

WEDC: Awards 11 grants to support entrepreneurship programs throughout Wisconsin

Posted on Tuesday, Jan 23, 2018

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

CONTACT: Mark Maley
Public Affairs and COmmunications Director
608-210-6706
mark.maley@wedc.org

MADISON, WI. Jan. 23, 2018 – The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) today announced that 11 organizations have been awarded a total of \$500,000 in grants to help develop or expand innovative programs aimed at advancing the climate for entrepreneurship throughout the state.

The grants are being awarded as part of WEDC's Entrepreneurship Support Program, which is now in its second year. The grants will help fund activities that promote entrepreneurship or deliver education, training and other resources to assist new and aspiring business owners. More than 400 entrepreneurs are expected to receive services through a wide variety of initiatives.

“Entrepreneurs launching successful new ventures are an important ingredient for the prosperity of their communities and the entire state,” said Lt. Governor Rebecca Kleefisch, who joined WEDC Secretary and CEO Mark R. Hogan in announcing the grants in appearances throughout the state Tuesday. “The projects funded by these grants will provide key resources, address unmet needs in communities with unique challenges, and help to build a statewide culture that celebrates and encourages entrepreneurs to pursue their dreams.”

“Most of these organizations already support the overall mission of identifying,

educating, servicing and funding entrepreneurs, and several of them received WEDC grants last year,” Hogan added. “This additional funding will further increase the availability of resources for entrepreneurs and innovators throughout the state and will increase the likelihood of their success as they start and grow their businesses.”

The grant recipients are:

- BizStarts, Milwaukee, (\$80,000) will provide, in collaboration with Launch MKE, an innovative cohort-based education program with ongoing, long-term coaching to entrepreneurs in underserved and low-wealth neighborhoods in Milwaukee.
- BrightStar Wisconsin Foundation, Milwaukee, (\$65,000) will organize and deliver three iterations of the HATCH entrepreneurial pitch program in three separate regions throughout Wisconsin.
- Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA) 3, Fennimore, (\$27,000) will organize and deliver an Entrepreneurship Skills Academy for student teams from 31 school districts in several counties of southwestern Wisconsin.
- Couleecap, La Crosse, (\$62,000) will support entrepreneurs in four western Wisconsin communities through the expansion of both its cohort-based CO.STARTERS entrepreneurial development course, and the “Pop Up Shop” program assisting entrepreneurs with conducting proof-of-concept tests of their business ideas.
- Green County Development Corporation, Monroe, (\$40,000) will implement an entrepreneurship support strategy to engage, assess, and provide mentorship and coaching resources to current and aspiring entrepreneurs.
- Heart of Wisconsin Community Incubator, Wisconsin Rapids, (\$17,000) will provide entrepreneurial training to individuals incarcerated at the Wood County Jail, including educational sessions, individualized business coaching and mentorship.
- Indianhead Community Action Agency, Ladysmith, (\$41,000) will provide individualized coaching and capital access to new clients, and expand its Small Business Academy seminars to additional entrepreneurs.
- Nicolet Area Technical College, Rhinelander, (\$25,000) will expand training, mentorship and support services; build capacity for entrepreneurial education; and increase connectivity among entrepreneurs in its northern Wisconsin district.
- Oconto County Economic Development Corporation, Oconto, (\$43,000) will

accelerate its Business Innovation Development Program to provide entrepreneurs with early engagement, strategic planning and ongoing business coaching.

- UW-Stout Center for Innovation and Development, Menomonie, (\$50,000) will offer its “Idea to Prototype” program that provides inventors from any location in the state with customized resources to advance the commercialization of their products.
- WiSolve Consulting Group, Madison, (\$50,000) will provide new technology-based ventures with entrepreneurial consulting services delivered by scholars and mentors from science and technology fields at UW-Madison.

WEDC received 36 applications for the program, which provides matching grants to nonprofit organizations and communities. The Entrepreneurship Support Program is the latest addition to WEDC’s suite of entrepreneurship resources, which also include support for startup accelerators, seed capital funds, investment tax credits and technology development loans. In addition, WEDC supports and engages an existing statewide network of partners that offers business training, mentorship and financing to aspiring entrepreneurs.