

TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT NOTICE	NO. 35-11
	DATE March 27, 2012

TO: ALL STATE WORKFORCE AGENCIES
 ALL STATE WORKFORCE LIAISONS
 ALL ONE-STOP CAREER CENTER LEADS
 ALL STATE AND LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS
 ALL WIA SECTION 166 INDIAN AND NATIVE AMERICAN
 GRANTEES
 ALL DISCRETIONARY GRANTEES

FROM: JANE OATES
 Assistant Secretary



SUBJECT: Opportunities for the Workforce System to Support the Summer Jobs + Initiative

1. **Purpose.** To share with the public workforce system opportunities to support the Summer Jobs + Initiative for the summer of 2012.

2. **Background.** On January 5, 2012, President Barack Obama announced the Summer Jobs + Initiative, a new call to action for businesses, non-profits, and government to work together to provide pathways to employment for low-income and disconnected youth (16 to 24 years of age) in the summer of 2012. The Federal government and private sector joined together to commit to creating nearly 180,000 employment opportunities for low-income youth for the summer of 2012, with a goal of reaching 250,000 employment opportunities by the start of summer, at least 100,000 of which will be placements in paid jobs and internships. To view the White House Press Release on Summer Jobs + visit <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/01/05/wc-cant-wait-white-house-announces-federal-and-private-sector-commitment>.

The Administration provided a menu of options from which businesses can choose to assist low-income youth in accessing the skills and opportunities necessary to be successful in the workforce. Three key ways or “pathways” through which businesses and organizations can engage include:

- **Learn and Earn:** Provide jobs for the summer of 2012 in the form of paid internships and/or permanent positions that provide on-the-job training. Of the roughly 180,000 job commitments announced, more than 70,000 are Learn and Earn commitments.

- **Life Skills:** Provide work-related soft skills, such as communication, time management and teamwork to youth through coursework and/or experience. This includes resume writing, interview workshops, and mentorship programs.
- **Work Skills:** Provide insight into the world of work to prepare for employment. This includes job shadow days and internships.

To assist employers in ensuring quality experiences for youth, the Administration offered a key resource, *A Toolkit for Employers: Connecting Youth and Business* (Toolkit), which may be accessed at <http://www.dol.gov/summerjobs/pdf/Toolkit.pdf>. It provides step-by-step instructions designed to guide companies with options for supporting, training, and employing disconnected youth.

3. Opportunities for the Public Workforce System. The Summer Jobs + Initiative will advance its goals through the commitments of businesses across the country and through collaborative efforts between the public and private sector. While there are no new dedicated funds allocated to the U.S. Department of Labor for Summer Jobs +, many opportunities exist for the public workforce system to play an important and substantial role in facilitating its success. *(Note: for states or local areas using WIA funds to provide services to enrolled WIA Youth in support of Summer Jobs +, all existing WIA statute and regulations apply. Also, there are no specific performance or eligibility requirements for Summer Jobs + since it is not associated with any new funding.)*

Steps the system could take to support youth and businesses include:

- 1) Connecting existing WIA Youth to employers. The Administration made clear its goal to target low-income and disconnected youth for the Summer Jobs + initiative. During his announcement, President Obama said that “while young people who are currently disconnected from school or work are not contributing to our economy, we see these young people as ‘Opportunity Youth’ – because of the untapped potential they bring to the Nation.” He also emphasized the need for youth to gain important work skills and receive “social supports and access to relevant education, mentoring and training.”

The WIA Youth Program delivers an array of services to approximately 250,000 low-income youth every year, assisting them in attaining academic or occupational skills training, and preparing them for postsecondary educational and employment opportunities. State and local workforce areas are well-positioned to play a role in Summer Jobs + by helping connect WIA Youth to the initiative. The Administration will launch the Summer Jobs + Bank, a one-stop Internet search tool for youth where they can access postings for any participating employers seeking to reach them online. The tool will be available soon at www.dol.gov/summerjobs. With the information provided by the tool, WIA Youth providers could work with youth to identify “pathways” opportunities of interest and assist them in connecting with those employers.

- 2) Supporting employers serving WIA Youth. The public workforce system is designed to help employers meet their skills and workforce goals. For that reason, the system is poised to support employers in their efforts to provide “pathways” opportunities to WIA Youth. State and local workforce areas could help businesses understand the Summer Jobs + “pathways” options (Learn and Earn, Life Skills, and/or Work Skills), and work together to determine how best to accomplish the “pathways” commitments they have made.

As discussed in the Toolkit, employers are encouraged to partner with organizations that can assist with program preparation activities, such as recruiting and selecting youth, as well as providing youth with job readiness training and coaching. The Toolkit encourages employers to seek partners to support them during the work experience or internship, for example, by providing youth with coaching opportunities, and monitoring youth progress and performance. It also suggests that employers seek partners to provide wrap-around support, to act as the intermediary between youth and the company, and to provide youth with follow-up support, coaching, and assistance in placing youth in permanent part-time or full-time jobs. As the public workforce system already provides all of the services and supports mentioned through its WIA Youth program, opportunities exist for state and local workforce areas to reach out to participating businesses and to explain what support the workforce system could provide in a new or existing partnership working to achieve the goals of Summer Jobs +.

To help employers ensure that youth have meaningful work experiences and build their employability skills, workforce providers could also suggest the use of the Work Readiness Tool. The tool, found at <http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEGL/TEGL07-10a4.pdf>, provides a way for employers to evaluate youth workplace proficiency and assist youth on performance improvement. More information on ensuring youth preparation and support can be found in Training and Employment Guidance Letter 27-09 at <http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEGL/TEGL27-09acc.pdf>.

- 3) Recruiting and outreach to employers. The public workforce system closely partners with business. As such, the system has access to employers that may have an interest in participating in the Summer Jobs + Initiative but are not aware of it or do not understand how to participate. The workforce system could highlight the importance of employers engaging in this effort and ask them to commit to one or more of the “pathways” options by registering at www.dol.gov/summerjobs. Workforce providers could connect with their workforce investment board, especially with its business members, and develop employer outreach strategies. Business members of the board also could reach out to other employers with whom they have relationships and recruit them to commit to the initiative.

The workforce system is encouraged to engage employers in Summer Jobs + through direct one-on-one contact and by explaining the benefits of partnering with the workforce system, such as those mentioned above. The workforce system could also engage employers by explaining that by partnering to provide youth with “pathways”

opportunities they may positively impact their bottom line in a number of ways. Benefits include:

- Obtaining an expanded pool of qualified applicants
- Gaining a direct chance to recruit and screen potential employees
- Evaluating potential employees in work settings prior to hiring
- Developing a quick and reliable source of skilled labor
- Improving the quality of life skills in the community
- Reducing turnover of entry-level employees
- Influencing curriculum development to meet industry requirements

In addition to recruiting employers, the workforce system could also visit the Summer Jobs + Bank, once its available, to identify employers in their local area who have already committed to the initiative and determine if there are opportunities to connect WIA Youth to those employer commitments.

4. Resources. The Department of Labor created a web page, www.dol.gov/summerjobs, that provides: an overview of the Summer Jobs + Initiative; information for employers on how to make a commitment; resources on how to fulfill those commitments; information for youth on how to connect to participating employers; and links to additional resources to support both youth and employers in successfully engaging in Summer Jobs +. State and local workforce investment areas participating in Summer Jobs + could review these resources in order to assist youth and businesses when possible.

ETA will host a webinar in April of 2012 to assist the workforce system and other interested organizations in understanding opportunities for participating in the initiative, utilizing the Summer Jobs + Bank, and connecting existing job banks to the tool. The webinar will be announced and participants can register through the ETA technical assistance platform at www.workforce3one.org.

Additionally, under The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act), ETA gathered a clearinghouse of tools and resources from around the country that may be helpful to both workforce providers and employers. The tools and resources include summer youth program examples, worksite agreements, work readiness measurement methodologies, training materials for staff and worksite supervisors, guidance for monitoring worksites, as well as materials gathered from the 2009 summer youth employment initiatives implemented under the Recovery Act. The Recovery Clearinghouse can be found at <https://economicrecovery.workforce3one.org/page/home>.

5. Inquiries. Questions concerning this Training and Employment Notice should be directed to the appropriate Regional Office.