

Gov. Walker: 22 Wisconsin school districts awarded fab lab grants

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Governor Scott Walker, WEDC Secretary Mark Hogan, UW System President Ray Cross and other key leaders to award grants during statewide tour on "Fab Lab Day"

MADISON – Governor Scott Walker and the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) today announced that 22 school districts throughout the state have been awarded a total of more than \$500,000 in grants to establish or expand local fabrication laboratory (Fab Lab) facilities. “Fab Labs are the latest example of the many investments we have made in education and workforce development to ensure that Wisconsin students have the skills and training they need to compete for the jobs of the 21st century,” said Governor Walker, who is attending announcement events in Rhinelander and Ashwaubenon. “Wisconsin’s Fab Labs provide students with hands-on experience in areas such as design, engineering, and complex problem-solving – all key skills that will benefit those students regardless of the career path they choose after high school.”

Governor Walker has declared today as Fab Lab Day in Wisconsin, and to mark the occasion, he and WEDC Secretary Mark R. Hogan, along with other key state leaders, are visiting all 22 school districts to present the grants and celebrate their successes. Others taking part in the statewide announcement tour are Wisconsin Department of Revenue Secretary and WEDC board member Rick Chandler; University of Wisconsin System President Ray Cross; WEDC Deputy Secretary and COO Tricia Braun; Wisconsin Technical College System Provost and Vice President Colleen McCabe; and Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Deputy Secretary Chris Hagerup.

Also scheduled to take part in Fab Lab Day announcements are 17 state legislators and the chancellors of UW-Green Bay, UW-Stout and UW-River Falls.

A Fab Lab is a high-technology workshop equipped with computer-controlled manufacturing components such as 3D printers, laser engravers, computer numerical control routers, and plasma cutters. Through its Fab Lab Grant Program, WEDC is supporting the purchase of Fab Lab equipment for instructional and educational purposes by elementary, middle, junior, or high school students.

The following school districts were awarded Fab Lab Grants today:

- **Altoona**, Eau Claire County – \$25,000
- **Antigo**, Langlade County – \$18,300
- **Ashwaubenon**, Brown County – \$25,000
- **Beaver Dam**, Dodge County – \$25,000
- **Black River Falls**, Jackson County – \$23,500
- **Chequamegon**, Price County – \$22,423
- **Cornell**, Chippewa County – \$20,000
- **East Troy**, Walworth County – \$19,000
- **Elmbrook**, Waukesha County – \$25,000
- **Florence County**, Florence County – \$10,759
- **Lakeland Union High School Consortium**, Oneida County – \$35,346
- **Mauston**, Juneau County – \$15,000
- **Milwaukee Public Schools**, Milwaukee County – \$25,000
- **Northland Pines**, Vilas County – \$25,000
- **Northwood, Washburn County** – \$25,000
- **Phillips**, Price County – \$25,000
- **Plymouth**, Sheboygan County – \$25,000
- **Rhineland**, Oneida County – \$24,235
- **Solon Springs** – Douglas County, \$25,000
- **Somerset** – St. Croix County, \$25,000
- **Waunakee**, Dane County – \$16,300
- **Waupun** – Dodge and Fond du Lac counties – \$25,000

The 22 public school districts are receiving a total of \$504,863 in Fab Lab grants from WEDC. Individual school districts were eligible for up to \$25,000, and consortiums of two or more districts were eligible for up to \$50,000. The program requires matching funds from each district.

Because of the important role that Fab Labs play in student training and workforce development, Governor Walker’s 2017-19 budget directed WEDC to allocate a total of \$1 million in Fab Lab funding this year and next.

“Over the last three years, WEDC has invested \$1.6 million to provide 43 districts across the state the type of equipment needed to help students master the skills that are in high demand in the job market, including manufacturing, technology, and engineering,” said WEDC Secretary Hogan. “This program will better prepare students for the life after high school – whether they’re heading straight into the workforce, going to a technical college or attending a four-year university.”

WEDC received 63 applications, which were evaluated based on readiness and long-range planning, curriculum, business and community partnerships, financial need, and previous awards. The review committee consisted of experts from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and UW-Stout, as well as three WEDC team members.

In addition to the grants, WEDC has developed a [Fab Labs resource page](#) for its website that provides districts with information and a video on how to set up and equip a Fab Lab, how to implement best practices to ensure a successful Fab Lab and more. Content for the page was provided by the University of Wisconsin-Stout and Gateway Technical College.

In addition, UW-Stout, with funding from WEDC, has developed a web portal, wifabcooperative.com, that allows Fab Lab schools to communicate with one another on issues such as curriculum development and implementation, equipment usage and training. Districts may also request technical assistance.

UW-Stout and Fox Valley Technical College are offering a weeklong Fab Lab retreat this summer to help teachers better understand how Fab Labs can support multi-disciplinary learning and inspire students through design thinking. For more information on the retreats, visit wifabcooperative.com

For more information on the state’s Fab Labs, including resources for teachers, visit wedc.org/fablabs or follow #WIFabLab on Twitter.

[See Gov. Walker’s Fab Lab Day proclamation.](#)