



Wider Opportunities for Women

Labor Budget Features Innovation, Standards Enforcement Over New Dollars

May 8, 2009

On the heels of a massive infusion of training dollars through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, President Obama's first budget largely calls for holding annual spending steady for workforce development in 2010, the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1, 2009. The budget request for line-item programs will be acted upon in Congressional appropriations bills in coming months

The major Employment and Training Administration program for training, including **WIA** adult, youth, dislocated worker, **Community Service Employment for Older Americans**, **migrant workers**, as well as the **Carl T. Perkins Career and Technical Education** program in the Department of Education, are all held to less than a 1% increase.

At the same time, Department of Labor budget materials released Thursday do contain interesting new program directions and requests for several significant funding increases. Some increases, such as that for the Women's Bureau and Office of Federal Contract Compliance, were recommended by WOW last December and January to the Presidential Transition Team.

- Community colleges will become the focus of the Department of Labor's \$125 million **Career Pathways Innovation Fund**, which will be re-oriented to award grants to community colleges and consortia of community colleges expanding career pathway programs in partnership with education and training providers, employers and the workforce investment system. With a 7.4% increase, funds may also be used for capacity building activities such as curriculum development faculty hiring and equipment purchase.
- A 68% increase to \$11.6 million is requested for "rigorous, randomized" evaluations of Title I Adult programs, YouthBuild and possibly senior and other programs in order to inform future policy and investment decisions.
- A \$50 million pilot is requested to demonstrate **transitional job program models** for noncustodial parents, including young parents. Transitional jobs combine short-term subsidized or supported employment with case management services to help individuals with significant barriers obtain the skills needed for unsubsidized jobs.
- A 1.7% increase is requested for the **Women's Bureau**, enabling it to maintain its staffing level of 52 FTEs and possibly resume some of the analytic and informational activities discontinued in recent years. The DOL budget says the Bureau's roles include "advising and assisting in the development of DOL policies and programs," an activity WOW believes should be undertaken at the outset of the development of any new policy in the department.
- A 1.7% increase would bring the **Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations (WANTO)** to its fully authorized level of \$1 million.. The Women's Bureau will work with community-based organizations to expand the placement and retention of women in green industries as well as construction and advanced manufacturing.

- A 31% increase to \$27.8 million is requested for the **Office of Apprenticeship**, which administers and certifies the 30,000 apprenticeship sponsors representing 225,000 employers and enrolling more than 300,000 individuals a year. The office plans to promote coordination with the workforce system and stress “equal opportunity for individuals, including women and minorities, to participate in apprenticeship programs.”
- \$57.5 million, a 19% increase, is requested for pilots, demonstrations and research under WIA. Emphasis will be given to increasing the **understanding of what program models and specific interventions** best prepare different populations to compete in the changing economy. Attention will be given to increasing the market participation of “underutilized populations.”
- \$50 million is provided for the a **Green Jobs Innovation Fund**, an extension of the competitive grant awards under Section 171 of WIA for pilot projects. ETA estimates that up to 60 grants serving 8,300 participants can be funded emphasizing pre- and registered apprenticeship programs, career pathways programs and community-based partnerships serving targeted populations preparing for employment in green industries.
- \$114.5 million, a 64% increase for **Youth Build**, the job training and educational opportunities program for at-risk youth up to age 24. The request will enable the program to continue at the same level as with both the 2009 appropriation and the \$70 million more received in the stimulus bill. ETA will stress the transition to post-secondary education at community colleges and registered apprenticeships in this competitive grant program. It will also emphasize training in green construction for industry recognized instruction.
- While level-funded, the Labor Department will strongly encourage states to include assessment and data-driven career counseling to support **Dislocated Workers** training and job search activities in areas of anticipated economic and job growth. DOL is requesting a 45% increase, or \$71 million, for a reserve account in case of additional lay-offs during the downturn.
- \$15 million is requested for competitive grants to support **development of longitudinal data** systems to integrate education and workforce data, including demographic information, high school and college information, and quarterly wage data. The data is intended to improve the quality and accessibility of performance data reported by training programs.
- \$109,521, a 33.4% increase, for the **Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP)** to enforce affirmative action provisions of contracts using federal dollars. The 213 additional staff (FTEs), bringing the total to 798 will support a new case management system and enforcement and outreach efforts related to compensation. The 2010 staffing level will be slightly higher than it was in 2001. The office also received \$7.2 million under the Recovery Act, which supports 50 FTEs. In addition to monitoring and enforcement, OFCCP provides TA to federal contractors and forms linkage agreements between contractors and job training programs.

- \$227.7 million, a 44% increase, is sought for the Wage and Hour Division bringing staffing up to 1,572 from 1,283 FTE. WHD promotes compliance with labor standards, including Davis Bacon prevailing wages, the minimum wage, overtime and the Family Medical Leave Act. This funding is in addition to the \$22 million the division received under ARRA to hire 116 FTEs.
- A 39% increase to \$37 million for the **Office of Disability Policy** for an initiative that will focus on working with One-Stops, employers, labor-management partnerships, labor unions, and other stakeholders to improve the employment process for individuals with disabilities utilizing pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs, and career-related community service opportunities.
- \$115 million, a 7% increase, for **reintegration of ex-offenders**.

For more information contact Susan Rees, srees@wowonline.org