WITC benefits from three-year, $20 million federal grant

Wisconsin’s health care employers and workers will benefit from a $20 million investment by the U.S. Department of Labor in the form of a grant to Wisconsin’s technical colleges to address emerging needs in the health care sector. Advancing Careers and Training for Healthcare (ACT for Healthcare) is a collaboration of all 16 colleges in the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS), industry partners, workforce development systems, and previous TAACCCT grant recipients to develop, expand and enhance health care training programs.

WITC’s $593,789 portion of this grant will support development of an associate degree gerontology program that will include career pathway options of embedded credentials. Students may opt to pursue a full gerontology degree or enhance other program degrees that serve the aging population’s needs with gerontology embedded certificates or technical diplomas. The three-year grant funding began October 1 and will conclude September 30, 2017.

“The TAACCCT 4 funding provides some terrific opportunities for WITC, especially in terms of meeting the needs of our growing, aging population in the district,” said Mary Ann Pebler, WITC Director of Resource Development. “A growing aging population means we have more families needing services and yet fewer younger community members available to meet these needs. This will be a big challenge in the near future and the TAACCCT 4 grant is just a piece of how WITC will move forward to meet this challenge.”

The grant will also allow for a significant upgrade of human patient simulation (HPS) equipment for all campuses’ nursing labs.

From 1990 to 2009, the number of workers in Wisconsin’s robust healthcare industry increased by 106 percent, remaining steady even during the 2008 recession. The health care workforce continues to grow, with 387,882 jobs throughout the state projected to increase to nearly 423,000 by 2018, representing a greater increase than any other industry.

The successful grant application comes under the fourth installment of a multi-year, nearly $2.0 billion federal community college initiative designed to increase credential attainment in high-priority economic sectors. In previous rounds, Wisconsin’s technical colleges won grants to expand innovative programs that produce high-skilled workers in information technology ($23.1 million in 2013) and manufacturing ($18.3 million in 2012).

This round also includes a $5 million, three-year grant to the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) to oversee technical assistance, professional development, and shared learning that advances career
pathways across sectors and regions in Wisconsin. Career pathways organize curriculum and services around flexible, “stackable” modules that progressively build over the course of a career.

“These one-time federal funds allow us to advance a more robust initiative in support of our health care sector than would be possible otherwise,” said WTCS President Morna Foy. “In the past three years, the Department of Labor has provided a strong complement to our core state and local funding.”

Wisconsin’s technical colleges received the largest single award and the collaborative is one of the few applicants to successfully receive grants in each of the past three years.

Ranked fourth best two-year college in the nation by Washington Monthly magazine, WITC serves the educational and career needs of more than 25,000 residents of Northwestern Wisconsin each year. With multiple campuses, WITC offers career-focused associate degree programs, technical diplomas, short-term certificates, customized business training, and a wide array of courses for personal or career enrichment. WITC is a member of Wisconsin Technical College System. For more information, call 800.243.WITC or visit witc.edu. WITC is an Equal Opportunity/Access Employer and Educator.