



STATE OF GEORGIA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Sonny Perdue
GOVERNOR

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Governor Perdue Announces Work Ready Region Grants
Georgia Regions Will Work Together to Strengthen Strategic Industries

ATLANTA – Governor Sonny Perdue today awarded \$3.5 million in grants to seven Georgia regions committed to becoming Work Ready Regions. These regions bring together their assets and leaders to create regional talent pools targeting existing strategic industries and to increase economic development opportunities.

“The Work Ready Regions initiative is being led by businesses and will link workforce, education and economic development to ensure Georgia’s workforce is our state’s number one competitive advantage,” said Governor Sonny Perdue. “This effort will drive continued growth and prosperity throughout the state.”

The seven Work Ready Regions grant recipients include:

- Northwest Georgia for automotive advanced manufacturing (Catoosa, Chattooga, Floyd, Gordon, Murray, Polk, Paulding, Walker and Whitfield Counties)
- Western central Georgia for aerospace advanced manufacturing (Chattahoochee, Harris, Muscogee, Quitman, Stewart, Talbot and Taylor Counties)
- Middle Georgia for aerospace advanced manufacturing (Bibb, Bleckley, Houston, Peach and Pulaski Counties)
- Middle Georgia for advanced manufacturing (Dodge, Johnson, Laurens, Telfair, Treutlen, Wheeler and Wilkinson Counties)
- Eastern Georgia for logistics, distribution and warehousing (Bryan, Bulloch and Candler Counties)
- Western Georgia for automotive advanced manufacturing (Carroll, Coweta, Douglas, Haralson, Harris, Heard, Meriwether, Talbot, Troup and Upson Counties)

- Northeast Georgia for bioscience
(Barrow, Clarke, DeKalb, Gwinnett, Jackson, Madison, Morgan, Oconee, Oglethorpe and Walton Counties)

Additional counties may be added to some regions as the Work Ready Region process proceeds.

The potential Work Ready Regions will each receive a \$500,000 grant to assist in increasing the skill level of its workforce. Specifically, increasing the number of individuals in the workforce holding a Work Ready Certificate, ensuring each county in the region earns Certified Work Ready Community status, encouraging local employers to complete Work Ready job profiles and providing specialized training for the existing workforce.

“These regions will develop the future workforce pipeline for these identified growth industries by continuing to increase the regional high school graduation rate and establishing life-long learning through a seamless career pathway from high school through the state’s two- and four-year colleges,” said Governor Perdue.

Each regional effort is being led by a local businessperson associated with the strategic industry, according to Debra Lyons, director of the Governor’s Office of Workforce Development (GOWD). This leader will work closely with GOWD to ensure continuity of efforts among the various regions, and will assemble an industry network to ensure the region’s work plan meets the needs of the industry, both current and future.

In addition, six other Georgia regions have been awarded membership in the Work Ready Region Policy Academy. Lyons said local leaders will learn how to access and use economic development and workforce data to identify the best strategic industry for their region, develop an overall regional work plan and prepare for the next round of Work Ready Region grants.

“Work Ready has the potential to propel our state's economic growth," said George M. Israel, III, president & CEO of the 4,100-member Georgia Chamber of Commerce. “By bringing our regions together, committed to a common goal, Georgia can enhance its role as a player in the highly competitive race to attract new industry.”

Georgia’s Work Ready initiative is based upon a skills assessment and certification for job seekers and a job profiling system for businesses. By identifying both the needs of business and the available skills of Georgia’s workforce, the state can more effectively generate the right talent for the right jobs.

For more information on the Work Ready initiative please visit the Web site at www.gaworkready.org