



## DOL News Brief

January 7, 2010

[Subscribe](#) | [Send Feedback](#) | [PDF Version](#)



### EFAST2 System Goes Live

The Department's Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA) converted to a total electronic system of online filing for the Forms 5500 and the new Form 5500-SF on Dec. 31, 2009. The all-electronic EFAST2 system allows the public to submit and access filings online. "Now that the EFAST2 system is operational, the federal government and public will for the first time have real time, online access to financial information about private-sector employee benefit plans," said Phyllis C. Borzi, Assistant Secretary of EBSA.

- [View the EFAST2 Site](#)
- [Read the News Release](#)

### Phase 2: You Rate the Tools

The "Tools for America's Job Seekers Challenge" has entered Phase 2 — where job seekers and workforce professionals are invited to vote for their favorite tools, make comments, and of course, apply for jobs! Time is running out to explore the more than 500 tools that have been posted. Your feedback will let developers know what you want to see in a job-site and will lead to improved resources for America's job seekers.

- [Take the Challenge](#)

### Mine Health & Safety Act Turns 40



December 30, 2009 marked the 40th anniversary of the signing of the Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act, which instituted the strongest, most comprehensive occupational safety

and health protections that had ever been enacted in the country. The Act increased enforcement powers at mines, mandated four complete inspections of underground coal mines annually, and established mandatory fines for all violations and criminal penalties for certain violations. It also established safety standards aimed at curbing mine accidents such as roof falls, mine fires and explosions, and designated limits on unhealthy coal mine dust.

- [Read the News Release](#)

### What's Hot

#### Secretary Announces Green Jobs Grants

On Wednesday, January 6, Secretary Solis announced nearly \$100 million in green jobs training grants, as authorized by the Recovery Act. The grants will support job training programs to help dislocated workers and others, including veterans, women, and minorities find jobs in expanding green industries. Approximately \$28 million of the total funds will support projects in communities impacted by auto industry restructuring. "This announcement is part of the administration's long-term commitment to fostering both immediate economic revitalization and a clean energy future," said Secretary Solis. The grants are built on strategic partnerships — requiring labor and business to work together. The 25 projects selected, ranging from approximately \$1.4 to \$5 million, are located across the country.



- [Read the News Release](#)
- [Visit DOL's Green Jobs Site & Watch Video](#)

#### ETA Rolls Out Green Jobs Community of Practice

The Department's Employment & Training Administration (ETA) recently launched the Green Jobs Community of Practice (CoP). This on-line virtual community is available through ETA's knowledge sharing and learning platform — Workforce3One.org. Green Jobs CoP will provide a platform for workforce professionals and leading green job experts to share promising practices, serve as a venue for providing technical assistance to ETA grant-funded programs, and provide a central point of communication.

- [Visit the Green Jobs CoP](#)

### DOL Working For You

#### Summer Job Ignites Solar Career

Growing up in a tough California neighborhood helped keep nineteen year-old Kwanasia Smith motivated towards securing full time employment. Now, a green jobs training program has launched her career.

Smith enrolled in an Oakland summer jobs program funded by the Recovery Act. She studied solar paneling, mounting and wiring, and spent hours in the hot sun learning roofing skills. She impressed the employer and was later offered a full time position with the Sun's Free Solar, a solar panel installation company. "I could see I could trust Kwan's dedication and desire," said her boss, Kevin Good.

Smith admitted that having a green job "is fun, easy and different," but what



---

she learned most of all is that "hard work pays off."

---

## Mentoring Month

Every day, mentors in communities across our nation provide essential support and guidance to young people and fulfill critical local needs that often elude public services. Whether a day is spent helping with homework, playing catch, or just listening, these moments can have a lasting effect on a child's life. During National Mentoring Month, we recognize those who give generously of themselves by mentoring the next generation and encourage everyone to give back by mentoring young people in your communities who may lack role models.



- [Read the President's Proclamation](#)

---

## National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month

The United States was founded on the principle that all people are born with an unalienable right to freedom — an ideal that has driven the engine of American progress throughout our history. During National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month, we acknowledge that forms of slavery still exist in the modern era, and highlight the many fronts in the ongoing battle for civil rights.

- [Read the President's Proclamation](#)

---

## 40th Anniversary Of The National Environmental Policy Act

Forty years ago, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) was signed into law, establishing concrete objectives for Federal agencies to prevent damage to the environment, while emphasizing public involvement. That is why NEPA remains a vital tool for the administration as it works to protect our national resources and revitalize our economy. "Our Nation's long-term prosperity depends upon our faithful stewardship of the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the land we sow," noted President Obama.

- [Read the President's Proclamation](#)

---

## Upcoming Deadlines & Events Spotlight: OFCCP is Listening

On January 12, Patricia Shiu, Director of the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) will host the first in a series of Web Listening Sessions. OFCCP is seeking input from stakeholders to enhance the agency's existing regulations and improve compliance with the laws that OFCCP enforces. Each session will highlight a different portion of their regulatory agenda, and participants will be able to submit comments and

---

## News You Can Use

### Congress Extends COBRA

On December 19, President Obama signed legislation extending the eligibility period for the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) premium reduction through February 28, 2010 — an additional two months — and the maximum period for receiving the subsidy for an additional six months. "Millions of unemployed Americans and their families will be better able to afford and keep their health benefit coverage because of this new law," said Assistant Secretary of the Employee Benefits Security Administration Phyllis C. Borzi. "However, it is critical that individuals that feel they are eligible for the additional premium subsidy continue to pay 35 percent of premiums to retain their right to the extended subsidy, even if they have not yet received notice from their employers about the extension."

- [Get COBRA Updates](#)

### 2009 Form M-1 Available Online

DOL's Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA) announced the availability of the 2009 Form M-1 annual report for multiple employer welfare arrangements (MEWAs). The online filing system allows a filer the flexibility to complete the form in multiple sessions, print a copy and submit it at no cost. EBSA's Web site also includes a user manual, frequently asked questions, and a link to submit questions electronically.

- [Read the News Release](#)
- [Visit the Web Site](#)

---

## DOL in Action

### OSHA Proposes More Than \$1.4 Million in Penalties for Fatal Explosion

Following a fatal explosion at the Houston-based CES Environmental Services Inc., DOL's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) fined the employer \$1.4 million for failing to protect its workers. "Proper precaution prevents deaths," said Secretary Solis. "Employers should take steps to eliminate hazards and provide a safe working environment for their workers. That is the law." In the past 11 months, three workers at the company's Houston and Port Arthur, Texas facilities have been killed.

- [Read the News Release](#)

### OSHA Protects Whistleblower; Seizes Corvette



Special agents from the Department's Office of the Inspector General recently joined U.S. marshals to seize a vehicle from the president of Brocon Petroleum Inc., after the Freehold, N.J. company failed to pay \$7,500 in back wages to a former employee. The federal order resolved the lawsuit filed after the company violated whistleblower provisions of the Occupational Safety and Health Act by terminating an employee whose complaint

was suspected of prompting an Occupational Safety and Health Administration inspection.

- [Read the News Release](#)

---

## National News

### President Obama Continues "Educate to Innovate" Campaign

President Obama recently honored educators from across the country for excellence in

feedback via email, phone, or Web chat. Additional Webinar sessions will follow on January 14th and January 20th.

#### OFCCP Web Listening Series

- [January 12, 2010 — Webinar](#)
- [January 14, 2010 — Webinar](#)

#### OFCCP — Compliance Assistance Seminar for Construction Contractors

- [January 8, 2010 — Richmond, VA](#)
- [January 14, 2010 — Philadelphia, PA](#)
- [January 21, 2010 — Philadelphia, PA](#)
- [January 29, 2010 — Richmond, VA](#)

#### Office of Public Engagement — Tribal Consultation Meetings

- [January 12, 2010 — Phoenix, AZ](#)

#### OFCCP — AAP Development and Preparing for a Desk Audit

- [January 12, 2010 — Philadelphia, PA](#)
- [January 14, 2010 — Baltimore, MD](#)
- [January 26, 2010 — Philadelphia, PA](#)
- [January 28, 2010 — Baltimore, MD](#)

#### EBSA — Retirement Planning Workshop

- [January 13, 2010 — Oxon Hill, MD](#)

#### OFCCP — Long Island Industry Liaison Group Meeting

- [January 13, 2010 — Farmingdale, NY](#)

#### OFCCP — Affirmative Action Plan (AAP) Workshop

- [January 13, 2010 — Pittsburgh, PA](#)

#### OFCCP — Compliance Assistance Seminar

- [January 13, 2010 — Boston, MA](#)
- [January 20, 2010 — Boston, MA](#)
- [January 21, 2010 — Baltimore, MD](#)

#### OFCCP — Veteran Employment Conference

- [January 15, 2010 — San Francisco, CA](#)

#### OFCCP — Compliance Assistance Seminar for Supply and Service Contractors

- [January 15, 2010 — Richmond, VA](#)

#### OFCCP — Open Forum Compliance Assistance

- [January 22, 2010 — San Antonio, TX](#)

#### OFCCP — Workforce Awareness Group Seminar

- [January 22, 2010 — Richmond, VA](#)

#### OFCCP — Beyond the Written AAP

- [January 27, 2010 — Houston, TX](#)

#### EBSA — Getting It Right: Know Your Fiduciary Responsibilities Seminar

mathematics and science teaching at the second "Educate to Innovate" campaign event. "Passionate educators with issue expertise can make all the difference, enabling hands-on learning that truly engages students and preparing them to tackle the grand challenges of the 21st century," he said. The President also announced key new partnerships with public-private investments of more than \$250 million.



- [Read the WH Press Release](#)
- [Watch the Video](#)

---

## Recovery Highlights

### DOL Announces Grant Exceeding \$2.2 Million to Assist Texas Workers

The Department announced more than \$2.2 million in National Emergency Grant funding to assist Texans impacted by layoffs at Alcoa Inc., Zachry Holdings Inc., Becon Construction Co. Inc., and Texas Hydraulics Inc. The grant — made available through the recovery act — will help ensure that the affected workers receive the employment and retraining services necessary for securing jobs in new local industries.

- [Read the News Release](#)

### \$2.4 Million to Idaho Workers Affected by Electronics Layoffs

Workers laid-off from Micron Technology, Inc. in Boise, Idaho will now be able to access training and employment services through a National Emergency Grant of nearly \$2.4 million. The grant, made available through the Recovery Act, will serve approximately 1,000 workers who lost their jobs due to company restructuring. Most of the workers covered are also eligible to apply for Trade Adjustment Assistance.

- [Read the News Release](#)

---

## Spotlight on States: Arkansas

### Department Provides More Than \$1.2 million to Assist Recovery Efforts

Arkansans in 38 counties impacted by storms in late 2009 will soon be able to apply for temporary jobs to assist in cleanup and recovery efforts. These positions will be made available through more than \$1.2 million in National Emergency Grant funding announced by the Department. Benefits from this funding are two-fold as displaced workers enter jobs that will in turn advance the region's recovery.

- [Read the News Release](#)

---

## Opportunities are Open: Specialists

At the U.S. Department of Labor we specialize in "Good Jobs for Everyone." Whether we are securing worker compensation, negotiating essential contracts, or ensuring equal opportunity in the workplace, DOL is committed to protecting the jobs of working families. Explore the three specialists opportunities below or [view all](#) the rewarding DOL positions.

1. Positions in the Washington DC Metro Area  
[Contract Specialist — GS-1102-11/13](#)  
DE-10-HRC-BOC-053  
Close: 01/22/2010
2. Position in Harrisburg, PA  
[Supervisory Wage and Hour Compliance Specialist — GS-1849-13/13](#)  
DE-10-PHIL-WHD-0029  
Close: 01/11/2010
3. Positions in San Francisco, CA

- [January 28, 2010 — Pasadena, CA](#)

[Equal Opportunity Specialist — GS-0360-13/13](#)  
DE-10-SF-OFCCP-035  
Close: 01/19/2010

---

Follow USDOL on 

- #dolchallenge The Job Hunting Handbook - <http://ideascale.com/t/UBj1ZFkb> 9 minutes ago
- #dolchallenge JobTitled - Knowledge for career decisions - <http://ideascale.com/t/UBj1ZFll> 28 minutes ago

[Previous Issues](#) | [Follow us on Twitter](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Send Feedback](#) | [Unsubscribe](#)

U.S. Department of Labor, Frances Perkins Building, 200 Constitution Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20210  
[www.dol.gov](http://www.dol.gov) | Telephone: 1-866-4-USA-DOL (1-866-487-2365) | TTY: 1-877-889-5627 | [Contact Us](#)