

Gov. Evers: announces Dept. of Workforce Development now accepting applications for the expanded Wisconsin Fast Forward Technical Education Grant Program

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Up to \$700,000 available to school districts for advanced manufacturing tools and equipment

MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers, together with the Department of Workforce Development (DWD), today announced that school districts across Wisconsin can apply for up to \$50,000 in grant funding to purchase technical education equipment through the Expanded Wisconsin Fast Forward Technical Education Equipment Grant Program. Through this up to \$700,000 grant program, grant funds will be available to Wisconsin school districts to train students to use advanced manufacturing tools and equipment to help address Wisconsin's skilled worker shortage.

"To build the workforce of tomorrow, we have to make sure we're investing in career pathways for our students and in school, and these grants are a great way to inspire more students to get some of the skills and training they need to pursue careers in advanced manufacturing," said Gov. Evers. "The technology schools can access with these grants resembles what students will encounter out in the workforce, giving students an edge to be career-ready and succeed in these high-skill, high-wage fields."

The Expanded Wisconsin Fast Forward Technical Education Equipment Grant Program helps students transition from high school into the workforce by supporting technical education and reduces higher education costs by providing dual enrollment credits, industry-endorsed certificates, and technical endorsements on high school diplomas. Grants will reimburse school districts for the purchase and installation costs of technical education equipment used in vocational training and technical education in advanced manufacturing fields, including costs for equipment operation software and instructional materials.

In 2020, Webster High School in Burnett County used its grant funding to purchase a Computer-Numerically-Controlled (CNC) milling machine and robotic arm to help students learn how to fabricate custom parts, read blueprints, use inspection equipment, and design and program parts on a computer. A video demonstration of the purchased equipment is available [here](#). In fiscal year 2022, 29 school districts were awarded Technical Education Equipment grants, receiving \$1 million in total grant funds from DWD.

"DWD recognizes the importance of education and ensuring that our students get skills training in high-demand fields like advanced manufacturing," said DWD Secretary-designee Amy Pechacek. "Investing in our students is investing in our future Wisconsin workforce and local businesses."

Award amounts will range from \$5,000 to \$50,000. Applications are due by **3 p.m. CST on Dec. 8, 2022**. For additional information or to download an application, please consult the Grant Program Announcement and related grant program materials on the [Wisconsin Fast Forward Grants website](#).

This grant program announcement comes as part of the ongoing observance of October 2022 as "Manufacturing Month" in Wisconsin. A copy of the governor's Manufacturing Month proclamation is available [here](#).

Additionally, this announcement builds on previous efforts to support youth advanced manufacturing training and workforce development. In August, Gov. Evers [announced](#) 14 new Youth Apprenticeship pathways for high school juniors and seniors heading back to school this fall. They include programs in agriculture, natural resources, health science, manufacturing, aviation maintenance, and more. Also in August, Gov. Evers [announced](#) that 11 Wisconsin school districts would receive more than \$414,000 in grant funding through the Wisconsin Fast Forward Program to increase the number of students in career and technical education programs. Following this announcement, in September, the governor [announced](#) that 16 school districts would receive \$450,000 through another round of Wisconsin Fast Forward Grant funding.

Last week, Gov. Evers also [announced](#) that Wisconsin surpassed 15,000 participants in the Registered Apprenticeship program—the highest participation rate in the program in two decades. Wisconsin's Registered Apprenticeship program began in 1911 and has served as a national model for its innovation. The state's 2,600 participating employers include leading manufacturers, construction businesses, agricultural and food producers, and more recently, childcare providers, healthcare systems, and information technology services. Wisconsin's Youth Apprenticeship program also reached a record 6,412 participants working at a record 4,478 employers. The 15,000 registered apprentices were all active during 2022, and the number is expected to grow as more apprentices are registered this fall.



An online version of this release is available [here](#).