

Two Franklin County companies awarded state grants for workforce training

Recorder Staff

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Two Franklin County companies have been awarded state grants dedicated to workforce training and job creation.

Poplar Hill Machine Inc. in Conway was awarded \$53,180 to train 16 workers; 1 additional job is expected to be added by 2019. Greenfield's Valley Medical Group was awarded \$242,850 to train 427 workers; 12 additional jobs are expected to be added by 2019.

Celebrating October as Manufacturing Month, the Baker-Polito Administration awarded \$11.9 million in Workforce Training Fund Program grants to 121 Massachusetts companies Wednesday, spurring workforce training of nearly 7,000 workers and creating more than 1,000 projected new jobs in the state.

"The evolving manufacturing sector and new, innovative technology continues to provide successful careers for Massachusetts' workforce to support their families," Governor Charlie Baker said in a statement. "We are excited to see these funds put to work creating over 1,000 new jobs and providing additional manufacturing skills to 7,000 workers that spur personal and economic growth for our families and communities."

The Workforce Training Fund provides grants of up to \$250,000 to companies in Massachusetts to pay for employee training over a two-year period. Grants are awarded to projects that will upgrade workers' skills, increase productivity and enhance competition. Grants are matched dollar-for-dollar by the award recipients.

"This program is a highly effective catalyst for job creation in manufacturing and we look forward to the growth in skills and success for these 121 companies and their employees," Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito said. "Workforce Training Fund grantees have added jobs at more than double the statewide average, helping to close high demand skills gaps in the Commonwealth and provide new jobs for residents."

The Workforce Training Fund is a program of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development and is administered by Commonwealth Corporation, a quasi-public state agency that fosters partnerships between industry, education and workforce organizations.

Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development Rosalin Acosta noted, "An important part of our job is to make sure more of our businesses of any size are able to access this great resource. Over the past two years we have increased the number of small businesses served significantly and now over 84 percent of the businesses served by the Workforce Training Fund are small businesses."

Since the beginning of the Baker-Polito Administration, the Workforce Training Fund has awarded more than 400 grants totaling over \$43 million to train more than 31,000 workers from over 600 different businesses in the state. This is expected to result in more than 3,700 new jobs. The Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development and Commonwealth Corporation hopes to encourage businesses to address workforce training needs through the Workforce Training Fund. Interested parties are encouraged to visit WorkforceTrainingFund.org to learn more.