



# **Women's Economic Security Act (WESA) Women and High-Wage, High-Demand, Nontraditional Jobs Grant Program**

As required by Minnesota Stat. §116L.99 Subd. 3

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## Legislative History

Minnesota enacted the Women’s Economic Security act (WESA) in 2014. WESA is designed to protect and promote opportunities for women in the workplace. The Department of Employment and Economic Development administers the women and high-wage, high-demand, nontraditional jobs grant program ([Minnesota Statute §116L.99](#)) and expanded unemployment eligibility for domestic abuse victims, as established by WESA.

The purpose of the women and high-wage, high-demand, nontraditional jobs grant program is to make grants to eligible organizations for programs that encourage and assist women to enter high-wage, high-demand, nontraditional occupations including but not limited to those in the skilled trades, science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) occupations. Funds are to be used for:

1. Recruitment, preparation, placement, and retention of women, including women of color, low-income women, and women over 50 years old, in:
  - a. registered apprenticeships
  - b. postsecondary education programs
  - c. on-the-job training, and
  - d. permanent employment in high-wage, high-demand, nontraditional occupations.
2. Secondary or postsecondary education or other training to prepare women to succeed in high-wage, high-demand, nontraditional occupations. Activities under this clause may be conducted by the grantee or in collaboration with another institution, including but not limited to a public or private postsecondary school.
3. Innovative, hands-on, practices that:
  - a. stimulate interest in high-wage, high-demand, nontraditional occupations among girls,
  - b. increase awareness among girls about opportunities in high-wage, high-demand, nontraditional occupations, or
  - c. increase access to secondary programming leading to jobs in high-wage, high-demand, nontraditional occupations.
  - d. Best practices include but are not limited to mentoring, internships, or apprenticeships for girls in high-wage, high-demand, nontraditional occupations.
4. Training and other staff development for job seeker counselors and Minnesota family investment program (MFIP) caseworkers on opportunities in high-wage, high-demand, nontraditional occupations.
5. Incentives for employers and sponsors of registered apprenticeship programs to retain women in high-wage, high-demand, nontraditional occupations for more than one year.
6. Training and technical assistance for employers to create a safe and healthy workplace environment designed to retain and advance women, including best practices for:
  - a. addressing sexual harassment, and
  - b. overcoming gender inequity among employers and registered apprenticeship programs.
7. Public education and outreach activities to overcome stereotypes about women in high-wage, high-demand, nontraditional occupations, including the development of educational and marketing materials.
8. Services to support women in high-wage, high-demand, nontraditional occupations including but not limited to:
  - a. assistance with balancing work responsibilities;

- b. skills training and education;
  - c. family caregiving; and
  - d. access to advocacy assistance and services.
9. Recruitment, participation, and support of girls of color in approved training programs or a valid apprenticeship program subject to section [181A.07, subdivision 7](#).

The last item, recruitment of girls of color in training programs or apprenticeships, was added in 2016, as was a requirement that priority be given to programs that provide services and activities to women of color (along with women over 50 years of age and low-income women). The 2016 Legislature also added the requirement that DEED submit an annual report on the grants on January 15 of each year, beginning January 15 of 2019. The report must contain data, to the extent that they are available, disaggregated by race, cultural groups, family income, age, geographical location, migrant or foreign immigrant status, primary language, whether the participant is an English learner under section [124D.59](#), disability, and status of homelessness.

## Awards

### Funds Available

As authorized in [Minnesota Session Laws - 2023, Regular Session, Chapter 53, Article 20, Section 2, Subd.3. \(c\)](#) up to \$750,000 per year for State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2024-2025 is available for grants under the Women’s Economic Security Act (WESA) Competitive Grant Program. DEED will use five (5) percent of the \$750,000 each year to administer and monitor this program.

Organizations may apply for up to \$125,000 each year, for a maximum of \$250,000.

Total amount available for WESA grant awards is \$712,500 each year, for a maximum of \$1,425,000.

Nine organizations were awarded grants, eight entered into contract, for State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2024 and SFY 2025 (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024, and July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025, respectively). However, contracts were not executed for SFY2024 until February 2024. Contracts were executed for the full two-year period with an end date of June 30, 2025. The table below includes Grantees, servicing location, and funding amount for each SFY with total funds allocated.

### WESA Grant Awards for SFY 2024

Grantee	Servicing Location	Funding Amount, SFY2024	Funding Amount, SFY2025	Total Funding Amount
Community Action Duluth	Duluth Area & Surrounding Counties (St. Louis, Carlton, Pine, Lake)	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$100,000

Dunwoody College of Technology	Twin Cities/Metro Area	\$70,000	\$70,000	\$140,000
Emerge	Twin Cities/Metro Area	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$160,000
Minnesota Training Partnership	Twin Cities/Metro Area	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$200,000
National Able Network	Twin Cities/Metro Area	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$200,000
Northwest Indian Community Development Center (NWCDC)	Northwest Mn/ Headwaters Region 2	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$200,000
Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council (SWMN PIC)	Lower/Upper Sioux Communities & 23 Surrounding Counties	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$150,000
Washington County Workforce Center	Washington County	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$100,000

## Summary of Grantee Work Plans and Objectives

### *Community Action Duluth – Women in Non-traditional Employment*

**Program:** Provides employment & training in the construction and natural resources trades to female identifying individuals. There is a high demand for construction, laboring, and environmental careers and a systemic exclusion of women, BIPOC, and LGBTQIA+ identifying individuals. This project seeks to give female identifying individuals the skills to be successful in these career paths and advance racial and gender equity in the trades.

**Objective:** Prepare female identifying individuals of color and /or low-income female identifying individuals for basic carpentry certification.

- Complete outreach and recruitment activities in served areas,
- Serve 16 young women,
- 13 complete industry –recognized credentials,
- 14 placed in unsubsidized jobs,
- 14 exit the program with a wage at or above \$15.00 per hour.

### *Dunwoody College of Technology: Women in Technical Careers (WITC)*

**Program:** WITC prepares low-income women and women of color for high-wage, high-demand jobs by providing tuition assistance and other financial support, mentoring, professional development, and career services to support their pursuit of a certificate or degree from Dunwoody College and transition into the workforce. The program includes an outreach component targeting middle and high School girls and women to raise awareness of the benefits of postsecondary technical education and careers.

**Objective:** Provide training and job placement to low-income girls and women.

- Complete outreach and recruitment activities in served areas,
- Serve 14 women,
- 12 complete industry –recognized credentials,
- 12 placed in unsubsidized jobs,
- 12 exit the program with a wage at or above \$15.00 per hour.

#### *Emerge – High Demand Careers for Women*

**Program:** Provide career training in Commercial Driving and Manufacturing/Metal forming to women from Cedar-Riverside and North Minneapolis.

**Objective:** Connect low-income women, primarily BIPOC to truck driving and manufacturing training.

- Complete outreach and recruitment activities in served areas,
- Serve 20 women,
- 15 complete industry –recognized credentials,
- 12 placed in unsubsidized jobs,
- 12 exit the program with a wage at or above \$15.00 per hour.

#### *Minnesota Training Partnership – Union Jobs for Women*

**Program:** Minnesota Training Partnership (MTP) is the educational entity of the Minnesota AFL-CIO. Through the Union Jobs for Women project, MTP will prepare underserved groups of women for high wage, high-demand union jobs in manufacturing and construction. Key components of the project include online training modules, culturally responsive services, and strong connections to unions and apprenticeships.

**Objective:** Provide training and job placement to low-income girls and women.

- Complete outreach and recruitment activities in served areas,
- Serve 51 women,
- 36 complete industry –recognized credentials,
- 41 placed in unsubsidized jobs,
- 41 exit the program with a wage at or above \$15.00 per hour.

#### *National Able Network: IT Career Lab*

**Program:** IT Career Lab is a 10-week program that prepares low-income women of color to earn two certifications from Microsoft and Cisco. Earning these certifications helps level the playing field and allows students to advance their career and achieve upward economic mobility.

**Objective:** Provide training and job placement to low-income girls and women.

- Complete outreach and recruitment activities in served areas,



- Serve 40 young women,
- 28 complete industry –recognized credentials,
- 28 are placed in unsubsidized jobs,
- 28 exit the program with a wage at or above \$15.00 per hour.

*Northwest Indian Community Development Center: Anokiiwin Initiative – Women Succeeding in Workforce*

**Program:** Women’s Workforce Program – a foundation of skill-building targeted at female members through structured learning and individualized support.

Services are targeted to women needing employment and other related stabilization services to counteract financial challenges, housing instability, re-entry from incarceration or SUD treatment, who have not completed high school diploma, have long gaps in employment history, with income at or below 200% federal poverty guideline, and/or who identify as part of the BIPOC community.

**Objective:** Provide training and job placement to low-income girls and women.

- Complete outreach and recruitment activities in served areas,
- Serve 48 young women,
- 32 complete industry –recognized credentials,
- 20 placed in unsubsidized jobs,
- 7 exit the program with a wage at or above \$15.00 per hour.

*Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council (SWMN PPIC) –Women in Skilled Employment (WISE) Project*

**Goal:** To introduce and advance the careers and wages through a continuum of integrated opportunities and support to obtain academic credit, college credit, industry recognized credentials, marketable skills, related on-the-job training/work experiences, and employment in non-traditional high growth, high-demand occupations. .

**Objective:** Provide training and job placement to low-income girls and women.

- Complete outreach and recruitment activities in service areas,
- Serve 38 young women,
- 24 complete industry –recognized credentials,
- 26 placed in unsubsidized jobs, and
- 22 exit the program with a wage at or above \$15.00 per hour.

*Washington County Workforce Center: Women’s Economic Security Act (WESA)*

**Goal:** We will recruit and enroll 10 women who are either age 50+, or of color, or low income to complete classroom-based training for non-traditional work in occupations that are in-demand.

**Objective:** Provide training and job placement to low-income girls and women.

- Complete outreach and recruitment activities in served areas,
- Serve 10 young women,
- 8 complete industry–recognized credentials,
- 8 placed in unsubsidized jobs,
- 8 exit the program with a wage at or above \$15.00 per hour.

## Data

WESA Grantees document demographics for their program participants, their activities, services received, and outcomes in Workforce One, DEED’s web-based client management application. However, only those activities related to education, training, and employment are tracked in DEED’s on-line data system.

### Demographics

The tables below present data on demographics and outcomes for SFY2024 WESA programs. Data are for participants served between the time each grantee began to enroll participants, through September 30, 2024. Data is not provided for immigration status, English proficiency, or primary language. Participants are not required to provide this information and the percent of individuals who chose to provide this information was so small that no conclusions can be drawn from available data. Minnesota Statutes, Section 116L.99, requires disaggregated data to the extent they are available. To the extent they are available, disaggregated data on credentials earned and wages are provided following cumulative outcome tables.

#### *Age (at enrollment)*

Age Range	Number	Percent
0-15	0	0.00%
16-17	1	0.93%
18-19	3	2.80%
20-24	12	11.22%
25-29	24	22.43%
30-39	35	32.71%
40-49	23	21.50%
50-54	5	4.67%
55-59	1	0.93%
60+	3	2.80%
Total	107	100%

### Race

Race	Number	Percent
American Indian or Alaska Native	23	21.50%
Asian	4	3.74%
Black or African American	36	33.64%
Hawaiian Native or Other Pacific Islander	0	0.00%
Multi-Race	9	8.41%
White	31	28.97%
Did Not Self-Identify	4	3.74%
Total	107	100%

### Ethnicity

Latino/Hispanic	Number	Percent
Did Not Self-Identify	4	3.74
Hispanic or Latino	7	6.54
Not Hispanic or Latino	96	89.72
Total	107	100%

### Disability

Disability	Number	Percent
Did Not Self-Identify	14	13.08%
Not Disabled	81	75.70%
Yes, Disability is Employment Barrier	4	3.74%
Yes, Disability Not Barrier to Employment	8	7.48%
Total	107	100%

### Homelessness

Homeless Status	Number	Percent
Yes	15	14.02%
No	92	85.98%
Total	107	100%

### Annual Family Income

Income Range	Number	Percent
\$0-\$10,000	43	40.19%
\$10,001-\$20,000	10	9.35%
\$20,001-\$30,000	13	12.15%
\$30,001-\$40,000	4	3.74%

\$40,001-\$50,000	1	0.93%
\$50,001-\$60,000	4	3.74%
\$60,001-\$70,000	2	1.87%
\$70,001-\$80,000	0	0.00%
\$80,001-\$120,000	1	0.93%
\$120,001+	0	0.00%
No Data	29	27.10%
Total	107	100%

### *Labor Status*

Labor Status	Number	Percent
Employed Full-Time	13	12.15%
Employed Part-Time	34	31.78%
Employed, Received Term Notice/Military Separation	0	0.00%
Not Employed, Was Not Self-Employed	5	4.67%
Not Employed, Was Self-Employed, Farm	0	0.00%
Not Employed, Was Self-Employed, Non-Farm	0	0.00%
Self-Employed	3	2.80%
Unemployed	52	48.60%
Unemployed, Not Seeking Employment	0	0.00%
Total	107	100%

### *Educational Attainment*

Education	Number	Percent
0-11th Grade	6	5.61%
12th Grade Completed, No Diploma	1	0.93%
High School Diploma	27	25.23%
GED	5	4.67%
Some College/Tech/Vocational School	24	22.43%
Associate's Diploma/Degree	19	17.76%
Cert of Attendance/Completion	0	0.00%
Other Post-Sec Degree/Cert	2	1.87%
Bachelor's Degree or Equivalent	19	17.76%
Education Beyond Bachelor's Degree	4	3.74%
No Data	0	0.00%
Total	107	100%

## Outcomes

### Grant Summary

Grant Summary	Participants Served by September 30, 2024
Planned Participants	237
Actual Enrollments	114
Percent of Total Planned Participants	49%
Planned Enrolled in Training	199
Actual Enrolled in Training	80
Percent of Total Enrolled in Training	70%
Actual Enrolled in Credentialed Training	71
Successfully Completed Credentialed Training	39
Actual Enrolled in Non-Credentialed Training	25
Exits	28
Percent of Total Enrollments Now Exited	24%
Planned Employment Exits	166
Entering Employment at Exit	7
Percent of Total Enrollments Exiting to Employment	6%
Percent Employment Exits Compared to Planned	4%
Percent of Employment Exits Related to Training	43%
Average Wage at Exit	\$23.27

### Credentials

Credential Type	Participants Served by September 30, 2024
Occupational Skills Certificate	23
Technical/Occupational Skills License	7
AA or AS Degree	0
Other Recognized Credential	7
Credential Pending	30
No Credential Attained	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>85</b>

*Exits (Participants exited by September 30, 2024)*

Successful Exits	# of Participants Exited by September 30, 2024
Completed Program Objective	0
Entered Unsubsidized Employment	8
Program/Type Transfer	5
Remained in School	0
<b>Subtotal Successful Exits</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Total Exits</b>	<b>37</b>

*Wage Data*

Average Wage at Enrollment	Average Wage at Exit	Change	Percent Change	Annualized Change
\$13.67	\$24.48	\$10.81	57%	\$22,484.80

## Expenditures

Total amount available for grant awards was \$712,500 each year, for a maximum of \$1,425,000.

The following indicates the total programs' expenses July 1, 2023 - September 30, 2024, for SFY 2024:

COST CATEGORY	TOTAL EXPENSES/ REIMBURSEMENTS
Administration	\$15,250.91
Direct Services	\$127,536.72
Direct Services – WR/GED/ABE	\$4,003.15
Direct Customer Training	\$137,027.15
Support Services Costs	\$23,246.85
Outreach	\$2,272.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$309,337.28</b>