

Federal job training programs with amendments impacting service delivery under the Wagner-Peyser Act, Adult Education and Literacy Act, and the Rehabilitation Act. A number of other Federal programs are also identified as required partners in the One-Stop delivery system to provide comprehensive services for all Americans to access the information and resources available that can help in the achievement of their career goals. The intention of the One-Stop system is to establish a network of programs and providers in co-located and integrated settings that are accessible for individuals and businesses alike in approximately 600 workforce investment areas established throughout the nation. There are currently over 1,900 comprehensive Centers and over 1,600 affiliated Centers across the United States.

WIA established State and Local Workforce Investment Boards focused on strategic planning, policy development, and oversight of the workforce investment system, and accorded significant authority to the nation's Governors and local chief elected officials to further implement innovative and comprehensive delivery systems. The vision, goals and objectives for workforce development under the WIA decentralized system are fully described in the State strategic plan required under section 112 of the legislation. This State strategic workforce investment plan—and the operational experience gained by all the partners to date in implementing the WIA-instituted reforms—help identify the important “unmet needs” and latent opportunities to expand access to One-Stop by all the population segments within the local labor market.

Engagement of Faith-Based and Community Organizations Under the Workforce Investment Act

On January 29, 2001, President George W. Bush issued Executive Order 13198, creating the Office for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives in the White House and centers in the departments of Labor, Health and Human Services (HHS), Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Education (ED), Justice (DOJ). President Bush charged the Cabinet centers with identifying statutory, regulatory, and bureaucratic barriers that stand in the way of

effective faith-based and community initiatives, and to ensure, consistent with the law, that these organizations have equal opportunity to compete for federal funding and other support.

In early 2002, the Department's Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (CFBCI) and ETA developed and issued Solicitations for Grant Applications (SGAs) to engage intermediary and grass-roots organizations in our workforce system-building. These grants were designed to involve the faith-based and community-based organizations in service delivery, strengthen their existing partnership with the local One-Stop delivery system, while providing additional points of entry for customers into that system.

These 2002 grants embodied the Department's principal strategy for implementing the Executive Order by creating new avenues through which qualified organizations can more fully participate under the Workforce Investment Act while applying their particular strengths and assets in service provision to our customers. These grants also proceeded from an ETA-CFBCI mutual premise: that the involvement of community-based organizations and faith-based organizations can both complement and supplement the efforts of local workforce investment systems in providing universal access and serving the training-, job- and career-support needs of many of our citizens.

Both ETA and CFBCI are committed to bringing new Intermediary and grass-roots organizations to workforce system-building through the issuance of a new solicitation in 2003. This new solicitation draws on “lessons learned” in 2002 while introducing several “promising practices” introduced by other ETA grantees. While many Statement of Work elements in the 2002 solicitation have been preserved, the 2003 competition also sharply focuses on the ability of the Intermediary grantee and its sub-grantees to bridge the “gaps” in types of service provision and/or meeting the needs of historically hard-to-serve populations reached in the community (Note: While several of the Intermediary grantees in 2002 served multiple jurisdictions in various States, the 2003 competition focuses on the ability of the Intermediary to serve a single defined geographic area or contiguous geographic areas.) The new

solicitation also places significant emphasis on performance outcomes—documenting and quantifying the additional value the Intermediary and its sub-grantees bring to the One-Stop delivery system in the community.

Through this competition, ETA seeks to ensure that an important Workforce Investment Act tenet—universal access to the programs and services offered under WIA—is further rooted in the customer-responsive delivery systems already established by the Governors, local elected officials and local Workforce Investment Boards. ETA also reaffirms its continuing commitment to those customer-focused reforms instituted by State and local governments which help Americans access the tools they need to manage their careers through information and high quality services, and to help U.S. companies find skilled workers.

Faith-based and community-based organizations present strong credentials for full partnership in our mutual system-building endeavors. Faith-based and community-based organizations are trusted institutions within our poorest neighborhoods. Faith-based and community-based organizations are home to a large number of volunteers who bring not only the transformational power of personal relationships to the provision of social service but also a sustained allegiance to the well-being and self-sufficiency of the participants they serve. Through their daily work and specific programs, these organizations strive to achieve some common purposes shared with government—reduction of welfare dependency, attainment of occupational skills, entry and retention of all our citizens in good-paying jobs. Through this solicitation, ETA and CFBCI strive to leverage these programs, resources and committed staff into the workforce investment strategies already embodied in State and local strategic plans.

Legal Rules That Apply to Faith-Based Organizations That Receive Government Funds

The government is prohibited from directly funding religious activity.* These grants may not be used for religious instruction, worship, prayer, proselytizing or other inherently religious practices. Neutral, secular