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DWD Secretary Newson Announces Intent to Award More Than \$1.5 Million in Wisconsin Fast Forward Grant Funding to Train 2,200 Manufacturing Workers

Grants will support manufacturing job creation, wage increases at dozens of Wisconsin employers

MADISON – Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development Secretary (DWD) Reggie Newson today announced DWD intends to award 17 applicants more than \$1.5 million in worker training grants through the Wisconsin Fast Forward (WFF) initiative. The grant awardees cover 37 employers representing 15 Wisconsin counties and will train approximately 2,200 manufacturing workers.

"Under Governor Walker's leadership, Wisconsin Fast Forward supports innovative worker training programs that are employer-driven and address both immediate and future needs for skilled workers," Secretary Newson said. "As our state's improving economy creates new opportunities for workers to support themselves and their families, the Wisconsin Fast Forward program will help individuals develop new skills that lead to new jobs or higher pay."

The WFF program was proposed by Governor Scott Walker in early 2013 and passed with significant bipartisan majorities. The legislation appropriated \$15 million to fund worker training and additional resources to enhance DWD's Job Center of Wisconsin website. Wisconsin Fast Forward provides flexibility for companies that have identified a specific training need, enabling the business to partner with other businesses that have the same need, along with training providers, workforce development boards, economic development organizations, technical colleges, and other partners.

The DWD Office of Skills Development (OSD), which is responsible for administering the WFF program, has developed a nimble process that enables companies to easily apply for grants. All applications are evaluated by representatives from OSD, the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, Wisconsin Technical College System, and local chambers of commerce.

Applications that were approved will complete a contract committing participating businesses to certain employment and wage outcomes. OSD is responsible for closely monitoring grantees to ensure that funds are spent appropriately and that outcomes are met. Underemployed and unemployed workers will be hired after the completion of the training program and incumbent workers will receive a wage increase.

During his 2014 State of the State address, Governor Scott Walker proposed a \$35.4 million expansion of the WFF worker training program as part of his *Blueprint for Prosperity* to focus on three populations:

- Reducing wait lists at Wisconsin technical colleges in high-demand fields like manufacturing and information technology;

(more)

- Developing innovative school-to-work collaborations between businesses, school districts, technical colleges, and other partners that result in industry-recognized certifications in high-demand areas; and
- Enhancing employment opportunities for workers with disabilities as part of the Governor's Year of the Better Bottom Line initiative that seeks to connect disabled individuals with employment.

DWD previously announced its intent to award more than \$2.1 million to support school-to-work programs throughout Wisconsin under WFF-Blueprint for Prosperity. The programs will target a variety of occupations in manufacturing health care, construction, hospitality, and other areas of significant job growth.

DWD is also working closely with stakeholders to identify wait lists at Wisconsin technical colleges and is developing a grant announcement to train workers with disabilities.

Wisconsin Fast Forward – Round 2 Manufacturing Grant Awards		
Business Partner	County	Intent to Award
Kenall Manufacturing	Kenosha	\$388,800
Stoughton Trailers	Dane	\$238,471
G3 Industries, Sulzer Machine, Merit Gear, JARP Industries, Goetsch Machine, Oldenburg Group, Gordon Aluminum, Lange Machine, J&D Tube Benders, Waukesha Bearing, Schuette Metals, Marathon Electric, Crystal Finishing, Imperial Industries, and Northland Stainless	Portage, Langlade, Marathon, Lincoln, Oneida	\$191,935
Plexus	Winnebago	\$173,093
TTM Technologies	Chippewa	\$138,815
Didion Milling	Jefferson	\$95,495
Anteco Pharma, CM Global, EVCO, Fisher Barton Specialty Products, McFarlane MFG, Springs Window Fashion, and Teel Plastics	Dane, Sauk, Columbia, Jefferson, Dodge	\$74,369
Anderson Machining	Jefferson, Whitewater	\$59,079
New Page Wisconsin System (Wisconsin Rapids)	Wood	\$58,768
Midwest Prototyping	Dane	\$32,064
Premium Waters	Chippewa	\$27,050
Services Plus, Inc.	Brown	\$13,745
Borg Indak	Walworth	\$13,254
New Page Wisconsin System (Stevens Point)	Portage	\$11,512
Fusion Integrated Solutions	Brown	\$11,372
Xten Industries	Kenosha	\$11,027
Bradshaw Medical	Kenosha	\$7,000
TOTAL		\$1,545,849

A summary including additional details on each approved application can be found [here](#).

To learn more about Wisconsin Fast Forward, visit WisconsinFastForward.com.