# EMPLOYER TRAINING INVESTMENT PROGRAM – MULTI-COMPANY COMPETITIVE GRANT

## FISCAL YEAR 2010

**July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010**

**MANAGED BY THE**
**VALLEY INDUSTRIAL ASSOCIATION**
**www.VIAassn.org**

**ADMINISTERED BY THE**
**ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY**
**www.ildceo.net**

Valley Industrial Association

## February 2010

## Grant Overview

The Employer Training Investment Program (ETIP) is a training grant program sponsored by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) that was established to help Illinois employers remain competitive by upgrading their employees' skills to meet the changing needs of the market place. Funds are allocated to eligible organizations, such as the VIA, who is responsible for administering the program within DCEO guidelines.

This is the 17th year that the VIA has participated in the grant program. With the FY09 grant process still underway as of the end of February 2010, what VIA currently projects is that 45 VIA Member companies will receive $272,637 in reimbursement for training their employees on new and improved ways of performing their jobs. The program reimburses companies up to 50 percent of the cost of eligible and approved training programs.

The State allocates these funds with the intent of assisting Illinois-based companies to become more competitive, efficient and to assist their efforts in expanding into new markets with the long-term goal of improving the economy and job market in Illinois.

The VIA is proud to continue it's tradition of facilitating this program and assisting our member companies in training their employees for the demands of the global marketplace.

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## Section 1: Contact Information:

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VIA website: www.VIAassn.org
Illinois DCEO website: www.ildceo.net

## Section 2: Eligibility Guidelines

### A. Company Eligibility:

To be eligible to apply, the company must be:

- a current, dues-paid VIA member
- a manufacturing or distribution company
- an Illinois-based company
- provide required documentation within established timelines

*Per state guidelines, the following organizations are not eligible to participate in the ETIP program: retail establishments, consulting or professional services, training providers, service industries, nonprofit organizations, units of local, municipal, county, state or federal government.*

### B. Trainee or Employee Eligibility:

- Employees must be full-time, regular employees.
- Employees must be based in Illinois.

*Training for part-time, seasonal, temporary or contractual employees is not eligible.*

### C. Number of Trainees Per Class:

There must be at least two people in a class for the training to be eligible for reimbursement. One-on-one training is NEVER eligible for reimbursement.

Companies may send one (1) employee to an outside training class as long as there are at least two (2) participants in the class.

## D. Training Eligibility Guidelines:

*For a detailed list of training titles by category, go to page 14 of this booklet.*

### I. Job related training only:

Companies must demonstrate that the new skills and/or knowledge gained through the training are directly related to the work performed by the employee participating in the training.

### II. Eligible training time frames:

Training must be started and completed between July 1, 2009 and June 30, 2010.

### III. Eligible training categories:

1. **Information Technology/Computer Skills**
   Training that develops computer competency and knowledge. Examples are Solid works, Excel, computer numerical control, web-design and system wide computer upgrade training.

2. **Quality/ISO/Organization & Management/Safety**
   - Training that introduces or improves quality processes into the workplace. Examples include: total quality management concepts, quality auditing, cycle reduction, bench marking and quality certifications.
   - Training on implementing ISO programs into the company. Examples include: ISO documentation, Auditor Training, how to produce an ISO manual.
   - Training on the concepts and practices for good supervision and management. Examples include: facilitating successful meetings, leadership and train the trainer.
   - Training of employees in skills necessary to enable the company to establish, maintain or expand into new export markets.
   - Training that increases knowledge and/or skills related to an employer's regulatory requirements. Examples include: OSHA, accident prevention, chemical hazards and waste disposal.

3. **Technical or Specialty Workplace Skills**
   Training to increase knowledge and/or skills related to employees' job-related technical requirements or training associated with new, improved, modified or upgraded equipment and processes.

4. **Electronic Media**

Training conducted through cable, network, closed circuit television, distance education telecommunication, Internet or video.

5. **Published Materials**
   Workbooks or other training materials purchased from external vendors to conduct training.

## IV. Ineligible Training Categories

*The following training is **not eligible** for reimbursement:*

- *Basic and/or remedial training*
- ***Internal Training***
- *Credit or degree courses*
- *Non-job related training*
- *Consulting services*
- *Consulting in strategic planning services*
- *One-on-one training*
- *New hire orientation*
- *Executive coaching*
- *Outdoor ropes or experiential training programs*
- *Self-paced training*
- *Sales training*
- *Apprenticeships*
- *Personal development (G.E.D)*
- *Non-skill related assessments*
- *Educational degree programs*
- *Human resource practices:*
  *Administration and compensation systems*
  *Recognition systems*
  *Interviewing*
  *Diversity*
  *Employee discipline/termination*
  *Performance appraisals*

## V. Types of Training Allowed:

- External Trainer
- Classroom Training
- Seminars
- Workshops
- Materials

## E. VIA Eligible Program Reimbursements:

Only five of the ***Seven Seminars for Effective Supervisors*** classes offered by the VIA are eligible for the grant. Therefore, even though your company pays $595 for the program, only $425 is eligible for the 50% reimbursement under grant guidelines for a reimbursement amount of $212.50.

ISO Auditor Training, another VIA offering is also eligible.

## F. REIMBURSEMENT REQUESTS:

### I. Company prepayment:

Companies must pay all expenses to outside vendors before submitting the training for the 50% reimbursement through the grant.

### II. Submitting training to multiple grant programs:

Training submitted to the VIA for reimbursement through the grant, must not be submitted to other sources for additional reimbursement.

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| **Companies must ALWAYS pay at least 50% of the training costs.** |

### III. Minimum reimbursement request—*Waived for 2010*:

The minimum reimbursement request amount for an individual training class is **$300**. Reimbursements of less than $300 with a corresponding reimbursement of 50% or $150, cost more to process than funds received when considering the time spent by the submitting company, the VIA and the DCEO staff.

### IV. Actual training expenses only:

Expenses related ONLY to the actual training session are eligible for reimbursement. The following are eligible:

- External vendor fees for presenting the training
- Fees charged for attending outside training sessions
- Purchased Materials to conduct training

## V. Ineligible Expenses:

*The following expenses are not eligible for reimbursement:*

- ***Internal Training***
- *Travel or lodging expenses for either the trainee or the trainer*
- *Fees or costs associated with pre-training*
- *Curriculum development*
- *Trainee wages and fringe benefits*
- *Refreshment or meal costs*
- *Job design and job analysis assessment/activities (Work Keys)*
- *Assessments of internal systems or company culture*
- *Fees associated with testing or certification exams*
- *Sales tax incurred in the purchase of training materials*
- *Non-skill related assessments*
- *Any item that can depreciate in cost, such as the purchase of equipment.*

# Section 3: Grant Fund Allocation Process:

## A. Factors used in determining your grant allocation:

The DCEO and the VIA share the goals of providing funding to as many of our member companies as possible along with training the greatest number of individuals. In addition, the DCEO has stated that the purpose of this program is to assist companies in preparing their employees for the ongoing and future demands of the marketplace.

To that end, the DCEO favors, but does not limit to, the following types of training:

- response to new or changing technology
- training related to the introduction of more efficient technologies
- total quality management or continuous improvement
- regulatory compliance that is mandated for the workplace
- training of employees in companies that are expanding into new markets or expanding their exports from Illinois.

The VIA considers all the following criteria when determining each company's allocation:

- amount of grant allocation received from the state
- dollar amount the company requested on the application form
- the organization's history of timely and thorough submission of grant paperwork
- number of individuals proposed to be trained
- the type of training being conducted

- the cost effectiveness of the training
- number of employees in the company
- total amount of funding requested by all companies

**B. <u>Notification of allocation:</u>**

The grant application is due March 12. VIA will notify companies if and when an allocation is announced. Any funds received will be divided among member companies using the factors outlined above.

You will be notified of the amount of your allocation in an *Allocation Acceptance Letter*. This letter is sent after the VIA receives notification of our grant award.

**C: <u>Using less than your allocation:</u>**

If you discover that you are not going to be able to use all the grant funds allocated to you, contact the Grant Manager immediately. It is imperative that the Grant Manager be notified as soon as possible so the funds can be reallocated to another organization.

**D. <u>Missing grant deadlines:</u>**

The VIA has timelines it must meet in managing the grant funds allocated to us by the DCEO. It is critical in meeting these guidelines for FY10 because of the compressed implementation timeline.

**Companies that do not meet the established deadlines, risk losing all or part of their grant allocation.**

Funds from delinquent companies may be reallocated to those organizations that have been submitting their reimbursement paperwork in a timely basis.

**E. <u>Allocation of extra funds:</u>**

Allocated grant funds become available when a company is not able to utilize all the funds allocated to them or companies fail to meet grant paperwork submission deadlines. These funds will be reallocated to other companies.

Each *Allocation Acceptance Letter* contains a section where you may indicate if your organization would be able to utilize extra funds over what you were allocated. This information will go into a database and you will be contacted if extra funds become available. If you become aware of a need for extra funds after you have submitted the *Allocation Acceptance Letter*, notify the grant manager by email of your ability to use extra funds.

## Section 4: General Guidelines for Participation:

### A. Steps for participating in the grant program:

1. Complete and return the Application Information by FAX on or before Monday, March 8, 2010 by noon.
2. VIA will notify applicant companies upon notification by DCEO.
3. You will be sent an *Allocation Acceptance Letter* stating the amount of your allocation and outlining the terms of accepting the grant funding.
4. You sign and return the *Allocation Acceptance Letter*.
5. You conduct and pay for the training.
6. You submit required post-training reports and documentation to the VIA within established timeframes.
7. If you have been notified by the Grant Manager of any errors or omissions in the submitted grant reimbursement paperwork, you must submit the corrections within by the deadline specified.
8. After approval of your reimbursement request, your reimbursement check will be mailed to your organization.
9. After submission of your final grant reimbursement request, complete and return the Customer Satisfaction Survey.
10. Complete and submit the employee retention report, by the specified deadline.

### B. Grant program timeline:

| | |
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| February 25, 2010 | Grant information meeting |
| Noon, March 8, 2010 | Submission deadline for application information |
| Date TBD | VIA notified by DCEO of our grant funding for |
| Within next 7 days | *Allocation Acceptance Letter* mailed to you |
| Date TBD | All grant reimbursement paperwork due |
| Date TBD | Employee Retention Report due |

### C. Reimbursement paperwork deadlines:

It is beneficial to submit the grant reimbursement as soon possible after the training has been completed. However, we cannot accept reimbursement paperwork before we are notified by the DCEO if we have received grant funding for the year.

We recommend completing the required paperwork on FY10 and holding it in a file until the *Allocation Acceptance Letter* is received. You may then submit the reimbursement paperwork along with the signed copy of the *Allocation Acceptance Letter*.

If you are having difficulty meeting any deadline, contact the Grant Manager.

## Section 5: Forms

### A. Where to find the forms:

All forms are in Excel format and are available at the VIA website at http//www.VIAassn.org under ETIP Training Grant Program. Access the files and download them to your computer.

### B. Completing the paperwork:

All grant reimbursement requests must be completed in the Excel Spreadsheet format.

### C. Paperwork retention requirements:

Grant guidelines require that participating organizations maintain copies of the grant paperwork submitted for reimbursement for four years from the end of the grant year (June 30). The DCEO retains the right to audit grant records for a period of four years after the end of the grant year.

The DCEO conducts an audit of the grant reimbursement paperwork every year. During this process, the grant auditor may request additional documentation from participating companies and companies must provide this information within 10 business days.

### D. Errors and omissions:

Once a company has been notified by the Grant Manager of any errors or omissions in the submitted grant reimbursement paperwork, the corrections must be submitted within two weeks from the date of notification.

### E. Overview of instructions:

*Detailed instructions on how to complete the paperwork is provided in the instructions included with the forms and are available on the website.*

**Accurate and thorough completion of this paperwork is required to meet the requirements issued by DCEO for eligibility for grant funds.**

## I. Application forms:

Completing the application forms requires that you have planned out the training you are going to conduct for the upcoming year. These forms are used to determine company eligibility to participate in the grant and to allocate grant dollars to individual companies.

## II. *Allocation Acceptance Letter*:

This letter will be sent to you and contains the dollar amount you were allocated for training reimbursement for fiscal year 2010 through the VIA – ETIP program. It also reviews the basic requirements for grant participation.

## III. Large Allocation - Additional Requirements

- Companies that receive a grant allocation of $10,000 or more may be required to complete additional paperwork at the request of DCEO.

## IV. Mega training – Additional Requirements

- Companies that receive a grant allocation of $10,000 or more may be required to complete additional paperwork at the request of DCEO.

## V. Reimbursement forms:

An Excel spreadsheet must be completed for each training program submitted. For each training program, you will need to provide the following information; incomplete forms will be returned:

- **ETIP Cover sheet:**

A summary of the training program, including a description of the training, cost and number of trainees participating in the training event is reported on this form. *(Why is this needed? Provides necessary information to track and process the reimbursement request. Provides the information required by DCEO on how this training is helping the organization and the employees prepare for the future.)*

- **Participant list:**

A list of the names of all employees participating in the training and information on whether they are new hires or upgrades. New hires are defined as anyone hired on July 1 or after. All employees hired prior to July 1, are considered to be upgrades.

- **Attendance sheet:**

The names and signatures of all participants in the training.

*(Why is this needed? This information serves as verification that the training took place and the number of people who participated in the training.)*

If you use a different attendance sheet than the one provided, this statement **MUST** appear on the form:

*This training is partially funded by the Employment Training Investment Program Multi-Company Competitive Component Grant administered by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO).*

***You must provide a plan for informing employees that received training during FY10 of DCEO's underwriting of a portion of the training that they've already received.***

- **Vendor invoice/receipt:** (needed for external training only)

Must include the name of the vendor, name of training, date of training and cost of training.

*(Why is this needed? Proof of the cost and that employee/s participated in the training.)*

- **Proof of payment:**

Must have an invoice with zero balance from external trainer, canceled check, accounts payable record of payment print out or some other indication that the training has been paid.

*(Why is this needed? Proof that your organization paid for the training.)*

The paperwork requirements are extensive, but it is necessary to confirm that the funding is being used as within the guidelines established by the DCEO. The Excel spreadsheets have been developed to ease the process as much as possible.

## Section 6: Frequently Asked Questions:

1. *How does the VIA maintain confidentiality of the submitted records.*

The VIA is very diligent in maintaining the confidentiality of the information submitted. We understand the responsibility of protecting the information provided to us. The records are retained in a locked storage facility for five years and then shredded. The DCEO also takes every precaution to protect the confidentiality of the information submitted to them.

2. *Why is there so much paperwork?*

The paperwork is required to prove that the training took place and was paid for by the company. Again, each of these steps is required to fulfill grant-reporting requirements and to ensure the funds are being used properly.

*3. Why can't I just submit one reimbursement request for all the training conducted throughout the entire year?*

The reimbursement paperwork needs to be submitted as training is conducted to allow the VIA to submit the required reports. In addition, it is important that the Grant Manager ensure that all funds will be spent which is impossible to accurately monitor when reimbursement requests are not received until the end of the grant cycle.

4. *Do I have to complete the forms in Excel format and return them by mail?*

Yes. This system allows for us to import the data directly from the spreadsheets into the grant tracking system. This will greatly reduce data entry errors and reduce the processing time.

5. *Do I have to photocopy the invoices or sign-in sheets?*

Scanning and/or photocopying the original documents submitted is a requirement. If your organization does not have scanning ability, you may fax or mail sign-in sheets, invoices or copies of checks to the Grant Manager. Training documents must be submitted in sets by class.

6. *Why can't I submit reimbursement paperwork before I receive the Allocation Acceptance Letter?*

Until we receive this information, it would be impossible for the VIA to let you know how much funding you will receive. You may submit reimbursement paperwork as soon as you receive your *Allocation Acceptance Letter* which will be sent to after the DCEO notifies the VIA on the amount of the grant allocation for Fiscal year 2010.

7. *What documents can I use for Proof of Payment?*

Canceled checks, invoices that show a paid up $0 balance, credit card statements and corresponding proof that the credit card statement was paid. Statements showing detailed check payment information from your accounts payable system is acceptable. HOWEVER, it is possible that during the annual audit of accounts, that you may then be asked to provide copies of actual canceled checks