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DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

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- News Release -

**NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
 PO BOX 110, TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08625-0110**

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

Funding Available for New Jersey's Competitive Literacy Skills Grants to Train Workers in Basic Skills

Trenton, July 17, 2007 – Commissioner David J. Socolow of the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, today announced the Notice of Grant Opportunity (NGO) for Fiscal Year 2008 competitively awarded training funds to help businesses improve the basic skills of their incumbent workers.

To achieve economic success and achieve self-sufficiency, all of New Jersey's workers must be able to function at their highest potential skill levels. This competitive grant program is made possible under the New Jersey Supplemental Workforce Fund for Basic Skills, and is administered by the Office of Grants Operations (Customized Training Unit).

Beginning July 18, 2007, New Jersey employers may apply for competitively awarded Literacy Skills Grants. The New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development will set aside funds for these one-year grants from the Supplemental Workforce Fund for Basic Skills.

OVERVIEW

The New Jersey Supplemental Workforce Fund for Basic Skills (SWFBS) was

established in 2001. The SWFBS program provides funding for basic skill programs to promote adult literacy in the workplace by providing basic skills training for unemployed and employed workers. The SWFBS is funded through employer and employee assessments from payroll contributions. The SWFBS law allocates a portion of the funding for basic skills training for incumbent workers employed by businesses located in New Jersey. The incumbent worker training grants awarded from these funds are known as Literacy Skills Grants.

The New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (LWD) sets a priority on awarding grants that demonstrate clear and meaningful outcomes. The key outcomes established by LWD for literacy skills grants are wage gain, opportunities for career advancement for workers in low-wage, lower-skilled occupations and job creation. The Department continues to consider and award grant applications that focus on job retention. The applicant must provide a justification that clearly demonstrates that the proposed training in basic literacy skills will materially impact on the business decision to maintain jobs in New Jersey or avert a layoff.

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF GRANT PROGRAM FUNDS

To achieve economic success, all New Jersey's workers must be able to function at their highest potential skill levels to achieve self-sufficiency. To realize that goal, LWD is announcing the FY08 Literacy Skills Grants. This competitive grant program is made possible under the New Jersey Supplemental Workforce Fund for Basic Skills, and is administered by the Office of Grants Operations (Customized Training Unit). The intent of the literacy skills grant is to provide funding for basic skills programs to promote and improve adult literacy in the workplace for incumbent workers in low-wage, lower-skilled occupations.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

This one-year grant program is open to the following eligible applicants:

- Individual employer
- An employer organization, labor organization, or community-based organization; and
- An employer organization, labor organization, or consortium made up of one or more educational or training institutions seeking to provide training to upgrade the basic skills of incumbent workers employed in New Jersey.

The SWFBS law requires that if the company receiving financial assistance for basic skills training services relocates out of State within three years following the ending date of the customized training contract, the company must return all monies provided to the company by the State for these training services.

ELIGIBLE TRAINEES AND TRAINING

Applicants must propose training for persons employed at a New Jersey facility. All trainees must be employed or hired into permanent full-time or part-time positions working a minimum of 20 hours per week. Training is to be conducted with an employer's commitment to continue to employ all trained individuals for a period of at least six months following successful completion of training. Failure to adhere to this requirement may result in the employer's having to refund grant dollars allocated to train these workers.

Types of training potentially eligible under a Literacy Skills Training grant include:

- Training provided by qualified in-house instructors in an on-the-job or classroom based setting for literacy basic skill sets;
- Training provided in a classroom setting in partnership with a New Jersey based training provider, which includes New Jersey's two-year or four-year colleges and universities, vocational-technical schools, and other qualified training providers.
- Basic Skills Training programs are limited to reading comprehension, basic math and computer literacy, English Language proficiency, along with other work readiness skills as defined by the Work Readiness Profile (See Attachment 1). The potential courses include but are not limited to:
 - Basic Skills, English as a Second Language – Levels 1 - 2
 - Basic Skills, Work Readiness Skills
 - Basic Skills, Communications Skills/Reading
 - Basic Skills, Communication Skills/Writing
 - Basic Skills, Mathematics Skills
 - PC Introductory Skills, Windows/Operating Systems
 - PC Introductory Skills, Word Processing
 - PC Introductory Skills, Spreadsheets
 - PC Introductory Skills, E-Mail
 - PC Introductory Skills, Internet
- Training courses submitted as part of a grant application must include pre-and post-training assessment tools to measure the improvement of the trainees' skills. When applicable the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) must be utilized for the pre-and post-training assessments.

An applicant must demonstrate the impact and results of the training on business operations and identify the transferable skills acquired by employees. All courses are subject to the Department's review and approval through a Panel Review process. Priority of training should be identified by the applicant, ranking the classes in order of importance with the most critical training need listed first.

APPLICANT REQUIREMENTS

Applicants for New Jersey's Literacy Skills Training Grants for Fiscal Year 2008 **must** meet the following requirements:

A. PROGRAMMATIC

- Adhere to the general provisions of the Department of Labor and Workforce Development's (LWD) Customized Training grant agreements.
- Participating business (es) must be current on all New Jersey tax obligations.
- Provide at least a 50% match toward the total program costs; however, applicants that focus on training low-wage, low literacy level workers are encouraged to apply even if they have a lesser percentage of employer matching funds.
- Identify type of training and the training costs and hours must adhere to the cost/instructional hours allowed by the Department – not to exceed \$175 per instructional hour.
- Average cost of instruction per trainee should not exceed \$1,000.

- Training must be targeted towards low-wage workers.
- Must clearly identify the organizational needs to be addressed by the proposed training.
- Ensure that each course includes pre- and post- training assessment tools to measure improvements of the trainees.

B. TECHNICAL

- Prepare applications using the on-line Customized Training Tracking System (CTTS) with the following personal computer requirements:
 - A personal computer with Window 98 operating system or higher,
 - Internet Explorer browser, version 5.5 or higher, 128 bit cipher strength and active X enabled on the computer desktop,
 - Internet E-mail Address, and
 - A printer connected to the computer.
- Business (es) lists newly created jobs with local One-Stop Career Centers or through America's Job Exchange. Also, demonstrates a commitment to establish and maintain a working relationship with local One-Stop Career Centers to assist with the recruitment of new workers. Information about local One Stop Career Center services is available at <http://www.wnjpin.com/oscc/index.html>
- Participating business (es) must identify the number of part-time workers to be trained. If part-time workers are being trained, provide an explanation in the narrative portion of your proposal. NOTE: part-time workers must work no less than 20 hours per week.
- Must clearly identify the name and location of the approved training provider(s). For assistance in identifying an eligible training provider, visit <http://www.wnjpin.state.nj.us/coei/etpl/etpl.htm>.
- Must provide the Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) of all participating business (es) – additional information @ <http://www.nj.gov/labor/ea/eaindex.html>.
- Must provide the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code of all participating business(es) – additional information @ <http://www.census.gov/epcd/naics02/>
- Submit a narrative proposal that is consistent with the requested on-line CTTS application.

AWARD PROCESS

The Office of Grant Operations will review each completed and digitally signed application on the basis of quality, comprehensiveness, appropriateness, and demonstrated need. Applicants are reminded that the Literacy Skills Training grants are awarded through a competitive process. LWD cannot fund all applications submitted, therefore only those applications that meet the highest standards will be awarded. Grants will be awarded on a monthly basis beginning in August 2007 and ending June 2008. Business Service Representatives will be assigned to each applicant to provide technical assistance throughout the entire application and award process.

RATING CRITERIA

A thorough review of each application will be made by a review panel which will

evaluate the applications against the rating criteria listed below.

Company Information (Maximum of 20 points)

- The business (es) employs 100 or less employees.
- The business (es) is located in an area designated as a "labor surplus area" by the United States Department of Labor.
- The business (es) has not received a Customized Training Literacy grant in the prior fiscal year.

Special Points (5 points)

- Applicants utilizing training facilitated by competent instructors who are employed by an approved New Jersey based training provider on the Eligible Training Provider List.

Expected Outcomes (Maximum of 70 points)

In addition to the on-line application, each applicant should address the participating business information and training desired outcome measures listed below. Since the on-line application does not allow for narrative information, a supplemental narrative should be submitted to the assigned Business Representative. Applications will not be considered complete until the narrative information is submitted.

- How will the training focus on improving the basic skills of the trainees? Does the training address challenges confronting limited or non-English speaking workers in performing current responsibilities?
- Explain how the training will result in a wage increase for the trainees and include a timeline for wage increases to take effect.
- Career Ladder - will the training allow for advancement within the current business(es)? Explain how the training requested will allow the business (es) to promote from within based on the completion of the training.
- Explain how the training will create new jobs in New Jersey. Explain the number and timing of new hires to include the average income and job titles of anticipated new hires. Describe the procedure or process used to list newly created jobs with the One-Stop Career Centers or through America's Job Exchange.
- Explain how the training will prevent business(es) relocation outside of New Jersey.
- Explain how the training will minimize employee turnover or avert layoff or loss of jobs. The applicant should describe specific factors that would prevent these outcomes.

Special Populations (5 points)

- Does the application include training of the following: persons with disabilities, veterans, former TANF recipients or individuals released from a correctional facility?

Grant applicants should submit the narrative portion of their proposals to:
NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development
Division of Labor Planning & Analysis
Office of Grant Operations
7th Floor
P.O. Box 915
John Fitch Plaza
Trenton, NJ 08625-0915
Directions to Labor building
Parking

REIMBURSEMENT

The final contract amount will be stipulated in the contract for customized training services executed between the approved applicant for customized training services and the Department. Contracts will be awarded on a cost-reimbursement basis, with a definite start and end date. Submissions of copies of pre and post assessment results are required when grantees request reimbursement. Reimbursement may not be sought until the completion of each training course. In accordance with the general provisions of the LWD Customized Training grant agreement, reimbursement will be given for actual expenses incurred during the contract/grant period or during an approved extension. Contract awards will not exceed 12 consecutive months, and training will be monitored by the Office of Grants Operations. A formal grant closeout report will be required upon completion of the training.

SCHEDULE OF GRANT ACTIVITIES

NGO ANNOUNCEMENT:

July 18, 2007

Quarterly Technical Assistance Workshops will be held at the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, John Fitch Plaza, Trenton, New Jersey on the 13th Floor Auditorium. Please visit <http://www.state.nj.us/labor> for more information. The following dates and times have been reserved:

| <u>CTTS Enhancements</u> | | |
|--------------------------|-----------|------------|
| July 24, 2007 | 1PM - 3PM | 12PM – 1PM |
| October 1, 2007 | 1PM - 3PM | 12PM – 1PM |
| January 9, 2008 | 1PM - 3PM | 12PM – 1PM |
| April 1, 2008 | 1PM - 3PM | |

Due to limited space, please RSVP your attendance at the Competitive Literacy Skills Grants' technical assistance workshop at least 2 business days prior to the event. Contact the Help Desk and indicate your name, organization, contact information, date and time that you are interested in attending the Competitive Literacy Skills Grants' technical assistance workshop.

| | <u>Phone</u> | <u>Email Address</u> |
|------------|--------------|------------------------------|
| Help Desk: | 609-633-6799 | CTTShelpdesk@dol.state.nj.us |

Applications will be reviewed on a monthly basis beginning in August 2007 and ending in June 2008. The 2008 schedule for submission of completed applications and panel review dates are:

| <u>SUBMIT COMPLETED APPLICATION BY:</u> | <u>PANEL REVIEW (week of):*</u> |
|---|---------------------------------|
| July 26, 2007 | August 23, 2007 |
| August 29, 2007 | September 27, 2007 |
| September 26, 2007 | October 25, 2007 |
| October 26, 2007 | November 28, 2007 |
| November 13, 2007 | December 12, 2007 |
| December 21, 2007 | January 23, 2008 |
| January 21, 2008 | February 20, 2008 |
| February 20, 2008 | March 19, 2008 |
| March 26, 2008 | April 23, 2008 |

April 23, 2008

May 21, 2008

May 21, 2008

June 18, 2008

*Dates may be subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances. When feasible, any changes will be posted on the department's webpage.

PANEL REVIEW PROCESS:

All applications are subject to a Department panel review and final approval of the Commissioner of the Department of Labor and Workforce Development. Within 5 business days following the panel review date, applicants will be notified of the status of their application and any requested revisions. Upon completion of all requested revisions and re-submission of completed applications, applicants will be notified of the final determination of their request within 20 business days.

SPECIAL NOTES:

WORK READINESS CREDENTIAL

The State of New Jersey has been a major partner in the creation of a national Work Readiness Credential (WRC). The WRC is a nationally validated, portable, computer-based assessment that measures readiness for entry-level jobs. While this Literacy grant competition focuses on improving the basic skills of existing lower-wage workers, the participation of employers in the WRC is critical to ensuring that the employment future of workers is tied to a nationally-recognized skill standard. For more information on the National Work Readiness Credential and New Jersey's participation, go to: www.workreadiness.com or the NJ State Employment and Training Commission at www.njsetc.net.

CHANGES TO CTTS ONLINE SYSTEM

In accordance with Chapter 39 of Public Law 2004, enhancements to the online Customized Training Tracking System (CTTS) have been developed for online applications and grants, and will be deployed in fiscal year 2008. These enhancements will alter the look, feel, and capabilities of the application in several ways.

First, there will be an added incentive of an additional 50% wage reimbursement for classroom training provided to Qualified Employees. Qualified Employees are defined as individuals hired by the employer through a One-Stop Career Center who receive classroom training under the grant and were recipients of benefits under the state's welfare reform program, WorkFirst NJ, within the 12 months preceding submission of the application or employment date with the applicant, whichever is most recent. This incentive will be applied in addition to the total budget amount and will not factor towards the matching contribution of the applicant.

Second, an applicant will have the option to provide justification or allow the system to recalculate the overall training budget when it exceeds the 50% match requirement.

Finally, additional features added to the new online application as a result of the enhancement include:

- View App Summary Button-This feature gives summary of entire application including a budget summary. Similar to the Section 11 signing page.
- Course display- System will display the assigned course number for each course. This will help in distinguishing courses with the same categorized name.

As the deployment of the system enhancement will take place in fiscal year

2008, time will be allocated in each technical assistance workshop, identified in section **Schedule of Grant Activities**, to provide training on these new features. The deployment training will take place from 12 noon to 1 PM.

STEP-BY-STEP APPLICATION PROCESS

PREQUALIFICATION:

To apply for the grant, all applicants must express a notice of intent to apply by completing the prequalification portion of the application. For fiscal year 2008, applications will be considered for a grant on a rolling basis; however, the final submittal date for a pre-qualification will be **May 14, 2008**.

Any organization that wishes to apply for a competitive grant: Click Here. You may also access the website at https://www6.state.nj.us/labor/DOL_CCTS/ctts_welcome.html to begin the process. Review the contents of the Customized Training System Welcome Page. Before proceeding, review the General Provisions document, which is accessed by a Click Here direction on the Welcome page. All grants awarded by the Office of Grants Operations are subject to these general provisions.

Next, review the State of New Jersey Subscriber Agreement for digital certificates which is accessed by a Click Here direction on the Welcome page. A LWD staff member will work with each applicant early in the application process to install a State of NJ digital certificate on a personal computer the applicant designates as the personal computer that will be used by the applicant/grantee to electronically sign all documents in the application, agreement, reimbursement, and close out processes.

Once the review is completed, click on the Continue button at the bottom of the Welcome page. This will take you to the Customized Training Grant Program Prequalification Questionnaire. The Prequalification is a one-page online form. Enter all the data requested.

In the section of the Prequalification Questionnaire that asks for the Type of Desired Application, select **Literacy**. In the section that asks for the Primary Product or Service, specify that you are applying for a competitive literacy grant and then list your primary product or service (i.e. Competitive Literacy-Hotel Housekeeping).

Once you complete the prequalification, print a copy for your records by selecting the Print button at the end of the Prequalification Questionnaire, and then select the Submit button to submit the Prequalification Questionnaire for review by New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

Once the Department's review is completed, the Office of Customized Training will send a message to the e-mail address specified in your Prequalification Questionnaire. If additional information is required before proceeding with the application, the e-mail will contain instructions. If no additional information is required, you will receive two e-mail messages:

- The first e-mail message will contain instructions for setting up your access to the My NJ Portal as well as an authentication code you will use as part of the setup.
- The second e-mail message will contain instructions for setting up your access to the Customized Training Tracking System (CTTS) as well as a security code you will use as part of the setup.

Both steps are required and must be followed in the above order.

APPLICATION:

Once you have established access to the My NJ Portal and to CTTS, click on the Welcome to the Customized Training System link on the portal page. This will take you to the main menu screen for CTTS.

In the upper left corner of the menu screen are a series of selection boxes. If you run your cursor over the boxes, another series of boxes will drop down from the menu box you select. These are the action boxes that direct CTTS to the function you wish to perform.

From the Application select box, chose the Create/View/Modify function. This will bring you to the first section of the Literacy application. Most of the data in this section will be pre-filled with information you provided in the Prequalification Questionnaire. Complete the information in this section. Then select the Next button at the bottom of the section to move to Section Two. After you move to Section Two of the application, a staff member will be assigned to assist you in completing your application. You will receive an e-mail message providing the name, address, e-mail address, and telephone number of your designated contact person.

Technical Resource Contact Information

| | <u>Phone</u> | <u>Email Address</u> |
|------------|--------------|------------------------------|
| Help Desk: | 609-633-6799 | CTTShelpdesk@dol.state.nj.us |

Grant applicants must submit the narrative portion of their proposals to:

NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development
Division of Labor Planning & Analysis
Office of Grant Operations
7th Floor
P.O. Box 915
John Fitch Plaza
Trenton, NJ 08625-0915

Attachments

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Email: Constituent.Relations@dol.state.nj.us
