



# Wisconsin Training for Resilient Advanced Industry Needs (WisTRAIN)

GRANT PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

MAY 28, 2026

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## Program Purpose and Goals

Wisconsin employers are adopting advanced manufacturing technologies, artificial intelligence (AI), and digital production systems to remain competitive in a changing global economy. Many companies face challenges finding and training workers with the technical skills needed to successfully develop and implement these technologies.

The Wisconsin Training for Resilient Advanced Industry Needs (WisTRAIN) grant program helps employers address this challenge by supporting employer-led occupational skills training in advanced manufacturing and AI. Through the program, employers identify workforce needs and design training solutions that align with current and emerging industry demands.

Through WisTRAIN, the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) reimburses employers for a portion of the cost of high-demand technical skills training for workers to strengthen business competitiveness and support the continued growth of Wisconsin's advanced industry sectors.

Training supported through WisTRAIN may focus on skills such as:

- Advanced manufacturing technologies
- The use and/or development of Artificial intelligence and automation tools
- Robotics and digital production systems
- Industrial cybersecurity
- Data analytics and digital manufacturing tools

Employers may design such training programs independently or partner with training providers, technical colleges, local Workforce Development Boards, and/or industry associations.

WisTRAIN is supported by the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) [Industry-Driven Skills Training Fund](#), a competitive federal grant program for state workforce agencies, and is part of Wisconsin's broader effort to strengthen the state's advanced industry workforce in the digital age.

## WisTRAIN at a Glance

Item	Details
Total funding available	\$6.6 million
Estimated number of awards	At least 20
Maximum reimbursement per trainee	\$6,600
Maximum reimbursement per employer or consortium	\$330,000
Reimbursement rate	Up to 80% of training costs
Reimbursement structure	70% after training completion; 10% after six-month employment retention
Training duration	Up to 24 months. All training must be completed by Sept. 30, 2028
Employment retention requirement	Six months after training completion
Application period	May 28 – July 13, 2026 (ongoing thereafter until funds are exhausted)
Eligible applicants	Wisconsin employers and employer consortia
Eligible trainees	Newly hired or incumbent employees working in Wisconsin

## Funding and Reimbursement

DWD is making **\$6.6 million** available through WisTRAIN to support employer-led workforce training and expects to issue **at least 20 grant awards**.

WisTRAIN provides reimbursement for a portion of eligible employee training costs. Key funding parameters are outlined below.

Program Limit	Amount
Maximum reimbursement per trainee	\$6,600
Maximum reimbursement per employer or consortium	\$330,000
Maximum reimbursement rate	Up to 80% of eligible training costs
Reimbursement structure	70% after completion of training by trainee; 10% after six-month employment retention

Applicants should request the amount of funding needed to implement their proposed training project within these limits.

Employers may:

- Submit multiple applications
- Apply multiple times as a member of a consortium, either as a lead employer or a participating employer
- Apply as both an individual employer and as part of a consortium

For employers awarded funds across multiple applications, the total WisTRAIN reimbursement across all approved awards per individual employer will not exceed \$330,000.

DWD may:

- Partially fund applications
- Modify award amounts to ensure effective use of program funds
- Limit awards based on available Training Fund resources

All awards are subject to contract negotiation and final approval by DWD. Grant funds may be used only for eligible training activities as described in this announcement.

### How Reimbursement Works

WisTRAIN is an **employer reimbursement program**. Grantees (employers) pay for the training up front and then request reimbursement from DWD after required milestones are met.

Under the [grant requirements set by DOL](#), WisTRAIN reimburses **up to 80% of eligible training costs**. The amount reimbursed per trainee will not exceed \$6,600 and the total amount reimbursed to the employer or consortium will not exceed \$330,000. Reimbursement payments will be issued to the approved applicant (lead employer) and will not be paid directly to training providers.

Reimbursement is earned in two stages:

Milestone	Reimbursement
<b>Trainee successfully completes training program</b>	70% of eligible training costs, subject to the maximum reimbursement per trainee
<b>Trainee remains employed for six months after training completion</b>	10% of eligible training costs

DWD will issue one reimbursement payment after each milestone is verified. The first payment will be issued following confirmation that the trainee successfully completed the training. The second payment will be issued after verification that the trainee remained employed with the grantee (employer) six months after training completion. Reimbursement requests must be submitted following the procedures and timelines established by DWD.

The combined reimbursement for both milestones will not exceed 80% of eligible training costs or the maximum reimbursement per trainee. Per DOL, employers are expected to contribute a minimum of 20% of the cost of the training by design, to demonstrate intentionality and commitment to the training agreement. Further, per DOL, funds leveraged from other sources (e.g., other federal and/or state grants, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act incumbent worker training, Wisconsin Fast Forward, etc.) **cannot** be used to cover the difference in training costs for employers.

**NOTE:** DOL does not allow grant funds to be used for supportive services; however, grantees are encouraged to contact [their local Workforce Development Board \(WDB\)](#) to learn about other resources available to their

trainees to ensure successful completion of their training, such as childcare, dependent care, transportation, mental health counseling, books, academic fees, supplies, parking, housing, etc.

Reimbursement is calculated on a per-trainee basis, and payments are issued only for trainees who meet the qualifying milestones. If a trainee does not successfully complete the training phase of the program, the employer will not be reimbursed for **any** part of the cost of the training for that trainee.

### Special Conditions for Employer Consortia

For consortium applications, reimbursement payments will be issued only to the lead employer identified in the grant agreement. The lead employer is responsible for coordinating training activities and distributing any applicable funds or training benefits among participating consortium members in accordance with the terms of the employer [consortium agreement](#) and the approved application.

All reimbursement requests submitted to DWD must be made by the lead employer and must include documentation for training activities conducted by consortium members.

For consortium applications, the \$330,000 maximum reimbursement applies to the consortium as a whole. The application must specify how the funding will be allocated among participating employers and indicate the number of trainees at each employer.

### Trainees Participating in Multiple Training Programs

A trainee may participate in more than one WisTRAIN-supported training program. However, total reimbursement may not exceed **\$6,600 per trainee across all approved training programs**.

Training programs must occur **sequentially**. A trainee must successfully complete one training program before beginning another; if trainees are engaged in multiple training programs simultaneously, only one will be eligible for reimbursement.

Per DOL, each training program must meet its own reimbursement milestones. For each program, the employer must demonstrate that the trainee:

1. Successfully completed the training program, and
2. Remained employed for **six months following the training completion date**.

Reimbursement will be issued only after the employer verifies that the required milestones have been met for each individual participant within the training program.

### Reimbursement Examples

The examples below illustrate how WisTRAIN reimbursement is calculated and distributed based on the program's reimbursement limits.

### Example 1 – Standard

A grantee (employer) provides training for four trainees at a total cost of \$8,000 (\$2,000 per trainee). All trainees complete the training and remain employed with the grantee (employer) for six months after training.

WisTRAIN reimburses 80% of eligible training costs, or \$1,600 per trainee, for a total reimbursement of \$6,400.

Under Example 1, payments would be issued as follows:

Milestone	Payment
Training completion (70%)	\$5,600
Six-month employment retention (10%)	\$800
<b>Total Reimbursement</b>	<b>\$6,400</b>

### Example 2 – Total Training Cost Exceeds Allowable Thresholds

A grantee (employer) provides training for 10 trainees at a total cost of \$100,000 (\$10,000 per trainee). Because WisTRAIN caps reimbursement at \$6,600 per trainee, the grantee (employer) is eligible for reimbursement of up to \$66,000.

Assuming all trainees complete the training and remain employed with the grantee (employer) for six months after training completion, reimbursement for Example 2 would be issued as follows:

Milestone	Payment
Training completion (70%)	\$57,750
Six-month employment retention (10%)	\$8,250
<b>Total Reimbursement</b>	<b>\$66,000</b>

Because the per-trainee ceiling of \$6,600 applies, milestone payments are calculated as proportional shares of the \$66,000 maximum reimbursement – with 7/8 paid at training completion (\$57,750) and the remaining 1/8 paid after six-month employment retention (\$8,250).

### Example 3 – Trainee Does Not Meet Milestones

A grantee (employer) provides training for five trainees at a total cost of \$15,000 (\$3,000 per trainee).

Four trainees successfully complete the training and remain employed for six months. One trainee leaves the company after completing the training but before reaching the six-month employment retention milestone.

WisTRAIN reimburses up to 80% of eligible training costs, or \$2,400 for trainees who meet both milestones.

Under Example 3, reimbursement would be issued as follows:

Milestone	Payment
Training completion for five trainees (70%)	\$10,500
Six-month employment retention for four trainees (10%)	\$1,200
<b>Total Reimbursement</b>	<b>\$11,700</b>

#### Example 4 – Trainee Does Not Complete Training

A grantee (employer) provides training for five trainees at a total cost of \$15,000 (\$3,000 per trainee).

Four trainees successfully complete training and remain employed with the grantee (employer) for six months. One trainee does not successfully complete the training program.

WisTRAIN reimburses up to 80% of eligible training costs, or \$2,400 per trainee, for trainees who meet the required milestones.

Reimbursement for Example 4 would be issued as follows:

Milestone	Payment
Training completion for four trainees (70%)	\$8,400
Six-month employment retention for four trainees (10%)	\$1,200
<b>Total Reimbursement</b>	<b>\$9,600</b>

#### Example 5 – Employer Consortium Training Project

A consortium of three employers submits a WisTRAIN application through a designated lead employer. The consortium provides training for 30 trainees across participating employers. The total cost of the training is \$180,000 (\$6,000 per trainee).

Because WisTRAIN reimburses up to 80% of eligible training costs, the maximum reimbursement per trainee is \$4,800.

All trainees successfully complete the training and remain employed with their respective employers for six months after training completion.

The total reimbursement for the consortium is \$144,000 in this example, and the following reimbursement would be issued to the lead employer:

Milestone	Payment
Training completion for 30 trainees (70%)	\$126,000
Six-month employment retention for 30 trainees (10%)	\$18,000
<b>Total Reimbursement</b>	<b>\$144,000</b>

**Example 6 – Consortium Reaches Maximum Award Limit**

A consortium of four employers submits a WisTRAIN application through a designated lead employer. The consortium proposes training for 80 trainees across the participating employers. The total cost of the training program is \$640,000 (\$8,000 per trainee).

Because WisTRAIN reimburses up to 80% of eligible training costs, the potential reimbursement per trainee would normally be \$6,400. However, WisTRAIN limits reimbursement to \$6,600 per trainee and \$330,000 per employer or consortium.

If all trainees complete the training and meet the six-month employment retention requirement, the total reimbursement that would otherwise be available based on the training costs would be \$512,000.

However, because the maximum reimbursement per employer or consortium is \$330,000, the total reimbursement for this project is capped at \$330,000. For consortium projects, the maximum reimbursement of \$330,000 applies to the consortium as a whole, regardless of the number of participating employers. Milestone payments are calculated as proportional shares of the \$330,000 maximum reimbursement – with 7/8 paid at training completion and the remaining 1/8 paid after the six-month employment retention.

When applying the reimbursement caps to Example 6, the consortium's reimbursement would be issued to the lead employer, as follows:

Milestone	Payment
Training completion milestone (70%)	\$288,750
Six-month employment retention milestone (10%)	\$41,250
Total Reimbursement	\$330,000

**Example 7 – Trainee Participating in Multiple Training Programs**

An employer enrolls a trainee in two WisTRAIN-approved programs. The trainee must successfully complete one training program before beginning a subsequent WisTRAIN-supported training program, and each training must have its own completion and employment retention milestones.

**Training Program 1**

- Training cost: \$4,000
- Eligible reimbursement (80%): \$3,200
- The trainee completes the training and remains employed for six months.
- The employer receives \$3,200 in reimbursement.

After completing the first training, the trainee begins a second training program.

**Training Program 2**

- Training cost: \$6,000
- Potential reimbursement (80%): \$4,800

However, WisTRAIN limits reimbursement to \$6,600 per trainee across all training programs. Because the trainee has already received \$3,200 for the first training, the maximum reimbursement available for the second training is \$3,400.

If the trainee successfully completes the second training program and remains employed for six months after completion, the employer may be reimbursed up to \$3,400, bringing the total reimbursement for that trainee to the \$6,600 program limit.

**Sequential Training Timeline**

Date	Activity	Reimbursement Impact
Jan. – March 2027	Training Program 1: Computer Numerical Control (CNC) Programming	Training cost: \$4,000, resulting in \$3,200 allowed reimbursement.
March 1, 2027	Training 1 completed	70% milestone eligible
Sept. 1, 2027	Six-month employment retention verified	Remaining 10% milestone paid
Oct. – Dec. 2027	Training Program 2: Robotics Programming	Training cost: \$6,000. Remaining reimbursement capped at \$3,400
Dec. 1, 2027	Training 2 completed	Employer reimbursed 7/8 of the remaining \$3,400 allowed (\$2,975)
June 1, 2028	Six-month employment retention verified	Employer reimbursed the remaining funding (\$425)

**Example 8 – Work-Based Learning On-the-Job Training (OJT) Cost Calculation**

A grantee (employer) proposes an OJT program to upskill five incumbent workers in robotics programming.

Each trainee:

- Earns \$25 per hour
- Participates in 120 hours of structured training as part of their work schedule

The employer determines that these 120 hours represent the training portion of work-based learning, separate from routine job duties.

**Training Cost Calculation**

Item	Value
Hourly Wage	\$25
Training Hours per Trainee	120
Number of Trainees	5

<b>Total Training Cost</b>	\$15,000
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WisTRAIN reimburses up to 80% of eligible training costs.

### Reimbursement Calculation

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Payment</b>
<b>Training completion milestone (70%)</b>	\$10,500
<b>Six-month employment retention milestone (10%)</b>	\$1,500
<b>Total Reimbursement</b>	\$12,000

#### NOTE:

- Only the structured training hours (120 hours per trainee) are included in the calculation
- Wages associated with routing job duties are not eligible
- Final reimbursement is based on actual documented training activity and employment retention outcomes

For additional information about eligible OJT costs, see the Allowable Activities section of this program announcement.

## Eligibility

### Grantee (Employer) Eligibility

WisTRAIN applications are open to employers of any size or industry operating in Wisconsin, including consortia of employers applying through a designated lead employer.

To be eligible, applicants must meet all the following criteria:

- Be a business or consortium of businesses with operations in Wisconsin.
- Attest that all trainees participating in WisTRAIN-funded training are employed in positions based in Wisconsin.
- Propose training that supports occupations, technologies, or workforce needs related to advanced manufacturing, AI, or related emerging industries identified in this WisTRAIN Grant Program Announcement.
- Be a legal entity registered with the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions (DFI).
  - Applicants must provide their DFI registration number or other documentation demonstrating registration.
- Be financially viable and current on all federal and state tax obligations.
  - Applicants may be required to provide documentation demonstrating financial viability, such as financial statements, tax records, or other documentation requested by DWD.
- Not have filed a [WARN and/or Wisconsin Business Closing and Mass Layoff \(WBCML\) notice with DWD](#) within the past six months and not have engaged in a workforce reduction that would otherwise require such notice.

### Special Conditions for Employer Consortia

Applications submitted by an employer consortium must include a signed employer [consortium agreement](#) from each consortium member to demonstrate their commitment to and participation in the project.

All participating employers in the consortium must meet the eligibility criteria and provide sufficient documentation of eligibility, as outlined above.

Each consortium must identify a **lead employer**. The lead employer is responsible for ensuring that all consortium members comply with WisTRAIN program requirements and provide any documentation necessary for reporting and reimbursement.

### Application Preference

While not required for eligibility, preference points may be awarded to applicants that:

1. Are small businesses or consortia comprised of a majority (51% or greater) small businesses, and/or
2. Develop or use training programs that lead to industry-recognized credentials or certifications.

### Trainee Eligibility

Trainees participating in WisTRAIN-funded training must meet all the following criteria:

- Be newly hired or incumbent employees of the applying employer and/or one of the employers represented by an employer consortium.
- Be at least 17 years of age.
- Be not currently enrolled in secondary school within a local educational agency.
- Be legally authorized to work in the United States.
- Be employed in a Wisconsin-based position.

Grant funds may not be used to reimburse employers for training federal workers in any occupations or any worksites. This restriction does not apply to federal contractors.

### Special Conditions for Employer Consortia

Trainees participating in consortium projects must be employees of one of the participating consortium employers.

### Allowable Activities

Training programs eligible for reimbursement must provide an appropriate combination of training and education services and/or work-based learning activities, based on the employer needs within targeted industries. Training must be directly related to the trainee's current position or a higher-skilled role within the organization and must support the development of occupational skills relevant to WisTRAIN program priorities.

The WisTRAIN application must provide an adequate description of the proposed training program that addresses all of the following criteria:

1. The type of training to be provided.

2. The skills and/or experience that will be gained.
3. At what point the training program will be considered complete.
4. The credentials that will result from the training (if applicable).
5. Any employment advancement and/or wage increases that will result from training completion.

Employers may partner with training providers, technical colleges, local Workforce Development Boards, and/or industry associations to deliver training under WisTRAIN.

### **Eligible training activities include:**

#### **Classroom Instruction (in-person or virtual)**

Structured instruction must be delivered by a qualified instructor in a classroom or online learning environment. Instruction may occur in-person, through live virtual instruction, or through a structured online training platform. Classroom instruction must focus on occupational or technical skills directly related to the trainee's current or projected job responsibilities.

Eligible classroom instruction may include, but is not limited to, training delivered by any of the following:

- Technical colleges or universities
- Industry training providers
- Employer trainers or subject matter experts
- Online learning platforms

#### **Customized Employer Training Programs**

Customized training programs designed to meet the specific workforce needs of one or more participating employers may be developed or delivered by the employer, a training provider, or a partnership between employers and training providers.

Customized training must achieve all of the following:

- Address specific occupational skill gaps identified by the employer
- Prepare trainees for current or higher-skilled positions within the organizations
- Focus on skills relevant to advanced manufacturing, artificial intelligence, or related technologies

#### **Technology-based or Simulation Training**

Training that uses technology-enabled learning tools or simulated work environments to teach occupational skills allows trainees to practice job tasks in a controlled environment that replicates real-world equipment, systems, or processes.

Examples may include:

- Robotics or automation simulators
- Digital manufacturing or production system simulations
- Virtual reality or augmented reality training platforms

- Computer-based technical training modules

Training must focus on developing practical occupational skills relevant to the trainee's job duties.

### **On-the-Job Training**

On-the-Job Training (OJT) provided to a trainee by an employer while the trainee is engaged in productive work in a job setting provides structured instruction and hands-on skill development under the supervision of experienced staff or trainers.

OJT must achieve all of the following:

- Be based on a documented training plan or skills progression
- Address specific occupational competencies required for the trainee's position
- Result in measurable skill gains related to the trainee's job duties

Training activities must be time-limited and focused on skill development beyond routine job orientation.

### **Registered Apprenticeship**

Training activities that support the related technical instruction and/or work-based learning components of a Registered Apprenticeship program registered with the Wisconsin Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards or U.S. Department of Labor are allowable.

Eligible activities may include:

- Related technical instruction required under the apprenticeship program
- Specialized occupational training aligned with the apprenticeship standards
- Training necessary for progression through apprenticeship wage or competency levels

Training supported through WisTRAIN must be directly tied to the occupational skill development requirements of the Registered Apprenticeship program.

### **Additional Guidance for Work-Based Learning (OJT and Registered Apprenticeship)**

Employers proposing OJT or Registered Apprenticeship must clearly distinguish between structured training activities and routine job duties. WisTRAIN reimburses only the portion of work-based learning that is directly associated with skill development.

#### **Defining the Skills Gap**

Applications must identify the specific occupational skills gap(s) the training will address, including all of the following:

- The current skill level of the trainee and/or trainee group
- The target occupation or competency level
- The specific technical skills to be developed

Skills gaps must reflect new or enhanced occupational competencies in advanced manufacturing, artificial intelligence, or related technologies. General onboarding or routine job training is not eligible.

### **Estimating Training Hours**

Applicants must estimate the amount of time that constitutes structured training, separate from total work hours. This includes all of the following:

- Total number of training hours per trainee
- Estimated training hours per week
- Duration of the training period

Training hours should reflect structured skill development activities and may be organized by phase, competency, or progression level.

### **Work-Based Learning Structure**

Work-based training must include all of the following:

- Follow a documented training plan or skills progression
- Be time-limited and focused on skill acquisition
- Include supervision or instruction by experienced staff or trainers
- Result in measurable skill gains tied to occupational competencies

### **Examples of Eligible Training**

Examples of training that may be eligible for WisTRAIN reimbursement include, but are not limited to:

- Industrial automation training
- Robotics programming
- AI-enabled manufacturing systems
- CNC programming and advanced machining
- Industrial cybersecurity
- Digital manufacturing and process control
- Data analytics for manufacturing operations
- Training aligned with Registered Apprenticeship programs

### **Note on Intellectual Property Rights**

All materials created with WisTRAIN funds must be [open licensed](#), such that the federal government reserves the right to reproduce, publish or otherwise use, and to authorize others to use for federal purposes the intellectual property related to, but not limited to, curricula, training models, technical assistance products, and any related material using grant funds. This right allows DOL to modify and distribute such products worldwide by any means, electronically or otherwise.

This open licensure does not apply to the purchase of training curriculum and/or materials reimbursed using grant funds; open licensure is only applicable if WisTRAIN grant funds are used directly for the development of curriculum and/or materials.

## Eligible/Ineligible Costs

### Eligible Costs

WisTRAIN funds may be used to reimburse reasonable and necessary costs directly associated with the delivery of approved training activities. Eligible costs must be clearly documented and directly related to the training provided under the WisTRAIN grant.

Allowable training costs may include any of the following:

#### Training Provider Costs

- Tuition or enrollment fees charged by an approved training provider
- Instructor or trainer fees
- Costs associated with developing or delivering customized training programs

#### Training Materials and Supplies

- Instructional materials required for training (e.g., manuals, workbooks, course materials)
- Training-specific supplies used during the training program

#### Certification and Assessment Costs

- Industry-recognized credential examination fees
- Certification testing costs
- Required skill assessments related to the training program

#### Technology-Based Training Costs

- Fees for online training platforms or learning management systems
- Costs associated with simulation-based training tools or software licenses used for training purposes

#### Work-Based Training Costs (When Applicable)

For approved OJT or Registered Apprenticeship-related training, eligible costs may include:

- A portion of trainee wages associated with the structured training period
- Wages for trainers or mentors providing instruction during the training period

These costs must be supported by documented training plans and time allocations that demonstrate the training component of the activity.

#### Clarification on Work-Based Training Costs

Employers must clearly distinguish between training time and productive work time when calculating costs associated with work-based learning.

Only wages associated with structured training activities may be included as eligible training costs. Wages for routine job duties, general productivity, or time not directly tied to skill development are not allowable.

Applicants must do all of the following:

- Identify the number of training hours per trainee
- Distinguish between training time and productive work time
- Provide a clear and reasonable methodology for estimating training-related wage costs

Estimates provided in the application do not require individual trainee-level wage data but must be reasonable, consistent, and supported by the proposed training plan. Final reimbursement will be based on actual documented training activity and costs.

### **Additional Cost Requirements**

All reimbursable costs must meet all of the following criteria:

- Be necessary and reasonable for the delivery of the training program
- Be incurred during the approved grant period
- Be supported by appropriate documentation such as invoices, payroll records, or training provider contracts
- Comply with applicable federal cost principles and program requirements associated with the Industry-Driven Skills Training Fund

DWD may request additional documentation to verify that submitted costs are eligible under the WisTRAIN program.

### **Ineligible Costs**

WisTRAIN funds may not be used to reimburse costs that are not directly related to the delivery of approved training activities. The following costs are not eligible for reimbursement under the WisTRAIN program.

#### **Administrative and Overhead Costs**

- General administrative or overhead expenses of the employer or training provider
- Costs associated with preparing or submitting the WisTRAIN application
- Grant management or reporting costs

#### **General Employee Compensation**

- Trainee wages, salaries, stipends, or fringe benefits not directly associated with structured work-based training activities (as described above)
- Overtime pay unrelated to training

**NOTE:** Limited wage reimbursement may be allowed when associated with approved OJT or Registered Apprenticeship training activities, as described in the Allowable Training Activities section.

#### **Capital and Equipment Costs**

- Capital equipment purchases
- Machinery or equipment used for general business operations
- Long-term technology investments not specifically required for the approved training program

#### **Facilities and Construction**

- Real estate purchases
- Building construction, renovation, or remodeling costs
- Facility lease or rental costs unrelated to training delivery

### **Training Conducted Outside the Grant Period**

- Training that occurs prior to execution of the grant agreement
- Training conducted after the approved training period ends

### **General Education Programs**

- Traditional K-12 education programs
- Degree programs not directly related to occupational skill development for the trainee's job

### **Supportive Services**

Costs intended to address personal or logistical barriers to training participation are not eligible for reimbursement. Examples include:

- Transportation assistance
- Child care expenses
- Housing assistance
- Food or meal allowances
- Tools, uniforms, or work clothing
- Personal technology or devices not directly required for training

### **Career Services**

Services intended to support employment readiness or job placement are not eligible for reimbursement. Examples include:

- Career counseling or career coaching
- Job search assistance or placement services
- Resume development or interview preparation
- Case management services

Employers are encouraged to contact their local [Workforce Development Board \(WDB\)](#) to learn about other resources available to their trainees to ensure successful completion of their training.

DWD reserves the right to determine the eligibility of all costs and may deny reimbursement for costs that are not reasonable, necessary, or directly related to approved WisTRAIN activities.

## **Documentation Required for Reimbursement**

Employers must submit documentation to verify that training activities and required milestones have been completed before reimbursement will be issued.

Documentation may include:

- Invoices or receipts for eligible training costs
- Training provider contracts or agreements
- Training completion records for each trainee
- Payroll or employment records verifying trainee employment retention for six months following training completion

DWD may request additional documentation as needed to verify the eligibility of submitted costs. All documentation must be maintained by the employer and made available to DWD upon request. Submission of documentation does not guarantee reimbursement. All reimbursement requests are subject to review and approval by DWD to ensure costs are eligible, reasonable, necessary, and consistent with the approved training plan.

## Period of Performance

Each WisTRAIN award will include two phases:

1. **Training Phase** – the period during which training occurs.
2. **Retention Phase** – the six-month employment retention period following training completion.

The total grant period includes both phases.

### Program Timeline

Phase	Maximum Length	Deadline
Training Phase	Up to 24 months	Training must be completed by <b>Sept. 30, 2028</b>
Retention Phase	Six months following training completion	Employment retention verification must occur by <b>March 31, 2029</b>
<b>Total Grant Period</b>	<b>Up to 30 months</b>	

### Additional Requirements

- The total period of performance may not exceed 30 months, including the employment retention period.
- The training phase may not exceed 24 months.
- All training must be completed no later than Sept. 30, 2028.
- Verification of the six-month trainee employment retention milestone must occur no later than March 31, 2029.

## Data Sharing Requirements

Grantees will be required to provide sufficient individual trainee data, employer data, and training program data to satisfy federal program reporting and evaluation requirements. DOL requires that trainee information be reported at the individual level; this may include trainee name, date of birth, Social Security Number or other unique identifier, training participation details, credential attainment, and wage outcomes.

Employers are not required to submit individual trainee data at the time of application.

However, employers must be prepared to do all of the following:

- Collect required trainee information after award selection
- Submit initial participant data prior to contract execution
- Provide additional data and documentation to support reimbursement and reporting throughout the project

If awarded a WisTRAIN grant, employers must, at a minimum, provide all of the following information.

**Participant-Level Data (Pre-Contract Execution):**

- Participant Name (Last, First, Middle Initial)
- Social Security Number (SSN), if provided
- Date of Birth
- Sex
- Ethnicity
- Race
- Veteran Status
- Training O\*Net Code ([Link](#))
- Employment status at time of enrollment (newly hired or incumbent worker)

**Training Completion Data (Required for Quarterly Reporting and Initial Reimbursement):**

- Confirmation that training was provided (Yes/No)
- Training start date
- Training end or exit date
- Type of training (e.g., On the Job Training (OJT), Customized Training, Occupational Skills Training, Registered Apprenticeship)
- O\*Net Code ([Link](#))
- Training completion Status (Yes/No)
- Credential type (if applicable; e.g., Occupational Licensure, Occupational Certificate, Occupational Certification, Other Recognized Diploma, Degree, or Certificate, or No Recognized Credential)
- Date credential was attained
- Reason for exit (if applicable; e.g., Institutionalized, Health/Medical, Deceased, Reserve Forces called to Active Duty, Foster Care, Ineligible, Criminal Offender, or No)

**Employment Retention Data (Required for Quarterly Reporting and Final Reimbursement)**

- Confirmation of continued employment with the employer for six months following training completion (Yes/No/Not Applicable)

**Documentation Requirements:**

Grantees must maintain and submit documentation that supports the information reported. This does not require creating new systems but does require retaining standard business records. Necessary documents may include:

- Payroll records
- Pay stubs
- Tax records (e.g., W-2, quarterly payroll filings)
- Internal HR records
- Employer verification letters
- Training plans or outlines
- Attendance records or training logs
- Completion records
- Apprenticeship or OJT documentation

- Certificates
- Licenses
- Credential award documentation
- Training provider records

Some participant information may require documentation. In most cases, employers may rely on:

- Existing HR records
- Employee-provided documentation (e.g., ID, onboarding records)
- Self-attestation (for voluntary demographic information such as race, ethnicity, and sex)

Examples of acceptable documentation may include:

- Driver's license or state ID (for date of birth)
- HR onboarding records
- Veteran documentation (if applicable)
- Internal personnel records

Employers are not required to collect new documentation beyond what is reasonably available through standard employment records, unless specifically requested by DWD.

**NOTE:** The collection of Social Security Numbers (SSNs) is authorized under federal regulation (20 CFR § 677.175) for the purpose of tracking employment outcomes.

- Providing an SSN is voluntary for the individual employee.
- Individuals cannot be denied participation for choosing not to provide an SSN.

If an SSN is not provided, the employer must be able to provide alternative documentation to verify employment and wage outcomes for up to 12 months after the project ends.

If an employee agrees to provide their SSN, the employer must report it as required.

DWD will provide all of the following:

- A standardized reporting template (Excel-based)
- Instructions for completing required data fields
- Guidance on acceptable documentation
- Reporting timelines and submission processes

Final reporting requirements will be detailed in the executed contract between DWD and the employer.

Data and documentation requirements are directly tied to reimbursement. Final payments may be withheld until all required data and documentation are submitted and verified.

## Records Retention and Audit Access

Grantees must retain all financial records, training documentation, and supporting materials related to WisTRAIN-funded activities.

These records must be retained for at least three years following the close of the grant or longer if required by federal or state records retention policies or otherwise directed by DWD.

DWD, the U.S. Department of Labor, or other authorized entities may review grant records to verify compliance with program requirements. Grantees must make such records available to DWD or other authorized entities upon request.

## Application Process

Applications for the initial round of WisTRAIN funding will be accepted beginning on **May 28, 2026**, and must be submitted no later than July 13, 2026

Applications received by the deadline (July 13, 2026) will be reviewed as part of the initial funding round. After this date, if funds are available, DWD may accept applications and review them on a rolling basis until all available funds are awarded.

Complete application instructions are provided on the WisTRAIN [website](#). Applicants will need a MyWisconsin ID to save their progress when applying. To obtain a MyWisconsin ID, please visit the [MyWisconsinID web page](#).

Applicants proposing On-the-Job Training (OJT) or Registered Apprenticeship are strongly encouraged to review additional guidance in this announcement regarding the identification of skills gaps, estimation of training hours, and calculation of training-related costs.

Completed application packages include:

- A signed and completed application
- Signed Consortium Agreements from all participating employers (if applicable)

Applications must be submitted electronically through the [online application system](#).

DWD will review all complete applications to ensure alignment with the goals of the WisTRAIN program and will make award decisions based on the evaluation criteria outlined in the WisTRAIN application.

DWD reserves the right to:

- Request additional information from applicants during the review process
- Reject incomplete applications
- Close the application period early if availability of federal funds changes.

Employers are encouraged to contact their local Workforce Development Board or DWD's Bureau of Workforce Training for assistance in developing their application.

## Review and Selection

DWD will assemble a team comprised of workforce training subject matter experts to review all complete applications to ensure they meet the eligibility requirements and evaluate them against the criteria outlined in the WisTRAIN application, which may include:

- Alignment with WisTRAIN program priorities
- Demonstrated employer need for training
- Quality and feasibility of the proposed training plan
- Anticipated impact on worker skills development and business competitiveness
- Employer commitment to supporting the training initiative

DWD may request additional information during the review process. Funding decisions will be based on the strength of the application, alignment with program priorities, geographic distribution, representation across key industries in Wisconsin, and the availability of funds. DWD may approve, partially fund, or decline applications. DWD may also make changes to this announcement or program requirements if needed to meet federal or state requirements. Submission of an application does not guarantee funding. DWD reserves the right to make funding decisions at its sole discretion based on program priorities, application quality, and the availability of funds.

## Award Notification and Grant Agreement

Applicants selected for funding will be notified in writing by DWD. Selected applicants will be required to enter into a grant agreement (contract) with DWD before training activities begin. The grant agreement will outline the approved training activities, budget, reporting requirements, and reimbursement procedures. Costs incurred prior to the execution of the grant agreement will not be eligible for reimbursement.

Applicants may be required to provide additional information or documentation during the contract development process.

DWD reserves the right to modify proposed training activities, budgets, or timelines during grant negotiations to ensure alignment with program requirements and available funding. Training activities and reimbursement requests must comply with the terms and conditions specified in the grant agreement.

## Program Contact and Technical Assistance

Employers interested in applying for WisTRAIN grants are encouraged to contact DWD's Bureau of Workforce Training for additional information or assistance with the application process.

Questions regarding this announcement or the WisTRAIN application may be directed to [WisTRAIN@dwd.wisconsin.gov](mailto:WisTRAIN@dwd.wisconsin.gov).

Employers may also contact their local Workforce Development Board for assistance identifying training providers, developing training plans, or preparing an application.

Find information about Wisconsin's Workforce Development Boards on the [Job Center of Wisconsin website](#).

DWD may provide technical assistance to applicants through informational webinars, guidance materials, or direct consultation during the application period.

## Definitions

### Program Participant Definitions

**Incumbent worker:** An individual who has been employed by the applicant (employer) for six months or longer at the start of the training program and receives training to upgrade skills, maintain employment, or advance to a higher-skilled position within the organization.

**Newly hired worker:** An individual who has been employed by the applicant (employer) for fewer than six months at the start of the training program and receives training to develop the occupational skills necessary to perform the duties of the position for which they were hired.

**Trainee:** An individual employed by the applicant (employer or an employer participating in an employer consortium) who participates in training activities funded through the WisTRAIN program.

### Employer and Grant Structure Definitions

**Employer Consortium:** A group of two or more employers collaborating on a shared training initiative under a single application submitted by a designated lead employer.

**Grant Recipient (Grantee):** The employer or lead employer in an employer consortium that submits the application, enters into the grant agreement with DWD, and is responsible for grant administration, reporting, and reimbursement requests.

**Lead Employer:** The employer designated by an employer consortium to serve as the primary applicant and grant recipient for a WisTRAIN project. The lead employer is responsible for submitting the application, entering into the grant agreement with DWD, and serving as the primary point of contact for program administration. The lead employer is also responsible for:

- Managing grant funds and submitting reimbursement requests
- Ensuring compliance with WisTRAIN program requirements
- Coordinating training activities among participating consortium members
- Submitting required reports and documentation to DWD

Reimbursement payments will be issued only to the lead employer. The lead employer will distribute training funds or coordinate training activities among participating consortium members in accordance with the approved training plan.

### Program Phases and Milestones Definitions

**Employment Retention:** Continued employment of a trainee with the employer following completion of training. For purposes of the WisTRAIN program, the employment retention

requirement is met when the trainee remains employed with the employer for at least six months after the training completion date.

**Grant Period (Period of Performance):** The period during which approved training activities may occur and eligible costs may be incurred under the WisTRAIN grant. The grant period includes both the **training phase** and the **retention phase**. No costs incurred outside the approved grant period are eligible for reimbursement.

**Retention Phase:** The six-month period following training completion during which the trainee must remain employed with the employer to meet the WisTRAIN employment retention milestone.

**Training Completion:** Successful fulfillment of the training program requirements as documented by the employer and/or training provider, including completion of required instruction or competency milestones. This may or may not include the attainment of an industry-recognized credential. What constitutes training completion may depend on the type of training provided, and must be clearly identified in the application and resulting contract. Generally, training completion occurs when a trainee has either reached the end of the time requirements of a training program, or finished the final component of a training program. A training completion is considered successful when the trainee has satisfactorily achieved all objectives associated with the training program.

**Training Phase:** The period during which trainees participate in approved training activities funded through the WisTRAIN program.

**Training Withdrawal:** When a trainee discontinues training or does not meet the successful completion requirements that are identified as part of the agreement between the grantee (employer) and DWD.

## Training Activities Definitions

**Advanced Manufacturing Technologies:** Modern production methods that use innovative equipment, software, and processes to improve the efficiency, precision, flexibility, and sustainability of manufacturing.

These technologies often integrate digital tools, automation, and advanced materials to produce goods more quickly and with higher quality than traditional manufacturing methods.

Common examples include:

- Additive manufacturing (3D printing)
- CNC machining
- Smart sensors and industrial Internet of Things (IIoT) systems
- Advanced materials processing
- Digital twins and simulation technologies

**Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Automation:** Technologies that allow machines or computer systems to perform tasks that normally require human intelligence or manual labor.

- Artificial intelligence uses algorithms and machine learning models to analyze data, recognize patterns, make predictions, and support decision-making.
- Automation uses machines, software, or control systems to carry out processes with minimal human intervention.

In manufacturing and industry, these technologies are commonly used for:

- Predictive maintenance
- Quality inspection using computer vision
- Automated production scheduling
- Autonomous material handling systems

**Classroom Instruction:** Instructor-led occupational training delivered in a classroom or virtual learning environment.

**Customized Training:** Training programs designed to meet the specific workforce needs of one or more employers.

**Data analytics and Digital Manufacturing Tools:** Software platforms and technologies used to collect, analyze, and apply data to improve manufacturing performance and decision-making.

- **Data analytics** involves examining large datasets to identify trends, optimize processes, and improve outcomes.
- **Digital manufacturing tools** are software systems that support the design, planning, simulation, and management of production activities.

Examples include:

- Manufacturing Execution Systems (MES)
- Computer-aided design and manufacturing (CAD/CAM)
- Production data dashboards
- Predictive analytics platforms
- Process simulation and optimization tools

These tools help manufacturers improve efficiency, reduce waste, enhance product quality, and respond more quickly to changing market demands.

**Eligible Training Provider:** An organization or individual approved by the employer to deliver occupational training under the WisTRAIN program. Examples may include technical colleges, universities, industry training providers, or qualified employer trainers. Training providers must be able to document training delivery and training completion as required by DWD.

**NOTE:** WisTRAIN does not require training providers to be on Wisconsin's Eligible Training Programs List (ETPL). However, the ETPL may be used as a resource to identify potential training programs.

**Industrial Cybersecurity:** The practice of protecting industrial systems, manufacturing equipment, and operational technology (OT) networks from cyber threats, unauthorized access, and digital disruption.

Unlike traditional IT cybersecurity, industrial cybersecurity focuses on systems that control physical operations such as:

- Manufacturing equipment
- Industrial control systems (ICS)
- Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) systems
- Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT) devices

The goal is to ensure the safety, reliability, and integrity of production systems while preventing disruptions, data theft, or sabotage.

**On-the-Job Training (OJT):** Structured training provided by an employer while the trainee performs productive work, involving a documented training plan and supervision by experienced staff.

**Registered Apprenticeship Training:** Training activities that support the related technical instruction or work-based learning components of a Registered Apprenticeship program registered with the U.S. Department of Labor or the Wisconsin Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards.

**Robotics and Digital Production Systems:** Involve the use of programmable machines and integrated digital technologies to perform manufacturing tasks and coordinate production processes.

- **Industrial robots** are automated machines capable of carrying out complex or repetitive tasks such as welding, assembly, painting, or packaging.
- **Digital production systems** integrate software, sensors, and networked equipment to manage and optimize manufacturing operations in real time.

These systems are often part of “smart factory” or Industry 4.0 environments where equipment, production lines, and data systems communicate continuously.

**Technology-Based Training:** Training delivered through digital platforms, simulations, or technology-enabled learning environments that replicate job tasks or technical systems.

**Training Plan:** A documented description of the training program that identifies the training activities, skills, or competencies to be achieved, and the scope and sequence of instruction.

**Training Program:** A structured set of instructional activities, which may include training and educational services and/or work-based learning, designed to enable trainees to acquire specific occupational skills and competencies.

## Cost Definitions

**Career Services:** Services designed to assist individuals with employment readiness, job search, or career planning, such as resume preparation, career counseling, or job placement assistance.

**Eligible Training Costs:** Reasonable and necessary expenses directly associated with approved training activities and incurred during the grant period.

**Ineligible Costs:** Expenses that are not directly related to training activities or that are otherwise prohibited under WisTRAIN program requirements.

**Supportive Services:** Services intended to address personal or logistical barriers to training participation, such as transportation assistance, childcare, housing support, or meal assistance.

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