

Application and Selection Criteria

A total of six state teams will be selected to participate in the Academy. Up to four of these states will be selected this fall. States interested in competing this fall must submit applications by **September 16, 2002**. States will be notified of their selection in October 2002.

Should an incumbent Governor in a selected state lose in the upcoming fall election, the new Governor will be asked to affirm the state's commitment to the initiative or take the opportunity to withdraw from the academy.

Due to the large number of governors up for election this fall and with twenty-one governors leaving office, states with newly elected Governors will be invited to apply for participation in the Academy during the spring of 2003 when two or three additional states will be selected to participate.

Selection Criteria. States interested in competing in the in the fall of 2002 are asked to submit an application by **September 16, 2002** that addresses the criteria listed below. The application should be no more than five pages long and must include a letter of interest/commitment from the Governor.

- **State's goals and objectives for participating in the Academy.** What does the state expect to achieve from participation in the Academy and how will the state assess its progress in achieving its goals and objectives?
- **Demonstrated commitment to change and readiness to benefit from the Academy.** To what degree has the state demonstrated a commitment to change by implementing innovative policies that address the challenges and actions outlined for this project?
- **Key Stakeholder involvement and coordination with other similar initiatives.** How does the state propose to engage and ensure genuine participation of key stakeholders, including employers, unions, nonprofits, and education and training providers at the state and community levels?
- **Demonstrated commitment to participate in the Academy.** What is the commitment to provide team leadership from the Governor's office and for full participation of the state's team members in three Academy meetings, learning networks and up to three NGA team site visits.
- **Breadth, depth, and influence of the proposed state team.** What evidence is there that the state team consists of high-level officials that have authority over key programs and have established relationships with critical decision-makers like the Governor and state legislators?

For more information and to receive an application packet, please contact: Martin Simon, NGA Center for Best Practices at (202) 624-5345 or email: msimon@nga.org

State Policy Academy on Creating the Next Generation of Workforce Development Policy

A New Initiative for States by:

The NGA Center for Best Practices
Employment and Social Services Policy
Studies Division

Academy Overview

The National Governors Association Center for Best Practices is launching an important new initiative to assist Governors and their policy advisors advance workforce policies to keep employers, job seekers, workers, and communities prosperous and competitive in the global, knowledge-based economy. Through the **Next Generation Workforce Development Policy Initiative** state teams from up to six states will be selected to participate in a policy academy to develop and test new strategies for improving state workforce development systems. Through the Academy, states will share lessons learned with other states and have an opportunity to advance broader policy and system reforms.

Challenges in Building a Skilled Workforce

States and communities face major challenges in preparing U.S. workers for high-skill, high-wage employment. The rapid pace of economic change demands that states accelerate their response in creating a skilled workforce. Key challenges include the following:

- Many state workforce systems do not reflect market needs.
- Public education is falling short in preparing individuals for the new economy.
- Workers must navigate a more uncertain career path.
- Many low-wage workers need work supports to advance.
- Effective governance and accountability structures are missing.

State Policy Actions

Governors can provide leadership in achieving a more effective workforce development enterprise by implementing key policy changes that address the challenges to building a skilled workforce. Outlined below are six policy changes that states must address.

- Connect workforce development to economic needs.
- Build a stronger education pipeline to Produce skilled workers.
- Expand opportunities for continuous learning.
- Enhance workers' ability to manage their careers.
- Strengthen work supports to promote employment retention and career advancement.
- Strengthen governance and accountability in the workforce system.

Structure of the Academy

Academy Meetings. An academy is a highly interactive and iterative team-based process for crafting policy strategies and solutions to complex policy challenges. This Academy involves three 2-day meetings of participating state teams at which team members will:

- work intensively with their state's own team members to explore issues and solutions in-depth,
- engage in cross-team analysis and critiques of policy proposals, and
- have access to a "faculty" of national and state policy experts.

Academy meetings are structured to provide opportunities for cross-state exchange of ideas and strategies, time for individual state team work sessions and opportunities for state teams to consult with academy faculty.

Staff of the NGA Center and university partners will serve as faculty for the Academy, with other experts brought in, as appropriate. In addition, they will provide the state teams with ongoing consultation and technical support through cross-state learning networks and site visits.

Cross-state Learning Networks. In addition to the academy meetings, NGA and the university partners will support a series learning networks that will be created around issues of particular concern to the participating states. The learning networks will generally involve a subgroup of the participating states that have identified a common issue to resolve by working together outside of the regular academy meetings. States will have the option to participate in one or more networks over the two-year duration of the academy. Networks may be formed at different times throughout the course of project based on state interest and will last as long as states find them useful.

Site Visits. The three Academy meetings and learning networks will be supplemented by site visits to each state by NGA project team and other outside experts. The site visits will provide further opportunity for teams to undertake in-depth analysis of the current status of the state's workforce and policies, learn more about specific policy options and strategies, address specific issues that the team has identified as a priority, and consider implementation challenges and barriers. Each selected state will receive an initial site visit by the NGA project team and follow-up visits following the academy meetings.

Cross-agency Teams. A critical feature of the Academy process is a strong cross-agency state team. Therefore, states selected to participate in the Academy will be required to assemble a cross-agency team of executive level policy advisors from the Governor's office and state agencies to include such areas as workforce development, welfare, secondary and post secondary education, and economic development. States also are encouraged to include representatives from local government and the private sector on their team.