

# I N S T I T U T E F O R W O R K & T H E E C O N O M Y

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## Request for Qualifications

Development of Final Report on a Framework and Associated Policies Setting Forth the Role of Workforce Development for Achieving Sustained Job Growth and Improved Wealth in the Midwest

April 6, 2010

The Institute for Work and the Economy is seeking to the assistance of a qualified individual in the development on a framework and associated policies setting forth the role of workforce development in achieving sustained job growth and improved wealth in the Midwest. Persons interested in partnering on this initiative should present their credentials and billing rates to Peter A. Creticos by 5 p.m. CDT on Tuesday, April 20.

### Background

The Midwest Innovation Initiative (MI2) is a project organized by the Great Lakes Employment and Training Association, an association of local workforce development executives, and the state workforce development administrators from the Midwestern states of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio and Wisconsin. It is working in collaboration with the Midwestern Legislative Conference of the Council of State Governments, an association of state legislators from the Midwestern states plus North Dakota and South Dakota. It is funded by a grant from the Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor to the State of Minnesota in behalf of the region. The Institute for Work and the Economy provides project management.

The mission of MI2 is to:

- Identify and address the barriers preventing Midwestern states and communities from making full use of the competitive advantages of the region functioning as a single, integrated economy
- Take stock of:
  - The talent and skills of Midwesterners
  - The institutions and systems that foster the development of talent
  - The investments that we are making in our human resources
- Look forward to the region's collective future workforce needs and less on today's demand
- Assist in the development and implementation of talent-based models that foster invention, innovation, entrepreneurship and business growth in industries in which the Midwest can obtain a competitive advantage

- Support the development of agile education and job training structures
- Support efforts to integrate investments across the region to reach the critical mass needed for a virtuous cycle of self-sustaining growth
- Join with other regional initiatives to integrate workforce development with economic development efforts

The goals and objectives of the initiative are:

- Develop a research framework that deepens our understanding of:
  - The economic connections that bind together Midwest communities and states
  - The talent base of the region and the institutions and systems that support its development
  - The interplay of the state and local workforce systems with large-scale initiatives and trends in the region and global changes
  - Talent-based models that lead as well as support innovation, invention, entrepreneurship and business development
- Support the integration of workforce development and economic development in furtherance of Midwest growth by:
  - Forging and strengthening social networks connecting the region's WIRED and RIG projects
  - Furthering the development of state and local workforce leadership to help them understand and respond to shifting global, national and regional economic changes
  - Co-hosting gatherings of policy makers and opinion leaders with other Midwestern groups
  - Leveraging other resources in furtherance of this Initiative
- Identify and, where necessary, develop and publish possible policies and programs that are consistent with the goal of greater collaboration and coordination. The Initiative will not lobby for any specific policy or program.

The Initiative will produce several products and services. Over the course of the project, the Institute for Work and the Economy will commission several policy and program development-related research papers and reports on regional economic issues, the transition from automobile manufacturing to other manufacturing products and services, on talent driven development, and on regional workforce challenges, opportunities and solutions. It has and will continue to convene a series of working sessions focused on the development of new tools that will aid local and state workforce agencies in their work to grow local, state and regional economies. Finally, it will support the exchange of ideas and solutions amongst practitioners and policy makers in the region through conferences, workshops and through the initiative's website: [midwestinnovate.org](http://midwestinnovate.org).

Project for which qualifications are requested

The Institute has sponsored a series of workshops and has commissioned other work on the condition of the Midwest economy, the interdependencies that exist between states within the region, on the root causes of the overall economic decline of the region beyond those affecting the U.S. economy as a whole, and on the opportunities that may improve economic opportunity and growth in the region. The President and Executive Director is responsible for producing a report that brings together the diverse elements of this project and for articulating a framework

that sets forth the actions workforce development may take in driving greater job creation and growth in overall wealth. This report is expected to:

1. Specify the basis for collective economic action by states and communities in the region;
2. Acknowledge and specify the circumstances where individual action is constructive and describe the methods for undertaking constructive actions;
3. Provide a roadmap and describe the role for workforce development in the process of sustainable job creation;
4. Specify the conditions and strategies that lead to wealth creation (emphasizing innovation and entrepreneurship);
5. Describe the tools that are available or should be developed for:
  - a. Monitoring current economic conditions and for predicting future conditions under various economic scenarios
  - b. Understanding the interdependencies among states
  - c. Predicting occupational demand and supply
  - d. Determining the skills characteristics of local labor markets
6. Set forth a practical course of action that may be undertaken by states and local areas.

The Institute is seeking the assistance of a qualified individual with not fewer than five years of experience in workforce development research and policy formulation, who has an excellent working knowledge of federal, state and local workforce operations in the Midwest, who has good writing and organizational skills, and who has a demonstrated ability to conceive of and develop non-traditional approaches to workforce policy and practice.

The project will commence on April 21 and conclude on July 15. The project will require a commitment of no more than one half full-time equivalent and in no case more than \$10,000 in billable time. The successful candidate will be an independent consultant on the project and will not be an employee of the Institute. Out of pocket expenses, including any travel authorized by the Institute, will be paid separately and will not count towards the maximum of \$10,000. Those interested in providing consultative services should submit their qualifications, an estimate of the time that they can spend on this project and hourly rates. The due date and time for such submissions is 5 p.m. CDT, April 20, 2010.