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Governor's Workforce Cabinet, Conexus Indiana launch grant program to support high school adoption of Industry 4.0 technologies, prepare future workforce

(INDIANAPOLIS) - The Governor's Workforce Cabinet and Conexus Indiana today announced a new \$500,000 grant program to support Indiana high schools as they prepare students for careers in the increasingly high-tech advanced manufacturing industry. Modeled after the statewide [Manufacturing Readiness Grants](#) program, Education Readiness Grants are available for qualifying secondary schools that purchase new, smart manufacturing technologies and equipment to develop skills students need to succeed in an Industry 4.0 economy.

The Education Readiness Grants program is a direct response to the success of the Manufacturing Readiness Grants program, launched in mid-2020 and administered by the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC) in partnership with Conexus Indiana. To date, 169 awards have been made totaling more than \$13.4 million in Manufacturing Readiness Grants. These grants are supporting a projected \$93 million in capital investment in Industry 4.0 technologies, which connect physical production with smart technologies such as machine learning, additive manufacturing and artificial intelligence.

[Education Readiness Grants](#) of up to \$100,000 per applicant are now available to Indiana secondary schools to purchase hardware and/or software that create foundational exposure to the types of smart manufacturing technology being adopted by companies awarded Manufacturing Readiness Grants.

"Education Readiness Grants complement Indiana's Next Level Programs of Study, which ensures all students have access to career and technical education with the opportunity to earn dual credits, postsecondary credentials and engage in work-based learning experiences," said Tony Harl, State Career and Technical Education director for the Governor's Workforce Cabinet. "Not only will

Education Readiness Grants provide schools with the tools to enhance student engagement in CTE, but students will be better prepared for careers in their communities with advanced manufacturers committed to Industry 4.0 technology.”

[Next Level Programs of Study](#), Indiana’s redesign of secondary career and technical education courses, is made up of 66 programs of study launching in the 2022-2023 school year. Schools interested in offering the Industry 4.0 - Smart Manufacturing or Industrial Automation and Robotics programs of study will be able to use Education Readiness Grants funds to assist with implementation.

In addition to providing grants to secondary schools, Education Readiness Grants will strengthen partnerships between industry and local schools. Grant recipients must demonstrate a direct connection with local advanced manufacturers with the goal of recruiting more students to career and technical education (CTE) and graduate job-ready students with experience and credentials that apply to local employers.

“Manufacturing Readiness Grants, the first-of-its kind program in the nation, have enabled Indiana small- to mid-sized companies to adopt technologies that not only increase their productivity and competitiveness, but provide Hoosiers with high-paying, rewarding careers,” said Brad Rhorer, chief talent programs officer for Conexus Indiana. “Education Readiness Grants will help schools align curricula and hands-on experiential learning with the types of high-tech technologies that define the future of advanced manufacturing in Indiana.”

Schools can apply for Education Readiness Grants at www.conexusindiana.com/cultivating-talent/education-readiness-grants/. The grant application will remain open through April 8, 2022. Grant applications will be reviewed by the Conexus Indiana Smart Manufacturing Education Fellows advisory committee, which will make funding recommendations for the Governor’s Workforce Cabinet’s Office of Career and Technical Education’s consideration. The committee comprises post-secondary, industry and state leadership partners who represent various industry sectors, technology competencies and geographic diversity.

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About the Governor’s Workforce Cabinet

The Governor’s Workforce Cabinet (GWC) was formed in 2018 with the mission of addressing current and future education and employment needs for individuals and employers, strengthening Indiana’s economy by integrating and aligning state and federal resources, and ensuring a talent-driven education and workforce system. The membership of the GWC includes the business community, K-12 representatives, postsecondary institutions, Indiana lawmakers, and leaders from Indiana state agencies.

About Conexus Indiana

For more than a decade, Conexus Indiana, one of the Central Indiana Corporate Partnership (CICP) non-profit initiatives, has been positioning the Hoosier State as the best place for advanced manufacturing and logistics industries to innovate, invest, employ and succeed. By collaborating with industry, academic and public sector partners on a shared vision for an innovative, skilled workforce and stronger business climate, Conexus Indiana has helped to create opportunities for advanced manufacturing and logistics companies, prepare Hoosiers to succeed in the state's largest industry sectors and maintain Indiana's competitive advantage. For more information, go to www.conexusindiana.com.