

<b>CRITERIA</b>
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## **The Recognition of Excellence Application Process**

To recognize superior employment and training related programs and improve system performance, the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) is sponsoring a system to recognize high levels of success by entities managing and partnering with ETA funded programs. ETA recognizes that achieving commendable outcomes requires much more than statutory or regulatory compliance. Therefore, high levels of success should be recognized, and it is ETA's hope that this recognition process will facilitate the exponential replication of promising practices throughout the workforce investment system.

This Recognition of Excellence replaces awards programs that were administered on ETA's behalf in the past. ETA is requesting applications in order to select honorees, which will be showcased at the Workforce Innovations Conference in July 2004. Through this conference, thousands of workforce investment professionals from across the nation will be able to learn about the promising practices of the honorees. ***The applications are for recognition and not a monetary award.***

Honorees in five separate categories will be recognized:

- ❖ ***Educating America's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Workforce***
- ❖ ***Building an Industry/Business Driven Workforce Investment System***
- ❖ ***E<sup>3</sup> Partnerships***
- ❖ ***Recognizing the Demographics of the Workforce***
- ❖ ***Serving Out-of School Youth***

*(For a detailed description of each category, see section III)*

Honorees will be selected based on an application package that demonstrates that the project, program or initiative is innovative, collaborative, resulted in positive performance outcomes, linked services to occupations in demand, economic development and community benefit, and is replicable.

This recognition supports the Department of Labor's goals of ensuring:

- 1) A Prepared Workforce: Enhancing opportunities for America's workforce
- 2) A Secure Workforce: Promoting the economic security of workers and families
- 3) A Competitive Workforce: Addressing demand for new, replacement and skilled workers

Further, consistent with ETA's mission, the recognition awards will promote efficient and effective functions of the U.S. labor market by recognizing high

quality job training programs that provide employment and labor market information, and seek temporary, partial wage-loss replacement for workers through state and local workforce investment systems.

## **I. Eligibility**

Any state or local program, project or initiative, including national programs grantees, funded through ETA activities, or in which an ETA funded activity is one integral component, may apply (i.e. youth, adults, dislocated workers, unemployment compensation, tax credits, apprenticeship programs, electronic systems, etc.). The program, project or initiative must have been operational at some point in time within the last two program years (the current program year and/or the previous program year).

## **II. Application Instructions**

The following application instructions are very important and should be read closely. Failure to comply with all requirements will result in disqualification of the application. Each submission must include an application that meets the following specifications and contain the appropriate signature pages as explained below.

- A. *Format:* Applications must be 10 pages or less, typed, single sided, double-spaced, 12 point font with 1 inch margins on the top, bottom and sides. Applications that do not meet these format criteria will not be considered.
- B. *Signature Page:* Each applicant must submit a signature page which should be labeled Appendix A and submitted with the application. The signature page must consist of the applicant name, title or organization and the name, title and organization of each collaborating partner. Collaborating partners must sign the application, or empower one entity to sign by stating such in writing and signing the written statement. This statement of empowerment must also be included with the signature page. The signature page will not be counted in the page restriction. The signature page should indicate, "By signing this page we are providing assurances that the information provided is true and can be verified without notice."
- C. *Criteria:* Within each award category there are five criteria, 1) Innovation, 2) Collaboration, 3) Performance Outcomes, 4) Linking Services to Demand Occupations, Economic Development and Community Benefit, and 5) Replicability. Applications should provide an overview of the program, and must address each of the five criteria. Applications that do not address the five criteria will not be considered.

- D. *Restriction on Number of Applications:* Any individual state program or local program, project or initiative, including national programs' grantees, funded through ETA activities, or in which an ETA funded activity is one integral component, may only apply in one award category. Entities with duplicate applications in more than one category will be disqualified. Different programs, projects or initiatives under a state agency may be submitted and will be counted separately.
- E. *Deadline:* The original and three copies of the application must arrive at DOL by 4:00 p.m. on May 10, 2004. Applications received after that date will not be considered. Faxed or emailed materials will not be accepted.
- F. *Mailing Address:* Mail applications to:

Adele Gagliardi  
Office of Policy Development, Evaluation and Research  
Employment and Training Administration  
Frances Perkins Building  
200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Room N 5637  
Washington, D.C. 20210

NOTE: Applicants should be aware that U.S. mail to Washington, D.C. is still being screened for security reasons, and is often significantly delayed. As a result, it is recommended that applicants consider other delivery methods.

- G. *Recognition:* Selected Honorees will receive recognition by the Assistant Secretary of Labor at a plenary session during the Workforce Innovation 2004 conference, accompanied by a symbolic engraved commemorative figurine. Honorees will receive free registration at the conference.
- H. *Questions:* If you have questions about the award or application, contact Adele Gagliardi at (202) 693-3700 or [gagliardi.adele@dol.gov](mailto:gagliardi.adele@dol.gov).

Applications will be screened to determine whether they address/conform to the basic eligibility, criteria and application requirements. Those that conform to the basic criteria will be forwarded to the panel of reviewers and will be scored on a 100 point scale in response to the criteria in the award category for which the application is being reviewed. Those that do not conform will not be reviewed. ETA staff will perform the initial review for conformity with application requirements. Applications will be scored by a panel of reviewers made up of system stakeholders. One application will be honored in each category.

### **III. Criteria**

Each application must contain a written description of the program, project or initiative, and an overview that addresses each of the criteria in the category of chosen.

#### **Category 1: Educating America's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Workforce**

Globalization, technological advances and America's shifting demographics are rapidly changing the 21<sup>st</sup> Century workforce into one that is vastly different from a few years ago. A fundamental transformation for all industries is occurring and requirements for higher skills and education are increasing. Eighty percent of the fastest growing jobs in the U.S. require higher education and many require increased math and science skills. Post-secondary institutions and alternatives such as community colleges and apprenticeship programs will be increasingly critical providers of skills training for workers needing to retool, refine, and broaden their skills. These changes require workforce investment organizations to employ new strategies to educate and train America's workforce, ensuring that individuals are adequately prepared for their career of choice and that the United States remains competitive in this new and dynamic global economy. This category recognizes organizations that have developed new and effective strategies in training and development that will prepare our workforce for the changes and challenges that lie ahead.

##### ***Criteria a: Innovation (15 points)***

Please describe the specific purpose of the program, project or initiative. How is it innovative in developing and designing new programs and training systems? How has it provided a positive impact on the training and development of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century workforce? How does it differ from traditional programs or projects? What prompted the innovation and how was it accomplished?

##### ***Criteria b: Collaboration (25 points)***

Identify innovative partnerships, such as partnerships with industries, businesses, government agencies, credentialing organizations, educational institutions, etc. Describe any productive working relationships with members of the education community such as high schools, post-secondary institutions and apprenticeship programs. Describe the collaborative relationships. How and when did this partnership begin? How did the collaborative relationships affect the program, project or initiative? If direct services are involved, are they provided in a seamless manner? If so, how is this seamless approach accomplished? Describe how resources are leveraged, citing all resources that are involved.

***Criteria c: Performance Outcomes (20 points)***

Describe how you measured the success of the effort. Describe any performance goals that were set and how they were established. Identify strategies that were established and/or efforts undertaken beyond what is normally expected, in order to meet those goals. Describe the positive outcomes. How do they relate to the overall goal(s) of the program, project or initiative? Do these goals relate to the required performance outcomes for the ETA funded activity (i.e., are they the same or different, and how)? How did this effort improve or enhance ETA funded program performance?

***Criteria d: Linking Services to Demand Occupations, Economic Development and Community Benefit (25 points):***

How does this initiative meet the education and training needs of both businesses and job-seekers/workers? To what extent were business and industry involved with curriculum development? What specific business, economic or community challenges have been addressed? Does this project, program or initiative involve or develop career ladder or lattice training? Are there any tangible benefits to the community at large?

***Criteria e: Replicability (15 points)***

Describe how this project, program or initiative is replicable. (Examples include, but are not limited to demonstrating a replicable model for others; providing tools or resources that enable the model/approach to be replicated; or documenting information or findings that can be disseminated to and used by others?)

## **Category 2: Building an Industry/Business Driven Workforce Investment System**

Our nation's ability to be competitive in a global economy depends on the quality of our workforce. To succeed, we must maintain and expand upon our market driven focus, simultaneously responding to the existing needs of businesses, while preparing a skilled workforce to fulfill further job growth and evolution. This award recognizes public workforce systems that have built the capability to respond effectively to the needs of all of its customers: businesses, employers, workers and job seekers.

### ***Criteria a: Innovation (20 points)***

Describe how program, project or initiative engaged business and economic development groups in innovative ways to identify areas of high-growth employment and the skills and competencies needed for high-growth jobs. Are these skills employer specific or general industry requirements? Are they forward looking? How? Be specific, such as in the design and development of a business service delivery model (types of services, how services are accessible, methods of service delivery, etc.). Include input from state and local officials and local business organizations.

### ***Criteria b: Collaboration (20 points)***

Describe the collaborative relationships involved in this initiative. Explain leadership demonstrated in engaging business and industry, and in determining current and future labor force needs, required job competencies, and entry level and career progression opportunities. Describe any resources that are leveraged, citing all resources that are involved. Are there specific performance expectations for each of the collaborative partners?

### ***Criteria c: Performance Outcomes (20 points)***

Describe how you measured the success of the effort. Describe any performance goals that were set and how they were established. Identify strategies that were established and/or efforts undertaken beyond what is normally expected, in order to meet those goals. Describe the positive outcomes. How do they relate to the overall goal(s) of the program, project or initiative? What impact has the initiative had on jobseekers, employers, and local economic development? Do these goals relate to the required performance outcomes for the ETA funded activity (i.e., are they the same or different, and how)? How did this effort improve or enhance ETA funded program performance?

### ***Criteria d: Linking Services to Demand Occupations, Economic Development and Community Benefit (25 points)***

Show evidence that the project leveraged the combined financial resources of partners including education, employers, economic development groups, and worked with industries that are critical for regional or local economic growth. Include information on how demand information was used to serve workers and provide career guidance around high demand industry sectors that provide options for workers to get and retain jobs at sustainable wages with options for career mobility. Did information for workers provide career guidance around high demand occupations critical for the region's economic growth?

***Criteria e: Replicability (15 points)***

Describe how this project, program or initiative is replicable. Examples include, but are not limited to, demonstrating a replicable model for others; providing tools or resources that enable the model/approach to be replicated; documenting information or findings that can be disseminated to and utilized by others; or developing a strategy to continue a successful project.

### Category 3: E<sup>3</sup> Partnerships

Addressing the critical challenges that both job seekers and employers face requires the considerable leveraging of resources from multiple systems that impact the labor market, including those of employment, education and economic development programs. ETA refers to such linkages as the “Power of E<sup>3</sup>.” The honoree of this category will be a project that demonstrates sustained partnerships between these three entities, and shows how they are working together to prepare jobseekers and incumbent workers for jobs with upward career mobility potential, thereby meeting the needs of employers.

***Criteria a: Innovation (25 points)***

Briefly describe the purpose of the partnership and how demand driven approaches were used to develop innovative solutions and prepare new and diverse labor pools to meet critical industry needs. Demonstrate how the program, project or initiative is innovative compared to traditional approaches? Describe any unique characteristics of the partnerships involved.

***Criteria b: Collaboration (20 points)***

E<sup>3</sup> project applications should be centered on collaboration. In this category evidence of partnerships between all three must be reflected in the application. Describe how the program, project or initiative created partnerships that involve employment (workforce investment system), education, and economic development in engaging industry to identify needs. Describe how the industry partners helped the E<sup>3</sup> entities identify, develop, and prepare new and diverse labor pools to meet critical industry needs.

Describe how the partners brought together and leveraged resources, and what role the workforce investment system had as catalyst and convener in bringing together the entities involved. Describe how the project used business- driven leadership at the state and/or local levels to achieve its results.

Describe the specific role each of the E<sup>3</sup> partners carried out including specific actions taken, if appropriate.

***Criteria c: Performance (20 points)***

Describe any performance goals for the initiative and how they were met or exceeded. How did the project help business, industry, and jobseekers better access the services of the workforce investment system? What was the impact on state, regional, or local economic development in measurable terms? How did this effort consolidate or link resources to reduce duplication across funding streams? Identify strategies that were

established and/or efforts undertaken beyond what is normally expected of ETA funded activities, in order to meet project goals.

***Criteria d: Linking Services to Demand Occupations, Economic Development and Community Benefit: (20 Points)***

Describe how labor market information was used to inform strategic use of workforce investment resources and to target industries that provide the best opportunities for workers to secure jobs at sustainable wages with options for career mobility. Also describe how the program, project or initiative acted as catalyst and convener to link the publicly funded workforce investment system with education, and economic development entities.

***Criteria e: Replicability (15 Points)***

Describe how this project, program or initiative is replicable. (Examples include, but are not limited to demonstrating a replicable model for others; providing tools or resources that enable the model/approach to be replicated; documenting information or findings that can be disseminated to and utilized by others; or developing a strategy to continue a successful project.)

#### **Category 4: Recognizing the Demographics of the Workforce**

With the shifting demographics of the U.S. workforce, it is becoming ever more critical that the workforce investment system find ways to integrate every available worker into the workforce to enable the continued competitiveness of U.S. businesses. This award will recognize a program, project or initiative that provide effective services to special populations with unique characteristics and barriers to employment as are provided to the general population. The results should indicate that jobseekers were adequately prepared to secure and retain employment.

Examples of special populations include, but are not limited to, individuals with disabilities, those with limited English proficiency (LEP), homeless individuals and families, Indian and Native Americans, Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers, older workers, welfare recipients, etc. Programs which focus on out-of-school youth should apply for Category 5: Serving Out-of-School Youth.

***Criteria a: Innovation (25 points)***

Describe how the program, project or initiative provided the same range of employment and training related services as are expected to be provided to the general population to help the target population(s) overcome specific barriers to employment. Identify how the program, project or initiative is innovative and creative compared to traditional programs or projects? (For example, overcoming barriers to physical and programmatic access, enhancing staff capabilities, overcoming language and technology barriers, outreach to the population, etc.) What prompted this innovation and how was this achieved?

***Criteria b: Collaboration (10 points)***

Describe the collaborative relationships involved in this initiative. Describe how resources are leveraged, citing all resources that are involved. (Examples include obtaining additional support and/or resources to serve this population, gaining expertise of outside organizations, pooling and combining resources across program and agencies to solve the employment and training needs of the population including leveraging workforce investment system resources, outreach to community and faith based organizations, etc.) If direct services are involved, are they provided in a seamless manner? How is this seamless approach accomplished?

***Criteria c: Performance Outcomes (20 points)***

Describe how you measured the success of the effort. Describe any performance goals that were set and how they were established. Identify strategies that were established and/or efforts undertaken beyond what is normally expected, in order to meet those goals. How did these goals recognize the demographics of the current and future workforce and focus

on positive outcomes in employment and retention for special population(s)? Describe the positive outcomes. How do they relate to the overall goal(s) of the program, project or initiative? Do these goals relate to the required performance outcomes for the ETA funded activity (i.e. are they the same or different, and how)? How did this effort improve or enhance ETA funded program performance?

***Criteria d: Linking Services to Demand Occupations, Economic Development and Community Benefit: (20 Points)***

Describe why this program, project or initiative is important to the business customer and/or the community. Describe the business or community challenges, issues or needs it addresses. If outreach was conducted, what was the result? (For example, identify how outreach was done to connect with individuals in the targeted population(s); work within the community to determine the target population's needs; connect the targeted populations with employers; create links with specific employer or business needs, etc.). How did the program, project, or initiative enhance the quantity and quality of services?

***Criteria e: Replicability (25 Points)***

Describe how this program, project or initiative is replicable. (Examples include, but are not limited to, demonstrating a replicable model for others; providing tools or resources that enable the model/approach to be replicated; documenting information or findings that can be disseminated to and utilized by others; or developing a strategy to continue a successful project.)

## **Category 5: Serving Out-of-School Youth**

By providing out-of-school youth with experience, education and skills, we can help develop a pipeline of job ready individuals to serve the needs of business, and provide youth with paths to career enhancing opportunities and productive lives. The challenge for agencies that employ a demand-driven strategic approach to serving out-of-school youth is developing programs that balance traditional methodology with “outside the box” or creative techniques to successfully match employers who need workers with young people that need jobs.

This category recognizes an exemplary program, project or initiative that employs innovative techniques and actively collaborates with business and industry and other essential partners in workforce and economic development to develop successful workforce solutions that address the education, training and hiring challenges of serving out-of-school youth. The initiative should be part of a strong network of stakeholders, partners and resources and be able to demonstrate positive performance outcomes for out of school youth in placement, retention, earnings gained, and/or credentials obtained. (Including but not limited to the WIA Youth program, Job Corps or Youth Opportunity Grants.)

### ***Criteria a: Innovation (15 points)***

Describe how the program, project or initiative is innovative and creative compared to traditional approaches. Identify any innovative activities that ensure that the workforce system partners connect with business, community organizations, and public and higher education systems in order to prepare out-of-school youth for career opportunities in high growth job sectors of the 21st century.

### ***Criteria b: Collaboration (20 points)***

Describe how the program utilizes linkages with a myriad of stakeholders, partners, organizations or resources. (Including, but not limited to partnerships with businesses, community colleges, high schools, community and faith-based organizations, non-traditional education and training programs, Job Corps, Youth Build, Youth Corps) Describe how these partnerships promote educating, training and/or employing out-of-school youth in self-sustaining jobs, including, but not limited to providing vital support services such as work readiness training, mentoring, transportation, child care, translation services and job coaching, raising academic standards, addressing student needs, reaching out to employers, collaborating to maximize funding, resource mapping, specialized case management for youth, managing community partners and networks, youth liaisons, or collaboration to make electronic technology tools, such as America’s Job Bank, America’s Career InfoNet, O’Net, Labor Market Information and Career Voyages tools available to

students. Describe how resources are leveraged, citing all resources or contributions.

***Criteria c: Performance Outcomes (30 points)***

Describe how you measured the success of the effort. How did the effort improve the placement, earnings, retention and or credential rating for out-of-school youth? How were performance goals established? Identify strategies that were established and/or efforts undertaken beyond what is normally expected, in order to meet those goals. How do goals relate to the overall goal(s) of the program, project or initiative? Do these goals relate to the required performance outcomes for the ETA funded activity (i.e. are they the same or different, and how)? How did this effort improve or enhance ETA funded program performance? Does it foster long term attachment to the workforce?

***Criteria d: Linking Services to Demand Occupations, Economic Development and Community Benefit (25 points)***

Describe how the program, project or initiative ensures that the workforce system connects with business, public and higher education systems in order to prepare out-of-school youth for the 21st century career opportunities and skills in high growth job sectors. Include the detail for each three (3) categories: 1) Purpose and Activities, 2) Organization and Management, and 3) Workforce Development. Why these factors are important to the business customer or the community? If providing services, how does the service delivery model demonstrate a demand driven approach and effective engagement with the business community? What is the relationship between the initiative's mission, activities and the youth it serves? Does the initiative maintain strong, engaged, and competent leadership? Does the initiative nurture career awareness and/or career planning and readiness throughout the program? Is there any focus on soft-skills?

***Criteria e: Replicability (10 Points)***

Describe how this project, program or initiative is replicable. (Examples include, but are not limited to, demonstrating a replicable model for others; providing tools or resources that enable the model/approach to be replicated; documenting information or findings that can be disseminated to and utilized by others; or developing a strategy to continue a successful project.)