

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
APPLICATION TO THE H-1B TECHNICAL SKILLS TRAINING PROGRAM

The Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) of Merced, Madera, and Stanislaus Counties and the Mother Lode Area in California have formed a regional partnership with Merced College, University of California, Merced, and Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory for the purposes of pursuing this grant and designing an innovative technical skills training program. The program, to be known as the Alliance for Central California Technical Training (ACT), will address numerous economic and social problems that burden the region, such as low educational attainment and high unemployment. The program will also address the increasing demand in the region for technically proficient workers due to the area's geographic proximity to California's San Francisco Bay Area and the growing diversity of the regional economy. ACT provides an innovative solution to regional problems, and will decrease domestic employers' dependence on foreign labor under the H-1B program.

The lead applicant in this proposal is the Merced County Workforce Investment Board, and the primary service provider will be Merced College. The training programs will be offered at the College campus in Merced as well as at nine off-campus sites located in Delhi, Dos Palos, Gustine, and Atwater (Merced County), Chowchilla (Madera County), Riverbank, Newman, and Turlock (Stanislaus County), and at California State University, Fresno (Fresno County – adjacent to Madera County). Additionally, clinical work required for the Registered Nursing and Sonography programs will be performed at participating health care sites in each student's home county. The proposed program would serve 1000 employed and unemployed workers throughout the region over the two year grant period.

Grant funds in the amount of \$2,999,988 are being sought to support six different technical skills programs that culminate in degrees, certifications, or licensure. The six occupations workers will be trained for are Certified Network Associate, Certified Network Professional, Semiconductor Manufacturing Technician, Laser Electro-Optics Technician, Biotechnician, Registered Nurse, and Sonographer. These professions were chosen due to high national and local demand for workers in these areas, and high reliance on H-1B visas for filling these positions.