

## Staff Development Grant Winona State University

**Project:** WSU Employee Development Day

**Project description:** Develop and offer a day-long Employee Development Day for classified employees.

**Project leaders:** Ann MacDonald, Institutional Effectiveness, and Lori Reed, Human Resources

**Award:** \$5,000

### **Project Re-cap:**

The project leaders and our HR team worked within the university to develop training topics and the format for the day. The focus of the training was on developing skills that benefit employees both in their work lives and in their personal lives. Sessions included Life and Work Balance, Innovative Thinking, Generational Differences, How to Prepare for a Difficult Conversation, and Life Lessons – You are an Essential Piece. We had 163 classified employees participate in the sessions that were offered between 9:30-3:30.

Breakdown of funds:

Keynote speaker, travel, accommodations: \$2,507.22

Lunch: \$1,170.00

Supplies, materials: \$345.29

### **Impact:**

A key objective for the event was to provide on-campus development opportunities and invest in the skills of our classified employees, who have fewer opportunities and less professional development funds available under the contracts. Another key objective was to positively impact morale by clearly communicating that they are essential to the success of WSU and that the work they do is recognized and appreciated.

Approximately 54% of our classified employees attended the day with 57% of the group completing evaluations. Of those 57%, 95% felt that the programs were highly useful and 94% felt that the speakers were highly effective. Along with usual logistical feedback, comments included appreciation for the opportunity to develop their skills and that they felt valued by WSU because this training was provided for them.

This project served as a starting point for our campus. The feedback from those attending has both confirmed the need and increased our desire to establish a formal development program. General positive attitudes have spread on campus and employees have shared their suggestions for future sessions. The positive outcome has also gained the attention of many supervisors and administrators who see value in offering additional development opportunities in the future.

## **Reflection**

This project confirmed that our employees are excited to have opportunities to develop their skills. It also confirmed that they are excited about being a part of WSU but need to receive more recognition for the part they play in the university's success. This event was a good first step that needs to be built on in future years. Although we were fortunate to receive this grant, we were mindful of the budget issues that we are facing. As a result, we worked hard to contain costs and actually came in below the grant total. Looking back, we could have added a few more sessions and snacks/extras during the breaks to add to the day.