

Gov. Evers: Announces more than \$6.6 million to support apprenticeship, job and skills training projects across Southwestern, Central Wisconsin

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FENNIMORE — Gov. Tony Evers today announced more than \$6.6 million to support youth apprenticeship opportunities, job training and upskilling in advanced manufacturing, and scholarships for students pursuing careers in education in grants through the second round of the [Workforce Innovation Grant Program](#). The investment supports projects across 12 counties in southwestern and central Wisconsin with grants awarded to Southwest Wisconsin Technical College, Wisconsin Heights School District, and Boys & Girls Club of Dane County.

“We’re working to ensure we have more apprenticeship opportunities and jobs and skills training across our state. From youth apprenticeships in the trades to upskilling for advanced manufacturing jobs to supporting our own homegrown talent so they can come back and teach our kids, today’s investments will help young people connect with local career opportunities and ensure we’re growing Wisconsin’s workforce for the future,” said Gov. Evers. “With these investments, we’re also helping to make sure folks who are already in our manufacturing workforce will be able to increase their skills and knowledge—and their wages—to support their families and career goals. These projects are a win-win-win for the greater region, and we’re glad to be awarding these funds today.”

The first round of Workforce Innovation Grants were announced in [December 2021](#) when the governor announced 12 regional projects would receive up to \$59.5

million in grants. [Last summer](#), Gov. Evers announced a groundbreaking \$130 million investment in workforce solutions across the state. The second round of Workforce Innovation Grants brings that total investment to more than \$158.5 million, including:

- More than \$128 million for the Workforce Innovation Grant Program to encourage regions and communities to develop leading-edge, long-term solutions to the workforce challenges the state faces in the wake of COVID-19;
- \$20 million toward the [Worker Advancement Initiative](#), which offers subsidized employment and skills training opportunities with local employers to unemployed individuals; and
- \$10 million for a [Worker Connection Program](#), which provides workforce career coaches who will connect with individuals attempting to reengage in the workforce post-pandemic.

While Wisconsin continues to see workforce shortages that existed long before the pandemic began, last week, the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) [released](#) the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) preliminary employment data for the month of May, which not only showed Wisconsin's unemployment rate continues to remain below the national average at 2.9 percent but also a historic high of 3,059,300 Wisconsinites employed.

On Tuesday, Gov. Evers [announced](#) the first three recipients of the second round of the Workforce Innovation Grant Program. Additional recipients will be announced on a rolling basis, and a full list of grant awardees will be released in the coming days. The three projects the governor announced today will receive a total of up to \$6.6 million in grants through the second round of the Workforce Innovation Grant Program, and include:

Southwest Wisconsin Technical College | up to ~2.9 Million

Serving Crawford, Grant, Iowa, Lafayette, and Richland counties, Southwest Wisconsin Technical College will utilize these grant funds for their Advance Southwest Wisconsin initiative. This project will help businesses train more than 500 employees, hire more than 300, and promote dozens of incumbent workers over the course of three years. The Advance Southwest Wisconsin initiative includes providing custom on-site upskill trainings, bolstering advanced technology expertise with coordinated industry support, which will include a new manufacturing and STEM youth apprenticeship program that will bridge the college's technical programs with the University of Wisconsin-Platteville's engineering programs, and

offering targeted support to help the most at-risk employees overcome barriers through individualized instruction, childcare services, and transportation, among other supports.

Wisconsin Heights School District | up to ~\$264,000

Serving Columbia, Dane, Sauk, Jefferson, and Iowa counties, a partnership of Wisconsin Heights School District, Cambridge School District, Lodi School District, Sauk Prairie School District, and the Wisconsin Center for Education Research has proposed using these grant funds to support their Grow Our Own (GROW) initiative. With this funding, GROW will support current high school students who plan to pursue careers in education with five \$10,000 scholarships and four \$1,000 scholarships, and they will support alumni from GROW high schools pursuing education with seven \$10,000 scholarships and 10 scholarships of \$2,000. Scholarship recipients will agree to be interviewed at one of the GROW districts in return, and if hired, will commit to teaching for three years in a GROW district. Additional goals of the program include offering high school students 12 credits of Early College Credit classes in education combined with mentorship.

Boys & Girls Club of Dane County | up to ~3.5 Million

Serving Dane and Walworth counties, the Boys & Girls Club of Dane County proposes using these grant funds for the Careerforce Build Up! Program that will engage young people who are involved in the organization's youth development programs to prepare them for apprenticeships and build a pipeline of talent. Through a partnership with the McKenzie Regional Workforce Center, youth will receive training and support to pursue careers in plumbing, electrical, carpentry, and HVAC, as well as entrepreneurial classes.