



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

317 West Main Street, Boise, Idaho 83735-0510

TRANSMITTAL # 10

MEMORANDUM

May 8, 2011

TO: Workforce Development Council
FROM: Tim Komberec, Chair
SUBJECT: Workforce Innovation Fund Grant Proposal

ACTION REQUESTED: Information Only

BACKGROUND:

In December 2011 the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) announced the availability of approximately \$98.5 million in Workforce Innovation Fund grants. The Idaho Department of Labor, with input from potential stakeholders developed a \$6 million, three-year grant application that was submitted to USDOL in March 2012 on behalf of the Workforce Development Council. The following narrative provides an overview of the grant application.

Workforce Innovation Fund Purpose:

The fund is one of several new federal grant programs in which grantor agencies support projects that seek to use evidence to design program strategies. The fund will provide grants to:

- Re-tool service delivery strategies and/or policy and administrative systems and processes to improve outcomes for workforce system customers and;
- Evaluate the effectiveness of such activities.

The solicitation outlined four requirements for innovations supported by the fund:

1. Deliver services efficiently and serve vulnerable populations, including low-income, low-skilled, and long-term unemployed adult and youth workers by helping them obtain employment, academic and industry-recognized credentials and improve their basic skills;
2. Support system-level reform that advances collaboration across workforce development, education, human services, social insurance and economic development programs;
3. Include partnerships with employers or industry sectors with existing and future workforce needs; and
4. Address how the supported innovations will be evaluated and "lessons learned" will be used to take effective practices to scale across workforce systems in other states and local areas.

Importantly, these grants are “intended to seed innovation in the regular WIA formula programs” so must meet the eligibility criteria of WIA Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth or Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service programs. Applicants are asked to clarify how regular formula funds as well as grant funding will be used to support these innovations and sustain them.

Proposal Concept, Emphasis and Goals

Issue: Job seekers remain unemployed or underemployed for extended periods of time while employers cannot find job candidates with desired skills. The department’s *IdahoWorks* job-matching system lacks an effective mechanism to identify and match the skills employers need with the skills job seekers possess. System inadequacy also blocks our ability to identify existing skill gaps, both at an industry level and at an individual business or job seeker level. Other goals include:

- Increasing employers satisfied with applicants referred by IDOL
- Decreasing time spent by employers sifting through too many unqualified applicants
- Focusing job seekers in more structured and efficient job search
- Increasing automated job search results that match the skills of job seekers
- Creating real-time labor force and industry data to help identify and address skill gaps.

Project: Enhancements to *IdahoWorks* and microsite development.

This project will enhance the state’s *IdahoWorks* job matching system by making matches based on skills sets required by the employer and possessed by the job seeker. In addition, it will develop industry specific Internet “microsites” that will promote jobs within a particular industry. The project will initially engage one industry sector (healthcare) as a pilot phase for design and development, then will expand enhancements system-wide to other industries.

Scope: Enhance the *IdahoWorks* system functionality to include:

- A compendium of technical and soft skills, education, licensing and training required by industry/occupation from which employers can select when listing jobs and by which job seekers can select when registering.
- A résumé building feature by which customers can input various occupational codes which will then match to an automated list of transferrable skills and other related occupations.
- Keyword search capacity that will scan either customer profiles or résumés in the database for employers to identify/filter applicants.
- Analytical tools/reporting capacity accessible internally and externally to provide stakeholders and policy makers real-time workforce development data.

Benefits:

- Increase in appropriate match of job seeker skills with skills of job listings.
- More employer job listings within targeted industries and at higher wages.
- Improved and increased applicant pool.
- Workforce supply and demand information/data to inform system policy makers.
- Reduced use of unemployment insurance resources.
- Increased customer satisfaction.

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