



April 9, 2024

Regional Career and Education Equipment Grant Program Announcement

Award Amount \$5,000 to \$30,000

**Applications are due by 3 p.m. CST on Thursday, May 9, 2024.
Email Applications to RegionalCareerEduEquipPgm@dwd.wisconsin.gov**

The Office of Skills Development at the Department of Workforce Development (DWD or Department) administers the grant program. The Office of Skills Development works to encourage the development of innovative solutions at the local and regional level that bring together employers, educators, workforce development entities, and economic development organizations to meet area workforce needs and increase the economic capacity of its residents.

Southeastern Wisconsin makes up more than 35% of the state's total population. This seven-county region is a key economic driver for Wisconsin and its residents have relatively high per capita income when compared to the state as a whole. Prosperity, however, has proven to be uneven, with major disparities in unemployment and poverty occurring along racial lines.

Wisconsin Unemployment and Poverty by Race and Hispanic or Latino Origin

	Percentage Below Poverty Level	Unemployment Rate
Population 16 years and over	10.4%	3.4%
White alone	8.5%	2.9%
Black or African American alone	28.9%	8.2%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	22.6%	7.2%
Asian alone	14.1%	3.6%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	18%	3.4%
Some other race alone	19.6%	4.5%
Two or more races	16.2%	5.6%
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	18.1%	4.5%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	8.2%	2.8%

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2018-2022, Table [S1701](#) and [S2301](#)

The COVID-19 pandemic worsened economic disparities in Southeastern Wisconsin, disproportionately affecting underserved communities with high unemployment rates and low levels of education.

In state fiscal year 2022, the IKEA US Community Foundation donated funds to DWD equivalent to the amount of Wisconsin Unemployment Insurance benefits paid to IKEA employees at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. These funds were allocated to the Regional Career and Education Equipment Grant program to provide education and skills training that will lead to placement in high-demand occupations to underserved populations in Southeastern Wisconsin.

This grant opportunity will provide career and technical education equipment to schools located in two southeastern Wisconsin workforce development areas (WDA). School districts in (WDA 1) Kenosha, Racine, Walworth and (WDA 2) Milwaukee counties are encouraged to apply. 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 or WDA 2.

This grant opportunity is open to Wisconsin school districts in WDA 1 or WDA 2 that can demonstrate that the career and technical education program for which they will be purchasing and installing equipment:

- Meets the needs of employers in their region.
- Leverages partnerships.
- Optimizes regional training capacity.
- Increases the supply of skilled workers in career and technical education fields.
- Builds on proven programs.
- Includes mechanisms for sustainability.

Program Overview

Definitions: The following definitions are used throughout the Grant Program Announcement (GPA):

- **Applicant** means a school district located in (WDA 1) Kenosha, Racine, Walworth and (WDA 2) Milwaukee counties that submits a proposal in response to this Grant Program Announcement.
- **Career and technical education (CTE)** prepare students and the workforce across a wide range of industries and occupations.
- **Contract** means a legal document that sets forth the grant terms and conditions.
- **Grantee** means a WDA 1 or WDA 2 school district awarded a grant by the department.
- **Grant** means an award from the department to the grantee whereby the department provides funds.
- **School District** means a territorial unit for school administration. School districts are classified as common, union high, unified, and first-class city school districts. A joint school district is one territory of which is not wholly in one municipality.
- **State** means state of Wisconsin.
- **Underserved populations** are defined as Black, Indigenous, people of color, women, and those who reside in WDA 1 or WDA 2.
- **Workforce Development Area (WDA)** means a regional area of Wisconsin's workforce development system; Wisconsin is divided into 11 regional Workforce Development Areas.

GPA Summary: Up to approximately \$172,000 is available in the 2024 state fiscal year to fund southeastern Wisconsin school districts and train high school students in CTE programs not only to provide skills training to underserved populations but to also help address Wisconsin's skilled worker shortage. This grant is also intended to accelerate the transition of students into the workforce by preparing them for stable careers and to provide students and their families the means to reduce higher education costs by providing dual enrollment credits, industry-endorsed certificates, and technical endorsements on high school diplomas.

School districts are required to:

1. Track outcomes related to the vocational and technical education programs for grant supported equipment purchases.
2. File an outcomes report with DWD by June 30 of each of the **two** fiscal years after the year of receiving the grant. In each report, the grantee shall do the following:
 - a. Describe how the grant funds were expended.
 - b. Describe the outcomes achieved as a result of the grant.
 - c. Share the best practices employed by the grantee in training students to use the equipment acquired with the grant funds.
 - d. Include a plan for sustainability of the training described in paragraph (c).
 - e. Provide such other information as the department may require in the GPA.

Grant Program Highlights

Total Grant Program	Approximately \$172,000 is available for funding in this fiscal year.
Individual Awards	Minimum \$5,000 up to \$30,000
Eligible Applicants	Wisconsin School Districts in WDA 1 or WDA 2

Use of Grant funds	Reimburse costs for the acquisition of CTE equipment that is used in the workplace, together with any software necessary for the operation of that equipment, infrastructure improvements, instructional materials, equipment installation, and renovations.
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train high school students in CTE programs to help address Wisconsin's skilled worker shortage. • Accelerate the transition of students into Wisconsin's workforce. • Provide students and their families with a way to reduce higher education costs by providing dual enrollment credits, industry-endorsed certificates, and technical endorsements on high school diplomas.
Terms of Award	Grants will be awarded as cost reimbursement contracts with an anticipated contract start date of June 28, 2024. All grant expenditures must be completed by June 30, 2026.
Match Funding	There is no requirement for matching or leveraged funding.

Important Dates: Applications are due by 3 p.m. CST on Thursday, May 9, 2024. Application packages must be emailed to RegionalCareerEduEquipPgm@dwd.wisconsin.gov

GPA Released	April 9, 2024
Application Submission	May 9, 2024 Email application package (application, required forms, and supporting documents) to RegionalCareerEduEquipPgm@dwd.wisconsin.gov emailed by 3 p.m.
Anticipated Projected Grant Awards Announcement	June 14, 2024
Anticipated Contract Start Date	June 28, 2024
Funding Disbursement	Reimbursement basis (upon verification and approval of submitted documentation of purchases, purchase orders, invoices, related project expenses and proof payment for all expenses).
Contract End Date	June 30, 2026

GPA and Application Process Questions and Answers:

Any questions or clarifications related to this GPA may be submitted in writing via email to RegionalCareerEduEquipPgm@dwd.wisconsin.gov . We will respond to your inquiry promptly.

Responses will also be posted at dwd.wisconsin.gov/det/

If it becomes necessary to provide additional clarifying data or information, it will be posted at dwd.wisconsin.gov/det/

Additional Information

Application Form and Instructions:

Access the application, evaluation rubric, and reporting template at dwd.wisconsin.gov/det/

To submit, email the application package to RegionalCareerEduEquipPgm@dwd.wisconsin.gov

Applicants must describe the following in their grant applications:

- a. The purpose and need for the grant.
- b. The projected outcomes that the applicant is seeking to achieve as a result of receiving the grant.
- c. Any other information required in the GPA.

Letters of Commitment:

Partner letters of commitment or support must:

- Be on letterhead.
- Include attestation regarding partnership expectations, the need for employees trained in CTE program, and any other elements that inform the program.

Project Period: The project period for this GPA is from the contract execution date through June 30, 2026.

Grant Amount: Not less than \$5,000, nor more than \$30,000 is available per grantee. Grant expenditures must be incurred during the project period. All eligible grant expenses will be reimbursed, per individual contract specifications, when expenses are:

- Included in the award application.
- Paid and documented by the grantee.
- Approved by DWD's Office of Skills Development.

Disbursement of grant funding will be made on a rolling basis when the grantee complies with all conditions of the grant as stipulated in the contract. Reimbursements may be pro-rated or withheld based on the extent to which contract conditions are met.

Match Contribution: No match is required.

Retainage: No retainage required.

Eligibility: For an application to be considered for funding, the following conditions must be met:

- Applicant is a school district in WDA 1 or WDA 2.
- Applicants may apply for no more than one grant for this round of grant funding.

Due Diligence: All applicants are required to complete the risk assessment form and due diligence checklist. If any of the statements below apply to an applicant, that applicant may be disqualified and will not be scored:

- Applicant has been in operation less than 24 months.
- Within the last 24 months, the applicant has been required to provide a Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) notice under 29 U.S.C. § 2101 et seq., or a notice under Wisconsin's Business Closing and Mass Layoff Law, Wis. Stat. § 109.07 (layoff notices: <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dislocatedworker/warn/>).
- Within the last 24 months, the applicant has been found to have violated the Unemployment Compensation laws, Wis. Stat. Ch. 108.
- Within the last 24 months, an applicant has been found to have violated the Worker's Compensation Act, Ch. 102.
- Applicant is on the Wisconsin Department of Administration's list of vendors who are not in compliance with Wis. Stat. § 77.66. The list is available at: <http://vendomet.state.wi.us/vendomet/wocc/CertList.pdf>.
 - Please note that an applicant may demonstrate that they have come into compliance since the last posting date of the list.
- Applicant's status is not registered as a Wisconsin business or otherwise not in good standing with Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions.
- Within the last 24 months, an applicant has been found to have violated the Wisconsin Fair Employment Act, Wis. Stat. § 111.31 et seq., or employment regulations under Wis. Stat. Ch. 103.
- Applicant is listed as ineligible on the Department of Administration's Office of Contract Compliance Vendor Directory, found here: <https://vendornet.wi.gov/Procurement.aspx>.
- Applicant is listed as a delinquent taxpayer with the Wisconsin Department of Revenue, at this website link: <https://www.revenue.wi.gov/Pages/DelqList/DelqSearch.aspx>.

Organizations are strongly encouraged to verify that there are no unresolved issues in these areas prior to submitting the application or should provide a detailed explanation with the application.

Eligible Expenses: Funds awarded under this GPA shall be used to reimburse expenses related acquiring equipment that is used in CTE fields in the workplace, together with any software necessary for the operation of that equipment, and any instructional material necessary to train students in the operation of that equipment, infrastructure improvements, equipment installation, and renovations.

Ineligible Expenses: Regional Career and Education Equipment Grant funds may not be used to purchase real estate, traditional public or private kindergarten-12th grade education, trainee wages, or fringe benefits.

Supplement not Supplant: Violations of permissible expenses may result in suspension of current or future funds under this program, repayment of monies awarded under this grant, and possible civil and/or criminal penalties.

Grant Evaluation Rubric and Scoring: The Regional Career and Education Equipment Grant Program is a competitive grant program. The evaluation committee will evaluate grant applications for compliance with the grant eligibility requirements and specifications cited in this document. Grant proposals will be rated on a 100-point scale, based upon the following point values:

Selection Criteria	Points
Demand-driven, based on labor market data and employer partnerships.	20
Leverages partnerships with employers.	20
Optimizes regional training capacity and the number of skilled workers, as validated by relevant employers.	20
Builds on proven programs.	20
Objectives and outcomes.	20

Grants will be ranked by high score and awarded based upon ranking and availability of budgeted funds. Grants that score below 50 points will not be eligible for funding. It is strongly recommended that applicants consult the Grant Evaluation Rubric and Scoresheet to address all scoring criteria when writing proposals. The Grant Evaluation Rubric and Scoresheet is available at dwd.wisconsin.gov/det/

Contract: The Regional Career and Educational Equipment Grant applications that are funded under this GPA are required to execute a binding contract with DWD **before any expenses are incurred** for which reimbursement is expected.

Reimbursement

- Awards are structured as cost-reimbursement grants, meaning that recipients are expected to incur expenses before receiving any Regional Career and Education Equipment Grant funds. The Office of Skills Development will provide access to an online invoicing system and reimbursement instructions.
- Upon submission of complete invoices with proper documentation and proof of payment, payments will be disbursed via Automated Clearing House (ACH) transactions.
- In compliance with the Office of the State Comptroller rules and regulations, no grant recipient shall expend grant funds until a contract has been fully executed with DWD. Upon contract execution, recipients will be allowed to incur costs. Costs must be incurred between contract execution and up to (and including) June 30, 2026. No expenses incurred after June 30, 2026, will be reimbursed by this program.
- Grantees will forfeit any remaining award unused after the contract expires.
- As a condition of funding, DWD will require that the grantee provide outcome reporting as determined by the individual grant contract, consisting of two annual reports and a final report in the third year.

Grant Reporting Requirement: Grant recipients must meet the program reporting requirements, including submission of project updates to document reimbursement requests, and annual reports.

The anticipated result of this grant program as laid out in the proposal is to provide education and skills training in high-demand fields to underserved populations to narrow the training gap and place individuals in well-paying, family-supporting jobs. The grantee is responsible for tracking and monitoring enrollment counts, number of students trained, number of courses offered, partnering counts, awarded credentials counts, budget, and any other required information related to the technical education programs for which the grant supported the purchase of equipment.

School districts are required to file a report with DWD by June 30 of each of the **two fiscal years** after receipt of the grant that:

1. Describes how the grant money was used and the outcomes achieved as a result of receiving the grant.
2. Shares the best practices employed by the school district in training of students to use the equipment acquired (including a plan for the sustainability of the training).
3. Other information as required.

Additionally, school districts may be subject to program and fiscal audits by DWD as defined in the contract. Reports should justify quantifiable outcomes and impacts for the school district, training participants, employers, and the state of Wisconsin including progress towards addressing two of the three grant program goals below:

1. Increase the count of students able to participate in an existing program.
2. Create a new program to meet a demonstrated employer demand, as supported by labor market data and partnerships with employers.
3. If no increase in the number of participating students is projected, the applicant must demonstrate a significant improvement in the skills of the students who are able to participate in the program because existing equipment will be replaced or updated, as validated by support from relevant employers.

Reservation Clauses:

The program reserves the right to:

- Make no award.
- Postpone or cancel this GPA upon notification to all applicants.
- Amend the GPA after its release with appropriate notice to all applicants.
- Request applicants to present supplemental information clarifying their application in writing for transparency. Applicants failing to respond to these requests during the time allotted may be eliminated from funding consideration.
- Give applicants the opportunity to resolve minor or clerical errors.
- Negotiate with select applicants prior to contract awards.