

Department of Workforce Development

Workforce Equity Grant

Questions and Answers

1. Can you clarify the process to apply for the Workforce Equity Grant?

Visit the DWD Employment & Training web page (<https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/det/>) and locate "Workforce Equity Grants." Below the description and details for "Workforce Equity Grants," you will find links from which to download the following:

- the Grant Program Announcement (<https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/det/pdf/weg-announcement.pdf>) which provides information on the grant program and directions for the application,
- the Application (<http://wisconsinfastforward.com/doc/tech-edu-equip-application.docx>), a Microsoft Word document that must be submitted as a Microsoft Word document. Do not submit the Application as a .pdf, Google link or Google document,
- an Employer-Placement Partner Letter of Commitment ([Workforce Equity Employer-Placement Partner Letter of Commitment template](#)), and
- the Evaluation Rubric (<https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/det/pdf/weg-rubric.pdf>), which provides the criteria with which applications will be evaluated.

Answer the questions in the Application by following the instructions in the Grant Program Announcement and the evaluation criteria in the Rubric. After completion, save the Application. To submit your application, email it along with your letters of support and any other documents by 3 pm CST on October 18, 2021 to WorkforceEquityGrant@dwd.wisconsin.gov

2. Why was my request for access to the WFF system as an application writer denied?

The Workforce Equity Grant is not a Wisconsin Fast Forward grant, and thus, does not use the Wisconsin Fast Forward Grant online application portal.

The application and GPA documents can be accessed from the DWD Employment & Training website at <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/det/>. For more information about how to apply please see the response to question #1.

3. What is the percentage of match that is required for this grant?

No match is required for this Grant Program Announcement. All grant and match expenditures must be incurred during the Training Project period.

4. What is the minimum and maximum award that I can request?

Award amount requests must range between \$5,000 to \$400,000. Requests by applicants who lead a consortium of employer partners for greater amounts may be considered at the discretion of OSD. In addition, award recipients will be required to track the progress of trainees and to submit quarterly progress and final reports of project results using the Wisconsin Fast Forward online grants system.

5. Who is eligible to apply for a grant? Is a training provider eligible to apply?

Since the goal of the grant is to train new and current employees and to place successful trainees in an occupational training or work experience, **applicants are limited to Wisconsin employers or an organization that is part of a consortium of employers that are located in Kenosha, Racine, Walworth, or Milwaukee counties.**

Consortiums are required to include employers that will provide hiring placement for specific counts of trainees. Employers must commit to hiring Trainees in writing. See [Workforce Equity Employer-Placement Partner Letter of Commitment template](#).

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6. What types of entities may be included in an applicant consortium?

Applicants are limited to Wisconsin employers or to organizations that are a part of a consortium of employers located in Kenosha, Racine, Walworth, and Milwaukee counties. Employers may apply as the leader of a consortium of applicant partners. Eligible consortium partners are:

- Employers
- Economic Development Agencies
- Technical Colleges or Universities
- Chambers of Commerce
- Tribes
- Industry sector Partners
- Unions/Trade Associations
- Public Training Providers
- Corrections Agencies
- Private Training Providers
- Veterans Organizations
- Governmental Agencies
- Workforce Development Boards

7. We are not located in the region comprised of eligible counties. However, as we are a school that helps people from those areas, is this grant something that we could apply for to help the people from that area?

This grant opportunity focuses on training underserved workers in two southeastern Wisconsin Workforce Development Areas (WDA): WDA 1-Southeast (Kenosha, Racine, and Walworth County) and WDA 2-Milwaukee (Milwaukee County). Employers in WDA 1 or WDA 2, or organizations that are a part of a consortium of employers located in WDA 1 and WDA 2 counties, are eligible to apply. Job placement partners – that is, the employers at which Trainees will be placed in work after completing training – are required to be located in the aforementioned counties.

8. We are a Wisconsin employer with locations in Green Bay, De Pere, Richland Center and West Bend. Would there be consideration for us to apply for a grant?

For this grant opportunity, applicants are limited to Wisconsin employers located in Kenosha, Racine, Walworth and Milwaukee counties.

Employers and other workforce partners that are located in other areas of Wisconsin may be eligible to apply for a Standard Wisconsin Fast Forward Grant opportunity when a GPA is offered. These grants support short-term and medium-term employer-led training projects that:

- Encourage increased collaboration between Wisconsin businesses and workforce training partners
- Fill current and ongoing skill requirements of Wisconsin employers
- Place workers in long-term positions with opportunities for professional growth and economic advancement.

More information on the Wisconsin Fast Forward program can be found at <http://wisconsinfastforward.com/>

9. What are the grant requirements?

The purpose of the Workforce Equity Grant is to provide skills training to underserved populations in southeastern Wisconsin and to place these trainees in an occupational training or work experience. For the purposes of this grant, underserved populations are defined as Black, Indigenous, and people of color, women, and those who reside in WDA 1 and WDA 2. See the Grant Program Announcement.

Training programs should provide education, skills training, post-employment support, and placement in occupational training or work experiences in high-demand occupations. Post-training positions must have a

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clear career path, identified advancement requirements, and should have minimum post-training wages of \$15/hour. See the Grant Program Announcement, available for download at <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/det/pdf/weg-announcement.pdf>, for detailed information on the components of successful programs.

10. Do you have programs with this approach that you funded before that you can share?

Previously awarded applications are not shared.

The IKEA US Community Foundation has donated \$947,000 to the Wisconsin DWD for this grant opportunity. The donation is equivalent to the amount of Wisconsin Unemployment Insurance benefits paid to IKEA employees at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. These funds will be used to provide skills training to underserved populations in southeastern Wisconsin (WDA 1 and WDA 2). The current Grant Program Announcement supports the funds remaining after the first round of grants were awarded, \$577,350.00.

It is the intent of the Workforce Equity Grant program to provide education, skills training, and placement in high-demand occupations to underserved populations in southeastern Wisconsin, to reduce racial disparities, and to narrow the education gap in the State's workforce, as well as to place trained individuals in well-paying, family-supporting jobs.

11. Can the grant be used for a program that is already setup and operational? Is there any restriction on using other funding sources for training (e.g. federal or FSET, W2 or WIOA funding)?

Grant funds are intended for new programs that are customized to the specific training needs of employers. Training must occur during the grant period, and may not be used to implement existing programs. Supplanting existing funds (using grant funds in place of state, local, and other federal funds) is not allowed.

12. Can the Workforce Equity Grant be used to establish a new apprenticeship?

The Workforce Equity Grant funds are available to employers and to consortia comprised of employers and training providers in Southeast Wisconsin. Kenosha, Racine, Walworth, and Milwaukee county employers may apply for grants to provide occupation-related education, skills training, work experiences, and job placement for workers from under-served populations. The project needs to focus on providing training, work experiences, and jobs to Black, Indigenous, and people of color, women, and those who reside in WDA 1 and WDA 2.

The intent of the funding is to provide for short-term occupational training. An employer or organization may apply as the leader of a consortium with partner employers that commit to hiring or providing work experiences to a specific number of trainees. Letters of Hiring Commitment from employers (on their letterhead) attesting to the count of trainees they will hire, the wages, benefits, and occupations, must be submitted with the application. Applicants are encouraged to use the Employer-Placement Partner Letter of Commitment template that is posted with the application materials.

13. Would a private university with its headquarters in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, be eligible to apply for the Workforce Equity Grants?

The Workforce Equity Grant funds are available to employers and to consortia comprised of employers and training providers in Southeast Wisconsin. The applicant may be an employer or organization in an application consortium with employers.

A private university would be eligible to apply as a member of a consortium, partnered with employers that commit to hiring a specific number of trainees. Letters of commitment from the hiring employers (on their letterhead) attesting to the count of trainees they will hire, the wages, benefits, and occupations, must be submitted with the application.

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14. Regarding the line item in the grant program announcement that says that trainees should receive minimum post-training wages of \$15/hour. Does this mean we hire Trainees at \$15/hour, or that grant funds maybe used to pay Trainees \$15/hour for a period of time? How long does one have to spend the funds? Is the money provided up front or is it a draw down?

Post-training wages refer to the wages paid to trainee after they have completed training. So, after training, trainees should be placed in positions that pay or should receive pay (if currently employed) of \$15 per hour or more.

Trainee wages are not eligible for reimbursement in this Grant Program Announcement, so grant funds may not be used to pay trainee wages. Grant funds may be used to pay stipends to trainees. A stipend is a fixed amount paid to a trainee that is intended to offset the cost of incidental training expenses.

The grant is a reimbursement grant, which means that the entity receiving the award must pay for the expense, and then submit receipts or other proof of payment to DWD for reimbursement. Eligible expenses are reimbursed up to the amount awarded.

The grant period is two years.

15. Do you or your department recommend any grant writers?

The Department of Workforce Development neither maintains a list of grant writers nor recommends any grant writers.