



# ASTD POLICY BRIEF

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## ASTD Policy Brief Winter 2010

### **DOL Announces Grantees for Green Jobs Grants**

On January 6, U.S. Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis announced nearly \$100 million in green jobs training grants as authorized by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009. The grants will support job training programs to help dislocated workers and others find jobs in green industries and related occupations. Approximately \$28 million of the total funds will support projects in communities impacted by the auto industry's restructuring.

Through the Energy Training Partnership Grants being administered by the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration, 25 projects ranging from approximately \$1.4 to \$5 million each will receive grants. The grants are built on strategic partnerships between labor and business.

Training activities funded through this program will be tailored based on occupations and skills identified as in demand in local areas around the U.S. These grants are part of a larger \$500 million ARRA initiative to fund workforce development projects that promote economic growth by preparing workers for careers in the energy efficiency and renewable energy industries. DOL expects to release funding for two remaining green grant award categories over the next several weeks. More information may be found here: <http://www.dol.gov/opa/media/press/eta/eta20091526.htm>.

### **Jobs for Main Street Act Passes the House**

Before the December break, the House of Representatives passed the Jobs for Main Street Act of 2009. In an overview of the legislation from the [National Skills Coalition](#), the \$150 billion jobs bill will include significant new investments in infrastructure, fiscal relief to preserve education, law enforcement, and other public jobs, and a six-month extension of unemployment benefits and COBRA health insurance subsidies provided under ARRA. Like the Recovery Act, the bill largely focuses on increasing investments in existing programs, providing \$1.25 billion in new training funds under the Department of Labor. The Senate will likely take up a jobs bill this year.

### **OPM issues Regulation Mandating Stronger Training Programs**

According to a December 10, 2009 article on [Government Executive.com](#), the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) issued a regulation requiring agencies to monitor their training efforts more strictly, with an eye toward creating better managers. The rule, which implements provisions in the 2004 Federal Workforce Flexibility Act, requires agencies to train managers within one year of their appointment to a supervisory position on mentoring and employee development, conducting performance appraisals, and dealing with poor performers.

“The focus of the program should be to develop managers as well as strengthen organizational capability, and to ensure an adequate number of well-prepared and qualified candidates for leadership positions,” the regulation stated. The new requirements take effect immediately. To ensure training is effective, the regulation calls on agency heads to track, on at least an annual basis, whether their programs meet agency goals and are closing workforce talent gaps.

### **Congressional Conversations Continue**

At the ASTD 2009 International Conference & Exposition, a group of members visited Capitol Hill to discuss training and workforce development issues with Congressional staff. This first event of its kind for ASTD was a success and the public policy staff is continuing the dialogue on a variety of legislative issues including 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.

Despite being on the Congressional agenda several times in recent years, WIA reauthorization has not passed. However, it appears that momentum is building for activity on this legislation in 2010. If you serve on a state or local Workforce Investment Board, now is a good time to reach out to members of Congress to share your ideas about training and workforce development.

### **ASTD Chapter Leaders Learn from the U.S. Chamber’s Institute for a Competitive Workforce**

At the fall 2009 ASTD Chapter Leaders Conference, Karen Elzy, Executive Director of the Institute for a Competitive Workforce at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, spoke to chapter leaders about the organization’s work with policy makers and the administration on education and workforce development. She also discussed WIA reauthorization and the opportunities for chapter leaders to become more involved in these issues at the local level.

Chapter leaders also took advantage of another session that provided an overview of the workforce investment system, how to gather information about grant funding, and ASTD’s recent work with local workforce boards in the Washington, D.C. area. At the 2010 Chapter Leaders Conference, ASTD will lead another Congressional Conversations event for chapter leaders to meet with legislators on Capitol Hill.

### **Building a Working Partnership with the Public Workforce System**

ASTD members continue to find value in building a successful working partnership with the public workforce system. The public workforce system, which includes Workforce Investment Boards, One-Stop Career Centers, community colleges, and some universities, uses public funds for specific workforce training needs. And, these are the same entities that can apply for federal and state grant opportunities. In many cases, grant applications require active employer participation.

Some ASTD members who serve on Workforce Investment Boards take a “community” (or state) approach to workforce investment resources and help to advise the board and community partners about the best use of public funds for training. Some members are engaged with their local One-Stop Career Centers to advise the center about their employer or industry’s skill needs. And in some cases, members are volunteering to help One-Stop Center customers who may be looking for employment.

For information about your local resources, go to [www.careeronestop.org](http://www.careeronestop.org). Consider introducing yourself to those local contacts to discuss your organization’s training and workforce development needs.