2022 Workforce Development Training Fund Annual Report

Overview

The Workforce Development Training Fund (WDTF), established in W.S. 9-2-2604, provides funding for training programs that increase the skills of Wyoming's workforce. The goal is to not only grow the skills of workers but strengthen businesses operating in the state to create a more economically viable Wyoming. The fund is also an important tool used by economic development entities to entice new businesses to relocate, build, and grow in Wyoming. The WDTF grant options include: Business Training Grants, Pre-Hire Economic Development Grants, Pre-Obligation Grants, Apprenticeship Grants, and Internship Grants.

The WDTF program is funded through interest earned from the Unemployment Insurance State Trust Fund and through an appropriation of State General Funds.

This report fulfills the requirement in W.S. 9-2-2604(c) to annually report on the expenditures made from the training fund in the preceding fiscal year and the results of the activities funded by the training fund.

Expenditures:
The training fund's total expenditures for Fiscal Year 2022 totaled $2,387,599.

The following breaks down this figure:
- $365,575 Administrative Costs;
- $634,366 for Business Training Grants;
- $659,160 for Pre-Hire Economic Development Grants;
- $326,217 for Apprenticeship Grants; and,
- $402,281 for Internship Grants.

Approved Grants:
Fiscal Year 2022 saw an increase in grant applications and contracts for most of the WDTF grant options as we emerged from the global pandemic. The pandemic severely impacted Wyoming businesses and created an urgent need for WDTF to provide focused re-employment efforts throughout the state as the pandemic impacted training opportunities in Wyoming.

One method of meeting this need was to increase the training grant limits in order to encourage Wyoming businesses to train and retrain the state's workforce. Emergency rules were enacted in May 2022 and regular rules were promulgated shortly thereafter.

Business Training Grant limits were increased per trainee to $4,000 and for preferred industries, the limit increased to $5,000 per trainee. The amount businesses are able to request per state fiscal year to train their employees increased to $200,000 per state fiscal year. The Internship

Grant increased the amount a business would be able to request for intern wages per hour. With documentation of industry average wages that support the amount being requested, WDTF is now able to reimburse up to $25 per hour and businesses are able to request up to six internships, as long as the business is able to mentor and guide the interns sufficiently. Businesses with a Registered Apprenticeship Program are able to have up to 10 internships.

The WDTF team worked to promote the training grants and educate Wyoming businesses and workforce partners on the increased grant limits and rule changes. As a result, the program realized an increase in grant inquiries, grant applications, grant awards, and overall grant use across all industries.

Business Training Grants (BTG) This grant is available to Wyoming businesses for employees who need a skill upgrade or need retraining in their current occupation. There were 509 applications submitted in FY 2022 with 473 being approved and put into contract to serve 1,110 trainees.

Eighteen industries are represented as users of this grant with Healthcare, Finance, Manufacturing, Professional & Technical Services, and Information & Technology being the top five industries served.
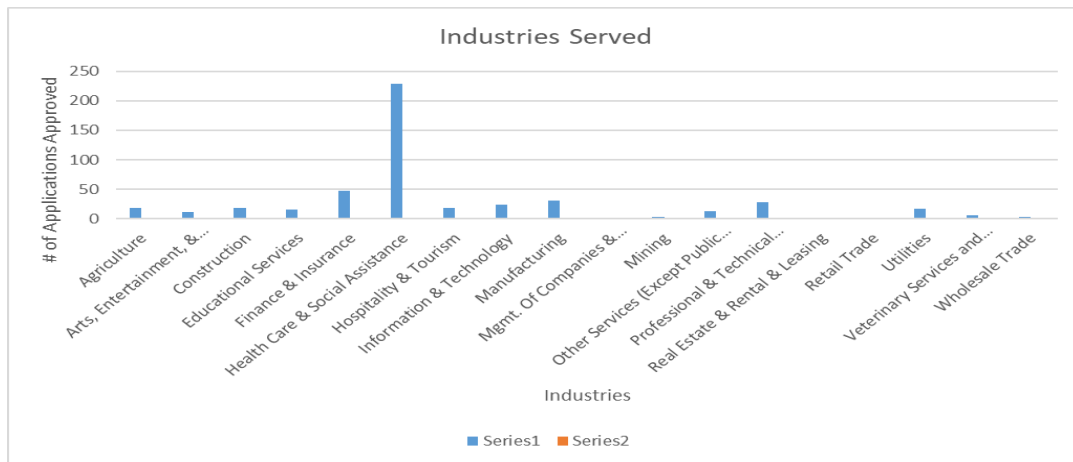
Twenty-one counties are represented by grant recipients. Teton, Laramie, Campbell, Natrona, and Sheridan have the most recipients of the Business Training Grant.
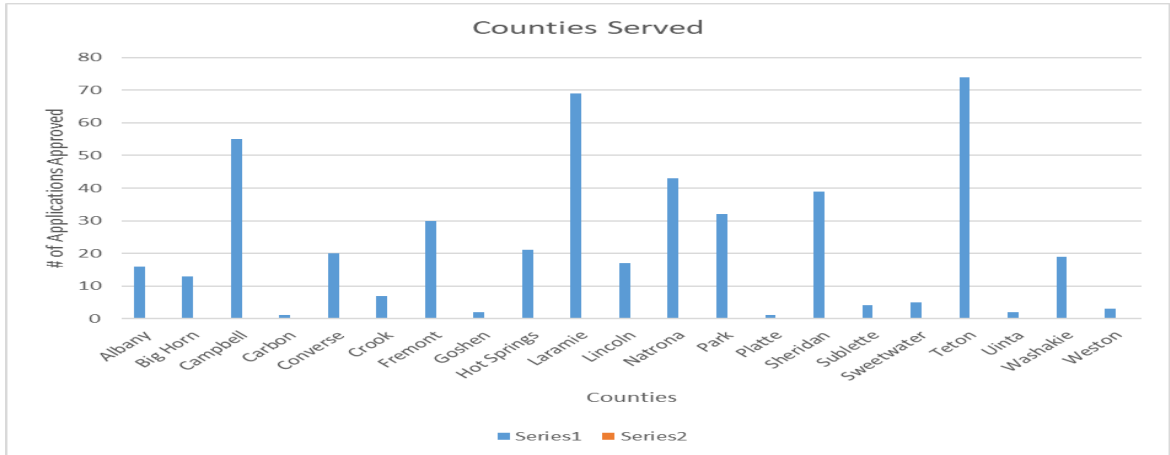

Internship Grants are available to Wyoming businesses that want to provide short-term work experiences to individuals to enhance their work skills, knowledge and abilities. During FY 2022, 89 applications were submitted and 72 were approved and put into contract to reimburse the wages for 103 internships.

Twenty industries are represented by grant recipients. The top five industries were Manufacturing, Technology, Healthcare, Hospitality & Tourism, and Construction.
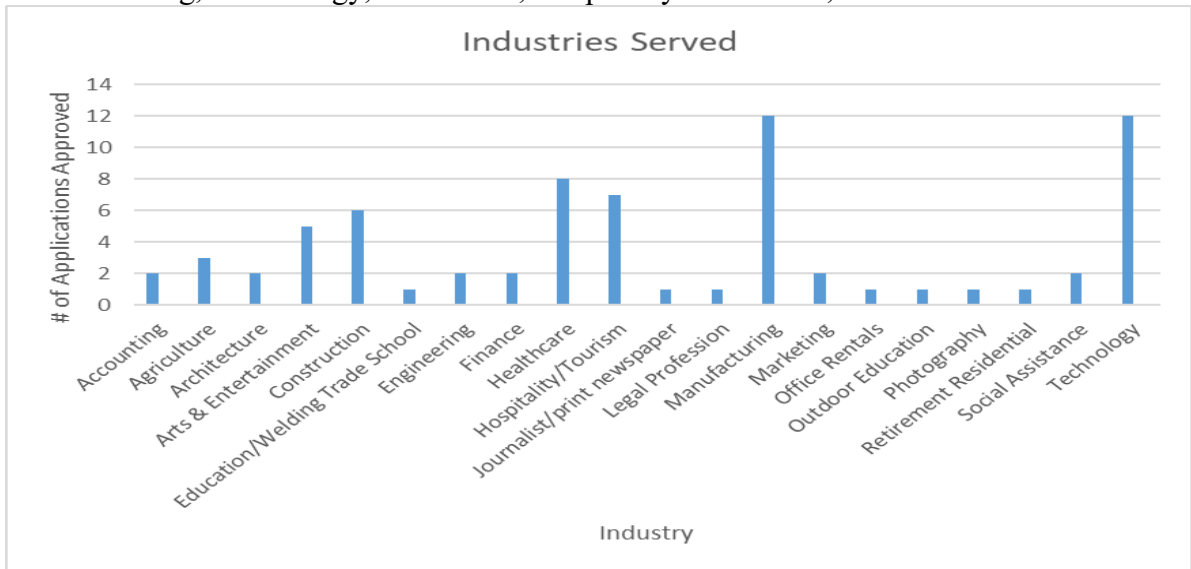
Sixteen counties are represented with Albany, Laramie, Natrona, Teton, and Fremont being the top five users of the Internship grant.

Counties Served
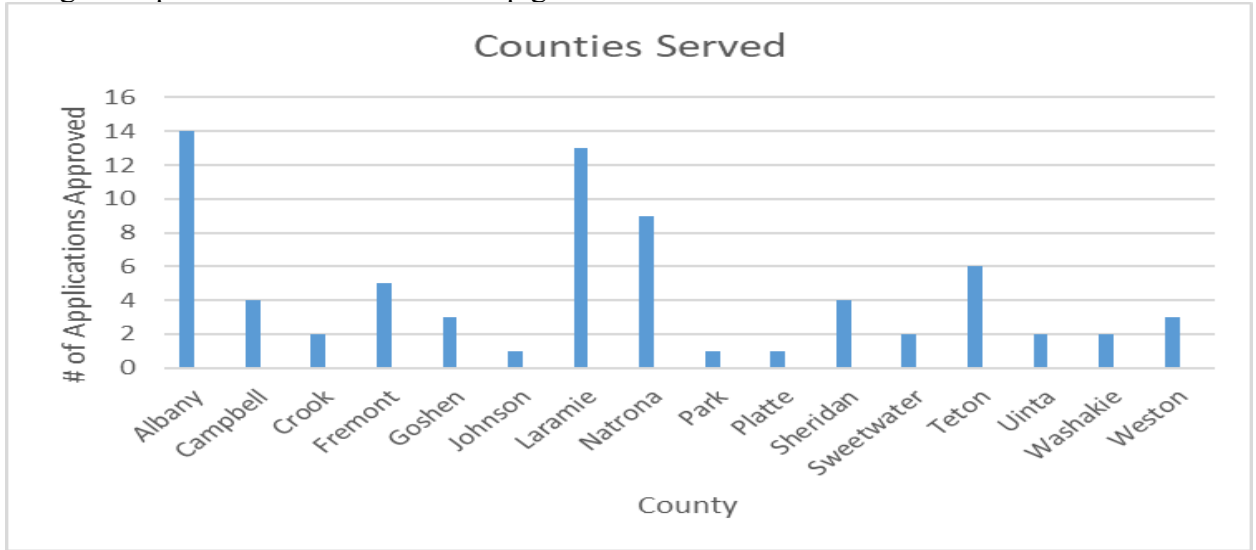
Apprenticeship Grants are available to Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeship Programs to develop an industry specific workforce for business(es) or industry and to assist with the expenses of the related instruction associated with the Apprenticeship Program. Five grants were submitted and approved to assist with 84 apprentices' related instruction expenses.

Three industries are represented by grant recipients: Construction, Technology, and Healthcare.
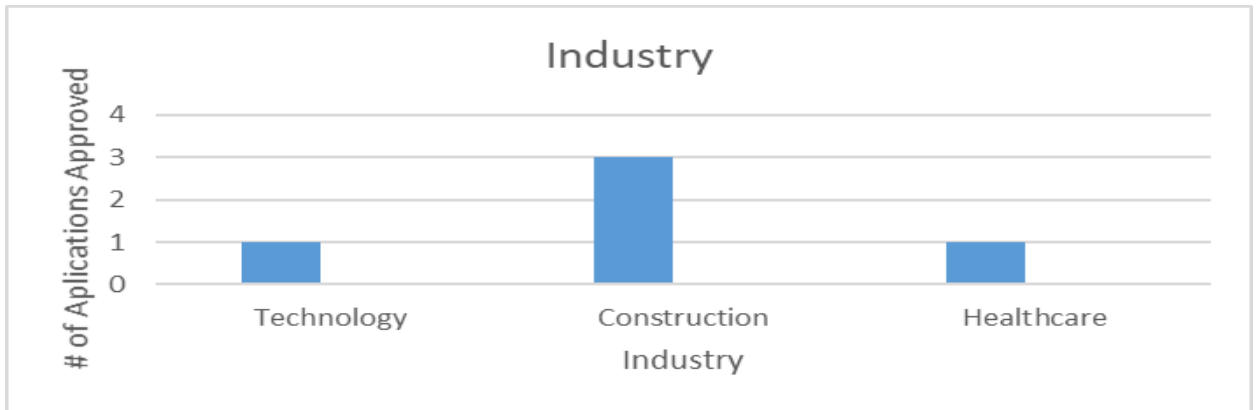
Two counties, Laramie and Natrona, are represented as users of the Apprenticeship Grants.
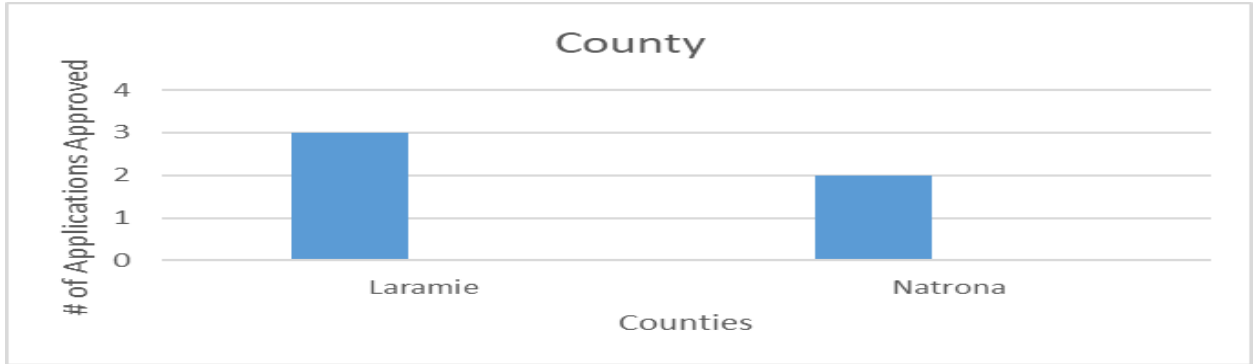
Pre-Hire Economic Development Grants are available to develop an industry specific workforce for business(es) or industry when there is a shortage of workers. This grant supports the number to be trained if it is no more than 10% or 2 more trainees than the number of workers required by the businesses that have a shortage of workers.

Five applications were submitted and approved in the Transportation industry to train 206 potential employees to obtain their CDL license.

Four counties are represented as recipients of the Pre-Hire Economic Development Grants.
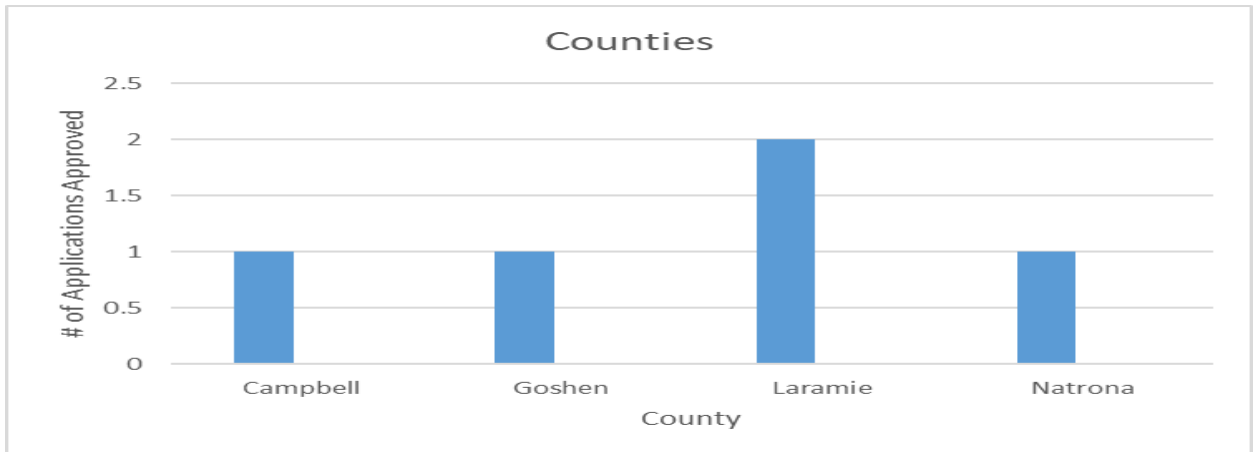
Benchmarks

The Workforce Development Training Fund was established to:

· Foster economic development in Wyoming;
· Strengthen Wyoming businesses;
· Support Wyoming employers and workers;
· Provide training beyond what would normally occur;
· Encourage employers to invest in training their workers;

- Be accountable and yield measurable benefits;
- Support keeping Wyoming workers in the state;
- Promote wage progression for workers.

Partnerships

The Workforce Development Training Fund is proud to partner with Wyoming's community colleges, economic development entities, private training entities, Wyoming businesses, and the department's workforce centers across the state.

Success Stories

PreHire Grant - LCCC Ukrainian refugee forges new future in LCCC CDL program (LCCC press release)

CHEYENNE, WYOMING – It was around 4 a.m. when Olekdsandr Ageyev and his family, who were living in Kherson, Ukraine, heard the sirens signaling that Russia was invading.

"When this all started, we only had like 30 minutes to pack all of our stuff and go to Western Ukraine," he said.

Ageyev along with his wife, 6-year-old daughter and cat, Malish, hurried to Lviv where they would stay until it was clear the situation was untenable. An oil tanker explosion near the place they were staying was the final straw for Ageyev, who decided they needed to leave Ukraine as soon as possible.

"It was a big explosion and a lot of smoke," he said. "And my daughter was near me, so I was watching her and I said, 'Yeah, I'm done.'"

After making a long drive to Austria, Ageyev, 31, was able to connect with Meadowbrooke Church in Cheyenne, Wyoming, that would help the family escape the dangers of war, bringing them to the U.S. in late July.

"It was a long story — a lot of documents, a lot of paperwork — but the church helped us a lot to move here and with housing and all that stuff," Ageyev said.

Though he worked in information technology in Ukraine, Ageyev said he wanted to try a different path to support his family now that he's in the states. Through some of his newfound connections in Cheyenne, Ageyev was able to enter the Commercial Driver's License (CDL) Certification program at Laramie County Community College.

Ageyev received financial assistance through the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services pre-hire grant for CDL students and in early October completed the program. By the end of the month, he expects he'll begin working driving a truck.

"I enjoyed the program a lot because I learned a lot of new things," Ageyev said. "Not only about driving the truck, but about inspecting the truck."

The visa program that allows Ageyev and his family to stay in the U.S. lasts two years, and it's not clear what will happen with their refugee status after that. As such, Ageyev said he's not sure whether his

family will remain in the U.S. permanently. But in the meantime, he said his family is loving their time in Cheyenne.

"I'm still happy that I'm saved and I'm in a great country and my daughter is in a great school," Ageyev said. ""We still have little problems with all this moving stuff, but my wife is actively learning the language at LCCC (English as a second language) classes, and at school the teachers try very hard to help my daughter adapt. But we are happy for now."

Even at the most dire moments, Ageyev said he never lost hope.

"I was just thinking that I will be good because I need to; I was thinking about my family," he said. "This was the first priority for me."

Michael Geissler, CDL program manager, said he's enjoyed working with Ageyev from the start.

"I can sense the enthusiasm and eagerness of Oleksandr to take advantage of this opportunity," Geissler said. "He is determined to make the best of this situation in order to provide for his family."

Today, the future looks bright for his family, Ageyev said. The opportunity to take on the CDL program at LCCC has been a key part of that future, and the people at the college helped make it all possible.

"The instructors here are very good," Ageyev said. "They are very experienced, not only in terms of the truck and the technical stuff, but they also guide you through the business stuff. For all the insurance and taxes. They talk about what companies are good. They're just like mentors."

Apprenticeship Grant - Made Safe in Wyoming dba CyberWyoming (press release)

First Cybersecurity Apprentice Graduate in Wyoming - Sayer Hendrickson, the youngest apprentice in CyberWyoming's Department of Labor approved Cybersecurity Technician Registered Apprenticeship, is also the first to graduate from the program.

"In cybersecurity's ever growing climate I am grateful to have been provided a brand new set of 'tools under my belt' that I'm already experiencing the benefits of," said Sayer.

Sayer, a Casper native who entered the program in January of 2020 at 19 years old, works for CMIT Solutions. CyberWyoming sponsors two Department of Labor approved Registered Apprenticeship programs: IT Specialist, for entry level professionals, and Cybersecurity Technician, for more advanced employees. The apprenticeship training programs were developed in 2017 and 2018 and have now been adopted by other organizations nationwide.

The CyberWyoming Registered Apprenticeship programs are free for any employer willing to technically mentor a new professional. As a part of the program, CyberWyoming requires each apprentice to undergo soft skills training on such topics as strategic planning for tech to conflict management and more.

Internship Grant (from WDTF final report summaries)

Pipe Arc Solutions dba Western Welding Academy: This internship helped us improve efficiency. Joey (intern) came up with new procedures and different ways of doing things which helped our main office work more efficiently.- Bree Clemetson

Urban Concrete: "The skills I learned will stay with me and hopefully I will be able to grow and use the tools like a"foreman", Amber Urban.

Jackson Wild: "I gained many skills that I did not have before that will help me break into the industry. I also met my current employer via Jackson Wild", Somes Huwiler

Piney Island Native Plants, LLC: "I found PINP on a class field trip, at that point, I had no idea what I wanted to do with my future, but I knew I wanted to work outside. The day we visited the greenhouse, we helped transplant willows and from then I knew I wanted to work with native plants. Later transferred from Sheridan College to University of Wyoming for a Botany degree". - Alison Dooley

9H Research Foundation: Valuable connections in the professional realm helped me get a job with Senator Barrasso, - Sabrina Considine