

<b>TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT NOTICE</b>	<b>NO.</b> 40-08
	<b>DATE</b> April 16, 2009

**TO:** STATE WORKFORCE AGENCY ADMINISTRATORS  
STATE WORKFORCE LIAISONS  
ONE-STOP CENTER SYSTEM LEADS  
STATE WORKFORCE AGENGIES  
LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT AREAS  
STATE AND LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD CHAIRS

**FROM:** GAY M. GILBERT /s/  
Administrator  
Office of Workforce Investment

**SUBJECT:** Industry Competency Models Initiative

**1. Purpose.** The purposes of this Training and Employment Notice are to: (1) Introduce the industry competency models and their value as resources that can support partnership development and engagement among business, the workforce investment system, and the continuum of education; (2) Illustrate a variety of uses for competency models for workforce investment system partners and industry organizations; and, (3) Share information about two interactive tools that enable workforce system partners to collaboratively develop customized industry competency models and career ladders/lattices.

**2. Background.** In the 21st century global economy, industries in the United States are continually transformed by the impacts of globalization, innovation, and technology. Businesses require workers who can adapt to new skill demands throughout their careers. Workers who engage in lifelong learning to acquire new skills increase their employability along with their ability to transfer to new work when necessary. In response to this workforce challenge - to prepare, recruit, and retain a skilled workforce to meet emerging and changing needs - ETA and industry partners have collaborated to develop and maintain dynamic industry competency models as a resource for the workforce investment system. The goal of the Industry Competency Model Initiative is to promote an understanding of the skill sets and competencies that are essential to educate and train a globally competitive workforce.

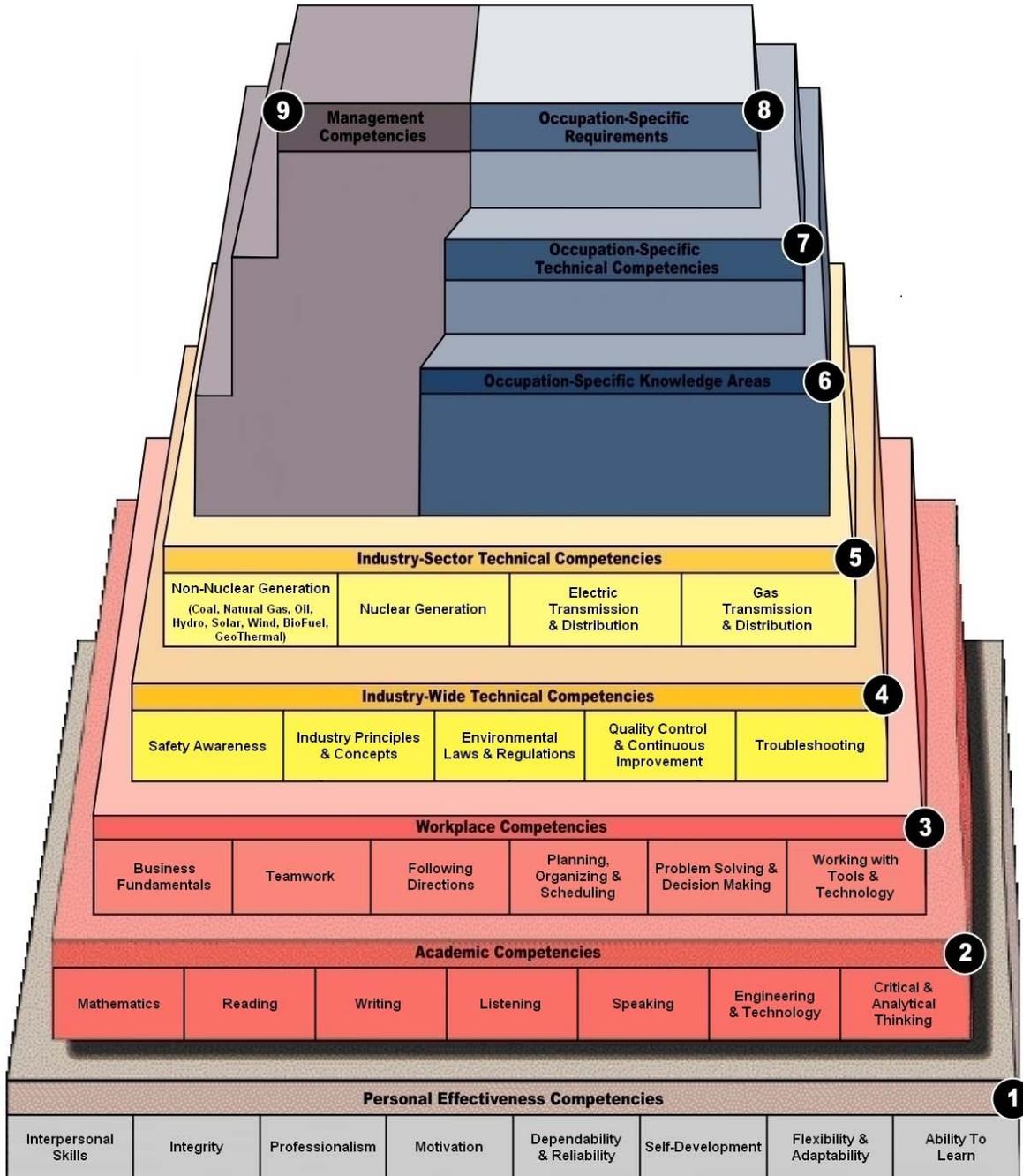
**3. Competency Model Framework.** A *competency model* is a collection of competencies that taken together define successful performance in a particular work setting. Developed for specific jobs, job groups, organizations, occupations or industries, models typically include: competency names and definitions; descriptions of activities or behaviors associated with each competency; and a graphic diagram of the model. In support of the industry competency model initiative, experts developed a single reference source - a set of "building blocks" for competency model development.

The Building Blocks model is depicted in a graphic consisting of nine tiers. The arrangement of the tiers in a pyramidal shape is not meant to imply that competencies at the top are at a higher level of skill. The model's shape represents the increasing specificity in the application of skills as you move from Personal Effectiveness at the base through the Occupational Competencies at the top. The pyramid graphic used to display the major competency areas provides a clear visual model of the broad skill content areas required for growth and career advancement in an industry. See Figure 1 for a graphic of the Competency Model for Energy Generation, Transmission and Distribution. For more information on all of the industry competency models that have been developed see Section 4 and:

<http://www.careeronestop.org/CompetencyModel/pyramid.aspx>

Figure 1.

## Energy/ Generation, Transmission and Distribution Competency Model



**4. Uses of Industry Competency Models.** Industry competency models provide a common framework to drive the dialogue on regional talent development among the workforce investment system, businesses, the education community, labor organizations, and economic developers. Competency models are not the end product, but a resource with multiple uses, as summarized in Figure 2.

**Figure 2.**

<b>Uses of Competency Models for the Workforce Investment System</b>	
<b>Use</b>	<b>Description</b>
Communicate Industry Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate industry expectations and demands to potential workers, career development professionals, training providers, and education partners.</li> <li>• See information about the Competency Model Clearinghouse and the interactive tools developed to facilitate customizing a national industry model in Section 5 -Competency Resources.</li> </ul>
Career Exploration and Guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist new entrants and incumbent workers to target career exploration efforts and identify career pathways to success. Provide career guidance and counseling to jobseekers to help them set career goals and obtain the appropriate training/ education to reach those goals.</li> </ul>
Career Paths, Ladders & Lattices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the foundation, academic, and industry technical competencies that underlie career ladders or lattices. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Career ladders represent the upward movement of workers in progressively more complex positions throughout their careers (for example, from Assistant Mechanic to Mechanic to Senior Mechanic).</li> <li>○ Career lattices represent careers that do not follow a linear progression and include lateral moves.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Promote collaboration and alignment between Career and Technical Education Pathways and Programs of Study and workforce investment system investments in training for individuals to move along Career Ladders/Lattice (see Attachment).</li> </ul>
Workforce Program Planning and Labor Pool Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate existing programs against competencies required by regional business and industry by providing a blueprint for identifying commonalities of skill needs across the employers in an industry and the programs available to train the workforce needed.</li> <li>• Conduct labor pool analyses to examine the skills in the available labor force.</li> <li>• Compare the skills of the labor pool to those required by regional business and industry.</li> </ul>
Curriculum Evaluation, Planning, and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the foundation and technical competency areas that lead to satisfactory performance in an industry.</li> <li>• Develop competency-based training objectives and outcomes.</li> <li>• Tailor courses to specific student populations or industry needs.</li> </ul>

Uses of Competency Models for the Workforce Investment System	
Human Resource Services to Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articulate required knowledge, skills, and abilities in job descriptions.</li> <li>• Match candidates' qualifications to employer requirements to facilitate recruitment and selection.</li> <li>• Create competency-based position descriptions, job matches, and employee development plans and performance appraisals.</li> </ul>
Certification, Licensure, and Assessment Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform the development of assessments by identifying the basic literacy, numeracy, and academic competencies required for success.</li> <li>• Provide a resource to ensure that professional certification and licensure requirements include the wide range of knowledge and skills needed.</li> <li>• Inform the development of achievement tests that measure desirable work-related knowledge and skills such as computer programming or statistical process control.</li> </ul>
Industry Models and Registered Apprenticeship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Award certificates of apprenticeship based on requiring the apprentice to demonstrate competence in defined knowledge and skill areas per new regulations.</li> <li>• Provide a resource for identifying the competencies that must be acquired through the combination of on-the-job training and related technical instruction in a Registered Apprenticeship program.</li> </ul>

**5. Competency Resources.** Eleven industry models have been completed as of January 2009: Advanced Manufacturing; Aerospace; Automation; Construction – Heavy/Civil/Highway; Construction – Residential; Energy; Entrepreneurship; Financial Services; Hospitality – Hotel and Lodging; Information Technology; and Retail.

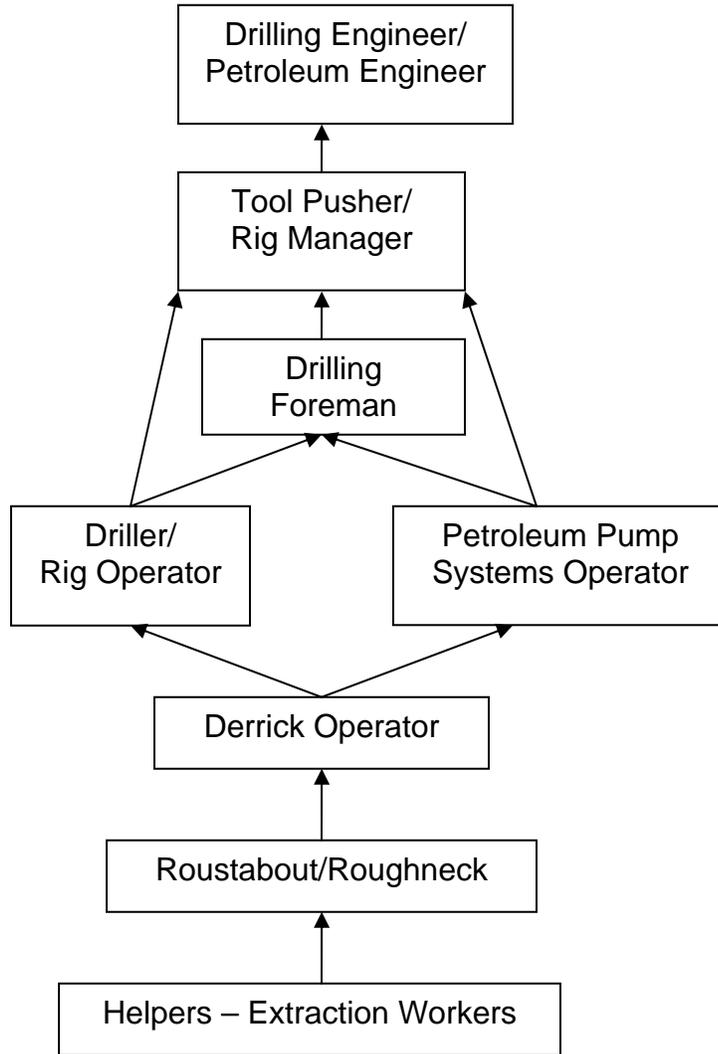
These models can be found on the Competency Model Clearinghouse (CMC) at <http://www.careeronestop.org/CompetencyModel/>. New models currently under development and any revisions to or updates of existing models will also be posted on the CMC.

In addition, under the Build a Model link, the CMC provides two interactive tools - Build a Competency Model and Build a Career Ladder/Lattice.

- The Build a Competency Model tool enables users to customize one of the national industry competency models to reflect specific workforce needs in a region. For example, a user can start with the framework for Advanced Manufacturing and customize it to reflect the competencies for pharmaceutical manufacturing.
- The Career Ladder/Lattice tool enables users to start with a national or customized industry competency model and then employ the Career Ladder/Lattice tool to display the sequence of jobs or occupations within specific careers in that industry. The tool results in a graphic that illustrates the progression and advancement

potential in the career ladder/lattice and also contains documentation of the requirements for each job as well as the critical developmental experiences needed to move between them. Figure 3 depicts the graphic only for a sample Career Ladder/Lattice within the Energy sector, the model itself provides additional detail.

**Figure 3. Example Career Ladder for Energy Industry (Petroleum Sector)**



To access these tools as well as other resources that will help you learn about and use competencies and career ladder/lattices to support workforce and talent development, visit the Competency Model Clearinghouse at <http://www.careeronestop.org/CompetencyModel/>. Instructions and online animated tutorials for both the Build a Competency Model and the Build a Career Ladder/Lattice tools are available in the lower left-hand corner of the Build a Model page. To start using the tools, click on "Build a Model."

The CMC Web site also offers developers and users of competency models a variety of resources, tools, and links including:

- a *Technical Assistance Guide: Developing and Using Competency Models*, available to be read online or downloaded for easy reference;
- a searchable database of over a thousand competency-based resources; and,
- Case in Point stories about promising practices around using competency models.

**6. Action Required.** Recipients are requested to share this Training and Employment Notice with workforce system partners in business, education, and elsewhere who could make use of and benefit from these competency model resources and tools. Users who develop customized industry competency models or career ladder/lattices for talent development in regional economies are encouraged to share final models with the workforce investment community and its strategic partners by posting them on [www.Workforce3One.org](http://www.Workforce3One.org).

**7. Inquiries.** Questions about the ETA Industry Competency Models Initiative and Competency Model Clearinghouse should be directed to Pam Frugoli at [frugoli.pam@dol.gov](mailto:frugoli.pam@dol.gov).

**8. Attachment.** Relationship of Industry Competency Models to Career Clusters