



**Retrainee - Job Creation  
Training Proposal for:  
Alpine Corporation**

<b>Small Business ≤ \$50,000</b>
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**ET15-0359**

**Approval Date:** December 9, 2014

**ETP Regional Office:** North Hollywood      **Analyst:** E. Wadzinski

**CONTRACTOR**

- Type of Industry: Manufacturing
  
- Priority Industry:  Yes  No
  
- Number of Full-Time Employees
  - California: 29
  - Worldwide: 39
  - Number to be trained: 30
  - Owner  Yes  No
  
- Out-of-State Competition: NAICS Code Eligible
- Special Employment Training (SET):  Yes  No
- High Unemployment Area (HUA):  Yes  No
- Turnover Rate: 15%
- Repeat Contractor:  Yes  No

**FUNDING**

- Requested Amount: \$46,800
- In-Kind Contribution: \$28,800

**TRAINING PLAN TABLE**

Job No.	Job Description	Type of Training	Estimated No. of Trainees	Range of Hours		Average Cost per Trainee	Post-Retention Wage
				Class / Lab	CBT		
1	Retrainee Priority Rate SB <100 HUA	Business Skills, Computer Skills, Continuous Impr, Mfg Skills	27	8-60	0	\$1,560	\$12.03
				Weighted Avg: 60			
2	Job Creation Initiative Priority Rate Retrainee SB<100 HUA	Business Skills, Computer Skills, Continuous Impr, Mfg Skills	3	8-60	0	\$1,560	\$10.03
				Weighted Avg: 60			

It will be made a condition of contract that the trainees in this Job Number will never be paid less than the statewide minimum wage rate as in effect at the end of retention regardless of the wage expressed in this table.

- Reimbursement Rate: Job #'s 1 and 2: \$26 SB Priority
- County(ies): Los Angeles
- Occupations to be Trained: Buyer, Assistant Buyer, Warehouse Staff, Customer Service Representative, Telemarketer, Manager, Accounting Staff, Owner
- Union Representation:  Yes  
 No
- Health Benefits: Job #1: \$3.03 per hour, Job #2: \$0.65 per hour

**SUBCONTRACTORS**

- Development Services: Jewish Vocational Services in Los Angeles will develop the project for a flat fee of \$5,000.
- Administrative Services: Jewish Vocational Services will also provide administration for a fee not to exceed 13% of earned funds.
- Training Vendors: To Be Determined

**OVERVIEW**

Alpine Corporation (Alpine) ([www.alpine4u.com](http://www.alpine4u.com)), founded in 1999, designs, manufacturers, and distributes lawn and garden products. The Company is headquartered in the City of Commerce and serves many different segments of the market from mid-level retailers (such as Ace Hardware and True Value) to a variety of independent merchants (i.e., gift shops, grocery stores, catalog companies, garden centers, and pond supply stores). The Company has

another location in China that supports manufacturing operations and oversees the design, production, and quality of its products.

### **Retrainee - Job Creation**

Alpine's product line has expanded (in a short time) from one initial product (pond tubing) to over 4,000 different items such as fountains, garden décor, landscape lighting, benches, and figurines. Its products are designed in-house with many inventions patented including its Rainforest solar lighting line.

Recently, Alpine reorganized its business and internal processes, with assistance from a consulting firm that analyzed operational procedures and financial controls, in order to improve operations. It resulted in an increase in efficiency and production, the fostering of new products, and improved pricing. As a result, Alpine experienced rapid growth in the last two years and expects more growth. The Company has already expanded sales goals for the next year.

In order to support Alpine's goal of increasing sales, the Company intends to hire three employees. The employees will fill newly created positions in the sales division as an Assistant Buyer, Customer Service Representative and Telemarketing Representative. Alpine represents that the date-of-hire for all trainees in the Job Creation program will be within the three-month period before contract approval or within the term-of-contract. The Company also represents that these trainees will be hired into "net new jobs" as a condition of contract. Training for newly-hired employees will be reimbursed at a higher rate and trainees will be subject to a lower post-retention wage.

### **Training Plan**

This will be Alpine's second ETP Agreement. Training under the first Agreement focused on the Company's new ERP business software, Office Master System (OMS). The software is used to process and access data in real time by integrating all company functions, including sales, purchasing, accounting, customer service, shipping, and receiving. OMS also manages product availability from remote suppliers to customers through warehouse facilities.

For this proposal, Alpine will continue to train on the OMS software to learn more advanced features and capabilities. Training will also focus on its reorganization to become more efficient. Expanding product lines require the need for more training to remain viable with companies who are consolidating the number of competitors in the industry. Alpine currently invests significant time and money in training; however, it needs assistance due to budget constraints as a small business company. With ETP funds, Alpine will be able to offer an extended training program to its employees.

**Business Skills (30%)** – Training will be provided to Management, Sales and Office Staff in order to improve effective communication, deliver exceptional customer service, enhance skills in marketing, and sell and promote Alpine's products and services. The main objective of training is to create a professional and positive mindset aimed towards growth and sustainability of the organization.

**Computer Skills (30%)** – Training will be provided to Office Staff in an effort to teach the importance of empirical data and how to collect and present data in a form allowing managers to make sound business decisions. Spreadsheets will be utilized to track, inform and analyze a wide range of data. By developing a better understanding of what OMS offers and how it can grow with the Company, employees will be able to extrapolate the empirical data needed to make better operational decisions.

**Continuous Improvement (15%)** – Training will be provided to all occupations in order to promote continuous improvement in approach and work performance. Employees will be instructed on how to look for improvements in company operation and analyze how those improvements can impact the bottom-line, both in short-term expenses and long-term savings. By developing better understanding of why we need improvements, employees will be better able to adapt to changes and participate in higher level discussions to develop and implement changes.

**Manufacturing Skills (25%)** – Training will be offered to Warehouse and Management Staff in order to create a work environment where employees can be more versatile and aid the company by cross training on multiple pieces of equipment. This will allow Alpine to handle challenges better when vacations, extended leave of absences, and/or equipment failures occur. In addition, advanced skills in manufacturing, packaging, and maintenance will promote consistently excellent performance.

### **High Unemployment Area**

All trainees work in a High Unemployment Area (HUA) with unemployment exceeding the state average by at least 15%.

#### ➤ Wage Modification

Alpine is requesting a post-retention hourly wage modification for Job Number 1 trainees to \$12.03 per hour and for Job Number 2 (Job Creation) trainees to \$10.03 per hour, which are 25% below the ETP Minimum Wage.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends approval of this proposal with the HUA wage modification.

### **ACTIVE PROJECTS**

The following table summarizes performance by Alpine under an active ETP Agreement:

Agreement No.	Approved Amount	Term	No. Trainees Enrolled	No. Completed Training	No. Retained
ET14-0111	\$40,248	08/05/2013-08/04/2014	34	23	23

Based on the ETP Online Tracking System, Alpine has recorded 1,920 eligible hours (100% of the Agreement amount). A Final Closeout Invoice has been submitted to ETP on 9/2/14 with 100% projected earnings.

**Exhibit B: Menu Curriculum****Class/Lab Hours**

8–60

Trainees may receive any of the following:

**BUSINESS SKILLS**

- Customer Relations
- Identifying Customer Needs
- Resolving Customer Complaints
- Telephone Skills
- Telemarketing Skills and How to Win a Customer
- Product Knowledge
- Financial Strategies
- Customer Relations
- Identifying Customer Needs
- Resolving Customer Complaints
- Project Management

**COMPUTER SKILLS**

- Training on Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) System
- Intermediate or Advanced Microsoft Office (Word Excel Powerpoint)
- Design Software Photoshop

**CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

- General Accounting
- Payroll
- Cost Accounting
- Project Management
- Identifying Customer Needs

**MANUFACTURING SKILLS**

- Forklift
- Material Handling
- Project Management
- Inventory Control and Sales Forecasting, Using ERP Software “Office Master System” (“OMS”)

Note: Reimbursement for retraining is capped at 60 total hours per-trainee, regardless of method of delivery.
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