

Regional Innovation Grants (RIG) are designed to assist State Workforce Agencies (SWA) and local Workforce Investment Boards (WIB) in the development of a comprehensive and integrated Regional Strategic Plan to counteract the effects of an economic shock and to prepare the workforce to succeed in the global economy. Regionalism and asset alignment are key elements to developing a strategy for economic transformation and to provide new, well-paid employment opportunities for American workers.

Utilizing National Emergency Grant (NEG) funds, RIGs are awarded to initiate transformative regional planning. RIGs assist regional leaders in the development of a comprehensive and integrated Regional Strategic Plan, with a focus on addressing talent and economic development strategies in response to current and future economic dislocation events. RIGs build upon the conceptual framework of earlier ETA initiatives, particularly the Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) Initiative. Through these initiatives, ETA has identified critical success factors for organizing and transforming regions, which include:

- A Socially-Networked Leadership Group
- A Strong Regional Identity; Data Analysis
- Alignment of strategies across workforce development, economic development, and workforce systems; and
- Shared Resources to Implement Strategies: All sectors contribute, leverage and share resources needed to implement growth strategies.

Awards will be limited to \$250,000 for any one project for an 18 month grant period. Eligible applicants include the State workforce agencies or a multi-state agency consortium, WIBs or a consortium of local boards, and joint applications for multi-state regions.

Allowable uses of funds may include but not limited to: identifying and engaging social networks to support the proposed regional strategy, asset mapping, developing working agreements with key stakeholders, conducting a SWOT analysis, devising ongoing systems and structures in response to major dislocation events, leveraging resources, and developing a Regional Strategic Plan.

In order to apply for a RIG, applicants must meet the conditions for NEG funds. Therefore, the region must have an eligible dislocation event. Qualifying events include a significant worker dislocation or a pending dislocation; a general announcement of a significant mass layoff or plant closure; an issuance of a Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN); or an unexpected event such as a disaster, including all natural and manmade disaster events that the Federal Emergency Management Agency has declared eligible for public assistance.

