

Jim Doyle
Governor

Roberta Gassman
Secretary



State of Wisconsin
Department of Workforce Development

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
201 East Washington Avenue
P.O. Box 7946
Madison, WI 53707-7946
Telephone: (608) 266-3131
Fax: (608) 266-1784
<http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/>
e-mail: dwdsec@dwd.state.wi.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, June 24, 2009
CONTACT: Dick Jones, Agency Liaison, 608-267-4780

Governor Doyle Announces \$1.5 Million in Opportunity Grants Now Available for Low-wage Workers Eager for Careers in Demand Sectors

\$1,000 grants for those with only high school diploma; opportunity for tech school training

MADISON – Governor Jim Doyle today announced the availability of \$1.5 million in Opportunity Grants and urged low-wage workers, who have no education beyond high school, to apply now for up to \$1,000 to take technical college classes this fall and prepare for careers in health care, advanced manufacturing and other demand occupations.

“Opportunity Grants represent another significant step we are taking to ensure a skilled workforce,” Governor Doyle said. “One of the challenges we face in building a 21st century workforce is a skills gap. Two out of three jobs today require more than a high school diploma. Yet we have more than 723,000 working-age adults who have no education or training beyond high school. These grants provide individuals, currently working a low-wage job, an opportunity to take a course or two and begin the path to rewarding careers in high-growth industries.”

In March, Governor Doyle announced a nearly \$6 million worker training package that included \$1.5 million for Opportunity Grants, an initiative that is part of his Grow Wisconsin plan. The package is being funded with employment and training dollars that the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) receives from the federal government. DWD has now distributed the \$1.5 million to 11 regional workforce development boards.

Applicants must be at least 18 years of age and employed, but with earnings below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines, and otherwise ineligible for financial aid. The annual household income limit would be \$29,140 for a family of two, \$36,620 for a family of three, and \$44,100 for a family of four. Applicants must have a high school diploma or the equivalent.

Up to \$1,000 will be provided for tuition, fees, books and supplies. Eligible areas of study are those identified by the regional boards as high demand occupations, such as health care, advanced manufacturing, biotechnology and energy. The grants will cover short-term training, enabling individuals to earn certificates or degrees. The grant program also includes registered apprenticeships in high-demand occupations. In addition to the grants, individuals can receive up to \$250 to cover the cost of tools and uniforms, exam fees, transportation and child care.

Individuals should apply for grants through their regional workforce development boards or local Job Centers. For Job Center locations, go to JobCenterOfWisconsin.com, or call, 888-258-9966. Contact information for the boards can be found at http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dwdwia/PDF/wda_list.pdf.