



News Release

Northwest WI Workforce Investment Board
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Workforce Investment Board announces \$250,000 grant to Northwest Wisconsin to develop interstate economic development strategies with Northeast Minnesota

The Northwest Wisconsin Workforce Investment Board, Inc. (NWWIB, Inc.) is pleased to announce a \$250,000 federal Department of Labor grant has been awarded to the Northland Works Partnership, comprised of the Northwest Wisconsin Workforce Investment Board, Northeast Minnesota Workforce Investment Board, and the Duluth Workforce Development Council. This Regional Innovation Grant will result in a transformative regional strategic plan that, when implemented, will prepare workers and businesses to compete and succeed in the global economy.

Regional Innovation Grants are drawn from National Emergency Grant funds to assist local workforce investment boards and their key partners design and develop a comprehensive and strategic regional plan focused on talent development that is aligned with the demands of the 21st century economy. This \$250,000 grant will support analysis of the region's infrastructure and economic assets and help develop viable strategies that create good employment opportunities for workers. The grant was submitted by Minnesota's Department of Employment and Economic Development in partnership with the NWWIB, Inc.

"Workforce development is more critical now than ever," said Steve Terry, Executive Director of the NWWIB, Inc.. "The myth persists that there are no good jobs in our region. The fact is there is a major workforce shortage looming on the horizon, one that will require thousands of skilled workers." The shortage will result from retirements, business expansions, and new developments. "Developing a comprehensive regional strategy that links economic development with workforce development and education is the most effective way we can tackle these impending issues," Terry said.

Several projects such as The Northland Works and the GROW Initiative are already working on aspects of a regional strategy. This project will work hand in hand with these efforts and develop a strategy that also includes Northeast Minnesota. "The economies of Northwest Wisconsin and Northeast Minnesota are facing very similar issues. Treating these areas as a contiguous economic region makes sense in terms of sharing resources to develop a strategy that benefits both regions," Terry said. The project includes the Wisconsin counties of Ashland, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Iron, Price, Rusk, Sawyer, Taylor and Washburn and the Minnesota counties of Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake and St. Louis. For more information on the project or the Workforce Investment Board, contact Mari Kay-Nabozny at 715-682-9141.