

**STATEMENT OF  
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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR**

**BEFORE THE  
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**June 6, 2012**

Good Morning Chairman Issa, Ranking Member Cummings, and Members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the Department of Labor's efforts to train workers for good, sustainable jobs in green industries.

The President has made clear that an economy built to last needs an all-of-the-above approach to energy policy – one with strategic investments in a clean energy economy designed and produced by American workers. The Department's investments in green job training support a clean energy future that both reduces our dependence on foreign energy and supports sustainable green jobs in the United States. I'm pleased to update you on the progress of those investments.

Through the Recovery Act, the Department invested nearly \$500 million in 189 green job training and related programs to help train workers for careers in solar, wind, biofuels, and other renewable energy sources. These grants have served and are still serving more than 99,000 workers. To date, 65,200 have completed training and of these, 88% have received an employer or industry-recognized credential, such as a certificate or degree. Despite tough economic times, after completing their training, more than 25,200 workers have already found new jobs, with 81% of them in green training-related jobs. It is important to note that of the over 99,000 workers who have received services, almost 49,000 have been incumbent workers, and thus were not necessarily seeking a new position. To date, 29,899 incumbent workers that have completed training have received a credential. While some incumbent workers who received green jobs training did find new positions, for incumbent workers that did not find new jobs we estimate that at least 90% of these workers retained their current job, which may include increased advancement opportunities, wages, or job responsibilities as a result of the training received.

All three types of Recovery Act grants that focus on green jobs training are providing services that align with the needs of local employers—Energy Training Partnership, State Energy Sector Partnership, and Pathways out of Poverty. These grantees were asked to identify the occupations on which they would focus, helping ensure that participants receive training in the specific skills that employers need. Grantees are required to have employer partners that are involved with their projects, further tying grant projects to business needs.

Many of these grants have ongoing training activity, with some of the programs not finishing until 2013. As the economy continues to strengthen and growth industries emerge, we have encouraged grantees to modify training plans and curricula to meet the needs of local green energy employers. In some communities employer needs have changed since grants started, and grantees have made adjustments to continue to ensure that their projects are aligned with employer needs, such as providing training for additional occupations that are in demand in their local areas. This flexibility ensures these grants, which have already helped thousands of people, will continue to help more people.

In addition, grantees continue to recruit additional employer partners into their projects, helping to take advantage of new areas of economic growth and increase employment opportunities for program participants. A number of grantees have also added more paid work experience or internships to their projects, enabling more participation in “earn-and-learn” activities.

To monitor progress and take necessary actions to improve grant outcomes and hold grantees accountable, the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) has implemented a number of new processes. Federal Project Officers (FPO) conduct standardized on-site monitoring and desk reviews of grantees, and we follow a performance-based process for identifying and prioritizing grantees with high technical assistance needs. Grantees receive technical assistance through a coordinated effort of ETA, ETA regional offices, and the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA).

ETA provides technical assistance through several mechanisms, including in-person conferences and workshops, facilitated peer-learning conference calls, webinars on key program topics, and case studies examining promising practices implemented by high-performing grantees. Our coordinated technical assistance efforts cover a wide range of topics, from proper reporting and accounting procedures, to effective strategies for serving targeted populations. To help grantees address challenging economic conditions, our technical assistance has also focused heavily on job placement and employer engagement strategies.

In addition to monitoring the progress of these grants, the ETA is conducting formal evaluations of the green jobs training grants. These evaluations will help assess the outcomes and impact of the grants, and will provide relevant information to practitioners as well as policy makers. The department recently published its interim report for the qualitative evaluation of the training-focused grants, which included a descriptive analysis of eight grantee projects (in addition to green jobs training grants, it includes grants funded through the Health Care and Other High Growth and Emerging Grants Solicitation for Grant Applications (SGA)). This report presented an overview of the grants program with overall statistics for four SGAs and summarized the major themes emerging from the site visits and focus groups conducted to date in eight sites.

The Department has worked in close partnership with the energy and utilities sector since 2007 to understand and meet their workforce needs. ETA convened the Energy Skilled Trades Summit in conjunction with the Southern Governors' Association with over 300 participants representing industry, economic development, education, and workforce communities. State teams discussed major workforce challenges faced by the industry and developed action plans.

Twenty-five of these state teams are now fully functional state consortiums supporting this critical workforce.

As part of its support for the energy and utilities sector, the Department partnered with the Center for Energy Workforce Development (CEWD) to validate and prepare the energy generation, transmission and distribution competency model. A competency model is a collection of competencies that together define successful performance in a particular work setting. Competency models are the foundation for important human resource functions – such as recruitment and hiring, training and development and performance management – because they specifically define what is essential to train and develop a diverse, talented candidate pool.

The energy utility industry needed a mechanism that could be used by educators, workforce investment professionals, and businesses to articulate the skills required to perform key work so that effective screening of candidates can occur and training courses can be developed to prepare candidates for employment in the industry. The energy competency model is a critical tool in this effort. The Department has also added green competencies to the energy generation model, advanced manufacturing, residential and commercial construction, and automation competency models. In addition, the team is working with industry representatives and federal agency partners, including the Department of Energy, on a renewable energy competency model that will be available in the fall of 2012 to lay the foundation for the renewable sectors workforce.

More recently, the Department of Labor has also supported the Center's Get into Energy Career Pathways for Skilled Utility Technicians, a project with support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. CEWD is preparing to test a pathways model to attract low income young adults, ages 16-26, to the energy sector. We helped the Center make connections to State and Local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) to test this pathways model in multiple jurisdictions within California, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Minnesota, North Carolina, Ohio, and Washington. The model is providing a roadmap for entry into skilled utility technician positions in the energy industry with pathways to higher-level jobs in a variety of work settings.

The Department has also worked to ensure that all of our investments have as large of a reach, and make as much of an impact, as possible. For example, in June 2010, the Department awarded a \$4.9 million Community-Based Job Training grant to Westmoreland Community College (PA) and its consortium partners in West Virginia and Ohio to establish a tri-state Marcellus Shale Training Network (Marcellus ShaleNET) to develop, deploy, and disseminate a common curriculum specifically endorsed by industry for six high priority occupations in the natural gas drilling and production industry. Marcellus ShaleNet brings WIBs, their One-Stop Career Centers, industry, and training providers together to build a Marcellus-wide industry-recognized uniform training and certification program, aggregating and augmenting existing curricula, and adopting best practices as identified. The project is developing comprehensive tools for use by the One-Stop Career Centers that present a realistic picture of the work, screening and assessment tools to more quickly identify specific attributes needed for the positions, and a comprehensive pre-employment program for those who move past initial screening including an industry orientation, basic safety training, and job readiness skills.

Currently, 20 educational institutions across Ohio, New York, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia are approved to offer ShaleNET training, and as of March 31, 2012 nearly 60 companies have hired 164 graduates of the ShaleNET program.

Working collaboratively with American businesses to develop a strong and vibrant workforce is critical to growing and sustaining our Nation's economy. Through its local delivery systems in every region of the country, the Department of Labor is helping regions use local labor market information to drive strategic investments that prepare workers for good paying jobs in all fields, including green industries, an approach that clearly relies on strong partnerships with employers in order to be successful. Through these efforts, and the work we have done to implement comprehensive oversight, accountability, and technical assistance strategies, we believe our grantees have the necessary tools help American workers succeed in today's economy.

Thank you again for inviting me here today, and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

## Biographical Sketch

JANE OATES

Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training  
U.S. Department of Labor

Jane Oates was nominated by President Barack Obama to join Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis' leadership team at the Department of Labor in April, 2009. Confirmed as Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training on June 19, 2009, she now leads the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) in its mission to design and deliver high-quality training and employment programs for our nation's workers. Working with States and territories, municipalities, labor management organizations, employers, educational institutions, fellow Federal agencies, and other partners, ETA strives to assist workers in gaining the skills and credentials needed to enter careers that pay family supporting wages and offer opportunities for advancement. With a nationwide reach and focus on good jobs in promising industries, ETA programs are designed to serve every American who aspires to career success.

Prior to her appointment, Ms. Oates served as Executive Director of the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education and Senior Advisor to Governor Jon S. Corzine. In that position Oates worked to strengthen the connections among high school, post-secondary education and the workforce. Ms. Oates served for nearly a decade as Senior Policy Advisor for Massachusetts Senator Edward M. Kennedy. She worked closely with the Senator on a variety of education, workforce and national service legislative initiatives, including the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. Ms. Oates began her career as a teacher in the Boston and Philadelphia public schools and later as a field researcher at Temple University's Center for Research in Human Development and Education.

She received her BA in Education from Boston College, and an M.Ed in Reading from Arcadia University.