



Request for Proposals: Growing, Attracting, and Retaining Talent in the Wired65 Region

In the 21st century global economy, talent is the most important economic development tool we have. Twenty-six counties -- 19 in Kentucky and 7 in Southern Indiana -- have united as a region to better integrate economic and workforce development activities and support the growth, attraction and retention of talent. This work is funded by a \$5 million federal grant initiative called Workforce Innovations in Regional Economic Development (Wired) awarded to the Commonwealth of Kentucky in 2007. Additional information may be found at www.wired65.org

In 2008, the initiative invested in an asset mapping process that outlines the economic and workforce development-related challenges facing this region. Now, Wired65 administrators and partners are soliciting proposals for projects that offer new ways to develop, retain, and recruit talent with the skills and flexibility to meet the needs of current and future employers. There are worker shortages predicted nationwide due to baby boomers reaching retirement age over the next few years. As worker shortages loom in many regions of the country, the recruitment of companies has taken a backseat to the recruitment of skilled workers. With a population that is generally older than the nation, the Wired65 region will experience this to an even greater degree. If we are to generate economic opportunity in our region, we have to *retain* our best and brightest, *develop* our new and incumbent workforce, and make sure we are a magnet to *attract* talent from outside the region. It is not enough to do only one or two -- we must do all three.

In this first investment process, Wired65 is seeking project proposals that respond to one or more of the priority recommendations articulated in The TIP Report: Wired65 Regional Competitiveness Strategy. The recommendations are: Fix the Pipeline, Prepare for 21st Century Jobs, Create a Talent Magnet, Invest in Priority Sectors, and Focus on Quality of Place.

- **Fix the Pipeline:** We will consider investments in projects that focus on smoothing transition points within the P-20 education system, and focus on making learning relevant to growth industries or making the connection between education, income, and prospects for the future (Please note that federal Wired rules require Wired65 to seek approval before funding activities that serve youth under

the age of 16). We also encourage applications for projects that provide meaningful summer jobs, informed career counseling, and individualized and engaging coursework, and/or project career-focused experiences.

- **Prepare for 21st Century Jobs:** We will consider investments in projects that provide cutting-edge vocational training in high school, or better alignment of postsecondary programs with the needs of local business. We are also seeking creative, sustainable solutions to incumbent worker training and skills development and projects that promote private sector investment in workers' education. Finally, projects that provide alternative academic and training offerings that better match the time constraints of working students and help them navigate the complex process of enrolling, transferring credit, and finding financial aid will be considered.
- **Create a Talent Magnet:** We will consider investments in projects that strengthen the region as a world-class destination for higher education by promoting collaboration among the region's educational and research assets.
- **Invest in Priority Sectors:** We will consider investments in economic and workforce development projects that strengthen the region's priority sectors through targeted workforce training or recruitment. The region's priority sectors are Health Enterprises; Life Sciences; Transportation, Distribution and Logistics; Human Resource Management; Energy Technologies; Advanced Manufacturing; Agriculture; Entrepreneurship; and Tourism.
- **Focus on Quality of Place:** Projects that address one or more of the previous components and take a broad, regional view that utilizes the region's quality of place as a recruitment and retention tool for knowledge workers will be considered.

This RFP responds to key research findings about current (and projected) workforce and skills needs in the Wired65 region. These findings are outlined in The TIP Report, which provides additional detail about these priority recommendations. A copy of the full report may be found at www.wired65.org.

Investment Criteria: Regional Partnerships and Funds Leverage

We will consider investments in innovative projects in the 26-county Wired65 region, made up of Adair, Breckinridge, Bullitt, Carroll, Grayson, Green, Hardin, Henry, Jefferson, Larue, Oldham, Meade, Marion, Nelson, Shelby, Spencer, Taylor, Trimble and Washington counties in Kentucky and Clark, Crawford, Floyd, Harrison, Jefferson, Scott and Washington counties in Indiana.

The purpose of Wired65's investments is to further regional cooperation while testing new, innovative ideas that further the recommendations outlined in The TIP Report and result in systemic change on a regional level. Therefore, multi-county partnerships are essential. We will consider, but are not limited to, investments in existing projects.

Highly desirable projects are those that:

- Leverage additional funds;
- Offer sustainability beyond the Wired initiative, and;
- Include private/public partnerships

All projects should propose specific measures and targets that align with The TIP Report. Finally, this is a federal program limited by H-1B funding requirements found at www.wired65.org. Awards are contingent on the availability of funds and all funds must be obligated by June 30, 2010.

The following investments will not be considered:

1. Product R&D
2. Public Infrastructure Improvements
3. Inventory Acquisition
4. General business capitalization or expansion even though these activities may result in the creation of new jobs

The Types of Wired65 Investments

Wired65 will make two types of investments:

- **Quantum Fund Investment**: The purpose of the Quantum Fund is to drive significant, systemic change in the shortest, realistic time period. A Quantum Fund project will have a wide regional impact and quantifiable measures that align with The TIP Report. An investment of \$2.5 million in Wired65 funding will be made available to one transformational Quantum Fund project.
- **Catalytic Fund Investments**: The purpose of the Catalytic Fund is to test ideas, start projects and/or expand current projects that result in smaller scale, yet significant change. Projects receiving Catalytic Fund investments should have the potential to expand, be replicated or result in other projects with longer lasting effects. A total of \$1 million in Wired65 funding will be invested in multiple Catalytic Fund projects. Individual investment requests may range from \$5,000 to \$100,000.

Selection Process

Project proposals will be reviewed by the Wired65 Project Review Team, which consists of representatives from Wired65 workforce regions and members of the Wired65 Leadership Team. The Review Team will make investment recommendations to the Lincoln Trail Workforce Investment Board and the Commonwealth of Kentucky, which will make final selections.

How to Submit a Proposal

A proposal template and a copy of the Scoring Criteria, which is used to evaluate proposals, is attached to this document.

Pre-proposals are required for Quantum Fund submissions. Pre-proposals should address each content area listed below in five pages or less. **Quantum Fund pre-proposals are due by 4:00 PM on Monday, May 11, 2009.** Wired65 staff will review the pre-proposals and provide feedback no later than Monday, May 18, 2009. **Final Quantum Fund proposals are due by 4:00 PM on Thursday, June 4, 2009.**

Catalytic Fund proposals are due by 4:00 PM on Wednesday, May 20, 2009. Final award decisions for Quantum and Catalytic Fund investments will be made by June 16, 2009.

Mail one original, signed and unbound proposal to Debbie Wesslund, Project Director, Wired65 c/o Lincoln Trail WIB, P.O. Box 604, 613 College Street Road, Elizabethtown, KY 42701. The mailed copy must be postmarked by the deadlines specified above.

In addition, send one electronic copy to dwesslund@ltadd.org. The electronic copy must be received by 4:00 PM on the appropriate due date listed above.

Bidder's Conferences

Bidder's conferences will be held in Louisville and Elizabethtown on the dates listed below. Attendance is not required.

Wednesday, April 29, 2009: Two sessions, 10:00 am and 1:30 pm, in the Lincoln Trail Area Development District's (LTADD) Board Room, 613 College Street Road, Elizabethtown.

Thursday, April 30, 2009: Two sessions, 10:00 am and 1:30 pm, KentuckianaWorks, 410 W. Chestnut Street, Louisville. Basement meeting room. Enter off of 4th Street, just north of Chestnut Street.

For more information, go to www.wired65.org. If you have questions, please email Debbie Wesslund, Project Director, dwesslund@ltadd.org. Questions received via email and at the Bidder's Conferences will be answered within 48 hours and will be posted on the Wired65 Web site.

Proposal Content

Proposals for Catalytic and Quantum project investments should include the following:

1. Contact information
2. The opportunity: Briefly describe the opportunity and why Wired65 should invest in this proposal.
3. The purpose and metrics: Clearly describe the purpose of this investment and what would constitute a successful outcome. Please outline how Wired65 will measure the success of this project.
 - Traditional workforce metrics, including number of individuals that begin or complete training, attain a degree or certificate or are placed in jobs in a targeted industry, will be considered.
 - Additional metrics may include, for example, the number of individuals trained as a result of: preparing educators for instruction in identified industries, developing new curriculum, and/or regional leadership training initiatives.
4. Action plan and budget: Briefly describe the steps taken to implement the project and the associated budget needs.
5. Co-investors: Outline other partners that may invest funds or personnel in the project.
6. Project sustainability: Please outline how the project could be sustainable after the Wired65 investment is complete.

Wired65 Logo and More Information

Programs receiving awards will agree to include the Wired65 logo on program materials, and agree to identify their program as a community initiative sponsored by Wired65 in any public relations efforts or media releases.

For more information, see the Wired65 Web site, www.wired65.org. If you have questions, please e-mail Debbie Wesslund, Project Director, dwesslund@ltadd.org. Questions will be answered within 48 hours and will be posted on the Wired65 Web site.

Scoring Sheet

Type of Proposal: ____Quantum ____Catalytic

Proposals for Growing, Attracting, and Retaining Talent in the Wired65 Region

Proposal Name:

Funding Requested: \$

Reviewer Name:

	Scoring Criteria	Reviewer's Score (A) (Scale of 0-4)	Scoring Factor (B)	Line Item Total A * B	Scoring Criteria Definitions
1	Change		1.5		1. <u>Change</u> : Effects positive, measureable change by addressing one or more of the 5 challenges outlined in The TIP Report. 2. <u>Quantifiable Measures</u> : Proposes specific measures and targets and outcome measures. 3. <u>Regional Impact</u> : Collaboration with other counties across the region. 4. <u>Funds Leverage</u> : Financial support from co-investors. 5. <u>Sustainability</u> : Demonstrated interest from a broad list of partners. 6. <u>Ability to Replicate</u> : Similar needs exist across the region and state. 7. <u>Partnerships</u> : Involves public/private partnerships or cross-county partnerships. 8. <u>Budget</u> : Adequate to cover personnel and non-personnel and administrative and overhead, and considers in-kind contributions. 9. <u>Experience</u> : Does management team have experience? Is organization structured in a manner that will support a successful project? Utilize a 4-Point Scale: 0=No Support to 4=Strong Support Proposal Advancement: A total of 33.6 out of 48 possible points (70%) is required to move the proposal forward in the review process.
2	Quantifiable Measures		1.5		
3	Regional Impact		1.5		
4	Funds Leverage		1.5		
5	Sustainability		1.5		
6	Ability to Replicate		1		
7	Partnerships		1.5		
8	Budget		1		
9	Experience		1		
Proposal's Score					

Reviewer's Comments:



Growing, Attracting, and Retaining Talent in the Wired65 Region
Proposal Template
Catalytic and Quantum Fund Investments

Proposal Name

Contact Information
Name:
Organization:
Email Address:
Telephone #:
Amount of Funding Requested:
Check One: <input type="checkbox"/> Quantum Fund Application <input type="checkbox"/> Catalytic Fund Application

Please respond to the items below. Attachments, such as letters of support, may be added if necessary. Length of proposals must be 20 pages or less, including attachments. Use 12-point font, 1-inch margins and either Arial or Times New Roman font.

- 1. The Opportunity:** Briefly describe the opportunity and why Wired65 should invest in this proposal.

- 2. Change:** Please address how the project will effect positive, measurable change and which of the five challenges outlined in The TIP Report are impacted.

- 3. The Purpose and Metrics: Clearly describe the purpose of this investment and what would constitute a successful outcome: How do we measure success?**

- 4. Action Plan and Budget: Briefly describe how you plan to use Wired funds.**

- 5. Co-investors: Outline who else might be a co-investor with Wired: Who else is likely to have an interest in success?**

- 6. Impact: Who will benefit from this project and what counties will be impacted by this project?**

- 7. Scaling the initiative: What are others around the region doing to address this issue? Is there a potential to scale the initiative? If so, briefly explain how this program could be expanded across the region.**

For more information, refer to the Wired65 Web site, www.wired65.org, or contact: **Debbie Wesslund, Wired65 Project Director, dwesslund@ltadd.org**