

of the performance partners will be invited to become charter members of the larger BEST Network.

The BEST Network will connect communities across the country to demonstrate model ways to encourage lifelong learning. The overall initiative also seeks to minimize administrative barriers to problem solving and help communities maximize currently available federal resources.

This is the first step toward creating a national network of communities working together and sharing best practices to help more adults get 21st century skills and find more opportunities for lifelong learning. The network will help communities collaborate with each other, across sectors and with the federal partners to:

- Increase the number of Americans with 21st century skills and help them find high-skill, high-wage jobs;
- Close the Skills Gap;
- Promote lifelong learning;
- Address barriers at the federal, state, and local level—in ways allowable under current law—to increase the flexibility and effectiveness of resources;
- Obtain technical support and facilitate access to best practices employed in various communities; and
- Share lessons with other communities.

*What Are The Benefits To Communities?* This is not a grant program and includes no new Federal funds. To help community, State and local partners, Federal partners will:

- Participate in the formation of a national "community of practice" that shares best practices and works together to solve problems and get results.
- Assign a federal "champion" to each performance partner to help communities navigate the hallways of inter-governmental programs, policies, and federal resources across government;
- Help create solid management systems that focus on meaningful outcomes for learners;
- Provide increased access to federal data and geographic information related to 21st century skills, jobs and work trends; and
- Facilitate consolidated reporting and increased flexibility in administration—within existing legal requirements—for communities that use Federal funds from different government departments and agree to public measures of outcomes and results.

The larger BEST Network will:

- Connect communities and relevant agencies with peers working on similar issues;

- Share lessons learned;
- Give national recognition to innovative communities for their effective strategies and results;
- Link to other, related federal initiatives; and
- Help communities and local agencies measure results and obtain expert advice in devising strategies for collecting, analyzing, and using data to achieve results.

*Who Can Apply To Be a Local Partner?* Expressions of Interest can be submitted by the head of a community-based partnership, local government, network of local governments, state or local workforce development agency, or network of state or local agencies or organizations. Where state funds or agencies are involved or where federal funds flow through the state, there must be clear evidence of state partnership.

*How Does My Community Express Interest in the BEST Network?* Potential partners should submit a brief Expression of Interest. To minimize any burden, submissions should be under ten pages in length. Communities are encouraged to use existing plans and documents wherever possible.

*Selection Criteria:* A cross-agency team will select local partners based on:

- Existence of a partnership that crosses sectors such as business, labor, education and government.
- A community-wide plan for adult learning and skill development that has clear, objective, measurable goals.
- Effective leadership and participation of key stakeholders such as community, business, labor, and educational leaders; federal, state, and local officials; faith community representatives; and others.
- Readiness and commitment of partners to work together, cut red tape, coordinate operations, use current funding more effectively, and achieve better results.
- Potential impact of proposed performance partnership on closing the skills gap in the local community, as demonstrated by a focus on one or more of the five broad recommendations in the report *Skills for a New Century: A Blueprint for Lifelong Learning*;
- Balance in terms of geography, demographic characteristics, and areas of focus.

The BEST Network will be supported by the Lifelong Learning Inter-Agency Strategy Group that includes representatives of the U.S. Departments of Labor, Education, and Commerce, facilitated by the Vice President's National Partnership for Reinventing Government.

*Expressions of Interest:* Expressions of Interest in partnerships must be

received by close of business on February 25, 2000. They may be submitted by mail, fax or electronically to: BEST Communities, National Partnership for Reinventing Government, Suite 200, 750 17th Street NW, Washington, DC 20007. Fax: (202) 632-0390, or e-mail at [BEST@npr.gov](mailto:BEST@npr.gov).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Dr. Lynn S. Kahn, (202) 694-0038, [lynn.kahn@npr.gov](mailto:lynn.kahn@npr.gov); or Meshell Jones, (202) 694-0122; [meshell.jones@npr.gov](mailto:meshell.jones@npr.gov).

Dated: January 20, 2000.

**Lynn S. Kahn,**  
Team Leader.

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## NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

### Special Emphasis Panel in Advanced Networking and Infrastructure Research; Notice of Meeting

In accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act (Pub. L. 92-463, as amended), the National Science Foundation announces the following meeting.

*Name:* Special Emphasis Panel in Advanced Networking and Infrastructure Research (#1207).

*Date/Time:* February 22 and 23, 2000; 8:30 AM-5:00 PM.

*Place:* Room 1120, National Science Foundation, 4201 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, VA 22230.

*Type of Meeting:* Closed.

*Contact Persons:* Darleen Fisher and Karen Sollins, Division of Advanced Networking Infrastructure Research, Room 1175, National Science Foundation, 4201 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, VA 22230. Telephone: (703) 306-1950.

*Purpose of Meeting:* To provide advice and recommendations concerning proposals submitted to NSF for financial support.

*Agenda:* To review and evaluate proposals submitted to the Networking Research Program as part of the selection process for awards.

*Reason for Closing:* The proposals being reviewed include information of a proprietary or confidential nature, including technical information; financial data, such as salaries; and personal information concerning individuals associated with the proposals. These matters are exempt under 5 U.S.C. 552b(c), (4) and (6) of the Government in the Sunshine Act.

Dated: February 1, 2000.

**Karen J. York,**

Committee Management Officer.

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