Expands operation in an EZ; (4) Retains jobs in the EZ; or (5) Purchases items or services through a Wisconsin supply chain.

EZ tax credit projects must meet the requirements in Wis. Stat. §238.399, §71.07 (3w), §71.28 (3w), and §71.47 (3w). Among other things, these statutes cover applicable definitions, eligibility for tax benefits, and limits on the tax benefits.

Each EZ may exist for up to 12 years. WEDC may cap the award and/or limit the number of years in which credits may be claimed by a certified business within the EZ. But there is no statutory cap on allocated tax credits per award, or on the overall program.

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING (CY24)

Subject to passive review by the Joint Committee on Finance, WEDC may designate any number of Enterprise Zones in Wisconsin. WEDC shall designate at least five zones subject to population limits in a political subdivision.

The incentives under this program are refundable tax credits according to the following stipulations:

EZ Job Creation Credit: A tax credit equal to no more than 7% of the net increase in EZ payroll from base in a Tier I county or municipality, less 150% times the federal minimum wage per new, full-time employee and up to \$100,000 per employee, or a 7% tax credit against the lesser of the net increase in state payroll and EZ payroll from base in a Tier II county or municipality, less \$30,000 per new, full-time employee and up to \$100,000 per employee. Calculations are relative to a base year which is fixed as the year before the EZ takes effect. This benefit may be awarded for up to 12 years.

EZ Job Retention Credit: A tax credit equal to no more than 7% of the taxpayer's EZ payroll in a Tier I county or municipality that is paid to full-time employees who earn more than 150% times the federal minimum wage but less than \$100,000 in annual wages, less the amount paid to new full-time employees, or no more than 7% of the taxpayer's EZ payroll in a Tier II county or municipality that is paid to full-time employees who earn more than \$30,000 but less than \$100,000 in annual wages, less the amount paid to new full-time employees. This benefit may be awarded for no more than five consecutive years.

Training Credit: The amount of tax credits for training for a certified business may equal up to 100% of the total eligible training costs.

- Amount paid to upgrade or improve skills of full-time employees
- Amount paid to train any full-time employees on new technology
- Amount paid to train full-time employees who are in their first full-time job

Investment Credit: The business may also claim up to 10% of its significant capital expenditures. This benefit may be awarded for up to 12 years.

Wisconsin Supply Chain Credit: The business may also claim up to 1% of the amount it paid to purchase tangible personal property, items, property, goods, or services from Wisconsin vendors. Businesses may not claim the Wisconsin Supply Chain Credit and the Investment Credit for the same expenditures. This benefit may be awarded for up to 12 years.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Assist three businesses to support the creation of 500 jobs, retention of 800 jobs, and achieve a 10:1 leverage of other investment.

FY25 PROGRAM ACTIVITY

EZ AWARDS CONTRACTED IN FY25					
	Awards	Award Amount	Jobs to be Created	Jobs to be Retained	Leverage Ratio
TOTAL	1	\$18,000,000	708	0	7:1

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

None

ENTREPRENEURIAL MICRO-GRANT

STATUS

Active

INCEPTION

WEDC FY13

PROGRAM GOAL

The goal of the Entrepreneurial Micro-Grant (EMG) Program is to support business planning and strategy for entrepreneurs and small business owners in the state of Wisconsin.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The EMG program provides early-stage technology-based companies with services and funding to support their efforts in obtaining significant federal grant funding. Additionally, business planning services rendered by the Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) increase the entrepreneurial proficiency of state entrepreneurs and small business owners.

WEDC provides funding to the Center for Technology Commercialization (CTC) to deliver micro-grants to clients for the services below:

- Small Business Innovation Research/Small Business Technology Transfer (SBIR/STTR) Assistance program, providing up to \$4,500 for assistance to prepare and submit an SBIR/STTR or other federal funding proposal. Applicants awarded federal funding may receive an additional \$1,000 funding bonus through the program.
- Commercialization Planning Assistance, providing individual and small business applicants up to \$4,500 for assistance in completing business validation activities and a comprehensive market study or business plan or commercialization plan to procure Phase II SBIR/STTR funding or to prepare for angel or venture capital funding. Applicants must utilize an eligible professional services provider.
- Entrepreneurial Training Program, providing a grant of up to \$750 to entrepreneurs upon successful completion of startup coursework provided by the SBDC in the Universities of Wisconsin. Eligible applicants must provide at least a \$250 match. Eligible coursework may focus on either business modeling or business planning.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To administer the EMG program, CTC must continue to demonstrate the expertise and capability of serving a statewide network of entrepreneurs.

The SBIR/STTR Assistance and Commercialization Planning Assistance micro-grants are available to those starting or expanding a technology-based or research-oriented business or to firms located in Wisconsin that rely on the use of technology. Eligible projects include:

- Development of an SBIR/STTR Phase I or Phase II proposal or other federal funding proposal;
- Development of an SBIR/STTR Phase II commercialization plan or a comprehensive business plan; or
- Procurement of a CTC-approved market research study in support of a commercialization or business plan. The Entrepreneurship Training Program is an eight- to 12-week course offered periodically by SBDCs that provides assistance with business plan development to current or prospective business owners.

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

\$250,000

The incentive in this program is grants to eligible entities to provide micro-grants to companies for commercialization assistance, training, or research and tech transfer.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Award one organization to assist 125 businesses.

FY25 PROGRAM ACTIVITY

The program is administered through CTC.

EMG AWARDS CONTRACTED IN FY25		
	Awards	Award Amount
TOTAL	1	\$250,000

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

Add language clarifying that program focus is on high-growth potential companies.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP PARTNER GRANT

STATUS

Active

INCEPTION

WEDC FY22

PROGRAM GOAL

The goal of the Entrepreneurship Partner Grant (EPG) is to encourage the formation of entrepreneurship support programs and to develop startup and emerging growth companies in the state of Wisconsin.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The EPG program is intended to increase opportunities for entrepreneurship across the state of Wisconsin. Utilizing community building, capacity building, business financing, technical assistance, and other similar support, the program will strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Those served by the funded programs may be provided with a wide range of support including, but not limited to, financing, experienced hands-on mentorship, educational programming, visibility to investors, community building, leadership training, entrepreneurship and networking events, idea validation, and business development strategies.

The program provides an entity operating a not-for-profit entrepreneurship program with grant funding used to support the direct operational expenses of the program. Program funds may also be used for eligible financial support of participant companies/individuals related to technical assistance program participation.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Entities eligible for EPG funds must be a not-for-profit organization, to include nonprofit entities, units of government, educational institutions, community organizations, foundations, Tribal entities, or nonprofit entities acting as a fiscal agent on behalf of another organization.

Eligible applicants will provide information on program management, operating plans, entrepreneurship resources, and use of funds. Applicants will identify matching funds equal to funding provided by WEDC according to amount requested. Matching funds may be from cash or valid program expenses and may be dedicated to operating expenses.

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

\$2,250,000

The grant will be offered through solicitations held periodically throughout the year. Each offering will be competitive and may have a focus such as expanding existing programs, pilot programs, and programs focused on identified themes. Applicants may receive one grant per fiscal year.

The amount of funding per award will generally not exceed \$200,000. WEDC may exceed that amount to address unanticipated opportunities, needs, project scope, and project budget.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Assist 20 organizations: 350 startups and early-stage companies.

FY25 PROGRAM ACTIVITY

During FY25, budget was amended up to \$2,978,700.

EPG AWARDS CONTRACTED IN FY25

	Awards	Award Amount	Businesses to be Assisted
TOTAL	22	\$2,913,290	327

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

Rename program and move to the Business and Community Development team to better align with a focus to fund only technical assistance programs aimed at supporting traditional small businesses.

EXPORTECH™

STATUS

Active

INCEPTION

April 2010

PROGRAM GOAL

The goal of the ExporTech™ (EXTECH) Program is to support the export capabilities of businesses in the state of Wisconsin.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

In order to support the export capabilities of Wisconsin companies, WEDC partners with the Wisconsin Center for Manufacturing & Productivity (WCMP) to offer financial and technical assistance through the EXTECH Program. The program has three financial components: WEDC funding for EXTECH delivery, WEDC assistance with the program cost for eligible participating companies, and funding for a market assessment following ET completion.

EXTECH is managed and deployed nationally by the National Institute of Standards and Technology's Manufacturing Extension Partnership (NIST MEP) in collaboration with other federal/state export partners and promotion organizations. Through a contractual agreement, EXTECH is coordinated by WCMP, with financial and technical support from WEDC.

EXTECH is a proven export strategy development program designed to speed a company's "go to market" timeline by developing a customized international growth plan for the company's product in key markets. Participating companies receive access to topic matter experts, individualized coaching and consulting, customized support and guided development of an international growth plan. The program provides a unique focus on CEO/top management success factors and aims to provide companies with early export success. Each program takes place over 12 weeks.

This program provides financial assistance to eligible Wisconsin companies to participate in the 12-week program and receive a market assessment upon completion.

The key to success in international markets is preparedness and the goal of EXTECH is to better position companies for success in the global economy. In order to further assist and provide Wisconsin companies with hands-on strategic export development, EXTECH is designed to help companies take a more proactive approach to export markets. As the driving force in job creation and economic growth, small business growth is imperative to the health of the Wisconsin economy.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Eligible EXTECH companies must be established businesses operating in Wisconsin that manufacture, process, assemble, and/or distribute a product or perform a service with a potential to be exported. Executive level (C-level, president, owner, decision maker) involvement and participation is required.

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

\$144,000

Scholarship Funding: Through this agreement, WEDC will fund scholarships for eligible participants for 50% of ET costs, up to \$5,000.

Market Assessment Funding: In order to further support export plan implementation, in-market research/due diligence, and utilization of our Global Trade Network, EXTECH graduate companies will receive a formal market assessment in one of their target markets by WEDC's global network. These funds will be administered as a pass-through by WCMP.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Award one organization to support 24 businesses.

FY25 PROGRAM ACTIVITY

Seven businesses completed the course.

EXTECH AWARDS CONTRACTED IN FY25

	Awards	Award Amount
TOTAL	1	\$144,000

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

None

FABRICATION LABORATORIES GRANT

STATUS

Active

INCEPTION

WEDC FY17

PROGRAM GOAL

The goal of the Fabrication Laboratories (Fab Labs) Grant Program is to support the growth of a talent pipeline in the state of Wisconsin.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The program is designed to support hands-on science, technology, engineering, arts, and math (STEAM) education by assisting public school districts with equipment purchases used for instructional and educational purposes in fab labs in Wisconsin schools. The open fab lab environment enables students to learn the skills necessary to thrive in the 21st century global economy. Fab labs may also serve as a local economic development tool, providing a resource for entrepreneurs, businesses, and inventors through community access.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Wisconsin public school districts may apply for a grant to purchase equipment to be used for instructional and educational purposes in one or more fab labs by elementary, middle, junior high, or high school students. Either a cooperative educational service agency (CESA) or a lead public school district may apply on behalf of a consortium of two or more public school districts. All applicants must match 50% of the grant amount provided by WEDC.

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

\$350,000

The incentives in this program are grants of up to \$25,000 for individual school districts or up to \$50,000 for consortium applications to reimburse recipients for equipment purchases. The minimum grant amount available is \$10,000. Applicants may only be awarded one grant per fiscal year. Applicants can receive a maximum of three grants. This does not apply to Milwaukee Public Schools, the expansion of a fab lab to allow use by K-8 students, or the expansion or addition of a fab lab to include artificial intelligence or related skills training.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Assist 20 public school districts or consortiums.

FY25 PROGRAM ACTIVITY

During FY25, the program budget was amended up to \$500,000.

FAB LABS AWARDS CONTRACTED IN FY25

	Awards	Award Amount
TOTAL	20	\$497,199

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

None

GLOBAL TRADE MISSION

STATUS

Active

INCEPTION

WEDC FY15

PROGRAM GOAL

The goal of the Global Trade Mission (GTM) Program is to support Wisconsin's business growth by increasing collaboration between businesses within key industries and target countries.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The program provides Wisconsin companies access to expertise in target markets to realize export opportunities and to accelerate a company's export sales.

WEDC's market development directors lead Wisconsin companies on virtual or in-country trade missions, providing each participating company a suite of in-market services that are executed by one of WEDC's authorized trade representatives. The services of the U.S. Commercial Service and/or other independent contractors may be required to execute services for a trade mission. Program funds will help support the cost of country-specific business services to eligible Wisconsin companies by offsetting the cost of the mission.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Participants must be an established business operating in Wisconsin that manufactures, processes, assembles, and/or distributes a product or performs a service with a potential to be exported. The company does not need to be headquartered in Wisconsin but must have export-related operations located within the state. Service companies such as engineering, architectural, information technology, scientific research, and other traded services are eligible for support under this program.

International professional business service providers or economic development entities seeking to build their international network or to support client companies attending the trade mission may also participate. Service providers unable to demonstrate the potential to expand traded international exports will not be eligible for the funding that supports the in-market service package and will pay full price to participate in the mission.

If the market warrants a subject matter expert or an industry representative, WEDC may invite appropriate representatives to join the trade mission at the expense of WEDC or the subsidized rate.

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

\$745,589 (non-aids)

The FY25 budget encompasses the total costs of program implementation, including administrative, marketing, in-market services, and other costs associated with staff and subject matter experts. WEDC may subsidize a portion of the business service package cost to eligible Wisconsin companies. WEDC may negotiate a reduced rate package for eligible businesses depending on the specific services to be offered. Ineligible companies may participate by paying the full market price of the trade mission package.

Services are determined based on the market and business need. Services may include but are not limited to:

- Market assessment
- Partner search (customer, dealer, distributor, rep, agent, licensee, employee)
- Translation/interpreting
- Activities to foster cultural understanding of customers or consumers

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Support seven GTMs in WEDC's target markets in nine countries and assist 44 businesses. One of the seven trade missions will be administered by third-party organizations.

FY25 PROGRAM ACTIVITY

GTM SUPPORT IN FY25

	Number of Missions	Businesses Assisted
TOTAL	7	33

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

None

HISTORIC PRESERVATION TAX CREDIT

STATUS

Active

INCEPTION

2013 Wisconsin Act 62

PROGRAM GOAL

The goal of the Historic Preservation Tax Credit (HTC) Program is to incent reinvestment into historic main streets, downtowns, and commercial districts in the state of Wisconsin.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The HTC Program provides transferable tax credits to eligible entities rehabilitating certified historic buildings. The state program acts as a supplement to the federal program, allowing for a state credit of 20% of qualified rehabilitation expenditures for certified historic structures. A certified historic structure is a building that is listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places or is located in a registered historic district and is certified by the National Park Service as contributing to the historic significance of that district.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Nonprofits are not eligible for certification unless 1) the entity is a 501(c)(3), and the entity intends to sell or otherwise transfer the credit, or 2) the entity is a nonprofit other than a 501(c)(3) as described above, and WEDC receives approval of the proposed project from the Joint Committee on Finance under 14-day passive review.

For taxable years beginning after Dec. 31, 2013, applicants may be certified to claim tax incentives for qualified rehabilitation expenditures on eligible buildings and projects.

Certification requires that the claimant provide the following to WEDC:

- Evidence that the rehabilitation was recommended by the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) for approval by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior before the physical work of construction, or destruction in preparation for construction, began
- Evidence that the taxpayer obtained written certification from SHPO that the property qualifies under any of the following:
 - Listed in the National Register of Historic Places in Wisconsin or the State Register of Historic Places
 - Determined by the Wisconsin Historical Society (WHS) to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or the State Register of Historic Places
 - Located in a historic district that is listed in the National Register of Historic Places or the State Register of Historic Places and is certified by the SHPO as being of historic significance to the district
 - An outbuilding of an otherwise eligible property certified by the SHPO as contributing to the historic significance of the property
- The costs were not incurred before the Wisconsin Historical Society approved the proposed preservation or rehabilitation plan.
- The cost of the person's qualified rehabilitation expenditure, as defined in section 47 (c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code, is at least \$50,000.
- The rehabilitated property is placed in service after Dec. 31, 2013.
- The proposed preservation or rehabilitation plan complies with standards promulgated under Wis. Stat. §44.02(24) and the completed preservation or rehabilitation substantially complies with the proposed plan.
- No physical work of construction or destruction began prior to the recommendation of the proposed preservation or rehabilitation by the SHPO.
- The eligible costs are not incurred to acquire any building or interest in a building or to enlarge an existing building.

- The rehabilitated property must be used for income-producing purposes, i.e., used in a trade or business or for the production of rental income.

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

The incentive through this program is a 20% transferable tax credit of qualified rehabilitation expenses. Fund certifications are awarded on a rolling basis, at the discretion of WEDC. In accordance with 2017 Wisconsin Act 280, the maximum amount of credits for all projects undertaken on the same parcel may not exceed \$3,500,000.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Assist 20 community projects and achieve a 5:1 leverage of other investment.

FY25 PROGRAM ACTIVITY

HTC AWARDS CONTRACTED IN FY25			
	Awards	Award Amount	Leverage Ratio
TOTAL	27	\$16,636,575	8:1

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

Clarify that the minimum amount of Qualified rehabilitation expenditures must be at least the building's adjusted basis and at least \$50,000.

IDLE SITES REDEVELOPMENT GRANT

STATUS

Active

INCEPTION

WEDC FY14

PROGRAM GOAL

The goal of the Idle Sites Redevelopment (ISR) Program is to incent community redevelopment in the state of Wisconsin.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The program generally offers grants to Wisconsin communities for the redevelopment of sites that have been idle, abandoned, or underutilized for a period of at least two years. Blighted properties may be perceived as eyesores that can lead to decreased property tax revenue for a community. The ISR Program provides incentives to help rejuvenate abandoned blighted sites and assistance in elevating local economies. Approved projects can use funds for demolition, environmental remediation, infrastructure, or site-specific improvements to advance the site to shovel-ready status or enhance the site's market attractiveness.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

The applicant may be any city, village, town, county, government entity, or Tribal entity that has one of the following:

- If a private developer is participating in the project, a draft of a development agreement that describes the project and its goals, anticipated outcomes, project timeline, and actions, obligations, and investments to be made by each party that must be executed prior to the first draw of funds
- If the project does not have a private developer, an officially approved resolution that describes the project and its goals, anticipated outcomes, project timeline, and actions, obligations, and investments necessary to achieve redevelopment

The project site may be:

- one or more contiguous industrial parcels that exceed 4 acres and had long-term (more than 25 years) industrial usage;
- one or more contiguous commercial parcels that exceed 4 acres and had long-term (more than 25 years) commercial usage (for projects in an economically distressed community or Opportunity Zone, parcels need to exceed 2 acres); or
- one or more contiguous institutional parcels that exceed 4 acres and had long-term (more than 25 years) institutional usage (properties of less than 4 acres may be considered when the property is located within a commercial corridor).

Applicants must own the targeted site or demonstrate the legal ability to access the property and perform the work proposed in the application.

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

\$2,500,000

The maximum award generally does not exceed \$250,000 unless the request for funds is for a project that, due to the size and scope of the redevelopment, clearly justifies an award beyond normal parameters. Applicants may receive one award per fiscal year.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Assist 10 communities and achieve a 20:1 leverage of other investment.

FY25 PROGRAM ACTIVITY

ISR AWARDS CONTRACTED IN FY25

	Awards	Award Amount	Leverage Ratio
TOTAL	10	\$2,250,000	68:1

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

None

INDUSTRIAL REVENUE BONDING

STATUS

Active

INCEPTION

Industrial Revenue Bond (IRB) Program financing was authorized in Wisconsin in 1969. Authorized under Wis. Stats. §66.1103, §238.10, and §238.11, and 26 U.S. Code §144, §146 and §147.

PROGRAM GOAL

The goal of the IRB Program is to primarily incent expansions of manufacturing facilities in the state of Wisconsin.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

WEDC is responsible for allocating volume cap on the issuance of private activity bonds. The volume cap limits the amount of bonding authority that can be issued in a year. Once the annual cap is established under federal law, WEDC allocates bonding authority pursuant to Wis. Stat. §238.10 and the policy on the allocation of volume cap.

Generally, the volume cap allocated by WEDC is for IRBs. At the federal level, IRBs are covered by Sections 103 and 141 through 149 of the Internal Revenue Code and Income Tax Regulations, which establish the nature and size of projects which qualify for federal tax exemption of interest.

IRBs are tax-exempt bonds that can be used to stimulate capital investment and job creation by providing private borrowers with access to financing at interest rates that are lower than conventional bank loans. The IRB process involves five separate entities—the borrower, lender, bond attorney, issuer, and WEDC. Each year, federal law establishes a volume cap, which applies at the state level. The municipalities and counties issue the IRBs so that the proceeds can be loaned to eligible businesses undertaking eligible projects.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Manufacturers can use the IRB proceeds for building, land, or equipment but not working capital. There are restrictions on bond size and total capital expenditures. Manufacturing includes nearly every type of processing that results in a change in the condition of tangible personal property. The facility being financed must be located in the state of Wisconsin unless otherwise allowed by law. According to federal tax law, the maximum size of an IRB issue is \$10 million. For IRB issues exceeding \$1 million, capital expenditures in the municipality where the project is located cannot exceed \$20 million during the three years before and the three years after the date the IRBs are issued. The \$20 million capital expenditure limitation includes any principal user of the facility and also related persons. Also, the total amount of IRBs outstanding at all related operations of the business, in all states, may not exceed \$40 million. Exempt Facility Bonds are bonds issued for one of the following project types, and are not subject to the same rules as other private activity bonds:

- Airports
- Docks and wharves
- Mass-commuting facilities such as high-speed rail
- Facilities for furnishing water
- Sewage facilities
- Solid waste disposal facilities
- Facilities for the local furnishing of electric energy or gas
- Facilities for local district heating and cooling
- Qualified hazardous waste facilities

WEDC can allocate volume cap for any private activity bond, including both exempt and non-exempt projects.

To qualify for an IRB volume cap allocation, the following must be satisfied:

- **Notice of intent:** At least 30 days prior to entering into a revenue agreement with a municipality or county, the business benefitting from the bonds must give WEDC a notice of intent to enter into the agreement, on a form prescribed by WEDC. No later than 20 days after receipt of this notice, WEDC will issue a job impact to the municipality or county, estimating whether the project is expected to eliminate, create, or maintain jobs on the project site and elsewhere in the state and the net number of jobs expected to be eliminated, created, or maintained as a result of the project.
- **Good faith estimate:** Prior to adoption of an initial resolution, WEDC must receive a good faith estimate of attorney fees which will be paid from bond proceeds.
- **Initial resolution:** Within 20 days following publication of notice, WEDC must be provided a copy of the initial resolution together with a statement indicating when the public notice required under Wis. Stat. §66.1103(10)(b) was published.
- **Notice of closing:** After the closing of the bond issue, WEDC shall be notified of the closing date, any substantive changes made to documents previously filed with WEDC, and the principal amount of the financing. This notice must be filed with WEDC within five business days from the date of the closing. The notice must also include the following information: buyer/underwriter, type of sale (public or private), term, and interest rates.

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING (CY24)

Volume cap is allocated on a calendar year basis. The total amount for WEDC for calendar year 2025 is \$382,463,375. The federal tax code allows each state to establish by law its own formula for allocating its volume cap. Volume cap is allocated on a statewide basis pursuant to Wis Stat. §238.10 and the Policy on the Allocation of Volume Cap.

Specifically, WEDC must:

- Ensure that the amount of private activity bonds issued in a calendar year does not exceed WEDC’s volume cap for such calendar year
- Calculate the state ceiling using information published in the Federal Register each year. State population is to be determined on the basis of the most recent census estimate of the resident population of the state released by the U.S. Census Bureau before the beginning of the calendar year.

WEDC may elect to carry forward excess volume cap from a calendar year to the following calendar year if it identifies the amount and use of such excess.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Assist three businesses through the authorization of tax-exempt municipal bond sales.

FY25 PROGRAM ACTIVITY

IRB AWARDS CONTRACTED IN FY25		
	Awards	Award Amount
TOTAL	3	\$16,455,000

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

None

INTERNATIONAL MARKET ACCESS GRANT

STATUS

Active

INCEPTION

WEDC FY12

PROGRAM GOAL

The goal of the International Market Access Grant (IMAG) is to provide funding to support a business' specific export development and deployment strategy.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The program assists businesses in accelerating their export development plan, with better execution and lower financial risk. The IMAG provides direct assistance to individual businesses. The program is designed to be flexible and able to meet businesses where they are in their export growth.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

IMAG applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Be an established business operating in Wisconsin, and registered with the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions, for not less than one year that manufactures, processes, assembles and/or distributes a product or performs a service with a potential to be exported
- Have significant export-related operations located within Wisconsin and provide economic benefit to the state (does not have to be headquartered in Wisconsin)
- Self-certify that at least 35% of the value of the product or of the service is composed of Wisconsin cost inputs. Program staff provide an Excel tool to help determine eligibility upon request.
- Have an annual gross revenue of less than \$100 million. This cap does not apply to businesses exporting Wisconsin-grown crops, dairy, or meat that are applying for IMAGs funded by the Wisconsin Initiative for Agricultural Exports.

Eligible activities:

- **Trade shows/missions:** Assistance may be provided to attend a U.S. Department of Commerce or WEDC approved domestic trade show, an international-based trade show, conference, or business meeting. The IMAG may not be used to pay for any cost to attend WEDC-sponsored trade missions.
- **Marketing and promotion:** Assistance may be granted for translation of web/printed materials for a targeted foreign market, design services, advertising, and/or printing. Grants may also be used for company/product/foreign trade zone certification, registration, and marketing within the foreign market.
- **Export education:** Assistance may be approved to support international and export related conferences, seminars, meetings, webinars, and courses. These educational opportunities are for staff who will be implementing the company's international export strategy. Educational courses and seminars also qualify.
- **Consulting services:** Assistance may be funded for services with WEDC's Global Business Network providers, matchmaker services, Gold Keys, consultants, or brokers.

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

WEDC Funds: \$1,005,000

Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection Wisconsin Initiative for Agriculture Exports funding for businesses exporting crops, dairy, and meat: \$220,000

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Assist 65 businesses.

FY25 PROGRAM ACTIVITY

During FY25, the WEDC program budget was amended up to \$1,079,573. Including DATCP funding, total program budget was \$1,299,573.

IMAG AWARDS CONTRACTED IN FY25

	Awards	Award Amount
TOTAL	55	\$1,159,573

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

None

MAIN STREET AND CONNECT COMMUNITIES

STATUS

Active

INCEPTION

1987 Wisconsin Main Street Act; Wis. Stat. §238.127, WEDC FY13

PROGRAM GOAL

The goal of the Main Street (MS) and Connect Communities (CNTC) Program is to support downtown community development in the state of Wisconsin.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

WEDC provides technical assistance to communities in the planning, management, and implementation of strategic development projects in downtowns and urban neighborhoods. This includes MS support and CNTC, which is aimed at supplementing the MS program by expanding services to more downtowns across the state.

WEDC will maintain partnerships and develop new ones with other state and local public and private entities such as the UW-Extension and USDA Rural Development to provide services to municipalities undertaking downtown revitalization projects.

WEDC will annually develop a plan that describes the objectives of the state MS program and the methods for 1) coordinating with the public and private sectors, 2) soliciting private sector funds for revitalization of business areas, and 3) helping municipalities engage in revitalization with help from interested individuals and organizations. WEDC matches technical assistance from our own staff, the National Main Street Center, and outside consultants to the needs of respective municipalities and nonprofit organizations. WEDC will also work with local communities to set strategies to solicit funding from the private sector in those communities to support the local downtown revitalization effort.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Eligible entities for CNTC and MS communities are communities or urban neighborhoods with a central or core business district and demonstrated local commitment to preservation and revitalization activities. Regional entities may apply for the CNTC program on behalf of multiple small communities (1,000 or fewer in population) within their region. Regional coordinators commit to meeting program attendance, sharing information, and collecting annual reporting information from participants.

WEDC will take the following into account when considering MS or CNTC applications:

- **Organizational capability:** An applicant's ability to bring financial and volunteer resources together according to the National Main Street Center's four-point approach to downtown revitalization
- **Public sector commitment:** The participation from local government in the form of financial and staff commitment to the local downtown revitalization effort
- **Private sector commitment:** The participation from local businesses and individuals in the form of financial and volunteer commitment to the local downtown revitalization
- **Financial capacity:** The ability of the community to bring together comprehensive financial resources to adequately support the downtown revitalization program. For MS communities, this includes funds to employ a local program manager to manage the effort for at least five years. Communities with populations of 5,000 or more must employ a full-time, paid program manager and meet a minimum budget requirement. Communities of fewer than 5,000 must employ a half-time program manager and meet a minimum budget requirement. A community's ability and commitment to hiring design consultants and providing training will also be taken into consideration.
- **Need:** Applicants must show that they need the CNTC or MS Program. This need is exhibited by vacancy rate, excessive competition from competing areas, blight, building deterioration, and business mix issues.

- **Physical capacity:** An applicant’s ability to show that they have sufficient building stock, businesses, and a recognizable downtown district
- **Historic integrity:** An applicant’s existing historic resources in the downtown and genuine interest in saving and restoring their historic structures. WEDC will employ a design specialist to assist S communities with design plans.

In addition to these criteria, local MS communities must commit to training and sharing downtown revitalization information with communities that do not participate in the MS program.

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

\$250,000 (non-aids contracting)

This is a technical assistance program; therefore, no funding is provided directly. This technical assistance is given in the form of training, façade renderings, small business consultations, and hiring of outside consultants to address topics such as business recruitment and retention, branding, historic preservation planning, and event development. Per Wis. Stat. §238.127(2)(j), WEDC expends at least \$250,000 annually on the MS program, which covers administration, staff resources, and outside consulting services.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Assist 35 MS communities, including one new community in FY25; 89 CNTC communities, plus 10 new communities in FY25; and 250 small businesses.

FY25 PROGRAM ACTIVITY

MS/CNTC SUPPORT IN FY25					
	Main Street Communities	New Main Street Communities	Connect Communities	New Connect Communities	Businesses Assisted
TOTAL	33	1	102	13	166

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

None

OPPORTUNITY ATTRACTION FUND

STATUS

Active

INCEPTION

2023 Wisconsin Act 169

PROGRAM GOAL

The goal of the Opportunity Attraction Fund (OAF) Program is to attract major opportunities and events to the state of Wisconsin, as directed by the Legislature in 2023 Wisconsin Act 169. Until the current legislation was passed, there was not a statewide effort or fund to assist with the attraction of large, economically impactful events.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The OAF Program provides funds for eligible entities to attract to Wisconsin, or host in Wisconsin, events and opportunities that are secured through competitive bidding against other states or jurisdictions outside of Wisconsin. Events or major opportunities secured through this program should drive economic impact within Wisconsin. Additional benefits may include increased travel and tourism activity within the state, as well as out-of-state talent attraction.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Eligible applicants may be a city, village, town, or county; an American Indian Tribe or band in this state; an area visitor and convention bureau; a business improvement district; or a private entity.

Applicants may use OAF grant funds on a project to attract to Wisconsin, or host in Wisconsin, or both, a major opportunity event that is open to the public, whether or not free of charge.

Specifically, grant funds may be used to undertake a project to do one or more of the following:

- Bid against other states or jurisdictions outside of Wisconsin to attract an opportunity or event that will draw national exposure and drive economic development and visitors to Wisconsin
- Host an opportunity or event that will attract national exposure and drive economic development and visitors to Wisconsin that the applicant has secured through a competitive bid against other states or jurisdictions outside of Wisconsin

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

\$5,000,000

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Assist three businesses or communities and achieve a 1:1 leverage of other investment.

FY25 PROGRAM ACTIVITY

OAF AWARDS CONTRACTED IN FY25			
	Awards	Award Amount	Leverage Ratio
TOTAL	3	\$1,932,102	1:1

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

Increase bid fee limit to \$2 million and remove in-kind match.

QUALIFIED NEW BUSINESS VENTURE CERTIFICATION/ EARLY STAGE BUSINESS INVESTMENT

STATUS

Active

INCEPTION

2003 Wisconsin Act 55

PROGRAM GOAL

The goal of the Qualified New Business Venture (QNBV) program is to incent equity investment in technology-based businesses in the state of Wisconsin.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The program provides tax credits to eligible angel and venture fund investors who make cash equity investments in qualified early-stage businesses. If all eligibility requirements are met, investors receive a Wisconsin income tax credit equal to 25% of the value of the Investment made in the certified company. The investments incented by this program provide the capital necessary for emerging growth companies to develop new products and technologies, move products to market, and provide high quality jobs in Wisconsin.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Qualified New Business Venture Certification

QNBV certification allows businesses to offer their equity investors the angel or early stage seed income tax credits as an incentive for investing in their business. WEDC maintains flexibility in evaluating applications for certification to protect the intent of the QNBV program in focusing on economic development, particularly incentivizing in-state investors, in Wisconsin.

A business may be certified, and may maintain such certification, only if the business satisfies all of the following conditions:

- It has its headquarters in this state.
- At least 51% of the employees are employed in this state.
- It has: (1) the potential for increasing jobs in this state, increasing capital investment in this state, or both; and (2) it is engaged in, or has committed to engage in innovation, if the innovation involves the development of a differentiating technology, product, service, or production process.
- It is not primarily engaged in (being primarily engaged means having greater than 50% of projected or reported revenue generated from) real estate development, insurance, banking, lending, lobbying, political consulting, professional services provided by attorneys, accountants, business consultants, physicians, or health care consultants, wholesale or retail trade, leisure, hospitality, transportation, or construction, except construction of power production plants that derive energy from a renewable resource, as defined in Wis. Stat. §196.378(1)(h).
- It has fewer than 100 employees at the time of initial certification.
- It has been in operation in this state for not more than 10 consecutive years at the time of initial certification.
- For taxable years beginning before Jan. 1, 2008, it has not received more than \$1,000,000 in investments that have qualified for tax credits under Wis. Stat. §71.07(5d).
- It has not received aggregate private equity investment in cash of more than \$10,000,000 at the time of initial certification.
- For taxable years beginning after Dec. 31, 2007 and before Jan. 1, 2011, it has not received more than \$4,000,000 in investments that have qualified for tax credits under the program.
- For taxable years beginning after Dec. 31, 2010, and before Jan. 1, 2018, it has not received more than \$8,000,000 in investments that have qualified for tax credits under the program.

- For taxable years beginning after Dec. 31, 2017, it has not received more than \$12,000,000 in investments that have qualified for tax credits under the program.
- Companies whose certification has expired or lapsed due to meeting or approaching \$8 million in qualified investments prior to Jan. 1, 2018 may qualify for additional funds under the following:
 - If the company is within the required three-year reporting period following the receipt of qualifying investments and is in good standing with WEDC, it may be eligible for recertification in the program under limits established for tax years after Dec. 31, 2017.
 - If the company is outside its reporting period, the company must go through the full application process.

Fund Manager Certification/Qualified Venture Fund (QVF)

A certified fund manager is eligible for early stage seed tax credits when making investments in QNBV certified companies. An investment fund manager desiring certification for a specific fund shall submit an application to WEDC.

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

\$30,000,000 allocated for CY24

The aggregate amount of investment in any one qualified new business venture that may qualify for tax credits under the program is limited to \$12,000,000 or a different amount determined by WEDC at the time of certification or recertification.

The aggregate amount of angel and early stage seed tax credits that may be claimed for investments in businesses is limited to \$30,000,000 per calendar year.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Certify 38 new businesses and eight fund managers and achieve a 4:1 leverage.

FY25 PROGRAM ACTIVITY

Three qualified venture fund managers were certified during FY25.

QNBV AWARDS CONTRACTED IN FY25

	Awards	Amount
TOTAL	31	\$89,788,150

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

None

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT GRANT

STATUS

Active

INCEPTION

WEDC FY25

PROGRAM GOAL

The goal of the Small Business Development Grant (SBDG) Program is to support local and regional economic development programs that are aimed at providing greater access to capital to small businesses in the state of Wisconsin.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The SBDG Program encourages communities and economic development partners through financial incentives to invest in their small businesses by developing innovative programs aimed directly at supporting small businesses and small business creation. WEDC believes we can foster creative, new program ideas by challenging our communities and partners to think outside the box to develop new programs and ideas rather than the typical top-down approach to program development.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Local and regional economic development organizations, municipalities, Tribal governments, and counties are eligible applicants.

Eligible funds include matching grant programs (start-up, façade, expansion) and small business financing for firms with fewer than 25 full-time employees. Matching funds are not required, but will be considered during the scoring process, as well as other attributes including whether the project is in a rural/distressed area, whether the small business is diverse owned, and other attributes outlined on the SBDG scoring rubric.

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

\$2,000,000

Awards are between \$50,000 and \$250,000.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Awards will be made to a minimum of eight and a maximum of 40 communities.

FY25 PROGRAM ACTIVITY

During FY25, the budget was amended up to \$4,740,000. 29 communities were assisted and expected to assist 896 businesses.

SBDG AWARDS CONTRACTED IN FY25

	Awards	Amount
TOTAL	29	\$4,690,000

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

Allow membership organizations to apply.

Prioritize applicants that have not previously received funding.

SMALL BUSINESS INNOVATION RESEARCH (SBIR)/ SMALL BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER (STTR) MATCHING GRANT

STATUS

Active

INCEPTION

WEDC FY15

PROGRAM GOAL

The goal of the SBIR/STTR Matching Grant Program is to stimulate technological innovation by supporting technology-based small businesses in the state of Wisconsin.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The program provides funds to technology-based businesses that qualify as a small business concern, as defined by the Small Business Administration, operating in or relocating to Wisconsin by matching a portion of Phase I and/or Phase II awards under the federal Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs provided through periodic competitions. The program will be administered by the Center for Technology Commercialization (CTC).

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

The federal SBIR program provides more than \$2.5 billion annually in grants from 11 federal agencies designed to help small businesses create and commercialize new innovations and technologies. The program consists of three phases:

- Phase I awards range from \$100,000 to \$225,000 to support feasibility studies.
- Phase II awards range from about \$750,000 to \$1,500,000 to support full research and development.
- Phase III entails commercialization supported by funding outside of the federal program.

CTC must administer the SBIR/STTR Matching Grant program according to the following guidelines:

- Wisconsin businesses that are Phase I or Phase II recipients of federal SBIR/STTR funding may apply to CTC for a matching grant.
- Out-of-state businesses may apply for and receive funding contingent on the business relocating to Wisconsin within 90 days of receiving the matching grant funding.
- Businesses may receive matching grants for both Phase I and Phase II awards, but the program will primarily support first-time recipients of a federal award for the phase for which a matching grant is pursued. The matching grant is intended to support eligible activities including but not limited to customer validation activities, market research, intellectual property assessment, and feasibility assessment.

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

\$1,500,000

The SBIR/STTR Matching Grant program will provide award matches of 50% up to \$75,000 of the amount of federal Phase I or up to \$100,000 for up to two years for Phase II funding awards. The grant must be used for new and additional work tasks that relate to the project granted by the federal award.

It is anticipated that the number of federal awards eligible for matching grants will exceed the funding level of the matching grant program. Projects will be evaluated as part of a competitive scoring process and awards will be made based on funding availability and project merit.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Award one organization to support 15 businesses and achieve a leverage to federal grants of 3:1.

FY25 PROGRAM ACTIVITY

The program administered through CTC assisted nine businesses.

SBIR/STTR AWARDS CONTRACTED IN FY25		
	<i>Awards</i>	<i>Award Amount</i>
TOTAL	1	\$1,500,000

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

None.

STRATEGIC INVESTMENT FUND

STATUS

Active

INCEPTION

WEDC FY24

PROGRAM GOAL

The goal of the Strategic Investment Fund (SIF) Program is to assist organizations carrying out activities that support WEDC's:

Vision: An Economy for All, where every Wisconsinite has the opportunity to thrive; and

Mission: To strategically invest in Wisconsin to enhance the economic well-being of people and their businesses and communities.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The program provides grants to support projects strategically forwarding WEDC's mission and vision. The SIF will contribute to projects that help build a Wisconsin economy that:

- fuels financial stability;
- educates everyone;
- supports healthy living;
- reinforces community infrastructure; and/or
- respects the environment.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

SIF projects must advance WEDC's mission and vision and the five pillars of an Economy for All. SIF projects must have an executive sponsor within WEDC and be approved by the CEO and CFO in concept prior to submittal of an application and must have metrics built in for evaluating a project's success.

SIF is not available for projects that are eligible to be funded through other programs offered by WEDC.

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

\$3,000,000

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Assist three organizations.

FY25 PROGRAM ACTIVITY

During FY25, the program budget was amended down to \$1,820,000.

SIF AWARDS CONTRACTED IN FY25

	Awards	Award Amount	Leverage Ratio
TOTAL	3	\$1,747,000	2:1

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

None

TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT LOAN

STATUS

Active

INCEPTION

WEDC FY12

PROGRAM GOAL

The goal of the Technology Development Loan (TDL) Program is to support technology-based startup and emerging growth companies in the state of Wisconsin.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The program provides direct financial assistance to startup and emerging growth companies in Wisconsin that are developing and commercializing innovative products and services at critical stages in their development. The TDL Program is intended to provide capital to those companies that have the potential to add to Wisconsin's economic base over the long term by attracting and training a high-wage, highly skilled workforce and establishing a unique competitive advantage. The funds can be used as working capital and require leverage from outside funding for the business development project or funding round under consideration. Funding levels are dependent on the stage of growth, capital need, financial leverage, economic potential, risk evaluation, and other factors deemed by WEDC to impact the funding request under consideration.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Funds are awarded for various activities according to the following eligibility criteria:

1. Product/process development
 - Supports research and development, proof of concept, and prototype development
 - Early-stage company or spinout with fewer than 25 employees
 - Demonstrates financial need and potential for business growth
 - Funding is generally limited to \$250,000 per company.
2. Product/service commercial launch
 - Company is raising funds for initial launch of a developed product into the primary market after proof of concept and development testing.
 - Funding is generally limited to \$500,000 per company.
 - A lower limit may be imposed for moving into test markets if the technology or industry requires incremental steps to commercialization.
3. Growth/expansion stage
 - Company is in growth mode with recurring sales of fully developed product into the intended market.
 - Company should have strong and growing market traction and have a clear path to sustainability.
 - Intent is to provide capital for increasing production and approaching profitability.
 - Funding is generally limited to \$750,000 per company.

WEDC maintains flexibility in evaluating applications for loan funding in order to best direct the limited funding available on an annual basis.

WEDC will consider the circumstances of each loan and will limit its liability to the greatest extent possible.

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

\$5,225,000

Funding will be provided in the form of loans and will be awarded through an ongoing application process.

WEDC: \$1,000,000

SSBCI: \$4,225,000 (total anticipated funding)

Federal SSBCI funding has specific requirements for the company eligibility, private funding participation, reporting requirements, and other factors. The funding source utilized will be based on the ability of the proposed project and funding structure to meet federal funding eligibility requirements, policy guidance, and program objectives established by the U.S. Department of Treasury.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Assist 12 businesses and achieve a 4:1 leverage of other investment.

FY25 PROGRAM ACTIVITY

During FY25, the WEDC program budget was amended up to \$1,250,000. Including SSBCI funding, total program budget was \$5,475,000.

Four SSBCI awards were contracted.

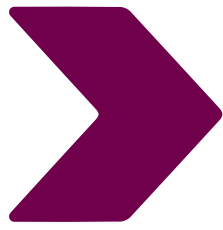
TDL AWARDS CONTRACTED IN FY25

	Awards	Award Amount	Leverage Ratio
TOTAL	8	\$2,727,500	6:1

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

Update language in the program purpose to reflect focus on high growth potential companies.

Clarify language around SSBCI requirements.



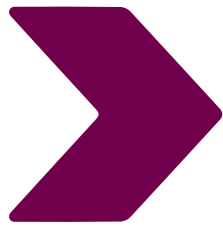
WEDC FY25 LEGISLATIVE AWARDS

Working collaboratively
on statewide initiatives

Programs in this section are
carried out by WEDC as directed
by the Legislature according to
legislative priorities.

BIOFORWARD TECH HUB

2023 Wisconsin Act 96 directed that WEDC provide sponsorship funding for purposes of this state's designation as a regional technology and innovation hub under 15 USC 3722a. The funding was in the form of a grant of \$7,500,000 awarded to BioForward Inc. in its capacity as the lead member of the consortium formed for purposes of this state's federal designation as a regional technology and innovation hub. The grant monies are to be used by BioForward Inc. to: (1) establish in this state a clinical workflow and supply chain support center for image-guided therapies and theranostics; (2) expand shared lab space at Forward BIOLABS Inc., construct new Forward BIOLABS Inc. lab space, develop lab-related programming, and support the expansion of Forward BIOLABS Inc.; and (3) develop a program that provides support for manufacturing and supply chain companies in this state to develop apprenticeship programs and support incentives for employers in this state to engage apprentices in high-demand industry sectors.



WEDC FY25 INITIATIVE SUMMARIES

WEDC leverages resources for economic well-being.

Initiatives in this section also serve WEDC's mission and vision, but have guidelines promulgated by another organization or entity rather than WEDC itself.

WISCONSIN INVESTMENT FUND

STATUS

Active

INCEPTION

WEDC FY23

INITIATIVE GOAL

The goal of the Wisconsin Investment Fund (WIF) is to leverage public and private dollars to increase investment in Wisconsin companies and to empower small businesses to access capital needed to invest in expanding opportunities.

INITIATIVE DESCRIPTION

Wisconsin has been approved by the U.S. Department of the Treasury for \$50 million to support the WIF initiative over a 10-year period. The fund will promote entrepreneurship and democratize access to startup capital across the state. Through the WIF, WEDC will be investing equity capital utilizing external venture capital fund managers who will then invest the capital into Wisconsin small businesses.

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

Total allocation over 10 years: \$50,000,000

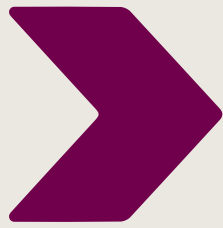
Available budget for FY24: \$13,959,704

FY25 INITIATIVE ACTIVITY

WIF INVESTED IN FY25			
	Investments	Investment Amount	Leverage Ratio
TOTAL	13	\$8,635,000	1.4:1

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

None



DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION

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AMERICAN INDIAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANT

INCEPTION

July 1, 2012

PROGRAM GOAL

According to Wis. Stat. §16.29(1), the purpose of the program is to partially fund a program to provide technical assistance for economic development on Indian reservations.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Grants to the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council (GLITC) partially fund a program for the following businesses: a tribal enterprise, an Indian business that is located on an Indian reservation, and an Indian business that is not located on an Indian reservation but that directly benefits the economy of an Indian reservation. Technical assistance provided: management assistance to existing businesses; startup assistance to new businesses, including the development of business and marketing plans and assistance in securing development financing; technical assistance to new and existing businesses in gaining access to tribal, state, and federal business assistance and financing programs. The program may not provide technical assistance for commercial gaming and gambling activity. As a condition of receiving a grant, GLITC shall annually prepare a report on the technical assistance program and submit the report to the Department of Administration (DOA).

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Wisconsin statutes dictate that the grant will be given to the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council.

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

Each year, GLITC sends a plan of work to the DOA along with a proposed budget of how it will spend the funds and with measurable goals.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

\$79,500 annual grant to GLITC per state statutes.

PROGRAM ACTIVITY

The American Indian Economic Development Technical Assistance program has reached out to develop many partnerships and collaborative activities with tribal community economic development initiatives, state business development programs, the private sector, and local colleges.

In collaboration with the GLITC Economic Administration Program director, we will answer the needs of tribal people and communities as they strive for economic prosperity and independence.

We will continue enhancing and adding more resources to the new GLITC Economic Development Program's web page and will work with the American Indian Chamber of Wisconsin on completing and updating the Wisconsin Native Owned Business Directory. We will continue to use the First Nations Development Institute's Building Native Communities: Financial Skills for Families course text to teach financial knowledge and practices that are based in Native tradition and critical to asset building and entrepreneurship.

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

It is more essential now than ever before to provide consistent and culturally sensitive entrepreneurial development skills, small business training, financial literacy, and targeted technical assistance to Native American communities.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT - COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

WEBSITE

energyandhousing.wi.gov/Pages/CommunityResources.aspx

INCEPTION

Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974

PROGRAM GOAL

To provide resources to units of general local government (UGLGs) throughout Wisconsin to address deficient infrastructure and facilities; alleviate threats to public health, safety, and welfare; support revitalization of established neighborhoods and downtown businesses; and improve economic opportunities for low- to moderate-income persons and communities.

To achieve these goals, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) regulations define eligible activities and the national objectives that each activity must meet. For each CDBG project that it funds, the Division of Energy, Housing, and Community Resources (DEHCR) must ensure that it meets at least one of the following national objectives and that each project is an eligible activity as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

The HUD national objective category must be identified in the application prior to the award of funding. The three national objectives are:

1. To provide benefits to low- to moderate-income persons (LMI)
2. To aid in the prevention or elimination of slums or blighted areas
3. To provide funding for projects that have a particular urgency due to existing conditions which pose a serious and immediate threat to the health and welfare of the community

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

CDBG - Community Development programs include:

- CDBG - Public Facilities (CDBG - PF)
- CDBG - Planning (CDBG - PLNG)

The CDBG Program is administered by HUD. The primary purpose of the Small Cities CDBG Program is the development of viable communities through the provision of decent housing, a suitable living environment, and the expansion of economic opportunities, all principally for the benefit of persons of low to moderate income.

The Department of Administration (DOA) is Wisconsin's recipient for the Small Cities CDBG Program. DOA monitors and oversees all of the state CDBG programs, other than those in entitlement communities. Under a previous administrative agreement executed between WEDC and DOA, WEDC administered, with DOA's oversight, Wisconsin's CDBG - American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), CDBG - Community Development, and CDBG - Economic Development programs. On July 1, 2013, all CDBG application and contract management activities were transferred to DOA's Division of Energy, Housing, and Community Resources (DEHCR). WEDC continues its extensive community and economic development and networking outreach to local communities.

Every year, HUD provides federal CDBG funds directly to states, which in turn provide the funds to small, rural cities and towns with populations of fewer than 50,000 and/or to non-urban counties. These small communities are referred to as non-entitlement areas because they must apply to the state for CDBG funding. Larger areas, including but not limited to Milwaukee, La Crosse, and Madison, receive CDBG funding directly from HUD and are defined as entitlement communities. Entitlement communities are not eligible to apply for the state's CDBG program.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

DEHCR may only award CDBG sub-awards to UGLGs, which in turn carry out the funded activities. The only UGLGs eligible to apply for CDBG funds are incorporated towns, non-entitlement cities, villages, and non-urban counties. Nonprofit agencies and entities such as sewer districts and fire departments are not eligible to apply for sub-award funds. DEHCR cannot award CDBG funds directly to citizens or private organizations.

UGLGs are responsible for considering the local needs of their populations, preparing applications for assistance to DEHCR, and carrying out the contracted development activities. UGLGs must comply with all federal and state requirements pertaining to the use of their awarded CDBG funding.

State CDBG funds are awarded by DEHCR to non-entitlement communities annually on a competitive basis, based on predetermined scoring parameters. DEHCR awards grants to UGLGs for public infrastructure projects such as municipal water and sewer improvements; construction of public facilities, such as community and senior centers; slum and blight elimination; and community planning activities.

PROGRAM ACTIVITY

CDBG - PF:

- 21 communities assisted
- 57,864 persons served

CDBG - PLNG:

- 0 communities assisted
- 0 beneficiaries

Since CDBG data are compiled at contract closeout and reported on the program-year basis, performance data do not reflect the time period covered by the state fiscal year, but rather are based on HUD's program year of April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025.

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

None

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

WEBSITE

energyandhousing.wi.gov/Pages/CommunityResources.aspx

INCEPTION

Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974

PROGRAM GOAL

To provide resources to units of general local government (UGLGs) throughout Wisconsin to address deficient infrastructure and facilities; alleviate threats to public health, safety, and welfare; support revitalization of established neighborhoods and downtown businesses; and improve economic opportunities for low- to moderate-income persons and communities.

To achieve these goals, CDBG regulations define eligible activities and the national objectives that each activity must meet. For each CDBG project that it funds, the Division of Energy, Housing, and Community Resources (DEHCR) must ensure that it meets at least one of the national objectives and that each project is an eligible activity, as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The HUD national objective category must be identified in the application prior to the award of funding.

The three national objectives are:

1. To provide benefits to low- to moderate-income persons (LMI)
2. To aid in the prevention or elimination of slums or blighted areas
3. To provide funding for projects that have a particular urgency due to existing conditions which pose a serious and immediate threat to the health and welfare of the community

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

CDBG - Economic Development programs include:

- CDBG - Economic Development (CDBG - ED)
- CDBG - Public Facilities for Economic Development (CDBG - PFED)

The CDBG Program is administered by HUD. The primary purpose of the Small Cities CDBG Program is the development of viable communities through the provision of decent housing, a suitable living environment, and the expansion of economic opportunities, all principally for the benefit of persons of low to moderate income.

The Department of Administration (DOA) is Wisconsin's recipient for the Small Cities CDBG Program. DOA monitors and oversees all of the CDBG programs, other than those located in entitlement communities. Under a previous administrative agreement executed between WEDC and DOA, WEDC administered, with DOA's oversight, Wisconsin's CDBG - American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, CDBG - Community Development, and CDBG - Economic Development programs. On July 1, 2013, all CDBG application and contract management activities were transferred to DEHCR. WEDC continues its extensive community and economic development and networking outreach to local communities.

Every year, HUD provides federal CDBG funds directly to states, which in turn provide the funds to small, rural cities and towns with populations of fewer than 50,000 and/or to non-urban counties. These small communities are referred to as non-entitlement areas because they must apply to the state for CDBG funding. Larger areas—including but not limited to Milwaukee, La Crosse, and Madison—receive CDBG funding directly from HUD and are defined as entitlement communities. Entitlement communities are not eligible to apply for the state's CDBG funding.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

DEHCR may only award CDBG sub-awards to UGLGs, which in turn carry out the funded activities. The only UGLGs eligible to apply for CDBG funds are incorporated towns, non-entitlement cities, villages, and non-urban counties. Nonprofit agencies and entities such as sewer districts and fire departments are not eligible to apply for sub-award funds. DEHCR cannot award CDBG funds directly to citizens or private organizations.

UGLGs are responsible for considering the local needs of their populations, preparing applications for assistance to DEHCR, and carrying out the contracted development activities. UGLGs must comply with all federal and state requirements pertaining to the use of their awarded CDBG funding.

DEHCR awards CDBG - ED funds to non-entitlement UGLGs, which in turn grant or loan funds to local businesses for economic development projects. The controlling federal laws and regulations require that the activity funded must constitute an eligible activity and meet a national objective (benefit persons of low to moderate income, address slum and blight conditions or meet an urgent local need). In addition, at least 70% of the state's total funds must be dedicated to the primary objective of benefiting persons of low to moderate income.

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

\$1,312,665 in total funding available

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

0 jobs created/retained

PROGRAM ACTIVITY

Communities and businesses assisted, job creation, job retention, investment in public infrastructure

CDBG - ED:

- 0 community assisted
- 0 jobs created

CDBG - PFED:

- 0 community assisted
- 0 jobs created

Since CDBG data are compiled at contract closeout and reported on a program-year basis, performance data do not reflect the time period covered by the state fiscal year, but rather are based on HUD's program year of April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025.

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

None



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, TRADE, AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

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BEGINNING, MINORITY, AND UNDERSERVED FARMER ASSISTANCE

INCEPTION

2008

PROGRAM GOAL

Provide outreach and referrals for technical assistance and resources for business development and risk management to beginning, minority, and underserved farmers to improve their sustainability, resilience, and profitability.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Entity Served: Individual beginning and minority farmers

Type of Assistance: Technical and referral

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

All beginning, minority, and historically underserved farmers are eligible for receiving outreach and referral to technical assistance and resources.

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

None

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

To engage in statewide outreach to beginning, minority, and underserved farmers, and improve awareness of and access to information, resources, and programs to increase farm success

PROGRAM ACTIVITY

In FY25:

- Four workshops and outreach events were organized and offered to beginning, minority, and underserved farmers. These events were funded by grants secured from partner organizations, such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) 2501 Grant (sub-award from EasterSeals).
- Individual technical assistance was provided to 52 beginning, minority, and underserved farmers on multiple topics including transitioning to organic; accessing wholesale markets; keeping records; applying for grants; USDA programs such as National Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency (FSA), Rural Development, and Risk Management Agency; grants; and cost share, loans, and other financial assistance programs.
- The Wisconsin Beginning Farmer Resource Guide and other educational materials were distributed to beginning, minority, and underserved farmers at conferences and events. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection participated in creating the guide, which was funded by FSA.

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

None

BUY LOCAL BUY WISCONSIN

WEBSITE

datcp.wi.gov/Pages/BuyLocalBuyWisconsinGrants.aspx

INCEPTION

2008

PROGRAM GOAL

The Buy Local Buy Wisconsin competitive grant program was launched in 2008 to strengthen Wisconsin's agricultural and food industries. The grants work to reduce the marketing, distribution, and processing hurdles that impede the expansion of sales of Wisconsin's food products to local purchasers.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The need for the Buy Local Buy Wisconsin grant program remains high. From the start of the program in 2008, 607 applications have been received, requesting more than \$21.03 million. To date, Buy Local Buy Wisconsin has funded 128 projects for a total of \$3.227 million. The funded projects are directly impacting infrastructure development, market development, agritourism, producer development, and other areas related to local food production and distribution.

CUMULATIVE PROGRAM ACTIVITY

- More than \$14 million in increased sales
- More than \$8.4 million in new investments
- 221 new jobs created
- 323 jobs retained
- 5,617 producers benefited
- 5,508 Wisconsin markets benefited

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Proposals are accepted from individuals, groups, businesses, and organizations involved in Wisconsin agriculture, Wisconsin food processing, Wisconsin food distribution, Wisconsin food warehousing, Wisconsin retail food establishments, or Wisconsin agricultural tourism. Proposals may involve collaborations or partnerships among producers, food businesses, industry, academia, or organizations. Applicants may cooperate with any public or private organization. Projects with broad-reaching impacts receive higher consideration. Projects should benefit the local food industry and/or the public rather than a single organization, institution, individual, or commercial product. Proposed projects should be driven by or supported by local food producers. The Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection may not make more than one grant award to the same person in the same state fiscal biennium. Grant applicants must provide cash or in-kind match equivalent to or greater than 50% of the total project cost (1:1 match).

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

The Buy Local Buy Wisconsin grant program had \$250,000 allocated for grant awards in FY25. Projects must be concluded within three years of their contract start date. The maximum grant award is \$50,000 per project.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- The project demonstrates that it will increase the purchase of Wisconsin food products for sale to local purchasers and includes a way to measure the increase that is directly related to project work.
- The project demonstrates economic development in the form of new/retained jobs, new investment, increased sales, etc.
- The project shows broad impact.
- The project benefits the local food industry and/or the public rather than a single organization, institution, individual, or commercial product.
- The project directly impacts community development.

- The project expands community leadership, increases social capital, helps develop more effective nonprofit and/or community-based organizations, and/or improves quality of life.
- The project outcomes clearly demonstrate return on project investment.
- The project provides a direct benefit to local food producers and local markets.
- The project helps build supply chain infrastructure for Wisconsin's local food system.
- The project creates a competitive advantage for Wisconsin agriculture.

PROGRAM ACTIVITY

In FY25, 11 projects were awarded a total of \$250,000.

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

None

COUNTY AND DISTRICT FAIRS STATE AID

WEBSITE

datcp.wi.gov/Pages/AgDevelopment/FairsAndShows.aspx

INCEPTION

State aid is paid based on a formula established by the Legislature in Wis. Stat. §93.23(1)(a) in 1950.

PROGRAM GOAL

Provide aid to county and district fairs that pay premiums to exhibitors.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Premiums are paid to junior, open, and senior citizen classes, with a \$20,000 maximum for each fair. The money is to be paid to eligible fairs by request only.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

State aid paid to each fair is based on premiums paid in the current fair season. One fair per county receives funding, as designated by the county board. Also eligible is any fair that received state aid in 1950, as long as it continues to operate a fair each year in conformity with the applicable law and regulations.

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

In FY25, \$650,000 was available for equitable distribution among the eligible county and district fairs.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

All 73 eligible fairs will receive state aid.

PROGRAM ACTIVITY

All 73 county and district fairs received state aid in FY25.

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

None

DAIRY PROCESSOR GRANTS

WEBSITE

datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Growing_WI/DairyDevelopment.aspx

INCEPTION

The former 20x20 program was transferred to the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) from the Department of Commerce in 2012. The Dairy Processing Grant Program is funded under Wis. Stat. §20.115(4)(dm) and authorized by Wis. Stat. §93.40.

PROGRAM GOAL

The overall goal of the Dairy Processor Grant is to improve the long-term viability of Wisconsin's dairy industry.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Dairy Processor Grant is designed to provide access to services and resources for proposed dairy processing plant projects that enhance or develop the current business, solve an existing problem or concern at the plant, improve production or profitability, and help the processor innovate.

Grant projects may include multiple aspects from the following areas:

- Dairy plant modernization and expansion efforts to aid with professional service costs related to siting, engineering, design, and layout of new facilities or production lines.
- Consulting services to help pass a food safety audit or certificate needed to meet a customer-driven market requirement.
- Training of plant staff on food safety requirements, new technology, etc.
- Assistance for related professional services and consultants to develop new processes, improve wastewater treatment or handling, or find new uses for whey or other innovations.
- Other dairy processing projects may be considered.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for the grant, an applicant must operate a licensed dairy processing plant that is engaged in pasteurizing, processing, or manufacturing milk or dairy products that is or will be located in Wisconsin.

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

A total of \$500,000 was available for grants in FY25. Grants up to \$50,000 are available per dairy processor per year.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

DATCP's goal is for dairy processors to explore new technologies, make operational changes, and improve profitability and efficiency.

PROGRAM ACTIVITY

DATCP received 31 applications in FY25 and 14 projects were selected for funding.

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

None

FARM TO SCHOOL AND INSTITUTION PROGRAM

WEBSITE

datcp.wi.gov/Pages/AgDevelopment/FarmToSchool.aspx

INCEPTION

2009 Wisconsin Act 293

PROGRAM GOAL

The Wisconsin Farm to School Program strengthens local economies by increasing the purchases of Wisconsin-grown and -produced food products for sale to Wisconsin schools, either directly from the producer or through traditional distribution channels, thereby expanding markets for Wisconsin agricultural producers and food entrepreneurs. The Farm to School Program connects Wisconsin food businesses to school food buyers in an effort to provide children with locally produced fresh fruits and vegetables, dairy products, proteins, and grain to be served in breakfast, lunch, and snack programs; help children develop healthy eating habits; provide nutritional and agricultural education; and improve farmers' incomes and access to markets.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Farm to School Program is conducted with the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection Farm to School Advisory Council and other industry stakeholders. It serves Wisconsin farmers, food purchasing organizations, and institutional markets, and offers technical assistance and federal grant program administration and coordination. It is funded through general purpose revenue for program expenses, Wis. Stat. §20.115(3)(at), with appropriation for one FTE to manage program administration and oversight. Program targets include producers, processors, distributors, food service management companies, school food service staff, early childhood education centers, and food assistance organizations. Eligible activities include connecting farmers to procurement systems for institutional cafeterias, institutional gardens, and nutrition and agriculture education; activities that increase awareness and access; and supply chain development.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

The Farm to School Program:

To be eligible for the Farm to School Program, applicants must be a Wisconsin farmer, a food purchasing organization, or an institutional market that is in the practice of participating in and promoting the use of locally sourced foods in school meal programs.

The Farm to School Grant Program:

One-time federal funding has been provided with the purpose of expanding or creating new farm-to-school activities. The goal of the Wisconsin Farm to School Grant Program is to enable communities to develop partnerships, implement initiatives, and strengthen Wisconsin's farm-to-school network. Successful projects gathered impact and outcome data, measured grant program demand, and captured success stories for ongoing support and funding. Funds were not intended to provide one-time funding for farm-to-school meals.

Eligible applications included three or more partners engaging youth in farm to school activities. Applicants also identified a school food service director, an early childhood education director, or an authorized school or community nutrition program representative.

Funded projects ranged in size from \$10,000 to \$40,000 for one year following a competitive review process. Eligible expenses included salaries, equipment rental/lease, materials, and supplies. Matched funds of 25% of the award or 20% of the total project were required.

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant: \$100,000 for promoting farm-to-school specialty crop producers

USDA Farm to School Grant: \$400,000, piloting the state grant program

Farm to School Program Administration: \$90,600

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Increased resiliency in food supply chains to communities through essential institutions, including schools, medical facilities, early childhood education and elderly care feeding programs, food banks, and food pantries.

PROGRAM ACTIVITY

- Filled one FTE Farm to School and Institution Specialist in March 2020
- 200,000 Wisconsin students participated in Great Lakes Apple Crunch.
- 35,000 individuals participated in Wisconsin chili lunch events.
- Supported food box programs to early childhood education and elderly care by connecting local food suppliers to Wisconsin Farm to School and Institution initiatives
- Supported Wisconsin food industry food bank purchases
- Supported 289 farmers and more than 300 food access sites in supply chain connections for the implementation of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) funds to food pantries, food banks, and schools
- Worked with key supply chain and school food service stakeholders to create partnerships in local supply chain development and procurement
- Continued projects focused on developing a statewide procurement strategy. Continued Marketplace Meetings in partnerships with the Department of Public Instruction to bring local food suppliers and school food service directors together
- Engaged processors and distributors with Specialty Crop Block Grants to develop minimally processed Wisconsin fruit and vegetables products to assist school food service in meeting food and service needs
- Administered federal grants to implement initiatives and strengthen Wisconsin's farm-to-school network
 - 31 grant applications were received.
 - 8 grant projects were selected for funding ranging from \$10,000 to \$40,000 per project.
 - A total of \$250,000 was awarded to recipients.

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

The Wisconsin Farm to School Program will continue to seek alternate funding sources for farm-to-school initiatives.

MEAT PROCESSOR INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT PROGRAM

WEBSITE

datcp.wi.gov/Pages/AgDevelopment/MeatProcessorInfrastructureGrants.aspx

INCEPTION

2021

Funding for the Meat Processor Infrastructure Grant Program is defined in Wis. Stat. §20.115(4)(f) and the program authority is under Wis. Stat. §93.68(1).

PROGRAM GOAL

The overall goal of the Meat Processor Infrastructure Grant is to grow Wisconsin's meat industry and improve the long-term viability of the livestock sector through services to meat processing establishments.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection Meat Processor Infrastructure Grants are available to new or existing processors to facilitate changes, support expansion to grow harvest capacity, and increase product throughput. The grant is designed to provide access to services and resources for proposed meat processing establishment projects that grow or develop the current business's harvest or throughput capacity, improve production or profitability, and help the processor resolve capacity challenges and production bottlenecks.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

An applicant must or will operate a licensed meat processing establishment, be engaged in livestock harvest and/or further processing (sausage, cured meats, or other value-added meat manufacturing), and be located in Wisconsin.

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

A total of \$200,000 was available in the Meat Processor Infrastructure Grant Program for FY25. Grants of up to \$50,000 were available per project.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Funded projects are expected to demonstrate one or more of the following outcomes:

- Establish expansion efforts to aid with professional services costs related to siting, engineering, design, or layout of new meat processor facilities or production lines.
- Increase in an establishment's harvest capacity by 20% or more per year.
- Increase in meat or meat product production that shows a benefit to harvest capacity within the supply chain.

PROGRAM ACTIVITY

In FY25, 51 grant applications were received and nine projects were selected for funding. Grants of up to \$50,000 were available per project.

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

None

ORGANIC CERTIFICATION COST-SHARE PROGRAM

WEBSITE

datcp.wi.gov/Pages/AgDevelopment/OrganicFarmingAndFood.aspx

INCEPTION

The Organic Certification Cost-Share Program originated in the 2002 Federal Farm Bill and was reinstated under the 2014 Federal Farm Bill.

PROGRAM GOAL

To provide a cost-sharing program that reimburses part of the cost of obtaining and maintaining organic certification for producers and processors

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The USDA National Organic Program provides each state with funds to reimburse organic certified farmers and processing companies. In FY25, reimbursement was increased to the historic norm: 75% of eligible certification costs up to \$750 per scope of certification.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Certified entities must complete a state application and submit, or have their certifier submit, proof of certification along with receipts for expenses paid to their certifier during the federal fiscal year.

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

In FY23, \$645,000 was available for rebates for Wisconsin through USDA funding. USDA's total available funding for FY24 was \$7,500,000.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) provides outreach with the goal of receiving applications from at least 50% of the state's organic certified producers and processors.

PROGRAM ACTIVITY

In FY25, 384 entities received a rebate out of 389 applications received.

DATCP distributed reimbursement payments totaling \$378,198 to 23% of Wisconsin's 1,656 certified organic operations* in FY25.

**USDA Organic Integrity Database year to date June 5, 2025*

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

None

SOMETHING SPECIAL FROM WISCONSIN™

WEBSITE

www.somethingspecialwi.com

INCEPTION

1983 (Act 92)

PROGRAM GOAL

Provide commodity and product promotion, and technical assistance

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Something Special from Wisconsin (SSfW) is a statewide identifier. Paid members may use the trademarked logo if at least 50% of the value of the product or service is attributable to Wisconsin ingredients, production, or processing activities.

Members are authorized to use the logo on product labels, brochures, promotional materials, trade show banners, vehicles, and signs.

Target industry: Value-added Wisconsin agricultural products and other products produced, grown, manufactured, or processed in Wisconsin.

Eligible activities: Market assistance, branding, promotions, and technical assistance to businesses.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Members in good standing are eligible to use the logo on any product or commodity as long as at least 50% of the product or commodity's value added is attributable to Wisconsin ingredients or to Wisconsin production or processing activities.

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

Program members benefit from having a "Wisconsin" brand identity that consumers recognize as top quality and high value. SSfW provides a quick and reliable way to identify genuine Wisconsin products and services at grocery stores, retail outlets, farmers markets, and restaurants throughout the state.

SSfW-labeled products also enjoy a strong competitive edge, and every dollar spent on SSfW products supports local farmers, food processors, entrepreneurs, our communities, and their livelihood, as well as the Wisconsin way of life. Any business, no matter how large or small, may participate in the SSfW program.

In FY25, the SSfW program funding received from membership dues was estimated to be \$27,175. The general purpose revenue funds staff for program support.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The following are goals for SSfW member organizations:

- Average member reported sales will increase as a result of program participation by 12%.
- Member events will average 150 participants.
- Consumer visits to the online Member Directory will yield the following analytics:
 - Direct to member profile views: 85,000
 - Category searches: 225,000
 - Click-throughs to member websites: 18,000

PROGRAM ACTIVITY

In FY25, the program recorded the following activity:

- Number of SSfW members: 496
- Membership retention: 94%
- New member recruitment: 93
- Average sales increase reported as a result of membership: 12%
- Members participating in SSfW events: 138

- Member Directory analytics:
 - Direct to member profile views: 231,387 (119% increase from previous fiscal year)
 - Category searches: 1,755,339 (48% increase from previous fiscal year)
 - Click-throughs to member websites: 10,384 (1.7% decrease from previous fiscal year)

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

Revise Wis. Stat. §93.44 and ATCP 161 to reflect current needs of program members.

SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT

WEBSITE

datcp.wi.gov/Pages/AgDevelopment/SpecialtyCropBlockGrants.aspx

INCEPTION

Federal Specialty Crop Competitiveness Act of 2004

PROGRAM GOAL

To increase the competitiveness of Wisconsin specialty crops by providing federal grant funds to Wisconsin specialty crop industry agencies, organizations, and businesses

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

- Grants are awarded for a three-year period through a competitive process representing Wisconsin's diverse specialty crop industries.
- Proposals must be sponsored or endorsed by Wisconsin specialty crop growers' organizations or industry representatives.
- Funding source: Federal
- Target industry: Specialty crops
- Eligible activities: Market development, research, education, or industry innovation

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for a grant, projects must enhance the competitiveness specifically of Wisconsin-grown specialty crops and cannot benefit any non-specialty crops. Priority is given to projects that have the potential to provide solutions that lead to measurable outcomes for the specialty crop industry and the public.

Grant funds will not be awarded for projects whose products or services promote or provide profit that solely benefits a single organization, institution, business, or individual. Funds also cannot be used to compete unfairly with companies that provide equivalent goods and services.

Projects must include a plan to disseminate project results to the targeted industry, and proposed projects must include documented support by the impacted specialty crop growers or industry sector. Support may be illustrated via letters from industry sector organizations or individual letters of support from growers or processors.

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

Funding is allocated annually to states through the U.S. Department of Agriculture and changes annually based on each state's sales and planted acreage of specialty crops. Funding for projects ranges from \$10,000 to \$100,000 annually.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Each project has its own outcomes related to at least one of the following:

- Increasing consumption and consumer purchasing of specialty crops
- Increasing access to specialty crops and expanding specialty crop production and distribution
- Increasing food safety knowledge and processes
- Improving pest and disease control processes
- Developing new seed varieties and specialty crops
- Expanding specialty crop research and development
- Improving environmental sustainability of specialty crops

PROGRAM ACTIVITY

The proposed 2025 Wisconsin State Plan for this year's application is in review with the USDA Agriculture Marketing Service and no grants will be awarded until the plan is approved.

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

None

WISCONSIN INITIATIVE FOR AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS EXPORT EXPANSION GRANT PROGRAM

WEBSITE

<https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/AgDevelopment/ExportExpansionGrants.aspx>

INCEPTION

Funding is distributed in accordance with the provisions in 2021 Wisconsin Act 92.

PROGRAM GOAL

The objective of the Export Expansion Grant Program is to accelerate export growth of Wisconsin dairy, meat, and crop products through export expansion projects.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Projects are selected based on scope, impact, and export growth potential for milk and dairy products, meat (including poultry and fish) and meat products, and crops and crop products. The intent is for the agribusiness industry organizations, economic development organizations, and academic institutions to develop innovative and impactful projects that provide strategic and long-term growth of Wisconsin agricultural exports and exporters.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

An applicant must:

- Be a not-for-profit organization located in Wisconsin currently serving or demonstrating the ability to serve Wisconsin agribusiness companies.
- Demonstrate the capacity to manage and provide reporting on the projects that meet the grant objectives.

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

In FY25, applications were accepted for a third round of export expansion grants. Round three grants will be funded with FY26 funds. No specific dollar amount was included in the funding announcement to maintain program flexibility.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Projects will meet one or more of the following objectives:

- Cultivate new-to-export and emerging export agribusinesses.
- Build exporting capacity and knowledge of the industry.
- Increase understanding of foreign markets and consumers.
- Make products export-ready or develop products for specific export markets.
- Promote Wisconsin products in foreign markets.

PROGRAM ACTIVITY

Applications for a third round of export expansion grants were accepted in FY25. Seven projects were selected to be funded with a total of \$315,649 in FY26 funds. Project terms begin July 1, 2025.

As of the end of FY25, 12 export expansion grants had been completed and closed out, and another four were in the process of closing out awards. Four grants that received term extensions were still active in addition to the seven new third-round awards.

Grant funding:

- FY22 (Round One): \$564,584 was awarded to 13 nonprofit organizations
- FY23 (Round Two): \$683,649 was awarded to nine nonprofit organizations
- FY24: No grants awarded
- FY25: No grants awarded
- FY26 (Round Three): \$315,649 is being awarded to seven nonprofit organizations

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

None

WISCONSIN INTERNATIONAL AGRIBUSINESS CENTER

WEBSITE

datcp.wi.gov/Pages/AgDevelopment/InternationalAgribusiness.aspx

INCEPTION

1986, Wis. Stat. §93.42

2022 Agricultural Export Program - Wisconsin Initiative for Agricultural Exports (WIAE), Wis. Stat. §93.425

PROGRAM GOAL

The International Agribusiness Center (IABC) accesses federal and state funds to help Wisconsin food, forestry, and agricultural companies grow their exports.

In accordance with the WIAE, beginning in 2022, the IABC shall achieve the following export objectives by June 30, 2026 (Wis. Stat. §93.425) in cooperation with WEDC:

- Increase the value of Wisconsin's milk and other dairy product exports by at least 25% over the value as of Dec. 31, 2021.
- Increase the value of Wisconsin's meat, including poultry, fish, and meat product, exports, by at least 25% over the value as of Dec. 31, 2021.
- Increase the value of Wisconsin's crop and crop product exports by at least 25% over the value as of Dec. 31, 2021.

Of the funds appropriated under Wis. Stat. §20.115 (3) (b), the IABC's marketing shall ensure that \$2,500,000 is expended for the objective specified in sub. (2) (a); \$1,250,000 is expended for the objective specified in sub. (2) (b); and \$1,250,000 is expended for the objective specified in sub. (2). The center may not expend more than \$1,000,000 under the program in any fiscal year.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

- The IABC serves Wisconsin's food, forestry, and agricultural product companies.
- The program offers technical expertise, market development initiatives, and trade promotion activities (international trade shows, trade missions, inbound buyer missions, and social media campaigns) supporting Wisconsin's food, forestry, and agricultural companies in their pursuit of increased exports and the development of trade-enhancing partnerships.
- The program is funded by state and federal sources, including but not limited to: USDA (Food Export Association, U.S. Livestock Genetics Export Association, Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program, American Hardwood Export Council, and Soft Wood Export Council) and the Small Business Administration State Trade Expansion Program (STEP) Grants made available through WEDC.
- The program target is Wisconsin agribusinesses interested in or already exporting.
- Eligible activities include technical assistance, market research, grants for export expansion, trade promotion activities, and market development.
 - WIAE provides support in the following areas: support for food, forestry, and agriculture companies applying for WEDC International Market Access Grants; ExporTech™ tuition support for agriculture companies in NAICS category 11 (agriculture, hunting, and fishing); and Export Expansion Grants for nonprofit organizations to assist food, forestry, and agriculture producers and processors in growing Wisconsin's export of dairy, meat, and crop products.
- The IABC staff use client feedback, global trends, and market and export data to establish criteria for identifying target markets and activities. The IABC works with its counterparts on the WEDC Global Trade and Investment team on mutually beneficial projects.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Wisconsin-based businesses producing, processing, or distributing for export food, forestry, and agricultural products.

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

Eligible businesses can access numerous services, including:

- One-on-one consultations to identify strategies to reach out to customers in other countries
- Education workshops that cover a wide range of topics, from exporter basics and market characteristics to detailed sessions on trade regulation, tariffs, and insurance
- Customized export assistance on export regulations, product and facility registration, and other elements affecting the export of food, forestry, and agricultural products
- Scheduling of one-on-one meetings with interested buyers
- Coordination of trade promotion activities and trade show enhancement services, which may include pre-show feedback on competitors, translation of company profiles, on-site interpreters, prearranged meetings with potential buyers, site visits to local retailers, in-market seminars, and follow-up assistance
- Trade missions that provide opportunities to develop firsthand market knowledge through coordinated individual and group programs and to attend scheduled one-on-one meetings with qualified buyers and government officials
- WIAE support for the WEDC International Market Access Grant to food, forestry, and agriculture companies of \$10,000 to \$30,000 per state fiscal year

Export Expansion Grants – WIAE funded:

- Export Expansion Grants were created to promote and increase the value of Wisconsin's milk, meat, and crop product exports.
- Export Expansion Grants were first awarded in FY22 with nonprofit organizations eligible to receive up to \$50,000 to conduct projects to assist food, forestry, and agriculture companies to grow exports. In FY23, the amount for projects to grow dairy product exports was increased to \$100,000.
- In FY22 and FY23, a total of \$1,248,233 was awarded across 22 grants.
- In FY25, applications were accepted from Wisconsin organizations for a third round of Export Expansion Grants, to be funded with FY26 funds of \$315,649 to support seven shorter-term grant projects that will foster innovation in exporting agricultural products.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

WIAE aims to boost the export of dairy, meat, crop, and other agricultural products by 25% by June 2026 while allowing DATCP flexibility to respond to changing market conditions. FY25 results include the following:

- 40 WIAE-funded trade promotion activities assisted 169 Wisconsin companies and 27 organizations.
- Immediate sales equaled \$11,155,050.
- Anticipated one-year sales equal \$17,616,700.
- Combined immediate and anticipated sales from WIAE FY25 activities are \$28,771,750.
- Anticipated number of jobs created or retained as a result of services: 241.

(Calculation: \$1 million in agricultural exports creates or retains 8.4 jobs, according to USDA's Economic Research Service.)

- Additional economic activity: \$37,403,275, based on actual and anticipated export sales.

(Calculation: \$1 million in agricultural exports generates \$1.3 million in additional domestic economic activity, according to USDA's Economic Research Service.)

PROGRAM ACTIVITY

The IABC assisted 94 Wisconsin food and food processing companies in accessing a total of \$5,856,729 in federal funding to defray international marketing expenditures (Note: Funding allocations are on a calendar-year basis, 2024). Immediate and anticipated sales from federal funding are \$160,167,446.

- Anticipated number of jobs created or retained as a result of services: 1,346

(Calculation: \$1 million in agricultural exports creates or retains 8.4 jobs, according to USDA's Economic Research Service.)

- Additional economic activity: \$208,217,680, based on actual and anticipated export sales.
(Calculation: \$1 million in agricultural exports generates \$1.3 million in additional domestic economic activity, according to USDA's Economic Research Service.)

In addition, 1,161 Wisconsin companies received export development consultation services from IABC staff, and 640 organizations received export consultations.

Additional Funding Provided by IABC with help of WIAE (results not yet available):

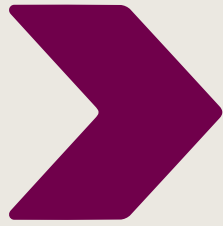
- International Market Access Grants: Five companies received \$110,000 total.
- Export Expansion Grants: Twelve Export Expansion Grants awarded in FY22-23 were completed in FY25, and another four are in progress. Four grant projects that received term extensions are currently active. A new round was introduced in FY25, awarding \$315,649 to fund seven shorter-term grant projects for FY26, with project spending beginning July 2025 and ending May 2026.

Overall IABC FY25 Results for Wisconsin's food/food processing/agricultural companies:

WISCONSIN INTERNATIONAL AGRIBUSINESS CENTER ACTIVITY FY25			
	Immediate and Anticipated Sales	Number of Jobs Created	Additional Economic Activity
WIAE Activities	\$28,771,750	241	\$37,403,275
Federal funding for WI companies	\$160,167,446	1,346	\$208,217,680
TOTAL	\$188,939,196	1,587	\$245,620,955

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

Continue WIAE funding beyond FY26 to continue trade promotion activities, grant opportunities, and outreach efforts to Wisconsin food and agriculture companies, and collaborate with industry, state, and federal organizations to increase awareness of programs and participation in export activities.



DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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June 2, 2025

Melissa Hughes, Secretary and CEO
Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation
P.O. Box 1687
Madison WI 53701

Subject: FY 2025 Report on Economic Development

Dear Secretary Hughes:

As required by 2007 Wisconsin Act 125, the Department of Natural Resources reports to your agency each year on job creation and other data associated with economic development programs.

As we have reported in previous years, DNR does not currently administer any grant or loan program that meets the statutory definition of an “economic development program” as defined in section 23.167, Wis. Stats. In that section, an economic development program is defined as “a program or activity having the primary purpose of encouraging the establishment and growth of business in this state, including the creation and retention of jobs....”

While DNR administers grant and loan programs that have a positive, secondary impact on the economy, the primary objective of these programs is to promote public health, protect the environment, or enhance outdoor recreational opportunities.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Karen Hyun, Secretary
Department of Natural Resources

cc: Steven Little
Mark Aquino
Jim Ritchie
Molly McNab
Maggie Hutter
Calvin Boldebeck

dnr.wi.gov
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DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM

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AGENCY CONTACT

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JOINT EFFORT MARKETING GRANT

WEBSITE

industry.travelwisconsin.com/industry-resources/grants/joint-effort-marketing-jem-grant-program/

INCEPTION

1975

PROGRAM GOAL

The Joint Effort Marketing (JEM) Grant Program assists in the development and marketing of Wisconsin tourism events and destinations. Qualified projects are awarded reimbursement for marketing expenses and must demonstrate substantial return on investment through increased traveler spending, overnight stays, and marketing deliverables.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

JEM Grants provide partnership funding to help nonprofit Wisconsin organizations promote tourism in their areas, e.g., destination marketing, new events, sales promotions, existing events, and one-time/one-of-a-kind events.

Projects must show that they will generate an increase in visitors and make a positive economic impact in the local area. The advertising plan must be consistent with the current statewide marketing plan and target markets beyond the local area. Applications are reviewed five times a year. Destination marketing deadlines are April 1 and Sept. 1. All other categories adhere to application deadlines of Feb. 1, April 1, Aug. 1, and Nov. 1.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Statutory Requirements (Wis. Stat. §41.17)

- At least \$1.13 million must be awarded annually.
- Any public or private nonprofit organization, including a Tribal organization of a federally recognized American Indian Tribe or band in Wisconsin, is eligible to apply.
- Tourism can reimburse up to 75% of a project's first-year promotional costs, but no more than 50% of the total budget. In subsequent years, up to 50% of the promotional costs for the second year and 25% for the third year may be allowed in some categories.
- A certain percentage of the grants must be matched through cash or in-kind contributions.
- Grants fund only marketing expenses, such as email marketing, print and broadcast ads, direct mail, publicity, and billboards. Grant funds may not be used for operational costs.

Administrative Rulemaking (Ch. Tour 1)

- An eligible applicant may submit an application no less than 90 days prior to the first date advertising is scheduled to begin.
- The JEM Committee reviews all applications and makes funding recommendations to the department's secretary.
- An applicant shall submit a written evaluation of the project within 45 days of completion of all project activity in such form as the department may require. Of the total award amount, 10% is withheld until a suitable evaluation is submitted.
- Contracts are terminated if evaluations and project invoices are past due.

Underwriting Criteria

- Applicant originations must be tourism-related Wisconsin nonprofit organizations.
- The application process is competitive.
- Contractual obligations for ongoing JEM projects must be met before any new contracts will be issued.

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

\$1,130,000 per fiscal year

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Increase visitors and their associated spending to an area, measured by visitor counts multiplied by average expenditure numbers from Longwoods/Tourism Economics, or similar research or tax revenues.
- Value of advertising provided by grant recipients/marketing deliverables, measured by paid advertising invoices.

PROGRAM ACTIVITY

51 projects were awarded in FY25.

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

None

MEETINGS MEAN BUSINESS GRANT PROGRAM

WEBSITE

industry.travelwisconsin.com/industry-resources/grants/meetings-mean-business-mmb-grants-program/

INCEPTION

2010

PROGRAM GOAL

Provide funding to destination marketing organizations to help defray the costs of bidding on and hosting large or midsize meetings and conferences.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Meetings Mean Business (MMB) Grant Program gives Wisconsin a competitive edge and top-of-mind awareness as the premier place to host meetings or conventions by providing destinations with financial assistance for bid fees or facility costs. Destinations may use the program to attract the types of meetings and conventions that best fit their business model (such as association and organization meetings, trade shows, reunions, education, or social groups).

Attracting national or Midwest regional meetings and conventions generates significant economic impact from additional room night bookings and traveler spending in the community in which they are held. Many destinations have invested in substantial conference infrastructure in order to capture meeting and convention business.

The fund has \$110,000 per year available for matching grants. Destinations may apply for 50% of the costs for convention facility rental, in-community convention transportation and/or host costs, up to a maximum of \$30,000 per fiscal year (July 1-June 30).

Applications are reviewed three times annually. The deadlines are Jan. 1, April 1, and Sept. 1 at 11:59 p.m.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Applications must be submitted to the Wisconsin Department of Tourism through a recognized Wisconsin destination marketing organization (such as a convention and visitors bureau or chamber of commerce) and must be signed by the director or president of that organization.
- Organizations receiving funding through this program may not also request funding from the JEM Grant Fund for the same event during the same fiscal year.
- This grant does not fund in-state events that are regularly scheduled or that routinely rotate to destinations within the state.

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

\$110,000 annually

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

More than \$20.8 million in projected visitor expenditures for FY25 grants

PROGRAM ACTIVITY

6 MMB grants awarded in FY25

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

None

READY, SET, GO! GRANT PROGRAM

WEBSITE

industry.travelwisconsin.com/industry-resources/grants/ready-set-go-rsg-grant-program/

INCEPTION

2006

PROGRAM GOAL

To provide funding to destination marketing organizations to help defray the costs of bidding and hosting competitive sporting events.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Ready, Set, Go! (RSG) Grant Program generates visitor spending by securing or creating competitive sporting events with a structure that both draws a spectator/athlete base for the event and creates an economic impact for the area.

The program is designed to assist destinations in securing competition-related events that require an up-front financial commitment. Grant funding may be used for bid/commitment fees paid directly to the event holder or financial commitments needed to secure a venue or municipal services for an event.

The department provides \$110,000 for RSG grants each fiscal year (July 1-June 30).

Applications are reviewed three times annually. The deadlines are Feb. 1, April 1 and Sept. 1 at 11:59 p.m.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Destinations may request 50% of the bid/commitment fee or 50% of the venue/municipal fees, up to a maximum of \$30,000 per fiscal year.
- Applications must be submitted to the Wisconsin Department of Tourism through a recognized Wisconsin destination marketing organization (e.g., convention and visitors bureau or chamber of commerce) and must be signed by the director or president of that organization. Events that have been secured prior to the written grant application must be submitted at least 180 days prior to event. Organizations or events that are currently funded through statutorily required expenditures are not eligible for funding through RSG. Organizations requesting funding from the RSG Grant Fund are not eligible to also request funding from the JEM Grant Program for the same event during the same fiscal year.
- Events that have been hosted in Wisconsin previously will be considered for grant funding based on prior event evaluation and documented economic impact.

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

\$110,000 annually

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

FY25 RSG grants are projected to generate approximately \$12.1 million in visitor expenditures.

PROGRAM ACTIVITY

14 awards were funded in FY25.

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

None



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

WEBSITE

<https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/local-gov/astnce-pgms/aid/tea.aspx>

INCEPTION

Sept. 8, 1987, under enabling legislation of Wis. Stat. §84.185, and administered under Wisconsin Administrative Code Department of Transportation (Trans) Chapter 510, created as an emergency rule effective Oct. 16, 1989.

PROGRAM GOAL

The objective of the Transportation Facilities Economic Assistance and Development (TEA) Program is to help support new business development in Wisconsin by funding transportation improvements that are needed to secure jobs in the state.

Eligible applicants are governing bodies, such as a town, village, city, or county, that partner with a business located within that governing body to create and/or retain jobs. The funding is intended to help the business with transportation improvements so it can achieve its job creation/retention goal. Program funding is provided to the governing body in which the transportation improvement is located through a reimbursement of cost process.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Each state fiscal year, the TEA Program is appropriated state funds in order to provide funds to local governments for eligible transportation facility improvements, as defined in Wis. Stat. §84.185(1)(d), that are essential for an economic development project. An economic development project is defined in Wis. Stat. §84.185(1)(am) as a business development that directly retains jobs or increases the number of jobs in this state. For grants, applicants are required to provide a 50% match.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

The TEA Program provides up to \$5,000 for each job created and/or retained. The following transportation project improvements are eligible for funding assistance: street, road, highway, intersection, and interchange improvements that are open to the public for travel and come under the jurisdiction or ownership of a public authority (all private roads, parking lanes, and parking lots are excluded); rail projects to include an industrial lead, a spur, team track, or trackside intermodal transfer facility; harbor/port improvements that consist of dredging, dock walls, piers, intermodal connections, and lighting; and airport improvements consisting of runways, taxiways, aprons, and access service roads (airport hangars are excluded).

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

The biennial budget appropriation for the TEA Program is \$6,805,200. Eligible applicants receive grants based on the following three criteria, selecting the lowest figure from among them:

- 50% of the project's actual TEA-eligible costs
- Total dollar amount for created and/or retained jobs based on \$5,000 per job rate multiplied by jobs created and/or retained

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

TEA grants awarded in the current fiscal year are pledging jobs in the future by creating new jobs or retaining jobs. The job creation and/or retention needs to take place at the location at which TEA funding will be used and is based on a seven-year timeline with the clock starting at the point at which the project agreement is signed. Snapshots are taken at the three-year and seven-year periods for both new and retained jobs.

For FY25, WisDOT approved five TEA grants, combined pledging to create 646 jobs and retain 15 jobs, for a total jobs guarantee of 661.

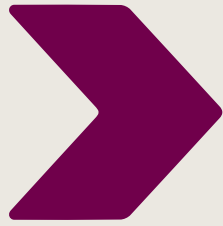
PROGRAM ACTIVITY

In FY25:

- Five grants were awarded totaling \$3,303,576.
- 661 jobs were pledged within three years.
- The average cost per job amounted to \$4,998.
- Total capital investment was \$834,552,370.
- The total capital investment per grant dollar awarded was \$253.

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

None



DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

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AGENCY CONTACT

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WISCONSIN FAST FORWARD

WEBSITE

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.



UNIVERSITIES OF WISCONSIN

Jay Rothman
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SYSTEM CONTACT

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June 24, 2025

Melissa Hughes, Secretary and CEO
Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation
P.O. Box 1687
Madison, WI 53701

Dear Secretary Hughes,

The Universities of Wisconsin value our partnership with the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) in advancing economic and talent development statewide. This strong collaboration is reflected in WEDC's section of the Annual Report on Economic Development (ARED), in which award and outcomes data are noted for initiatives enabled by WEDC funding, including those UW-led programs such as the Office for Business & Entrepreneurship.

While the remaining Universities of Wisconsin activity falls outside the scope of ARED, we appreciate the opportunity to highlight just a few of our additional contributions to economic development in Wisconsin.

In the 2023-24 academic year, UW universities awarded over 35,600 degrees to graduates. With the average lifetime earnings of a bachelor's degree holder exceeding those of a high school graduate by \$1.2 million, a Universities of Wisconsin education directly promotes an increase in household incomes and community prosperity. Over 90 percent of in-state UW graduates stay in Wisconsin for at least five years after earning a degree, with a median salary of more than \$71,500.

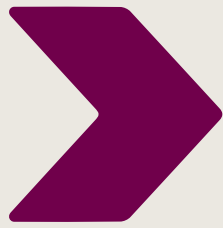
The Universities of Wisconsin also contribute to the richness of Wisconsin's culture and economy with groundbreaking research, new companies and patents, and boundless creative intellectual energy. Overall, research at the Universities of Wisconsin in FY24 totaled nearly \$1.6 billion. Additionally, nearly one in three UW degrees are conferred in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and health disciplines.

Furthermore, the UWs are committed to connecting business and industry with university faculty, staff, and students to foster internships, innovation, and entrepreneurship, and to build stronger, more resilient communities. Information on UWs efforts in support of its mission of outreach and community service are highlighted in the [UW System Accountability Dashboard](#).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jay Rothman'.

Jay Rothman
President



WISCONSIN HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONDUIT BOND ISSUE PROGRAM - CHAPTER 234.65

WEBSITE

www.wheda.com

INCEPTION

Chapter 234

PROGRAM GOAL

The Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority's (WHEDA's) Economic Development Conduit Bond Issuance Program is intended to provide Wisconsin businesses financing that will create and retain jobs in Wisconsin and promote economic development in both rural and urban communities.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

WHEDA has the authority to issue up to \$150 million of Economic Development Bonds in aggregate over the next four fiscal years. Sources of tax-exempt bond financing include:

- Industrial Revenue Bonds

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

What are eligible uses of bond proceeds?

An economic development project will be eligible for the financing of land, plant, or equipment for any of the following:

- Facilities for manufacturing or commercial real estate activities
- Facilities for the retail sale of goods or services
- Other eligible projects, including national or regional headquarters facilities; facilities for the storage or distribution of products of manufacturing activities, materials, components, or equipment; facilities for research and development activities; recreational and tourism facilities serving to attract visitors to Wisconsin; and facilities for the production, packaging, processing, or distribution of raw agricultural commodities
- Activities of a long-term nature, such as research and development or long-term working capital, may also be eligible.

Required Criteria

WHEDA may not issue bonds to finance an economic development loan unless all of the following apply:

- The economic development project is or will be located in Wisconsin.
- One or more other financial institutions participate in the economic development project.
- WHEDA shall not assume unsecured or uncollateralized risk for any economic development loan.
- The economic development loan will not be used to refinance existing debt, unless it is in conjunction with an expansion of the business or job creation.
- The name of the person receiving the loan does not appear on the statewide support lien docket.

Considerations

WHEDA may finance an economic development loan only after considering all of the following:

- The extent to which an economic development project will maintain or increase employment in this state
- Whether an economic development project will be located in an area of high unemployment or low average income
- The extent to which the activities constituting the economic development project otherwise would not occur

Preferences

WHEDA shall also give preference to businesses:

- That are more than 50% owned or controlled by women or minorities
- That, together with all of their affiliates, subsidiaries, and parent companies, have current gross annual sales of \$5,000,000 or less or that employ 250 or fewer persons
- That have less than 50% of their ownership held or controlled by another business and have their principal operations in Wisconsin

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

The incentive to use this tax-exempt bond program is that it offers a lower cost of funds. Available funding is determined by an annual WEDC review of volume cap allocation.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

In FY25, no new originations are expected.

PROGRAM ACTIVITY

No bonds were issued for FY25.

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

On Jan. 1, 2013, the Midwest Disaster Area Relief Bond Program expired, eliminating the primary resource for federal tax-exempt bonding using this bond issuance capacity. WHEDA does not expect to see much activity in this program until another tax-exempt program can be matched with it.

WDRF - AGRIBUSINESS PROGRAM

WEBSITE

www.wheda.com

INCEPTION

Chapter 234

PROGRAM GOAL

To provide loan guarantees to lenders to assist in the startup, acquisition, or expansion of a business that develops products using Wisconsin's raw agricultural commodities. WHEDA administers the Wisconsin Development Reserve Fund (WDRF) to provide loan guarantees to farmers, other agribusinesses, and small businesses.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Assist in the startup, acquisition, or expansion of a business that develops products using Wisconsin's raw agricultural commodities.

- The term raw agricultural commodity refers to any agricultural, aquacultural, horticultural, viticultural, vegetable, poultry, or livestock product produced in Wisconsin, including milk and milk products, bees and honey products, timber and wood products, or any class, variety, or utilization of the products in their natural state.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

What is required to be eligible?

An economic development project will be eligible for the financing of land, plant, or equipment for any of the following:

- The business must start with a Wisconsin-grown, raw agricultural commodity and do one of the following:
 - Create a product new to the business
 - Expand production of an existing product that will increase the use of a raw agricultural commodity
 - Enhance the efficiency of the business
- The business must be unable to obtain conventional financing on reasonable terms.
- The business must be located in Wisconsin in an area with a population of under 50,000.
- The business owner must be current in any child support payments and not in default on any WHEDA loans.

What are eligible uses of loan proceeds?

- Purchase or improve land and buildings
- Purchase or improve machinery and equipment
- Purchase inventory
- Fund permanent and revolving working capital
- Fund initial marketing expenses associated with making the product available to consumers

What are the terms and conditions of this guarantee?

Maximum guarantee is the lesser of 50% or \$600,000

Maximum guarantee terms:

- Fixed assets, inventory, and permanent working capital: Five years
- Amortization term may exceed the guarantee term but cannot exceed the useful life of the collateral
- Interest rate is set by the lending institution and is subject to WHEDA approval; variable rate loan may not exceed the prime rate plus 2.75%.
- Loan must be secured by assets being financed; additional collateral and personal guarantees may be required.

How does the application process work?

- The lender must first complete and submit an agribusiness guarantee eligibility form (Form 3).
- WHEDA determines business and project eligibility and will render that decision within one business day.
- Upon eligibility approval, the lender shall complete and submit a loan guarantee application (Form 4) within 90 days of eligibility determination.
- WHEDA reviews the complete application and renders a decision upon completion of its underwriting process.

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

\$34.8 million in guarantee authority is available for all Wisconsin Development Reserve Fund (WDRF) programs, including agribusiness guarantees.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

No dollars were benchmarked for new originations and no dollars for guarantee payments. The jobs created and retained benchmark is one for every \$30,000 in guarantees.

PROGRAM ACTIVITY

No applications were received and no guarantee payments were processed during the fiscal year.

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

None

WDRF – CREDIT RELIEF OUTREACH PROGRAM

WEBSITE

www.wheda.com

INCEPTION

Chapter 234

PROGRAM GOAL

Provide loan guarantees to lenders to assist farmers in obtaining materials and supplies in the planting and harvesting of agricultural commodities and the purchase and feeding of livestock.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Credit Relief Outreach Program (CROP) Guarantee is a financing resource for farmers that provides guarantees on agricultural production loans. The loan must be used for the purchase of services or consumable goods necessary for producing an agricultural commodity. The commodity must be planted and harvested for consumption within the loan term. This includes livestock, if purchased, fed, and sold within the loan term. Eligible uses of loan proceeds include: fertilizer, seed, fuel, land rent, animal feed, hedging, UCC filing charges, equipment rental, tillage service, custom hire, crop insurance, equipment repair, pesticides/herbicides, feeder animals if purchased and sold within the loan term, utility bills related directly to the production of the agricultural commodity, and labor costs related directly to planting and harvesting the agricultural commodity (excluding labor costs paid to the farmer and spouse).

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Eligibility requirements for farmers include:

- Inability to obtain conventional financing at reasonable terms
- Debt-to-asset ratio of at least 40% but less than 85%
- Positive projected cash flow budget for the term of the loan
- Sufficient collateral to cover the value of the CROP loan
- The farm is located in Wisconsin and the farmer resides in Wisconsin or is legally registered in Wisconsin in the case of a partnership or corporation.
- The farmer is currently engaged in the operation.
- The farmer is current in child support payments and not in default on any WHEDA loans.

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

\$34.8 million in guarantee authority is available for all Wisconsin Development Reserve Fund programs, which includes CROP Guarantees.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Budgeted volume for FY25: \$783,000

PROGRAM ACTIVITY

For FY25, one application was submitted and approved for \$60,000.

No payouts.

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

None

WDRF – FARM ASSET REINVESTMENT MANAGEMENT GUARANTEE PROGRAM

WEBSITE

www.wheda.com

INCEPTION

Chapter 234

PROGRAM GOAL

The Farm Asset Reinvestment Management (FARM) Guarantee Program provides loan guarantees to lenders to assist farmers in the expansion or modernization of an existing farming operation and to assist in the startup of new farms.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

- Assist in the expansion or modernization of an existing farming operation.
- Assist in the startup of a new farming operation.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

What is required in order to be eligible?

- The farmer must be unable to obtain conventional financing on reasonable terms.
- The farmer's debt-to-asset ratio must be 85% or less.
- The farmer must have sufficient collateral to cover the value of the FARM loan.
- The farm must be located in, and the farmer must reside in, Wisconsin (or be legally registered in Wisconsin if a partnership or corporation).
- The farmer must be actively engaged in the operation.
- The farmer must be current on child support payments and must not be in default on any WHEDA loans.
- If a startup operation, the farmer must have no less than three years of farming experience (including managing day-to-day farm operations).

What are eligible uses of loan proceeds?

- Acquisition of agricultural assets
- Machinery
- Equipment
- Buildings
- Land
- Livestock to be kept more than one year
- Improvements to buildings or land for agricultural purposes
- Refinancing existing debt (not to exceed 75% of WHEDA's guaranteed loan) if expanding an existing farm operation

What are the terms and conditions of this guarantee?

The maximum guarantee is the lesser of:

- 25% of the FARM loan
- The farmer's net worth including the FARM loan
- \$200,000 if no other state or federal credit assistance program is utilized
- \$100,000 if any other state or federal credit assistance program is utilized and tied to the same note

Maximum guarantee term:

- Land and buildings: 10 years
- Equipment, machinery, and livestock: five years

How does the application work?

- The lender completes a farm guarantee application (Form 2) and the borrower signs the farmer's affidavit (Form 3).
- Submit complete application package to WHEDA, including application fees.
- WHEDA reviews and renders a decision within one business day.

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

\$34.8 million in guarantee authority is available for all WDRF programs, including FARM guarantees.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

\$500,000 was expected in new originations for FY25 with \$0 budgeted for guarantee payments.

PROGRAM ACTIVITY

There were no FARM guarantees approved for FY25 for \$0 and no guarantee payments.

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

The program continues to evolve. There are no other current recommended changes.

WDRF – SMALL BUSINESS GUARANTEE PROGRAM

WEBSITE

www.wheda.com

INCEPTION

Chapter 234

PROGRAM GOAL

Help create and retain jobs by providing loan guarantees to lenders for small business projects that would not otherwise receive financing, if not for the credit enhancement provided by this program.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

- Assist with the expansion or acquisition of an existing small business that has been in operation for at least 12 months.
- An expansion may involve a new line complementary to the existing business, such as a landscaping business expanding into retail floral or a lodging facility adding a restaurant.
- Assist in the startup of a day care business for adults or children.
- Assist in the startup of a small business located in a vacant storefront in the traditional downtown area of a community.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

What is required in order to be eligible?

- The business must be unable to obtain conventional financing at reasonable terms.
- The business must employ 250 or fewer full-time equivalent employees at time of application.
- The business must be located in Wisconsin.
- The business owner must be current in child support payments and not in default on any WHEDA loans.
- The project must create or retain jobs.

What are eligible uses of loan proceeds?

- Purchase or improve land and buildings, including mixed-use properties (properties that contain both commercial and residential components)
- Businesses can occupy as little as 25% of the total building space
- Purchase or improve machinery and equipment
- Purchase inventory
- Fund permanent and revolving working capital
- Finance soft costs (not to exceed 5% of eligible project costs)
- Refinance existing debt (not to exceed 75% of the WHEDA guaranteed loan and/or demonstration of business expansion)

What are the terms and conditions of this guarantee?

- The maximum guarantee is the lesser of 50% or \$750,000 for all uses of proceeds except revolving working capital, whose maximum guarantee is the lesser of 50% or \$200,000.
- The maximum guarantee for businesses in the Transform Milwaukee area is the lesser of 80% or \$750,000 for all uses of proceeds.

Maximum guarantee term:

- Fixed assets, inventory, and permanent working capital: Five years
- Revolving working capital: Two years
- The amortization term may exceed the guarantee term but cannot exceed the useful life of the collateral.
- The interest rate is set by the lending institution and is subject to WHEDA approval. Variable rate loan may not exceed prime plus 2.75%.
- The loan must be secured by assets being financed, and personal guarantees may be required.

How does the application work?

- The borrower and lender must complete and submit a loan guarantee application (Form 4).
- WHEDA reviews the complete application and renders a decision upon completion of its underwriting.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

\$1,000,000 is budgeted for new originations and no dollars in guarantee payments. The jobs created and retained benchmark is one for every \$30,000 in guarantees.

PROGRAM ACTIVITY

\$34.8 million in guarantee authority is available for all WDRF programs, including Small Business Guarantees. One guarantee was approved for the fiscal year and there were no guarantees paid out.

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

None



WISCONSIN TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM

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WORKFORCE ADVANCEMENT TRAINING GRANTS

WEBSITE

mywtcs.wtcsystem.edu/grants-data-reporting/grants/state-grants/

INCEPTION

2005 Act 25

Authorizing Statute 38.41

Administrative Rule TCS 17

PROGRAM GOAL

Wisconsin statute authorizes the Wisconsin Technical College System Office to make grant awards to technical colleges for worker skills training. Grants in this category are awarded to promote increased investment in the development of incumbent workers, improve Wisconsin businesses' productivity and competitiveness, augment the state's economic base, and expand technical college training services to businesses and industry. Grants are awarded to upgrade the skills and productivity of employees of established businesses operating in Wisconsin, with the additional objective of supporting regional workforce and economic development efforts.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Workforce Advancement Training (WAT) Grants are made to technical college districts as directed by statute, and the colleges submit applications in partnership with an employer or a consortium of employers. WAT grants promote increased investment in the development of incumbent workers, improve Wisconsin businesses' productivity and competitiveness, augment the state's economic base, support career pathways, and expand technical college training services to businesses and industries throughout the state. Training under these grants must focus on occupational skills but can include a combination of occupational, academic, and employability topics or courses.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

WAT grants are focused on improving occupational skills, and a wide range of training is feasible under this umbrella.

In addition to specific job-related skills such as welding, electrical maintenance, and customer relations, WAT grants have covered more general topics such as quality improvement, Lean, supervision and management, teamwork, problem solving, computing, manufacturing core skills, small business development, and occupational health and safety. Basic skills or English language learning instruction that supports the occupational skill training may also be provided under the grants.

INCENTIVES AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

In FY24, the program was funded at a level of GPR \$4.85 million. \$500,000 was set aside for grants serving small businesses. The remaining \$4.35 million was available for grants serving businesses of any size.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Percent of business partners who thought the employee skill gains produced by the training met or exceeded their expectations: 98.5%

Percent of the businesses that sought to improve the work environment through training felt that their expectations were met or exceeded: 99.1%

Percent of business partners who said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the technical college's services: 97.6%

Percent of business partners who said they probably or definitely would recommend the college's services to others: 98.8%*

Percent of business partners who said they probably or definitely would use the college's services again: 98.2%

**Measures reflect customer satisfaction information for 2023-24 WAT grant projects as information for 2024-25 is not yet available.*

PROGRAM ACTIVITY

In FY24, WAT grants funded 47 projects and served 8,871 individuals.

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

None



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Madison, WI 53713
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LOOK FORWARD 