

**TRANSMITTAL #5**

**MEMORANDUM**

**August 13, 2012**

**TO:** Workforce Development Council

**FROM:** Roger B. Madsen, Director *Roger B. Madsen*

**SUBJECT:** Governor's Five Percent Reserve Funds

**ACTION REQUESTED:** Approval for proposed projects funded by these monies

**BACKGROUND:**

WIA legislation allows governors to reserve, or "set-aside," a percentage of the Title I formula funding to carry out statewide employment and training activities for youth, adults and dislocated workers. Besides funding required activities, governors are also given the authority to use the funding for initiatives and innovations that address state-specific needs.

Allowable activities for the Governor's WIA Reserve funds are listed in Section 134(a)(2)(B) and (3) of the WIA act and include among other items:

- Establishment and operation of a One-Stop Delivery System to provide core services including eligibility determination, outreach and orientation to information and other services available, job search and placement assistance, provision of employment statistics information including job vacancy listings and information on job skills necessary to obtain the jobs listed.
- Statewide employment and training activities, which may include the provision of capacity building and technical assistance to One-Stop operators.

The spending proposal for Idaho's reserve funds for the coming year targets the following projects to enhance WIA core services and provide training to build One-Stop operator staff capacity. The elements of the proposal were derived from a federal Workforce Innovation Fund grant application that the state did not receive but portions of which may be achieved through the use of the Governor's Five Percent Reserve during the current program year.

**Proposed PY2012 Governor's Reserve Funds Projects:**

Use approximately \$200,000 of the Governor's Five Percent Reserve funds to support enhancements to the One-Stop system that will more effectively move WIA participants towards employment, including

those currently receiving unemployment insurance benefits. The project would take a two-pronged approach.

1. Realign processes to ensure WIA participants are more effectively connected to One-Stop services:
  - a. Develop training for staff and managers to assure integration between WIA services and the Employment Services (ES), business services and Unemployment Insurance Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment programs (approximate cost - \$27,500).

The department's training unit will work with a team of workforce consultants and managers to create instructor-led and online modules. The training would be focused to both current staff needs and as a tool for orienting new employees in the future.

- b. Hire an IT contractor for system changes to update *IdahoWorks* (Idaho's automated labor-exchange system) and other online platforms (approximate cost - \$111,180)

Some examples of automation projects to be undertaken are:

- Embedding email messages with links to WIA, ES and other program services into the Unemployment Insurance claims process to assure those eligible for WIA and other programs receive appropriate services.
- Integrating social media tools to promote connection to One-Stop services.
- Streamlining tasks that involve legal requirements such as moving the department complaints system onto a SharePoint platform and screening job listings for specific phrases such as "English language required" or "door to door sales."
- Developing industry specific micro websites to increase use of the labor-exchange system by targeted high wage, high growth industry sectors and to better connect WIA participants to jobs within these sectors for which they have been trained.
- Linking occupational coding in database records for auto-fill rather than staff and employers manually selecting codes.

2. Subscribe to Help Wanted Online for a one-year pilot (approximate cost - \$61,320)

The subscription service, Help Wanted Online (HWOL), uses recent Web spider crawler technology to scrape among others: online job boards, newspapers, niche, free and local sources and aggregator sites. The results are compiled and imported into subscribers' labor exchange databases. Applying HWOL services to *IdahoWorks* is projected to increase the average number of job openings posted from around 5,500 to around 26,000, assuring greater access to job listings for WIA participants within the system.

Economic analysis tools form an extremely valuable part of the subscription as well. The HWOL series is generated by scanning 1,200 online newspapers and Internet job boards daily and collecting all the help wanted ads. Duplicate ads are removed and then identified by type according to location and standard occupational classification. The tools allow researchers to analyze and define the occupations and industries that are thriving by local geographies. This enhanced labor market

information will be used to better educate WIA participants and other job seekers of career and job opportunities in their areas.

If costs for the training development component and the Help Wanted Online implementation prove less than projected, the remaining funds will be applied to additional, much needed process improvements to the *IdahoWorks* system by the IT contractor.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends the proposed projects for funding through the Governor's Five Percent resources be approved.

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