

<p style="text-align: center;">Recognition of Excellence 2007 Application Process</p>
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The Recognition of Excellence (ROE) 2007 Overview

To promote superior employment and training-related programs and improve system performance, the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) is sponsoring an initiative to recognize high levels of success by entities managing and partnering with ETA-funded programs. ETA recognizes that achieving commendable outcomes requires much more than statutory or regulatory compliance. Therefore, high levels of success should be recognized, and it is ETA's hope that this recognition process will facilitate the exponential replication of promising practices throughout the workforce investment system.

This is the fourth year ETA has administered the Recognition of Excellence (ROE). ETA is now seeking applications to select honorees to be showcased at the 2007 Workforce Innovations conference on July 17-19 in Kansas City, Missouri. Through this conference, thousands of workforce investment professionals from across the nation will be able to learn from the promising practices of the honorees. ***The honorees will be selected for recognition, not a monetary award.***

Honorees in five separate categories will be recognized. There will be one winner and up to two (2) honorable mentions in each category listed below.

- ❖ ***Educating America's 21st Century Workforce***
- ❖ ***Building an Industry/Business-Driven Workforce Investment System***
- ❖ ***Leveraging the Power of e³ Partnerships***
- ❖ ***Recognizing Special Populations in the Workforce***
- ❖ ***Serving Out-of-School Youth***

(For a detailed description of each category, see Section III of this document.)

Honorees will be selected based on an application package that demonstrates that the project, program or initiative is innovative, collaborative and resulted in positive performance outcomes; linked services to high demand occupations, economic development and community benefit; and is replicable.

This recognition supports the Department of Labor's goals of ensuring:

- 1) A Prepared Workforce: Developing a prepared workforce by providing effective training and support services to new and incumbent workers and supplying high-quality information on the economy and labor market;
- 2) A Competitive Workforce: Meeting the competitive labor demands of the worldwide economy by enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the

- workforce development and regulatory systems that assist workers and employers in meeting the challenges of global competition; and
- 3) Strengthened Economic Protections: Protecting and strengthening worker economic security through effective and efficient provisions of unemployment insurance and workers' compensation; ensuring union transparency; and securing pension and health benefits.

I. Eligibility

Any state or local program, project or initiative, including national program grants, funded through ETA activities or in which an ETA-funded activity is one integral component, may apply (i.e., youth, adults, dislocated workers, unemployment compensation, tax credits, apprenticeship programs, electronic systems, etc.). The program, project or initiative must have been operational for at least twelve (12) months and at some point in time within the last two program years (from July 2005 to present).

In addition to employment and training entities funded directly by ETA, eligible applicants for ROE may include universities, community colleges, businesses or other organizations that receive ETA funds or partner with the ETA-funded entity in the recommended program, project or initiative.

Projects, programs and initiatives selected for Honorable Mention for Recognition of Excellence in 2004, 2005, or 2006 are eligible to apply for ROE 2007. However, projects previously recognized as Recognition of Excellence winners may not be submitted for consideration again in any category.

II. Application Instructions

The following application instructions are very important and should be read closely. Failure to comply with all requirements will result in disqualification of the application. **Only applications submitted electronically will be accepted.** Each submission must include an application that meets the following specifications.

A. *Format*. The electronic application will consist of four (4) parts.

- 1) *Part 1*. Application Program and Submitter Information Page which contains identification and contact information for the program, project or initiative. All required information must be provided.
- 2) *Part 2*. Narrative Description of the program, project or initiative being submitted. The specific criteria and scoring differ for each category. **Please carefully review and conform to the criteria in**

the category for which you are submitting an application. The narrative shall not exceed 10 double-spaced pages.

- 3) *Part 3.* List of collaborating partners for the program, project or initiative. Each applicant must provide the name and contact information for the collaborating partner(s) supporting this application. Collaborating Partners are defined as organizations or individuals that provide leadership, funding or significant support to the successful implementation or operation of the program, project or initiative. Inclusion of the collaborating partner's name indicates that the collaborating partner is willing to provide assurances that the information in the application is true and can be verified without notice. *Signatures of collaborating partners that are listed in applications being vetted for First Place or Honorable Mention recognition will be requested.*
- 4) Part 4. A Signature page, which will be generated electronically following submission of the application, requires the signature of the authorized representative submitting the application (see item 5 under section B below).

Applications **must** include the completed Program Information page, 10 pages or less Narrative Description, Collaborating Partner's page, and the signed Signature Page.

The application will not be considered complete until a faxed copy of the signed electronic application's signature page is received by ETA.

Applications that do not meet all of these requirements will not be considered.

B. *Preparation.* Before beginning the electronic application, we strongly recommend that applicants:

- 1) Compile and verify all of the required contact and identification information requested on the Program Information page of the application.
- 2) Prepare the narrative description of the program, project or initiative in a word processing document first; then "copy and paste" the information into the appropriate text boxes provided on the electronic application form.
- 3) Compile and verify all of the collaborating partners' contact information. You will be limited to no more than 25 collaborating partners.

- 4) After completing the application, carefully review the application before clicking the "submit" button. Once the application is submitted, changes will not be permitted.
- 5) When the application is submitted, print the electronic application's signature page, and immediately fax it with the authorized representative's signature to the following fax number: (202) 693-3667.

C. *Criteria:* Within each award category there are five criteria:

- 1) Innovation, 2) Collaboration, 3) Performance Outcomes, 4) Linking Services to Demand Occupations, Economic Development and Community Benefit, and 5) Replicability. Applications should provide an overview of the program, and must address each of the five criteria. Applications that do not address the five criteria will not be considered.

D. *Restriction on Number of Applications:* An applicant may submit applications for more than one program, project or initiative. *However*, an individual program, project or initiative may be submitted in only one recognition category. Entities with duplicate applications in more than one category will be disqualified.

E. **Restriction on Applications. A program, project or initiative that has been previously recognized as a winner will not be accepted in any category.** Honorable Mention projects from previous years may be submitted for consideration in another year.

F. ***Deadline:* The electronic application and the signed application signature page must be received in ETA by 5:00 p.m. EST on Friday, March 30th, 2007.** Applications and signature pages received after that date and time will not be considered. Hard copy, faxed or emailed applications will not be accepted.

G. *Recognition:* Selected honorees will receive recognition during the 2007 Workforce Innovations conference. Winners will receive an engraved commemorative symbol and four (4) free registrations for Workforce Innovations, to include one for a program participant. Up to two (2) Honorable Mentions in each category will receive an engraved plaque and one (1) free registration for the Workforce Innovations conference.

- H. *Computer System Requirements.* Any computer with internet access should allow access to and permit completion of the Recognition of Excellence application online at: <http://roe.doleta.gov/>.
- I. *Questions.* If you have questions about the application process, please first review the FAQs on the Web site, <http://roe.doleta.gov/>. If you have additional questions, you may email them to: eta.roe@dol.gov.

Applications will be screened electronically to determine whether they address/conform to the basic eligibility, submission and application requirements. Those that conform to these criteria will be forwarded to panels of reviewers comprised of ETA staff and system stakeholders, and will be scored on a 100 point scale in accordance with the criteria in the recognition category for which the application is being reviewed. One winner and up to two (2) honorable mentions will be selected in each category.

III. Criteria

Each application must contain a completed Program Information Page, a written description of the program, project or initiative that addresses each of the criteria in the chosen category, a list of collaborating partners and a faxed copy of the electronic application's signature page with the signature of the authorized representative submitting the application.

Each recognition category, and the rating criteria for each category, are described below. Applicants' narrative descriptions should conform to the information requested in that category.

Category 1: Educating America's 21st Century Workforce

Globalization, technological advances and America's shifting demographics are rapidly changing the 21st Century workforce into one that is vastly different from a few years ago. A fundamental transformation for all industries is occurring and requirements for higher skills and education are increasing. Ninety percent of the fastest growing jobs and sixty-three percent of all new jobs in the United States require a post-secondary education. Post-secondary institutions and alternatives such as community colleges and apprenticeship programs will be increasingly critical providers of skills training for workers needing to retool, refine, and broaden their skills. These changes require workforce investment organizations to employ new strategies to educate and train America's workforce, ensuring that individuals are adequately prepared for their career of choice and that the United States remains competitive in this new and dynamic global economy. This category recognizes organizations that have developed new and effective strategies to educate and prepare our workforce for the economic and demographic changes and challenges that lie ahead in the global marketplace.

Criteria a: Innovation (15 points)

Please describe the specific purpose of the program, project or initiative. How is it innovative in developing and designing new strategies, programs and training systems? How has it provided a positive impact on the training and development of the 21st Century workforce? How does it differ from traditional programs or projects? Does it bridge areas within the state or across state borders? What prompted the innovation and how was it accomplished?

Criteria b: Collaboration (25 points)

Identify innovative partnerships, such as partnerships with industries, businesses, government agencies, credentialing organizations, educational institutions. Describe any productive working relationships with members of the education community such as high schools, post-secondary institutions and apprenticeship programs. Describe your collaborative relationships. How and when did this partnership begin? How did the collaborative relationships affect the program, project or initiative? If direct services are involved, are they provided in a seamless manner? If so, how is this seamless approach accomplished? Describe how resources are leveraged, citing all resources that are involved.

Criteria c: Performance Outcomes (25 points)

This section focuses on quantitative and qualitative outcomes of the program, project or initiative. Describe how you measured the success of the effort. Describe any performance goals that were set and how they were established. Identify strategies that were established and/or efforts undertaken, beyond what is normally expected, in order to meet those goals. Describe the positive outcomes in quantitative and/or qualitative terms. How do they relate to the overall goal(s) of the program, project or initiative? Do these goals relate to the required performance outcomes for the ETA-funded activity (i.e., are they the same or different, and how)? How did this effort improve or enhance ETA-funded program performance?

Criteria d: Linking Services to Demand Occupations, Economic Development and Community Benefit (20 points)

How does this initiative meet the education and training needs of both businesses and job-seekers/workers? To what extent were business and industry involved with curriculum development? What specific business, economic or community challenges were addressed? Does this project, program or initiative involve or develop career ladder or lattice training? What are the tangible benefits to the community at large?

Criteria e: Replicability (15 points)

Describe how this project, program or initiative is replicable. Have you replicated this program, project or initiative in other areas of your operation? How can you facilitate replication? (Examples include, but are not limited to, demonstrating the model for others; providing tools or resources that enable the model/approach to be replicated; providing documentation or findings that can be disseminated to and used by others; and replicating the model elsewhere.)

Category 2: Building an Industry/Business-Driven Workforce Investment System

Our nation's ability to be competitive in a global economy depends on the quality of our workforce. To succeed, we must maintain and expand upon our market driven focus, simultaneously responding to the existing needs of businesses, while preparing a skilled workforce to fulfill further job growth and evolution. This award recognizes public workforce systems that have built the capability to respond effectively to the needs of all of its customers: businesses, employers, workers and job seekers by maintaining a market-driven focus.

Criteria a: Innovation (20 points)

Describe how the program, project or initiative engaged business and economic development groups in innovative ways to identify areas of high-growth employment and the skills and competencies needed for high-growth jobs. Are these skills employer-specific or general industry requirements? Are they forward looking? How? Be specific, such as in the design and development of a business service delivery model (types of services, how services are accessible, methods of service delivery, etc.). Describe input from state and local officials and local business organizations. Does the program, project or initiative encourage the development of a regional labor market?

Criteria b: Collaboration (20 points)

Describe the collaborative relationships involved in this initiative. Explain steps taken to engage business and industry, and the method of determining current and future labor force needs, required job competencies, and entry level and career progression opportunities. Describe any resources that are leveraged, citing all resources that are involved. Are there specific performance expectations for each of the collaborative partners?

Criteria c: Performance Outcomes (25 points)

Describe how you measured the success of the effort. Cite any performance goals that were set and how they were established. Identify strategies that were established and/or efforts undertaken, beyond what is normally expected, in order to meet those goals. Describe the positive outcomes in quantitative and/or qualitative terms. How do they relate to the overall goal(s) of the program, project or initiative? What impact has the initiative had on jobseekers and employers,? Do these goals relate to the required performance outcomes for the ETA-funded activity (i.e., are they the same or different, and how)? How did this effort improve or enhance ETA-funded program performance?

Criteria d: Linking Services to Demand Occupations, Economic Development and Community Benefit (20 points)

Show evidence that the project leveraged the resources of partners including employers, economic development organizations; and worked with industries that are critical for regional economic growth. Discuss how the project attempts to address regional economic needs. Include information on how demand information was used to serve workers and provide career guidance around high demand industry sectors that provide options for workers to get and retain jobs at sustainable wages with options for career mobility. Did information for workers provide career guidance around high demand occupations critical for the region's economic growth?

Criteria e: Replicability (15 points)

Describe how this project, program or initiative is replicable. Have you replicated this program, project or initiative in other areas of your operation? How can you facilitate replication? Examples include, but are not limited to, demonstrating the model for others; providing tools or resources that enable the model/approach to be replicated; providing documentation or findings that can be disseminated to and utilized by others; developing a strategy to continue a successful project; or utilizing the model in other programs areas.

Category 3: Leveraging the Power of e³ Partnerships

Addressing the critical challenges that both job seekers and employers face requires considerable leveraging of resources from multiple systems that impact the labor market, particularly those of employment, education and economic development programs. ETA refers to such linkages as the “Power of e³.” The honorees of this category will be organizations that demonstrate sustained partnerships among these three critical workforce entities, and show how they are successfully working together to prepare: (1) jobseekers for employment; (2) incumbent workers for jobs with upward career mobility potential; and (3) entrepreneurs to create, sustain and expand their businesses in their communities.

Criteria a: Innovation (20 points)

Briefly describe the purpose of the partnerships and how demand driven approaches were used to develop innovative solutions and prepare new and diverse labor pools to meet critical industry needs and promote economic growth. Demonstrate how the program, project or initiative is innovative compared to traditional approaches? Describe any unique characteristics of the partnerships between employment, education and economic development programs.

Criteria b: Collaboration (25 points)

The power of e³ partnerships project applications should be centered on collaboration. In this category evidence of partnerships between all three must be reflected in the application. Describe how the program, project or initiative created partnerships that involve employment (workforce investment system), education, and economic development in engaging industry to identify needs and serve workers and entrepreneurs. Describe how the industry partners helped the e³ entities identify, develop, and prepare new and diverse labor pools to meet critical industry needs.

Describe how the partners brought together and leveraged resources, and what role the workforce investment system had as catalyst and convener in bringing together the entities involved. Describe how the project used business-driven leadership at the regional, state, or local levels to achieve its results. Describe the specific role each of the e³ partners carried out including specific actions taken, if appropriate.

Criteria c: Performance Outcomes (20 points)

Describe any performance goals for the initiative and how they were met or exceeded. Quantify the outcomes to the extent possible. How did the project help business, industry, jobseekers and entrepreneurs better access the services of the workforce investment system? What was the impact on regional economic development in measurable terms? How did this effort consolidate or link resources to reduce duplication across

funding streams? Identify strategies that were established and/or efforts undertaken beyond what is normally expected of ETA-funded activities in order to meet project goals.

Criteria d: Linking Services to Demand Occupations, Economic Development and Community Benefit (20 Points)

Describe how labor market information was used to inform strategic use of workforce investment resources and to target industries that provide the best opportunities for workers to secure jobs at sustainable wages with options for career mobility. Discuss how the e³ collaboration has been driven by specific regional economic factors. Describe how the program, project or initiative acted as catalyst and convener to link the publicly funded workforce investment system with education, and economic development entities.

Criteria e: Replicability (15 Points)

Describe how this project, program or initiative is replicable. Have you replicated this program, project or initiative in other areas of your operation? How can you facilitate replication? (Examples include, but are not limited to, demonstrating the model for others; providing tools or resources that enable the model/approach to be replicated; providing documentation or findings that can be disseminated to and utilized by others; or developing a strategy to continue a successful project.)

Category 4: Recognizing Special Populations in the Workforce

With the shifting demographics of the U.S. workforce, it is becoming ever more critical that the workforce investment system find ways to integrate every available worker into the workforce to enable the continued competitiveness of U.S. businesses. This award will recognize programs, projects or initiatives that provide effective services to special populations with unique characteristics and barriers to employment. The results should demonstrate economically relevant talent development in the form of jobseekers adequately prepared to secure and retain employment in high-demand industries.

Examples of special populations include, but are not limited to: persons with disabilities, individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP), immigrants, older workers, ex-offenders, homeless individuals and families, Indian and Native Americans, Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers, welfare recipients, etc.

Programs which focus on out-of-school youth should apply for Category 5: Serving Out-of-School Youth.

Criteria a: Innovation (20 points)

Describe how the program, project or initiative provided the same or greater range of employment and training-related services as are expected to be provided to the general population to help the target population(s) overcome specific barriers to employment. Identify how the program, project or initiative is innovative and creative compared to traditional programs? (For example, what strategies or tools were used to help overcome barriers to physical and programmatic access, enhance staff capabilities, overcome language and technology barriers, recruit the population, etc.) What prompted this innovation and how was this achieved?

Criteria b: Collaboration (20 points)

Describe the collaborative relationships involved in this initiative. Describe how resources are leveraged, citing all resources that are involved, including regional, state, and local supports. (Examples include: obtaining additional support and/or resources to serve this population, gaining expertise from outside organizations, pooling and combining resources across program and agencies to solve the employment and training concerns of the population including leveraging workforce investment system resources, outreach to community and faith based organizations, etc.) If direct services are involved, are they provided in a seamless manner? How is this seamless approach accomplished?

Criteria c: Performance Outcomes (25 points)

Describe how you measured the success of the effort. Describe any performance goals that were set and how they were established. Identify strategies that were established and/or efforts undertaken, beyond what is

normally expected, in order to meet those goals. How did these goals recognize the demographics of the current and future workforce and focus on positive outcomes in employment and retention for special population(s)? Describe the positive outcomes in quantitative terms. How do they relate to the overall goal(s) of the program, project or initiative? Do these goals relate to the required performance outcomes for the ETA-funded activity (i.e. are they the same or different, and how)? How did this effort improve or enhance ETA-funded program performance?

Criteria d: Linking Services to Demand Occupations, Economic Development and Community Benefit (20 Points)

Describe why this program, project or initiative is important to the business customer and/or the community. Describe the business or community challenges, issues or needs it addresses. Does the program, project or initiative address the need for talent in the regional labor market? If outreach was conducted, what was the result? (For example, identify how outreach was done to connect with individuals in the targeted population(s); work within the community to determine the target population's needs; efforts to connect the targeted populations with employers; create links with specific employer or business needs, etc.). How did the program, project, or initiative enhance the quantity and quality of services for the special population?

Criteria e: Replicability (15 Points)

Describe how this program, project or initiative is replicable. Have you replicated this program, project or initiative in other areas of your operation? How can you facilitate replication? (Examples include, but are not limited to, demonstrating the model to others; providing tools or resources that enable the model/approach to be replicated; documenting findings that can be disseminated to and utilized by others; or developing a strategy to continue a successful project.)

Category 5: Serving Out-of-School Youth

By providing out-of-school youth with experience, education and skills, we can help develop a pipeline of job ready individuals to serve the needs of business and provide youth with paths to career enhancing opportunities and productive lives. The challenge for agencies that employ a demand-driven strategic approach to serving out-of-school youth is developing programs that balance traditional methodology with “outside the box” or creative techniques to successfully match employers who need workers with young people who need jobs.

This category recognizes an exemplary program, project or initiative that employs innovative techniques for talent development and actively collaborates with business and industry and other essential partners to develop successful workforce solutions that address the education, training and hiring challenges facing out-of-school youth. The initiative should be part of a strong network of stakeholders, partners and resources and be able to demonstrate positive performance outcomes for out-of-school youth in placement, retention, earnings gained, and/or credentials obtained. This category includes, but is not limited to, WIA Youth programs.

Criteria a: Innovation (15 points)

Describe how the program, project or initiative is innovative and creative compared to traditional approaches. Identify any innovative activities that ensure that the workforce system partners connect with business, community organizations, and public and higher education systems in order to prepare out-of-school youth for career opportunities in high growth job sectors of the 21st century.

Criteria b: Collaboration (20 points)

Describe how the program utilizes linkages with different stakeholders, partners, organizations or resources, including but not limited to, partnerships with businesses, community colleges, high schools, community and faith-based organizations, non-traditional education and training programs, Job Corps, Youth Build, and Youth Corps. Describe how these partnerships promote educating, training and/or employing out-of-school youth in self-sustaining jobs, including, but not limited to: providing vital support services such as work readiness training, mentoring; transportation; child care; translation services and job coaching; raising academic standards; addressing student needs; reaching out to employers; collaborating to maximize funding; resource mapping; specialized case management for youth; managing community partners and networks; youth liaisons; or collaboration to make electronic technology tools, such as America’s Job Bank, America’s Career InfoNet, O’Net, Labor Market Information and Career Voyages tools available to

students. Describe how resources are leveraged, citing all resources or contributions.

Criteria c: Performance Outcomes (25 points)

Describe how you measured the success of the effort. In quantitative terms, how did the effort improve the placement, earnings, retention and or credentialing for out-of-school youth? How were performance goals established? Identify strategies that were established and/or efforts undertaken, beyond what is normally expected, in order to meet those goals. How do goals relate to the overall goal(s) of the program, project or initiative? Do these goals relate to the required performance outcomes for the ETA-funded activity (i.e. are they the same or different, and how)? How did this effort improve or enhance ETA-funded program performance? Does it foster long term attachment to the workforce?

Criteria d: Linking Services to Demand Occupations, Economic Development and Community Benefit (25 points)

Describe how the program, project or initiative ensures that the workforce system connects with business, public and higher education systems in order to prepare out-of-school youth for the 21st century career opportunities and skills in high growth job sectors. How does the program contribute to economic development and community betterment? If providing services, how does the service delivery model demonstrate a demand driven approach and effective engagement with the business community, education and the larger economy? Does the initiative nurture career awareness and/or career planning and readiness throughout the program? Is there a focus on soft-skills?

Criteria e: Replicability (15 Points)

Describe how this project, program or initiative is replicable. Have you replicated this program, project or initiative in other areas of your operation? How can you facilitate replication? (Examples include, but are not limited to, demonstrating the replicable model for others; providing tools or resources that enable the model/approach to be replicated; providing documentation or findings that can be disseminated to and utilized by others; or developing a strategy to continue a successful project.)