
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, December 20, 2013

CONTACT: DWD Communications, 608-266-2722

On the Web: <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dwd/news.htm>

On Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/WIWorkforce>

On Twitter: @WIWorkforce

Secretary Newson: Wisconsin Fast Forward Off to Strong Start in 2013

Annual report highlights Walker Administration's success in launching \$15 million training program

MADISON – The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) today submitted the first annual report of Wisconsin Fast Forward program activities since Governor Walker signed the \$15 million worker training initiative into law in March 2013. The law requires DWD to submit to the Governor and key Legislative leaders an annual report of activities through the most recent fiscal year.

"In a matter of months, DWD established a nimble, demand-driven worker training program that we are confident is in line with the bold vision that Governor Walker and the Legislature shared in advancing Wisconsin Fast Forward," Secretary Newson said. "We set in place a responsive, transparent and accountable system that focuses on skilled workers, promotes smart business and advances Wisconsin's economy."

DWD's Office of Skills Development administers the worker training grant program. Since OSD's launch in May 2013, the office has:

- Set forth guiding principles to ensure grant awards are not only responsive to the skill needs of businesses, but that the grants support training that cannot be met by an existing program.
- Created a dynamic online system to receive and respond to inquiries, and to announce grant opportunities on a quarterly basis.
- Developed a comprehensive, data-driven system to analyze and announce grant opportunities. The system incorporates labor market information and includes input from the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation and the Wisconsin Technical College System.
- Established a robust grant monitoring and audit program to track employment and wage outcomes of each grant award.

Governor Walker proposed Wisconsin Fast Forward as a key component of his \$100 million workforce agenda. Rep. Kathy Bernier and Sens. Rick Gudex and Robert Cowles introduced the legislation, which passed both chambers with overwhelming bipartisan majorities.

Wisconsin Fast Forward appropriates \$15 million for worker training grants, and provides additional resources for development of a state-of-the-art labor market information system.

Governor Walker announced the first round of grant opportunities in November. Highlights include:

- Up to \$1.4 million to train manufacturing workers, including \$400,000 available to manufacturers with 50 full-time employees or fewer;
- Up to \$1 million to train customer service workers; and
- Up to \$300,000 to train construction workers.

The first round of grant awards will be announced in early 2014. The annual report is available [online](#).

- END-