



APPLICATION

A grant program of
West Central Initiative.



The purpose of the Workforce Solutions Grant Program is to advance a skilled workforce with the talents and supports needed to strengthen the economy of west central Minnesota. The total amount available for distribution is \$150,000.

Successful applicants will propose workforce solutions that help people obtain the capabilities and supports needed to secure, maintain and advance in jobs in west central Minnesota. Simultaneously, these projects will strengthen the competitiveness of employers who offer good-paying jobs by ensuring that they have access to the talent they need.

Two types of grants, each with a different maximum award, are being offered:

1. **Local Impact:** These grants target workforce development at the community level. The maximum award is \$15,000. Typical awards will range from \$2,500 - \$10,000.
2. **Multi-County Impact:** These grants are for projects that reach participants in more than two of the counties served by West Central Initiative. Applicants will be invited to apply for up to \$7,500 per county with a maximum award of \$67,500 (9 x \$7,500.)

MEASURABLE OUTCOMES

The funded projects will result in two types of outcomes:

1. People will gain the knowledge, skills, abilities and/or supports needed to explore, obtain employment and advance in careers located in west central Minnesota.
2. Employers will experience increased success in attracting, hiring, training and advancing workers in careers.

GUIDELINES

Eligible proposals must:

- Be submitted by a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization or unit of government willing to accept financial responsibility for the project.
- Address and document a workforce challenge within WCI's service region (Becker, Clay, Douglas, Grant, Otter Tail, Pope, Stevens, Traverse and Wilkin counties);
- Focus on industries in the region that pay well and have job openings paired with a shortage of qualified workers; and
- Provide a 1:1 dollar-for-dollar match. The match may be cash or in-kind. However, projects providing cash match may be given funding priority.

WCI will not support:

- Capital campaigns or the use of grant funds for capital expenditures such as equipment;
- Fund drives, grant writing, or fundraising programs; or
- Lobbying or political activities.

WCI places a low priority on programs that:

- Focus on low-wage jobs or jobs with limited demand in west central Minnesota.
- Support general career exploration and/or career advising rather than focusing on jobs available in west central Minnesota;
- Benefit a single employer; or
- Pay for training or services that an employer would typically cover.

REVIEW CRITERIA

The criteria that will be used as a basis for funding decisions are listed below.

- **New Projects:** This grant program is intended to support entities in trying out new ideas for strengthening the workforce development system. The funding is not intended for continuation of a program that has already been launched.
- **Work Plan:** The proposal plainly describes the need for the project and the action steps to be taken. Sufficient time and personnel have been allocated to execute the activities described in the proposal.
- **Budget:** The budget is reasonable and adds up. Sufficient detail is provided regarding use of funds. Projects that provide cash match may be given priority.
- **Collaboration:** The applicant has formed alliances with employers and other organizations to implement their project and sustain the work.
- **Evaluation:** The applicant clearly communicates what project success will look like and how impact will be measured. The project's evaluative measures clearly relate to one or both of the two outcomes that this grant program is intended to impact.

It is unlikely that a community will receive more than one workforce development grant per year even if the associated partners and the project focus are different.

SELECTION PROCESS

Proposals will be reviewed by West Central Initiative staff using stated grant guidelines and criteria. Site visits will be conducted with viable proposals. Recommendations will be provided to WCI leadership and/or the WCI Board who will make the final determination of awards.

DEADLINES

Requests will be accepted on an ongoing basis until all funds have been awarded. Applications for \$7,500 or less will usually be processed within three weeks. Larger requests may take up to six weeks. Requests must be made with enough lead time for WCI to conduct a site visit and make a funding decision before any costs are incurred.

INSTRUCTIONS

Prior to completing an application, please contact Wendy Merrick, 1-800-735-2239, wendy@wcif.org to confirm that funding has not already been fully distributed.

After verifying funding availability, please complete the attached form. If the expiration date on the bottom of this page has passed, please contact WCI for a current version.

Questions about this application are best directed to Wendy Merrick, 1-800-735-2239, wendy@wcif.org.

Send your completed application as an e-mail attachment to wendy@wcif.org or mail to Wendy Merrick, West Central Initiative, PO Box 318, Fergus Falls, MN 56538-0318.

**WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS GRANT APPLICATION
(WCI CODE EHS – 26)**

PART I: COVER PAGE

APPLICANT

Organization name:

Address:

City:

State:

Zip code:

Telephone:

Contact person:

Title:

Telephone:

Email:

Type of organization: 501(c)(3) Unit of Government Other (specify)

Applicant's federal tax identification number (EIN):

PROJECT INFORMATION

Name of project:

Project Period:

From:

To:

Application Type (check one):

- Local Impact: project targets workforce development at the community level. Maximum award is \$15,000.
- Multi-County Impact: project reaches participants in more than one of the counties served by WCI. \$7,500 per WCI county served, with a maximum award of \$67,500 (9 x \$7,500.)

Measurable Outcome (check one):

- Applicant will measure and report this project's impact on the ability of people to explore, obtain employment and maintain and advance in careers located in west central Minnesota.
- Applicant will measure and report this project's impact on employer ability to do at least one of the following: attract, hire, train, or advance workers in careers.

BUDGET SNAPSHOT All projects must provide a dollar-for-dollar match.

| | |
|-----------------------|----|
| TOTAL PROJECT COST | \$ |
| Cash requested of WCI | \$ |
| Cash match | \$ |
| In-kind match | \$ |

PART II. PROPOSED BUDGET

Remember that to be eligible for funding, your project budget must show a dollar-for-dollar match. The match may be in-kind and should be included both in project costs and project sources of income.

| ESTIMATED PROJECT COSTS | CASH REQUESTED OF WCI | CASH MATCH FROM APPLICANT & OTHER SOURCES | IN-KIND MATCH FROM APPLICANT & OTHER SOURCES | TOTAL PROJECT |
|---|------------------------------|--|---|----------------------|
| Salaries and benefits | | | | |
| Contractual services | | | | |
| Supplies | | | | |
| Travel | | | | |
| Communications (postage, printing, telephone, etc.) | | | | |
| Space (rent, utilities, etc.) | | | | |
| Other: (specify) | | | | |
| Other: (specify) | | | | |
| TOTAL COSTS | | | | |
| SOURCES OF FUNDS FOR PROJECT | CASH | | IN-KIND SUPPORT | TOTAL PROJECT |
| Request of WCI | | | | |
| Applicant | | | | |
| Other: (specify) | | | | |
| Other: (specify) | | | | |
| TOTAL SOURCES OF FUNDS | | | | |

PART III. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Please list the objectives for your project using the format provided below. Include at least one measurable outcome for each objective. We recommend limiting yourself to three objectives.

| PROJECT OBJECTIVES | MEASURE(S) YOU WILL TRACK TO SHOW SUCCESS OR PROGRESS | COMPLETION DATE | PERSON RESPONSIBLE |
|--------------------|---|-----------------|--------------------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

PART IV. NARRATIVE & ATTACHMENTS

When responding to the following five questions:

- Use size 12 font.
- Begin each response by first listing the corresponding item number (1-5).
- Limit your responses to the following five items to a total of four one-sided pages.

Need

1. Tell us about the workforce challenge that your project addresses. Document that this workforce challenge exists in your community or in the region by referencing data or by attaching letters from employers in the region that attest to the challenge.

Target Population & Geography

2. Identify the target population and geography your project will serve.

Solution

3. Describe what you will do to address the need you have identified. Include a list of the services you will deliver.

Collaboration

4. Provide a bulleted list of the entities represented on your project team. On your list, please include a sentence or two about the contribution this partner will make to carrying out the project.

Evaluation

5. Provide a bulleted list of the indicators you will use to measure the impact your project will have on workers and/or employers:
 - **WORKERS:** list indicators you will measure or data you will collect to show that the project has improved the ability of people to explore, obtain employment and maintain and advance in careers located in west central Minnesota, AND/OR
 - **EMPLOYERS:** list indicators you will measure or data you will collect to show improved employer success in attracting, hiring, training and advancing workers in careers.

ATTACHMENTS: Please attach the following supporting materials.

- **Required:** A resolution from the applicant's governing body or letter from its chief elected or administrative official authorizing application for funds.
- **Helpful, but not required:** Copies of letters or agreements documenting participation of other partners involved in the planning, implementation and continuation of the project.