



**Wider
Opportunities
for Women**

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CONTACT: Susan Rees
(202) 464-1596
srees@wowonline.org

Workforce Development Organizations Warn Cuts to Job Training Programs Will Slow Job Growth, Economic Recovery

WASHINGTON, DC – As the House Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training discusses job training programs today, workforce development organizations, which have served 8 million people and placed more than half of them in new jobs in the past year, are warning Congress about crippling job growth that could result from severe cuts to job training programs. Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW), a national organization that works with workforce development organizations across the country and conducts job training in their home community of Washington, DC, is issuing the following statement on today's hearing:

“Job training programs are helping unemployed Americans get back to work in jobs that let them support their families,” said Joan Kuriansky, **WOW Executive Director**. **“Cutting off the very programs that have helped people find new jobs is a short-sighted budget maneuver that will hurt recent economic growth and ultimately put less money in the hands of struggling families and the economy as a whole.”**

“Job training programs help women and other unemployed workers develop marketable skills, and help employers find the skilled workers they need. Alongside unemployed workers, employer associations like [Deloitte Touche and the Manufacturing Institute](#) have been crying out for these programs, and shutting career center doors will hurt job creation, hiring and our economic recovery.”

The House budget for fiscal year 2012, also known as the Ryan budget, proposes cutting as much as \$60 billion over ten years by consolidating dozens of job training programs into “career scholarships.” These programs, like the 3,000 Workforce Investment Act (WIA) one-stop centers and the Career and Technical Education, have helped 4.3 million people find new jobs. Other programs have proven successful by addressing the challenges to job placement faced by particular populations, such as women entering non-traditional occupations, youth, older workers, persons with disabilities and seasonal workers.

In Seattle, Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs have not only helped thousands of unemployed workers find jobs, they have also helped workers find jobs that let them support their families. The Workforce Development Council (WDC) of [Seattle-King County's Self-Sufficiency Calculator](#) shows that more than two-thirds of WIA clients who were unable to support their families when they entered the program left the job training with earnings at or above self-sufficiency levels. Another 19% were more than half way to self-sufficiency.

"In Seattle-King County, the Workforce Investment Act supports critical job training and services for people trying to get back to work and connects them with businesses who want to hire them," said Marléna Sessions, CEO of the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County. "With 93,000 people out of work locally, we can't afford to cut back on the very programs that connect them with employers."

Ray Fleming Dinneen, the executive director of CLIMB Wyoming helps provide low-income single mothers job training and placement in high demand sectors, such as the energy industry.

"Employers consistently report that women are particularly adept at many of the job responsibilities in the energy industry, which makes them quite valuable to businesses in that field," said Dinneen. "But if the job training programs that help women gain these skills are cut, I'm afraid that many of them will remain in low-wage jobs that don't let them support their families."

Older workers who lose their jobs are being forced into early retirement unless they can develop new skills and credentials for a new field. Job training programs are also vital to women reentering the workforce after divorce, death of a spouse or taking care of their children or elderly parents.

"Older Americans are having a particularly difficult time finding work, forcing some of them to take extreme measures to make ends meet," said Shirley Stuart, State Director of Experience Works South Dakota. "Through our older workers training program, which is funded through the Senior Community Service Employment Program, we were able to find a job for an unemployed 55-year-old who had been selling blood plasma to cover their bills."