



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (March 4, 2021) – Bay Area Workforce Development Board Receives Grant to Address Rural Healthcare Shortages

Bay Area Workforce Development Board (Bay Area WDB) is excited to announce that it has received an award of \$507,000 to address rural healthcare workforce shortages in several Wisconsin communities.

This award, a partnership with five other workforce boards in Wisconsin, is part of a \$2.5 million federal grant under the H-1B Rural Healthcare Grant Program of the Department of Labor.

The **Collaboration of Wisconsin: Rural Investment in Community Healthcare (COW)** will serve a total of 17 rural counties in Wisconsin. Bay Area WDB will specifically serve the counties of Oconto, Menominee, Lincoln, Langlade and Waushara.

Efforts will focus on addressing the challenges that rural communities are facing regarding healthcare worker shortages, and will concentrate on expanding, developing, and providing employment and training in direct patient healthcare occupations.

Northeast Wisconsin Technical College, College of Menominee Nation and Northcentral Technical College, as well as employer partnerships, will contribute to the collaboration. Current curriculums will be modified to allow for virtual or hybrid training, including the use of simulation machines. Training and employment services will focus on the following healthcare occupations:

- ADN Registered Nurse
- Home Health Aide
- Medical Assistant
- Medical and Clinical Lab Technician
- Substance Abuse Counselor
- Social & Human Services Assistant
- Phlebotomist

While the grant's focus is on rural communities, individuals interested in training opportunities do not need to currently live in one of the five counties mentioned above in order to participate. Those who live in a surrounding county, who are interested or willing to work in a rural community, are also eligible.

The goal of the grant is to increase the overall number of individuals trained in healthcare occupations and address the projected healthcare job openings in rural communities.

“Rural Northeast Wisconsin communities are experiencing an increasing need for healthcare workers, which has been exacerbated over the past year due to the ongoing pandemic. As healthcare providers in our rural areas struggle to attract and hire skilled talent, this program creates a unique opportunity to address employer workforce needs by providing critical financial resources and convening a collaboration of higher-education and healthcare employers, led by the Bay Area Workforce Development Board. We are excited to lead this collaboration and look forward to working more closely with our rural healthcare providers, regional colleges and universities, and Northeast Wisconsin residents interested in pursuing careers in the healthcare industry and desiring to live and work in our beautiful rural communities.” - Matt Valiquette, Executive Director of Bay Area WDB.

Questions about the COW grant program can be directed to Matt Valiquette, Executive Director at mvaliquette@bayareawdb.org or 920-431-4110.

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Additional information, and auxiliary aids and services for individuals with disabilities, is available by contacting Matt Valiquette, EO Officer at mvaliquette@bayareawdb.org | (920) 431-4100 | TDD/TTY Dial 7-1-1 Toll-free