

TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT NOTICE	NO. 16-09
	DATE November 30, 2009

TO: STATE WORKFORCE AGENCIES
STATE WORKFORCE ADMINISTRATORS
STATE WORKFORCE LIAISONS
STATE AND LOCAL WORKFORCE BOARD CHAIRS AND DIRECTORS
STATE LABOR COMMISSIONERS
COMPREHENSIVE AND AFFILIATE ONE-STOP CAREER CENTER
DIRECTORS

FROM: JANE OATES /s/
Assistant Secretary

SUBJECT: Tools for America's Job Seekers Challenge

- 1. Purpose.** The Department of Labor (DOL) invites the workforce development system to participate in the Tools for America's Job Seekers Challenge (hereafter called the "Challenge"). The Challenge seeks to help jobseekers and workforce development professionals identify and use online job search and career advancement tools. The Challenge utilizes an innovative method called crowdsourcing to allow jobseekers and workforce development professionals to recommend and comment on job search and career advancement tools. The effort is a collaboration among the White House, the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA), IdeaScale.com, job-related online tool providers, workforce development professionals, and jobseekers.
- 2. References.** Wagner-Peyser Act 29 U.S.C. § 49b(a) and (c)(2)
- 3. Background.** The Challenge seeks to identify useful job-related online tools by inviting feedback from workforce professionals and the public, a methodology sometimes called crowdsourcing. The Challenge's specific approach is to first invite companies and entrepreneurs with job-related online tools to post them online at www.DOLChallenge.IdeaScale.com. Then, the workforce system and the public can test-drive the tools, comment upon them, and recommend their preferences. DOL will share highly recommended tools with the workforce development system and jobseekers, and list them on government Web sites, including www.CareerOneStop.org, www.Workforce3One.org, and www.DOLETA.gov. The goal of the challenge is to help workforce system decision-makers identify useful on-line tools so they can make them available through the national network of One Stop Career Centers. The Challenge does not constitute an official endorsement by DOL or ETA: this is not an opportunity to apply for government funding.

ETA will conduct the Challenge in three phases:

PHASE 1 (November 30, 2009 to December 18, 2009). In Phase 1, ETA will help develop an inventory of on-line job search and career advancement tools by encouraging developers to submit information on their tools at www.DOLChallenge.Ideascale.com. Although DOL is primarily interested in identifying tools that are free for the use of America's jobseekers, tools with a fee may be submitted as long as the submitting company provides a short-term demo site or other platform that allows the tools to be reviewed free of charge in Phase 2 of the Challenge. After the Challenge has been completed, the workforce development system and job seekers can decide whether to buy or license such tools. DOL will accept submissions from businesses and entrepreneurs, nonprofit organizations, and state and local workforce agencies. Participating tools will be classified into one or more of these categories:

- General job boards, listing sites, and aggregators
- Niche job boards
- Career tools such as ladders, transition tools, etc.
- Web based career exploration sites
- Web 2.0/social media sites specializing in job searches or job postings
- Other job matching and career advancement tools

Along with the tool itself, ETA will ask developers to provide basic information such as the target uses and users of the tool or product, and contact information. At their option, developers may also submit a YouTube video of their tool in action or other tool-related materials.

PHASE 2 (January 4 to January 15, 2010). In Phase 2, workforce development professionals and job seekers will test-drive the tools and recommend those they find useful. Reviewers are encouraged to recommend tools based on: 1) how effective the tool is in providing accurate results – including how well the tool reflects jobs available in its target labor market; 2) how efficient it is in completing job search and matching tasks in a reasonable amount of time; and 3) the level of satisfaction the user felt. Reviewers may recommend as many tools as they wish, and are encouraged to comment on the tools to provide more feedback on their experience with the tools.

PHASE 3 begins on January 18, 2010. In this final phase, DOL and ETA will publish the top tools in each category, allowing workforce system decision-makers to easily access the recommendations of their peers and customers. Results will be published through various means, including:

1. Announcements on key Web sites, including www.DOL.gov; www.DOLETA.gov; www.WhiteHouse.gov/blog; www.Workforce3One.org; and other sites;
2. ETA's www.CareerOneStop.org, which already offers many job-related tools, will be the principal access point for tools that rise to the top in the Challenge;
3. Webinars through www.Workforce3One.org;
4. Other communication outlets such as national associations and intergovernmental organizations.

4. Workforce System Participation. Workforce system participation is critical to the success

of all three phases of the Challenge. Many states and local workforce areas provide innovative online job tools, and ETA encourages them to enter their tools during Phase 1 to inform their peers of these tools. During Phases 2 and 3, robust participation by the workforce system benefits both the system and jobseekers. A key purpose of the Challenge is to familiarize workforce development professionals with the wide array of free and other available online tools. Peer reviews from workforce development professionals will help state labor exchange and job board managers and One-Stop Career Center managers prudently select tools for the One-Stop System. One-Stop Career Centers are a key access point to jobseekers, and therefore an excellent means to maximize their participation in the Challenge. During Phase 3, One Stop Career Centers can help jobseekers discover and use online tools to enhance their careers by communicating the results of the Challenge and making relevant tools available through One-Stop Career Centers, state job banks, and Internet-based resources at the conclusion of the Challenge.

- 6. Orientation Webinar.** ETA will host a Webinar on Wednesday, January 6, 2010 at 2:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time to explain the Challenge, discuss how to engage jobseekers in the Challenge, and to answer questions about how to recommend and comment upon tools. ETA will include instructions on how to sign up for this Webinar through www.Workforce3One.org in a subsequent invitation.
- 7. Action Requested.** ETA encourages workforce development professionals to participate in the Challenge by enrolling on-line tools developed by states and local areas, reviewing submissions, encouraging jobseekers to review tools, and by making appropriate job tools available through One-Stop Career Centers, state job banks, and other Internet-based resources at the conclusion of the Challenge.
- 8. Inquires.** Questions should be directed to the appropriate ETA Regional Office.