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# President's High Growth Job Training Initiative

## *Textiles to Technology: Developing a Biotechnology Workforce for North Carolina's Western Piedmont*



**Grant amount:** \$754,146

**Grantee:** Forsyth Technical Community College

**Key Partners:** Wake Forest University, North Carolina Biotechnology Center, Wake Forest University Health Sciences, Winston-Salem State University, University of North Carolina-Greensboro, Winston-Salem Chamber of Commerce, Targacept, Inc., Joblink Career Center (comprised of Northwest Piedmont Council of Governments, Goodwill Industries of Northwest North Carolina, Employment Security Commission, and Experiment in Self Reliance and Vocational Rehabilitation), and Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools

**Leveraged amount:** \$150,828 in-kind contribution from partnering businesses, educational institutions, the local Chamber of Commerce, and association representatives who serve on the project advisory board

**Location of Grant Activities:** Piedmont Triad Region, North Carolina

### **Challenge:**

North Carolina's Piedmont Triad Region has experienced a severe economic downturn due to the decline of its traditional furniture, tobacco, and textile industries, which once supported economic growth and job development in the region. Large numbers of dislocated workers in the area lack the skills they need in order to transition into careers in the region's emerging biotechnology industry.

### **Addressing the Challenge:**

Forsyth Technical Community College (Forsyth Tech) will use its recent \$754,146 grant from the ETA and \$150,828 in leveraged contributions from business and education partners to implement a biotechnology associate degree training program for the region's dislocated workers. Forsyth Tech will retrain workers who have been dislocated from declining industries so that they are qualified for employment in the emerging biotechnology field. The Forsyth Tech curriculum will focus on training laboratory technicians in biotechnology and related pharmaceutical occupations.

### **Projected Outcomes:**

- Enrolling 100 individuals per year laid-off from the tobacco, furniture, and/or textile industries in the biotech program, graduating 80% of those individuals, and increasing their earnings by 15% - 30%; and
- Placing graduates in biotechnology companies in the Piedmont Triad area, including, Targacept, Wake Forest University Health Sciences (WFUHS), Banner Pharmaceuticals, EN-CAS Analytical Laboratories and other emerging biotech companies in the region.



**EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION**  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

*Biotechnology Industry Demonstration Grant  
Announced on June 9, 2003*