

Technical Education Equipment Grants to Serve Nearly 3,000 Students

Written by GOV Press Wisconsin
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Students at 17 Wisconsin school districts across the state will benefit from new advanced manufacturing training for high demand jobs.

MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers, together with the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD), announced on Wednesday that 2,927 students in 17 school districts statewide will benefit from advanced manufacturing training in preparation for high-demand job opportunities thanks to grants from the Wisconsin Fast Forward Program.



“There’s no denying the role of advanced manufacturing in the future of our economy and workforce right here in Wisconsin, and ensuring our kids have access to high-demand, high-skill job training opportunities is critical if we want to prepare our future workforce for the 21st Century,” said Gov. Evers. “By investing in technical education in school districts across the state, we are connecting the dots and expanding career opportunities for thousands of students while positioning our manufacturers for success.”

The current round of Wisconsin Fast Forward grants from DWD totals \$495,106 for school

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districts across the state to train students for career paths involving robotics, welding, plasma cutting, 3D printing, drones, and more. These grants reimburse school districts for the costs of purchasing and installing technical education equipment used for vocational training and technical education in advanced manufacturing fields. This includes the purchase of new equipment such as computer numerical control machines, robotic welders, fiber laser cutting machines, 3D printers, and more.

“Fast Forward grants accelerate advanced manufacturing training and equipment to better prepare our future workforce for careers in this high-demand, high-skill industry,” said DWD Secretary Amy Pechacek. “The state-of-the-art equipment, including robotic welders, laser cutters, 3D printers, and other high-tech tools, will enable schools to provide coursework that aligns with industry standards and requirements.”



High school students will train in advanced manufacturing fields to prepare for stable careers while they obtain dual enrollment credits, industry-endorsed certificates, and technical endorsements on high school diplomas. Advanced manufacturing refers to a family of manufacturing activities that depend on the use and coordination of information, automation, computation, software, sensing, and networking, and/or use of cutting-edge materials and emerging production capabilities enabled by the physical and biological sciences (e.g., nanotechnology, chemistry, and biology). This involves both new ways of manufacturing existing products and manufacturing new products emerging from advanced technologies.

The awards announced today include:

School District of Nekoosa, Wood County | \$14,425

The school district will use grant funds to buy equipment and software, including an Epilog Fusion Maker Laser Engraver and Corel Draw, to enhance the technical education infrastructure.

School District of Jefferson, Jefferson County | \$48,210

The school district will use grant funds for an Acer 3VS Vertical E-Milling Machine and a Badger/Miller Welder to modernize the manufacturing lab and better align with industry standards to teach skills needed in the trades.

Muskego-Norway School District, Waukesha County | \$37,997

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The school district will use grant funds to purchase a Laguna Industrial Planer, Laguna Widebelt Sander, and Oscillating Spindle Sander. The equipment will help students prepare for careers in precision manufacturing with various materials.

West Bend School District, Washington County | \$7,367

The school district will use grant funds for two Markforged 3D Printing Platforms that print with a variety of substrates to align the school's engineering and manufacturing programs with industry standards.

Pulaski Community School District, Brown County | \$50,000

The school district will use grant funds for an OMTECH CNC Fiber Laser Cutting Machine FC-105CFC, which will prepare students for careers in advanced manufacturing.

East Troy Community School District, Walworth County | \$29,103

The school district will use grant funds for an Amatrol Industry 4.0 Advanced Manufacturing Learning System to facilitate a new course and support current courses.

Whitehall School District, Trempealeau County | \$50,000

The school district will use grant funds for a ShopBot Max CNC router, Markforged Mark II 3D Printer Platform, and related software to help students create and fabricate prototypes and final product solutions.

St. Croix Central School District, St. Croix County | \$50,000

The school district will use grant funds to acquire a Fanuc Robotic Weld Cell ARC Mate for hands-on experiential learning on equipment in technical college and industry businesses.

Chilton School District, Calumet County | \$17,235

The school district will use grant funds for an Epilog Fusion Laser Engraver, Engraver Air Pump, Rim-Drive Rotary Attachment, and Vector grid and Filter system, providing students with more realistic production and manufacturing experiences.

School District of Monroe, Green County | \$50,000

The school district will use grant funds for Multiprocess Miller Welders XMT 350, Millermatic 252 wire feed welders, and Dynasty 210 TIG Welders, enabling the school district to work with employers and the technical college to provide manufacturing courses, certifications, mentorship, and career exploration.

Fort Atkinson School District, Jefferson County | \$10,011

The school district will use grant funds for a 770M CNC Mill to teach students how to set up, program, and use the machine for program design, preparing students for careers in manufacturing.

Prairie du Chien Area School District, Crawford County | \$50,000

The school district will use grant funds for Industry 4.0 Fundamentals Learning Systems to prepare students for careers in manufacturing processes, automation, and robotics.

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Wausau School District, Marathon County | \$12,062

The school district will use grant funds for an Afinia Dobot Bundle and FANUC ER-4iA Fenceless Robot CERT Cart, allowing students to use authentic industrial technology.

Hartford Union High School District, Washington County | \$14,166

The school district will use grant funds for a FANUC ER-4iA Fenceless Robot CERT Cart to deliver more industry-defined certifications and Waukesha County Technical College credits.

School District of Lomira, Dodge County | \$24,751

The school district will use grant funds for a FANUC ER-4iA Fenceless Robot CERT Cart, which is expected to double enrollment in advanced manufacturing courses.

School District of Milton, Rock County | \$19,615

The school district will use grant funds to purchase a Boss Table 4'x4' CNC Plasma Table and Hypertherm Powermax 45xp plasma cutter, giving students hands-on experience with relevant industry equipment.

Wittenberg-Birnamwood School District, Shawano County | \$10,164

The school district will use grant funds for electrical and plumbing work to purchase a VC999 Horizontal Thermal Form Packing Machine, creating a hands-on manufacturing experience.