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Gov. Reynolds announces second round of Employer Innovation Fund awardees, encourages employers to apply in third round

DES MOINES - Today, Governor Reynolds announced 22 recipients of the Employer Innovation Fund, a matching grant that helps employers provide postsecondary training and education opportunities for their employees. The second round of Employer Innovation Fund Grants will distribute \$568,000 to employers and employer consortiums across the state. A third round application period with \$244,200 in remaining funds will open Dec. 3 and close Dec. 17.

“Future Ready Iowa provides Iowans with life-changing opportunities while simultaneously helping employers grow their local workforce talent pipeline,” said Gov. Reynolds. “The program’s Employer Innovation Fund fuels grassroots innovation, empowering Iowa businesses and communities to create solutions that help Iowans find a good-paying job in a high-demand career. We are excited about this program’s initial success and see even greater opportunities in the future.”

The purpose of the grant is to create more opportunities for working Iowans to earn non-credit and for-credit postsecondary credentials leading to high-demand jobs in the state. Employers, community leaders and others can apply by submitting a proposal for implementing a creative solution to their local workforce needs.

“Employers’ efforts to develop their own workforce through upskilling, training and education programs, are key to help Iowa meet the 2025 goal of 70 percent of

lowans having postsecondary credentials,” said Director Beth Townsend, Iowa Workforce Development. “The Employer Innovation Fund is unique to Iowa and will help employers leverage their existing resources with a state match to upskill even more of their workforce. It also helps community organizations work with local employers to provide training dollars that also help develop a skilled workforce. We want to award all of the \$1.2 million the legislature appropriated to the fund this year so we strongly encourage employers to apply for the third round of grants.”

Employer Innovation Fund Recipients Include:

- Geater Machining & Manufacturing- Independence: Funding will support the purchase of a 3D printing package for Jesup Community School District; provide additional training and certification for 2 teachers and 3D printing certifications from MakerBot for 30 high school students. Award total: \$2,702
- Iowa Chronic Care Consortium (ICCC) – Des Moines: ICCC will provide scholarships and training materials for 7 students to participate in the first-in-Iowa Community Health Worker Professional Skills Training Program. Award total: \$8,575
- Interstates Construction Services, Incorporated –Sioux Center: Interstates will convert existing electrical apprenticeship training materials to Spanish as well as offer “English as a Second Language” classes. Currently, the apprenticeship program and journeyman’s electrical license exam are available only in English. This will provide a pathway to Interstates Registered Apprenticeship program for employees for whom English is not their first language. Award total: \$32,500
- Society of Saint Vincent de Paul/Bridges of Iowa – Des Moines: Funding will support the creation and implementation of a 4-step curriculum that will prepare and align under-leveraged, talented work candidates with support services, skill development and internships with multiple employers working in the trades. The goal is to create a career pathway that will lead to successful participation in Pre-Apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship programs. Award total: \$15,000
- Carl A. Nelson & Company, Brockway Mechanical & Roofing Co, Burlington Community School District and Southeastern Community College – West

Burlington: This partnership will create a construction Quality Pre-Apprenticeship program for high school students. Students will earn college credit, a Building Construction Certificate and an OSHA 10 General Construction credential. Award total: \$18,250

- Redstone Content Solutions LLC – Davenport: Funding will support opportunities for 2 interns to work in software development resulting in valuable IT experience and Java certification. Award total: \$21,000
- Family Resources – Davenport: Family Resources will implement a Family Resources Behavior Disorder Counselor Internship program for 18 interns over 2 years to obtain experience and education needed in the difficult to recruit field of human services. College credit will be earned by participants. Award total: \$20,681
- United Way of Muscatine – Muscatine: This program is a partnership of numerous local employers, educators, and community organizations. The ultimate goal is to reduce barriers faced by low-income families and enable parents to achieve non-credit postsecondary credentials in high-demand occupations. The curriculum is geared specifically for adult learners and is an accelerated track to reduce the potential life barriers that can get in the way of completion. The training is available for welding, CNC, and CAN credentials. Award total: \$26,715
- Mahaska County Hospital/Mahaska Health Partnership – Oskaloosa: This programming creates internships in high-demand areas of the hospital and supports tuition assistance to employees to obtain much-needed credentials in sonography, respiratory therapy, and paramedic training. Award total: \$35,000
- Clarke County Hospital – Osceola: This funding will double the amount of money the hospital has to invest in education and certification of current employees who can fill high-demand positions. Award total \$25,000
- JB Holland Construction, Inc. – Decorah: Funds will support the purchase of a simulator, which provides training for beginner, intermediate, and advanced heavy equipment operators. The training will lead to non-credit certifications that can also transfer to a credit program should employees chose to pursue that path. JB Holland will train new employees with this model and upskill current employees in an accelerated manner. Award total: \$50,000

- Boone Community School District – Boone: With support from Musco Lighting, the District will expand their existing EDGE career prep program into the aviation field. This project will allow 5 students to explore a variety of aviation careers while preparing them for taking the certification test for a private pilot license. This model combines distance learning with on-site learning with the potential to scale if successful. Award total: \$2,500
- Heartland AEA – Johnston: In partnership with the Iowa Hospital Association, Iowa Society of CPAs, Iowa Communication Alliance, Wolfe Eye Clinic and Master Builders of Iowa, Heartland AEA will develop an industry sponsored career investigative learning module for each of these high-demand occupations. These modules connect students directly to industries they are interested in as well as provide access to mentors in the industry. Award total: \$12,500
- Associated Computer Systems LLC (ACS) – Des Moines: ACS will hire interns for 2-month time frames, recruiting from Des Moines area high schools and community colleges. Interns will gain experience in the high-demand IT fields of help desk, cybersecurity and data security. Award total: \$20,160
- Vera French – Davenport: Funding will help lower the financial barriers working adults face in pursuing education in the community mental health field. This funding will support current employees at Vera French Community Mental Health Center as they upskill and pursue careers in this high-demand area. Award total: \$20,000
- Iowa Restaurant Association – West Des Moines: This funding will expand opportunities for Iowa students to obtain ProStart certification. This is a nationally recognized certificate and first step into the many professional opportunities in the hospitality industry. This funding will remove barriers such as the cost of the exam and tracking of on-the-job training required for certification. Award total: \$50,000
- Broadlawns Medical Center – Des Moines: Funding will provide stipends to 40 participants and help them complete their training to earn a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) certification, a high-demand career field. Award: \$50,000
- Central College – Pella: Central College will create and implement programming that supports traditional students seeking alternative career

pathways to high-demand jobs. This program is designed to support the challenges young Iowans face transitioning into full-time employment and offers additional credit earning opportunities at the same time. Award total: \$27,500

- Indian Hills Community College – Centerville: This project will become the the Rathbun Area Industrial Maintenance Project. The partnership of Appanoose, Davis, Monroe and Wayne counties with numerous area employers will upskill current employees and provide a path for juniors and seniors in high school to earn an Industrial Maintenance Diploma. This provides much needed training closer to the employers to accelerate upskilling opportunities. Award total: \$50,000
- Midwest Diesel Tech Academy/Peterbilt of Sioux City – Sioux City: Funding will support the development of a new training academy to meet the demands of Iowa's transportation industry. The demand for diesel mechanics has been steadily increasing over the last 10 years. This is a 9-month training program that incorporates on-the-job training through internships. Award total: \$50,000
- Gregory Design & Manufacturing – Fort Madison: In partnership with the Burlington Regional Correctional Facility, Gregory Design & Manufacturing will implement a 5-month welding training program tailored to provide specific support and education to address the many challenges faced by this population as they transition out of corrections. Award total: \$13,724
- Scott County Family YMCA/John Deere Foundation – Davenport: The program provides at-risk teens and young adults with critical services that help address the multiple barriers they face getting on a sustainable path of education and employment. The program provides mentoring, job training, and resume building coaching among other employability skills. The program serves the homeless, teenage parents, juveniles with a criminal record and others facing multiple barriers. Award \$16,667
- Second round total: \$568,475
- First round total: \$387,425
- Total Employer Innovation Fund grants awarded to date: \$955,900
- Remaining amount to be awarded in third round: \$244,100

The third round of Employer Innovation Fund applications will begin Dec. 3 and close on Dec. 17, 2019. Applications must be submitted through IowaGrants.gov. For more information about the Future Ready Iowa Employer Innovation Fund, visit www.FutureReadyIowa.gov/innovation

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