TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT NOTICE	NO. 25-07
	DATE January 16, 2008

TO: ALL STATE WORKFORCE AGENCY ADMINISTRATORS
ALL STATE WORKFORCE LIAISONS
ALL STATE AND LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD CHAIRS AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

FROM: DOUGLAS F. SMALL
Deputy Assistant Secretary

SUBJECT: Announcing the 2008 Recognition of Excellence Application Process

The Employment and Training Administration (ETA) is pleased to announce the opening of the Recognition of Excellence (ROE) application process for 2008. This initiative was established in 2004 to recognize high performance employment and training-related programs and superior or improved system performance by entities administering and partnering with ETA-funded programs. The ROE is an important opportunity to honor programs that have achieved commendable outcomes as well as facilitate the exponential replication of innovative practices throughout the workforce investment system.

ETA is now requesting applications from which honorees will be selected and showcased at the Workforce Innovations Conference to be held July 15-17, 2008, in New Orleans, Louisiana. There, thousands of workforce investment professionals from across the nation will be able to learn about the successful practices of the honorees. ***The honorees are selected solely for recognition, not a monetary award.***

This year's categories and selection criteria have changed to reflect the continually evolving trends, emphases, service delivery, and training capabilities of the workforce investment system. The new and revised categories are:

- ***Educating America's Workforce to Serve Emerging Industries***
- ***Building a Regionally-Focused Workforce Strategy***
- ***Leveraging the Power of Partnerships***
- ***Tapping the Talents of Special Populations in the Workforce***
- ***Connecting America's Youth to the Workforce***

Honorees will be selected based on an application package that demonstrates excellence in a variety of criteria relevant to the revised categories. Selection criteria include: innovation, collaboration, service delivery, performance outcomes,

sustainability, replicability, linking workers to demand occupations and emerging industries, and impact.

Any state or local program, project, or initiative, including those of national program grantees, funded through ETA or in which an ETA-funded activity is one integral component, may apply. In addition to employment and training entities funded directly by ETA, eligible applicants for ROE may include universities, community colleges, businesses, foundations, faith and community-based organizations, and other entities that receive ETA funds or partner with the ETA-funded applicant in the recommended program, project, or initiative. The program, project, or initiative must have been operational for at least twelve (12) months during the last two program years (July 2006 to present). The program, project, or initiative may not have been recognized as an ROE winner in a previous year.

Three nominees in each category will be announced during the 2008 Workforce Innovations conference. The winner announced at Workforce Innovations will receive an engraved commemorative symbol and the two other honorees will receive an engraved plaque.

Applications must be submitted **electronically** by 6:00 p.m. EST on March 28, 2008. Applications received after that date will not be considered. If you have questions about the application process, view the Frequently Asked Questions on the ROE Web site or contact the ROE coordinator, Anissa Holm, by e-mail at: **holm.anissa@dol.gov** or by phone at: (202) 693-3163.

Action: To learn more about last year's Recognition of Excellence presentations, honorees, recognized programs, and the application process for 2008, visit the ROE Web site at: **http://roe.doleta.gov/**. Please prepare and submit your electronic application early to meet the 6:00 p.m. EST deadline on March 28, 2008.

For information on the 2008 Workforce Innovations Conference, please visit: **www.workforceinnovations.org**.

NEW! Recognition of Excellence 2008
Application Process Revised

The Recognition of Excellence (ROE) 2008 Overview

The Recognition of Excellence (ROE) 2008 application categories and guidelines have changed. However, the purpose of ROE in promoting superior employment and training-related programs and improving system performance remains the same. Again in 2008, the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) will 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. It is ETA's hope that this recognition process also will facilitate the exponential replication of promising practices throughout the workforce investment system.

ETA is pleased to be administering this recognition program for the fifth consecutive year. The 2008 application process is now open and ready to receive applications from which honorees will be selected and showcased at the 2008 Workforce Innovations conference on July 15-17, 2008, in New Orleans, Louisiana. Through this conference, thousands of workforce investment professionals from across the nation will be able to learn from the successful practices of the honorees. ***The honorees will be selected solely for recognition, not a monetary award.***

The 2008 ROE categories have been expanded and improved to more adequately reflect current ETA priority areas. Three honorees in each of the five "new and expanded" categories will be recognized. The three nominees, including one winner, will be selected in the categories listed below.

- ***Educating America's Workforce to Serve Emerging Industries***
- ***Building a Regionally-Focused Workforce Strategy***
- ***Leveraging the Power of Partnerships***
- ***Tapping the Talents of Special Populations in the Workforce***
- ***Connecting America's Youth to the Workforce***

A *detailed description of each category is provided in Section III of this document.*

Honorees will be selected based on an application package that demonstrates that the project, program, or initiative is innovative, collaborative, provided effective service delivery, linked workers to demand occupations and emerging industries, resulted in positive performance outcomes, had impact, and is replicable and/or sustainable.

I. Eligibility

Any state or local program, project, or initiative, including national program grants, funded through ETA 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, etc.). The program, project, or initiative must have been operational for at least twelve (12) months during the last two program years (July 2006 to present).

In addition to employment and training entities funded directly by ETA, eligible applicants for ROE may include universities, community colleges, businesses, foundations, faith- and community-based organizations, and other entities that receive ETA funds or partner with the ETA-funded applicant in the recommended program, project, or initiative.

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. **Only applications submitted electronically will be accepted.** Each submission must include an application that meets the following specifications.

A. *Format*: The electronic application will consist of four (4) parts.

1) *Part 1.* Application Program and Submitter Information Page, which contains identification and contact information for the program, project, or initiative. All required information must be provided.

2) *Part 2.* Narrative Description of the program, project, or initiative being submitted. The specific criteria and scoring differ for each category. **Please carefully review and conform to the criteria in the category for which you are submitting an application.** The narrative shall not exceed 10 double-spaced pages.

3) *Part 3.* List of collaborating partners for the program, project, or initiative. Each applicant must provide the name and contact information for the collaborating partner(s) supporting this application. Collaborating Partners are defined as organizations or individuals that provide leadership, funding, or significant support to the successful implementation or operation of the program, project, or initiative. Inclusion of the collaborating partner's name indicates that the collaborating partner is willing to provide assurances that the information in the application is true and can be verified without notice. *Signatures of collaborating partners that are listed in applications being vetted for possible recognition will be required.*

4) *Part 4.* The Signature Page, which will be generated electronically following submission of the application, requires the signature of the authorized representative submitting the application (see item 5 under section B below).

Applications **must** include the completed Program Information page, 10 pages or less Narrative Description, Collaborating Partner's page, and the signed Signature Page.

The application will not be considered complete until a faxed copy of the signed electronic application's Signature Page is received by ETA.

Applications that do not meet all of these requirements will not be considered.

B. *Preparation*: Before beginning the electronic application, we strongly recommend that applicants:

1) Compile and verify all of the required contact and identification information requested on the Program Information page of the application.

2) Prepare the narrative description of the program, project, or initiative in a word processing document first; then copy and paste the information into the appropriate text boxes provided on the electronic application form.

3) Compile and verify all of the collaborating partners' contact information. You will be limited to no more than 25 collaborating partners.

4) After completing the application, carefully review the application before clicking the "submit" button. Once the application is submitted, changes will not be permitted.

5) When the application is submitted, print the electronic application's Signature Page, and immediately fax it with the authorized representative's signature to the following fax number: (202) 693-3667, Attn: Etta Williams.

C. *Criteria:* Within each of the five award categories there are five of the eight criteria listed below that will be used to evaluate each category. The criteria may be different for each category, so please pay close attention to the criteria for the category for which you are preparing an application. The criteria will consist of the following eight areas: 1) Innovation, 2) Collaboration, 3) Performance Outcomes, 4) Service Delivery, 5) Sustainability, 6) Impact, 7) Linking Workers to Demand Occupations and Emerging Industries, and/or 8) Replicability.

Applications should provide an overview of the program, and must address each of the specified five criteria. Applications that do not address the five criteria will not be considered.

D. *Restriction on Number of Applications:* An applicant may submit applications for more than one program, project, or initiative. *However,* an individual program, project, or initiative may be submitted in only one of the five recognition categories. Multiple submissions of the same program, project, or initiative is not allowed.

E. *Restriction on Applications:* **A program, project, or initiative that has been previously recognized as a winner will not be accepted in any category.** Honorable Mention projects from previous years may be submitted for consideration under the new guidelines.

F. *Deadline:* **The electronic application and the signed application signature page must be received in ETA by 6:00 p.m. EST on Friday, March 28, 2008**. Applications and signature pages received after that date and time will not be considered. Hard copy, faxed, or emailed applications will not be accepted.

G. *Recognition:* Three nominees in each category will be announced during the 2008 Workforce Innovations conference. The five category winners will be announced at Workforce Innovations and will receive an engraved commemorative symbol, while the two runners-up in each category will receive an engraved plaque.

H. *Computer System Requirements:* Any computer with internet access should allow access to and permit completion of the ROE application online at: **http://roe.doleta.gov/**.

I. *Questions*: If you have questions about the application process, please review the Frequently Asked Questions on the Web site, **http://roe.doleta.gov/**. If you have additional questions, you may email them to: **eta.roe@dol.gov**.

Each application will be screened electronically to determine whether it addresses/conforms to the basic eligibility, submission, and application requirements. Those that conform to the criteria will be forwarded to a panel of reviewers comprised of ETA staff and system stakeholders, and will be scored on a 100 point scale in accordance with the criteria in the recognition category for which the application is being reviewed. The highest rated application in each category will be announced the winner during a plenary session at the Workforce Innovations Conference.

III. Criteria

Each application must contain a completed Program Information page, a written description of the program, project, or initiative that addresses each of the criteria in the chosen category, a list of collaborating partners and a faxed copy of the electronic application's Signature Page with the signature of the authorized representative submitting the application.

Each recognition category and the rating criteria for each category are described below. Applicants' narrative descriptions should conform to the information requested in that category.

Category 1: "Educating America's Workforce to Serve Emerging Industries"

Description: Globalization, technological advances, and America's shifting demographics are rapidly changing the 21st century workforce into one that is vastly different from a few years ago. A fundamental transformation in manufacturing and other industries is also occurring. These new and emerging industries require highly skilled and educated workers. Ninety percent of the fastest growing jobs and sixty-three percent of all new jobs in the United States require a post-secondary education. Post-secondary institutions 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 for the changing face of manufacturing and new technologies.

This category will recognize programs, projects, and initiatives that have developed and implemented effective strategies to educate and prepare the workforce for jobs in any of the 14 high-growth industries (**http://www.doleta.gov/BRG/JobTrainInitiative/**) and/or emerging fields such as nanotechnology and renewable energy, among others.

Narrative Description:

Introduction: In 100 words or less, provide the background and context for your program, project, or initiative, and describe the challenges it addresses.

Selection Criteria: Briefly address each of the criteria below.

Linking Workers to Demand Occupations and Emerging Industries: (25 Points) This section describes how workers and job-seekers are being prepared for careers in any of the 14 high-growth industries or new and emerging industries, among others.

Please describe the specific business, economic, or community challenges the program, project, or initiative is addressing. What new or emerging industries and/or high demand occupations are targeted? Describe how this initiative meets the education and training needs of both businesses and job-seekers/workers. What populations are served by this initiative? To what extent were business and industry involved with planning and curriculum development? Does this project, program or initiative involve or develop career ladders or lattice training to promote long-term attachment to the workforce?

Collaboration: (20 Points) The challenge of developing a world class workforce and a globally competitive economy requires cooperation among many uncommon partners. In this section, the application should identify innovative partnerships, such as partnerships with industries, businesses, government agencies, credentialing organizations, associations, faith- and community-based organizations, educational institutions, and others.

Please identify the new partners you enlisted. What role do they play? What financial and/or in-kind resources do they provide? Do the educational partners involve employers in the design and delivery of education? Is there an active collaboration between economic development, business, and education partners to gather and analyze current and real-time workforce and economic data?

Impact: (20 Points) Impact differs from performance outcomes in that this section describes more systemic outcomes and less quantifiable results, such as improvements in service delivery systems, program visibility and image, business growth, capacity-building, and individual benefits to participants.

Please describe the systemic enhancements that have been made with the program, project, or initiative that created or attracted new business opportunities to your area/region. Has your program, project, or initiative created increased opportunities for post-secondary education and lifelong learning? Are these opportunities aligned with the area's labor market information? Were time and cost saving strategies instituted? Were new capacity-building strategies implemented?

Performance Outcomes: (20 Points) This section focuses on quantitative and qualitative outcomes of the program, project, or initiative. It should describe the extent to which project outcomes or results are clear, and have a direct impact on improving service delivery and results to employers, workers, job-seekers, and the community.

Please describe the performance goals that were set and how they were established. Describe the outcomes in quantitative and/or qualitative terms. Compare outcomes (planned/actual) to the overall goal(s) of the program, project, or initiative. Are these goals the same or different from the required performance outcomes for the ETA-funded activity? Did the performance outcomes exceed required outcomes for the ETA-funded activity? How did this effort improve or enhance an ETA-funded program or service performance? What are the results/outcomes of the intervention? Are you engaged in data-driven analysis to shape ongoing strategic planning, investment of training resources, and the engagement of new and emerging industry opportunities?

Replicability: (15 Points) This section describes the extent to which the program, project, or initiative could be transferred or replicated elsewhere (internally or in another programmatic or geographical area).

Please describe the potential for the program, project, or initiative you have implemented to be widely applied. Has the program, project, or initiative been replicated in other areas of your operation? How can replication be facilitated in other locations? (Examples include, but are not limited to, demonstrating the model for others; providing tools or resources that enable the model/approach to be replicated; providing documentation or findings that can be disseminated to and used by others; and replicating the model elsewhere.) Present specific information regarding barriers that may assist the reader in determining the feasibility of implementing the program model in their area.

Category 2: "Building a Regionally-Focused Workforce Strategy"

Description: Our nation's ability to be competitive in a global economy depends on the transformation of our workforce investment system. To succeed, we must build the capacity for regional economic success through strategic partnerships and effective approaches to talent development. The challenge is to create a broad set of strategies involving workforce development, education, economic development, and others for immediate implementation and into the future.

This category will recognize public workforce investment systems that have built the capability to respond effectively to the needs of all of its customers: businesses, employers, workers and job seekers by employing a regional economic competitiveness strategy. This category is seeking applications that describe systems, procedures, collaborations, evidence of success in talent

development, and models for creating a regionally-focused workforce strategy.

Narrative Description:

Introduction: In 100 words or less, provide the background and context for your program, project, or initiative, and describe the challenges it addresses.

Selection Criteria: Briefly address each of the criteria below.

Innovation: (20 Points) This section describes the extent to which a program, project, or initiative varies from current approaches. ETA is especially interested in the application of different financing mechanisms, institutional arrangements and partnerships designed to unblock constraints to service delivery, regional planning and talent development, people-centered, seamless approaches to service delivery, and innovative uses of technology for capacity building and training, among others.

Please describe the specific purpose of the program, project, or initiative. Describe what prompted the innovation. What are the innovative or new strategies, partners, programs, training systems or other features implemented? Does the program, project, or initiative bridge areas within the state or across state borders? How does the approach differ from traditional programs or projects?

Collaboration: (25 Points) The challenge of developing a world class workforce and a globally competitive economy requires cooperation among many uncommon partners. In this section, the application should identify innovative partnerships, such as partnerships with industries, businesses, government agencies, credentialing organizations, associations, faith- and community-based organizations, educational institutions, among others.

Please discuss how leadership formation and development occurred in your region. What new partners did you enlist? Does your strategy include multiple WIBS? Does the strategy cross state lines? How were you able to get the support of the partners? What role do the various partners play? What financial and/or in-kind resources do they provide?

Service Delivery: (15 Points) This section addresses systemic changes and innovations to improve the process of delivering timely, appropriate, and effective services to employers, workers and job seekers.

Please discuss how the service delivery strategy has impacted the workforce investment system and changed your operational approach. Describe how service delivery was improved. Who has benefited from the services provided? Are the persons, businesses, and/or industries served different than before?

Impact: (20 Points) Impact differs from performance outcomes in that this section describes more systemic outcomes and less quantifiable results, such as improvements in service delivery systems, program visibility and image, business growth, capacity-building, and individual benefits to participants.

Please describe the systemic enhancements you have made and the results. Have you created or attracted new business opportunities to your region? Have you created increased opportunities for post-secondary education and lifelong learning? Are these opportunities aligned with the region's talent development strategy? Have you instituted time and cost saving strategies? Have you implemented new capacity-building strategies? How many persons are benefiting from the intervention? What is your progress to date? What benefit(s) is this strategy having on the region?

Sustainability: (20 Points) This section describes the extent to which the applicant is able to sustain the activities beyond the current funding phase.

Please describe your sustainability plan, i.e. resources commitment, roles and responsibility of partners. Describe any joint agreements signed by the partners. What steps have been taken to ensure the regional partnership will continue? Discuss the mechanism which keeps the leadership team and proposed initiative viable for the long-term. How will the new structure or process support long-term strategy and talent development as well as continued innovation?

Category 3: "Leveraging the Power of Partnerships"

Description: Addressing the critical challenges that both job seekers and employers face requires considerable leveraging of resources from multiple systems that impact the workforce and the economy. The engagement of traditionally separate organizations is necessary for building partnerships, creating a common vision and plan for the economic future of communities, and providing a more comprehensive and seamless array of services to the workforce.

The honorees in this category will be programs, projects, or initiatives that demonstrate sustained partnerships with new

entities/partners such as economic and workforce development organizations, businesses, K-12 education, community colleges, colleges and universities, venture capitalists, angel capital funds, industry associations, foundations, faith- and community-based entities, and governmental agencies. In addition, the applicant must demonstrate how they are successfully working together to prepare (1) jobseekers for employment; (2) incumbent workers for jobs with upward career mobility potential; and/or (3) businesses and entrepreneurs to create, sustain and expand their businesses.

Narrative Description:

Introduction: In 100 words or less, provide the background and context for your program, project, or initiative, and describe the challenges it addresses.

Selection Criteria: Briefly address each criterion below.

Collaboration: *(*25 points*)* The challenge of developing a world class workforce and a globally competitive economy requires cooperation among many uncommon partners. In this section, the application should identify innovative partnerships, such as partnerships with industries, businesses, government agencies, credentialing organizations, associations, faith- and community-based organizations, educational institutions, and others.

Please describe the labor and economic challenge(s) your community is facing. What new partners did you enlist to address these challenges? What role do they play? Describe any joint agreements signed by the partners. Does your partnership reflect an understanding of local labor market research, commercialization, and business development capacity in the local region? What financial and/or in-kind resources do the partners provide? How are established partnerships leading systemic transformation in your geographic area?

Service Delivery: (20 Points) This section addresses systemic changes and innovations to improve the process of delivering timely, appropriate and effective services to employers, workers and job seekers.

Please describe your service model. How is it different? Is it a seamless service delivery model? Who are the beneficiaries of the services provided in this program, project, or initiative? Are they different from what was provided before? Have common and innovative policies been adopted across the workforce, education, economic development, and other partnership communities? Do

these new strategies and structures successfully support talent development in the local/regional economy?

Performance Outcomes: (20 Points) This section focuses on quantitative and qualitative outcomes of the program, project, or initiative. It should describe the extent to which project outcomes or results are clear and have a direct impact on improving service delivery and results to employers, workers, job-seekers and the community.

Please describe the performance goals that were set and how they were established. How many persons are served by the intervention? Describe the outcomes in quantitative and/or qualitative terms. Compare outcomes (planned/actual) to the overall goal(s) of the program, project, or initiative, where possible. Are the goals the same or different from the required performance outcomes for the ETA-funded activity? Did the performance outcomes exceed required outcomes for the ETA-funded activity? How did this effort improve or enhance ETA-funded program or service performance?

Sustainability: (20 Points) This section describes the extent to which the applicant is able to sustain the activities beyond the current funding phase.

Describe your sustainability plan, i.e. resources commitments, roles and responsibility of partners? Discuss the mechanism which keeps the leadership team and proposed initiative viable for the long-term. How will the new structure or process support long-term strategy development and continued innovation? Describe how the leveraging of funds from grants and non-grant resources (such as user fees, community contributions, etc.) will be used to make the project financially viable beyond current funding. Describe the extent to which the application addresses organizational capacity, local support, and participation, leading to longevity.

Replicability: (15 Points) This section describes the extent to which the program, project, or initiative could be transferred or replicated elsewhere (internally or in another programmatic or geographical area).

Please describe the potential for the program, project, or initiative you have implemented to be widely applied. Has the program, project, or initiative been replicated in other areas of your operation? How can replication be facilitated in other locations? (Examples include, but are not limited to, demonstrating the model for others; providing tools or resources that enable the model/approach to be replicated; providing documentation or

findings that can be disseminated to and used by others; and replicating the model elsewhere.) Present specific information regarding barriers that may assist the reader in determining the feasibility of implementing the program model in their area.

Category 4: "Tapping the Talents of Special Populations"

Description: 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 category will recognize programs, projects, or initiatives that provide effective career-enhancing services to special populations with unique characteristics and barriers to employment. The results should demonstrate successful talent development in the form of jobseekers being adequately prepared for and securing and retaining employment in high-demand industries.

Examples of special populations include, but are not limited to: persons with disabilities, individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP), immigrants, older workers, ex-offenders, homeless individuals and families, Indian and Native Americans, Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers, welfare recipients, military spouses, etc. (Programs serving Youth should be submitted in the "Connecting America's Youth to the Workforce" category.)

Narrative Description:

Introduction: In 100 words or less, provide the background and context for your program, project, or initiative, and describe the challenges it addresses.

Selection Criteria: Briefly address each criterion below.

Innovation: (15 Points) This section describes the extent to which a program, project, or initiative varies from current approaches. ETA is especially interested in the application of different financing mechanisms, institutional arrangements and partnerships designed to unblock constraints to service delivery, regional planning and talent development, people-centered, seamless approaches to service delivery, and innovative uses of technology for capacity building and training, among others.

Please describe the specific purpose of the program, project, or initiative. Describe what prompted the innovation? What are the innovative or new strategies, partners, programs, training systems,

or other features implemented. How does the approach differ from traditional programs or projects?

What challenges are being addressed? How does/did your approach resolve the challenge? What did you do that is different? Why do you think it works/worked? How does your approach move beyond the traditional social services model?

Collaboration: (15 Points) The challenge of developing a world class workforce and a globally competitive economy requires cooperation among many uncommon partners. In this section, the application should identify innovative partnerships, such as partnerships with industries, businesses, government agencies, credentialing organizations, associations, faith- and community-based organizations, educational institutions, among others.

What new partners did you enlist, such as: high schools, post-secondary institutions, apprenticeship programs, community-based organizations, faith- and community-based organizations, associations, etc.? What roles do they play? What financial and/or in-kind resources do they provide? Does your partnership reflect the results of local labor market research, commercialization, and business development capacity in the local region? How did the collaborative relationships affect outcomes of the program, project, or initiative? Describe how resources are leveraged, citing all resources that are involved.

Service Delivery: (25 Points) This section addresses systemic changes and innovations to improve the process of delivering timely, appropriate, and effective services to employers, workers and job seekers.

What special population did you serve? What barriers do they bring such as: single parenthood, LEP, incarceration, substance abuse? Describe the service model. How is it different? Is it seamless? Discuss how you have eliminated any siloed programs or services. Have common and innovative policies been adopted across the workforce, education, and economic development systems and structures that support talent development for your target population?

Performance Outcomes: (25 Points) This section focuses on quantitative and qualitative outcomes of the program, project, or initiative. It should describe the extent to which project outcomes or results are clear and have a direct impact on improving service delivery and results to employers, workers, job-seekers and the community.

Please discuss the results/outcomes of the intervention. Has the training capacity for special populations increased? Are businesses hiring individuals from the targeted group at an above-average rate? List quantitative outcomes for participants in training completed placements, retention, earnings gained and credentials obtained. Are persons being placed in high demand jobs with career potential? Identify several of the job titles in which participants are being placed.

Replicability: (20 Points) This section describes the extent to which the project could be transferred or replicated elsewhere (internally or in another programmatic or geographical area).

Describe the potential for the idea you have implemented to be widely applied. Have you replicated this program, project, or initiative in other areas of your operation? How can you facilitate replication in other locations? (Examples include, but are not limited to, demonstrating the model for others, providing tools or resources that enable the model/approach to be replicated, providing documentation or findings that can be disseminated to and used by others, and replicating the model elsewhere.) Present specific information regarding barriers that may assist the reader in determining the feasibility of implementing the program model in their area.

Category 5: "Connecting America's Youth to the Workforce"

Description: The preparation of youth, both in-school and out-of-school, for the jobs of the future is important to the economic success of the nation. By providing youth with experience, education and skills early, a pipeline of job ready individuals to serve the needs of business and offer youth the pathways to career enhancing opportunities and productive lives can be created. The workforce investment system must employ creative techniques to successfully educate and train youth and to match employers who need workers with young people who need jobs.

This category will recognize exemplary programs, projects, or initiatives that employ innovative techniques for talent development, and actively collaborate with business, industry, K-12 education, community colleges, and other partners to develop successful workforce solutions that address the education, training, hiring, and retention challenges facing youth. The program, project, or initiative should have a strong network of stakeholders, partners, and resources, and be able to demonstrate positive performance outcomes for youth in training, placement, retention, earnings gained, and/or credentials obtained.

Narrative Description:

Introduction: In 100 words or less, provide the background and context for your program, project, or initiative, and describe the challenges it addresses.

Selection Criteria: Briefly address each of the criteria below.

Innovation: (20 Points) This section describes the extent to which a program, project, or initiative varies from current approaches. ETA is especially interested in the application of different financing mechanisms, institutional arrangements and partnerships designed to unblock constraints to service delivery, regional planning and talent development, people-centered, seamless approaches to service delivery, innovative uses of technology for capacity building and training, among others.

Please describe the specific purpose of the program, project, or initiative. What are the innovative or new strategies, partners, programs, training systems or other features implemented? Describe what prompted the innovation? Does the program, project, or initiative bridge areas within the state or across state borders? How does the approach differ from traditional approaches, programs or projects?

Collaboration: (15 Points) The challenge of developing a world class workforce and a globally competitive economy requires cooperation among many uncommon partners. In this section, the application should identify innovative partnerships, such as partnerships with industries, businesses, government agencies, credentialing organizations, associations, faith- and community-based organizations, educational institutions, and others.

Please identify any new partners you enlisted, such as: high schools, post-secondary institutions, apprenticeship programs, community-based organizations, faith- and community-based organizations, associations, etc. What roles do they play? What financial and/or in-kind resources do they provide? Does your partnership reflect the results of local labor market research, commercialization, and business development capacity in the local region? How did the collaborative relationships affect outcomes of the program, project, or initiative? Describe how resources are leveraged, citing all resources that are involved.

Service Delivery: (25 Points) This section addresses systemic changes and innovations to improve the process of delivering timely, appropriate and effective services to youth.

Please describe how the service delivery model and how it is different and seamless for youth. What innovative services are provided? What innovative strategies are used? Who has benefited from the services? Are new and different customers being attracted? Describe the processes and strategies implemented. How is this strategic model different from previous strategies?

Performance Outcomes: (25 Points) This section focuses on quantitative and qualitative outcomes of the program, project, or initiative. It should describe the extent to which project outcomes or results are clear and have a direct impact on improving service delivery and results to employers, workers, job-seekers and the community.

Please discuss the results/outcomes of the intervention. How many youth are served annually by the initiative? How many are in-school youth? How many are out-of-school youth? What other barriers do they bring such as: teen parenthood, incarceration, substance abuse? List quantitative outcomes for youth in: training completed placements, retention, earnings gained and credentials obtained. Are youth being placed high demand jobs with career potential? Identify several of the job titles in which youth are being placed.

Replicability: (15 Points) This section describes the extent to which the project could be transferred or replicated elsewhere, internally or in another programmatic or geographical area.

Describe the potential for the idea you have implemented to be widely applied. Have you replicated this program, project, or initiative in other areas of your operation? Discuss the extent to which your project could be, or has been, transferred or replicated elsewhere. How can you facilitate replication in other locations? (Examples include, but are not limited to, demonstrating the model for others, providing tools or resources that enable the model/approach to be replicated, providing documentation or findings that can be disseminated to and used by others, and replicating the model elsewhere.) Present specific information regarding barriers to implementation that may assist the reader in determining the feasibility of implementing the program model in their area.