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Secretary Gassman Awards \$300,584 for Skills Jump Start Grants, Continuing Governor Doyle's Investments in Worker Training

***State Labor Secretary says grants will help start low-wage workers on career paths
in health care, advanced manufacturing, clean energy, construction and business technology***

MADISON – Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Roberta Gassman today announced \$300,584 in Skills Jump Start grant funding to help low-wage workers, mainly those with no high school diploma, build career paths to good jobs in health care, advanced manufacturing and other demand sectors.

"In these tough economic times, Governor Doyle's top priority is creating and retaining jobs and helping our workers get these jobs," Secretary Gassman said. "These grants will help Wisconsin workers find opportunities to get ahead and gain valuable skills. This program is an innovative approach to give them, as the name implies, a jump start. Workers can go to a technical college, meet their basic education needs, and at the same time learn new skills to put them on a career path to a good job and a better life."

Governor Doyle included funding for the Skills Jump Start (SJS) program as part of a nearly \$6 million worker training package announced last year. The effort is part of the Regional Industry Skills Education (RISE) initiative, a DWD partnership with the Wisconsin Technical College System. The technical colleges have been developing SJS curricula combining basic education and skills training in key sectors, such as health care, advanced manufacturing, clean energy, green construction and information technology.

There are many Wisconsin workers that could potentially benefit from this training. According to a study by the Center on Wisconsin Strategy, nearly 700,000 Wisconsin workers, who are 25 to 54 years of age and have a limited education, are paid less than the median wage of \$15.11 an hour, not enough to keep a family of four out of poverty. Low-wage workers who are at least 18 and lack a high school diploma or need remedial instruction can apply for participation in an SJS program at their local Job Center. DWD's regional partners, the Workforce Development Boards, will be responsible for recruiting and enrolling SJS participants in classes that will be delivered through local technical colleges.

Secretary Gassman awarded funds to eight regional boards. The boards and colleges providing training are:

- **\$44,907** to the South Central Workforce Development Board (WDB) and Madison College;
- **\$43,774** to the Bay Area WDB and the North Central Technical College;
- **\$40,548** to the Northwest WDB and Northern Wisconsin Technical College;
- **\$40,000** to the Milwaukee Workforce Investment Board and MATC-Milwaukee;
- **\$38,636** to the North Central WDB and Nicolet Area Technical College;
- **\$37,157** to the Fox Valley WDB and Moraine Park Technical College;
- **\$31,608** to the Waukesha-Ozaukee-Walworth WDB and Moraine Park Technical College; and
- **\$23,954** to the Southeast WDB and Gateway Technical College.

Individuals interested in applying for the grants should contact the boards or Job Centers in regions where the program is offered. To find the nearest Job Center, call this toll free number, (888) 258-9966, or visit <http://www.wisconsinjobcenter.org/directory/>.

For a directory of workforce development boards, visit: <http://www.wvda.org/site/index-3.html>