



Women and High-Wage, High-Demand, Nontraditional Jobs Grant Program (WESA)

SFY2022-2023

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Program Overview

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.

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:
7. best practices for addressing sexual harassment, and
 - a. to overcome gender inequity among employers and registered apprenticeship programs.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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 WESA 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.

Impact

- 248 participants were served
- 78.88% of participants were BIPOC
- 88% of participants successfully completed their program
- 49% attained an educational or workforce credential
- 70% entered employed upon program completion
- \$22.17 was the average wage upon program completion

Awards

Funds Available

As authorized in [Laws of Minnesota 2021, 1st Special Session, Chapter 10, Article 1, Sec.2 Subd. 3 \(b\)](#) up to \$750,000¹ per year for State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2022-2023 was available for grants under the Women’s Economic Security Act (WESA) Competitive Grant Program.

Organizations may apply for up to **\$150,000** each year, for a maximum of **\$300,000**.

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

Eight organizations were awarded WESA grants for State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2022 and SFY 2023 (July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022, and July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023, respectively). However, contracts were not executed for SFY2022 until January 2022.

SFY2023 contracts were further impacted by the COVID-19 State of Emergency. Contracts were executed 7/1/2022 with an end date of 9/30/2023. The table below includes Grantees, servicing location, and funding amount for each SFY with total funds allocated.

WESA Grant Awards for SFY 2022 and 2023

Grantee	Servicing Location	Funding Amount, SFY2022	Funding Amount, SFY2023	Total Funding Amount
Career Solutions	Stearns & Benton Counties	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$200,000
Dunwoody College of Technology	Twin Cities/Metro Area	\$69,135	\$69,135	\$138,270
Emerge	Twin Cities/Metro Area	\$77,500	\$77,500	\$155,000
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 (NWICDC)	Northwest Mn/ Headwaters Region 2	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$200,000

¹ DEED will use five (5) percent of the \$750,000 each year to administer and monitor this program

Somali Community Resettlement Services of Olmsted County	Metro/ Olmsted, Kandiyohi, Ride, and Steele Counties	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$250,000
Washington County Workforce Center	Washington County	\$40,865	\$40,865	\$81,730

Summary of Grantee Work Plans and Objectives

Career Solutions – STEM for Girls

Program: Exposing young women, ages 16-18 from the BIPOC community to construction and other STEM related career fields through the CareerONE and CareerTWO programs.

Objective: Prepare young women from diverse backgrounds for long-term success in STEM career fields.

- Complete outreach and recruitment activities in served areas
- Serve 37 young women
- 50 complete industry –recognized credentials
- 16 placed in unsubsidized jobs
- 22 placed in post-secondary education
- Increase wage by \$2.00 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 19 women
- 12 complete industry –recognized credentials
- 10 placed in unsubsidized jobs
- 17 placed in post-secondary education
- Increase wage by \$8.00 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 19 women
- 15 complete industry –recognized credentials
- 11 placed in unsubsidized jobs
- Increase wage by \$3.00 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 40 women
- 36 complete industry –recognized credentials
- 32 placed in unsubsidized jobs
- Increase wage by \$16.25 + benefits 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 27 young women
- 21 complete industry –recognized credentials
- 19 are placed in unsubsidized jobs
- Increase wage by \$1.80 per hour

Northwest Indian Community Development Center: Gidanishinaabekwenaaneg Ondaasagiwewag

Program: Expand NWICDC's Women's Reintegration and Jail Diversion Initiatives to target 68 low-income American Indian Women with criminal system convictions who are transitioning home to north central Minnesota from correctional facilities, jail and/or court-ordered substance use disorder treatment settings with nontraditional workforce readiness, training and employment.

Career pathways are welding, carpentry, construction, and machinery. Women will also have the opportunity to complete their GED and will receive training in OSHA 30 and First Aid CPR training for all four pathways.

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

- Complete outreach and recruitment activities in served areas
- Serve 60 young women
- 10 complete industry –recognized credentials
- 15 placed in unsubsidized jobs
- Increase wage by \$7.50 per hour

Somali Community Resettlement Services of Olmsted County –Career Pathways for Immigrant Women

Program: Provide Information Technology (IT) training and outreach on high demand, high wage, nontraditional careers to East African and Latinx immigrant women.

Objective: Provide training and job placement to low-income, young women of color, ages (18-24).

- Complete outreach and recruitment activities in service areas
- Serve 25 young women
- 20 complete industry –recognized credentials
- 15 placed in unsubsidized jobs
- Increase wage by \$5.00 per hour

Washington County Workforce Center: Non-Traditional Opportunities for Women (NOW)

Goal: NOW will recruit and enroll 12 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. A dedicated employment counselor who has been the driving factor of the success in our current WESA grant will continue to recruit, case manage, and place women served in this proposal.

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

- Complete outreach and recruitment activities in served areas
- Serve 11 young women
- 9 complete industry–recognized credentials
- 9 placed in unsubsidized jobs
- Increase wage by \$4.00 per hour

Data

WESA Grantees document demographics for their program participants, their activities, services received, and outcomes in Workforce One, DEED's a 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 SFY2022 and SFY2023 WESA programs. Data are for participants served between the time each grantee began to enroll participants, through 9/30/2023, the date to which some grants were extended. Data are 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	44	15.49%
18-19	28	9.86%
20-24	46	16.20%
25-29	39	13.73%
30-39	59	20.77%
40-49	44	15.49%
50-54	14	4.93%
55-59	6	2.11%
60+	4	1.41%
Total	284	100%

Race

Race	Number	Percent
American Indian or Alaska Native	56	19.72%
Asian	23	8.10%
Black or African American	128	45.07%
Hawaiian Native or Other Pacific Islander	0	0.00%

Multi-Race	17	5.99%
White	43	15.14%
Did Not Self-Identify	17	5.99%
Total	284	100%

Ethnicity

Latino/Hispanic	Number	Percent
Did Not Self-Identify	16	5.63%
Hispanic or Latino	35	12.32%
Not Hispanic or Latino	233	82.04%
Total	284	100%

Disability

Disability	Number	Percent
Did Not Self-Identify	26	9.15%
Not Disabled	228	80.28%
Yes, Disability is Employment Barrier	11	3.87%
Yes, Disability Not Barrier to Employment	19	6.69%
Total	284	100%

Homelessness

Homeless Status	Number	Percent
Yes	2	.70%
No	282	99.30%
Total	284	100%

Annual Family Income

Income Range	Number	Percent
\$0-\$10,000	74	26.06%
\$10,001-\$20,000	28	9.86%
\$20,001-\$30,000	23	8.10%
\$30,001-\$40,000	21	7.39%
\$40,001-\$50,000	9	3.17%
\$50,001-\$60,000	4	1.41%
\$60,001-\$70,000	1	0.35%

\$70,001-\$80,000	1	0.35%
\$80,001-\$120,000	1	0.35%
\$120,001+	1	0.35%
No Data	121	42.61%
Total	284	100%

Labor Status

Labor Status	Number	Percent
Employed Full-Time	40	14.08%
Employed Part-Time	76	26.76%
Employed, Received Term Notice/Military Separation	0	0.00%
Not Employed, Was Not Self-Employed	122	42.96%
Not Employed, Was Self-Employed, Farm	0	0.00%
Not Employed, Was Self-Employed, Non-Farm	1	0.35%
Not in Labor Force	44	15.49%
Self-Employed	1	0.35%
Total	284	100%

Educational Attainment

Education	Number	Percent
0-11th Grade	60	21.13%
12th Grade Completed, No Diploma	5	1.76%
High School Diploma	93	32.75%
GED	19	6.69%
Some College/Tech/Vocational School	58	20.42%
Associate's Diploma/Degree	14	4.93%
Cert of Attendance/Completion	0	0.00%
Other Post-Sec Degree/Cert	4	1.41%
Bachelor's Degree or Equivalent	27	9.51%
Education Beyond Bachelor's Degree	3	1.06%
No Data	1	0.35%
Total	284	100%

Outcomes

Grant Summary

Grant Summary	Participants Served by 09/30/2023
Planned Participants	337
Actual Enrollments	284
Percent of Total Planned Participants	84%
Planned Enrolled in Training	258
Actual Enrolled in Training	168
Percent of Total Enrolled in Training	59%
Actual Enrolled in Credentialed Training	156
Successfully Completed Credentialed Training	115
Actual Enrolled in Non-Credentialed Training	16
Exits	251
Percent of Total Enrollments Now Exited	88%
Planned Employment Exits	217
Entering Employment at Exit	70
Percent of Total Enrollments Exiting to Employment	25%
Percent Employment Exits Compared to Planned	32%
Percent of Employment Exits Related to Training	46%
Average Wage at Exit	\$22.73

Credentials

Credential Type	Participants Served by 12/31/2021
GED	1
Occupational Skills Certificate	37
Technical/Occupational Skills License	16
AA or AS Degree	5
Other Recognized Credential	12
Credential Pending	69
No Credential Attained	23
Total	163

Exits (Participants exited by 12/31/2021)

Successful Exits	# of Participants Exited by 12/31/2021
Completed Program Objective	48
Entered Unsubsidized Employment	81
Program/Type Transfer	13
Remained in School	26
Subtotal Successful Exits	168
Total Exits	195

Wage Data

Average Wage at Enrollment	Average Wage at Exit	Change	Percent Change	Annualized Change
\$17.26	\$20.55	\$3.29	19%	\$6,843.20

Disaggregated Outcomes

Disaggregated data tables for credential attainment follow. Data displayed are for those participants who were served by 09/30/2023. As of 01/16/2024, 207 WESA participants had exited. Of these, 181 (87%) had exited to employment; 26 had not. Wage data are for the first quarter after exit.

Note that, for disaggregated data, numbers are not available when fewer than ten individuals are in a category.

Credentials by Age

Age Range	Postsecondary Credential	No Credential
Age 18 to 24	26	64
Age 25 to 44	37	133
Age 45-49	<10	14
Age 50+	24	24

Credentials by Race

Note that due to different groupings of race, a participant may be included more than one category.

Race	Postsecondary Credential	No Credential
American Indian	12	48
Asian	<10	18
Black or African American	32	82
US-born Black or African American	22	37
All Women of Color	64	183
White	21	39
Not Available	<10	23

Credentials by Homeless Status

Homeless Status	Postsecondary Credential	No Credential
Homeless at Enrollment	<10	<10
Not Homeless at Enrollment	224	83

Credentials by Educational Attainment

Education	Postsecondary Credential	No Credential
Less than HS Diploma	<10	25
HS Diploma or GED	39	112
Some College	28	67
College Degree	15	35

Credentials by Geography

Geography	Postsecondary Credential	No Credential
Twin Cities Metro	44	145
Greater Mn	38	79

Wages (First Quarter after Exit) by Age

As of 1/16/2024 participants must have exited by 6/30/2023 to be eligible for wage verification.

Age Range	Total	# Exited to Employment by 6/30/23	% Exited to Employment by 6/30/23	Average Hourly Wage	# Exited by 6/30/23, but not to Employment	% Exited by 6/30/23, but not to Employment
Age 18 to 24	62	57	92%	\$ 25.23	<10	0
Age 25 to 44	100	84	84%	\$ 23.35	16	43%
Age 45 to 49	15	14	93%	ND	ND	ND
Age 50+	24	24	100%	ND	ND	ND

Wages (First Quarter after Exit) by Race

Note that due to different groupings, a participant may be included more than one category. As of 1/16/2024 participants must have exited by 6/30/2023 to be eligible for wage verification.

Race	Total	# Exited to Employment by 6/30/23	% Exited to Employment by 6/30/23	Average Hourly Wage	# Exited by 6/30/23, but not to Employment	% Exited by 6/30/23, but not to Employment
American Indian	22	20	91%	\$ 13.84	<10	ND
Asian	19	16	84%	\$ 19.18	ND	ND
Black or African American	65	53	82%	\$ 15.76	12	18%
US-born Black or African American	36	30	83%	\$ 15.26	<10	ND
All Women of Color	149	130	87%	\$ 15.50	19	13%
White	49	43	88%	\$ 18.38	<10	ND
Not Available	16	13	81%	\$ 12.76	ND	ND

Wages (First Quarter after Exit) by Homeless Status

As of 1/16/2024 participants must have exited by 6/30/2023 to be eligible for wage verification.

Homeless Status	Total	# Exited to Employment by 6/30/23	% Exited to Employment by 6/30/23	Average Hourly Wage	# Exited by 6/30/23, but not to Employment	% Exited by 6/30/23, but not to Employment
Homeless at Enrollment	<10	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
Not Homeless at Enrollment	201	175	87%	\$16.43	54	13%

Wages (First Quarter after Exit) by Educational Attainment

As of 1/16/2024 participants must have exited by 6/30/2023 to be eligible for wage verification.

Education	Total	# Exited to Employment by 6/30/23	% Exited to Employment by 6/30/23	Average Hourly Wage	# Exited by 6/30/23, but not to Employment	% Exited by 6/30/23, but not to Employment
Less than HS Diploma	10	<10	ND	ND	<10	ND
HS Diploma or GED	100	90	90%	\$16.58	10	10%

Some College	58	50	86%	\$14.81	<10	ND
College Degree	39	34	87%	\$18.28	<10	ND

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, 2021- September 30, 2023 for SFY 2022 and SFY 2023:

COST CATEGORY	TOTAL EXPENSES/ REIMBURSEMENTS
Administration:	\$116,272.61
Direct Services:	\$562,207.52
Direct Services – WR/GED/ABE	\$45,593.52
Direct Customer Training:	\$527,038.10
Support Services Costs:	\$43,267.49
Outreach:	\$5,522.00
Total:	\$1,299,921.24

Future Allocations

The 2023 Minnesota Legislature appropriated \$750,000 for each year in the SFY 2024-2025 biennium for the women and high-wage, high-demand, nontraditional jobs grant program under Minnesota Statutes, section 116L.99. After reduction by a five percent administrative and monitoring fee, \$712,500 each year, for a maximum of \$1,425,000. remained for grants. Nine grants were awarded, as follows:

Agency	SFY24-25 WESA
EMERGE	\$160,000
Community Action Duluth	\$100,000
Minnesota Training Partners (MTP)	\$200,000
Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council (SWMN PIC)	\$150,000
Washington County	\$100,000
National Able Network	\$200,000
Northwest Indian Community Development Center (NWICDC)	\$200,000
Dunwoody College	\$140,000
Somali Community Resettlement Services (SCRS)	\$175,000
TOTAL	\$1,425,000