

Council on Workforce Investment  
**WORKFORCE STRATEGIES COMMITTEE**

August 3, 2006

**Recommendations for Use of CWI Advanced Manufacturing Project Funds**

Background

The CWI has targeted \$100,000 in CWI WIA Program Year 2006 Statewide Activity funds to support workforce development efforts in advanced manufacturing. The Workforce Strategies Committee has been given the responsibility for recommending how to use these funds. It began discussing the issue at its April 28, 2006 meeting, following which a survey of members was conducted to identify which of several project concepts emerged as a top priority. The top priority that emerged from this survey was to support implementation of the Manufacturing Skill Standards Council manufacturing skill standards assessment, training and certification system in Wisconsin. To pursue this priority, the Department would like to ensure the limited amount of funds available are strategically targeted to build system capacity; recognize various other federal, state and local resources being directed to advanced manufacturing; and leverage/link CWI funded efforts to these other resources to the extent possible.

Recommendation

The CWI Advanced Manufacturing Project funds will be used to support implementation of the MSSC manufacturing skill standards system by directing these funds to workforce investment system capacity building, including workforce development staff and employer education, in partnership with similar efforts occurring within the state. Recommended project activities include the following.

1. Develop/implement up to 11 MSSC-certified assessment centers located in, or firmly connected to, comprehensive Job Centers in each of the state's seven GROW regions.
2. Develop and deliver from four to seven MSSC system orientation sessions to staff within the workforce investment system, including staff from Job Centers, technical colleges, economic development agencies, youth apprenticeship/tech prep programs, WDBs, and other interested groups.
3. Develop and implement a statewide public information effort directed to employers to educate them on the MSSC system and its value/benefits, as well as to provide information on various other state resources available to assist them in meeting their workforce skill and workplace improvement needs.

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**Recommendation for Use of Remaining CWI “Special Innovation” Grant Funding**

Background

As was announced at the June 16 CWI meeting, three “Special Innovation” grants have been awarded, leaving approximately \$100,000 in unallocated grant funds. In the judgment of the review team, none of the “runner up” projects stood out as meriting these remaining funds. Instead, the Department would like to apply these funds strategically in a way that reinforces other major projects and initiatives.

Recommendation

Apply the remaining Special Innovation grant funds to a set of small “GROW Supplement” grants of up to \$25,000 each, to be awarded to GROW regions for proposals that, in addition to being clearly integrated with their existing GROW projects, innovate in either of the following two areas:

- *Regional metrics*: proposals to adapt and apply state- or regionally-developed economic and workforce data to specific elements of an established regional strategy. Possible uses of funds under this heading might include:
  - Refining metrics to relate to a specific industry-sector-based initiative
  - Using metrics to refine strategic focus on particular target populations
  - Developing metrics to capture regional innovation, entrepreneurship, or “new economy” aspects
  - Orienting stakeholders to better understand, interpret, and apply regional metrics.
- *Career pathways*: proposals to initiate, or take specific implementation steps in, career pathway projects. Possible applications of funds under this heading might include:
  - Initiating a career pathway planning process in a targeted industry sector
  - Planning or piloting a program for improving access to career pathways by specific underserved populations such as Limited English Proficient (LEP) individuals
  - Job Center staff training or orientation related to implementation of a career pathway structure
  - Outreach and marketing of career pathway programs to regional employers.