



# Focus on Training in Washington

In an economic environment that has left so many without work options, One-Stop Career Centers offer training and employment resources for all.

By Jennifer Homer

With unemployment in the United States hovering at the 10 percent mark and “real” unemployment projected to be almost 18 percent, the public workforce system has been very busy helping millions of citizens develop their skills, build their résumés, and find employment.

Two major components of the system are 600 Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) that lead the workforce development strategies in local communities and 3,000 One-Stop Career Centers that provide employment and training services for adult workers, businesses, and youth. In many areas across the United States, traffic in and out of One-Stop Career Centers has more than doubled during the recession.

With the theme of “Preparing a Competitive U.S. Workforce: Reflection, Reinvestment, Recovery,” the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB) held its annual Forum in Washington, D.C., in early March. Board members from state and local WIBs, community partners, and other organizations attended the conference, which achieved record attendance and brought together tremendous energy

and enthusiasm for sharing best practices and achievements in workforce development at the local level.

During the conference, Jane Oates, assistant secretary for employment and training at the U.S. Department of Labor, noted that getting people back to work is priority number one. In addition to providing an overview of the agency’s draft strategic plan for 2010-2016, Assistant Secretary Oates acknowledged the commitment and hard work of the entire workforce investment system at

the federal, state, and local levels during the ongoing economic crisis and shared some interesting data:

- A record 7.7 million people benefited from the services of the workforce investment system in 2009, which is a 320 percent increase compared with the previous two years.
- The focus on summer youth programs was tremendous—more than 300,000 youth (double the original estimate) were given summer employment opportunities, and 15,000 of those were able to go to work full-time with the same employer from the summer job.

In addition to funding other grants, the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) has awarded \$715 million thus far in competitive grants from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. More information about grant funding, including information about new solicitations, can be found at [www.doleta.gov/grants](http://www.doleta.gov/grants).

Looking ahead, ETA is continuing to focus on the Rapid Response program that provides resources for employees affected by a company layoff; continuing to support and build Registered Apprenticeship programs; strengthening youth programs; funding competitive grants, including those that support workforce training for high-demand industries; and providing funding to foster innovation within the workforce system.

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## Resources to Help

- ETA recently updated its resources for grants. Visit [www.workforce3one.org](http://www.workforce3one.org) to access a new web-based grant application toolkit, including a “101” guide to applying for competitive grants.
- Contact your local One-Stop Career Center to find out what resources are available and how you can access them. You can search by zip code or city and state at [www.careeronestop.org](http://www.careeronestop.org). When you meet with the One-Stop Center staff, explain what kind of job or role you are looking for and what type of training and development will help you move in that direction.
- Be sure that you are an ASTD member at the local and national levels. Building your network and being actively involved at the local level is important, and career development resources such as [www.jobs.astd.org](http://www.jobs.astd.org) and [www.careeronestop.org](http://www.careeronestop.org) will help you position yourself for a job search. Information about ASTD local chapters may be found at [www.astd.org/chapters](http://www.astd.org/chapters).