



# ASTD POLICY BRIEF

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## Spring 2009

### **Stimulus Legislation**

The 111<sup>th</sup> Congress got off to a quick start by passing the stimulus legislation, called the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (HR 1). This massive \$787 billion dollar package was signed by President Obama in February. The bill is designed, in part, to stimulate the economy and to create millions of jobs across the United States. The bill will invest heavily into new technologies, infrastructure projects, and health care. It will also invest in helping laid off workers get back to work. The legislation also includes investment in training within high growth industries through competitive grants.

The bulk of the training funds will be allocated through the publicly funded workforce system. You can access information about how much of these resources are coming to your communities by reaching out to the executive director of your local Workforce Investment Board (WIB) or the manager of your local One-Stop Career Center. For information on how to contact these agencies, visit [www.servicelocator.org/wibcontacts](http://www.servicelocator.org/wibcontacts).

If history repeats itself, applying for the \$750 million in competitive grants will require active business and industry participation with community colleges or institutions of higher education. The Department of Labor, Employment and Training website will provide more information, including notice about a future webinar to review the process to apply for grants. You can register to receive more information on these grants and other stimulus information at: [www.workforce3one.org](http://www.workforce3one.org).

There are many other bills introduced by this Congress that include significant items related to training. You can find this information on the Public Policy section of the ASTD website: [www.astd.org/ASTD/aboutus/publicPolicy](http://www.astd.org/ASTD/aboutus/publicPolicy).

### **Reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA)**

Passed in 1998, this landmark legislation created the United States' state and local workforce boards and one-stop career centers, and it required collaboration of all federally funded worker training programs. WIA was due for reauthorization in 2004, but for political and other reasons, this legislation was not reauthorized. With this Congress, the reauthorization process has begun again. The House of Representatives Committee on Education and Labor has held three public hearings with the Subcommittee on Higher Education, Lifelong Learning, and Competitiveness. You can access the videocasts and testimony notes from the committee website here: <http://edlabor.house.gov>.

Along with the \$4 billion in appropriations to the states, WIA will define the rules of the publicly funded workforce system – rules that will answer questions such as: who will serve on state and local boards?, who will pay for the one-stop career center operations?, can faith-based training programs be funded with WIA funds?, how much of the funding should be spent on training?, should some of these programs be consolidated?, and how will performance of these funds be tracked?. This may be a good time to reach out to your member of Congress and discuss this important piece of legislation.

### **Nominee for Assistant Secretary, Employment and Training Administration**

The Obama administration has announced its nominee for the Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training Administration (ETA). This position will oversee all of the worker training and employment programs in the Department of Labor, including all WIA programs, grants, and other ETA initiatives to train and upskill Americans and help them get back to work.

The administration's nominee is Jane Oates who is the Director of New Jersey's Commission on Higher Education. Prior to starting her current position in 2006, Oates served on Senator Edward Kennedy's staff as a Senior Policy Advisor on education and workforce issues, including helping to craft the current WIA legislation in 1998.

If confirmed, Oates will oversee the expansion of WIA funds and its upcoming \$750 million grant program outlined in the stimulus package. As Congress debates the reauthorization of WIA, Oates joins ETA at a critical time for the publicly funded workforce system and what the future of the system will look like.

### **Join ASTD on Capitol Hill during its International Conference & Exposition**

If you're attending ASTD's 2009 International Conference & Exposition in Washington this June, consider joining us for "Congressional Conversations," an opportunity to speak to your member of Congress about training issues and legislation that may affect the learning and performance profession. Congressional Conversations will take place on **Wednesday, June 3, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.**

ASTD will provide all of the tools and information you will need to prepare for a meeting with your member of Congress or someone on their staff. While you are there, you may have time to sit in the gallery of the House or the Senate to watch them in session, and before you leave you can check out the new visitor's center. The group will return to the Washington Convention Center and the ASTD Conference for a debrief session to discuss next steps.

If you are interested in participating, **pre-registration is required by Friday, May 22**. To register or for more information, email ASTD Public Policy at [press@astd.org](mailto:press@astd.org). (You must be registered for the ASTD International Conference & Exposition to participate in this event.)

### **Programming for Public-Sector Training Professionals Available at ASTD Conference**

The ASTD 2009 International Conference & Exposition will feature 30 sessions facilitated by learning professionals from local, state, and federal government. Rear Admiral Gary Jones, Commander, Naval Education and Training Command (NETC), will speak on Tuesday, June 2, 10:00-11:15 a.m. In addition, the program will include a panel of Chief Human Capital Officers to discuss the workforce challenges facing the federal government, and a panel discussion by Chief Learning Officers from four federal agencies.

Discounted registration rates are available for government employees. More information may be found at [www.astd2009.org/government](http://www.astd2009.org/government).