

Workforce Florida, Inc.

Solicitation for Facilitation and Evaluation Services for the Strengthening Youth Partnerships State Initiative

November 30, 2005

1. Purpose. The purpose of this Solicitation is to seek proposals for consulting services that involve facilitating a series of meetings between state agency representatives and evaluating the outcomes of the goals of those meetings to: **1) guide the interagency partners (including, but not limited to, the Florida Departments of Education, Juvenile Justice, Children and Families, the Agency for Workforce Innovation, Workforce Florida, Inc., Volunteer Florida, and the ABLE Trust) in building the organizational structure and governance relationships so that this collaborative body becomes institutionalized; and 2) provide an outside evaluation of the process and outcomes so that the “lessons learned” can be replicated. There will be a series of no less than five “face to face” meetings and two teleconferences from January 2006 – January 2007. A summary report of each meeting is to be reported to the partners via email not later than two weeks after each meeting. An evaluation tool, to be developed by the facilitator, to monitor progress and outcomes will be made available to interagency partners periodically. A final summary and evaluation of the interagency coordination effort will be submitted to the partners no later than 30 days after the last meeting.**

2. Objectives of Facilitation and Evaluation Services.

- a) To guide the interagency partners in building organizational structure and governance so that the collaborative body can be institutionalized;
- b) To provide optimal meeting conditions and communication that will result in full participation of representatives of all member agencies;
- c) To facilitate the conduct of meetings in a way that will bring efficient use of time and resources, opportunity for input from all partners, progress in meeting the organization’s mission at a pace acceptable to the partners, consensus among partners and, if necessary, the identification of roadblocks that inhibit effective collaboration, and tangible outcomes;
- d) To produce readable, summary reports of each meeting that will have utility for subsequent work;
- e) To recommend mid-course corrections based on results of an evaluation tool developed by the facilitator; and
- f) To prepare a final summary and evaluation of the interagency coordination effort, including “lessons learned” for replication.

3. Background. The attached documents will give the responder the background information needed to determine the nature and scope of this initiative. The document titled *Strengthening Youth Partnerships, A New Youth Vision* summarizes the progress thus far relative to Florida's **Strengthening Youth Partnerships** initiative. The document titled *New Strategic Vision for Delivery of Youth Services under the Workforce Investment Act* was published by USDOL prior to the document titled *Creating New Opportunities for Collaboration – A Shared Vision for Youth* which was published by four federal agencies to increase collaboration to improve services and outcomes. Florida has received a Technical Assistance and Training Grant for \$25,000 dollars to assist with a portion of the services being requested.

4. Qualifications for Respondents. Respondents will include information about its ability to perform as required under this project. When reviewing proposals, strong emphasis will be placed on: 1) experience related to previous projects facilitating meetings of approximately 20 individuals representing numerous agencies/organizations with similar goals but different perspectives; 2) the ability to establish and implement problem-solving strategies; 3) the ability to clarify roles, bring consensus; 4) the ability conduct meetings, write summary reports; and 5) the ability to assess progress of a project and assist in the achievement of outcomes. Respondents should include detail information if they have participated in other projects that dealt with youth employment issues and/or coordinating employment-related projects. At its sole discretion, WFI may request one or more respondents to make oral presentations before the review committee in Tallahassee. Any expenses involved in making such a presentation will be borne totally by the respondent.

5. Compensation. The proposal shall clearly state the proposed cost of the services to be provided as described in Sections 1 and 2 of this solicitation. The contractor will be responsible for his or her own travel expenses for the purpose of the meetings described in this solicitation (can be built into proposed cost). Four of the five "face to face" meetings will be held in Tallahassee, Florida with the fifth being held in a central location of the state. The meeting locations will be arranged by the agency partners and is not the responsibility of the contractor. The contractor will be responsible for all equipment, materials and miscellaneous expenses related to project activities. Payments will be made on a performance-based basis. Another way of describing a performance-based contract is that payment is predicated upon the delivery of specified services or products; these types of contracts DO NOT reimburse the contractor for expenses that have been incurred but rather require that contract deliverables have been accomplished and documented. Contract deliverables can be such services as completed summary reports.

6. Rating Proposals and Award. Proposals will be rated by the interagency partners who shall tabulate and submit its findings to Workforce Florida, Inc. (WFI). After a review of the findings from the interagency

partners, Workforce Florida, Inc. will make an award and direct the Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI) to make an award to a single proposer. The award of this contract will be e-mailed by AWI to all respondents. WFI retains the right to refuse all offers made.

7. Contract Document. The Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI) along with the contractor selected as a result of this solicitation will be the parties to the contract for services. This will be a performance-based contract with specific deliverables, the delivery and acceptance of which must be accomplished prior to the payment of funds to the contractor. AWI will develop the contract document to include, at a minimum, the terms and conditions stipulated herein. The contractor shall have the opportunity to accept the terms and conditions as offered by executing the contract or may offer counter terms and conditions for consideration by AWI.

The contract document will, at a minimum, contain terms and conditions that address the following issues (specific contract language may expand upon these issues):

8. Term. The proposed contract will be for the period from the date of execution until January 2007. Extension or renewal of the contract is contingent upon approval of agency partners of the Strengthening Youth Partnership initiative.

9. Parties. The parties to the proposed contract will be the Agency for Workforce Innovation and the individual selected as a result of this solicitation. The Agency for Workforce Innovation shall not be a party to any subcontract or third party contract that the contractor requires to perform under the proposed contract. The contractor shall be solely responsible for satisfying the deliverables and performance standards.

10. Cancellation. The Agency for Workforce Innovation will retain the authority to cancel the proposed contract, in whole or in part, upon thirty (30) days notice to the contractor by certified mail. The Agency for Workforce Innovation may cancel the contract upon 24 hours notice if a breach of the contract occurs.

11. Governance. The proposed contract will be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Florida within the jurisdiction of Leon County.

12. Indemnification. The Agency for Workforce Innovation will include language in the proposed contract that indemnifies and holds it harmless from all claims, suits, judgments or other actions for damages arising from the intentional acts of negligence on the part of the contractor in its performance under the contract.

13. Civil rights assurance. Respondents ***MUST*** sign and return the attached (Attachment A) assurance statement regarding equal employment opportunity as stipulated in 29 CFR 37.20. Failure to submit a signed equal employment assurance statement may result in rejection of the proposal.

14. Submittal of Proposals. Proposals shall be submitted for *receipt* by AWI at its office **NO LATER THAN 5:00 PM, EST, January 17, 2006.** Send five (5) copies of proposal to:

**Agency for Workforce Innovation
107 East Madison Street
Caldwell Building, Suite G 229
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-
ATTN: Jackie Phillips**

Facsimiles and e-mail proposals are not allowed.

The proposer will include information about the facilitator's ability to perform in a way that the objectives listed in Section 2 will be met. The proposer should address the facilitator's past experience that could be applied to meeting the objectives, including facilitating meetings and tasks and helping a cross-organizational group achieve a common purpose; handling communications among and for a group; conducting formative and summative evaluations; and assisting with the informal and formal roles of participants in working together on tasks, governing, and sustaining an organization. Numbers of participants and participating organizations should be provided.

The proposer also will address the facilitator's formal training relevant to this project; as well as any knowledge and experience with youth employment or other employment-related projects.

The proposer is required to submit the following:

- Examples of communications and material the facilitator has authored that are similar to the requirements for this contract. A sample evaluation tool or description of what would be included in an evaluation tool should be submitted as one of the materials.
- Names and contact information of clients or recipients of facilitation who AWI can contact for references.
- The proposal shall clearly state the proposed cost of the services to be provided as described in Sections 1 and 2 of this solicitation along with an explanation of the cost basis.

15. Point of Contact. All questions regarding this solicitation should be directed to –

Freida Sheffield, Workforce Florida, Inc.
Phone 850-215-0812
E-mail **fsheffield@workforceflorida.com**

16. Disputes. Workforce Florida, Inc. is a public/private corporation with specific statutory authority to enter into contracts and therefore its procurement policies and procedures are not subject to the requirements of Chapter 287, Florida Statutes. Decisions by the WFI Board of Directors or the WFI Executive Committee or duly authorized WFI officials regarding the awarding of Invitations to Bids, Requests for Proposals, grant solicitations and all other procurement actions, either through a competitive process or a non-competitive process, are final.

Potentially adversely affected parties may file a written dispute of a procurement decision within the following parameters:

- a) Such disputes must be in writing, signed by the official who signed the original bid/proposal, and must state with specificity the nature of the dispute and the requested disposition. The President of WFI retains the authority to determine if the written dispute meets the criterion of specificity. Any dispute that does not meet this requirement may be dismissed without further consideration.
- b) Such disputes must be received by the President of Workforce Florida, Inc. at 1974 Commonwealth Lane, Tallahassee, Florida 32303, not later than five (5) working days from the date of the notice of award. Parties filing a written dispute are required to ensure timely delivery. Facsimiles that have the appropriate signature and meet all other requirements stated herein may be accepted. Any dispute that is not received by the President within this timeframe will be rejected without further consideration.
- c) Parties filing a dispute are not allowed to provide additional information unless, at his discretion, the President requests clarification of submitted materials. The President may, solely at his discretion, invite the disputing party to make a personal presentation to augment the written dispute.
- d) Within five (5) working days after receipt of any such valid dispute, the President will issue a final decision regarding the outcome of the disputed award notifying the party that filed the

dispute and a member of the WFI Executive Committee. The Chairman of Workforce Florida, Inc. or its Board of Directors may direct the President to present disputes to the Executive Committee. No disputes of procurement actions will be presented to the Board of Directors unless, at the discretion of the Chairman, such full board review is deemed to be necessary.

- e) Nothing in this dispute process is intended to imply nor should it be construed to mean such filing of a dispute places any constraint on the ability of WFI to proceed with its disputed procurement action, either in whole or in part.

Attachment A

Equal Opportunity Assurance Statement

Any organization, public or private, including regional workforce boards, seeking WIA funds from Workforce Florida Incorporated, ***MUST*** sign and submit this Equal Opportunity Assurance Statement or its proposal or grant proposal **may be rejected**.

As a condition of the proposal for this grant, the Applicant assures that it will comply fully with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of the following laws:

1. Section 188 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) which prohibits discrimination against all individuals in the United States on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation, or belief, and against beneficiaries on the basis of either citizenship/status as a lawfully admitted immigrant authorized to work in the United States or participation in any WIA Title I B financially assisted program or activity;
2. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin;
3. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, which prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities;
4. The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of age; and
5. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs.

The Applicant also assures that it will comply with 29 C.F.R. Part 37 and all other regulations implementing the laws listed above. This assurance applies to the grant applicant's operation of the WIA Title I – financially assisted program or activity, and to all agreements the grant applicant makes to carry out the WIA Title I – financially assisted program or activity. The Contractor understands that WFI and the United States has the right to seek judicial enforcement of the assurance.

By signing below, the Applicant certifies and assures that it will fully comply with the applicable assurances outlined above.

Name and Title of Authorized Representative

Applicant

Date

NOTE: This assurance form MUST be signed and submitted with your proposal.

Strengthening Youth Partnerships

A New Youth Vision

Statement of the Problem

Economic prosperity in Florida is dependent upon a highly skilled and productive workforce. Clearly, today's youth are the pipeline of future workers. Ensuring that these future workers are prepared to enter the labor market upon completion of education and training so that they can transition to independent living is a critical task that must be a high priority if economic prosperity is to be realized.

Unfortunately, the majority of youth in Florida are entering employment directly from high school without specific job skills training. And, worse yet, are the numbers coming from deprived backgrounds or are involved in risk behaviors that make them very vulnerable of becoming "disconnected young adults." This should be a call to arms for organizations preparing tomorrow's workforce, the business community, and our educational providers. Understandably, workforce development has become the most important issue affecting quality economic development.

In economic terms, we must find a way to prepare all our young people, including the most at-risk – juvenile offenders, youth aging out of foster care, the disabled, and those with limited English proficiency, to become contributing members of the work force. According to the International Center for Leadership in Education, in the next eight years, there will be a 1.7 million decline in the number of people between the ages of 25 and 34. This trend, coupled with retiring "baby boomers," will greatly impact American economy and our ability to be competitive in the global economy. With Florida's unemployment rate hovering around 4.5% and the rapid growth taking place, the dependency on imported labor is increasing. The problem is compounded by the declining number of unskilled jobs and the skills gap between what students are learning in school and what they actually need to be competitive in the high-tech, global economy. **A problem of this magnitude requires improvement-focused planning and decision making.**

Numerous organizations affect the lives of our youth through different systems that focus on specific issues such as pregnancy prevention, education, foster care, mentoring, employment preparation, drug and crime prevention to name a few, yet all these issues affect the youths' transition to adulthood and their ability to successfully obtain and maintain employment that will lead to self-sufficiency. These efforts are piecemeal when they should be fully integrated. One might argue that increased funding is needed in some programs, but more resources alone is not the solution. This argument does however underscore the need to strategically align the available resources. Duplication of funding and effort can be avoided through information sharing, mutual understanding and shared visions. Additionally, it is reasonable to believe that the accumulated wisdom of key-agency representatives will result in innovation, program delivery efficiencies, improved inter-agency processes, and improved strategies and outcomes preparing Florida's youth to become self-sufficient.

Strengthening Youth Partnerships

In July of 2003, the First Jobs/First Wages Council (equivalent of State Youth Council) of Workforce Florida, Inc. initiated the first in a series of **Strengthening Youth Partnerships** meetings to enhance communication, coordination and planning among key state agencies that play a role in developing Florida's youth, particularly in the area of workforce skill attainment. **The initiative was designed to strengthen youth partnerships by organizing a state effort for sustained dialogue to improve programs, services and outcomes for youth by thinking long-term, integrating complementary services, identifying duplicative efforts, gaps in services, and aligning resources.** This collaborative body could: 1) recommend policies/procedures/best practices for system improvement; 2) provide technical assistance to their local counterparts; and 3) evaluate the outcomes of the collaborative strategies. Prior to this initiative there had not been an organized state effort to initiate and sustain a state level dialogue aimed at developing a state framework for preparing Florida's youth for employment and self-sufficiency.

Representatives of nine state agencies/organizations in addition to three private sector representatives met five times from July 2003 – July 2004 with the last being a statewide meeting where over 80 local associates attended a two-day meeting to be briefed on the work of the state partners, hear presentations on 'best collaborative practices' occurring in the regions serving Florida's most at-risk youth and to provide a forum for local in-put. Additionally, Workforce Florida, Inc. announced that they had allocated \$1.4 million dollars

to fund two demonstration projects which emanated from the Strengthening Youth Partnerships meetings, *Project Connect* to serve juvenile offenders and the *Replication of CHOICE Career Institutes*, a demand-driven, innovative career education program developed by the Okaloosa County School District. Since that time, four regional workforce boards have been competitively awarded *Project Connect* grants and four regions and five school districts have been awarded grants for the *Replication of CHOICE Career Institutes*.

The Primary Goals and Expectations of the Strengthening Youth Partnership Meetings included:

Goals:

- Create a sustained dialogue to enhance coordination and planning among key organizations that play a role in developing Florida's youth, particularly in the area of workforce skill attainment.
- Do everything possible to ensure every young person in Florida is ready and able to pursue a meaningful career path.

Expectations:

- ✓ Create a synergy between agencies and organizations that prepare youth to participate in the world of work to reap positive results for both Florida's youth and the participating agencies and organizations.
- ✓ Clearly define or redefine each agency's role to contribute the most to value-added services so that public funds are invested wisely and not duplicated.
- ✓ Develop action-oriented approaches that will produce tangible results.
- ✓ Accrue more federal funds for the state through joint efforts.
- ✓ Identify shared priorities, strategies, gaps in services and action plans.
- ✓ Identify common challenges and strategies for serving the most at-risk youth.
- ✓ Develop a policy framework serving youth.

Federal Partnership and New Youth Vision

The work and outcomes of the **Strengthening Youth Partnerships** initiative closely parallel some of the recommendations laid out in the *New Strategic Vision for the Delivery of Youth Services* under the Workforce Investment Act as published by the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) in July 2004. The federal **New Youth Vision** urges workforce development organizations to work more closely with their education and economic development partners to increase youth employment results in four areas: 1) advance results from "second chance" alternative education programs; 2) help youth find jobs in "high-growth" industries and occupations; 3) increase attention to the neediest youth; and 4) increase the performance of the full range of workforce investment programs and initiatives focused on youth.

This federal partnership and vision is in response to the 2003 White House Task Force Report on Disadvantaged Youth which noted that despite the billions of Federal, state, local and private dollars spent on needy youth and their families, many out-of-school, at-risk youth are currently being left behind in our economy because of a lack of program focus and emphasis on outcomes. Well-designed and coordinated programs are needed to more efficiently and effectively serve the neediest youth.

In response to ETA's **New Youth Vision**, four regional forums were hosted by the U.S. Departments of Labor, Education, Health & Human Services, and Justice to communicate the shared vision and commitment to collaboration. Invitations were issued to the state's requesting states to form teams made up of the above mentioned agencies. Florida's team was made up of one representative from each of the following organizations: Agency for Workforce Innovation (policy division), Department of Education (Adult Education Division), Department of Juvenile Justice (Prevention Division), Department of Children & Families (Permanency & Wellbeing, Child Welfare & Community Based), Workforce Florida, Inc. (Youth Program Specialist), and two representatives of the regional workforce boards. Florida's team discussed areas of potential collaboration and the strategies for advancing the **New Youth Vision**. **The Florida partners agreed that the state level infrastructure to move the federal New Youth Vision was in place due to the Strengthening Youth Partnerships initiative and that Florida is ahead of most states due to this initiative, but that it is imperative to get key agency/organization leaders engaged and establish continuity of engagement to fill leadership, planning and implementation functions.** The agency representatives also supported the inclusion of other key state organizations such as Volunteer Florida, the Governor's Office of Drug Control, etc. and felt that an outside facilitator is needed for two reasons: 1) to guide the partners in building the organizational structure and governance relationships so that this collaborative body becomes

institutionalized; and 2) provide an outside evaluation of the process and outcomes. Funding for these services has not been identified, but agency partner representatives agreed that interagency resources should be leveraged to support the facilitation services. USDOL is making available \$25,000 to one state in the Southeast Region on a competitive basis. Workforce Florida will be submitting a request for these funds, but even if awarded will not be sufficient to employ outside facilitation services.

On June 6, 2005, the first Strengthening Youth Partnership meeting was held since the issuance of the federal **New Youth Vision** calling for states to create a collaborative approach for preparing the most at-risk and neediest youth for jobs in a global economy. Gary Tyler, USDOL Project Officer, gave an overview of the federal partnership and the shared vision for youth. Representatives from the Departments of Education, Juvenile Justice, Children & Families, and Law Enforcement were in attendance as well as representatives from the Agency for Workforce Innovation, Volunteer Florida, Workforce Florida, two regional workforce board, and two private sector members of the First Jobs/First Wages Council of Workforce Florida, Inc. **The attendees agreed that the following next steps needed to occur prior to moving forward: 1) the Summary of Agency Information Forms need to be updated for resource mapping; 2) state executive leadership support needed to be secured; 3) appropriate partners for state collaborative team needed to be identified to fill leadership, planning and implementation functions; and 4) funds from state collaborative team agencies need to be leveraged.**

Where Do We Go From Here?

- Determine state executive level support for an integrated vision to equip youth, especially the most at-risk, to more fully participate in the technologically-driven global economy;
- Determine commitment for sustained collaborative effort, as opposed to short-term initiative;
- Long-term commitment will require organizational structure and governance procedures;
- Agency/organization representation must fulfill leadership, planning and implementation functions;
- Representation must be institutionalized into agency representative(s) job description(s) to assure the time to participate and implement partnership strategies;
- Strategic financing including funds for facilitation services for one year as well as making better and more flexible use of existing funds; and
- A commitment to a results orientation.

*Employment and Training Administration
U.S. Department of Labor*

New Strategic Vision for the Delivery of Youth Services under the Workforce Investment Act

*Training and Employment
Guidance Letter (TEGL) 3-04 was released
on July 17, 2004 to all State Workforce Agencies and State Workforce Liaisons.*

The TEGL appears here in "booklet format."

Purpose

This TEGL informs states and local areas of the Employment and Training Administration's new strategic vision to serve out-of school and at-risk youth under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998.

References

- Title I of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (Pub. Law 105-220, 29 USC 2801 et seq.), available at <http://www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/>
- Final WIA Regulations, 20 CFR parts 652, 660-671 (published at 65 Fed. Reg. 49294, August 11, 2000), available at <http://www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/>
- Training and Employment Guidance Letter No.20-03, March 25, 2004, FY 2004 Rescissions for WIA Adults and Dislocated Workers; Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Allotments for Program Year (PY) 2004; Additional Funding from Dislocated Workers National Reserve for Adults and Dislocated Worker Activities for Eligible States; Wagner-Peyser Act Final Allotments for PY 2004; and Work Opportunity and Welfare-to-Work (W-t-W) Tax Credit Allotments for FY 2004, available at <http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives>

Background

The realities of today's global economy make it imperative that publicly-funded workforce systems for youth be demand-driven, and the programs and services made available through that system be aimed at preparing our country's most at-risk and neediest youth for real job opportunities. Despite the billions of Federal, state, local and private dollars spent on needy youth and their families, many out-of-school youth are currently being left behind in our economy because of a lack of program focus and emphasis on outcomes.

Well-designed workforce investment programs offer youth who have become disconnected from mainstream institutions and systems another opportunity to successfully transition to adult roles and responsibilities.

VISION:

Out-of-school youth (and those most at risk of dropping out) are an important part of the new workforce "supply pipeline" needed by businesses to fill job vacancies in the knowledge economy.

WIA-funded youth programs will provide leadership by serving as a catalyst to connect these youth with quality secondary and postsecondary educational opportunities and high-growth and other employment opportunities.

The Administration is committed to trying bold, innovative and flexible initiatives to prepare the most at-risk and neediest youth for jobs in our changing economy. The White House Task Force Report on Disadvantaged Youth, released in December 2003, articulated a set of broad goals for disadvantaged youth in the country, including that they “grow up ready for work, college and military service.” The report also recommended that youth programs focus on serving the neediest youth, with priority given to out-of-school youth, high school dropouts, runaway and homeless youth, youth in foster care, court involved youth, children of incarcerated parents and migrant youth.

ETA has set an overarching priority for the entire workforce investment system: meet the demands of business by providing adults and youth with the necessary educational, occupational, and other skills training and services needed for high demand occupations in the 21st century. In that regard, ETA has developed a new strategic vision to serve out-of-school and at-risk youth through the workforce investment system. This vision represents new strategies for the investment of WIA resources. The vision’s focus on connecting youth with high quality education and employment services can be achieved under current law and reflects the principles articulated by the Administration for the reauthorization of WIA.

ETA’s new vision for serving youth will present challenges for how state and local WIA programs interact and link with state and local education and economic development systems. To achieve this vision, ETA will adopt a new strategic approach across four major areas:

- ✓ **Focus on Alternative Education**
- ✓ **Meeting the Demands of Business, Industries and Occupations** **Especially in High-Growth**
- ✓ **Focus on the Neediest Youth**
- ✓ **Focus on Improved Performance**

This TEGL is meant to provide information to state and local WIA systems on ETA’s new strategic vision for serving youth, the proposed focus areas, and the goals and critical strategies that Federal, state and local youth workforce programs should be engaged in implementing for Program Year (PY) 2004.

During PY 2004, ETA will be issuing specific program guidance to states and local areas on implementing the new strategic vision for serving the targeted youth populations.

Critical Strategies

The new vision for serving youth and the following proposed critical strategies will require ETA and state and local workforce investment system leaders to serve as catalysts for bringing together employment, education and economic development. If the vision is realized, state and local workforce investment systems serving youth will be positioned as strategic partners in the development and deployment of the emerging labor force.



Focus on Alternative Education

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act holds schools, school districts, and states accountable for student outcomes and requires that students meet standards in core subject areas. The implementation of NCLB has important implications for “second chance” alternative education programs since the public workforce investment system often contracts with these programs to provide educational services to economically disadvantaged high school dropouts and out-of-school youth with basic skills deficiencies, some of whom may have diagnosed or undiagnosed learning disabilities.

Goal: ETA is committed to providing leadership to ensure that youth served in alternative education programs will receive a high quality education that adheres to the state standards developed in response to the NCLB legislation.

In collaboration with the Department of Education, ETA will issue guidance to the workforce investment system on the following:

- A process for the workforce investment system to ensure that any particular alternative education

institution receiving WIA youth funds is able to make progress towards the standards for success.

- A model of what constitutes “alternative education programs” that characterizes the various forms/components of these programs required to meet the varied needs of out-of-school youth.
- A description of how alternative education institutions can serve as an integral part of state and local educational systems’ success in meeting the goals of the NCLB act.
- Information to help understand how average daily attendance funding applies to the students in alternative education institutions.
- Information to help workforce investment areas understand state NCLB implementation systems and their impact on alternative schools.
- Proven literacy/numeracy strategies targeted to the at-risk adolescent population.

State and local workforce systems are encouraged to partner with public school systems implementing state NCLB requirements around mutually beneficial issues, such as:

- Assisting school districts in meeting their annual yearly progress measures (AYP) by providing high-quality, diploma granting alternative learning environments for youth at-risk of dropping out of school. In this model, average daily attendance funds will follow youth to the alternative program while the youth will remain in the sending school district's count.
- Providing supplemental educational services for Title I schools that do not meet their AYP measures through after-school and Saturday programs.
- Working with alternative schools to establish high quality programs that meet state standards. This may include collaboration between state and local public education systems and workforce investment systems to improve teacher quality, develop flexible funding mechanisms and promote collaborative services.

Local level workforce investment areas are also encouraged to increase their knowledge of alternative education opportunities. This can be done by engaging in a “mapping” of alternative education offerings in the community to be used by both the education and workforce systems to help students make smart choices.

Lastly, WIA youth programs working through the One-Stop Career Center system, should ensure that alternative education institutions have and use information on local workforce training programs and local labor markets, including national electronic tools such as “Career Voyages” (www.CareerVoyages.gov), public and proprietary career information, and state labor market information. Local areas should ensure that alternative education students be exposed to job opportunities in growing occupations, including requirements for further education and training and possible career pathways.



Focus on Business Demands, Especially in High-Growth Industries and Occupations

Goal: *The investment of WIA youth resources will be demand-driven, assuring that youth obtain the skills needed by businesses so that they can succeed in the 21st century economy.*

Accomplishing this goal will entail three priority areas:

- ETA will provide guidance to the WIA youth system on how to incorporate successful models of employer-driven youth development programs such as SKILLS USA, Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) and Automotive Youth Educational Systems (AYES) that combine skills training with instruction in

employability skills including professional development, community service and leadership.

- ETA will promote strategic partnerships within the workforce system to ensure that resources are invested to effectively help youth gain the skills necessary for jobs and career pathways in high-growth and high-demand industries. WIA funds should be invested based on the skills needs of employers and strategies developed to address those needs. Building connections between the workforce system and community colleges ensures the creation of industry-focused pathways or career ladder programs that are market responsive. Model programs will be developed that demonstrate partnerships between local businesses, local workforce and educational organizations, and community colleges that allow for the rapid development of training curriculum to meet changing workforce demands. Specifically, partnerships developed can identify high-growth high-demand industries and target the appropriate resources for training programs that provide workers, particularly out-of-school youth, the skills required to receive an industry certificate and/or a postsecondary credential.
- State and local professionals in WIA youth-funded programs must be versed on what the high-growth industries/occupations are in their respectable areas what the career pathways are for these jobs, and what options are potentially available for at-risk youth to access these jobs.

The following Web sites are ETA sources of workforce information:

America's CareerOneStop Portal

<http://careeronestop.org>

CareerOneStop Portal Links

America's Career Information Network:

www.acinet.org

America's Job Bank:

www.ajb.org

America's Service Locator:

www.servicelocator.org

O*NET OnLine:

<http://online.onetcenter.org>

Workforce Tools of the Trade:

www.workforcetools.org

Career Voyages:

www.CareerVoyages.gov

In addition, staff should be knowledgeable about youth assessment, development of individual service strategies, integration of needed services, provision of follow-up services, and explicit documentation of services and outcomes. WIA youth professionals should ensure that training funds will be prioritized for eligible youth pursuing high-growth opportunities and that training investments meet industry-specific requirements leading to an industry-recognized credential when appropriate.



Focus on Neediest Youth

The White House Task Force Report on Disadvantaged Youth notes that the Federal government is spending billions of dollars to address the problems of youth. According to the report, youth training funds appear to be focused on ineffective and duplicative practices, and public money needs to be targeted to where it is most needed. The Task Force identified youth in foster care (particularly those

aging out of foster care), youth in the juvenile justice system, children of incarcerated parents, and migrant youth as those most in need of services.

ETA is making investments in a number of new initiatives to focus on and develop new strategies for serving these identified populations.

Goal: ETA will prioritize investments that serve youth in foster care, those aging out of foster care, youth offenders, children of incarcerated parents and migrant youth.

- Funds will be used to develop model programs for youth aging out of foster care. Model programs will take a comprehensive approach to serving this population, including basic skills remediation, help staying in school or returning to school, employment, internships, help with attaining a high school diploma or GED, post-secondary vocational training, apprenticeships, and enrollment in community colleges, and four-year colleges.
- ETA will continue to make funds available to help returning youth offenders reintegrate into and become productive members of their communities by providing education, job training, and supportive services such as mentoring and life skills training after their release from correctional institutions. In addition to helping youth attain employment or an education credential, this effort seeks to ensure that returning youth offenders remain crime-free. This initiative will build on strategies that have been the focus of previous pilot and demonstration projects. They include:
 - (1) the expansion of partnerships between state and local workforce investment systems and the criminal justice system;
 - (2) the use of faith-based and community-based organizations to train and mentor former prisoners; and
 - (3) the use of intermediary organizations in connecting employers with offenders particularly in high growth industries.
- ETA, in partnership with the Departments of Education and Agriculture, will develop a model program to provide workforce training, placement services and basic education services for high school completion to out-of-school migrant and seasonal farm worker youth ages 16 to 21. Mentoring is expected to be a significant component of this effort to assist migrant students navigate education and job training and to provide the encouragement, tutoring and assistance these students need to achieve their goals.



Focus on Improved Performance

In order to ensure the success of an increasingly at-risk youth population in the knowledge economy, the workforce investment system must be committed to utilizing the strategies that lead to higher levels of performance and outcomes. ETA will provide the leadership necessary to make this happen.

Goal: Key initiatives will be implemented to assure that funding for youth program is performance-based and that systems and programs are focused on outcomes.

All youth professionals will be expected to be knowledgeable about their local economy (e.g., current status, future projections, high-growth industries, career paths) and One-Stop Career Center professionals will be expected to make the connection to specialized youth programs for those drop-outs that are using core services who are in need of more intensive assistance.

- ETA will support Regional Forums designed to provide the workforce investment system with an overview of the new policy guidance related to services for youth. The Regional Forums will examine changes in legislation, policy guidance, and operational processes that will form a new strategic response to serving youth through the workforce investment system. The forums will target system leaders from the states and will work to align Federal policy with state and local practices.
- ETA will lead the way in establishing better “real-time” data and management systems by incorporating

investments made in management information systems into the formula program.

- Following the recommendations of the White House Task Force for Disadvantaged Youth, ETA will work with other Federal agencies to improve the Federal role in helping to understand what works. This entails creating a more consistent set of guidelines for assessing the quality of program evaluations. Protocols will be consistent across agencies and will emphasize random assignment evaluations. A cross-agency research agenda will be created based on large, randomized field trials to test different interventions for serving disadvantaged youth.
- ETA will implement a new core set of common performance measures for youth programs that apply across One-Stop system programs. The implementation of common performance measures across Federal job training and employment programs will enhance the ability to assess the effectiveness of the workforce investment system.
- The new set of common measures for youth programs will include: placement in employment or education; attainment of a degree or certificate; literacy and numeracy gains; and an efficiency measure. The introduction of these new measures for the workforce investment system places a new emphasis on literacy and numeracy gains for youth. It is important that service strategies for youth participants be directly linked to one or more performance outcomes within these common measures. Also, it is important to note that the certificate measure is a demand-driven measure in which certificates are awarded in recognition of an individual's attainment of measurable technical or occupational skills necessary to gain employment or advance within an occupation. These technical or occupational skills are based on standards developed or endorsed by employers.
- Attainment of literacy and numeracy gains is viewed as most appropriate for youth with basic skill deficiencies as determined by a basic skills assessment. The increased focus on literacy and numeracy gains for youth provides an impetus to ensuring that state and local WIA programs incorporate high quality adolescent literacy programs.

Action Required

States should share the information in this TEGl with the local areas.

Inquiries

Questions should be directed to the appropriate regional office.

ETA Regional Offices

Boston / New York

Mr. Joe Stoltz
U.S. Department of Labor/ETA
J.F.K. Federal Building, Room E-350
Boston, MA 02203
Phone: (617) 565-3630
Fax: (617) 565-2999

Philadelphia

Ms. Lenita Jacobs-Simmons
U.S. Department of Labor
Employment and Training Administration
Suite 825 East
The Curtis Center
170 South Independence Mall West
Philadelphia, PA 19106
Phone: (215) 861-5200

Atlanta

Helen Parker
U.S. Department of Labor/ETA
Atlanta Federal Center 61 Forsyth St. Rm. 6M12
Atlanta, GA 30303
Phone: (404) 562-2092
Fax: (404) 562-2149

Dallas / Denver

Joseph Juarez
Regional Administrator
U.S. Department of Labor/ETA
525 Griffin Street Room 317
Dallas, TX 75202
Phone: (214) 767-8263
Fax: (214) 767-5113

Chicago / Kansas City

Byron Zuidema
Regional Administrator
U.S. Department of Labor/ETA
230 South Dearborn Street, 6th floor
Chicago, IL 60604
Phone: (312) 596-5400

San Francisco / Seattle

Richard Trigg
U.S. Department of Labor/ETA
P.O. Box 193767 71 Stevenson St., Suite 830
San Francisco, CA 94119-3767
Phone: (415) 975-4610
Fax: (415) 975-4612

Labor, Education, Human Services, and Justice **Creating a Collaborative Approach** to Prepare Youth for Success in a Global, Demand-Driven Economy

A SHARED VISION FOR YOUTH

The 2003 White House Task Force Report on Disadvantaged Youth notes that despite the billions of Federal, state, local and private dollars spent on needy youth and their families, many out-of-school, at-risk youth are currently being left behind in our economy because of a lack of program focus and

emphasis on outcomes. Well-designed and coordinated programs offer youth who have become disconnected from mainstream institutions and systems additional opportunities to successfully transition to adult roles and responsibilities.

In response to the White House Report the Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Justice and Labor have committed to a collaborative approach at the national, state, and local levels to serving our nation's neediest youth in order to develop innovative approaches, enhance the quality of services delivered, improve efficiencies, and improve the outcomes for the youth we serve.

Creating New Opportunities for Collaboration

OUR WORK TOGETHER AS FEDERAL PARTNERS

Specifically, an Interagency Work Group was created to ensure that the communication, coordination, and collaboration recommended by the White House Task Force occurs and to focus on the following objectives outlined in the Report:

- Developing and coordinating policy, within existing policy structures to address the needs of disadvantaged youth.
- Maximizing interagency collaborations to utilize the significant expertise within specific Federal agencies.

- Coordinating Federal research so the government can fund programs that produce results that help disadvantage youth.
- Finding and elevating models of “what-works” and help replicate them nationwide.
- Developing innovative model strategies that efficiently and effectively respond to the needs of disadvantaged youth.

One of our first activities was to jointly convene Regional Forums which were designed to:

- Communicate the shared vision and commitment to collaboration.
- Facilitate the creation of state teams that will undertake strategic planning activities to develop cross-agency systems to better serve the neediest youth through improved leveraging of resources, policy alignment and other activities.
- Develop strategies for Federal support of the state teams.

Based on the feedback from the Regional Forums, the Federal Partnership will focus on:

- Engaging support of state executives including Governors, and lead agency executives.
- Creating Federal cross-agency teams to provide support to the state teams.
- Providing a “crosswalk” of key federal program definitions and program policies in order to better understand where there are opportunities and barriers to aligning programs and funds.
- Providing states with broad principles to assist them in gauging the effectiveness of their collaborative efforts.
- Providing states with information on the funding from each of the Federal agencies that is available in their state to serve the neediest youth.
- Providing models of collaboration.