

Pinnacle Award for Business Development Nomination

1. Award Questions

1. Contact Information of Individual Submitting Nomination

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2. Title of the project/initiative (*Please create a title if one does not currently exist*)

NextLevel Jobs Employer Training Grant

3. Provide a brief description of the innovative initiative, innovative framework, or efforts of national impact you have chosen as your primary focus for the nomination.

The Employer Training Grant (ETG) reimbursement is an innovative initiative. The ETG is one of two grants that are part of the State of Indiana's NextLevel Jobs program. Launched in August 2017, NextLevel Jobs is an initiative of the Governor's Office implemented by the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) and the Commission for Higher Education (CHE). DWD has had full responsibility of the ETG portion of NextLevel Jobs since its inception, and the results have been impressive over 16 months. The ETG was created to help employers provide occupational skill training for their employees who have been trained and retained for six months. Currently employers can be reimbursed up to \$5,000 for each newly-trained employees with a cap of \$50,000 per employer.

The training available from an ETG is specifically intended to cover middle skill, high-demand and high-wage jobs, which are the jobs that employers in Indiana most need to fill in the next few years. More than 100 occupations representing these six priority sectors are included in the ETG criteria: Advanced Manufacturing, Agriculture, Building and Construction, Health Sciences, Information Technology and Business Services, and Transportation and Logistics. Employers have the ability to utilize training providers approved by DWD or third party providers. The only requirements are that the training programs must be occupational skills training, align to an approved middle skills occupation, and be greater than 40 hours in length.

Applying for an ETG consists of completing a simple online form, which takes approximately three minutes to fill out and submit. The DWD Business Services Team receives the applications and responds within 48 hours. Within two to three business days, the employer is on the path to receiving the ETGs. Initially the employer provides a training plan, and a job description and salary range for each position. After the agreement is signed, funding is obligated. Throughout the training process, the employer tracks training invoicing. After six months, the employer submits the completed training invoice and retained employee data, and then DWD issues the reimbursement funding for reimbursement within 35 days.

4. Provide a statement of results, accomplishments, impacts and any other appropriate information that demonstrates why the nominee's efforts described in question #3 were an exceptional contribution.

Through approximately 16 months since inception, the ETG has produced some impressive results. Nearly \$14 million in funds have been obligated to more than 450 businesses across the state of Indiana. The number of workers trained thus far has surpassed 2,000. While the active businesses vary in size, the vast majority are small businesses. More than 47 percent of the active business have 50 or less employees, while nearly 42 percent have between 51 and 200 employees. Just over 11 percent have 201 or more employees. The top five jobs that have been trained by the ETG to date include nursing assistants, machinists, licensed practical nurses, plumbers and maintenance technicians. The average wage of all current jobs filled by ETG participants is \$16.54 per hour.

Of the six priority sectors covered by the ETG, advanced manufacturing has been the clear leader with almost 450 applications received. Next is health sciences with close to 300, followed by building and construction trades with just over 200. The final three are IT and business services with 120, transportation and logistics with 81 and agriculture with 14.

All in all, the response to the ETG has exceeded expectations, and the initial full funding level of \$10 million was obligated by the late spring of 2018. After a brief pause due to reaching funding limits, DWD began accepting more applications and have continued through the end of 2018. DWD expects applications for the ETG to continue to grow throughout 2019. The Indiana Governor's Office is excited by the response to the program thus far.

5. Provide samples of work including creative materials, videos, graphics, documents, plans, etc. regarding the efforts and results you outlined in questions #3 and #4.

(File limit: 10 / 10 MB limit per file)

[NextLevel_Jobs_Infographic.pdf](#)
[NLJ-Weekly_Report-12282018.pdf](#)
[Next-Level-Jobs-OnePager.7cff7b8d.pdf](#)
[Next-Level-Jobs-Rackcard.7585cb2c.pdf](#)
[Next-Level-Jobs-Roadmap.0643fa05.pdf](#)
[Next-Level-Jobs-One-Pager.pdf](#)
[Next_Level_Jobs_2c_logo_horiz.jpg](#)

6. Provide a brief description of the nominee's significant contributions in any one of the other two areas listed under "criteria" that you did not focus on above.

The framework that the ETG is built on is both innovative and unique. First, the application process was designed to be as easy and fast as possible, so as to not make it a confusing or time consuming activity for businesses who are already stretched thin. From there, the process is both personal and streamlined, giving the business the personal touch and prompt attention not often found in government-based programs.

Created by the Indiana Governor's Office, NextLevel Jobs has been implemented through a partnership between DWD and CHE. This has enabled each agency to focus on their strengths and expertise. DWD has handled the ETG from inception, and its Business Services Team has effectively communicated, managed and followed up on all applications in a very timely and efficient manner, while CHE has primarily done the same with the second grant, the Workforce Ready Grant (WRG) for individuals seeking training.

Additionally, DWD has effectively marked the availability of the ETG through webinars, live presentations and open houses to quickly get the word out to employers and allow its internal team to handle the influx of applications. The ETG's framework has enabled the program's remarkable success in less than two years.

7. Please upload a copy of the email or document with your state agency administrator's approval.

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