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RACINE COUNTY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS RECEIVE MORE THAN \$700K IN WISCONSIN FAST FORWARD WORKER TRAINING GRANT FUNDING

Funding will help prepare residents and businesses for region's extraordinary job growth

Racine – Today, Racine County Executive Jonathan Delagrave, Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Ray Allen and Racine Mayor Cory Mason were joined by other local and state officials to announce the award of more than \$700,000 in Wisconsin Fast Forward grant funding to Racine County-based entities to assist with worker training initiatives in Racine County.

The Fast Forward grant funding will enable programs to prepare local residents and businesses for the region's extraordinary job growth spurred, in part, by Foxconn Technology Group's \$10 billion investment. The funding includes \$400,000 to Racine Area Manufacturers and Commerce for the training of 100 unemployed and underemployed individuals for positions such as CNC operators/programmers, logistics technicians, truck drivers, electronic assemblers, construction/carpentry builders and other high-demand career opportunities.

Additionally, Racine County will receive \$314,103 to train 100 unemployed and underemployed individuals as CNC operators, industrial maintenance technicians, manufacturing operators, customer service specialists and hospitality specialists. This program will ensure that Racine County residents have the skills necessary to gain employment with existing local businesses that may be affected by Foxconn job growth.

"We are working hard to help our valued Racine County businesses find skilled talent in today's job market. Bringing more than \$700,000 in Wisconsin Fast Forward grant funding to Racine County is a tremendous boost for our local businesses and residents and will help ensure that everyone benefits in this historic new era for our community," County Executive Jonathan Delagrave said.

As part of the County's Fast Forward award, Racine County in partnership with Racine Community Foundation and United Way of Racine County will commit \$90,000 to fund Community Connectors, a community-based organization to engage, enroll, and support individuals throughout their employment progression. Community Connectors will target roughly 70% out-of-school youth, women, veterans, minorities, ex-offenders,

and long-term public assistance recipients and an additional 30% of participants from Western Racine County.

Gateway Technical College, WRTP-Big Step and First Choice Pre-Apprenticeship, a program of YMCA, will provide much of the worker training through the Fast Forward grant. WRTP-BIG STEP has committed \$30,000 toward marketing and outreach services, and UMOS, a non-profit advocacy organization seeking to improve employment opportunities for underserved populations, will invest up to \$100,000 for transitional jobs training and wage subsidies for successful trainees.

Training is expected to start in early 2019. At least 22 Racine County employers, including seven in Western Racine County, are committed to hiring more than double the number of residents successfully trained through the Fast Forward grant.

Today's announcement comes just a few months after the launch of Racine Works, a training program for construction workers that was funded in part by Wisconsin Fast Forward grant money.

"With the Wisconsin unemployment rate at historically low levels, it is imperative that we make significant investments in training our workforce, especially those people who are unemployed or underemployed," Secretary Allen said. "Under Governor Walker's leadership, the Fast Forward grant program has proven to be an extremely effective tool in addressing that need."

The State's Wisconsin Fast Forward (WFF) grant program is a nationally recognized, innovative talent development solution driven by Wisconsin businesses to train and retain highly skilled workers. More than \$25 million in WFF grant contracts has been issued to date, supporting more than 200 worker-training projects and benefitting hundreds of employers and thousands of workers across Wisconsin.

More information on the Wisconsin Fast Forward worker training grant program can be found online at WisconsinFastForward.com.

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