

Billing Code 4510-30

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Employment and Training Administration

**Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) Initiative;
Solicitation**

for Grant Applications (SGA); Correction

AGENCY: Employment and Training Administration (ETA), Labor.

ACTION: Notice of solicitation for grant applications; correction.

SUMMARY: The Employment and Training Administration published a document in the Grants.Gov on November 21, 2005 concerning the availability of grant funds to support the development of a regional, integrated approach to workforce and economic development and education, known as the Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development Initiative or WIRED. This correction is to provide additional clarification on eligibility information.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Laura Watson, Grant Officer,
Division of Federal Assistance, (202) 693-3381.

KEY DATES: The closing date for receipt of applications under this announcement is January 5, 2006 in accordance with the procedures identified in the original SGA.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

The first paragraph under Part III. 1, entitled "Eligible Applicants," beginning with the second sentence, is corrected to read:

As such, the Governors are responsible for submitting applications that clearly identify their DUNS number, the entity designated to administer the grant, as well as the fiscal agent.

The administering entity and fiscal agent may be two separate entities or the same entity. The application must also identify all project partners, specify their role, and identify the geographic region covered.

In the second paragraph of the same part: The sentence “The designated government entity will be responsible for administering the project and serving as its fiscal agent” is deleted. This sentence is inconsistent with other statements in the SGA that provide that the Governor must submit the application and designate a grant recipient, while not requiring that the grant recipient be a government entity.

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Dated: December 15, 2006..

Signed at Washington, D.C., this 15th day of December, 2006

Laura Patton Watson
Grant Officer

**DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
Employment and Training Administration**

Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) Initiative

Solicitation for Grant Applications

Note: This modification is located in Part III, Eligible Applicants, number 1.

Announcement Type: New. Notice of solicitation for grant applications.

Funding Opportunity Number: SGA/DFA PY-05-04.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance CFDA Number: 17.261.

Key Dates: Applications are due by January 5, 2006. A Virtual Prospective Applicant Conference will be held for this grant competition on December 7, 2005. Access information for the Prospective Applicant Conference will be posted on the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (DOL/ETA) Web site at <http://www.doleta.gov>.

Summary: In the new global economy, talent development is a key factor in our nation's economic competitiveness. To stay ahead of global competition, we must identify strategies to further integrate workforce and economic development with education at the regional level – where companies, workers, researchers, entrepreneurs and governments come together to create a competitive advantage.

The Employment and Training Administration (ETA) fully supports the development of a regional, integrated approach to workforce and economic development and education. To further this goal, we are announcing the Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) Initiative. 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.

The WIRED Initiative will take place over the course of three years. It is anticipated that individual grant awards will be in the range of \$5 million per year for up to three years. The Department reserves the right to award grants at either higher or lower amounts. Eight to ten regions will be selected to participate. Only Governors may apply on behalf of regions within their states. Joint application submissions for regions that cross state lines are also encouraged.

By participating in the WIRED Initiative, regions will be empowered to implement ground-breaking strategies that will result in their workforce investment system becoming a key component of their region's economic development strategy. The ultimate goal of the WIRED Initiative is to expand employment and advancement opportunities for American workers and catalyze the creation of high-skill and high-wage opportunities.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION – This solicitation provides background information on the Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) Initiative and critical elements required of projects funded under the solicitation. It also describes the application submission requirements, the process that eligible applicants must use to apply for funds covered by this solicitation, and how grantees will be selected. This announcement consists of seven parts:

- Part I provides background information on the WIRED Initiative.
- Part II describes the size and nature of the anticipated awards.
- Part III describes who qualifies as an eligible applicant.
- Part IV provides information on the application and submission process.
- Part V explains the review process and rating criteria that will be used to evaluate applications for funding.
- Part VI provides award administration information.
- Part VII contains DOL agency contact information.

Part I. Funding Opportunity Description

Background

The world is now witnessing one of the greatest economic transformations in history. The twin revolutions of technology and information have ushered in the era we know as globalization. This era is marked by tremendous advances in communications, travel, and trade allowing individuals instant access to commerce from almost anywhere in the world.

Although global competition is typically seen as a national challenge, the front lines of the battlefield are regional – where companies, workers, researchers, entrepreneurs and governments come together to create a competitive advantage in the global economy. That advantage stems from the prosperity-creating power of innovation – the ability to transform new ideas and new knowledge into advanced, high-quality products or services.

Regions like San Diego, California; the Research Triangle in North Carolina; and the Greater Austin region of Texas have been successful in creating a competitive advantage precisely because they have connected three key elements:

- 1) Workforce development and life-long learning strategies;
- 2) Investment and entrepreneurial strategies; and,
- 3) Regional economic development strategies.

While some regions of the country have thrived as a result of globalization, others have struggled to compete, particularly those with an economy based on manufacturing or other trade-impacted industries. These regions are being forced to revitalize and reinvent themselves. Regions recently impacted by hurricanes and other natural disasters will also have to rebuild and transform their economies. Workforce development is a key driver in this process, and innovative approaches to workforce development that go beyond traditional strategies are needed in order for regions to adequately compete both within the United States and globally.

Many regions have made considerable progress in integrating talent and skills development into their larger economic strategies, and in transforming their workforce development, economic development, and education systems into one comprehensive system which is both flexible and responsive to the needs of businesses and workers. However, the Department of Labor recognizes the ongoing importance of supporting regions that need additional technical and financial assistance to achieve these goals.

WIRED Initiative

The WIRED Initiative will help participating regions move to the next level of system innovation and transformation by providing funding, technical assistance, and access to a cadre of experts. The ultimate goal of the WIRED Initiative is to expand employment and advancement opportunities for American workers and catalyze the creation of high-skill and high-wage opportunities in the context of regional economies.

Flexibility to design a system capable of fueling regional economic competitiveness is a key component of the WIRED Initiative. Under current legislative authority, states and regions have access to an array of flexibility provisions which give them the opportunity to tailor service delivery and program design to fit the unique characteristics of their area. Too frequently, this flexibility is underutilized. As part of this initiative, the Department of Labor will work with participating states and regions to maximize the potential of these existing provisions which include waiver authority and Work-Flex authority under title I of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. The Department of Labor will also facilitate appropriate and available flexibility sought from other federal agencies.

Regional Approach

Another important component of the WIRED Initiative is the recognition that economic regions do not typically correspond to state, county, local workforce investment area, or municipal boundaries. Similarly, state boundaries do not always match labor market areas as evidenced by New York'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.

A key to success under this initiative will be the quality and strength of the regional partnership. The regional partnership should be a strong team composed of regional civic, business, investor, academic, entrepreneurial and philanthropic leaders. Governors are asked to submit an application on behalf of the regional partnership. State officials have a critical role to play in this effort by providing leadership and helping to facilitate an environment that is conducive to innovation. At the same time, community leaders from a variety of fields must invest in this process and be dedicated to taking the necessary action steps.

Technical Assistance

Throughout the WIRED Initiative, participating states and regions will receive ongoing intensive technical assistance crafted to meet their specific needs. The WIRED Initiative will also include extensive peer to peer contact. Quarterly meetings of all regional teams will be held to give teams the opportunity to share challenges and best practices. At the quarterly meetings, regional teams will 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). The U.S. Department of Commerce will collaborate with the Department of Labor on this initiative. By participating in the WIRED Initiative, economic regions will benefit from the expertise of all participating organizations.

A report on operational best practices generated by the regions as well as implementation tool kits for specific successful programs 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.

Part II. Award Information

1. Award Amount

ETA intends to fund eight to ten projects. Each competitively selected project will be funded at approximately \$5 million per year, for up to three years.

However, this does not preclude funding decisions above or below this amount, or funding a smaller or larger number of projects, based on the number and quality of submissions. These grants will be funded with H-1B fees as authorized under Sec. 414(c) of the American Competitiveness and Workforce Improvement Act of 1998 (P.L. 105-277, title IV), as amended.

2. Period of Performance

The period of performance will be 36 months from the date of execution of the grant documents. The Department may approve a request for a no-cost extension to grantees for an additional period of time based on the success of the project and other relevant factors.

Part III. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants

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 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. The application must clearly identify 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. The application must also identify all project partners, specify their role, and identify the geographic region covered.

Joint applications for regions that cross state lines will be accepted, and must be jointly submitted by the Governors of all impacted states. All participating Governors must sign the joint application, and the application must designate an entity as the grant recipient.

Each Governor is permitted to submit up to three applications for regional or cross-state regional teams.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

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.

3. Other Eligibility Requirements

Administrative Costs. The administrative cost limit for each project will be negotiated at the time of award.

Distribution Rights. Selected applicants must agree to give ETA the right to use and distribute all materials developed with grant funds such as training models, curriculum, technical assistance products, etc. Materials developed with grant resources are in the public domain; therefore, ETA has the right to use, reuse, modify, and distribute all grant-funded materials and products to any interested party, including broad distribution to the public workforce investment system via the Internet or other means.

Legal rules pertaining to inherently religious activities by organizations that receive Federal financial assistance. The government is generally prohibited from providing direct Federal financial assistance for inherently religious activities. See 29 CFR part 2, subpart D. Grants under this solicitation may not be used for religious instruction, worship, prayer, proselytizing, or other inherently religious activities. Neutral, non-religious criteria that neither favor nor disfavor religion will be employed in the selection of grant recipients and must be employed by grantees in the selection of sub-recipients.

Part IV. Application and Submission Information

1. Address to Request Application Package

This announcement includes all information and forms needed to apply for this funding opportunity.

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

Each application must include the original signed application and two hard copies. The proposal must consist of two separate and distinct parts, **Part A - Financial Proposal** and **Part B - Technical Proposal**. Both parts must be included in each copy of a complete application. Applications that fail to adhere to the instructions in this section will be deemed non-responsive and will not be considered for funding.

Part A - Financial Proposal includes the following two items:

1. Application for Federal Assistance SF-424 (available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/sf424.pdf>.) The SF-424 must clearly identify the applicant and be signed by an individual with authority to enter into a grant agreement on behalf of the applicant. Upon confirmation of an award, the individual signing the SF-424 on behalf of the applicant shall represent the

responsible entity. All applications for Federal grant and funding opportunities are required to have a Dun and Bradstreet (DUNS) number. See OMB Notice of Final Policy Issuance, 68 FR 38402 (June 27, 2003). Applicants must supply their DUNS number in item #5 of SF-424 (Rev. 9-2003). The DUNS number is easy to obtain and there is no charge. To obtain a DUNS number, access www.dunandbradstreet.com or call 1-866-705-5711.

2. Budget Information Form SF-424A (available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/sf424a.pdf>.) In addition to preparing the Budget Information form, the applicant must provide a concise narrative explanation to support the request. The budget narrative must break down the budget by deliverable and should discuss precisely how the administrative costs support the project goals.

Part B – Technical Proposal

The technical proposal must demonstrate the applicant's capabilities to plan and implement a demonstration project under the WIRED Initiative in accordance with the selection criteria. 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. The applicant must reference any participating entities in the text of the Technical Proposal.

No cost data or reference to prices should be included in the Technical Proposal. The following information is required as part of the Technical Proposal:

- A table of contents listing the application sections;
- A two-page abstract summarizing the proposed project and applicant profile information including: (1) applicant name; (2) project title; (3) key strategies for integrating workforce development, economic development, and education, with the end goal of transforming the regional economy; (4) strategic partnership members; and (5) requested funding level.
- A timeline outlining project activities; and
- A project description addressing the WIRED selection criteria.

Please note that the table of contents, the abstract, and the timeline are not included in the 20-page limit. Applications that do not meet these requirements will not be considered.

3. Submission Dates and Times

The closing date for receipt of applications under this announcement is January 5, 2006. Applications must be received at the address below no later than 5 p.m. (Eastern Time), except as identified in the "Late Applications" paragraph below. Applications sent by e-mail, telegram, or facsimile (fax) will not be honored. No exceptions to the mailing and delivery requirements set forth in this notice will be granted.

Mailed applications must be addressed to the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Division of Federal Assistance, Attention: Ms. Laura Patton Watson, 202-693-3961, Reference SGA/DFA PY 05-04, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Room N-4716, Washington, DC 20210. Applicants are advised that mail delivery in the Washington area may be delayed due to mail decontamination procedures. Hand-delivered proposals will be received at the above address.

Applicants may apply online at <http://www.grants.gov> by the deadline specified above. Any application received after the deadline will not be accepted. For applicants submitting electronic applications via Grants.gov, it is strongly recommended that you immediately initiate and complete the "Get Started" steps to register with Grants.gov at <http://www.grants.gov/GetStarted>. These steps will probably take multiple days to complete which should be factored into the applicant's plans for electronic application submission in order to avoid facing unexpected delays that could result in the rejection of the application. If submitted electronically through <http://www.grants.gov>, applicants should save application document as a .doc or .pdf file.

ETA will host a WIRED Virtual Prospective Applicant Conference for this grant competition on December 7, 2005. The access information for the Prospective Applicant Conference will be posted on ETA's Web site at <http://www.doleta.gov>.

Late Applications: Any application received after the exact date and time specified for receipt at the office designated in this notice will not be considered, unless it is received at the designated office 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 20th of the month must be postmarked by the 15th 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. It is highly recommended that online submissions be completed one working day prior to the date specified for receipt of applicants to ensure that applicant still has the option to submit by U.S. Postal Service Express Mail in the event of any electronic submission problems. "Postmarked" means a printed, stamped, or otherwise placed impression (exclusive of a postage meter machine impression) that is readily identifiable, without further action, as having been supplied or affixed on the date of mailing by an employee of the U.S. Postal Service. Therefore, applicants should request the postal clerk to place a legible hand cancellation "bull's eye" postmark on both the receipt and the package. Failure to adhere to the above instructions will be a basis for a determination of nonresponsiveness.

4. Intergovernmental Review

This funding opportunity is not subject to Executive Order (EO) 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs".

5. Funding Restrictions

Determinations of allowable costs will be made in accordance with the applicable Federal cost principles as indicated in Part VI.2. Disallowed costs are those charges to a grant that the grantor agency or its representative determines not to be allowed in accordance with the applicable Federal Cost Principles or other conditions contained in the grant. As discussed above, only costs that would be allowable with grant funds may be counted as part of the recipients' share of project costs.

6. Other Submission Requirements

Withdrawal of Applications. Applications may be withdrawn by written notice or telegram (including Mailgram) received at any time before an award is made. Applications may be withdrawn in person by the applicant or by an authorized representative thereof, if the representative signs a receipt for the proposal.

Part V. Application Review Information

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.

1. **Rating Criteria**

This section identifies and describes the three criteria that will be used to evaluate the proposals for the WIRED Initiative: A) Strength of Partnership (30 points); B) Statement of Need (30 points); and C) Strategies for System Transformation (40 points).

A) Strength of Partnership (30 points) – The applicant must demonstrate that the strategic partnership is a strong team of regional civic, business, investor, academic, entrepreneurial and philanthropic leaders.

- Partnerships must be representative of the entire region and inclusive enough to drive a transformation strategy within the region. (Strategic partners should include change agents representing an array of key interests including government, academia, business, community development and entrepreneurship and must have the authority to make capacity and infrastructure development decisions.)
- Applicant must include a comprehensive list of the strategic partners that will be included in the project and articulate each partner's role in the project.
- Applicant must demonstrate that integration or a high level of coordination already exists between partners, or that the applicant has the capacity to quickly establish these links.

Assessment of this criterion will be based on the comprehensiveness of the partnership and the degree to which each partner plays a committed role.

B) Statement of Need (30 points) – The applicant must articulate the need for the investment under the WIRED Initiative by demonstrating the presence of impacted economic elements in the region including, but not limited to: high worker dislocations, high unemployment rate, low average wages, low high school graduation rates, and low levels of new job creation.

- Applicant must describe the economic analysis and resource mapping conducted to date for the targeted region.
- Applicant must describe the economic and labor market conditions that are driving the need for transformation in the regional area. This description should include both a narrative discussion of key events such as mass layoffs and/or natural disasters as well as data displays showing recent trends in unemployment and job growth.
- Applicant must identify the extent to which foreign trade or natural disasters have impacted the regional economy.

- Applicant must identify industries that are declining in the region as well as industries being targeted for growth and expansion.
- Applicant must describe the efforts undertaken to date to revitalize the region, including what role the identified partners have played in those efforts.

Assessment of this criterion will be based on the extent of demonstrated economic need in the regional area.

C) Strategies for System Transformation (40 points) – The applicant must show how the region will be taking the current systems and structures supporting economic growth to the next level by implementing new efforts designed to drive system integration, innovation and transformation. Strategies should articulate clear goals and describe how the additional grant resources will enable the partnership to accomplish the goals. The applicant may focus on one or more innovative approaches.

- Applicant must demonstrate that they have examined strategies to increase synergy between the workforce, economic development and education systems.
- Applicant must demonstrate knowledge of the region’s projected high-growth industries and economic sectors.
- Applicant must clearly link goals and associated strategies to addressing the identified workforce and economic development challenges.
- Applicant must demonstrate that strategies are built upon and align with current state and local strategic plans currently in place under the Workforce Investment Act, the Department of Commerce’s economic development programs, the Department of Housing and Urban Development’s community development programs, and other applicable federal programs.
- Applicant must describe how resources under existing federal, state and local programs will be aligned in order to advance this effort. This description should include any existing grants such as: (1) grants awarded under the President’s High-Growth Job Training Initiative; (2) Community-Development Block Grants; (3) grants from the Department of Commerce’s Economic Development Agency; (4) Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community designations; and (5) foundation grants focused on workforce development or economic development.
- Applicant may identify federal regulatory and statutory barriers that impede their reform efforts and identify specific waiver requests pursuant to WIA sections 189 and / or 192 and the relevant WIA regulations.
- Applicant must describe opportunities for small business development.
- Applicant must describe strategies for creating connections between research and business development.

- Applicant must describe how the transformation strategies will be operationalized and how they will create a lasting impact on the region. Episodic interventions will not be funded.
- Applicant must identify mechanisms to ensure project sustainability both in terms of financial and systemic sustainability of the reforms.
- Applicant must demonstrate the use of state and local public and private, financial and non-financial, resources that will be dedicated to the project.
- Applicant must identify the types of technical assistance needed to successfully implement reform strategies.

Assessment of this criterion will be based on how well the applicant articulates the transformation strategies and goals, and how they provide viable solutions to the economic and workforce challenges identified in the region.

2. Review and Selection Process

Applications for the WIRED Initiative will be accepted commencing on the date of publication of this announcement until the closing date and time. A technical review panel will carefully evaluate applications against the rating criteria described in Part V. 1, which are based on the policy goals, priorities, and emphases set forth in this SGA. Up to 100 points may be awarded to an application, based on the Rating Criteria described in Part V.1. The panel results are advisory in nature and not binding on the Grant Officer. The Grant Officer may consider any information that comes to his or her attention.

The ranked scores will serve as the primary basis for selection of applications for funding, in conjunction with other factors such as urban, rural, and geographic balance; the availability of funds; uniqueness and innovative aspects of the project; and which proposals are most advantageous to the government. The government reserves the right to award projects with or without discussions or negotiations with applicants. Should a grant be awarded without negotiations, the award will be based on the applicant's signature on the SF-424, which constitutes a binding offer.

Part VI. Award Administrative Information

1. Award Notices

All award notifications will be posted on the ETA homepage at <http://www.doleta.gov>.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements – Administrative Program Requirements

All grantees will be subject to all applicable Federal laws (including provisions in appropriations law), regulations, and the applicable Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circulars. The applicants selected under the SGA will be subject to the following administrative standards and provisions, if applicable:

- Workforce Investment Boards – 20 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 667.220 (Administrative Costs).
- Non-Profit Organizations – Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circulars A-122 (Cost Principles) and 29 CFR Part 95 (Administrative Requirements).
- Educational Institutions – OMB Circulars A-21 (Cost Principles) and 29 CFR Part 95 (Administrative Requirements).
- State and Local Governments – OMB circulars A-87 (Cost Principles) and 29 CFR Part 97 (Administrative Requirements).
- All entities must comply with 29 CFR Parts 93 and 98, and where applicable, 29 CFR Parts 96 and 99.
- In accordance with Section 18 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, Public Law 104-65 (2 U.S.C. 1611) non-profit entities incorporated under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(4) that engage in lobbying activities will not be eligible for the receipt of Federal funds and grants.
- 29 CFR part 2, subpart D--Equal Treatment in Department of Labor Programs for Religious Organizations; Protection of Religious Liberty of Department of Labor Social Service Providers and Beneficiaries.
- 29 CFR part 30--Equal Employment Opportunity in Apprenticeship and Training.
- 29 CFR part 31--Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted Programs of the Department of Labor--Effectuation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
- 29 CFR part 32--Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Handicap in Programs and Activities Receiving or Benefiting from Federal Financial Assistance.
- 29 CFR part 33--Enforcement of Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Handicap in Programs or Activities Conducted by the Department of Labor.
- 29 CFR part 35--Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Age in Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance from the Department of Labor.
- 29 CFR part 36--Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex in Education Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance.

- 29 CFR part 37--Implementation of the Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Provisions of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA).

Note: Except as specifically provided in this notice, ETA's acceptance of a proposal and award of Federal funds to sponsor any program(s) does not provide a waiver of any grant requirements and/or procedures. For example, the OMB Circulars require that an entity's procurement procedures must ensure that all procurement transactions are conducted, as much as practical, to provide open and free competition. If a proposal identifies a specific entity to provide services, the ETA's award does not provide the justifications or basis to sole-source the procurement, i.e., avoid competition, unless the activity is regarded as the primary work of an official partner to the application.

Evaluation Requirements

The Department of Labor will require that selected applicants participate in an overall evaluation of the WIRED Initiative. The Department will fund a comprehensive evaluation that will take place throughout the three-year initiative implementation period. In applying for these grants, states 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.

The following outcomes will be used to assess the impact of the WIRED Initiative on participating regions:

- Improved performance under the Workforce Investment Act and the Trade Adjustment Assistance Act
- Increased training capacity
- Increased number of students enrolled in training
- Increased job growth
- Increased average wage
- Reduced unemployment rate
- Reduced "Brain Drain"
- Increased High School graduation rate
- Employer satisfaction

As part of the WIRED evaluation, a set of system-based outcomes will also be tracked throughout the three year implementation period. These will include:

- Elimination of redundancies between programs
- Elimination of barriers to innovation
- Increased efficiency
- Increased interdisciplinary collaboration
- Increased regional collaboration

Reporting Requirements

As a condition of participation in the WIRED Initiative, successful applicants will be required to submit performance information as well as Quarterly Financial Reports, Progress Reports and Final Reports.

Quarterly Financial Reports. A Quarterly Financial Status Report (SF 269) is required until such time as all funds have been expended or the grant period has expired. Quarterly financial reports are due 30 days after the end of each calendar year quarter. Grantees must use ETA's Online Electronic Reporting System.

Progress Reports. The grantee must submit a quarterly progress report to the designated Federal Project Officer within 30 days after the end of each calendar year quarter. Two copies are to be submitted providing a detailed account of activities undertaken during that quarter. The Department may require additional data elements to be collected and reported on either a regular basis or special request basis. Grantees must agree to meet the Department's reporting requirements. The quarterly progress report must be in narrative form and must include:

1. In-depth information on accomplishments including project success stories, upcoming grant activities, and promising approaches and processes.
2. Progress toward performance outcomes, including updates on product, curricula, and training development.
3. Challenges, barriers, or concerns regarding project progress.
4. Lessons learned in the areas of project administration and management, project implementation, partnership relationships, and other related areas.

Final Report. A draft final report must be submitted no later than 60 days prior to the expiration date of the grant. This report must summarize project activities, employment outcomes, and related results of the project, and should thoroughly

document the project solution approach. After responding to ETA's questions and comments on the draft report, three copies of the final report must be submitted no later than the grant expiration date. Grantees must agree to use a designated format specified by the Department to prepare the final report.

Part VII. Agency Contacts

Any technical questions regarding this SGA should be faxed to Ms. Laura Patton Watson, Chief of the Division of Federal Assistance, Fax number (202) 693-3362 (not a toll-free number). You must specifically address your fax to the attention of Ms. Laura Patton Watson and should include the following: SGA/DFA PY 05-04, a contact name, fax, and telephone number.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Laura Patton Watson, Chief of the Division of Federal Assistance, at (202) 693-3961 (not a toll-free number). This announcement is also being made available on <http://www.grants.gov>.

Signed at Washington, DC, this 17th day of November 2005.

**Laura Patton Watson
Grant Officer
Employment and Training Administration**

Attachments:

Appendix A: Application for Federal Assistance, SF-424

Appendix B: Budget Information Form, SF-424-A

Appendix C: OMB Survey N.1890-0014: Survey on Ensuring Opportunity for Applicants