

**BRIEFING SHEET**Report 19-24  
November 2019

State Auditor

[Joe Chrisman](#)**Wisconsin Fast Forward Program***Department of Workforce Development***Background**

The Wisconsin Fast Forward standard program was created by 2013 Wisconsin Act 9, which was enacted in March 2013. The expanded program was created by legislation enacted in the following years. The Department of Workforce Development (DWD) administers the program by awarding grants to public and private organizations for workforce training that is intended to provide individuals with skills needed by Wisconsin employers.

**Key Findings**

- Through fiscal year (FY) 2018-19, DWD awarded 514 program grants totaling \$81.2 million. Not all of these grants had ended at the time of our audit.
- From FY 2012-13 through FY 2018-19, program expenditures totaled \$62.7 million, including \$47.4 million (75.6 percent) for grants and \$15.3 million (24.4 percent) for administration.
- As a result of all 209 standard program grants that ended through December 2018, a total of 9,451 individuals completed program training, were counted as program successes, and received an average wage increase of \$1.85 per hour. These 9,451 individuals were 52.9 percent of the 17,881 individuals whom grant recipients were contractually required to train.
- The results of the 209 standard program grants that ended through December 2018 varied considerably. Few expanded program grants ended through December 2018, but additional expanded grants will end in the future.
- Statutes require DWD to report annually by December 31 to the Governor and the co-chairpersons of the Joint Committee on Finance on certain program results. We found that DWD's December 2018 report contained inaccurate information on program results and counted as program successes certain individuals who did not receive increased compensation after completing program-funded training.
- We reviewed DWD's files for 242 program grants totaling \$57.0 million and found that DWD did not consistently comply with statutes and administrative rules when awarding grants, require recipients to repay grant funds for not meeting contractually specified results, or provide sufficient management and oversight of all contracts.
- Statutes require DWD to consult with the Department of Public Instruction, the Wisconsin Technical College System Board, and the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation in order to implement various program components. We found DWD did not regularly consult with these entities in recent years.

**Recommendations**

We recommend DWD improve how it closes program grants, reports program results, assesses program results, and administers the program. We also identify two issues for legislative consideration.

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