

TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT NOTICE	NO. 21-12
	DATE February 15, 2013

TO: DOL ETA REGIONAL ADMINISTRATORS
 ALL STATE WORKFORCE ADMINISTRATORS
 ALL STATE AND LOCAL WORKFORCE AGENCIES
 ALL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD (WIB) AGENCIES
 ALL WIB STATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS
 ALL WIB LOCAL EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

FROM: JANE OATES
 Assistant Secretary *Jane Oates*

SUBJECT: Administration of State and Local Technology-Based Learning (TBL) Surveys to State Workforce Agency Administrators and Local Workforce Investment Board Executive Directors, Respectively

1. Purpose. To alert State Workforce Agency Administrators and Local Workforce Investment Board (LWIB) Executive Directors that a study of TBL in the public workforce system is being implemented and their completion of the State TBL Survey and Local TBL Survey, respectively, will support this effort. The primary purpose of these surveys is to gather up-to-date information on TBL opportunities and usage at the state and local levels, and factors that influence its adoption and design in the public workforce system.

2. Background. Technology-based learning (TBL), also known as distance learning and/or e-learning, is defined as any learning via electronic technology. TBL is defined broadly to include online education as well as learning facilitated by other electronic technologies like intranet sites, satellite broadcasts, audio and video conferencing, Internet bulletin boards and chat rooms, web casts, simulations, electronic gaming, podcasting, CD-ROMs, and a variety of mobile options (e.g., smart phone applications or "apps").¹ In 2008, the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) launched the TBL Initiative² to increase the awareness of TBL educational and training opportunities among public workforce system stakeholders, advance the use of technology for training within the public workforce system, and increase the number of people trained in high growth jobs by broadening the opportunities for skill and competency development. While several projects were initiated to advance TBL utilization or test innovative TBL strategies, the extent to which TBL training and development strategies are used, under which circumstances, and factors that shape their adoption within the public workforce system are still not well-documented.

¹ For background on the evolution and benefits of TBL please see the report, "Technology-Based Learning Strategies," which is available at http://www.doleta.gov/reports/papers/TBL_Paper_FINAL.pdf.
² Issued January 3, 2008, Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) No. 17-07 entitled, Using Technology-Based Learning in the Workforce Investment System (http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr_doc.cfm?DOCN=2574).

In July 2011, ETA contracted with Abt Associates to develop for administration two survey instruments to learn more about the use of TBL at the state and local levels in the public workforce system. Upon Abt Associates' preparation of two draft surveys in early 2012, ETA obtained the assistance of the Regional Administrators to conduct outreach with and identify leaders from state workforce agencies and local workforce boards to participate in pilot testing the two surveys. Five State Workforce Agency Administrators and six LWIB Executive Directors provided valuable initial reviews of the surveys. Both survey instruments were revised to address design, question content and complexity, and other issues uncovered during the pilot testing. The final versions of each survey are now ready for implementation and administration to all State Workforce Agency Administrators and LWIB Executive Directors.

3. Descriptions of Surveys. Both the State TBL Survey and Local TBL Survey have Office of Management and Budget approval, under the Paperwork Reduction Act (control number, 1205-0436), and both surveys will be administered or accessible electronically on an Internet-based survey platform called FluidSurveys.

- The intended respondents for the State TBL Survey are the State Workforce Administrators. This survey consists of three sections: 1) state policy, guidance, and support for TBL; 2) opportunities for TBL in support of WIA Title I training services; and 3) factors influencing the current level of TBL opportunities. The State TBL Survey is anticipated to take 30 minutes to complete. All State Workforce Agency Administrators will be given one month to complete their surveys.
- The intended respondents for the *Local TBL Survey* are the LWIB Executive Directors. This survey consists of six sections: 1) contextual information about the Local Workforce Investment Area; 2) use of TBL in the provision of Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title I core and intensive services; 3) use of TBL to support WIA Title I training services; 4) use of TBL to support WIA Title II services; 5) accessibility of TBL services; and 6) factors influencing the current level of TBL provision. The Local TBL Survey takes approximately 90 minutes to complete. All LWIB Executive Directors will be given one month to complete their surveys.

4. Action Requested. State Workforce Agency Administrators and LWIB Executive Directors are encouraged to participate in this study of TBL and respond to the State TBL Survey or Local TBL Survey, respectively.

- **How will Respondents Access the Survey?** Abt Associates (TBL_DOL@AbtAssoc.com) will send emails titled, *DOL Technology-Based Learning Survey*, to all State Workforce Agency Administrators and LWIB Executive Directors. The email will contain the secure, Section 508-complaint Web sites through which the surveys may be accessed and instructions for completing the surveys. Surveys may be saved, allowing respondents the opportunity to complete the survey over multiple sessions and time to consult with data sources and/or get assistance from program or other staff for information to respond to survey questions, if needed. Additionally, if

necessary, other WIB staff at the state or local levels may be contacted to provide input or complete specific questions.

- **When are the Responses to the Surveys Due?** After receipt of the email from Abt Associates, State Workforce Agency Administrators and LWIB Executive Directors will have one month to complete the surveys. The specific date by which respondents should complete the surveys will be included in the email from Abt Associates.
- **What are the Benefits of this Study to the Public Workforce System?** After collecting all completed surveys, Abt Associates will review and analyze the results from these survey research efforts. Some responses also may prompt Abt Associates to conduct follow-up with respondents to gather additional information about the design and implementation of TBL. Ultimately, Abt Associates will prepare a final report and briefing useful for assessing the current and future usage, practices, and policies of TBL; making determinations regarding the incorporation of technology in service planning and provision; sharing models for replication or partnerships; and planning future policy proposals, investment opportunities, and technical assistance activities.

In summer 2013, Abt Associates will share highlights from the final report at a comprehensive briefing. Upon approval of the final report for public dissemination, the final report, and an abstract of this publication, will be posted on the ETA Research Publication Database Web site at: <http://wdr.doleta.gov/research/keyword.cfm>.

5. Inquiries. For questions specific to completing the surveys, please contact Abt Associates, specifically, the TBL Surveys Solutions Desk on email at tbl_dol@abtassoc.com or call 1-855-295-5528 (toll free). For more information on ETA's TBL Initiative, please contact Michelle Ennis in ETA's Office of Policy Development and Research at 202-693-3636 or ennis.michelle@dol.gov.