

NEWS RELEASE

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UI, CWI, NIC Get Worker Training Grants

The Idaho Department of Labor, with the support of the Department of Commerce, has awarded nearly \$900,000 in special worker training grants to the University of Idaho, the College of Western Idaho and North Idaho College.

The grant funds will be used to leverage industry support and enhance the skills of Idaho workers.

Idaho's Industry Sector Grant Initiative attempts to connect education directly with industry to accelerate the pipeline of skilled workers needed to boost wages and expand the economy. Businesses must put up 25 percent in cash to match the grants from the Workforce Development Training Fund.

The University of Idaho will receive \$463,026 to begin a Cybersecurity Professional and Technical Education training program in August on its Coeur d'Alene campus. The program offers concentrated short-term training and certification exams to information technology professionals. It includes first-of-its-kind structured on-the-job training and features a security operations center laboratory at the school's Research Park in Post Falls to provide hands-on simulated cyberattack response training.

The university expects to enroll 31 students in the program from the participating private sector partners with a potential open enrollment of up to 350 students. Industry partners Idaho Power Co., Kootenai Health, Fatbeam and Highpoint Medical Inc. will provide a combined \$154,584 in match.

The College of Western Idaho will receive \$232,000 to create an education and certification program for perioperative nurses, who provide preoperative, intraoperative and postoperative care for patients who undergo surgery or other invasive procedures.

The school wants to certify 60 preoperative nurses by May 2017. Its private sector partners St. Alphonsus Health Systems, St. Luke's Health System and West Valley Medical Center are providing \$58,000 in cash match.

North Idaho College will receive \$202,500 to develop and implement education programs offering American Association of Psychiatric Technicians Certification for mental health assistants, national Health Unit Coordinators Certification for patient care coordinators and National Certification Career Association Certification for restorative care assistants/specialists.

The program will enroll 135 participants over two years. Private sector partners Kootenai Health, Valley Vista and Northwest Hospital Alliance are providing \$50,625 in cash match.

This is the second round of grants under the initiative. Boise State University, Idaho State University and North Idaho College shared \$1.8 million in grants awarded in late 2013.

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Grants are made to educational institutions that partner with at least three Idaho businesses to train workers in targeted occupations critical to those businesses. Until this initiative the Workforce Development Training Fund, which is financed by the state's 47,000 businesses, was used solely to reimburse businesses for the cost of training new workers or 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 has trained over 20,000 workers for more than 200 Idaho companies in the last 18 years.

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