

WRTP | BIG STEP Selected by Ascendium Education Group, to Lead Apprenticeship Pathway Coalition Initiative

Transforming Wisconsin's Workforce: \$10M Grant for Apprenticeship Expansion!

MILWAUKEE, WI, UNITED STATES, March 19, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Milwaukee-based [WRTP | BIG STEP](#) has been awarded funding from Madison-based [Ascendium](#) Education Group to lead the newly formed Apprenticeship Pathway Coalition Initiative (APCI).

Ascendium has granted WRTP | BIG STEP up to \$10,000,000 over the next five years to develop Wisconsin's future apprenticeship-focused workforce. These funds are designated to support creating collaborative coalitions and expanding apprenticeship pathways statewide in various industries that align with underrepresented populations in the state.

This grant directly supports WRTP | BIG STEP's mission. The funding allows WRTP | BIG STEP to build upon its core mission of enhancing the ability of public and private sector organizations to recruit, develop, and retain a more diverse, qualified workforce in construction, manufacturing, and emerging sectors.

"Being selected for this remarkable grant is a testament to our nationally recognized work. We are proud of our impact in southeast Wisconsin and remain dedicated to connecting people throughout the state to family-sustaining careers," Lindsay Blumer, WRTP | BIGSTEP President & CEO, said. "We look forward to leading this coalition to create a robust workforce ecosystem that serves both rural and urban areas with equitable access for all Wisconsinites."



Chasity Glosson, a participant enrolled in WRTP | BIG STEP's YouthBuild program, practices driving a forklift at WRTP | BIGSTEP's Milwaukee training center as part of her certified pre-apprenticeship training.

With offices in Milwaukee, Madison, and Racine, WRTP | BIG STEP will expand and develop a statewide network to build Certified Pre-Apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship pathways.

"Ascendium is pleased to support WRTP | BIG STEP in expanding apprenticeship pathways across Wisconsin," said Brittany Corde, Senior Program Officer at Ascendium. "We believe apprenticeships are a critical part of the landscape of workforce training opportunities that should be available to help more learners from low-income backgrounds achieve upward mobility. We're excited to see WRTP | BIG STEP's continued leadership in our home state of Wisconsin, which will create a long-term impact for the state's learners and employers."

Under the APCI, combined with a 50-year history, WRTP | BIG STEP will significantly broaden the scale of apprenticeship readiness and training for apprenticeshipable career opportunities statewide.

Through comprehensive and intentional planning, WRTP | BIG STEP will develop the foundational infrastructure to build equitable apprenticeship access and opportunities statewide for industry and community. This work involves leveraging and developing collaborative partnerships and programming with statewide organizations, agencies, industry stakeholders, employers, unions, and community organizations to create a functional and comprehensive apprenticeship pathway ecosystem.



Willie D. Ellis, a longtime WRTP | BIG STEP instructor, helps Wilder Chavez, a MilwaukeeYouthBuild participant, make an accurate cut. Hands-on learning is a key component to WRTP | BIG STEP's certified pre-apprenticeship training, which will soon expand s



WRTP | BIG STEP instructor Brian Foley works with John Knox, a participant enrolled in the Certified Production Technician High School Equivalency Diploma (CPT HSED) program, on HSED coursework. A \$10 million grant from Ascendium Education Group is funding

ABOUT WRTP | BIG STEP: WRTP | BIG STEP is a 501(c)3 nonprofit workforce intermediary connecting people to family-sustaining jobs. Our mission is to enhance the ability of public and private sector organizations to recruit, develop, and retain a more diverse, qualified workforce in construction, manufacturing, and emerging sectors of the regional economy. Learn more at www.wrtp.org

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