

# Dept. of Workforce Development: Announces Wisconsin Fast Forward Grant recipients

Posted on Tuesday, Feb 23, 2021

>> **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.](#)**

MADISON – Businesses and organizations across Wisconsin are getting more than \$1.65 million in grants from the Department of Workforce Development (DWD). The grants are part of DWD's [Wisconsin Fast Forward](#) initiative that provides targeted funds to support worker training, education, and recruitment.

This year's 13 grant recipients represent a variety of industries, from agriculture to information technology. Wisconsin Fast Forward encourages statewide economic growth by helping employers across the state train workers and fill positions to meet critical needs for a skilled workforce.

"In addition to serving employers, these Industry Sector Worker Training Grants offer a path to well-paying jobs for unemployed workers and higher wages and more opportunities for growth for current employees," said DWD Secretary-designee Amy Pechacek.

Wisconsin Fast Forward connects employers with local or regional economic development organizations, workforce development boards, post-secondary institutions, nonprofit organizations, and private training providers. The program aims to enhance equity and economic opportunity across the state by giving preference to projects that recruit socially and economically disadvantaged individuals, including veterans, people with disabilities, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, people with lower incomes, and ex-offenders.

An additional \$10 million in funding for Wisconsin Fast Forward is part of Gov. Tony Evers' Badger Bounceback agenda, which was unveiled last week in his biennial budget. The additional money will support training for individuals, businesses, and organizations affected by the pandemic.

"These additional dollars will allow DWD to continue to fund effective training for those out of work and those looking to advance in their industry by providing new, transferable skills for the unemployed and employed alike," Secretary-designee Pechacek said.

You can find a list of 2021 Wisconsin Fast Forward grant recipients below.

## **Agriculture:**

DWD granted \$69,050 to Wysocki Produce Farm, Inc. (Portage County), which is partnering with Mid-State Technical College to provide 76 hours of training to 24 incumbent workers in basic electrical skills and safety technology. Trainees will also learn how to perform preventative maintenance and increase their communications skills, all of which will allow the incumbent workers to transfer from seasonal to full-time permanent employment.

## **Construction:**

DWD issued a grant of \$108,200 to SOFTEC Education, Inc. (Burnett County), which is partnering with Train Skills Management, LLC to train 12 unemployed trainees. Specialized training will focus on road building and horizontal drilling processes for utility installation. Organizational partners have committed to offering Union Sponsorships to trainees, a necessary step to receive Union Apprenticeships and provide the trainees additional on-the-job training.

DWD awarded \$73,810 to Midwest Renewable Energy Association (Portage County), which is partnering with Arch Electric, Midwest Solar Power, Pieper Electric,

SunPeak, LLC, and Westphal & Co. to provide training to 79 unemployed trainees and 15 incumbent workers in basic solar photovoltaics skills and job safety. The program will give trainees the opportunity to train and test for industry recognized certifications. Training for incumbent employees will provide advanced technical skills and give them the required course hours toward advanced industry certifications.

### **Information Technology:**

DWD issued a grant of \$385,000 to MKE Tech Hub Coalition (Milwaukee County), which will create a new program to recruit 50 unemployed trainees to participate in a software development apprenticeship program. Apprenti and Tech Elevator will partner with MKE Tech Hub Coalition to deliver instruction and Kohl's Corporation will provide on-the-job training and serve as a placement partner for trainees who successfully complete the program.

### **Manufacturing:**

DWD granted \$329,610 to Rockline Industries, Inc.'s Sheboygan plant (Sheboygan County), which has invested in additional technology to meet the demands for hand surface disinfecting wipes because of the COVID pandemic. Rockline will train 50 unemployed trainees and 92 incumbent trainees to operate the new equipment. Unemployed trainees will receive wage increases up to \$2.83 per hour and incumbent trainees will receive wage increases up to \$1.15 per hour after completing training. Rockline will partner with the Paper Converting Machine Company, IAS Inc., RA Jones and Co., Sentry, K2 Engineering Group, Kolinahr Systems Inc., and Douglas Machine Inc. to provide training focused on preparing trainees to operate new equipment and processes.

DWD awarded \$17,500 to GPS Education Partners (Waukesha County). In partnership with Generac Power Systems Inc, GPS Education Partners will provide training to 15 incumbent workers to support their advancement into Automation

Machine Technician roles. The use of GPSEd trainers will provide industry credential validation. Trainees will spend 6 hours a week participating in online learning and direct training, to complete 45 days of related on-the-job training experience.

DWD issued a grant of \$319,200 to Central Wisconsin Metal Manufacturers Alliance (CWMMA) (Marathon County), which will partner with Greenheck Group, Lemke Industrial Machine, LLC., Crystal Finishing Systems Inc., Wausau Supply Company, Wausau Window and Wall Systems, Wausau Coated, and Northcentral Technical College to provide training to 100 unemployed and 100 incumbent workers. The training is a flexible, self-paced, and incentivized program that will pay \$500 to the trainees after 90 days of successful training and placement. The training consists of 40 hours of self-paced online classes, followed by a hands-on 20-hour workshop.

DWD granted \$58,000 to Trachte LLC (Dane County), which will partner with ManageAssist Inc. to provide training to 110 incumbent workers. The program will allow trainees to qualify for career advancement and compensation gains. Training courses will focus on lean manufacturing, process improvement, quality improvement, lean awareness, and dealing with change.

DWD awarded \$85,710 to ThermTech (Waukesha County), which will deliver the required training to 114 incumbent workers and three unemployed workers to be certified in Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC). Training will cover CMMC materials necessary to provide products and services to the Department of Defense.

DWD issued a grant of \$48,080 to AGRA Industries (Lincoln County), which will partner with Northcentral Technical College (NTC) to train eight unemployed trainees for welding/fabricating positions and four incumbent trainees. Incumbent trainees will receive a \$0.25-wage-increase for each of four levels of training completed. The training will last 4 months or 640 contact hours. All training and testing will be conducted in-house with a curriculum blended with NTC's college

material and hands-on training and will provide nine college credits and a State of Wisconsin Certified Welder credential to Merrill High School and Antigo High School students.

DWD granted \$5,225 to Midwest Prototyping (Dane County), which will partner with Cyber Nines and WMEP Manufacturing Solutions to provide training to 44 incumbent workers. Incumbent trainees will receive wage increases ranging from \$.99 to \$1.64 per hour after the training is completed. The training program will include information not currently covered in the traditional training programs and will be executed in five phases. Trainings will be recorded for future use and focus on cybersecurity and quality training needs.

### **Transportation:**

DWD awarded \$53,040 to WEL Companies (Brown County) to launch a mentorship program to train 125 incumbent employees to become compliant and legal tractor-trailer operators. Recent graduate students from tractor-trailer truck driving school will enter the mentorship program to gain safety, regulatory, compliance, and industry knowledge. The eight-week program will be conducted in three phases and is expected to increase the company's fleet size by 125 new drivers. Incumbent trainees will receive wages increases of up to \$8per hour after completing the training.

DWD issued a grant of \$101,720 to the Wisconsin Automotive & Truck Education Association, Inc. (Marathon County), which will partner with Northcentral Technical College to train six incumbent autobody technicians and six unemployed trainees. Trainees will be placed at one of three partnering area autobody shops. Trainees will complete a 30-week program that will combine coursework and on-the-job training. Participants will earn an Auto Collision Basics certification upon training completion.



For more information and learn about the next round of WFF grants, please visit

[http://wisconsinfastforward.com/wff\\_standard.htm](http://wisconsinfastforward.com/wff_standard.htm)