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THE EMPLOYMENT AND ADMINISTRATION  
**CUSTOMER SATISFACTION REPORT**  
FOR  
PROGRAM YEAR 1995 AND FISCAL YEAR 1996

September, 1996

THE EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION

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PROGRAM YEAR 1995 AND FISCAL YEAR 1996

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# THE EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION

## **CUSTOMER SATISFACTION REPORT**

FOR  
PROGRAM YEAR 1995 AND FISCAL YEAR 1996

The Employment and Training Administration (ETA) assists all Americans in gaining access to the information and other resources they need to successfully manage their connection with good jobs at decent wages, and to ensure that U.S. businesses have access to the skilled and secure workers they need to successfully compete in a global economy.

### **CUSTOMER PLEDGES**

ETA working with and through its partners and stakeholders offers these customer pledges:

- o ETA will help job seekers take control of their work lives through better employment and unemployment services.
- o ETA will help job seekers, workers and employers get the labor market information and other services they need in one-stop centers.
- o ETA will help teenagers and young adults throughout the nation move more smoothly from school to the workplace, in many cases for them and for adults, through apprenticeship opportunities.
- o ETA will help laid off workers find new jobs that pay as close as possible to what they used to earn.
- o ETA will help low-income adults and youth get the skills and training they need, and help them find first, new or better jobs.

ETA and its partners and stakeholders have been working to ensure that these pledges are met and exceeded. The pledges form the basis of the strategic planning and the ETA performance goals. In addition, ETA and its partners and stakeholders have sought to improve the services to customers by improving the quality of the programs delivering these services through a number of quality management initiatives.

For the past two years, the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) and its partner and stakeholder organizations have increased the emphasis on improving program quality and customers satisfaction. The partners and stakeholders include such agencies and organizations as the State and local government employment security agencies which manage employment

services and unemployment insurance programs, State and local government Job Training Partnership Act programs which ensure the delivery employment, reemployment, training and other services to laid-off workers and disadvantaged youth and adults and other organizations with an investment in training and employment.

While each of the quality improvement initiatives was launched as a program-specific effort, they share the common elements of pursuing excellence through continuous quality improvements and a renewed focus on discovering what the customers want and satisfying those customers.

## **THE QUALITY INITIATIVES**

### **JOB TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT FOR LAID-OFF WORKERS**

#### **The Enterprise Story**

As businesses and individuals experience the rapid and profound changes in our nation's economy and job market, education, training and labor exchange services are in high demand. There are no longer guarantees of lifetime employment. There are fewer high-paying jobs for unskilled workers, and middle management positions are disappearing as businesses flatten their hierarchies. The need to help employees and employers remain competitive in this changing job market has placed new demands on the publicly-funded workforce development system.

Increased expectation for the quality of publicly-funded services accompanies the rising demand. The public outcry for a high return on tax expenditures has driven government to reorient programs to focus on customer needs and expectations.

To meet these challenges and prepare the American workforce for jobs in the new economy, publicly-funded employment and training organizations nationwide have initiated strategies to ensure that their services are high-quality, efficient, and customer focused. These efforts emerged independent of direction from the federal government.

In recognition of its need to reinvent the workforce system, the federal government initiated a partnership with state and local workforce development organizations to unify these efforts and to forge a nationwide network of high-quality, customer focused workforce development organizations; a network committed to satisfied customers-workers and employers-and high performance, and continuous improvement. This unique partnership became known as **the Enterprise**, guided by an intergovernmental council.

The Enterprise Council was formed in October 1994, comprised of representatives from all levels of the workforce development systems: six federal, nine state and thirteen local members. Decision-making occurs by consensus and the Council is led by co-chairs from each level of government.

The Enterprise represents a major departure from previous practices. As its test bed for this innovation, the Enterprise initially targeted retraining programs for dislocated workers. The Enterprise set about to create performance benchmarks for the employment and training system that would drive the delivery of higher quality services. The Enterprise embraced the vision of providing its customers-dislocated workers-with the same level of performance and customer satisfaction that consumers expect from leading private sector firms like Motorola, Nordstrom, and Ritz-Carlton.

In the two years since its inception, the Council designed a system to define quality in public service and incorporate customer service principles into public programs through a voluntary certification process. To date the Council has inducted 164 local organizations-who serve 60,000 dislocated workers-into the Enterprise. These organizations demonstrated superior performance by achieving an 80 percent job placement rate, a 75 percent customer satisfaction rate, and a strong commitment to continuous improvement as certified by outside quality experts.

In fact, Enterprise members compare favorably with leading service firms in the private sector in terms of levels of customer satisfaction. Results from a national customer satisfaction survey show that customers of Enterprise members have a higher level of satisfaction with their services than customers of many well-known hotel and restaurant chains.

Future plans include expanding the certification process to other job training programs that assist disadvantaged individuals and to continuously improve the level of services provided to all customers of the workforce development system.

## JOB TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT FOR DISADVANTAGED WORKERS

### The **Simply Better!** Story

In recent years, America's public employment and training system has come to realize the importance of adopting principles from the "quality revolution" that swept through the private sector during the last decade. Some pioneering workforce development agencies have become "high performance" in every sense of the term, and most organizations now recognize the need to move toward a more customer-focused and quality-oriented approach to the delivery of services.

**Simply Better!** is a national technical assistance project designed to help employment and training organizations incorporate the principles of continuous quality improvement into their daily operations. It began in 1994 as a joint initiative between ETA's Seattle and Philadelphia Regional Offices but has expanded to include representatives of State governments, private industry councils, service delivery areas, sub-state grantees, local direct service providers and additional ETA Regional Offices.

The goals of **Simply Better!** are twofold. The immediate goal is to design products and provide services that assist the employment and training system to implement continuous improvement efforts. The long-term goal is to develop a learning network of individuals and organizations committed to continuous service improvement, to customer satisfaction and to exceptional quality. Simply Better has created its own internet web page to connect the members of this peer-to-peer assistance network.

**Simply Better!** does not believe its customers need be drawn from any one part of the Employment and Training system. The project will be equally relevant to ES offices, JTPA service providers, one-stop career centers, school-to-work programs, vocational education institutions and other employment and training programs, many of whom, as mentioned above, have begun their own continuous improvement initiatives.

**Simply Better!** is concerned with six major topic areas related to the broad field of quality management:

- ◆ Organizational Self-Assessment
- ◆ Identifying and listening to customers
- ◆ Using focus groups to determine customer needs
- ◆ Planning and managing quality operations
- ◆ Measuring performance improvement
- ◆ Case studies of quality organizations

Each of these topics will be addressed through printed materials, training seminars and on-going, hands-on technical assistance. Through a train-the-trainer strategy, **Simply Better!** is working to develop the capability of ETA Regional Office staff to become "consultants" to the future workforce development system in the area of quality operations, customer satisfaction and continuous improvement.

The following Technical Assistance Guides (TAGs ) were published by **Simply Better!** in early 1996:

- ◆ The *Self-Assessment System* is a nine-part workbook to help agencies perform an analysis of their strengths and weaknesses in areas such as leadership, planning, information management, human resources, operations and evaluation.
- ◆ The *Voice of the Customer* provides an overview of the tools and techniques of measuring customer satisfaction and integrating the resulting information into program design and decision-making.
- ◆ *Customers in Focus* is a guidebook on conducting focus groups as a way of uncovering customer needs and feelings.

Training courses on the use of these three quality management tools are being conducted nationwide beginning in March 1996 and will continue through the end of the calendar year. Over 500 ETA staff members and state and local E&T system practitioners have attended these courses. Ten thousand copies of **Simply Better!** materials have been distributed to

E&T organizations, other government departments, training institutions and private employers.

Three additional products are planned before the end of 1996:

- ◆ *Service By Design* will introduce a problem-solving model for continuous improvement of E&T operations that focuses on front-line "transactions"--the points of contact between the service and the customer.
- ◆ *Measures of Success* will help service providers determine which tools and measures best meet their management and information needs. The publication will discuss such topics as evaluation systems, performance standards, ROI, and cost/benefit analysis as applied to E&T programs.
- ◆ *Case Studies in Quality* will document examples of employment and training organizations that have adopted continuous improvement techniques.

Training and appropriate technical assistance is planned for these topics as well.

## JOB TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT FOR YOUTH

### The PEPNet Story

While the needs of today's youth continue to increase, the resources to address youth issues are diminishing. In 1994 the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) authorized a combined National and Regional Office team to focus on new ways to deal with the challenge of serving youth customers in this negative environment characterized by decreasing resources and decreasing expectations for successful youth outcomes. With backgrounds in a variety of youth programs including School-to-Work, Job Corps, Apprenticeship, JTPA year-round and summer; the team developed a concept for the creation of a network of promising and effective youth programs. This quality initiative, the **Promising and Effective Practices Network or PEPNet**, was conceived as a pro-active response to dispel the commonly held belief that "nothing works for youth."

Last year ETA awarded a grant to the National Youth Employment Coalition (NYEC), an organization with an extensive background in youth programs and issues, to develop and operate PEPNet. The goal of PEPNet is to establish criteria of effectiveness, invite youth programs to apply for recognition and build a network to raise the standards of youth programs building on the experience of effective programs. In addition to the U.S. Department of Labor, NYEC receives financial support from the Ford Foundation, the A T & T Foundation, the Prudential Foundation and the Clark Foundation for long-term strategies for PEPNet.

The NYEC; with a membership of more than 80 organizations representing practitioners, researchers, public interest groups, government and the private sector; launched PEPNet as a standard setting project for youth in the Summer of 1995. They assembled forty-five practitioners to form a working group to identify criteria of effective programs to guide the search for exemplary programs. The criteria were developed into an acceptable set of measures which were shaped into a self-assessment and application for PEPNet recognition.

The PEPNet selection criteria recognized that youth are diverse and that services must respond to the age and stage of development of each young person. PEPNet embraces three concepts as the keys to effective practice:

- ◆ Workforce Development which prepares youth for the workforce through working with employers and providing appropriate training, work experience, and education and connecting learning and work;
- ◆ Youth Development which recognizes youth as whole people entrusted to participate in program governance and to be involved in improving program activities, as it fosters cultural and ethnic awareness, has opportunities for adults and youth to interact informally and tailors activities to different stages of maturity;
- ◆ Quality Management which is demonstrated by active leadership and qualified and committed staff who work in collaboration with others, and use information and data for continuous improvement.

There is no single model of effectiveness. The PEPNet selection process was designed to encompass a wide range of goals, outcomes, systems, methods and techniques. All initiatives, programs or systems that are engaged in preparing young people for work and self-sufficiency in life can apply and be recognized, if they measure up to the criteria. They are not limited to ETA programs.

NYEC had to assure objectivity and integrity of the PEPNet system. The diversity of the NYEC membership and the working group assured a broad focus. The openness of the process gave PEPNet a wide base. PEPNet is designed as a self-nomination process and the application suggests that every PEPNet participant begin with a collaborative self-assessment to see how they stack up against the PEPNet criteria. Those that meet the criteria were encouraged to apply for PEPNet recognition.

PEPNet is a work in progress. In early May, NYEC mailed an announcement of PEPNet with a form to request the self-assessment and application to more than 7,000 organizations. PEPNet was advertised in "Youth Today" and NYEC staff and members made presentations at meetings of employment and training practitioners. The working group and the NYEC Executive Committee completed the development of the application in late May and they were mailed to the more than 700 youth-serving organizations that requested them. The due date for application submission was July 31; NYEC has received more than sixty applications.

All applications will be reviewed by teams of three volunteers who will be trained to apply the criteria in a uniform manner. The reviewers will recommend initiatives for PEPNet recognition. The final selection will be made by the National Youth Employment Coalition PEPNet Task Force. Recommendations will be complete by the end of August and a recognition ceremony is being planned for early October.

PEPNet's aims are lofty. Standards will be raised for youth employment programs. A network of youth practitioners will be organized to disseminate information about effective practice among providers to organizations that employs the self-assessment tool. The PEPNet Awardees will be operating examples of effective practice that can inform the public and other practitioners about the elements of effective practice. Everyone who applies for PEPNet will become a part of PEPNet and will have access to the methods, techniques, materials, practice and systems of the PEPNet Awardees. PEPNet will produce a newsletter, convene workshops and develop the applicants into a network to spread the word about how to improve the way we prepare young people for work.

PEPNet's first year of a five to 10 year developmental effort is complete. (NYEC is funded by ETA through June 1997 for PEPNet activities.) Second year plans are to refine the application process and to build a wider, stronger network. In the next few years, PEPNet will expand the criteria to identify effective youth employment systems, effective employers of youth and effective young people. It will expand to include more organizations and increase the number of effective programs.

PEPNet will become a force in youth employment/development programs. It will raise standards and expectations, employ quality management techniques and increase the opportunities for all youth, especially those who are considered to be at-risk, to prepare themselves for work and productive lives.

## EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

### REVITALIZATION OF THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

The Employment Service is a Federal-state partnership with 1800 offices in communities around the country. With unemployment insurance and job search services typically collocated in these facilities, these 1800 offices are often the first stop for people seeking jobs. In 1994, the United States Department of Labor, with support from the Interstate Conference of Employment Security Agencies, Inc. (ICESA), convened a Work Group to develop strategies to improve the effectiveness of these local offices and thereby increase the system's value to its primary customers - people seeking jobs, and employers seeking people.

The Work Group adopted a new vision statement for the Employment Service: *The Employment Service is the Nation's recognized leader in providing efficient labor exchange services and a universal gateway to workforce development resources by professional, empowered employees.*

From there the Work Group identified ten separate but related areas needing attention (including such concerns as staff training, customer satisfaction, local office layout, and marketing) to effect the desired operational improvements. The United States Employment Service then exercised its role as resource director, converting the ten focus areas into grouped opportunities for state initiatives and collaboration. The Federal approach of catalyzing action, allocating resources, and providing the vehicles for interaction among the lead and supporting states chosen to give attention to the work areas has produced exceptional results. This "light touch" has engendered creativity and superior products in a manner that suggests that a "heavy hand" approach would have been far less successful.

Grant agreements were implemented with:

- ◆ Rhode Island (which has produced customer satisfaction tools and training, including professionally developed survey instruments that can be adapted to each state's needs;
- ◆ **Iowa** which dealt with staff training and has published a "Listing of Training Currently Available," "Training: Six Steps for Capacity Building," and "The Workforce Development Staff Skills and Training Challenge," with reports coming on staff competency listings, staff training evaluation methods and tools, and state practices in staff skills assessments;
- ◆ **Maryland** Which produced a manual for local office design; the manual includes a computer assisted design software package, prototype designs for local office resource centers on computer diskette, and furniture and finish samples and specifications for use in local offices;
- ◆ **Texas** which focused on leadership development and piloted a manager exchange project, and has produced strategies for leadership assessment and development;
- ◆ **Ohio** which concentrated on "successful State Practices in Job Matching" and "The Use of Job Matching Information for Labor Market Analysis"; and
- ◆ **West Virginia** which developed a user-friendly, on-line bulletin board and Internet Web site to keep states and local offices informed of workforce development activities, and let states review and share model practices in management and service delivery subjects.

A total of twenty-five states were involved in advisory and pilot activities. Five of the six lead states used the Center for Employment Security Education and Research to facilitate communications, product dissemination and product packaging.

The United States Department of Labor and the Interstate Conference of Employment Security Agencies (ICESA) established a national customer service awards program recognizing outstanding performance by Employment Security staff, local offices, or programs. Now in its

third year, this program publicly recognizes outstanding state employment security agencies' accomplishments and successes with effective customer-focused delivery systems. The awards recognize activities in five customer service areas:

- ◆ Innovation in Customer Service (The Architect of Change Award);
- ◆ Collaboration for Improved Customer Service (The Pyramid Prize);
- ◆ Leading Tools and Technologies (The Compass Prize);
- ◆ Professional Development and Capacity Building (The Building a World Class Workforce Award); and,
- ◆ Special Recognition (extraordinary achievement and performance under unique circumstances).

Winning states in each category are awarded \$25,000. Agencies receiving "Honorable Mention" but not receiving a \$25,000. award receive a \$5,000. award. Award funds are made available to these agencies to support capacity building activities in customer service programs and employment security systems to further the Revitalization agenda.

Employment Service Revitalization provides essential technical resources and tools to assist efforts to increase the value obtained by the employer and job seeker customers of the workforce development system. Within the context of Employment Service Revitalization, the states and the United States Employment Service collaborated to develop America's Job Bank, including new Internet services for job seekers and employers. In the past three years, the number of current jobs available through America's Job Bank on the Internet has increased to 500,000, and the number of accesses has grown to 7 million per month. The Federal-state team that developed America's Job Bank on the Internet received the Hammer Award from Vice President Gore as one of the top innovations in government.

All of this activity has generated excitement, introspection, and actions to improve the effectiveness of this core public service. With first-class products and broad state and local participation to date, the Employment Service Revitalization efforts are now moving beyond the development stage to the implementation stage. The work and products will provide value-added as the system moves toward a one-stop environment.

## UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

### **UI Performs: The Unemployment Insurance Performance System**

The Unemployment Insurance Service (UIS) has operated through a partnership with State Employment Security Agencies for many years. In 1993, the National Performance Review called on the Department to "reexamine the present mix of systems for improving the performance of the Unemployment Insurance program." In response, a team of senior SESA managers and UIS staff known as the Performance Enhancement Work Group (PEWG), worked together to initiate several improvements to the current closed-loop system (much like the classic continuous improvement loop) which is designed to help ensure continuous improvement in UI operations performance. The group also set itself the broad goal of developing an approach by which the UI system could continuously improve services to the

system's ultimate customers (claimants and employers). This new system, call UI Performs will be phased in over 3-4 years as the various components are completed.

When complete and fully operational, UI Performs will comprise:

- ◆ a renewed affirmation of the long-standing principles for Federal-State cooperation;
- ◆ a redesigned process for operational planning and the execution of improvement activities;
- ◆ various mechanisms to ensure that performance in key areas exceeds certain minimum levels and continues to grow; and
- ◆ the redesign of many performance measurements plus the regular validation of key performance measures.

The measures were selected to enable the UI system's success to be judged by how well it serves its ultimate customers - claimants and employers. Most of the data used to construct the new UI Performs measures are already in State databases; UI Performs should not appreciably increase measurement effort overall.

The Department is now undertaking the numerous steps of "rolling out" the full design. These began with efforts to implement measurement systems already under development and making changes in existing systems. Resource-reducing changes in the Benefit Accuracy Measurement (BAM), formerly Benefits Quality Control, have been initiated and should be effective by the end of Calendar 1996, and the State-publication requirement has been dropped. (All measurement systems have received more generic names.) States were solicited for a pilot to develop the Denied Claims Accuracy component of BAM and the pilot should begin in Spring 1997. Efforts continue to implement the new Benefits Timeliness and Quality measures (Performance Measurement Review initiative); they should all be effective by 1/1/97. The new nonmonetary and appeals measurements began July 1, 1996; the automated timeliness measures are scheduled to begin January 1, 1997. The Tax Performance Quality (formerly know as Revenue Quality Control) measures were fully implemented in 1996. The Department plans to publish an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM) to solicit comments on a regulation to establish the UI Performs system late in calendar 1996.

Some implementation activities will extend into subsequent years. These include development of the annual performance planning process which will link performance and budgeting activities; development of the national criteria or benchmarks for selected UI performs measures; refinement and implementation of data validation activities; development and implementation of additional performance measures, including the denied claims accuracy measure; and development and promulgation of the UI Performs rule.

## CAPACITY BUILDING

### **The Professional Development and Training Panel Story**

The Nation's system for developing a high performance workforce is engaged in major change. The emergence of the one-stop career center system, restructuring of services to dislocated

workers, welfare reform, and new strategies for transitioning youth from school to work have placed new demands on agencies, managers, and professionals who administer and provide employment and training services. Preparing workforce development professionals to meet these challenges is a major task for the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA). One of ETA's approaches to accomplishing this task is the appointment in 1994 of the Professional Development and Training Panel to identify, coordinate, advocate, and disseminate staff and system development strategies that support the development of and transition to a quality customer-driven national workforce development system.

Comprised of 30 members from across the employment and training community, the Panel represents a successful partnership between ETA and its stakeholders that ensures national office decisions regarding staff development are guided by the needs of ETA's immediate customer. To this end, Panel membership is drawn from administrators and providers of local workforce development programs, state training institutes, community-based organizations, state agencies, organized labor, national and regional offices of the U.S. Department of Labor, and other invested stakeholders. To accomplish their mission, the Panel has been working diligently during their quarterly meetings and frequent conference calls to develop strategies to address the challenge of building the capacity of the nation's public workforce development professionals. In addition, they have made and will continue to make recommendations to the ETA about the steps they can take to both support and help the employment and training community respond effectively to new demands.

The following are some highlights of other work in which the Panel is engaged:

- ◆ To help the nation's public employment and training system meet the new challenges presented by the infusion of innovative technology into workplace, they have initiated an effort to develop staff skill competencies for technology.
- ◆ They have embarked on information collection activities around staff development tools and resources that are available in "Hot Topic" areas identified by the system. This endeavor will help to identify areas of need in which adequate resources are not available. This information will, in turn, assist ETA to make resource utilization decisions which will fill existing gaps in the system.
- ◆ A guide to Non-Traditional Funding Sources is being compiled to assist public employment and training organizations in this time of shrinking resources.
- ◆ Members of the Panel are working with the Core Competency Training Team (C2T2) out of ETA's National Office. C2T2 is tasked to identify, through a series of focus groups and meetings, the most critical competencies for federal staff. Panel members have been and will continue to be active contributors to the process.

Ultimately, the success of these efforts will be measured by the ability of the workforce development system to respond to the rapidly changing needs of its customers. To achieve this

success, the Panel believes that it is critical for our activities to have an impact on the staff who work with employers and job seekers every day. They emphasize the importance of this outcome in the opening statement of the Panel's Guiding Principles for Staff Development which reads: "It is imperative that a Workforce Development System have as one of its goals the development of its own high-performance workers as well as the development of high-performance workplaces that are predicated on customers' expectations and needs."

More information about the Professional Development and Training Panel; including their membership, mission, and products; can be found on the Training Technology Resource Center's (TTRC) on-line information system accessible via the Internet (Telnet to: [ttc.doleta.gov](telnet://ttc.doleta.gov) (text-based); Web URL: <http://www.ttrc.doleta.gov>).

## COORDINATION

### The Quality Forum

As is clear from this report, ETA has launched new activities aimed at improving the performance of the workforce development system by promoting and supporting the spread of quality practices throughout the system -- quality practices in **superior performance, customer focus and satisfaction, and continuous improvement**. These system-building initiatives are, in most cases, collaborative efforts among local, state, and federal organizations committed to quality and high performance. The Quality Forum was established to facilitate information exchange and the formation of tactical alliances among these employment and training initiatives focused on high performance and system building. Participation is voluntary and membership is fluid.

Initially, the following programs and initiatives have agreed to participate in the Quality Forum: Employment Service Revitalization, the Enterprise, the Office of Policy and Research, the One-Stop Career Center System, PEPNet, the Professional Development and Training Panel, and Simply Better!. As the Quality Forum evolves, membership may expand to include other initiatives and programs.

The mission of the Quality Forum is to improve services to the ultimate customers of the workforce development system, by members working together in the promotion of, training in, and recognition of quality practices and continuous improvement in workforce development organizations at the national, state and local levels. This will be accomplished through shared information on state-of-the-art marketing, training, communications, and customer feedback. Members retain their own individual identities, but seek ways to complement and strengthen each other's initiatives. Those areas of mutual interest and opportunities for collaboration are what shape the activities undertaken by the members.

The quality-focused initiatives share a common underlying approach, i.e., the most effective way to improve the level of service provided to our customers is to improve the quality of performance of the organizations that serve those customers. Excellent organizations have high quality performance outcomes. Many of the initiatives have adopted the Baldrige Award criteria

as a useful framework for talking about high performance -- whether in a private sector firm, an SDA/SSA, an Employment Service office, or a One-Stop Career Center. According to the Baldrige criteria, a quality organization must excel in each of the following dimensions of high performance:

- ◆Leadership
- ◆Information and Analysis
- ◆Strategic Planning
- ◆Human Resource Development and Management
- ◆Process Management
- ◆Business Results
- ◆Customer Focus and Satisfaction

These dimensions of high performance form a useful framework for planning strategic and tactical alliances among the participating quality initiatives. Each of the initiatives is, in some way, attempting to improve the system's performance in one or more of these dimensions.

In addition to the dimensions of high performance, forum members are exploring functional areas to be used as the basis for identifying alliance opportunities.. Marketing , training , information technology and communications and customer feedback are examples of these functional areas that could be used to form tactical alliances are:

The Quality Forum is primarily intended to benefit the customers of the workforce development system -- job seekers and employers. The customers will benefit by the successful improvement of the performance of the organizations responsible for delivering training and reemployment services. The system will benefit by having access to the more effective and more highly-leveraged training and technical assistance that will be delivered through strategic and tactical alliances among the participating initiatives.

The benefits to the participating initiatives are:

- ◆the opportunity to leverage limited resources,
- ◆capability of enhancing the positive impact on the system,
- ◆enhanced "public" image gained through the delivery of integrated, coherent services and information.

