



U.S. Department of Labor Employment & Training Administration

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Energy

Innovative Workforce Solutions to Help the Energy Industry Address Hiring, Training, and Retention Challenges

Since 2003, U.S. Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao has announced 22 investments totaling more than \$37 million to address the workforce needs of the energy industry. The U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) has sought to understand and implement industry-identified strategies to confront critical workforce challenges. Through multiple forums, ETA has listened to employers, industry associations, labor-management organizations, and others in the energy industry regarding their efforts to identify challenges and implement effective workforce strategies. ETA has worked with the energy industry to identify its hiring, training, and retention challenges in its sectors ranging from oil and gas to utilities and mining.

The challenges faced are far too complex for one institution or industry sector to solve alone. Investments in the High Growth Job Training Initiative for the energy industry support comprehensive partnerships among employers, the public workforce system, and other entities that have developed innovative approaches to meet workforce needs while effectively helping workers find good jobs with good wages and promising career pathways. Solutions are based on the energy industry's priorities that address the following issues:

- Employers expect that up to half of their current workers will retire over the next five to 10 years.
- Stereotyping of energy careers as unstable, dirty, and low-skilled causes qualified workers, especially youth, to be unaware of the many highly skilled, good-paying career opportunities.
- Many training programs were scaled back or closed due to a downturn in the industry in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Programs have not ramped up at the same rate as the industry's need has rebounded.
- Employers in all sectors of the industry need workers who are more proficient in math, science, and, especially, technology than workers in the past.
- Creative solutions are necessary to help experienced workers, who will be retiring, transfer their knowledge and skills to their replacements and to help new workers gain necessary skills as quickly as possible.
- Few industry-defined, portable credentials have been developed in the energy industry. Additionally, some energy occupations lack unambiguous career ladders necessary for changing a perception that working in the industry is a viable career choice.

These energy industry grants are intended to provide genuine solutions, leadership, and models for partnerships that can be replicated in different parts of the country.

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Apprenticeship

PURPOSE: To stimulate and assist industry in developing and improving apprenticeship and other training programs designed to provide the skilled workers needed to compete in a global economy.

DESCRIPTION: Apprenticeship is a combination of on-the-job training and related classroom instruction in which workers learn the practical and theoretical aspects of a highly skilled occupation. Apprenticeship programs are sponsored by joint employer and labor groups, individual employers, and/or employer associations.

Office of Apprenticeship (OA) registers apprenticeship programs and apprentices in 23 States and assists and oversees State Apprenticeship Councils (SACs) which perform these functions in 27 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Government's role is to, first, safeguard the welfare of apprentices, second, ensure the quality and equality of access of apprenticeship programs, and third, provide integrated employment and training information to sponsors and the local employment and training community.

ELIGIBILITY: Employer applicants include employers or an association of employers with or without the participation of labor unions. Individual applicants for apprenticeship programs must be at least 16 years old and meet the program sponsor's qualifications. Generally, applicants must satisfy the sponsor that they have the ability, aptitude, and education to master the rudiments of the occupation and complete the related instruction required in the program.

ESTABLISHING AN APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM: Prospective employers work with OA or SAC field representatives to develop a set of apprenticeship training standards which include the on-the-job training outline, related classroom instruction curriculum and the apprenticeship program operating procedures. The program will be registered if it meets Federal requirements.

HOW TO APPLY: Visit, write, or call the local Job Service Office, the nearest OA or SAC office (listed in the blue pages of the telephone directory), or employer or union engaged in the trade you want to enter.

AUTHORIZATION: The National Apprenticeship Act of 1937 (Fitzgerald Act), as amended PL 75-308, 50 Stat. 664, 57 Stat. 518, 29 U.S.C. 50, 50a, 50b.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: Write or call the [OA State Offices](#), U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Ave, NW, Washington, D.C. at (202) 693-3812. You may also contact your nearest [OA Regional Office](#).

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ETA News Releases

ETA News Release: [October 10, 2008]

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U.S. Department of Labor announces \$125 million President's Community-Based Job Training Grants competition

WASHINGTON – U.S. Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao today announced the fourth competition for the President's Community-Based Job Training Grants. Public and tribal community and technical colleges, community college districts, state community college systems and One-Stop Career Centers will compete for a total of \$125 million in awards, which will range between \$500,000 and \$2 million.

"This \$125 million grant competition will leverage the partnership among community colleges, One-Stop Career Centers, business, labor, nonprofits and faith-based organizations to help students and workers gain the relevant skills essential for long-term career success," said Secretary Chao.

Over the past three years, approximately \$375 million has been awarded to 211 community colleges and community-based institutions in 47 states to promote the U.S. workforce's full potential. Through these grants, nearly 25,000 individuals have completed training, and more than 80,000 are currently engaged in training.

This competition differs in a few respects from last year's. Among the modifications, applicants must show how their proposals' features vary from existing workforce products. In addition, besides partnerships with business and industry, the workforce investment system and K-12+ education institutions, applicants are encouraged to team with local faith-based and community organizations to help hard-to-serve populations reduce barriers to employment.

"Through this competition, whole communities can offer learning opportunities to individuals seeking to expand their own talents, skills and knowledge," said Deputy Assistant Secretary of Labor for Employment and Training Brent R. Orrell. "In regions across America, community colleges can become the gathering place for economic growth and real-world educational excellence."

A competitive solicitation for grant applications appears in today's *Federal Register* and can be accessed online through www.doleta.gov/sga/sga.cfm. Virtual conferences for prospective applicants will be held Friday, Oct. 24, at 1 p.m. EDT. Additional information and links to registration for these conferences will be posted at www.doleta.gov/business/Community-BasedJobTrainingGrants.cfm. This competition for grants will remain open through Monday, Nov. 24, with awards to follow.

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