



Governor's Council on Workforce Investment
Growing Regional Opportunities
in Wisconsin (GROW)
("GROW II") Grants

GRANT APPLICATION
GUIDELINES AND FORMS



July 10, 2006



Applications due August 25, 2006
(see p. 9 for details and contact information)

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I) Program Summary and Guidelines

As part of a broader effort to chart a new course for regional economic and workforce development in Wisconsin, Governor Jim Doyle, the Governor's Council on Workforce Investment (CWI), and the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) established the Growing Regional Opportunities in Wisconsin (GROW) grant program in 2005. The GROW grant program is one of many projects being implemented to advance the regional economic and workforce development agenda set forth in the Governor's *Grow Wisconsin* plan.

In order to build on the foundations established by the initial round of GROW grants, CWI and DWD have authorized an additional \$400,000 in funding to help GROW grant partnerships continue, consolidate, and expand their GROW projects. **Eligibility for this additional funding, hereafter referred to as "GROW II" is limited to the seven regional partnerships already receiving GROW grant funds.**

As with the first round of GROW grants, this additional GROW grant funding is being financed by state discretionary Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funds assigned by the Governor to support Council on Workforce Investment projects. The Department of Workforce Development, as the lead agency for the Council on Workforce Investment and as the responsible fiscal entity for the grant program funding, will administer and oversee the GROW grant program.

The shared focus of WIA, CWI, and DWD is the development of Wisconsin's workforce. In keeping with this focus, the GROW grant program is intended to support regional partnerships concerned primarily with workforce investment strategies and programs. Other efforts related to overall regional economic growth may be included in proposals to the extent that they clearly support the stated workforce investment objectives of the project.

The remainder of this program summary outlines the following information about the GROW grant program and guidelines for grant applicants:

- Grant program elements and expectations
- Basic requirements for grant applicants
- Program activity requirements of grantees
- Other administrative requirements.

A. Program elements and expectations

1. Main program elements

As a continuation of the GROW grant program, GROW II funding will support projects that combine partnership development, planning, and program capacity building aimed at linking workforce development, economic development, and education.

However, because partnerships eligible for GROW II grants have already received first year GROW funding, it is assumed that applicant partnerships are beyond the initial partnership-building and preliminary planning stage.

Therefore, the primary emphasis of GROW II will be on targeted capacity-building and program development activities based on strategic planning already completed. Any planning or partnership-building funded through GROW II should be geared towards advancing these capacity-building and program-development activities in clearly defined ways.

2. Expected project characteristics

Highest priority in GROW II funding will go to projects that:

- Embody clearly defined innovative strategies for linking economic development, workforce development, and education.
- Reinforce existing regional economic growth initiatives from the particular standpoint of workforce development.
- Involve key local and regional business, political, and other leaders in project design, planning, and implementation.
- Address documented labor market challenges and/or workforce program gaps or inadequacies.
- Target regional driver industries for systematic sector-based workforce development efforts, with an emphasis on career pathways.
- Incorporate program elements aimed specifically at improving labor market outcomes for low-skilled, low-wage, and otherwise disadvantaged workers.

B. Basic applicant qualifications

1. Definition of region

GROW II funding will be organized around the seven regions established under the initial round of GROW grants. Proposals based on new regional configurations will be considered only if:

- The proposed regional configuration represents the combination of two or more current single-WDA GROW regions; or

- The proposed regional configuration includes sub-regions outside of Wisconsin not included in the first round of funding.

Project proposals that involve either of these types of new regional configurations must offer a compelling strategic rationale for the new configuration. Proposals for regions that include areas outside of Wisconsin, whether or not they expand beyond their original GROW configurations, must include specific provisions for representation of the out-of-state areas in their partnership organizations, and for cash or in-kind contributions from the out-of-state areas to the required regional project match (see match requirements below).

2. Partnership composition

Partnerships seeking GROW II grant funding *must* include, from the outset of the grant period, representatives of:

- The regional business community
- Key regional labor organizations
- Workforce Development Boards
- Economic Development Corporations and Chambers of Commerce
- Technical College Districts
- University of Wisconsin two and/or four-year campuses

Such partnerships *are strongly encouraged to include, and will be more competitive to the extent that they include:*

- Key local elected officials CESA Offices and/or K-12 School Districts
- Independent colleges and private post-secondary educational institutions
- Regional Planning Commissions
- Community-based organizations

The most competitive proposals will provide for substantial private-sector business representation in, engagement with, and leadership of the regional partnership.

3. Leadership teams and GROW grantee institute

It is assumed that current GROW leadership teams will carry over into GROW II unless GROW II proposals specify changes to those teams. Applicants are strongly encouraged to assess the level of engagement of private sector business representation on their leadership teams and, if improvements are needed, focus on that aspect of any team changes.

At least one day-long GROW grant program conference Leadership Roundtable will be convened during the new grant period. Leadership teams will be required to attend.

C. Grantee activity requirements

Recipients of new GROW grant funding will be expected to conduct strategically targeted activities in each of the following three areas, with particular emphasis on the third:

1. Partnership strengthening

Recipients of GROW II funding must document that all required GROW partners are in place and actively contributing to the work of the partnership. Partnership building should focus on:

- Targeted expansions of partnerships to include underrepresented groups or to support specific strategic objectives, such as sector-specific initiatives.
- Strategic improvements in intra-partnership communication and involvement, or innovative strategies for partner engagement and participation.

2. Partnership strategic planning

GROW II projects should build on prior strategic planning efforts and be designed to advance those efforts in specific ways, such as:

- Targeted data collection identified as a priority by previous strategic planning.
- In-depth regional sector-based job skill and related training needs analyses or assessments following from preliminary planning.
- Planning of specific program activities designed to meet previously identified regional needs and sector-based growth objectives.

3. Partnership capacity-building and program implementation

The primary focus of GROW II funding should be on project and program implementation reflecting established strategic priorities. Highly competitive projects will include projects aimed at some combination of:

- Creating or working with existing regional industry partnerships and other partners in the development of sector-based career ladder / pathway structures.
- Enhancing efforts to build career ladder / pathway strategies designed specifically to help low-wage, low-skilled or otherwise disadvantaged workers.
- Implementing timely sector-based human resource strategies, particularly in high-wage growth industries experiencing shortages of skilled workers but also in other demand areas with career pathway potential.
- Integrating sector-based workforce development strategies and business services into job centers.
- Pursuing innovative efforts to engage the business community and/or individual business leaders in the work of the regional partnership.

D. Administrative requirements

1. Grant period

All GROW II grants will be for one year, from October 15, 2006 through October 14, 2007. There are currently no additional grant funds earmarked beyond this period.

2. Match requirement

In order to maximize the number of regional partnerships that can be funded and ensure significant local commitment to those partnerships, at least 50% of the requested grant amount of an applicant project must be covered by regional matching resources, with at least 15% of those project costs covered by cash match. [For example, a request for \$100,000 would require a total match of \$50,000, of which \$35,000 could be in-kind and \$15,000 would need to be cash match.] Match resources can draw on any combination of public, private, or philanthropic sources (as permitted by any applicable laws or regulations).

All resources and activities to be applied toward “in kind” match must be specified, and any prospective cash or in-kind contributions by regional partners supported by letters, memoranda of understanding, or other documentation. Regions that include areas outside Wisconsin must draw part of their match from those out-of-state areas and document this out-of-state contribution.

3. Sustainability requirement

Because state WIA funds to support this effort are limited and will not be available indefinitely, it is crucial that partnerships receiving GROW grants detail what, how, and when resources will be secured to continue the partnership and its activities beyond the grant period. Specific plans for both continued funding and ongoing administration of partnership activities must be included in project proposals. Note that sustainability plans will count more heavily for GROW II than for the first round of GROW grants, and that no specific commitment has been made to GROW funding beyond GROW II.

4. Ongoing monitoring, reporting and evaluation

GROW II grantees will be expected to set measurable goals for their projects and specify ways of tracking and evaluating progress toward those goals.

Grantees will also be expected to describe and document and their grant-funded spending and activities and project progress in detail. Reporting guidelines will be included in the grant agreements between recipient partnerships and DWD, and those agreements will emphasize the importance of timely and complete reporting.

Grantees may also be called upon to present information about their GROW-funded projects to the Governor’s Council on Workforce Investment or its committees.

5. Allowable and unallowable costs

Use of GROW grant funds for partnership project costs must comply with all applicable state and federal laws, regulations, and policies governing use of WIA funds. Costs that may be funded with GROW grant funds include, but are not limited to:

- Staff salaries and fringe benefits.
- Travel (e.g., staff, trainers, consultants, etc.).
- Facilities (e.g., rent, meeting space, conference sites, etc.).
- Supplies and materials related specifically to project activities.
- Consultants and trainers (e.g., for strategic planning, skill needs studies, etc.).
- Communications, publications, and public relations.
- Provision of direct training or other program services to individuals will be limited to those services being newly implemented or implemented on an experimental basis during the project year. GROW II funds may not be applied to routine operations of standard WIA or other workforce development programs.
- Other project related costs if detailed and justified in the grant application and allowable under WIA.

The following costs **may not** be funded with GROW II grants:

- Capital improvements.
- Other purposes not generally approvable under WIA.

6. Timely expenditure of funds

Applicants for additional GROW funding should note that WIA requires states to expend 80% of state WIA funds each year. Because of this requirement, DWD/DWS, in consultation with the CWI, reserves the right to renegotiate budgets and reallocate funds from approved projects if cumulative grant expenditures fall below 80% of planned grant expenditures by the end of the third quarter of the grant period.

E. Proposal Submission, Review, and Approval Process

1. Submission due date and process

Applicants must submit an electronic copy of their project application no later than 4:00 p.m. on Friday, August 25, 2006. Applicants must also submit one hard copy (with original signatures) either postmarked by August 25 or hand-delivered by the 4:00 deadline. Please note that DWD restricts e-mail files to 20MB. Both electronic and hard copies should be submitted to:

Fred Bartol
Department of Workforce Development
Division of Workforce Solutions
Office of Economic Initiatives
201 E. Washington Ave., Room A200
P.O. Box 7972
Madison, WI 53707-7972
Phone: (608) 266-1349
Fax: (608) 267-2829
Email: fred.bartol@dwd.state.wi.us

Applicants must complete the forms and respond to the application questions as specified in Part II: Application and Forms (below). This includes the following sections in the order in which they should be submitted:

- Cover Page (form provided)
- Project Executive Summary (form provided)
- Regional Partners Signature page (form provided)
- Current GROW grant third quarter report (using standard form)
- Project Narrative (not to exceed 10 single-spaced pages, with a font-size of no less than 11 points)
- Budget, Budget Backup, and Budget Expenditure Plans (forms provided)
- Applicant attachments (e.g., letters of support), as appropriate.

2. Application review process

Regional partnership proposals will be reviewed through a three-step process:

- **Basic compliance review**

DWD/DWS Office of Economic Initiatives and Bureau of Division-wide Services Finance and Budget staff will review GROW grant applications for compliance with basic application requirements, including completeness of submitted application materials, inclusion of required partners, response to specified grant priorities, and compliance with WIA administrative and program requirements.

DWD/DWS reserves the right either to deny grant applications that do not meet basic application requirements, or to require that incomplete applications be completed within a specified time before undergoing further review.

- **Internal and interagency content/quality review**

This review will be conducted by a review team comprised of CWI members, the CWI State Interagency Review Team (or their designees), and DWD/CWI staff. This review will focus on narrative components of the application.

- **Partnership presentations**

Representatives of partnership leadership teams will be required to present information concerning their proposals at in person meetings with members of the project review team to be held in Madison in early September.

The review team will submit funding recommendations to the DWD Secretary and CWI Chair, who will make final funding decisions based on the proposals that best further the intent of this effort and the goals of the Governor, the CWI, and the key state workforce development policy direction.

3. Review criteria

Applications will be reviewed for completeness and clarity of presentation, internal consistency among the project components, and overall consistency with GROW program priorities as outlined in these guidelines. Appendix A: Review Criteria (below) specifies the review criteria that will be used to evaluate proposals and make funding recommendations. Although those criteria and those recommendations are advisory only, applicants are encouraged to pay careful attention to them as well as to subsections A through C (above) of the current section for guidance in preparing project proposals.



Part II -- Application and Forms

This provides detailed instructions and forms for completing the GROW grant application. All sections of this application must be completed and submitted in the order listed.

A. **Grant Application Cover Page (Form A)**

B. *Executive Summary (Form B)* Please note that the executive summary may be the only document reviewed by key decision-makers and should clearly capture the essence and a few details of the proposal.

C. **Partnership Signature Page (Form C)**

D. **Third Quarter Report on Current GROW Project**

Complete your third quarter report using the standard report format and include it with this application. Please include all attached documentation related to your quarterly report and attach it to the report (not the application) such that the report and attached documentation can be treated as a separate document.

Please note that the third quarter report will be used to evaluate progress to date as part of the evaluation of the application for GROW II funding.

E. **Project Narrative**

The narrative section should be no longer than 10 pages. Number each page of the application narrative, respond to each response item as described, and number and label each response.

1. **Strategic background**

- a. **Regional challenges/opportunities.** Describe the regional geographic features, demographic trends, economic conditions, labor market dynamics, educational characteristics, public policy issues, or other circumstances the partnership considers central to the regional development situation the proposed GROW II project will address. Describe the data and analysis that support this understanding of the regional situation, and discuss how the partnership's current GROW project has influenced that understanding. [*Note: Any proposed changes in regional configuration should be explained and justified under this heading as well as under item 2a below*]
- b. **Partnership status.** Describe the composition of the partnership and the specific roles, responsibilities, and level of involvement of each partner, as well as the partnership's governance structure and process. Detail the partnership's involvement with any major regional economic development project or initiative (s), any major regional educational project or initiative(s), the regional business community, representatives of particular industry sectors, and the regional workforce development system.
- c. **GROW process and planning.** Describe in specific terms how the current GROW project has laid the foundations for the proposed GROW II project, and detail the process by which the partnership has developed that proposed project.

2. GROW II Goals, Objectives, and Activities

- a. **Strategic vision and goals.** Describe the strategic goals for the region and program goals for the partnership that will be advanced by the proposed use of GROW II funds. Explain how the proposed project represents an innovative approach to economic and workforce development in the region, builds upon or helps sustain innovations already under way, or enhances the capacity of the workforce development system to pursue innovative regional development efforts.
- b. **Partnership strengthening.** If applicable, describe any substantial changes expected in partnership composition or operations and how these reflect the project's strategic vision and goals. Specifically address the level of engagement of the business community.
- c. **Strategic planning.** If applicable, describe in detail any strategic planning that will be supported by GROW II funds. Explain how this planning builds on prior data collection, data analysis, strategic planning, or program implementation activities and how this planning is instrumental to one or more of the program priorities identified in Section I.C.3 of the Program Guidelines (above).
- d. **Partnership capacity building/targeted program activities.** Describe measurable objectives, key activities, and related action steps and timetables for any activities to be funded with GROW II funds. Indicate how these activities:
 - o will improve the region's ability to effectively implement regional workforce investment and economic growth strategies and plans, or
 - o represent concrete steps in implementing regional workforce investment and economic growth strategies and plans. Identify key action steps with timetables indicating how and when these steps will be implemented.

To the extent applicable, describe how the project addresses one or more of the following priorities:

- o Creating or working with existing regional industry partnerships and other partners in the development of sector-based career ladder / pathway structures.
- o Enhancing efforts to build career ladder / pathway strategies designed specifically to help low-wage, low-skilled or otherwise disadvantaged workers.
- o Implementing timely sector-based human resource strategies, particularly in high-wage growth industries experiencing shortages of skilled workers but also in other demand areas with career pathway potential.
- o Integrating sector-based workforce development strategies and business services into job centers.
- o Pursuing innovative efforts to engage the business community and/or individual business leaders in the work of the regional partnership.

3. Matching Funds

Describe the type (in-kind services, cash), source (federal, state, private, etc.), total match amount, and percentage of total grant dollars of match funds that will support this grant. Indicate what partners or other entities will be providing the match and what specific project expenses will be covered by matching resources. Include match amounts on the proposal budget page (Form D) and detail match components on the budget back-up page (Form D-1). (See Program Guidelines, Section E.2.)

Proposals should include, as attachments, documentation of commitments by partners to provide cash or in-kind matching resources.

4. Sustainability

Describe the partnership's commitment to and plans for sustaining the regional partnership and its activities beyond the grant period, assuming no additional GROW funding becomes available after October 14, 2007. Include details on what resources (financial, organizational, human), in addition to any identified as match for the grant period, will be sought/secured and from what entities, what specific action steps will be taken to secure the resources and what entity is responsible, and when the resources are expected to be available.

5. Evaluation

Describe how the partnership will measure progress and success in meeting project objectives. Specify quantifiable indicators related both to processes and outcomes. Indicate how the measures will be tracked for periodic review and reporting, including how the activities of multiple partners and fund expenditures will be tracked and what entity is responsible for tracking and reporting. Finally, indicate what systems will be in place to make adjustments in activities and expenditure rates when needed to improve project outcomes and achieve project objectives.

F. Budget, Budget Backup, and Budget Expenditure Plan (Form D, D-1, and D-2)

1. Complete the Budget Form D, providing budget information for each line item, for each column (e.g., grant dollars requested, match, total project funds.) (See Program Guidelines, Section D.5.)
2. Complete Budget Form D-1, Budget Back-up Page, that provides detail for each budget line. Refer to each line on the Budget page for guidance on what to include in the Budget Back-up. Please itemize and specify all "Other" costs on a separate sheet, and provide a detailed justification for including these costs. Please also itemize specific resources that represent project match.
3. Complete Form D-2, Quarterly Expenditure Plan, detailing projected expenditures by quarter and cumulatively over the life of the grant.

WIA requires that the state expend 80% of state funds each year. Because of this requirement, DWD/DWS reserves the right to renegotiate budgets and to reallocate funds from approved projects if cumulative grant expenditures fall below 80% of planned grant expenditures by the end of the third quarter of the grant period.

FORM A -- COVER PAGE

Growing Regional Opportunities in Wisconsin (GROW) II

Grant Application

Complete all information requested

Partnership Name: _____	Amt Requested: \$_____
Participating Wisconsin WDAs : _____	
Non-Wisconsin areas (if any) _____	

Applicant Organization Information (Provide information requested for the applicant organization.)

Organization Name

Grant Contact

Title

Phone Number/Extension

Fax Number

Email

Number and Street

City

WI

Zip Code

Fiscal Agent Information (If the fiscal agent is different from above, complete all information requested below. If the fiscal agent is the same as the applicant, provide only the name and contact information requested for the fiscal contact.)

Organization Name

Fiscal Contact

Title

Phone Number/Extension

Fax Number

Email

Number and Street

City

WI

Zip Code

Authorized Signatures (Signatures of individuals authorized by the applicant organization and fiscal agent organization, if different from the application organization.)

Applicant Organization Signature

Print Name

Print Title

Fiscal Agent Organization Signature

Print Name

Print Title

FORM B -- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Growing Regional Opportunities in Wisconsin (GROW) II

Grant Application

Complete all information requested; should not exceed 2 pages

Applicant Information

Applicant Name

Total Dollars Requested

Name of regional partnership/project title

Project Description *(Provide a brief description of the regional partnership, including regional geography, key partners, key goals and objectives, and key activities of the project.)*

Expected Results *(Indicate key outcomes that are expected at the conclusion of the grant)*

FORM C -- PARTNERSHIP SIGNATURE PAGE
Growing Regional Opportunities in Wisconsin (GROW) II

Grant Application

Include the name of each organization that is a partner in the Partnership and the name/title of the individual authorized to sign agreements on behalf of that organization. Obtain the signature of each partner authorized representative and date of signature. Expand or add additional signature pages as needed.

Workforce Development Board Representatives

(Include signatures of all participating WDB Board Chairs and Executive Directors)

1.	<hr/> <i>WDB Name</i>	<hr/> <i>WDB Number</i>
	<hr/> <i>Executive Director (Print)</i>	
	<hr/> <i>Signature</i>	<hr/> <i>Date</i>
	<hr/> <i>WDB Board Chair (Print)</i>	
	<hr/> <i>Signature</i>	<hr/> <i>Date</i>
2.	<hr/> <i>WDB Name</i>	<hr/> <i>WDB Number</i>
	<hr/> <i>Executive Director (Print)</i>	
	<hr/> <i>Signature</i>	<hr/> <i>Date</i>
	<hr/> <i>WDB Board Chair (Print)</i>	
	<hr/> <i>Signature</i>	<hr/> <i>Date</i>

Other Participating Organizations

1.	<hr/> <i>Business/Organization Name</i>	
	<hr/> <i>Name of Authorized Representative</i>	<hr/> <i>Title</i>
	<hr/> <i>Signature</i>	<hr/> <i>Date</i>
2.	<hr/> <i>Business/Organization Name</i>	
	<hr/> <i>Name of Authorized Representative</i>	<hr/> <i>Title</i>
	<hr/> <i>Signature</i>	<hr/> <i>Date</i>
3.	<hr/> <i>Business/Organization Name</i>	
	<hr/> <i>Name of Authorized Representative</i>	<hr/> <i>Title</i>
	<hr/> <i>Signature</i>	<hr/> <i>Date</i>

FORM D -- GRANT BUDGET PAGE AND BUDGET BACK-UP

Growing Regional Opportunities in Wisconsin (GROW) II

Grant Application

*Provide a detailed program budget in the categories listed below. Include grant requested funds, match (amount, type, source) and total budget by line item. Complete and attach the **detailed budget backup page** (Form D-1) that details what is included in each budget line as indicated under each budget line item. If equipment, development of curricula or other unique project funds are requested, provide a detailed explanation and justification on the budget back-up page.*

Budget Category	Grant Funds requested	Project Match			Total Project Funds
		Amount	Type	Source	
Staff Salaries <i>(Budget back-up: provide title, salary and number of hours for each staff position to be funded by this grant)</i>					
Staff Fringe Benefits <i>(Budget back-up: provide type and cost of FB for each position funded with grant dollars)</i>					
Consultants, Trainers <i>(Budget back-up: indicate what consultant services or training services are being contracted for, who is providing the services, costs of individual contracts)</i>					
Other Contractors <i>(Budget back-up: include list of other contractors, services provided, and costs of services)</i>					
Travel (Mileage, Lodging, etc.) <i>(Budget back-up: describe by group, e.g., staff, partnership members, consultants, etc., and by type of travel expense, e.g., mileage, lodging, etc.)</i>					
Supplies, Materials <i>(Budget back-up: provide types of materials included and estimated cost for each.)</i>					
Facilities (Rent, Conference Space, etc.) <i>(Budget back-up: describe type of facilities and related costs, including unit costs as appropriate)</i>					
Communications (Phones, Publications, Printing, Other) <i>(Budget back-up: detail type of communications and related costs, including unit costs as appropriate)</i>					
Other <i>(Budget back-up: describe by item and cost and provide justification.)</i>					
Total					

FORM D-1
BUDGET BACK-UP PAGE
(To be completed by applicant)

FORM D-2 -- QUARTERLY EXPENDITURE PLAN

Growing Regional Opportunities in Wisconsin (GROW) II

GRANT APPLICATION

Complete the table below, describing the planned levels of total expenditures for each quarter and cumulatively through the period of the grant. Planned quarterly expenditure levels should reflect the level and type of activity expected to occur within the quarter. DWD/DWS will track actual expenditure levels against planned expenditure levels and reserves the right to reallocate funds from the grant if accumulated expenditures at the beginning of the final quarter fall below 80% of plan.

1 st Quarter Expenditures (10/15/06 – 01/14/07)		2 nd Quarter Planned Expenditures (01/15/07 – 04/14/07)		Cumulative 1 st and 2 nd Quarter Planned Expenditures (10/15/06 – 04/14/07)		3 rd Quarter Planned Expenditures (04/15/07 – 07/14/07)		Cumulative 1 st , 2 nd and 3 rd Quarter Planned Expenditures (10/15/06 – 07/14/07)		4 th Quarter Planned Expenditures (07/15/07 – 10/14/07)		Total Planned Expenditures	
\$\$	%	\$\$	%	\$\$	%	\$\$	%	\$\$	%	\$\$	%	\$\$	100%

Appendix A – Proposal Review Criteria

The following review criteria will be used in reviewing and scoring grant applications. Please note, however, that the scoring process is designed mainly to guide and structure review team deliberation and that scoring by individual reviewers may be revised through a consensus process by the review team as a whole. Please note also that scoring based on these criteria is advisory only and that final decisions on funding are at the joint discretion of the DWD Secretary in consultation with the CWI Chair. Other considerations in funding decisions may include but are not limited to:

- Amount of previous GROW funding
- Performance and progress to date in completion of current GROW efforts
- Other funding sources available to the regional partnership.

COMPLIANCE REVIEW CRITERIA

- All required components are included in the proposal
- The partnership includes all required partners. (*Business community, labor organizations, workforce development boards, economic development corporation & chambers of commerce, technical college district, UW two and/or four year campus*).
- Any changes in regional configuration are permitted by the guidelines and clearly explained and justified.
- Partnership activities cover the entire region (including out-of-state areas where applicable).
- The budget is complete, consistent with grant objectives, and compliant with allowed uses of program funds, and the budget detail clearly and thoroughly explains all proposed expenditures.

NARRATIVE REVIEW CRITERIA

Strategic Background (20 points possible)

- The third quarter report is complete, informative, and carefully prepared, and documents acceptable progress in meeting partnership objectives for the current grant year.
- The proposal presents an appropriately detailed picture, supported by data and analysis, of the regional development circumstances the GROW II project will address.
- The proposal offers a clear and detailed picture of the composition, governance, and operations of the partnership, and provides evidence of active involvement of all partners (and in particular the business community) in the development of the GROW II project.
- The proposal describes how the current GROW project has provided the foundations for the proposed GROW II project, and how the proposed GROW II project builds on those foundations.

Project Goals, Objectives, Activities (40 points possible)

- The proposal expresses a clear vision both for the region's development and for the partnership's role in that development, as well as a clear strategy for pursuing those goals.
- Any proposed changes in partnership composition or operations are consistent with the strategic direction and proposed activities of the partnership.
- Strategic planning initiatives to be supported by grant funds build on or supplement, in clearly explained ways, on previously conducted data collection, data analysis, and preliminary planning.
- Proposed project activities are associated with defined action steps, timetables and benchmarks, and projected outcomes; and these relate realistically to the one-year period of the grant and the combination of grant and matching resources available.
- Project activities appear likely to advance regional efforts in one or more of the following areas:

- Creating or working with existing regional industry partnerships and other partners in the development of sector-based career ladder / pathway structures.
- Enhancing efforts to build career ladder / pathway strategies designed specifically to help low-wage, low-skilled or otherwise disadvantaged workers.
- Implementing timely sector-based human resource strategies, particularly in high-wage growth industries experiencing shortages of skilled workers but also in other demand areas with career pathway potential.
- Integrating sector-based workforce development strategies and business services into job centers.
- Pursuing innovative efforts to engage the business community and/or individual business leaders in the work of the regional partnership.

Matching Funds (10 points possible)

- Matching resources to support the project are identified and in the required cash and in-kind amounts.
- A detailed description of the matching resources is included (e.g., amount, type, source and partners/entities that will provide it), and their current or future availability is documented.

Sustainability (20 points possible)

- The partnership outlines a realistic long term strategy for continuing to fund partnership efforts beyond the grant year.
- The sustainability discussion explains the organizational infrastructure that will continue to support regional partnership activities beyond the grant year.
- The sustainability plan outlines specific action steps to obtain future project resources; these steps are plausible and allow for various contingencies.
- A long-term commitment by partners to maintaining the partnership and continuing its activities beyond the grant year is evident.

Evaluation (10 points possible)

1. Success indicators are measurable, reasonable, and clearly related to project goals.
2. A system for tracking and reporting progress is clearly described; the system enables tracking of activities that involve multiple regional partners and includes identification of the entity/partner responsible for tracking and reporting.
3. A system for making mid-grant adjustments to improve progress and results is evident and includes clear benchmarks and steps to trigger and implement adjustments.