

READINESS AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CONSULTATION GUIDE **For the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act**

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, outlines the public workforce system's important role in helping workers prepare for and find employment, and providing work experience for youth. The Act contains many provisions for ensuring a successful implementation of effective workforce interventions. To ensure success, Federal, state and local workforce systems must be guided by four overriding principles:

1. Transparency and accountability in the use of funds;
2. Timely spending of the funds and implementation of quality activities;
3. Expanded workforce system capacity and service levels; and
4. Increased training leading to increased employment opportunities.

The first step in the process is to accurately assess workforce system readiness across key administrative and program areas and to identify Technical Assistance (TA) needs. To do this, ETA Regional Offices will conduct an assessment of all states and local areas, compile those assessment responses, and provide recommendations on technical assistance actions ETA should take to support state and local implementation of the ARRA. The objectives, methodology and timelines for this assessment are described below.

Objectives of the Readiness Tool:

- Determine the capacity of the state and local systems to use ARRA funds to significantly increase the number of workers and employers who receive ETA services, with a focus on increased training opportunities in areas such as the President's Green Jobs initiative.
- Determine if state and local systems are in place that will prevent waste, fraud and abuse from occurring with the additional ARRA funds.
- Receive feedback on implementation areas that ETA could support through Technical Assistance (TA) directly to states and through regional sessions to ensure ARRA goals are met.
- Deliver a determination that the state or local system has the capacity to manage ARRA funding – "yes" or "no" – and what level of technical assistance should be provided to get to "yes" in all key implementation areas.

How ETA Will Accomplish the Objectives:

- Assess State Departments: Use the Readiness Discussion Guide in consultation with State leaders to make a state-level evaluation of Administrative capacity with an emphasis on reporting, financial

tracking systems and communications with Local Workforce Investment Areas (LWIAs).

- o The state-level assessment will yield a determination of readiness and a catalogue of mutually agreed upon technical assistance needs. The determination will be based on states' descriptions of system enhancements (to implement ARRA) coupled with the ETA Federal Project Officer's (FPOs) first-hand knowledge of actual operations and past performance. Each state report will include an assessment for the LWIAs that compose 50% to 60% of a state's service delivery capacity.
- Assess Local Workforce Investment Areas: In consultation with State leaders, make an evaluation that will emphasize LWIA capacity to serve the increased volume with service strategies that support longer term training and education aligned with jobs and industries important to local and regional economies. The local level assessment will initially focus on the local areas (LWIAs) that receive the largest share of funds and serve the largest number of worker and employer customers. This should be roughly 50% to 60% of a state's capacity. Additionally, the smaller LWIAs may be addressed with alternative strategies such as individual conference calls to extend the coverage of the consultation. Nonetheless, all local areas along with state leaders will be made aware of and invited to participate in the Recovery & Re-employment Regional Forums where practical.
 - o The local level assessment will be more detailed as this is where service delivery happens and pressure for change is the greatest. It will be a shared state and ETA determination of readiness and a plan for state TA to the local level. It is also the likeliest area of need for technical assistance for the summer youth program and service strategy re-design.
- All reports will be in a consistent format that will include an executive summary and quick-view chart of readiness.

Timeline:

- State and Local Workforce Investment Areas Assessments will take place between April 1 and May 15.

What the Tool is not:

- The Tool is not designed to be an overall workforce system monitoring instrument.

- The Tool is not designed to collect or duplicate information that will be collected through the State Plan modification process.

Regional Recovery & Re-employment Sessions:

- Regional Offices will convene state and local area leaders in Recovery and Re-employment Regional Forums
- All state leaders and all local areas leaders will be informed and invited
- The Readiness Review will be presented at the forums.
- TA will be provided to support smooth Recovery Act implementation
- Re-employment strategies to facilitate economic recovery for workers, employers and communities will be presented
- Best Practices will be shared.

ETA Follow-up:

- The Readiness Tool and reports will continue to be used in follow-up contacts and Technical Assistance
- The Readiness Tool will be a supplement in formal monitoring of the implementation of the ARRA.