

## USDOL/Employment & Training Administration 'Business Relations Group'

One of the fundamental tenets behind the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) is a greater emphasis on business engagement – the “demand side” of the workforce investment system. The Employment & Training Administration’s (ETA) new *Business Relations Group* (BRG) was established to provide a focal point for the coordination of business-related activities that support the creation of a demand-driven workforce system. Creating a demand-driven system that leaves no worker behind is the overarching objective of both ETA and the BRG.

### Five Key Strategies of the BRG

**Partnerships For Jobs.** The BRG will develop national partnerships with employers and national employer associations. After working with employers to identify their most pressing workforce needs, the BRG will help them navigate the workforce system and broker partnerships with the appropriate federal, regional, state, and local officials. These partnerships will promote a better understanding of the workforce needs of business and ensure that employers have access to the full range of services available through the workforce system.

**High-Growth Job Training Initiative.** Working with partners in the public, non-profit, and private sectors, the BRG will assess the training needs of employers in leading industries and develop potential strategies to address those needs. The BRG will lead the development of training initiatives that will assist employers in high-growth industries and facilitate the development of comprehensive collaborations between businesses, jobseekers, and community and technical colleges. The initiative seeks to foster a greater alliance between the community/technical college system and employers to develop and deliver curricula that ensures workers possess the right skills for the jobs in high demand.

**Capacity Building.** ETA and the BRG will work with its partners at the federal, regional, state, and local levels to build capacity of the workforce system so it can be responsive to the needs of business. This includes establishing regular communications within ETA, as well as with state business coordinators and federal and regional liaisons on business-related matters. The BRG will also strive to increase its understanding of employers through activities such as regional forums, where business executives identify their workforce needs, and conferences, where state business coordinators share best practices for working with the private sector. Working collaboratively with partners, the BRG will identify new capacity needed in order to be responsive to the needs of business.

**Outreach & Communications.** ETA will pursue a two-pronged outreach strategy, mounting a public awareness campaign to educate targeted business audiences about services that are offered through the workforce system, and to educate the public and the workforce system about the jobs in demand with career paths. This dual approach is designed to engage more businesses in the workforce system as both customers and partners and to help ETA work effectively with its many partners throughout the workforce system.

**Research & Performance.** The BRG will work collaboratively with ETA program offices and with its public workforce system partners to ensure that the workforce data provided to employers is continually aligned with their interests, and that the workforce system’s planning and service provision is matched with their needs.