

**BULLETIN 2010-08**

U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration Office of Apprenticeship (OA) Washington, D.C. 20210	<u>Distribution:</u>  A-541 Headquarters A-544 All Field Tech A-547 SD+RD+SAA+; Lab.Com	<u>Subject:</u> Energy Regional Innovation Cluster Initiative  <u>Code:</u> 400.1
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**PURPOSE:** To announce information on a new initiative that is designed to provide coordinated federal resources and support for an Energy Regional Innovation Cluster, and to encourage the public workforce system, including Registered Apprenticeship, to become partners in this effort.

**BACKGROUND:** The Department of Labor (DOL) is partnering with the Departments of Energy (DOE), Commerce, and Education; the Small Business Administration; and the National Science Foundation to launch a new initiative to support the growth of an Energy Regional Innovation Cluster (E-RIC). In launching this initiative, the federal partners seek to develop a replicable and sustainable model for coordinated federal and regional efforts that foster regional innovation clusters.

Regional innovation clusters are geographic concentrations of firms and industries that do business with each other and have common needs for workers, technology, and infrastructure. Ultimately, regional clusters are an effective way to create jobs and grow the economy in different parts of the country.

The centerpiece of the E-RIC is a DOE-funded energy efficient building systems design hub. The hub will focus on research and development of highly efficient building components, systems, and models aimed at reducing energy use, minimizing net greenhouse gas emissions, and catalyzing an industry-wide shift to new technologies.

The E-RIC will operate within a defined geographic region that includes an active network of organizations engaged in or with the energy efficient buildings systems design industry. It will encompass local universities, government research centers, and other research and development resources, which shall serve as catalysts of innovation and drivers of regional economic growth. The E-RIC will also leverage the region's unique competitive strengths and seek to nurture networks for business financing, education, and workforce development.

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT:** On February 12, 2010, DOL and its partner federal agencies released a joint Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) for the E-RIC. This FOA invites Consortia of co-applicants to submit one proposal to apply for funding from DOE, Department of Commerce/Economic Development Administration, Department of Commerce/National Institute of Standards and Technology (Manufacturing Extension Partnership), and Small Business Administration.

The full FOA, and additional information, may be found at [www.energy.gov/hubs/eric.htm](http://www.energy.gov/hubs/eric.htm). The deadline for submission of applications is May 6, 2010.

For more information on DOL's support of E-RIC, please refer to the Employment and Training Administration's Training and Employment Notice (TEN) 29-09, available on-line at: [http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr\\_doc.cfm?DOCN=2855](http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr_doc.cfm?DOCN=2855).

**ROLE OF REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP:** DOL encourages Workforce Investment Boards, Registered Apprenticeship, and other workforce entities to participate as partners in fostering the E-RIC and leverage Workforce Investment Act and other appropriate funds to recruit, train and place workers in good jobs created within the cluster. Registered Apprenticeship programs can be an important resource as part of any regional innovation strategy. Registered Apprenticeship programs have a proven track record of incorporating “earn and learn” strategies to provide skilled talent for regional economies.

Registered Apprenticeship programs provide industry-driven curriculum and often operate state of the art training facilities in many local communities and should be seen as a critical resource to be leveraged. In addition, Registered Apprenticeship programs are playing an important role in training the current and future workforce related to the energy efficient building systems design industry and other emerging green jobs.

**ACTION:** Registered Apprenticeship stakeholders, including State Apprenticeship Agencies (SAAs) and program sponsors are encouraged to participate as partners in applications for the E-RIC and to reach out to the Consortia in the region that will be submitting applications.

The OA staff should familiarize themselves with this bulletin.

If you have any questions, please contact [ric.info@dol.gov](mailto:ric.info@dol.gov).

**NOTE:** This bulletin is being sent via electronic mail.