

JOBS1ST PA REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS – A WORKFORCE/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COLLABORATIVE

Many economic development projects, whether new business development, relocations or expansion of existing facilities, include significant workforce development components. Employers often need to hire additional new or train existing employees as part of a project. Local workforce and economic development efforts within a region should be synergistic through recruitment and training programs. Governor Corbett has created the *JOBS1st PA Regional Partnerships – a Workforce/Economic Development Collaborative* to better connect Local Workforce Investment Boards and Partnerships for Regional Economic Performance (PREP) partners. This new effort will coordinate workforce recruitment, training programs, and economic development at a regional level. This increased coordination between two regional networks that represent job seekers and job creators is the mechanism by which employee recruitment efforts can be met and training programs can be developed to meet employer-demand.

Workforce development services are delivered at the local level through 22 Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs) across the commonwealth. The local boards have a majority representation from the local employer community. Each of the 23 Local Workforce Investment Areas has at least one comprehensive PA CareerLink® center where workforce development services are delivered to both job seekers and employers. PREP is the commonwealth's team of partners dedicated to work collectively to deliver economic development services. There are 10 PREP regions across the state. Funding from the commonwealth supports the PREP regions. The PREP partners collectively decide how to distribute the funds within the region.

While there is undoubtedly communication and collaboration between workforce and economic development at a local level, the *JOBS1st PA Regional Partnership* grant is intended to create or strengthen collaboration on a regional level, to increase employer engagement and to develop training programs to meet employer demand. The *JOBS1st PA Regional Partnership* effort includes the following pairing of LWIBs and PREP regions:

- Northwest PREP - Northwest and West Central Workforce Investment Boards
- Southwest PREP - Three Rivers, Tri-County, Southwest Corner and Westmoreland/Fayette Workforce Investment Boards
- North Central PREP – North Central Workforce Investment Board
- Southern Alleghenies PREP – Southern Alleghenies Workforce Investment Board
- Northern Tier PREP – Northern Tier Workforce Investment Board
- Central PREP – Central Workforce Investment Board
- Northeast PREP – Lackawanna, Pocono Counties, and Luzerne/Schuylkill Workforce Investment Boards
- Lehigh Valley PREP – Lehigh Valley Workforce Investment Board
- South Central PREP – Lancaster and South Central Workforce Investment Boards
- Southeast PREP – Philadelphia, Berks, Bucks, Chester, Montgomery and Delaware Workforce Investment Boards

A total of \$4 million is available through the Reemployment Fund. Awards will range from \$25,000 to \$500,000. Applications are due April 8, 2014 and awards are expected to be announced by May 5, 2014.