

*We inspire our community to work in partnership
and cultivate a vibrant economic future.*



August 7, 2026

Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development
WIG: HEART Evaluation Committee

To Whom It May Concern,

Envision Greater Fond du Lac is pleased to provide its enthusiastic support for the Fox Valley Workforce Development Board's (FVWDB) application for the Wisconsin Innovation Grant (WIG): HEART program. As one of the rural and semi-rural counties served through this initiative, we recognize the critical need to strengthen the healthcare workforce and believe this project represents an innovative, sustainable solution to one of our region's most pressing workforce challenges—the shortage of Diagnostic Medical Sonographers (DMS).

Access to quality healthcare is essential to the health and vitality of our communities. Residents of rural counties often face additional barriers to receiving timely medical services, including workforce shortages, longer travel distances, and extended wait times for specialized diagnostic care. Expanding the pipeline of highly trained Diagnostic Medical Sonographers will help address these challenges while improving healthcare access for current and future generations.

According to O*NET labor market data, Diagnostic Medical Sonographers are projected to experience employment growth faster than average, reflecting both increasing demand and ongoing workforce shortages. Despite this need, there is currently no local educational pathway within the six-county Fox Valley Workforce Development Board region for individuals seeking to enter this high-demand, family-sustaining profession. This gap limits career opportunities for local residents while making it more difficult for healthcare providers to recruit and retain qualified professionals.

The proposed partnership between Fox Valley Workforce Development Board, ThedaCare, and the University of Wisconsin–Oshkosh directly addresses this workforce gap by creating a local education and clinical training pathway that prepares students for careers where they are most needed. This transformational approach not only removes barriers to education but also strengthens the long-term healthcare workforce by connecting students with a respected regional healthcare system and creating opportunities for graduates to remain and work within our communities.

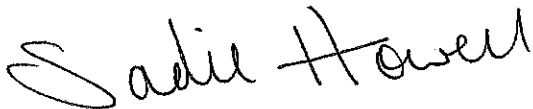
The benefits of this initiative extend well beyond workforce development. Increasing the number of Diagnostic Medical Sonographers throughout our region will help reduce wait times for diagnostic imaging, improve access to timely and accurate diagnoses, decrease travel burdens for patients seeking specialized imaging services, and enhance overall patient outcomes and satisfaction. As our population continues to age and demand grows for cardiovascular, obstetric,

vascular, abdominal, and other diagnostic imaging services, investments such as this become increasingly important to ensuring residents can receive high-quality healthcare close to home.

Envision Greater Fond du Lac serves as the combined Chamber of Commerce and economic development organization for Fond du Lac County, and workforce development sits at the heart of everything we do. We work daily with employers across our region—including healthcare providers—who tell us the same thing: talent is the single biggest barrier to growth. That's why we believe so strongly in initiatives like this one. A stronger regional pipeline of Diagnostic Medical Sonographers doesn't just benefit the six counties served directly by FVWDB—it strengthens the entire Fox Valley labor market that Fond du Lac County depends on, drawing from and feeding into a shared regional economy. When our neighboring workforce development board succeeds in building family-sustaining career pathways, our residents, our employers, and our healthcare system all benefit. At the end of the day, we believe regional collaboration is what allows communities like ours to compete for talent and investment, and we're proud to support FVWDB's efforts to close this critical workforce gap.

This proposal represents more than a workforce training project—it is a strategic investment in healthcare access, economic opportunity, and the long-term well-being of our region. We strongly encourage funding of the Fox Valley Workforce Development Board's WIG: HEART grant application and appreciate your consideration of this important initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sadie Howell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sadie" and last name "Howell" clearly distinguishable.

Sadie Howell

President/CEO
