

# WISCONSIN **FAST** FORWARD

## ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2014





Secretary Newson & Kimberly High School students celebrate the expansion of the CESA 6 Architecture, Construction & Engineering Academy for 52 students through a Blueprint for Prosperity - High School Pupil Worker Training grant.  
Back Row, Left to Right: Adam Lind, Matt Loewenhagan, Josh Mader and Parker Bekx. Front Row, Left to Right: Kayla Nessman, Morgan Talbot, Reggie Newson, Alyson Cotter and Brianna Dietzen.

December 31, 2014

Governor Scott Walker  
Room 115 East  
Wisconsin State Capitol  
Madison, WI 53703

Senator Alberta Darling  
Co-Chair, Joint Finance Committee  
Room 317 East  
Wisconsin State Capitol  
Madison, WI 53703

Representative John Nygren  
Co-Chair, Joint Finance Committee  
Room 309 East  
Wisconsin State Capitol  
Madison, WI 53703

Dear Governor Walker, Senator Darling and Representative Nygren:

I am honored to submit the 2014 Wisconsin Fast Forward Annual Report to you for your review. The Wisconsin Fast Forward program is having a positive impact on hundreds of employers and thousands of employees, both new hires and incumbent workers, while helping to fuel economic growth and position the state as one of the nation's top talent development leaders.

Wisconsin Act 9 was signed into law in March of 2013 with overwhelming bipartisan support from the State Legislature to create the Wisconsin Fast Forward program. In March of 2014, Wisconsin Fast Forward was expanded to include the \$35 million Blueprint for Prosperity initiative to: reduce Wisconsin Technical College waitlists in high-demand programs; train and certify high school pupils for in-demand careers; and enhance employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

As required by Wisconsin Statute 106.27 (3), this 2014 Wisconsin Fast Forward Annual Report summarizes program activities through state fiscal year 2013-2014. To demonstrate the program's impact since the first Grant Program Announcement was issued in November 2013, the report also includes data for the first and second quarters of state fiscal year 2014-2015. Highlights include:

- Program overview
- Data summary illustrating the program's impact
- Grantee success stories
- Labor Market Information System status update

As the program continues to grow and mature, employers and their training partners have become more adept at identifying skills gaps in the state's workforce. As a result, the training program proposals are more localized and target in-demand skill sets. Furthermore, employers continue to leverage the program's resources by collaborating in training program designs that yield skilled workers. New business alliances are forming around the state to identify common skill sets for use by many employers within a market or sector. In addition, local Workforce Development Boards, K-12 school districts and community based organizations have joined technical colleges in training skilled workers for employers. The Wisconsin Fast Forward initiative is developing collaborations and partnerships capable of providing sustainable talent.

This report includes the program status and outcomes for the standard Wisconsin Fast Forward grant program and the Blueprint for Prosperity initiative.

Sincerely,

Secretary Reginald J. Newson  
Department of Workforce Development



# CONTENTS

I. Wisconsin Fast Forward Overview	Page 4
II. Office of Skills Development	Page 6
III. Standard Wisconsin Fast Forward Grant Program	Page 6
IV. Proposed Wages and Grant Evaluation Criteria	Page 8
V. Actual Wages for Completed Training Programs	Page 9
VI. Blueprint for Prosperity Initiative	Page 12
VII. Labor Market Information System	Page 15
VIII. Glossary of Acronyms	Page 16
IX. Resources & Reports	Page 16

<b>Feb 13</b> Wisconsin Fast Forward legislation is introduced	<b>Feb 13</b> Wisconsin Act 9 is signed	<b>Oct 13</b> Emergency administrative rules take effect (DWD 801)	<b>Nov 13</b> Round 1 GPA issued	<b>Feb 14</b> Round 1 Grants awarded and Round 2 GPA issued	<b>Mar 14</b> Blueprint for Prosperity enacted	<b>May 14</b> Permanent administrative rules take effect and High School Pupil Grants awarded	<b>Jun 14</b> Round 2 and Wait List Grants awarded	<b>Sep 14</b> Round 3 GPA issued	<b>Nov 14</b> Training Workers with Disabilities Grants awarded	<b>Feb 15</b> Round 2 High School Pupil Grants to be awarded
---	--	---	-------------------------------------	--	---	--	---	-------------------------------------	--	---



The state's investment in the Wisconsin Fast Forward program serves as a national best practice model for assisting hundreds of employers and thousands of employees with addressing the skilled labor shortage. This 2014 Annual Report highlights the innovative services and employer demand-driven training solutions that fuel economic growth and position the state as a nation's talent development leader.

## I. Wisconsin Fast Forward Overview

### Standard Grant Program and Blueprint for Prosperity Initiative

The Standard Wisconsin Fast Forward (2013 Wisconsin Act 9) program was signed into law in March of 2013 with overwhelming bipartisan support from the State Legislature (Assembly 94-4; and Senate 33-0). The program was initially established to:

1. Fund, develop and implement an enhanced, cutting-edge Labor Market Information System (LMIS).
2. Create the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) – Office of Skills Development (OSD) by authorizing four positions to serve as a resource for any Wisconsin business seeking skilled workers and to administer the Wisconsin Fast Forward grant program.
3. Address Wisconsin's skills gap through a \$15 million investment in grants to employers for customized skills training to fill current job openings and ongoing skill requirements.

The first Grant Program Announcement (GPA) was issued in November of 2013 to address skilled labor shortages in the Manufacturing and Construction sectors, as well as for Customer Service occupations. Open job orders in the Job Center of Wisconsin (JCW) job board and feedback from the state's economic advisors confirmed the labor shortages in these fields. Policy makers quickly noted that the program design was capable of targeting skill shortages by industry sector, local geography or occupation. Discussions centered around expanding the program to address other known labor shortages and skills gaps.

In March of 2014, the Blueprint for Prosperity (2013 Wisconsin Act 139) initiative was enacted, which expanded the capacity of the Wisconsin Fast Forward program through a \$35.4 million investment to:

1. Reduce Wisconsin Technical College System waiting lists in high-demand fields.
2. Provide high school pupils with skills training and industry-recognized certification in high-demand fields.
3. Enhance employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, including service-disabled veterans.

With these statutory program enhancements, Wisconsin Fast Forward granting authority increased to include additional training program funding for targeted audiences. Exhibit 1 illustrates the total Standard Wisconsin Fast Forward program and Blueprint for Prosperity initiative appropriations:

**Exhibit 1**  
**Standard Wisconsin Fast Forward and Blueprint for Prosperity Initiative**  
**Appropriations Total (\$50.4M)**

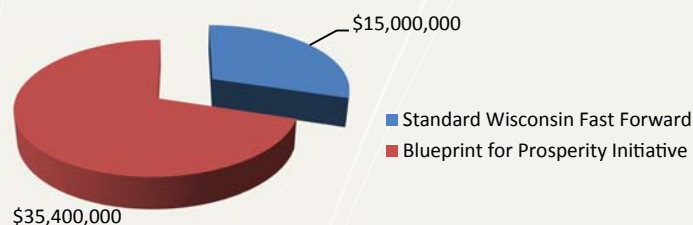


Exhibit 2 identifies the funding allocations and account balances for the Standard Wisconsin Fast Forward program and Blueprint for Prosperity initiative. These amounts represent the public funding that was awarded per applicant requests. The exhibit does not reflect the in-kind donations or match contributions of employers or training partners that are required for each training program.

**Exhibit 2**  
**Standard Wisconsin Fast Forward and Blueprint for Prosperity Initiative**  
**Funding Allocations and Account Balances**

Program	Program Allocations	Applicant Requested	OSD Intent to Award	Applicant Contracted	Applicant Reimbursed
<b>Standard Wisconsin Fast Forward</b>					
<i>Round 1</i>	\$2,700,000	\$4,071,700	\$2,604,943	\$2,599,158	\$786,134
<i>Round 2</i>	\$7,500,000	\$5,622,313	\$3,429,005	\$3,424,005	\$465,534
<i>Round 3</i>	\$8,000,000	\$11,048,041	\$6,472,005	TBD	TBD
<b>Blueprint for Prosperity Initiative</b>					
<i>Technical College Wait List</i>	\$31,000,000	\$38,696,551	\$28,021,052	\$27,578,431	\$614,921
<i>High School Pupil Round 1</i>	\$1,500,000	\$3,209,450	\$2,125,939	\$2,065,652	\$126,266
<i>High School Pupil Round 2</i>	\$3,000,000	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
<i>Persons with Disability-Project Search</i>	\$850,000	\$850,000	\$850,000	\$850,000	\$237,689
<i>Training Workers with Disabilities GPA</i>	\$1,000,000	\$1,189,112	\$622,340	TBD	TBD
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$55,550,000</b>	<b>\$64,687,167</b>	<b>\$44,125,284</b>	<b>\$36,517,246</b>	<b>\$2,230,544</b>

Notes: (1) Information is current as of December 23, 2014  
(2) Reflects processed reimbursement requests as of November 30, 2014

Exhibit 3 highlights the number of trainees for approved grant applications for each round and initiative. A further breakdown of trainees by industry sector is provided in Exhibit 5 for the Standard Wisconsin Fast Forward training programs. It should be noted that some grant applications include requests for multiple cohorts of training while others request training programs that extend over several semesters of course work (e.g. Technical College Wait List programs). As such, the number of trainees that have been enrolled in programs or have completed training at this time is much smaller than the contracted number of trainees. Many training programs will not begin until 2015, and some will not complete until 2016.

**Exhibit 3**  
**Standard Wisconsin Fast Forward and Blueprint for Prosperity Initiative Trainee Counts**

Program Summary	Intent to Award Trainees	Contracted Trainees	Trainees Enrolled in Training	Trainees Completed Training
<b>Standard Wisconsin Fast Forward</b>				
<i>Round 1</i>	2,244	1,920	1,005	398
<i>Round 2</i>	4,716	4,615	828	432
<i>Round 3</i>	6,826	TBD	TBD	TBD
<b>Blueprint for Prosperity</b>				
<i>Technical College Wait List</i>	4,908	4,896	1,526	252
<i>High School Pupil</i>	949	949	TBD	TBD
<i>Training Workers with Disabilities*</i>	210	TBD	TBD	TBD
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,853</b>	<b>12,380</b>	<b>3,359</b>	<b>1,082</b>

Notes: (\*) Does not include Project SEARCH

Grant applicants are required to submit the number of projected trainees with their training program proposal and request for funding. Applications are then reviewed by the OSD staff and a Grant Review Committee comprised of representatives from business, the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) and the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC). The Committee's recommendations to fund training programs (e.g. full funding, partial funding or denial) are subsequently reviewed with the DWD Secretary's Office. The OSD decision is then forwarded to the applicant as an "Intent to Award" determination. The "Intent to Award" trainee count in Exhibit 3 is the number of trainees submitted by the applicant. The "Contracted" count is the number of trainees committed to by the applicant(s) after reviewing the Intent to Award decision. Applicants may choose to reduce the number of trainees if the full amount of the grant request is not awarded or elements of the training program are not funded. The "Enrolled" and "Completed" counts are submitted by the applicant via the quarterly status and final reports required for each funded program. Changes to contracted trainee counts require a contract modification. Several contract modifications have been authorized by the OSD (e.g. lack of interest by potential trainees to commit to a training program or no available certified instructors to offer a particular program).



## II. Office of Skills Development (OSD)

The OSD provides technical assistance to and serves as a resource for Wisconsin employers experiencing a need for skilled workers. The OSD staff routinely visits with and facilitates conversations between employers, regional economic development corporations, Workforce Development Boards (WDBs), technical colleges, chambers of commerce and other stakeholders to make local talent development connections and encourage collaborative, multi-employer Wisconsin Fast Forward grant applications.

To assist employers with identifying their workforce training needs, the OSD has created an online inquiry process through the Wisconsin Fast Forward website ([www.WisconsinFastForward.com](http://www.WisconsinFastForward.com)). The OSD staff regularly reviews inquiries and shares the information with strategic partners, such as the WTCS, the WEDC and WDBs, to develop customized training referrals and solutions that are specific to employers' needs. The OSD also uses inquiry data, in combination with available labor market information, to drive the development of Wisconsin Fast Forward GPAs.

The OSD effectively manages business processes and grant application procedures for the Wisconsin Fast Forward program per DWD administrative rules (DWD 801). The OSD also oversees training program management and expense reimbursements for the duration of each grant period, possibly as long as two years from grant approval.

## III. Standard Wisconsin Fast Forward Grant Program

The Standard Wisconsin Fast Forward grant program cultivates a strong environment for private sector job creation by helping businesses train highly skilled workers to fill current job openings and ongoing skill requirements. As a catalyst for talent development, the program encourages increased collaboration between Wisconsin's businesses and workforce training partners for the development and implementation of customized and sustainable short- and medium-term training programs that place workers in long-term positions with opportunities for professional growth and economic advancement.

Through 2013 Wisconsin Act 9, \$15 million in General Purpose Revenue is authorized for the 2013-2015 biennial budget to provide Wisconsin businesses with customized training grants to enhance the skills and credentials of unemployed, underemployed and incumbent workers. To ensure accountability to taxpayers, the OSD is required to report the following grant program metrics on an annual basis to the Governor and the Joint Committee on Finance:

- Number of unemployed and underemployed workers and incumbent employees trained;
- Number of unemployed workers who obtain gainful employment, underemployed workers who obtain new employment and incumbent employees who receive a pay raise once training is complete; and
- Wages earned by trainees and employees before and after the training program as reported by the grantee.

2013-2014  
OSD Outreach  
with Wisconsin Businesses  
For Skilled Labor Attraction



### OSD Program Advisors

#### Inquiry Review Committee:

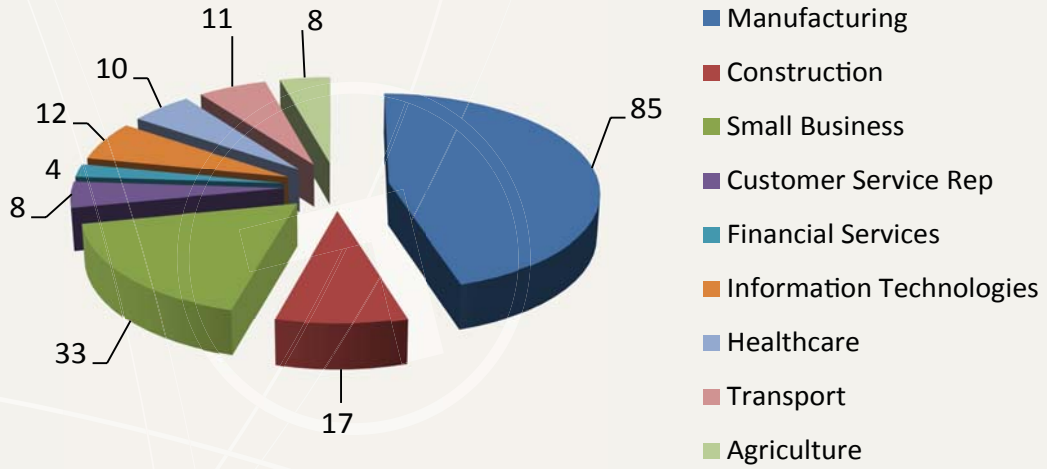
Managed by the OSD, the Inquiry Review Committee reviews inquiries from employers and training providers and acts as a triage service for referring businesses to knowledge experts and local service providers to resolve skilled talent issues quickly. Its membership consists of representatives from WEDC, WTCS and the Wisconsin Workforce Development Associations (WWDA).

#### Technical Review Committee:

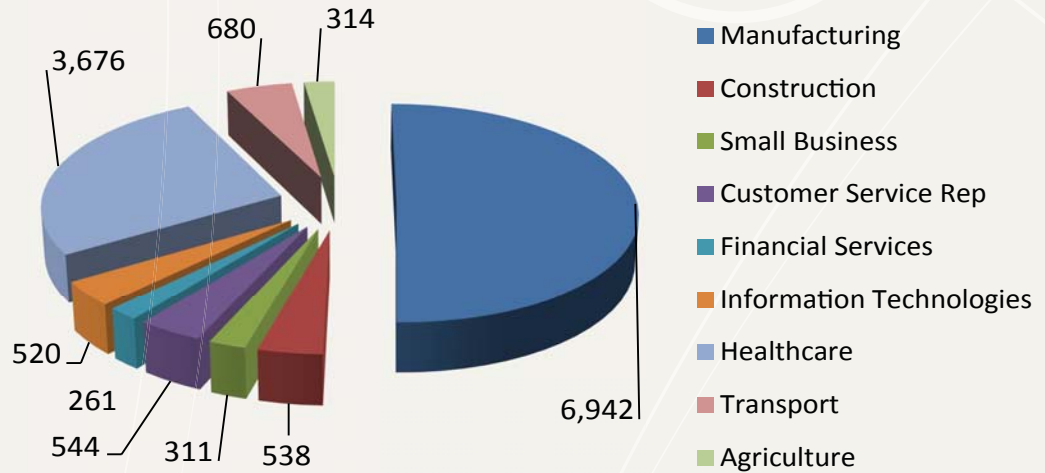
Convened by the OSD, state economic advisors from DWD, WEDC and the Department of Revenue (DOR) assess skills gaps and labor shortages in the workforce. The Committee utilizes research, employer feedback and regional market trends to prioritize and suggest where to invest program funding. These recommendations serve as the basis for formulating Grant Program Announcements (GPAs).

Exhibits 4 and 5 depict the total number of grant applications received and the number of trainees to be served based on intent to award data for Standard Wisconsin Fast Forward Rounds 1, 2 and 3.

**Exhibit 4**  
**Standard Wisconsin Fast Forward Applications**  
**Received (188) in Rounds 1, 2 and 3**



**Exhibit 5**  
**Standard Wisconsin Fast Forward Intent to Award**  
**Trainee Count (13,786) by GPA**



## IV. Proposed Wages and Grant Evaluation Criteria

The OSD considers several critical factors when determining whether to invest public monies in a skills development worker training program, including the impact of skill attainment compared to wages and earnings. The following is an excerpt from a Manufacturing GPA that offers guidance to applicants regarding training program design:

**Outcomes:** *The training project should produce quantifiable outcomes and impacts for the employer, training participants and the state of Wisconsin. Successful training projects will result in training graduates finding or retaining employment, earning higher wages, increasing their skill attainment, and/or receiving industry-recognized credentials. Wisconsin taxpayers should realize higher state revenues from increased individual income and sales tax receipts and increased corporate income and property tax receipts. The Grantee will be responsible for tracking and monitoring individual workers receiving training under the grant through the completion of pre- and post-training reports and a final report on the net jobs filled by unemployed, underemployed and/or incumbent workers and related wage increases. The anticipated result is a skilled workforce that is well-suited for employment and advancement opportunities in Wisconsin.*

When evaluating the merits of grant application training projects, Grant Evaluation Committee members and the OSD staff work diligently to balance the market demand for skilled labor with the opportunity to place workers in positions at the proposed post-training wage rates. Labor market analysis is provided to advise grant reviewers on the median county wages for occupations identified in proposals. Sharing median county wage data with applicants regarding similar occupations has resulted in some employers raising the expected post-training wage rate of their workers.

It is important to note that proposed post-training wages vary greatly between industry sectors, occupations and regions. For example, a healthcare related Home Health Aide grant application to train 20 students in an urban center for a proposed post-training wage of \$10.50/hour does not score as high as a similar application from a rural area with a greater demand for Home Health Aides where the median county wage of entry-level healthcare workers is \$10/hour. Furthermore, grant applications for entry level workers that provide trainees with career pathways to higher-skilled occupations with higher wages (e.g. Home Health Aide to Certified Nursing Assistant or Medical Technician) is a good long-term investment in skilled workers.

The proposed post-training wage data for non-healthcare related occupations that were approved in Rounds 1 or 2 of the Standard Wisconsin Fast Forward program are listed in Exhibit 6. These proposed post-training wages vary significantly between industry sectors and occupational titles. However, when compared to median county wages, local market demand for skilled workers, commitment from local employers to hire program graduates, attainment of an industry-recognized credential, pathways to higher-skilled employment, etc., each application was determined to be a prudent investment in skilled-worker training.

**Exhibit 6**  
**Non-Healthcare Proposed Post-Training Wages for Rounds 1 and 2**

GPA #	Sector	Proposed Wage
FF134BL1	Customer Service Occupations	\$14.75/hour
FF134CS1	Construction Trade Occupations	\$26.23/hour
FF134ML1	Large Manufacturers	\$16.91/hour
FF134MS1	Small Manufacturers	\$16.51/hour
FF141BS1	Small Businesses (less than 50 FTE)	\$15.37/hour
FF141CL1	Construction Trade Occupations	\$21.61/hour
FF141FL1	Financial Services	\$17.00/hour
FF141IL1	Information Technologies	\$31.06/hour
FF141ML1	Manufacturing	\$14.67/hour
FF141TL1	Transportation, Logistics, Warehousing	\$16.10/hour

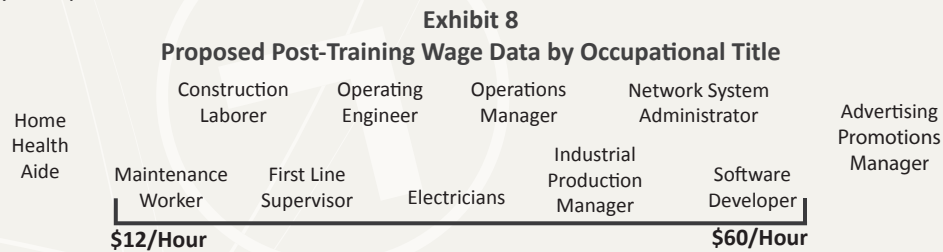


In Round 1 and Round 2, the proposed average post-training wage data for both incumbent workers and new hires, which includes unemployed, underemployed and new recruits, is summarized below:

**Exhibit 7**  
**Proposed Average Post-Training Wage Data Reports (all occupations)**

GPA	Proposed Average Post-Training Hourly Wage
Round 1	\$17.19/hour
Round 2	\$12.17/hour

Wages vary greatly depending on the occupational title and market demand for skilled labor in a particular industry and region. The chart below illustrates a range of proposed post-training wage rates by occupational titles:



## V. Actual Wages for Completed Training Programs

The Wisconsin Fast Forward grant program was launched in November 2013 with the announcement of \$2.7 million in funding. At this point, most Wisconsin Fast Forward-sponsored Round 1 and 2 training projects are in development or have just recently started. Some short-term training programs have been completed and hiring data has been reported to OSD. Grantees have reported that of the Round 1 and 2 trainees completing training, 73 unemployed and 91 underemployed individuals have obtained employment. In addition, Exhibits 9 and 10 provide a summary of the actual post-training wage data as reported by grantees:

**Exhibit 9**  
**New Hire Post-Training Wage Data Reports for Completed Trainees**

Trainee Outcome	Trainee Count	Average Post-Training Hourly Wage
Round 1 – New Hires-Training Completed	118	\$17.18/hour
Round 2 – New Hires-Training Completed	301	\$14.10/hour

Note: New hires are unemployed or underemployed workers.

**Exhibit 10**  
**Incumbent Worker Post-Training Wage Data Reports for Completed Trainees**

Trainee Outcome	Trainee Count	Average Post-Training Hourly Wage	Average Post-Training Hourly Wage Increase
Round 1 – Incumbent Workers	117	\$18.91/hour	\$1.02/hour
Round 2 – Incumbent Workers	57	\$20.24/hour	\$.83/hour

The actual post-training wages paid to new hires and incumbent workers that have completed training are at or above the post-training average wages proposed in the Round 1 and Round 2 applications. The OSD will continue to evaluate wages when considering grant applications in relation to county median wages for similar occupations, and collect data on enrolled and completed trainees as projects close out. The OSD will produce wage reports for completed Wisconsin Fast Forward grant projects as necessary and these reports will be posted on the Wisconsin Fast Forward website: <http://wisconsinfastforward.com/reports.htm>.



*"We are very thankful to the State of Wisconsin and the Fast Forward Grant program! The grants were used to fund Systematic and Decoupled Molding II Workshops at our facility, and at the facilities of two other injection molding companies in the area. The training was conducted by RJG and our entire technical staff, along with the technical staffs of the other companies were able to participate in the training.*

*Our people have already implemented many things they learned during the training that is improving our productivity, quality, and preventive maintenance. The skills and knowledge we obtained through the grant training make iMARK a stronger company and our employees the highest skilled in the industry!*

*The fact that three injection molding companies came together for the training makes Western Wisconsin an even stronger player in the global injection molding industry! Thank you!"*

John Porter  
Vice President of Operations  
iMARK Molding, Inc.



Sawyer Project Trainee Bryant Doud shares how he would describe this opportunity to his best friend:

*"Very well instructed, and informative. Hands-on out in the woods, easiest way to learn is on-site."*

## Round 1 Success

### Workforce Resource, Inc.

Workforce Resource, Inc. received a \$170,264 grant from Wisconsin Fast Forward in Round 1 to coordinate a Plastic Injection Molding Training program for 52 unemployed and incumbent workers for three businesses in St. Croix County.

*"Workforce Resource and the West Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board have been very pleased to have been a part of the Wisconsin Fast Forward program in its inaugural year. We have found that the program has opened doors for us to work more closely with our business community partners in promoting the program, assisting businesses in developing successful training initiatives and in actually operating components of Fast Forward projects with businesses in our region. Fast Forward is clearly responsive to the needs of businesses in West Central Wisconsin and we are hopeful that this highly effective workforce development resource will continue to be available well into the future."*

Richard Best  
Executive Director

West Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board



Sawyer project trainees gain hands-on experience while learning in the field.

## Round 2 Success

### College of Menominee Nation

College of Menominee Nation was awarded a \$29,917 grant from Wisconsin Fast Forward to provide 40 new hires with sawyer training in partnership with Menominee Tribal Enterprises and placed with the following businesses: Putnam Log & Pulp, LLC; Tim Dixon Logging; Wayne White Logging, LLC; Duane Gibbs Logging, LLC; and HOH Custom Logging, LLC.

*"The College plays a critical role in the economic development of the reservation and its region. When employers began reporting a shortage of sawyers, we worked with Menominee Tribal Enterprises to develop and implement a best practice training model for the industry that includes certification. With support from Wisconsin Fast Forward, this important training program is helping to place skilled workers in good-paying jobs and boost our local economy."*

Dr. Verna Fowler  
President, College of Menominee Nation

## Round 2 Success, continued...

### Stoughton Trailers

Stoughton Trailers received a \$238,471 grant from Wisconsin Fast Forward in Round 2 to develop and deliver training to 395 new production employees and to train 195 incumbent employees in lean manufacturing, welding, industrial painting and project management skills.

Kate Schieldt, Vice President of Human Resources at Stoughton Trailers, credits the WFF Grant in assisting with better training and employee retention. She shares, "Through the assistance of the Wisconsin Fast Forward Grant, we have been able to hire over 300 new employees in the past 6 months. The grant assisted us to develop a new trainee on-boarding program that increased the retention of our newly hired employees during their first 90 days of training. Before grant support, we could lose 3 or more trainees out of 25 within the first two weeks of training. Now, with the better coaching and personalized training techniques that the grant helped us to develop, we lose less than that amount over the entire 90 day training period and beyond."



An Assembly Line Worker at Stoughton Trailers practices newly acquired welding skills.

Gary Fenton, Vice President of Engineering, Stoughton Trailers, credits the Wisconsin Fast Forward grant in allowing the lease of a virtual welding training system. "With the virtual welding trainer, we have been able to introduce assembly line workers to welding skills very quickly, without the risk of injury and wasting welding materials in the process. This created an opportunity for upward career expansion with higher wages for many workers."

Eric Dahmen, Manager of the Welding Training Team, observed, "Thirty-six people have either been trained, tested or retested on the VRTEX virtual trainer with 55 hours of run time total. In a lot of these trainings, multiple people at a time watched demos. Since the virtual training began, we have saved a substantial amount of steel, gas and welding wire while increasing our welding training opportunities for many workers."

Upper Right: Ron Vike, Stoughton Welding Team Instructor, utilizes the VRTEX 360 Welding Training System to teach welding skills to an assembly line worker.



## Round 3 Success

### North Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board

The North Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board was awarded a Round 3 grant totaling \$189,642 in partnership with Skyward Inc., Sentry Insurance and Delta Dental to deliver highly customized information technology training through Mid-State Technical College and UW-Stevens Point for 60 incumbent workers and 17 underemployed individuals.

*"Sentry Insurance is consistently looking to hire individuals with skills in the areas of data management and analytics. In recent years, the demand for these skills has outpaced the supply provided by area universities. Through the Fast Forward program, we are looking to provide technical training in the area of data management to meet this demand. We hope to retool and retrain individuals with aptitude, but not necessarily the current technical skills. The success of the program allows Sentry to continue its pace of innovation in data management and analytics."*

Jim Frank  
Vice President Information Technology  
Sentry Insurance



## VI. Blueprint for Prosperity Initiative

In March of 2014, the Blueprint for Prosperity initiative was signed into law under 2013 Wisconsin Act 139. The legislation provides \$35.4 million in additional funding to expand the Wisconsin Fast Forward program and targets three distinct populations for skill training: college students, high school pupils and persons with disabilities.

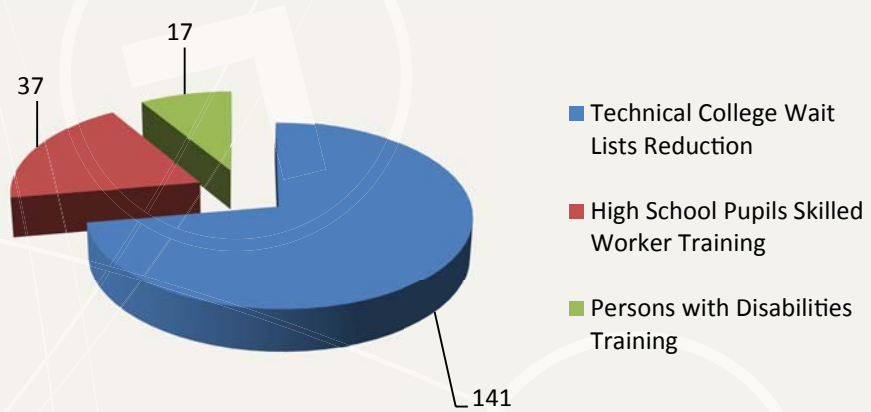
The Blueprint for Prosperity initiative builds on program successes by engaging businesses to develop and deliver training programs who commit to hire individuals who acquire the targeted in-demand skill sets. The OSD works in partnership with WEDC, WTCS, the Department of Public Instruction, the DWD Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and other stakeholders to:

1. Award \$28,021,052 to 16 technical colleges to reduce Wisconsin Technical College System waiting lists across 100 programs in high-demand fields for 4,908 college students.
2. Award \$2,125,939 to 30 projects that bring together school districts, technical colleges and businesses to provide 949 high school pupils with industry-recognized certifications in high-demand fields.
3. Award \$622,340 to enhance employment opportunities by providing employer-driven training for 210 persons with disabilities, including service-disabled veterans.
4. Invest \$850,000 to expand Project SEARCH for assisting students with disabilities as they transition into the workforce.

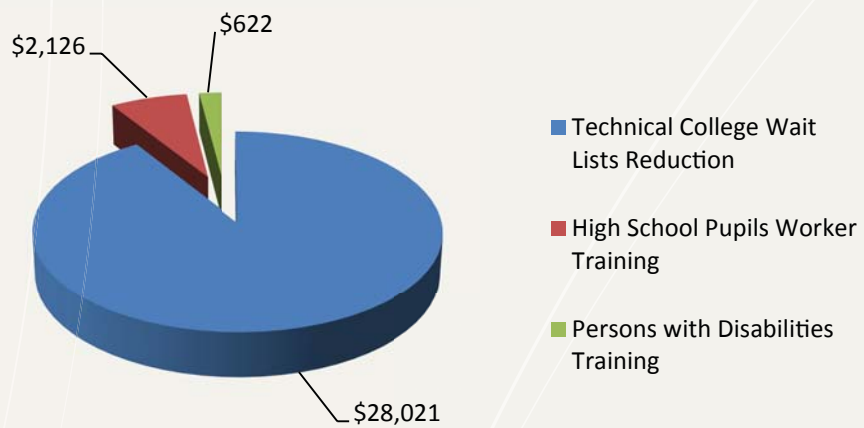


Exhibits 11 and 12 identify the total number of grant applications that have been received and the intent to award funds that have been committed to reduce Technical College Waitlists, train High School Pupils in high-demand fields and enhance job opportunities for workers with disabilities.

**Exhibit 11**  
**Blueprint for Prosperity Initiative**  
**Total Number of Grant Applications Received (195)**



**Exhibit 12**  
**Blueprint for Prosperity Initiative**  
**Intent to Award Funds (000's)**







*"I work full time and taking IT classes during the day just didn't work for me. When I heard Nicolet was expanding IT offerings to include evening classes, I enrolled immediately.*

*After I started classes I was able to get a new job in Internet marketing, which is the career field in which I always wanted to work.*

*I like the fact that I can earn an industry-recognized college diploma in a short period of time and then build on that to earn more advanced credentials in the future."*

*Briana Jones  
Nicolet College Student  
IT User Support Technician Program*



*"I'm very happy with the program at Nicolet. What we learn in class applies directly to what I do on the job. We get a lot of hands-on instruction, which is a great way to learn.*

*The instructors really take the time to explain things to you. When you don't get something, they'll sit down with you and work through it until you do get it. That is invaluable when learning new skills."*

*Matt Laddusire\*  
Nicolet College Student  
Manufacturing Program*

*\* Matt is currently employed in the Manufacturing industry.*

## **Technical College Wait List Reduction**

The Blueprint for Prosperity Technical College Waitlist Reduction grant program is helping the 16 technical college across the state address instructional capacity constraints to serve more students in high-demand fields.

In order to qualify for Blueprint for Prosperity initiative grant funds, Technical Colleges were required to submit project proposals to the OSD that included: the project scope, duration of training, occupational information, documented employer demand and the projected number of students to be trained. The OSD then conducted a rigorous view of the proposal by cross-matching the submitted data with additional labor market information and industry sources.

The OSD monitors Technical College Wait List Reduction grants through each grant recipients' quarterly report, which includes individual trainee outcomes.

## **Technical College Wait List Reduction Success**

### **Nicolet College**

The Blueprint for Prosperity Grant allowed technical colleges across Wisconsin to add sections of classes in high-demand occupational fields. Nicolet College received funding to expand sections and accessibility of several programs, including Electromechanical Technology, Information Technology, Welding, Business and Marketing, Nursing Assistant, and Preschool – Early Childhood Education.

Students enrolled in the programs have various life circumstances, and need classes and programs that can flex with the pace of life. Students benefit from increased accessibility to academic programs in high-demand fields. Additional sections of classes are offered during non-traditional meeting times, such as evenings and weekends. Where possible, course content was built online.

Demand for a skilled workforce is very high in northern Wisconsin. Students are frequently hired by employers while pursuing a credential, and continue supporting them toward degree completion.

Nicolet College partners closely with employers to understand workforce needs. In doing so, the college is able to teach skills that are an exact match to those needed in the workplace.



## VII. Labor Market Information System

The Wisconsin Fast Forward legislation authorized DWD to develop and maintain a labor market information system to collect, analyze, and disseminate information on current and projected employment opportunities in the state. Furthermore, the LMIS information was to be available free-of-charge to school districts, technical colleges, tribal colleges, institutions and college campuses within the University of Wisconsin System, local workforce development boards, employers, job seekers and the general public.

A three-part strategy was adopted by DWD to achieve these outcomes:

1. **Job-Skill Matching** - Create more skill and competency-based assessment, recruitment and research tools and processes that serve to connect and effectively match job seekers to both current and future employment opportunities.
2. **Data-Driven** - Incorporate more demand-driven data and employer job requisitions into Wisconsin's public labor exchange and better utilize the information to project both regional and sector-based skill and education requirements for job seekers, employers, workforce development boards, economic development agencies and educators.
3. **Talent Development** – Create LMIS related tools for students, parents, teachers, school counselors and technical advisors to better prepare the future workforce of Wisconsin for the skill, credential and education requirements of a globally competitive workforce.

The skill matching capabilities of LMIS were launched in October 2013 with the Skill Explorer application (<http://skillexplorer.wisconsin.gov/Search.aspx>). This tool enables job seekers, employers and students to cross-walk occupational titles to skills sets. Users can search job openings in the Job Center of Wisconsin (JCW) by skill requirements to determine wage/earning potential, education requirements, job demand by geography and more (<https://jobcenterofwisconsin.com/default.aspx>). Mapping technology has also been added to the LMIS tool set to provide users with demand graphics by skill sets and occupations.

DWD entered into a lease agreement with Burning Glass Technologies to incorporate five additional software capabilities into the JCW architecture. Job seekers will have access to enhanced resume writing and skill assessment features. Employers will be able to evaluate resumes by skill experience and capabilities. DWD researchers will have access to thousands of additional job boards and job postings using "spidering" technology. These enhancements will be rolled out in spring 2015. To learn more about the enhanced LMIS capabilities, please contact DWD at [BJ.Dernbach@dwd.wisconsin.gov](mailto:BJ.Dernbach@dwd.wisconsin.gov).



## VIII. GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

---

LMIS – Labor Market Information System

DWD – Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

OSD – Office of Skills Development

WFF – Wisconsin Fast Forward

WTCS – Wisconsin Technical College System

WEDC – Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation

WDB – Workforce Development Board

GPA – Grant Program Announcement

CORe – Expense reimbursement system utilized by DWD

JCW – Job Center of Wisconsin

## IX. RESOURCES & REPORTS

---

The Wisconsin Fast Forward website is continually updated with grant information, announcements, reports and more. Please click on the links below to find current information regarding Wisconsin Fast Forward's contribution to the state's talent development initiatives.

- Intent to Award Map: [http://wisconsinfastforward.com/mapped\\_report.htm](http://wisconsinfastforward.com/mapped_report.htm)
- What People Are Saying: <http://wisconsinfastforward.com/saying.htm>
- Reports and Resources: <http://wisconsinfastforward.com/reports.htm>
- Press and Newsletters: <http://wisconsinfastforward.com/press.htm>

Note: Photos in this report that were not sourced were purchased from <http://www.thinkstockphotos.com>.