



ASTD POLICY BRIEF

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American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Training Grants Available

Signed by President Obama on February 17th, the landmark stimulus legislation, ARRA, included \$3.9 billion to the Department of Labor for training that has been allocated to state and local workforce boards. An additional \$750 million is being devoted to competitive grants for high growth industries, and \$500 million of these funds will invest in projects under the new Green Jobs Act.

The competitive grants will require active private-sector participation with community colleges or higher education institutions. Additional information about grants is available on the Department of Labor/Employment and Training Administration website: www.doleta.gov/grants. If your organization is interested in partnering on one of these grant opportunities, it is a good idea to reach out to your local workforce board, community college, technical school, or university.

To help members gather more information about public funding for training, including grants, ASTD invited a representative from the Department of Labor/Employment and Training Administration to lead a webcast. An archived recording of the webcast, *Leverage Public Partnerships to Train Your Workforce*, is available [here](#).

Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Reauthorization Update

One of ASTD's public policy initiatives is to advocate for the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), the landmark legislation originally passed in 1998 to streamline and coordinate workforce training programs at the federal level. While WIA reauthorization has been on the Congressional agenda several times in recent years, it has not passed. However, in this session of Congress, both committees in the House and the Senate are working on this legislation and have held public hearings in recent months. More information from the committees' hearings may be found here: http://help.senate.gov/Hearings/2009_07_16/2009_07_16.html or <http://edlabor.house.gov/hearings/labor/competitive-workforce/>.

In addition to WIA reauthorization, ASTD is following specific training bills. Of the more than 300 pieces of legislation introduced in this session of Congress that include training, ASTD is tracking specific legislation of interest to members and the workforce development community. Check the legislative tracking chart on the [public policy page](#) of ASTD's website for up-to-date information.

ASTD Goes to Capitol Hill

On June 3, during the ASTD International Conference & Exposition in Washington D.C., members and chapter leaders took a trip to Capitol Hill to meet with U.S. Congressional representatives and their staffs. The task at hand: to reach out to federal leadership and create awareness about the learning profession's potential role in workforce development initiatives.

ASTD members were prepared and had the information needed to discuss the training components of ARRA and the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act. The goal was to introduce ASTD, present information and expertise that ASTD's member community can provide, and to continue the dialogue with members of Congress and their staffs after these meetings.

After the meetings on Capitol Hill, the group participated in a debrief session at the ASTD conference to discuss how to stay involved in legislative activity at the local, state, and federal levels. A wrap-up article was included in the [June issue of ASTD Links](#).

New Workforce Readiness Report

Together with Corporate Voices for Working Families, the Conference Board, and the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), ASTD produced a new report, *The Ill-Prepared U.S. Workforce: Exploring the Challenges of Employer-Provided Workforce Readiness Training*, on the challenges employers face finding skilled workers. The information was drawn from a survey of 217 employers about their training of newly-hired graduates of high school and two- and four-year colleges. The survey, conducted during 2008, included employers in manufacturing, financial services, non-financial services, education, government, and other non-profits. Almost half of respondents said they have to provide readiness training for new hires, and the majority of respondents rate their programs as only "moderately" or "somewhat successful."

Download a free copy of the report here: <http://www.astd.org/content/research/researchReports/>.

American Graduation Initiative

In July, President Obama announced plans to expand the use of community colleges. Speaking at Macomb Community College outside of Detroit, the President proposed investing \$12 billion into the country's community colleges over the next decade. The plan, known as the American Graduation Initiative, seeks to jump start and expand the use of the community college system.

At a time when most new jobs will require some post-secondary education, the president's proposal aims to create five million new community college degrees and certificates by 2020. Congress must approve the president's plan, unveiled at a time of severe budget cuts for community colleges; some have even moved to cap enrollments. If implemented, the President's plan would sharply raise federal financial support of two-year institutions. ASTD will continue to monitor this initiative.