

NEWS RELEASE

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Boise State, North Idaho College, Idaho State Get Worker Training Grants

The Idaho Department of Labor, with the support of the Department of Commerce, has awarded \$1.8 million in special worker training grants to Boise State University, North Idaho College and Idaho State University under a new initiative that leverages industry support to enhance the skills of Idaho workers.

"These grants are a major step forward in connecting our education teams directly with industry," Commerce Director Jeff Sayer said. "That connection will accelerate the talent pipelines our economy needs to achieve higher wage jobs and stronger economic growth."

Boise State will receive \$1 million from the Workforce Development Training Fund to expand its computer science program from 30 graduates to 60 graduates a year for jobs that typically pay over \$30 an hour. Under the Industry Sector Grant initiative, businesses must put up a 25 percent cash match for the grant, and Clearwater Analytics, Cradlepoint Inc., Focus IP Inc., Hewlett-Packard Co., Impact Sales Inc., Keynetics, MetaGeek and WhiteCloud Analytics are putting up a combined \$310,768 match.

North Idaho College will receive \$281,036 from the fund to develop a Wood Products Manufacturing Center for Excellence to train workers on industrial controls, saw filing and log scaling to fill openings created by existing workers retiring or leaving the workforce for other reasons. Idaho Forest Group, Potlatch Corp. and Stimson Lumber Co. are contributing a combined \$93,679 match to train workers for jobs that pay \$16 to \$24 per hour.

Idaho State University will receive \$532,180 to develop the Treasure Valley Anatomy and Physiology Laboratories. With the new lab, Idaho State will increase the number of graduates from the physician assistant program starting with the graduating class of 2016. The lab will also help expand the physical therapy and occupational therapy programs in the future. St. Luke's Health System, Saint Alphonsus Health System and Blue Cross of Idaho are putting up a combined \$141,709 match. Physician assistants average \$42 an hour.

The Industry Sector Grant initiative, approved by the state's Workforce Development Council earlier this year, is the first major departure in the use of the Workforce Development Training fund since it was created in 1996. The fund is financed by a 3 percent setaside of the unemployment insurance taxes paid by businesses each year.

Grants are made to educational institutions that partner with at least three Idaho businesses to train workers in a target occupation critical to those businesses. The businesses must contribute at least 25 percent of the grant award.

Up to now, the fund was used to reimburse businesses for the cost of training new workers or retraining existing workers who would otherwise be laid off. Eligible businesses must produce a product or service sold outside their region, and the jobs must pay at least \$12 an hour and include employer-assisted health insurance.

The fund, which has been Idaho's premier economic development incentive, has trained over 20,000 workers for more than 200 Idaho companies in the last 17 years.

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