

# 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:

- 1) 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;
- 2) the Application (<http://wisconsinfastforward.com/doc/tech-edu-equip-application.docx>), a Microsoft Word document that must be submitted in Microsoft Word format, that is, with a .docx extension – NOT as a .pdf, Google link or Google document; and
- 3) 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 to [WorkforceEquityGrant@dwd.wisconsin.gov](mailto:WorkforceEquityGrant@dwd.wisconsin.gov) by 3 pm CST on January 18, 2021.

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?

As stated on page 4 of the GPA, matching funds equal to 50 percent of the awarded grant amount are required. All grant and match expenditures must be incurred during the Training Project period.

4. What are the parameters of the award? Is Match required? What is the minimum and maximum award that I can request?

Awards are reimbursement grants that require cash or in-kind Match equal to 50% of the amount of the grant award (\$.50 of matching for each \$1 awarded). Letters of Commitment verifying the source(s) of Match on organization letterhead from employers, partners, and/or the Applicant are required by the application. All grant and Match expenditures must be incurred during the Training Project period. Award amount requests must range between \$5,000 to \$400,000 (not including match) for individual applicants. In addition, award recipients will be required to track the progress of trainees and to submit quarterly progress and final reports of project results.

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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, **only employers are eligible to apply for a grant.**

Applicants must meet the following conditions:

- Wisconsin employer(s) located in Kenosha, Racine, Walworth, or Milwaukee counties.
- Employers may apply as the leader of a consortium of applicants.

Eligible consortium partners are:

- Employers
- Technical Colleges or Universities
- Tribes
- Unions/Trade Associations
- Corrections Agencies
- Veterans Organizations
- Workforce Development Boards
- Economic Development Agencies
- Chambers of Commerce

6. 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 consortiums of these employers and training providers are eligible to apply. Job placement partners – that is, the employers at which Trainees will be placed in work experiences – are required to be located in the aforementioned counties.

7. 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. Entities 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 y can be found at <http://wisconsinfastforward.com/>

8. 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

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purposes of this grant, underserved populations are defined as Black, Indigenous, and people of color, women, and/or those who reside in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods/communities.

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 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.

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

As this is a new, unique grant program, there are no previously funded projects. 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 and to place these trainees in an occupational training or work experience.

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.

10. Can the grant be used for a program that was setup and started in September? Is there any restriction on using other funding sources for training (e.g. federal or FSET, W2 or WIOA funding)?

Grant funds are for new programs only that are customized to business training needs that will occur during the grant period, and may not be used to implement existing programs. Funds from other sources may be used as Match, if the provider of those funds allows it. It is the grant applicant's responsibility to check with other funding providers about using the funds for Match for this grant.

11. 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/or those who reside in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods/communities.

The intent of the funding is to provide for short-term occupational training. An employer 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 commitment from employers (on their letterhead) attesting to the number of trainees they will hire, the wages, benefits, and occupations, must be submitted with the application.

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12. 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 must be an employer.

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

13. Regarding the line item in the grant program announcement that says that Trainees should have minimum post-training wages of \$15/hour. Does this mean we hire Trainees at \$15/hour, or that the grant funds may be 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 the Trainee after they have completed training. So, after training, the Trainees should be placed in positions that pay or should receive pay (if currently employed) of \$15 per hour or more.

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. This includes completing the training and a final report. So, actual training activity can last for about 20-22 months.

14. 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.