

As part of the No Worker Left Behind initiative, Emily Stover DeRocco, Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration, created the Business Relations Group (BRG) to develop innovative approaches to helping business and industry better access the services of the state and local workforce investment system and to increase the capacity of the workforce investment system to provide solutions to the workforce challenges faced by business.

The BRG serves America's workers by creating partnerships between the workforce system and businesses. It coordinates with appropriate federal, state, and local public and private sector partners to implement agency and system-wide strategies to:

1. identify businesses and industries in high-growth sectors of the economy and translate their workforce needs to the public workforce system;
2. help the public workforce system respond effectively to business and industry needs for a skilled workforce;
3. help communities use workforce investment system resources as an economic development tool; and
4. work with the U.S. Department of Education to explore vocational education strategies that respond to business and industry needs for a skilled American workforce.

For more information on the activities and services of the Business Relations Group, contact:

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# High-Growth Job Training Initiative

The High-Growth Job Training Initiative is a strategic effort to improve the publicly funded workforce system's responsiveness to the needs of the labor market so that the workforce investment system can become demand-driven. The Initiative is specifically designed to build collaborations among employers, industry leaders, business associations, educators, trainers, and the community and technical college system to support models that operationally demonstrate how a demand-driven workforce system can more efficiently serve the workforce needs of business while also effectively helping workers find good jobs at good wages.

The High-Growth Job Training Initiative seeks to leverage the publicly funded workforce system more effectively in collaboration with private and public sector partners, to prepare new and incumbent workers with the general and industry-specific knowledge and skills demanded by employers. This Initiative focuses on high-growth industries where specialized skills training curricula needs to be developed or upgraded to ensure that workers have the right skills for the right jobs at the right time.

Based upon high-growth industry projections, economic development needs, and micro-enterprise efforts, the following sectors are being considered for the initial project focus:

- The Services Industry
  - Health Services Sector
  - Information Technology (IT) & IT Business-Related Services Sector
  - Automotive Services Sector
  - Geospatial Sector
  - Biotech Sector
  - Restaurant Sector
- The Retail Industry
- The Financial Industry
- The Transportation Industry
- The Manufacturing Industry

Outcomes from the High-Growth Job Training Initiative will be:

- Targeted investment of Workforce Investment Act training resources to develop workers' skills in demand occupations;
- Increased capacity in community and technical colleges to meet the skill training needs of high-growth industries;
- Increased integration of registered apprenticeship training as a means to develop skills by combining on-the-job training with academics, creating a system by which employers can develop and ensure availability of skilled workers; and
- Prepared workers with skills in occupations that provide paths to career-enhancing opportunities.

By expanding the local workforce system's capacity to be market-driven, responsive to local economic needs, and a contributor to the economic well-being of the community, the Employment and Training Administration is promoting workforce quality, enhanced productivity, and economic competitiveness.

The Employment and Training Administration, in its efforts to meet the demands of the 21st Century workforce, is now conducting Industry Forums with



various targeted high-growth industries. These Industry Forums allow business and industry an opportunity to share their current and future workforce needs with the workforce system. Using the information they provide, ETA, Industry, and the public workforce system is identifying the workforce gaps, developing training initiatives and strategies to address the needs of business, and fostering a greater alliance with employers so that the publicly funded workforce system can respond to the needs of the labor market and become a demand-driven system.

The publicly funded workforce investment system is a state and local network of resources to assist businesses in recruiting, training, and retaining a skilled workforce. Some large multi-state employers requested assistance from the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) to connect nationally to the state and local network of One-Stop Career Centers where such services are provided.

In response to this request, ETA created the *Partnerships for Jobs* initiative to: (1) assist in making this connection and (2) develop national business partnerships designed to ensure that large multi-state businesses remain connected to the full-range of services available through local and state workforce systems.

The benefits of the *Partnerships for Jobs* initiative are:

- Reduced recruiting costs and access to qualified workers
- Support in recruitment and screening of qualified workers and increased retention of workers
- Access to labor market information to help guide business decisions on expansion and location
- Access to training partnerships to ensure availability of qualified workers
- Assistance in developing a diverse workforce
- Tax credits for hiring targeted workers with barriers to employment
- Assistance when downsizing or rightsizing a company, as necessary

ETA has established a network of national regional liaisons, state coordinators, and local workforce system representatives who are ready to connect national businesses to the many services that are available through the publicly funded workforce investment system.

The Business Relations Group is also working to:

- Learn more about the needs of the business customer and educate business about the workforce system;
- Identify methods to help broker the connection to the state and local workforce systems and facilitate effective relationship-building;
- Provide support to state and local partners serving the business customer; and
- Track the effectiveness of the partnership.

For more information on ETA's *Partnership for Jobs* initiative, contact the Business Relations Group at (202) 693-3949.