



2010 – 2011 Department of Labor Accomplishments

At the Department of Labor, we are working hard to prepare America's workforce to meet the challenge of out-innovating, out-educating and out-building our global competition. The Department strives to help foster an economy in which good jobs are available for everyone and American workers are prepared with the skills necessary to be productive in these jobs throughout their lifetimes. This means jobs that can support a family. Jobs that are sustainable. Jobs that are safe and secure. Jobs that can lift up the middle class. The following list highlights the accomplishments of the U.S. Department of Labor, under the leadership of Secretary Hilda L. Solis, for the year 2010-2011 – actions that demonstrate this Administration's strong commitment to improving working conditions and increasing employment opportunities for all Americans.

- **Getting America Back to Work:** The Department of Labor is working to get America back to work by providing job seekers the skills necessary to land the good paying jobs of the future and by linking employers looking to hire with Americans looking to work.
 - Preparing America's Workforce: The Department served 39.7 million Americans through the Employment and Training Administration's programs from July 2009 through June 2010, including:
 - 22 million who received career counseling or help with job search, including resume assistance;
 - 8.9 million adults who participated in more comprehensive job training programs, including skills training;
 - 685,000 workers who were placed into new jobs through the Workforce Investment Act Adult and Dislocated Worker programs.
 - Of the 431,722 youth who were placed into jobs, 33,445 earned a high school diploma, GED, post-secondary degree, or certificates, and 44,000 were Job Corps graduates.
 - Transitioning Veterans Into the Workforce: The Department administers programs to help Veterans transition from the military service into civilian employment. Given the importance of honoring the service of America's Veterans, the Labor Department is working closely with the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans' Affairs to make sure that every returning Service Member has access to career counseling and job training programs. Through a network of approximately 3,000 Workforce Investment Act One Stop Career Centers nationwide, Local Veterans' Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program specialists conduct outreach to employers and engage in advocacy efforts with hiring executives to increase employment opportunities for veterans, encourage the hiring of disabled Veterans, and generally assist veterans to gain and retain employment. We're also working to link businesses that want to hire a Veteran with Veterans looking for work. The Department's Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) served 1.674 million veterans in 2010, assisting 473,700 who entered into employment.
 - Investing in a Clean Energy Future: The transition to a clean energy economy will reduce our dependence on foreign energy, enhance our national security, and provide new jobs for American workers. Through the Recovery Act, the Department invested \$500 million in 189 green jobs training programs to make careers in solar, wind, biofuels and other clean energy sources available to Americans throughout the United States.



- *On-the-Job Training (OJT)*: In June 2010, the Department announced \$75 million in Recovery Act funds for OJT National Emergency Grants (NEGS). OJT NEGs are a one-time funding source to support on-the-job training for dislocated workers experiencing prolonged unemployment, especially in geographic areas severely impacted by the recession. This is a win-win for workers and employers. For workers experiencing prolonged unemployed, OJT gets them back into the job market earning a paycheck, and refreshing their work skills and habits. For employers, especially small businesses, OJTs offer the unique opportunity to offset initial training costs to fill positions while building organizational productivity as the participants learn job requirements.
- *Health Care Sector and High Growth Grants*: The Department awarded approximately \$220 million in Recovery Act-funded competitive grants to support recruitment, retention and career pathways in the health care sector and other high growth areas. Training provided through these grants will lead to recognized credentials, such as associate degrees, licenses, and registered apprenticeship-related credentials. To ensure the maximum return on each investment, the Department has coordinated with the Department of Health and Human Services to align its Recovery Act health care training investments with their health information technology extension centers in an effort to expand training and job opportunities in health IT. Also, the Department is helping California and Florida design pilot projects that explore approaches to supporting and training Community Health Workers.
- **Keeping Workers Safe:** The Department of Labor is working to ensure that every employer takes responsibility for the safety and health of all their workers, and is partnering with employers to ensure they have the tools and incentives necessary to make good health and safety decisions. In America, no worker should lose his or her life simply for going to work.
 - *Protecting the Safety and Health of the American Worker*: In April 2010, the Department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) collected the largest fine (\$50.6 million) in the agency's history against British Petroleum (BP) for failing to comply fully with an agreement settling citations issued following a refinery explosion that killed 15 people and injured 170 more in Texas. OSHA also launched its severe violator enforcement program in 2010. It also provided over 26,000 small businesses with free on-site compliance assistance, and responded to over 200,000 requests for information by phone and email. The agency held the first-ever Latino Worker Safety Summit to address safety and health issues in this important community, which suffers the highest rates of work-related injuries and deaths in the Nation, and also issued a long-awaited standard to protect people who work on cranes and derricks.
 - *Keeping Miners Safe*: During 2010-2011, the Mine Safety and Health Administration responded to the Upper Big Branch disaster by using every tool at its disposal to protect miners. This included conducting impact inspections, placing appropriate mines on notice of a potential pattern of violations, seeking injunctive relief against mine operators that impede inspections or engage in a hazardous pattern of violation, pursuing scofflaw operators who fail to pay assessed penalties for violations, increasing education, outreach and compliance assistance, developing and revising safety and health standards to strengthen protections for miners, and implementing coordinated programs to end black lung disease and eliminate violations that lead to catastrophic accidents.



- *Better Wages and Conditions for Farmworkers*: By rewriting the regulations that govern the H-2A temporary agricultural program, the Department has strengthened worker protections and requirements for employers who are looking to bring non-immigrant foreign workers to the U.S. to perform agricultural labor or services of a temporary or seasonal nature. Through this effort the Department has ensured that the H-2A temporary agricultural worker program is only available to employers with a legitimate temporary need for non-immigrant workers. The Department must certify that no American workers are available for the job, and employers are required to pay all farm workers a fair and competitive wage, and to provide safe living conditions for all domestic and legal migrant farmworkers. In doing so, the Department not only protects foreign farmworkers from exploitation but also protects similarly employed domestic workers from adverse effects on wages and working conditions.
- *Combating Child Labor*: The Department's Wage and Hour Division published a Final Rule, effective on July 19, 2010, designed to protect working children from hazards in the workplace, while also recognizing the value of safe work to children and their families. The rule prohibits children under the age of 18 from engaging in unsafe occupations, such as door-to-door or street corner sales, operating chain saws, or working in poultry slaughtering. In addition, the Wage and Hour Division implemented enhanced civil money penalties for child labor violations involving youth who are too young to be legally employed, and brought greater transparency to the child labor civil money penalty assessment process. The Department is also addressing global farm labor issues. The Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB) funds projects to combat exploitation of children in commercial agriculture, in sectors such as cocoa production in West Africa, and in tobacco and tea production in Malawi.
- **Providing For Your Family and Keeping What You Earn**: The Department of Labor is fighting to ensure that workers are paid the hourly and overtime wages they've earned, workplaces are free of discrimination, retirement is secure, and insurance companies play by the rules. Workers who do their part can expect their employer to pay them the wages they have earned, and to keep their end of the bargain when it comes to health and retirement benefits.
 - *Work-Family Balance for Middle Class Families*: As more American families become two income families, and as the wage earners in those families find themselves working longer hours, the need for family friendly labor policies has never been greater. That's why the Administration endorsed the Healthy Families Act to provide workers with sick leave to take care of themselves or their families. It's why the Department of Labor is moving quickly to implement the portion of Health Care Reform that provides working mothers with time and a private place to express breast milk. And it's why the Department recently provided guidance to clarify that the Family and Medical Leave Act permits same-sex parents and numerous Americans who are aunts, uncles, grandparents and others who assume child rearing responsibilities time off to care for a sick child. Each of these improvements will make it easier for American workers to balance their professional and personal responsibilities. To expand our outreach and promote flexible work arrangements and policies that support the realities of American workers' lives, the Women's Bureau launched a National Dialogue on Workplace Flexibility to take place in ten cities across the country.
 - *Wage Enforcement, Education and Outreach*: The Wage and Hour Division (WHD) is working to ensure that, in difficult economic times, employers comply with minimum wage and overtime laws, so that workers in the United States are paid the wages they've earned. The Wage and Hour Division has worked hard to get these workers their full paychecks by adding 300 new investigators over the past



two years. Since January of 2009, the Department secured nearly \$313 million in back wages for 517,000 workers. In April 2010, the division launched the “We Can Help” nationwide campaign that connects America’s most vulnerable and low-wage workers with the broad array of services offered by the Department. To provide workers a better opportunity to seek redress for labor law violations and to pursue their right to private litigation, the Wage and Hour Division established a local referral service with the American Bar Association to connect workers to attorneys who may be able to help.

- *Promoting Equal Pay and Opportunity for Working Women:* By establishing the National Equal Pay Enforcement Task Force, a collaborative effort among the Labor Department, the Department of Justice and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Obama Administration will ensure strategic enforcement of pay discrimination cases. In addition, the Department’s Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs announced plans to engage in rulemaking that will seek input on a new compensation-based data collection tool and will launch new public education efforts so that working women, and their employers, understand the law. DOL is focusing enforcement efforts on individual and systemic pay discrimination that affects American families throughout the country. The Women’s Bureau hosted a summit with key stakeholders, advocates, community leaders and experts to identify the scope of the pay gap and ways to improve enforcement efforts and data collection. The Women’s Bureau and the Employment and Training Administration have jointly administered the Women in Apprenticeship and Non-Traditional Occupations (WANTO) competitive grants to recruit, hire, train, and retain women in registered apprenticeship programs for non-traditional and green-related occupations with the goal of increasing opportunities for women to obtain career pathways into sustainable good jobs.
- *Making Health Care More Affordable for Working Families:* Through the Recovery Act, the Department of Labor implemented a new program to provide a subsidy to laid off workers to make it more affordable to extend their health care benefits. It’s estimated that 23,794 Americans took advantage of the program, allowing these families to save an estimated \$52,113,768. The Department responded to over 264,000 inquiries related to the COBRA subsidy which was implemented as part of the Recovery Act.
- *Putting Health Care Reform Into Action:* Since the 2010 passage of comprehensive health care reform, the Department has played a key role on the Administration’s implementation team. Working with the Departments of Health and Human Services and Treasury, the Department has issued eight regulations, covering issues such as the elimination of preexisting conditions for children under age 19, internal and external appeals of benefit denials, the extension of coverage for children up to age 26, and a ban on rescissions. The Labor Department also has issued other implementation guidance, including four technical releases and six sets of Frequently Asked Questions, to assist stakeholders with compliance.
- *Strengthening the Safety Net for the Unemployed:* The Recovery Act provided incentives for states to update antiquated unemployment laws to make unemployment assistance available to more American workers. In addition, efforts by the Administration resulted in the extension of unemployment benefits during these challenging economic times, when many job seekers simply haven’t been able to find work. Since January 2009, the Department has ensured that 34 million Americans received the unemployment benefits they earned. And because of the modernization efforts in the Recovery Act, an estimated 200,000 unemployed Americans received benefits they would not have otherwise received.

www.dol.gov Current: July 26, 2011