

Dept. of Workforce Development: Announces \$3.8 million in Wisconsin fast forward worker training grants

Posted on Wednesday, Mar 1, 2023

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MADISON – From education to eye care to meat snacks, employers across Wisconsin will use more than \$3.8 million in Wisconsin Fast Forward grants from the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development to support worker training programs that put people on the path to employment and higher wages.

The worker training grants will help support 24 employers and serve up to 1,415 trainees across five high-demand sectors. Many of the Wisconsin Fast Forward projects are made possible through partnerships with community organizations, local employers, and industry associations.

“These partnerships provide training to bridge the gap between supply and demand when it comes to Wisconsin’s workforce needs. Our state has a great workforce and Fast Forward grants reward workers with new opportunities and higher wages through training,” DWD Secretary-designee Pechacek said. “The grants also give employers a competitive edge by boosting retention and recruitment through skills development. Investments through Wisconsin Fast Forward grants are proven to expand the state’s talent pipeline and connect unemployed and other workers with in-demand skills that are needed for family-supporting jobs.”

The WFF standard grant program awards funds to Wisconsin businesses to reimburse costs associated with occupational training. The grants cover training costs for those who are unemployed or underemployed, as well as for incumbent workers. Participants who successfully complete the training program will gain opportunities for employment, higher-level employment, or increased wages.

In the 2022 fiscal year, DWD's Office of Skills Development awarded and administered more than \$4.8 million in WFF grants for an estimated 2,638 trainees.

WFF grants range from \$5,000 to \$400,000 and projects require a 50% cash or in-kind employer match. The grant program is open to all industry sectors. The training must provide transferrable skills. Individuals eligible for training are incumbent workers, underemployed workers, and the unemployed.

To receive funding, employers must meet these minimum requirements:

- 85% of the participants must complete training.
- 65% must gain employment (the unemployed, hired; the underemployed, promoted).
- 75% of incumbent trainees receive pay raises.

The more than \$3.8 million in newly contracted WFF awards include:

Customer Service: \$29,245 to Adeline Montessori School Inc. in Waukesha County. The school is partnering with Oaks Montessori Teacher Education to provide Montessori teacher credentials to eight incumbent workers. The training will include online courses, in person classes, and supervised practicum. Following the training, the incumbent workers could receive a wage increase of \$3.86 or more per hour.

Financial Services: \$26,200 to Bank of Luxemburg in Kewaunee County. The company is partnering with Initiative One Leadership Institute to provide 29 hours of training to six incumbent workers in Leadership Skills. Trainees will receive 16.8 Continuing Education Units (CEUs) through University of Wisconsin Green Bay upon successful completion of training and could receive a wage increase of \$1.50 or more per hour.

Information Technology: \$108,500 Eight Eleven Group LLC in Milwaukee County. The company is partnering with MKE Tech Hub to provide technology training (AWS re/Start) to 50 unemployed individuals. Training will be conducted virtually in two groups and will consist of a full-time skills development program that prepares trainees for careers in cloud.

Healthcare: \$395,590 to Workforce Development Board of South Central Wisconsin in Dane County. The Board is partnering with University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics (UW Health) to provide training and certification to 10

unemployed and 10 incumbent workers, for a total of 20 trainees. Training will involve both classroom and clinical rotation hours leading to certification as an Ophthalmology Assistant. Following the training, incumbent workers could receive a wage increase of \$2 or more per hour.

Healthcare: \$246,530 to SSM Health Wisconsin in Dane County. The company is partnering with Madison Area Technical College to provide training and certification to 24 incumbent office workers transitioning to Medical Assistants. Training will provide incumbent workers an opportunity to advance within the organization and could receive a wage increase of \$2.84 or more per hour.

Healthcare: \$32,650 to Lynn Precious Moments in Milwaukee County. The company is partnering with Five Star Educational Training Center Inc. to train 15 unemployed trainees and 15 incumbent workers. Successful completion of the training program will lead to acquiring state required DCF Child Care Certification as well as hands on work experience learned in training by working directly in a childcare role. Placement partners include Children's Knowledge Learning Center II, Kreative Kidz Community Childcare, Princess Loving Her Angels, and Teach Early Childhood Learning Center. Incumbent workers could receive a wage increase of \$2 or more per hour.

Healthcare: \$217,800 to Green Bay Area Public Schools in Brown County. The public school system is partnering with University of Wisconsin-Green Bay to provide training to 15 incumbent staff members allowing them to advance their careers from an hourly paraprofessional position to a salaried teaching position. Following the training, incumbent workers could receive a wage increase of \$12.11 or more per hour.

Healthcare: \$266,530 to SSM Health Wisconsin in Dane County. SSM Health is providing training to 45 unemployed people and 30 incumbent Human Service Assistants for a total of 75 trainees to serve as registered behavioral technicians. Training will provide incumbent workers an opportunity to move-up within the organization and fill existing vacancies. Following the training, incumbent workers could receive a pay increase of \$4 or more per hour.

Healthcare: \$10,595 to Elevate Medical Solutions in Dane County. The company is providing training to four unemployed individuals and two incumbent medical coding professionals for a total of six trainees to address shortage of experienced Medical Coders. Successful completion of the training will result in employment and

increased wages, as either an outpatient or an inpatient medical coder at Elevate Medical Solutions. Following the training, incumbent workers could receive a pay increase of \$2 or more per hour.

Manufacturing: \$299,220 to Masters Gallery Foods Inc. in Sheboygan County. The company is partnering with Midwest Engineered Systems Inc., Somic Packaging Inc., Quest Industrial LLC, BW Packaging Systems/Hayssen, and Coprodev Plus to provide training to 30 unemployed individuals and 70 incumbent workers. Following the training, incumbent workers could receive a wage increase of 29 cents or more per hour.

Manufacturing: \$369,275 to Nemak USA in Sheboygan County. The company is partnering with Semoto to train 40 incumbent workers in die casting. Coursework will provide up-skill training leading to advancement of production staff into die casting. In addition, the Die Cast Production Supervisors will receive corresponding training to enable their enhanced support for the die casting positions. Following the training, incumbent workers could receive a wage increase of \$1.24 or more per hour.

Manufacturing: \$96,165 to Old Wisconsin Sausage in Sheboygan County, which is partnering with multiple training providers including UW-Madison Extension, Kuhlman, MRA-The Management Association, Cabinplant, and Crucial Learning to provide training to 92 incumbent workers. Training will lead to UW-Madison certification in manufacturing of meat snacks as well as up-skilling line production and improving management skills. Incumbent workers could receive a wage increase of 65 cents or more per hour.

Manufacturing: \$70,695 to In-Place Machining Company in Milwaukee County. The company is partnering with Manage Assist Inc. to provide training to 40 incumbent workers with skills to help achieve business objectives and advance their careers. On-site training with a combined classroom and online learning, the bulk of the coursework focuses on skills areas that include Lean Manufacturing, Supervision and Management, Quality and Customer Service. Following the training, incumbent workers could receive a wage increase of \$1.25 or more per hour.

Manufacturing: \$127,100 Federal-Mogul Piston Rings, LLC in Manitowoc County. The company is partnering with Manage Assist to provide training to 195 incumbent workers. Coursework includes principles of lean manufacturing, Pull/Kanban Methods, and establishing an on-going training program with Train the Trainer

principles. Incumbent workers could receive a wage increase of \$1.00 or more per hour.

Manufacturing: \$53,500 to Cascade Asset Management LLC in Dane County. The company is partnering with Manage Assist, Inc. to provide training to 67 incumbent workers. Training will include courses on Six Sigma, Value Stream Mapping, and other coursework which will have short and long-term impact on the company. Following the training, incumbent workers could receive a wage increase of 70 cents or more per hour.

Manufacturing: \$28,600 Baker's Quality Pizza Crusts in Waukesha County. The company is partnering with Manage Assist, Inc. and Waukesha County College to provide training to 32 incumbent workers. Training will be a mix of classroom and online learning and will include coursework to improve manufacturing safety, production, and effective management. Incumbent workers could receive a wage increase of \$0.38 or more per hour.

Manufacturing: \$179,385 to Octopi Brewing LLC in Dane County. The company will offer tailored equipment training to production and maintenance staff. Three training courses for eight unemployed trainees and 31 incumbent workers would be provided by vendors: cartonier training from Graphic Packaging International (GPI), machine operation skill advancement from KHS, and cellar process equipment training from GEA. Upon completion of training, employees would gain a higher-level understanding of the production process and incumbent workers could receive a wage increase of 72 cents or more per hour.

Manufacturing: \$284,435 to Snyder's-Lance Inc. The company, in Rock County, is partnering with multiple training providers including: BZ Consulting, Blueprint Automation, heat and Control, Wexxar Bel Packaging, Blackhawk Technical Collage, The Management Association, Waukesha County Technical College, First Quality Forklift Training, Hertzler Systems, Honeywell International, and Reading Bakery Systems. Training will be provided to 200 incumbent workers covering both hard and soft skills to improve supervisory oversight, develop an on-going training program through Train the Trainer and improving manufacturing skill sets. Incumbent workers could receive a wage increase of 70 cents or more per hour.

Manufacturing: \$20,195 to Mikrotech LLC in Kenosha County. The company is partnering with Living as a Leader, Computer Aided Technology, Paulson Plastics Academy, and QC Training Services, Inc. to provide training to five incumbent

workers. Following the training, incumbent workers could receive a wage increase of 83 cents or more per hour.

Manufacturing: \$322,840 to ND Paper, Inc. in Wood County to purchase of a B26 Paper Machine that will convert product to recycled packaging grades, making the mill 100% recycled. The proposed training will provide the necessary skill sets for 10 unemployed trainees and 70 incumbent workers to understand the workings of the equipment, process flows and ensure efficient operation. Incumbent workers could receive a wage increase of 81 cents or more per hour.

Manufacturing: \$60,135 to Rehrig Pacific Company in Kenosha County. The company is partnering with Gateway Technical College to provide classroom training to eight incumbent workers leading to a Mechanical Maintenance Technician certification. Following the training, incumbent workers could receive a wage increase of \$1.28 or more per hour.

Manufacturing: \$313,340 to Fincantieri Marine Group LLC (FMG) in Marinette County. The company is a member of Northeast Wisconsin Manufacturing Alliance and will train newly hired and incumbent workers to meet the needs of its three Wisconsin shipyards, Marinette Marine Corporation (MMC), Fincantieri Bay Shipbuilding (FBS) and ACE Marine, LLC (ACE) in an expanding marine manufacturing industry. FMG will provide training opportunities to 109 employees in the areas of ITIL 4 Foundation on Demand, Shipyard Surface Prep & Coating, and CPSR and Subcontract Compliance Training. Following the training, incumbent workers could receive a pay increase of 50 cents or more per hour.

Manufacturing: \$43,125 to Latitude Corp. in Dane County. The company is partnering with the Madison Area Technical College to provide a six-module training to 10 unemployed trainees and five incumbent workers to allow them to move from an entry level general labor job qualifications to that of a basic CNC machining operator. Following the training, incumbent workers could receive a pay increase of \$4.50 or more per hour.

Transportation: \$264,640 to Talgo Inc. in Milwaukee County. The company will provide training to 89 unemployed trainees and 70 incumbent workers. Training will include a combined training model that consists of courses and hands-on practice. Course topics include, but are not limited to, Connector Assembly, Soldering, Torquing, and Sandblasting. Incumbent workers could receive a wage increase of \$1 or more per hour.