

TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT NOTICE	NO. 37-12
	DATE May 23, 2013

TO: AMERICAN JOB CENTERS
WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT (WIA) 166 AND GRANTEES
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DIRECTORS
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ETA DISCRETIONARY GRANTEES

FROM: JANE OATES /s/
Assistant Secretary

SUBJECT: Release and Availability of the Employment and Training Administration
(ETA) *Five-Year Research and Evaluation Strategic Plan Program Years
2012-2017*

1. **Purpose.** To announce the release and availability of the *Five-Year Research and Evaluation Strategic Plan for 2012-2017*.
2. **Background.** Under Section 171 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), a five-year strategic plan (Research Plan) for the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL), ETA is to be prepared every two years. This Research Plan provides a strategic vision for research efforts based upon extensive input from stakeholders, a review of recent research efforts, an identification of areas where future research may be needed, and a review of possible research methodologies.
3. **Description.** The Research Plan sets an agenda and provides guidance for ETA when planning projects for future research evaluation, demonstration, pilot, multiservice, and multistate projects. (The terms “research” and “evaluation” are used interchangeably throughout the report to refer to all pilots, demonstrations, research and evaluations, including those with multistate and multiservice characteristics). The Research Plan development process provides ETA with valuable stakeholder input to assist in identifying gaps in knowledge surrounding public workforce programs. ETA will continue to fund projects in accordance with the WIA statute.
4. **Research Plan Overview.** The Research Plan reviews recently completed research from January 2005 through late 2010. First, the research is categorized by primary funder/publisher with the emphasis on research funded by Federal and philanthropic organizations, with the inclusion of other selected research. Next, the Research Plan discusses ETA’s current research and evaluation projects that addressed the previous six key

interest priorities developed under the 2007-2012 Research Plan: 1) Integration of workforce and regional economic development; 2) Methods of expanding U.S. workforce skills; 3) Increasing the labor market participation of underutilized populations; 4) Using state-level administrative data to measure progress and outcomes; 5) Postsecondary education and job training; and 6) Unemployment Insurance.

In addition, under a grant from ETA, the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development (Heldrich Center) of Rutgers University assisted with identifying research gaps and high priority topics for workforce systems. The Heldrich Center produced a paper summarizing these efforts entitled [*Identifying Gaps and Setting Priorities for Employment and Training Research*](#). Information has been taken directly from this paper and adopted as core parts of Chapters II, III, and IV of this Research Plan.

This Research Plan is comprised of five chapters:

- Chapter I introduces the role of the Research Plan in explaining the USDOL decision-making process for identifying and carrying out research and evaluation projects.
- Chapter II identifies significant recently completed body of research and evaluation projects conducted in the years from 2005-2010.
- Chapter III identifies current and ongoing research and evaluation efforts.
- Chapter IV recommends five high priority topic areas for research within the workforce system.
- Chapter V summarizes the role of the Research Plan.

Encouraging the use of the most rigorous research and evaluation methods possible, the Research Plan recommends priority areas for research under five broad themes for the next five years:

- 1) Understanding Changing Labor Markets
- 2) Identifying Effective Strategies
- 3) Improving Workforce System Infrastructure
- 4) Addressing the Needs of Special Populations
- 5) Building Research Infrastructure and Support

Through the Research Plan, ETA will be able to identify specific projects under the priority areas, in accordance with available resources, mandates, and other criteria. In addition to ETA, the information in this Research Plan can be used by other Federal agencies, State workforce agencies and stakeholders interested in identifying research priorities that contribute to the overall body of workforce-related research.

Finally, the Research Plan includes a summary that explains that agenda setting is just the first of five phases in a sound research process, as identified by the U.S. Government Accountability Office, and expounds on other criteria that may need to be taken into consideration when prioritizing and selecting research and evaluation activities to pursue.

5. **Inquiries.** To view an abstract of this publication, as well as to download the full report as a PDF, visit the ETA Research Publication Database Web site at:
<http://wdr.doleta.gov/research/keyword.cfm>.