

## **Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) Initiative Frequently Asked Questions**

**Question:** What is the WIRED Initiative?

**Answer:** The WIRED Initiative is designed to support the development of a regional, integrated approach to workforce and economic development and education. The ultimate goal of WIRED is to expand employment and advancement opportunities for American workers and catalyze the creation of high-skill and high-wage opportunities.

The Initiative will provide regions with funding and ongoing technical assistance and support from a cadre of experts to implement a transformational approach to their workforce and economic development systems at the regional level.

Individual grants will be awarded through a competitive grant solicitation.

**Question:** What is a region?

**Answer:** Economic regions do not typically correspond to political jurisdictions such as state, county, local workforce investment area, or municipal boundaries. Similarly, state boundaries do not always match labor market areas as evidenced by New York City's tri-state area or the greater Kansas City area, among others. The WIRED Initiative will focus on labor market areas that are comprised of multiple jurisdictions within a state or across state borders.

**Question:** What roles do State and/or Local Workforce Investment Boards, employers, labor organizations, community colleges, and community and faith based organizations have in the WIRED Initiative?

**Answer:** Each of these entities – along with civic, investor, academia, entrepreneurial and philanthropic leaders – play a critical role in providing necessary leadership and helping to facilitate an environment that is conducive to innovation. Through strong regional partnerships, they are encouraged to work with Governors on the application process and implementation of the WIRED Initiative.

**Question:** How many projects will be funded?

**Answer:** The Employment and Training Administration (ETA) anticipates issuing 8-10 grant awards in late January 2006. All award notifications will be posted on the ETA homepage at <http://www.doleta.gov>.

**Question:** How much funding is available for each project?

**Answer:** Individual grant amounts will be in the range of \$5 million per year for up to three years.

**Question:** What is the funding source?

**Answer:** Grants awarded through the WIRED Initiative will be funded with H-1B fees as authorized under Sec. 414 (c) of the American Competitiveness and Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (P.L. 105-277, title IV), as amended.

**Question:** What is the time-frame for the WIRED Initiative?

**Answer:** ETA launched the WIRED initiative on November 18, 2005, by inviting Governors to submit applications which are due on January 5, 2006. The period of performance will be 36 months from the date of execution of the grant documents.

**Question:** What types of technical assistance will be offered to grantees?

**Answer:** Throughout the WIRED Initiative, participating regions will receive ongoing intensive technical assistance crafted to meet the specific needs of those regions. The WIRED Initiative will also include extensive peer to peer contact. Quarterly meetings of all regional teams are planned to provide teams the opportunity to share challenges and best practices, and to work with experts from the workforce, education, and economic development communities, in addition to leaders from the private sector and the innovation community (e.g., high-tech business leaders, university presidents, research lab directors).

**Question:** Will best practices be made available to the workforce and economic development systems?

**Answer:** A report on best practices and implementation tool kits will be compiled and disseminated widely to the workforce and economic development communities so that all regions, even those not selected to participate, will benefit from the WIRED Initiative.

**Question:** Will the WIRED Initiative have an evaluation component?

**Answer:** Yes. ETA will require that selected applicants participate in an overall evaluation of the WIRED Initiative. ETA will fund a comprehensive evaluation that will take place throughout the three-year implementation period. In applying for these grants, regions agree to cooperate in this evaluation. The evaluation will assess the impact of the initiative on regional prosperity. Impacts will be measured through performance based outcome metrics and recommendations for ongoing action will be presented to participating regions based on the performance results.

**Question:** Will ETA still hold grant competitions under the High Growth Job Training Initiative?

**Answer:** Yes, ETA will continue issuing grant competitions under the High Growth Job Training Initiative.

**Question:** Will ETA still hold grant competitions under the Community-Based Job Training Initiative?

**Answer:** If authorized by Congress, ETA will continue issuing grant competitions under the Community-Based Job Training Initiative.

## QUESTIONS ON GRANT APPLICATION PROCESS

**Question:** How may Governors apply for a WIRED Initiative grant?

**Answer:** Governors may submit applications by mail or online at <http://www.grants.gov>. Applications may also be hand-delivered to Ms. Laura Patton Watson at the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Division of Federal Assistance, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Room N-4716, Washington, DC 20210 by 5p.m. on January 5, 2006. All application submittal instructions are available in the Solicitation for Grant Applications on <http://www.doleta.gov/sga/sga/SGA-DFA-PY-05-04.pdf>. Applications must be received by 5 p.m. on January 5, 2006.

**Question:** Will late applications be accepted?

**Answer:** Any application received after 5 p.m. (Eastern Time) on January 5, 2006 will not be considered unless it is received before awards are made and it (a) was sent by U.S. Postal Service registered or certified mail not later than the fifth calendar day before the date specified for receipt of applications (e.g., an application required to be received by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month must be postmarked by the 15<sup>th</sup> of that month) or (b) was sent by U.S. Postal Service Express Mail or online to addressee not later than 5 p.m. at the place of mailing or electronic submission one working day prior to the date specified for receipt of applications.

**Question:** Who is eligible to apply for the grants?

**Answer:** State Governors (for the purpose of this application the definition of State Governor includes the Governor of Puerto Rico and the Mayor of the District of Columbia) are the only eligible applicants for the WIRED Initiative. The Governor must submit an application on behalf of a specific, defined multi-county regional team of public and private partners, which clearly identifies the entity that will be the grant recipient with responsibility for administering the project on the Governor's behalf and serving as the grant's fiscal agent.

**Question:** How many applications can each Governor submit?

**Answer:** Governors are permitted to submit up to three applications for regional or cross-state regional teams.

**Question:** If an application is for a cross-state regional team will all Governors of the cross-state region have to sign-off on the application?

**Answer:** Yes, applications submitted for cross-state regions will require the signature of all the state Governors involved in the regional team, and the application must designate an entity as the grant recipient. The designated entity will be responsible for administering the project and serving as its fiscal agent.

## **GRANT APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS**

**Question:** What should be included in the application package?

**Answer:** The proposal must consist of two separate and distinct parts, Part A – Financial Proposal, and Part B – Technical Proposal. The Technical Proposal is limited to 20 double-spaced, single-sided, 8.5-inch-by-11-inch pages with 12-point font and 1-inch margins. In addition, the applicant may provide resumes, a staffing pattern, statistical information, and related materials in attachments which may not exceed 10 pages. Letters of commitment from partners may be submitted as attachments and will not count against the allowable maximum page totals.

**Question:** How will the technical proposal be evaluated?

**Answer:** Applications must define the region covered by the proposal, describe the region's specific economic challenges, demonstrate regional leadership commitment to the project (top down and bottom up), and propose an integrated approach to workforce and economic development and education. Applicants must also demonstrate a commitment to focusing work on economic regions, versus traditional municipal or state boundaries, and commit to engaging in learning and best practice sharing with other participating regions across the nation.

Three criteria will be used to evaluate the proposals for the WIRED Initiative: 1) Strength of Partnership; 2) Statement of Need; 3) Strategies for System Transformation. Greater detail about the evaluation criteria is available in the Solicitation for Grant Applications at <http://www.doleta.gov/sga/sga/SGA-DFA-PY-05-04.pdf>.

**Question:** Is there a cost sharing requirement?

**Answer:** Cost sharing, matching, or cost participation is not required for eligibility; however, applicants are encouraged to leverage the resources of all strategic partners whenever possible.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **More Information about the WIRED Initiative will be available via:**

- A Virtual Prospective Applicant Conference scheduled for December 7, 2005. Access information for the Virtual Prospective Applicant Conference will be posted on <http://www.workforce3one.org>.
- The U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration Web site at <http://www.doleta.gov>.

### **WIRED Contact Information:**

Technical questions regarding the WIRED Application Submittal Instructions may be faxed to Ms. Laura Patton Watson, Chief of the Division of Federal Assistance, Fax number (202) 693-3961 (not a toll-free number). You must specifically address your fax to the attention of Ms. Laura Patton Watson and should include the following information in your fax: SGA/DFA PY 05-04, a contact name, fax, and telephone number.

Questions of a general nature should be directed to the Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training, Emily Stover DeRocco, at (202) 693-2700 or [derocco.emily@dol.gov](mailto:derocco.emily@dol.gov).