

Economic Development Corporation: 31 Wisconsin school districts awarded Fab Lab Grants

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MADISON, WI. MAY. 1, 2020 – Governor Tony Evers and the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) today announced that 31 school districts throughout the state have been awarded a total of more than \$690,000 in grants to establish or expand local fabrication laboratory (fab lab) facilities.

“The fab lab program remains one of the best ways for students to gain experience in the high-tech manufacturing jobs where Wisconsin leads,” Governor Evers said. “During the current coronavirus crisis, when we’ve needed quick turnaround for protective gear and other medical devices, those manufacturers have become even more important to our state.”

“WEDC has invested more than \$2.8 million over the past five years to provide 77 school districts across the state with the equipment necessary to help students learn high-demand skills, including technology, manufacturing and engineering,” said Missy Hughes, secretary and CEO of WEDC. “Fab labs benefit not only the students themselves with important technology and career skills, but they also benefit Wisconsin employers, who will be able to find workers with the right skills to allow their companies to grow and thrive.”

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 Labs Grant Program, WEDC is supporting the purchase of fab lab equipment for instructional and educational purposes by elementary, middle, junior high or high school students.

The following school districts were awarded Fab Labs Grants today:

- Merrill Area Public Schools, \$15,000
- School District of Brown Deer, \$25,000
- Mellen School District, \$24,500
- Rice Lake Area School District, \$25,000
- School District of Beloit Turner, \$25,000
- Milwaukee Public Schools, \$25,000
- School District of Abbotsford, \$15,000
- School District of Mauston, \$15,000
- New Lisbon School District, \$9,700
- Somerset School District, \$25,000
- Waupun Area School District, \$25,000
- Pewaukee School District, \$25,000
- School District of Poynette, \$23,900
- Elmbrook Schools, \$25,000
- School District of Drummond, \$13,200
- Wauwatosa School District, \$25,000
- School District of Mondovi, \$25,000
- Oshkosh Area School District, \$25,000
- Washington Island School District, \$25,000
- Eau Claire Area School District, \$25,000
- School District of Omro, \$25,000
- Coleman School District, \$25,000
- School District of Random Lake, \$25,000
- Union Grove Union High School District, \$25,000
- Elkhart Lake-Glenbeulah School District, \$22,200
- Lake Holcombe School District, \$25,000
- School District of New Berlin, \$19,000
- Cedarburg School District, \$25,000
- Elkhorn Area School District, \$13,500
- School District of Mishicot, \$22,200
- Westby Area School District, \$25,000

The 31 public school districts are receiving a total of \$693,200 in Fab Labs 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.

WEDC received 31 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 University of Wisconsin-Stout, as well as three WEDC team members.

In addition to the grants, WEDC has developed a [fab labs resource page](#) on 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 UW -Stout.

For more information on the state's fab labs, including resources for teachers, visit wedc.org/fablabs or follow #WIFabLab on Twitter.