

**Delivering on the Promise:**

**U.S. Department of Labor**

**Self-Evaluation  
to Promote  
Community Living for People  
with Disabilities**

**Report to the President  
On Executive Order 13217**

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# Department of Labor

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The Department of Labor begins this Report by recognizing a simple truth: If people with disabilities are to fully access and be a part of their communities, they must have the opportunity to work. Work is so essential that without it people with disabilities often face isolation and segregation from the very communities in which they wish to participate.

People with disabilities *can* work when they have access to accommodations and individualized assistance – yet, as the President’s New Freedom Initiative recognizes, almost 70% of adults with disabilities are unemployed. The unemployment rate is even higher for people with the most significant disabilities, who have traditionally been relegated to non-work or residential placements. Many are still in nursing homes or other institutions, and thousands are on waiting lists for services or in day activity programs and other isolated or segregated environments.

Decades of research, demonstration projects, and other public and private activities, are challenging and changing the stereotypes that the only options for individuals with significant disabilities are segregated or non-work status. There are many successful and promising strategies for securing integrated, competitive employment: supported employment and entrepreneurship; individualized job development; job “carving” and restructuring; use of personal agents; micro-boards, micro-enterprises, cooperatives and small businesses; and personal budgets and individualized funding which promote self-determination and allow for more choice and control. These approaches, particularly when combined with assistive technology and consumer-directed personal assistance services, are increasing the employment rate of people with disabilities.

Without the economic and social benefits of employment, people with disabilities are forced into poverty and social isolation. Barriers created and sustained by outdated federal policies, lack of information, and the continued persistence of erroneous stereotypes, have made the quest for meaningful employment unobtainable for the overwhelming majority of adults with disabilities. In fact, the National Organization on Disability, following a national survey of adults with disabilities, concluded that not working is perhaps the truest definition of what it means to have a disability.<sup>1</sup>

The DOL is charged with preparing the American workforce of the 21<sup>st</sup> century for new and better jobs. It is responsible for the administration and enforcement of numerous federal statutes, covering a wide variety of workplace activities for employers and workers. The programs, services, and benefits afforded through DOL are intended for all employers and workers across the nation, including individuals with disabilities. Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao is committed to ensuring that DOL’s programs and services are available to and accessible by all people with disabilities, including those transitioning to the community, or at risk of institutionalization, segregation or isolation from their communities.

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<sup>1</sup> See Louis Harris & Associates, *Highlights of the National Organization on Disability/Harris 1998 Survey of Americans with Disabilities* (November 1998).

## II. BARRIERS AND EFFORTS TO DATE

The multiple barriers to employment and economic empowerment of adults with disabilities have been documented in numerous reports and policy documents.<sup>2</sup> These barriers include the fragmentation of existing employment services; the isolation and segregation of people with disabilities from mainstream programs and services; the lack of access to health insurance; the complexity of existing work incentives; the lack of control and choice in selection of providers and other agents; inadequate work opportunities resulting from attitudinal barriers based on historical and erroneous stereotypes; and the lack of accurate data on employment of people with disabilities needed to measure progress in eliminating barriers to their employment.

Unfortunately, in spite of multiple efforts to remove these barriers to employment, the unemployment rate for Americans with disabilities has not improved significantly over the last 12 years. In spite of numerous legislative mandates designed to address the barriers, and numerous interagency initiatives intended to facilitate the communication and collaboration needed for programs and services to work effectively and efficiently, people with disabilities remain out of the workforce at staggering levels. People with the most significant disabilities continue to be viewed as unable to contribute and are instead relegated to dependency on government programs and isolated from their communities. This view is pervasive despite multiple innovative demonstrations and model programs documenting that people with significant disabilities can work and can contribute to the fabric of community life.

Our nation's approach to employment for individuals with disabilities has historically been categorical and fragmented. No single entity has had the breadth of knowledge and scope of authority necessary to ensure a coordinated and effective strategy across and within federal agencies. In addition to the DOL, other federal agencies have responsibility for programs and services that affect the employment of people with disabilities. In a 1994 study by the General Accounting Office (GAO), 130 federal programs were identified, spread across 19 federal agencies, with a broad range of services to assist people with disabilities.<sup>3</sup> Sixty-nine of these programs specifically targeted people with disabilities and their employment-related needs. The GAO report concluded, however, that these programs do not work together as efficiently as they could to share information and overcome obstacles posed by differing eligibility criteria and uncoordinated service and benefit providers; that many federal agencies did not engage, or engaged very little, in basic information coordination with each other, with state and local agencies, and with the private sector (including the disability community).

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<sup>2</sup> See *Achieving Independence: The Challenge for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, National Council on Disability (1996) and *Re-charting the Course: First Report of the Presidential Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities*, Presidential Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities (1998).

<sup>3</sup> *Federal Programs Could Work Together More Efficiently to Promote Employment* [GAO/HEHS-96-126], General Accounting Office (1996).

The barriers created through this fragmentation contribute substantially to the staggering unemployment rate among adults with disabilities.

In response to this situation, the Presidential Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities (Task Force) was established in 1998 to create a coordinated strategy across the federal government for increasing employment for adults with the full range of disabilities. Chaired by the Secretary of Labor, the Task Force is working across 18 federal departments and agencies to: (1) review policies and practices relating to employment; (2) make recommendations to the President for modifications or changes necessary to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of programs and services; and (3) ensure that program and policy implementation is consistent with the goals of inclusion articulated in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The Task Force has also focused several of its initiatives on increasing employment for people with the most significant disabilities who are transitioning from institutions, nursing homes, and other environments in which they are either not working or are working at less than minimum wage. Based on extensive outreach to and input from multiple stakeholder groups, the Task Force identified specific actions that were needed to meaningfully address and increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities:

- Develop a consistent national policy on integrated employment.
- Increase capacity for choice and individualized budgeting.
- Increase access to technology and employment in technology fields.
- Expand opportunities for small business and entrepreneurship.
- Focus attention on youth transitioning from school to employment or post-secondary opportunities.
- Develop and leverage public/private partnerships.

An important step in addressing these needs was the creation of the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) at DOL. Based on a Task Force recommendation, Congress established and charged this new Office<sup>4</sup> with ensuring that all DOL agencies work cooperatively to fully address the employment needs and concerns of persons with disabilities. Clearly within this mandate is the goal of working across the DOL to increase employment in community settings for individuals with disabilities through better access to customized employment, training, and other individualized services and supports. ODEP's goal is not to replicate or consolidate service delivery currently provided through other parts of the DOL. Rather, ODEP will coordinate development of policy recommendations, and of the information and technical assistance needed to ensure physical, communication, and programmatic access to all DOL programs. In addition, ODEP will work with agencies to promote meaningful and effective opportunities to participate in these programs for people with disabilities. Moreover,

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<sup>4</sup> Section 1(a)(1) of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2001, Public Law 106-554.

ODEP will work to promote increasing the capacity of, and coordination across, workforce development and related systems to better meet the needs of, and improve outcomes for, youth and adults with disabilities. No other federal department or agency carries the breadth of this charge specifically relating to employment and disability. ODEP will collaborate with the Task Force as we begin implementing these actions.

DOL agencies have undertaken a number of activities over the last five years to begin addressing the need to increase employment for people with disabilities. Of particular note are the Employment Training Administration's (ETA's) access and technology initiatives, as well as the development of very strong regulations by the DOL Civil Rights Center (CRC) implementing Section 188, the nondiscrimination provisions, of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). Additional activities by ETA include the following:

- Implementing the Work Incentive Grant program, a significant vehicle for enhancing One-Stop center service delivery to people with disabilities, developing staff capacity to provide benefits planning and other information critical to successful employment (e.g., health care, transportation, and housing), increasing the availability of accessible technology in One-Stop Centers, conducting outreach to the disability community, and establishing linkages with public and private disability-related organizations.
- Developing technical assistance issuances and tools, including detailed guidance on physical and programmatic access that elaborates upon the Workforce Investment Act's Section 188 nondiscrimination regulations.
- Developing web-based technical assistance on promising practices related to training and employment of people with disabilities, as well as tutorials directed to the One-Stop Center system.
- Issuing a technical assistance guide on hidden disabilities, as related to individuals who receive Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) benefits and/or participate in Welfare-to-Work programs.
- Developing cross-agency initiatives on Native American issues and inclusion of young people with disabilities.

A more detailed discussion of ongoing activities is included in the appendices, and the reader is strongly encouraged to review these for a better understanding of the breadth of DOL activities related to increasing the employment of people with disabilities.

Notwithstanding these past efforts, many additional actions are needed to address barriers to employment for people with disabilities generally, and specifically for people with disabilities transitioning from institutions, nursing homes, or other segregated environments to the community. It is obvious that dramatic and sustained change must occur for these individuals to be integrated throughout our workforce as valued and equal participants. The structures and practices of our existing public systems have



taken decades to evolve, and their ways of doing business have become familiar and comfortable. Altering these structures in a substantive way will be a difficult and long-term project. Success will require a continuing mandate for change to prevent the patterns and practices of the past from persisting.

The DOL is committed to the actions and recommendations contained in this Report. Recognizing that bold and innovative initiatives are vital to changing negative attitudes, providing appropriate customized training and employment services, building a work environment that truly opens the door of opportunity to all people and, in particular, moving Americans with significant disabilities from spectators to participants in the world of work, Secretary Chao has directed each DOL agency to aggressively implement the policies and programs contained in this response to President Bush's Executive Order.

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*What was once only a moral imperative has now become an economic imperative as well. Our economy needs the talents and skills of people with disabilities. – Elaine L. Chao, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, D.C.*

*For many people with severe disabilities, a better future begins with a different kind of relationship between the people and agencies designated to assist them into the workforce...Without sustained effort among local people to learn and responsibly practice new ways and to develop a new culture of service, more ambitious policy goals will simply widen the gap between government rhetoric and the reality most people with disabilities face. Such a gap not only feeds cynicism and discouragement, it wastes peoples lives. – John O'Brien, "Another Look at Informed Choice," prepared for the Presidential Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities (2001).*

*After the listening and information gathering has taken place, the government must move beyond words and focus on taking action – action that will result in real, sustainable change. Policies must change, practices must change, funding must change, and attitudes must change. – Mary Kelley, Director of Governmental Affairs, National Association of Developmental Disabilities Councils.*

*To me, a job is not just a means of earning a living. For it is very much a part of who we are as persons.... Our work is one of the main vehicles through which we interact with others and affect our larger environment. Each time we miss out on an opportunity to work we are not just being deprived of a paycheck, but of the ability to have a creative and productive identity, and the larger community in turn is deprived of the contributions that we can make toward its growth and improvement. – Martha Rodriguez, Consumer.*

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### III. ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In support of the goals of Executive Order 13217, the Department of Labor has identified five broad areas requiring concerted, strategic, and collaborative efforts to ensure that Americans with disabilities can fully participate in their communities:

- Improving and increasing ***access to, and choice and customization of, employment and entrepreneurship opportunities***, supports, and services for people with disabilities, particularly those with significant disabilities.
- Increasing the availability and quality of ***personal assistants and community workers***, thereby preventing unnecessary institutionalization of people with disabilities who need assistance with activities of daily living, and providing supports necessary for those individuals to seek and maintain employment.
- Leveraging ***technology resources*** for people with disabilities, including increasing the use of technology as a tool for employment information and outreach, facilitating and increasing telework opportunities, and increasing employment opportunities in technology-related industries.
- Increasing ***innovative and strategic partnerships*** between the federal government and employers, people with disabilities, family members, providers, community organizations, and others in the private sector, including foundations and faith-based organizations.
- Increasing the numbers of ***people with disabilities working in the federal workforce***, with the Department of Labor leading by example through its commitment to hiring people with disabilities.

This chapter details DOL action steps and recommendations for each of these areas.

#### A. ***Improve and Increase Access to, and Choice and Customization of, Employment and Entrepreneurship Opportunities, Supports, and Services for People with Disabilities, Particularly Those with Significant Disabilities.***

There is a critical need to build the capacity of the generic workforce development system to provide meaningful opportunities to people with disabilities, including people with significant disabilities and high support needs, who are transitioning to the community from institutional settings or at risk of segregation. These services, while intended for all people, have not always been inclusive of or welcoming to people with disabilities. Furthermore, because people with disabilities have not been a part of the workforce system, there has been little conceptual framework on the part of those working within that system on how to provide effective services. The result is multiple

access issues for people with disabilities, relating to physical accessibility, customer relations, knowledge about promising practices, provision of accommodations, and effective strategies and services.

A key element of any effective overall strategy creating meaningful employment options for people with disabilities is the implementation of choice-based strategies. This approach shifts the balance of power between individuals with disabilities and the entities and agencies assisting them. By treating a person with a disability as a “customer” rather than a “client,” systems and programs must consider that individual’s choice of providers, services, and supports. The movement for increased choice in employment has recently begun to join forces with the broader self-determination movement within the disability field to suggest that individuals be given control of the public resources set aside for services through personal budgets and other forms of control and self-direction.<sup>5</sup> Such choice-based approaches can be particularly effective for people with significant disabilities who have been marginalized and often thought to be incapable of work, allowing them to move beyond attitudinal roadblocks and systemic barriers that have forced them into dependency on federal benefit programs.

There is also an urgent need to increase the availability of customized employment to assist people with disabilities in accomplishing their desire for work. Customized employment is based on personalized determinations of the strengths, needs, and interests of individuals with disabilities, and is also designed to meet the specific needs of employers. It can include employment opportunities developed through job carving, self-employment or entrepreneurial initiatives, or other job development or restructuring strategies. Customization assumes the provision of reasonable accommodations and supports necessary for the individual to perform the functions of a job that is individually negotiated and developed, sometimes through the use of personal agents, who may be family members or other advocates selected by the person with a disability. Customizing the terms and conditions of work through choice-based strategies, increasing access to personal budgets and other forms of person-directed financing, and otherwise mobilizing change in states and local communities are essential elements of designing effective strategies to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities who are transitioning to the community or at risk of institutionalization.

There is also a need for federal policies that support increased integrated employment opportunities. A large body of research, corroborated by anecdotal evidence, shows that integrated employment for people with significant disabilities improves employment outcomes, costs less than other adult day programs, and generates savings for taxpayers. It further indicates that the decision to serve an individual in an integrated rather than segregated program is often based on programmatic or funding concerns as opposed to the functional characteristics of an individual. Preliminary findings demonstrate that supported employment programs and other means of customizing employment to meet individual needs can lead to decreased dependency on federal disability benefit programs, a reduction in the need for costly alternatives such as

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<sup>5</sup> Self-determination refers to the ability of individuals with disabilities to control their lives, to achieve self-defined goals, and to participate fully in society.

workshops or activity centers, and an increase in the taxes paid by workers with disabilities.<sup>6</sup>

Finally, it is critical to have the data needed to measure progress in assisting people with disabilities to enter the workforce. Statistical data about the incidence, prevalence, and distribution of disability, and the characteristics and experiences of people with disabilities, is critical to planning services, evaluating programs, and formulating public policy. Federal agencies, the disability community, and other stakeholders all need accurate and reliable employment statistics for the disability population to best determine where to target grants, projects, and other federal initiatives. This need is particularly evident when outlining future federal efforts related to the transition of individuals with disabilities from institutional settings to the community.

- 1. ACTION #1 – The Department of Labor will work to increase access to mainstream employment systems by people with disabilities and to increase coordination and leveraging of resources among those systems at the federal, state, and local levels.**

*Lead Agencies:* DOL's lead agencies in this effort will be the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA), the Office of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Workforce, the Civil Rights Center in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management (OASAM), the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), and the Wage and Hour Division of the Employment Standards Administration (ESA).

*Purpose:* The purpose of this activity is to ensure that the employment-related needs of young people and adults with disabilities, particularly those who are transitioning from institutions into the community or who are at risk of institutionalization, are met by the workforce investment system.

*Background:* The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) provides the framework for delivery of employment and training services at the state and local levels to both

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<sup>6</sup> A recent 10-year longitudinal analysis of individuals with intellectual disabilities showed that integrated employment options were linked to economic self-sufficiency and earnings that were dramatically improved and sustained, as compared to segregated employment alternatives, and that surprisingly little difference existed in the demographic and functional profiles of persons served in integrated versus segregated employment settings. See J. Kregel, D. Dean, and P. Wehman, *Supported Employment Versus Sheltered Employment: A Direct Comparison of Long-Term Earnings Outcomes and Retention to Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities*, Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Workplace Supports, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia (2001). See also P. Rogan, T. Grossi, D. Mank, and F. Thomas, *A Comparison of Wages, Hours, and Benefits of Former Sheltered Workshop Participants Who are Now in Supported Employment*, Indiana University Institute on Disability and Community, Bloomington, Indiana (2001) and P. Blanck and H. A. Scharz [Health Policy & Disability Center, University of Iowa College of Law], in collaboration with J. Conroy and A. Fullerton [Center for Outcome Analysis], *Labor Force Participation and Income of Individuals with Disabilities in Sheltered and Competitive Employment: Cross-Sectional and Longitudinal Analyses from Seven States during the 1980s and 1990s* (2001).

employers and job seekers, including dislocated workers, new entrants to the workforce, and people with disabilities. These One-Stop Centers are intended to make a comprehensive range of employment, training, and related services available in a local community.

In strengthening the ability of the One-Stops and mainstream employment systems to serve individuals with disabilities, there are multiple challenges relating to physical and programmatic accessibility, customer relations, and access to knowledge about accommodations and effective service strategies. ETA has developed a number of initiatives to address these issues, including the Work Incentive Grant Program and Welfare-to-Work grants that specifically target people with disabilities. Evaluation of these grants is ongoing and will identify promising practices. ETA has also developed two guides, currently in the DOL clearance process, which will assist the workforce investment system in better serving individuals with disabilities. The guides focus on accessibility and accommodation for persons with disabilities in the One-Stops, and working with individuals who have hidden disabilities (e.g., learning disabilities, mental retardation, psychiatric disabilities, and addictive disorders).

WIA also identifies multiple programs and agencies that are to be workforce system partners, both required and optional, which must coordinate their programs and services through the local One-Stop Center System. State vocational rehabilitation (VR) programs are required partners with local One-Stop Centers and provide them with technical assistance. ETA and the Department of Education's Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) have been meeting at the federal level for several years and ETA has worked with state VR administrators on issues of mutual interest and to resolve problems related to WIA implementation. WIA emphasizes partnerships, collaboration, coordination, and integration – a significant change in direction from years past, and one that presents tremendous opportunities.

*Plan of Action:* To ensure the meaningful participation of individuals with disabilities in all employment activities, programs, and services, DOL will build on existing activities in ETA and ODEP to encourage coordinated and culturally appropriate outreach activities to individuals with disabilities; provide appropriate disability-related information, technical assistance and capacity-building to the One-Stop Center system; and explore how best to improve data collection and program evaluation activities in regard to services for individuals with disabilities. Accordingly, the following activities are DOL's initial plan of action:

- ODEP will initiate an *Olmstead Community Employment Initiative*, developing and implementing a coordinated strategy to ensure that all DOL policies and activities fully address the employment and training needs of people with disabilities who are at risk of institutionalization, or who are transitioning from institutions into the workplace and the community. ODEP will work with other DOL agencies to facilitate this process and, after obtaining input from all relevant stakeholders, will work collaboratively to develop relevant recommendations and policy initiatives across DOL.

- ODEP will award *Olmstead Community Employment Planning and Implementation Grants* to states that (1) develop an employment focus for persons with disabilities in their *Olmstead* state implementation plans and activities, and (2) incorporate activities coordinating employment and related supports at the state and local level. President Bush has requested \$8.3 million of new money in FY 2002 to fund the grants, establish a technical assistance capability, carry out research, and support joint activities, both within DOL and in collaboration with other federal agencies. Recipients will be consortia of nonprofit advocacy or service agencies and Local Workforce Investment Boards (Local Boards), and they will conduct aggressive and intensive outreach to persons with significant disabilities who are leaving or have already left institutions, who are currently in segregated environments, and/or who are at risk of segregation. Activities will focus on increased capacity and coordination, as well as the provision of ongoing feedback to ODEP and other DOL agencies on effective implementation strategies. This information will be an essential element of ODEP's work to develop and initiate federal policy recommendations.
- ETA and ODEP will work together to disseminate promising practices and successful strategies being identified under the Work Incentive Grant Program. ETA will work with ODEP to ensure close collaboration and the dissemination of information and technical assistance throughout the workforce system gleaned from the new ODEP Technical Assistance Grants. ETA will also continue to work with ODEP as this grant program progresses so that successful strategies identified in ODEP's Customized Employment and *Olmstead* Grants are leveraged and incorporated into the Work Incentive Grants and the overall workforce investment system, where applicable.
- Building upon current technical assistance developed by ETA and other agencies, ODEP will explore and coordinate development of possible new technical assistance activities, policy guidance, and training materials relating to employment of individuals with significant disabilities. Areas to be considered include the following: collaboration with non-required but essential partners and programs (such as Medicaid and community mental health services), which are critical to addressing the employment needs of people transitioning to the community; blending of personalized budgeting resources from the Social Security Administration's Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Program, vouchers and other sources; eligibility determination and documentation; service coordination among and between programs; use of personal agents and other forms of individualized support; strategies for increasing earning capacity; and other areas as identified and needed through research and outreach. These materials will be widely distributed, and trainings will be conducted throughout the workforce investment system through advocacy organizations, consumer and parent groups, and other appropriate entities.
- ODEP, in collaboration with the Task Force, ETA, and/or the Office of the Assistant

Secretary for Administration and Management's Civil Rights Center (CRC), will undertake the following activities to access information needed for determining and initiating new policy actions and other initiatives:

- Conduct joint listening sessions with customers of the workforce investment system – including people with disabilities, employers, parents and family members, providers of employment supports and services, and other relevant stakeholders – about changes needed to ensure meaningful and effective service delivery to people with significant disabilities.
  - Actively participate in ETA readiness workgroups and activities, and other initiatives, looking at the needs of people with disabilities in policy and technical assistance materials. A specific focus will be on performance measurement and accountability, eligible training providers, individual training accounts, eligibility determination, and partnerships.
  - Conduct disability-focused reviews and evaluations of implementation of Section 188 of WIA, the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity obligations. Under the leadership of the CRC, these evaluations will enable the Department of Labor to identify further areas in which federal training and technical assistance activities are needed to eliminate barriers and to prevent disability discrimination in the WIA programs.
  - ETA and RSA will collaborate to conduct comprehensive on-site state reviews of One-Stop Centers and develop a state guide. The reviews will enable DOL to identify further areas in which federal training and technical assistance activities are needed to enhance services to individuals with disabilities.
  - Explore data collection approaches relating to people with disabilities who are accessing both services and employment through the workforce investment system. It should be noted here that the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) is testing a set of questions to see if it can identify the disability population in the context of a labor force survey. If the tests succeed and a set of questions can be placed in the Current Population Survey, policymakers will be able to use this data to help determine where to target future federal money on behalf of people with disabilities seeking employment.
- DOL will build on its collaborative efforts related to employment of people with significant disabilities. Agencies and departments likely to be involved are ETA, the Department of Education's Rehabilitation Services Administration and Office of Special Education Programs, the Social Security Administration, the Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services, the Small Business Administration (SBA), the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Department of Transportation, and others as appropriate. ODEP will

work with the Presidential Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities to implement this action.

- DOL will work to increase One-Stop Center services to veterans with disabilities, including those transitioning to the community from the military, those in Department of Veterans Affairs' medical centers and residential facilities, and those at risk of placement in residential facilities.
- ODEP, the Task Force, and other DOL agencies will convene stakeholder meetings to identify policies and practices that pose barriers to employment and securing needed supports by people with significant disabilities. These meetings will also provide a mechanism for ongoing input and feedback to ODEP in developing policy actions to improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities.
- DOL will facilitate the development of an employment-focused Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between agencies and departments that are essential partners to the workforce investment system. The purpose of the MOU would be to (1) clarify integrated employment as a goal for adults with significant disabilities; (2) coordinate agency resources and capacity building initiatives at the federal level; and (3) serve as a model for state level coordination to ensure that employment becomes part of the planning process for people transitioning from institutional care into the community.
- ODEP will support collaboration with ETA, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Department of Transportation, to develop strategies to encourage integration of housing and transportation services for people with disabilities within One-Stop Centers.

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*Finally, we would look for better interagency communication and accountability for problem solving in the area of workforce development. – Cathie Sullivan, Policy Analyst, Service Employees International Union, Washington, D.C.*

*I would like to see all of you look at your federal policies on employment for people with disabilities. And let's move ahead. – Aileen O'Hare, Consumer, STAND Together of Montgomery County, Montgomery Village, Maryland.*

*If our national policy states that disability in no way diminishes the right to pursue meaningful careers, why is it that most people with disabilities continue to be segregated and excluded from the community workforce? While federal policies of the U.S. eloquently and clearly state integrated competitive employment, independence, and inclusion as its goals, the reality is that most people, particularly those with high support needs, continue to be excluded. – Celane McWhorter, Association for Persons in Supported Employment, Alexandria, Virginia.*



*[F]or people with very significant employment support needs, [integrated employment] has more to do with where you live and what organization or agency or service provider you happen to get slotted over to. It determines the kind of outcome that you might experience. And that is entirely unacceptable...*  
– Marcie Roth, Director of Advocacy and Public Policy, National Council on Independent Living, Arlington, Virginia.

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**2. ACTION #2 – The Department of Labor will work to increase employment choices and earnings opportunities by expanding capacity for individually designed customized employment.**

*Lead Agencies:* DOL's lead agencies in this effort will be the Office of Disability Employment Policy and the Employment and Training Administration.

*Purpose:* The purpose of this activity is to build and/or increase the capacity for, and availability of, customized employment strategies throughout the workforce investment system.

*Background:* The Presidential Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities, through its work and activities the past three years, has identified building professional competency within local One-Stop Centers and with their partners, providers, and employers, as a promising area for a coordinated initiative. Task Force research also indicates a need to expand the availability of personal agents, job development personnel, and eligible providers who can provide customized employment assistance, as well as develop other strategies for securing customized employment.

*Plan of Action:* The customized employment initiative for increasing employment of people with significant disabilities, including those transitioning or preparing to transition to the community from segregated environments or at risk of segregation, will be a major area of policy development for ODEP. The initiative provides the opportunity to bring together in a local area multiple cutting-edge strategies and promising practices in terms of employment for people with significant disabilities and systemic change within the state. The following activities comprise an initial plan of action:

- ODEP will expand the Customized Employment Grant Initiative to 10 additional sites in FY 2002.<sup>7</sup> These grants support Local Boards in systematically reviewing their

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<sup>7</sup> The DOL/ODEP Customized Employment Initiative was initiated in October 2001 with the award of seven grants to Local Workforce Investment Boards. The President's FY 2002 budget proposes \$6 million of new monies to expand this initiative. A national technical assistance consortium is also funded, which will provide assistance to customized employment grantees as they develop capacity in this critical area and to the system in other areas relating to employment and disability. These grants help each selected Local Board build capacity in local One-Stop Centers and provide customized employment services to persons with significant disabilities. Proposed activities include the following: training and educational activities on relevant employment and related topics; collaborating with other entities;

policies and practices in terms of services to persons with disabilities, incorporating new and innovative practices, as appropriate, and developing comprehensive models of customized employment services and supports for individuals with significant disabilities. In addition, Local Boards will provide ongoing feedback and information to ODEP.

- ODEP and ETA will jointly determine next steps in policy guidance, technical assistance, and training related to providing customized employment opportunities for people with significant disabilities within the One-Stop Center system.
- ODEP will collaborate with ESA's Wage and Hour Division to develop training and technical assistance on increasing wages and customized employment for individuals with significant disabilities earning commensurate wages under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act, and disseminate this assistance to their stakeholder networks.
- ODEP will review materials and guidance provided by the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) to ensure that appropriate information is available on providing accommodations to, and facilitating customized employment opportunities for, individuals with significant disabilities. Funded by ODEP, JAN is a resource for individuals with disabilities, employers, and others, and has a toll-free information line and a web site providing information on the employment provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act and resources for technical assistance, funding, education, and services related to the employment of people with disabilities. JAN can help individuals with disabilities, local One-Stop Centers, and government and private sector agencies, by providing information about the tools and methodologies available for persons with significant disabilities to maximize their ability to perform well at work and at home.
- The DOL Pension and Welfare Benefits Administration (PWBA) will expand its education campaigns and programs to provide more education and outreach directed toward Americans with disabilities who are entering the workplace. PWBA will develop new material, building on its current materials which address the importance of health benefits coverage and the important choices to be made about health benefits when entering the workforce, to address specific information/questions to assist Americans with disabilities. PWBA will also expand its materials addressing the importance of saving for a secure future and help on how to do it as well as information on retirement benefit plan rights to address any

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educating the media and general public about successful strategies for securing employment for people with disabilities; increasing the availability of job development personnel offering customized services through customer-controlled approaches; demonstrating the use of individual training accounts or contractual services; economic stimulus activities including low-interest loans for person-centered micro-boards; entrepreneurial employment initiatives; demonstrations of innovation providing personal control, choice, and customized assistance (such as business ownership, micro-enterprise development, or cooperatives for persons with disabilities); and other supports needed by specific individuals with disabilities to increase choice and earning opportunities in employment.

specific information/questions to assist Americans with disabilities. PWBA will work with its partners, as well as continuing to add new partners, to expand its outreach and provide more focused assistance to the disabled community through wider dissemination and more direct delivery of this important information.

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*Workers themselves are demanding more autonomy, more freedom, more customization of the terms and conditions of their employment. As we invest in critical job training, we are giving workers the bargaining power they need to custom-design their jobs around their lives, instead of the other way around.*

*– Elaine L. Chao, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor, Speaking to the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions on January 24, 2001, Washington, D.C.*

*Determining and controlling one's destiny has always been close to the core of the American psyche. We take the "liberty" part of the preamble to the Constitution very seriously. We believe that each individual should have the right to determine what is relevant and important in the pursuit of a meaningful life. – Michael Callahan, Marc Gold & Associates, and Employment for All (2001).*

*For every person in supportive employment there are three to five people that remain in segregated programs throughout the United States. The situation is perplexing. It has become clear that people do not need to get ready for community jobs.... – Pat Rogan, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.*

*We can look at choice not as one more property that makes up the employment and workforce development system, but as a quality that emerges from the way the parts of the system work together. Missing parts, not much choice. Poor relationships among the parts, not much choice. Strong forces pulling the parts this way and that, not much choice. Greater alignment and harmony among the parts, more choice. Thoughtful development of new parts, more choice. – John O'Brien, quoted in "Another Look at Informed Choice," prepared for the Presidential Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities (2001).*

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**3. ACTION #3 – The Department of Labor will work to increase successful transitions to employment and post-secondary activities for young people with disabilities.**

*Lead Agencies:* DOL's lead agencies in this effort will be the Office of Disability Employment Policy, the Employment and Training Administration, and the Office of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Workforce.

*Purpose:* The purpose of this activity is to prepare today's young adults with disabilities for participation in the workforce of the future, and develop strategies between, and coordination among, our education, employment, and other systems (such as health care and transportation) so as to support their successful transitions.

*Background:* Preparing for the workforce is a continuous process that must begin in the school years and focus on developing skills that encourage and facilitate participation in all aspects of community living. Young people with disabilities face particular barriers to succeeding in school, going to college, becoming employed and living independently. Low educational attainment, low education and employment expectations, and confusing government programs and benefits with conflicting eligibility criteria, have resulted in many young people with disabilities not making successful transitions from school to post-secondary education, employment, and independent living.

More than 20 years of research and experience confirms that smooth and successful transitions to employment for young people with disabilities include the following elements: (1) Career exploration and development as an integral part of the educational process; (2) Use of contextual teaching and learning methodologies that clearly connect classroom learning with the real world; (3) Work-based learning activities that tie the world of work back to classroom learning; (4) Partnerships between multiple agencies serving young people with disabilities and employers; and (5) Facilitation of self-advocacy, self-determination, family interventions, and independent living.

*Plan of Action:* It is essential that our evolving workforce investment system includes young people with disabilities in *all* employment activities, programs, and services. Accordingly, DOL proposes the following plan of action:

- The Task Force will convene the Youth Advisory Committee, composed of 15 young people (ages 14 to 28) with diverse disabilities and backgrounds. The Committee's role is to advise the Secretary of Labor and her designees (which include the Office of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Workforce and the Office of Disability Employment Policy) on education, transition, employment, health, rehabilitation, and independent living issues affecting young people with disabilities.
- ODEP and ETA will encourage the participation of young people with disabilities on workforce investment system youth councils, providing meaningful opportunities for input and resulting in improved service to young people with disabilities.
- ODEP will work with other DOL agencies and appropriate federal departments on activities that promote the transition of young people with disabilities from school to post-secondary opportunities and/or employment, including researching, demonstrating, and disseminating successful strategies for transitioning young adults with significant disabilities into employment, and initiation of policy actions and implementation ensuring such strategies are utilized within DOL programs and activities.

- ODEP and ETA will explore policy and implementation barriers and facilitators to inclusion of young people with disabilities in workforce investment activities, including looking at how to best reach out to and increase participation of young people with significant disabilities who are either transitioning from segregated environments or at risk of segregation.
- As part of this policy initiative, ODEP has awarded \$3.85 million to fund model youth demonstration programs to increase the participation of youth with disabilities in workforce development activities, especially as it relates to their accessing services from local One-Stop Centers. Recipients will be developing, implementing, evaluating, and disseminating new and/or improved strategies and techniques to increase youth participation and positive outcomes.
- ODEP will secure information from its national WIA Disability Technical Assistance Consortium, designed to assist One-Stop Centers and other WIA-assisted programs to better serve youth with disabilities, including youth with significant disabilities transitioning from residential and other segregated environments to the community. This Consortium will provide ongoing data on outcomes, strategies, and other information needed to inform ODEP of needed policy-related actions.
- ODEP will also utilize information from state Youth Leadership Forums to develop policy initiatives and other actions necessary to increase employment outcomes for young people with disabilities. These Forums are designed to help youth with disabilities build confidence, develop teamwork skills, and take responsibility for their own lives. The Forums will be reviewed to determine how they can be better utilized to serve youth with significant disabilities who are transitioning from institutions or other segregated environments. ODEP will also participate in the cross-agency National Youth Leadership Network, which promotes youth leadership at the national level and will be hosting a national conference in July 2002.
- ETA will explore expanded training of Job Corps administrators and staff on disability-related issues, and collection of data and other measures documenting outreach to, and inclusion of, young people with disabilities. During the outreach/admissions phase of the Job Corps Career Development Services System, young adults are assessed as to their needs and abilities, and young people with disabilities are provided the opportunity to request reasonable accommodations. ODEP will collaborate with ETA in this effort to ensure that the needs of youth with significant disabilities transitioning to the community are considered.
- ETA will work to implement the July 2001 MOU between DOL and the Department of Education regarding the development of a coordinated, interagency initiative to improve the employment opportunities and earnings of current workers and new labor market entrants who currently do not possess the reading and math skills essential to participate successfully in the 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce.

**4. ACTION #4 – The Department of Labor will work to increase employment, entrepreneurial and small business opportunities for people with disabilities.**

*Lead Agencies:* DOL's lead agencies in this effort will be the Office of Disability Employment Policy, the Office of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Workforce, the Office of Small Business Programs (OSBP), and the Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS), all working in conjunction with the Presidential Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities.

*Purpose:* The purpose of this activity is to ensure that self-employment and micro-enterprise are included in the Executive Order's implementation activities as viable pathways to economic independence and full integration into the community and the workforce.

*Background:* Ten years after the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, entrepreneurship is a critical next step in the full participation of individuals with disabilities in America's communities. Small business ownership and micro-enterprise can be very successful and rewarding paths to economic self-sufficiency. For people transitioning to the community from residential or other segregated environments, this area holds particular promise – yet there is a tremendous lack of understanding of the potential of this area for employment of these individuals.

The Task Force and ODEP have identified a broad range of obstacles, both within and outside the federal government, confronting people with disabilities who are interested in self-employment and small business ownership. These obstacles include a lack of access to capital, lack of information on business planning, and federal programs that discourage entrepreneurship. These have stifled the efforts of people with disabilities who have sought to become self-employed.

Despite these and many other barriers, people with disabilities have a higher rate of self-employment and small business experience (12.2%) than people without disabilities (7.8%), and nearly a third of vocational rehabilitation clients polled nationally have said they would choose self-employment as their preferred outcome of vocational rehabilitation. There is a need to address these barriers and provide additional opportunities to make self-employment a viable employment option for people with significant disabilities.

*Plan of Action:* Coordination across multiple public and private initiatives – including those targeted specifically to individuals with disabilities *and* those targeted to the general public – is needed to address the range of severe barriers faced by entrepreneurs with disabilities. These efforts will need to focus on increasing state and local coordination, training service providers, accessing micro-enterprise funds, leveraging federal government procurement opportunities, and developing mentoring programs. The following activities will be an initial step toward accomplishing this goal:

- ODEP, in concert with the Task Force and the Small Business Administration, will develop and implement an action plan with multiple DOL agencies to promote self-employment and small business development among people with disabilities, particularly those with the most significant disabilities. This plan will include, but not be limited to, the following actions:
  - ODEP and ETA will explore ways to encourage One-Stop Centers to incorporate technical assistance supporting small business ownership, self-employment and entrepreneurship into their service delivery.
  - OSBP will target businesses owned by persons with disabilities by conducting at least two procurement vendor outreach sessions. OSBP will also conduct training targeted for veterans with disabilities (both service-connected and nonservice-connected) in the new small business procurement initiatives. These efforts should be coordinated with ODEP, ETA, and the One-Stop Centers.
  - The Women's Bureau (WB), in collaboration with ODEP, will provide outreach to women with disabilities who are interested in self-employment.
  - ODEP will coordinate with VETS to provide technical assistance and appropriate referrals for veterans with disabilities interested in starting their own businesses. ODEP will also consult with relevant stakeholders, such as the Veterans Task Force on Entrepreneurship.
  - ODEP will increase development of micro-enterprise opportunities for people with disabilities, including significant disabilities, through participation on the Federal Interagency Workgroup on Microenterprise Development. This group provides a vehicle for encouraging development of micro-enterprise in America through policymaking, support, technical assistance, and funding for micro-enterprise programs.
- ODEP will work with other relevant agencies, including the Small Business Administration, the Social Security Administration (SSA), the Department of the Treasury, and the Department of Education's Rehabilitation Services Administration, to educate lenders about the viability of small business ownership for people with disabilities. Given that access to capital is the cornerstone of any effort to start a small business, any strategy addressing this area must consider the effects of current policy as well as the need for access to micro-loan and venture capital funds.
- ODEP will collaborate with relevant federal agencies to examine the possibility of increasing government procurement opportunities for small business owners with disabilities, and to look at whether the procurement process can be used to encourage companies that contract with the government to hire and promote individuals with significant disabilities. The federal government spends over 180

billion dollars annually to procure services and products from the private sector, and there is a need for fresh thinking as to how the federal government can stimulate more procurement opportunities for small business owned by people with disabilities.

- In addition to these identified actions, the Department of Labor recommends convening a conference, including the SBA and other relevant agencies, on micro-enterprise, self-employment, and small business for people with disabilities. Such a conference would elevate and promote increasing self-employment, micro-enterprise, and other small business opportunities among people with disabilities, including people with significant disabilities transitioning to the community from segregated environments.

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*The role of government is to create an environment in which the entrepreneurial person in America who works hard and dreams big can realize his or her dreams. That's the role of government... If we want to have a strong economy and a strong America, it is important to understand that small businesses generate 51% of the private sector GDP and that small businesses provide 75% of the net new jobs in America...The small business owner is incredibly important to the future of this country. – President George W. Bush, Addressing Small Business Owners in the East Room on March 16, 2001.*

*My son also has a dream. And it's a dream to be employed. I share his dream...I asked for a business plan to be drawn up because I see in my son's life a business co-op....He will be a part owner. I see micro-enterprises, micro-boards, business co-ops...It's about his income...They do have a program for entrepreneurship; however, it's not for people with cognitive disabilities. He is excluded. – Jackie Golden, Parent, Washington, D.C.*

*Small businesses in the United States represent 99.7% of all employers, employ 53% of the private work force, provide 47% of all U.S. sales, account for 35% of federal contract dollars, 28% of high tech jobs, and represent 96% of all U.S. exporters. – Partner America, A Public/Private Partnership Between the U.S. Conference of Mayors and American Management Services, Inc.*

**5. ACTION #5 – The Department of Labor will work to increase One-Stop Center employment services for people with psychiatric disabilities, including those transitioning to the community from institutions or those at risk for placement in residential facilities.**

*Lead Agencies:* DOL's lead agencies in this effort will be ODEP, working in conjunction with ETA, the Office of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Workforce, the Task Force, the HHS Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the Small Business Administration, and the Office of Personnel Management (OPM).



*Purpose:* The purpose of this activity is to address the unique issues involved in providing employment services to people with psychiatric disabilities under the Workforce Investment Act and to increase the employment rates of people with psychiatric disabilities.

*Background:* The general public, including many mental health providers and people with psychiatric disabilities, is not aware of what is available at local employment services offices or the new One-Stop Centers. People with psychiatric disabilities want to work, want to produce, and want to be engaged with others. Getting the public to understand and act on this concept, however, remains a challenge. While unemployment rates for the general public hover around 5%, national unemployment rates for people with a psychiatric disability range from 70% to 85%.

In an effort to increase understanding and awareness among One-Stop staff, ETA has developed a comprehensive guide to serving individuals with psychiatric and other “hidden” disabilities, as well as providing numerous workshops on this topic.

Other federal agencies have done work in the employment arena that ODEP and DOL can build on. Recently, the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), a part of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration at HHS, completed a landmark five-year initiative called the Employment Intervention Demonstration Program (EIDP). This program tested the effectiveness of employment preparation and support services for adults with severe mental illness and included careful study of what employment interventions actually work for persons with mental disabilities. In addition, it identified methods for overcoming barriers to implementation of exemplary employment practices, and disseminated results to the field and to all of the various agencies for federal and state governments that are responsible for improving employment opportunities for persons who are disadvantaged.

*Plan of Action:* To enhance access by people with psychiatric disabilities employment services under WIA, DOL will work with other agencies to promote the full inclusion of people with psychiatric disabilities in the programs and services in the One-Stop Center system. ODEP will lead this effort, which will include:

- Consultation with ETA, and representatives from the Task Force, SAMHSA, SBA, OPM, and stakeholders;
- Exploration of how to increase employment of people with psychiatric disabilities, including how to improve dissemination of ETA’s guide, EIDP materials, and other technical assistance throughout the entire workforce investment system and the provider community; and
- Exploration of how best to enhance coordination and collaboration between the mental health communities and local One-Stop Centers.

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*We need agencies and services that are integrated, coordinated, designed for people whose disabilities relapse, return, stabilize, and with help and hope, recover. – Karen Kangas, Consumer, Connecticut Department of Mental Health/Addiction Services, Community Education and Recovery Affairs, Hartford, Connecticut.*

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**B. Increase the Availability and Quality of Personal Assistants and Community Workers, Preventing Unnecessary Institutionalization of People Who Need Assistance with Activities of Daily Living and Providing Supports Needed to Seek and Maintain Employment.**

*Lead Agencies:* The Department of Labor's lead agencies in this effort will be the Office of Disability Employment Policy, the Employment Standards Administration, and the Employment and Training Administration, working in conjunction with the Presidential Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities.

*Purpose:* The purpose of this activity is to ensure that people with significant disabilities moving into the community have access to the personal attendant and other direct care personnel they need; there is an urgent need for a coordinated federal plan to increase the earnings, employment status, and labor supply of personal assistants and other direct care staff and community service workers.

*Background:* As the President's Executive Order is implemented, and more people with significant disabilities enter the workforce, the already critical need for personal care assistants and other direct care staff and community service workers will become even more pronounced. The inability to attract and retain dedicated people in these fields is in part related to the fact that these workers tend to earn very low pay, work long hours, and often receive no benefits. There is an urgent need to address the areas of recruiting, training, retaining, promoting, and improving the earnings/benefits of personal assistants and other community service workers.

*Plan of Action:* The following activities constitute an initial plan of action to attempt to increase earnings opportunities, employment status, and labor supply of personal assistants and other community workers:

- ODEP will work to identify and propose options for increasing the availability of personal assistants for people with disabilities and providing some path of career progression for personal assistants and other direct care staff. ODEP expects to consult with DOL agencies, including the Women's Bureau and ETA's Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training (BAT), Welfare to Work Office, and Senior Community Service Employment Program; the Department of Education; HHS's Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation's Office for Disability, Aging and Long Term

Care; and other appropriate departments. The overarching goal is to develop a cross-agency/cross-department plan to increase the availability and quality of personal assistants, and to identify options for the education, training, and career advancement for personal assistants and other direct care staff and community service workers. In designing this plan, consideration will be given to patterning some activities after those currently underway at BAT to increase the number and employment status of professional childcare providers. The possibility of encouraging the use of Senior Community Service Employment Program participants, volunteers from the National Service Corporation's programs, former welfare recipients, high school students required to perform community service, and members of faith-based and community organizations, to fill this void will also be explored, as will the potential role of partnerships with community and faith-based service providers.

- ODEP and its partners in this activity will convene a listening session so people with disabilities can provide input on this initiative. A similar listening session will be conducted for input from service providers and other direct care staff and community service workers.
- ODEP and ETA will explore increased access to personal assistance supports through the One-Stop Center system.
- ODEP will establish an online registry, similar to America's Job Bank, on DisAbilityDirect.gov where local or community-based organizations that help locate personal assistance can be identified.
- ODEP will work with ESA's Wage and Hour Division to determine if a study of the Fair Labor Standards Act's treatment of employees engaged in companionship and live-in services would be useful in assessing any impact in this area.
- ODEP will work with the Internal Revenue Service to develop and disseminate technical assistance to ensure that people with disabilities are aware of their responsibilities as household employers under federal tax laws.

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*[There is a need to]... focus greater attention on the shortage of front-line and other para-professional workers in the home and community-based services area...[this is] an important area for Department of Labor and Department of Health and Human Services to work together because it's going to grow and get a great deal worse over time. – Howard Bedlin, Vice President For Public Policy and Advocacy, National Council on Aging, Washington, D.C.*

*We urge HHS to work closely with the Department of Labor to implement efforts to begin to resolve the [low wage] crisis. – Martha Ford, The ARC of the United States, Washington, D.C.*

*And I fear that if I can't have attendant care when I need it in my home, I will be institutionalized. And what I will lose, then, it's the last thing that I have. It's my freedom... – J. Neel Ellis, Disability Housing Advocates of Northern Virginia, Reston, Virginia.*

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**C. Leverage Technology Resources for People with Disabilities, Including Increasing the Use of Technology as a Tool for Employment Information and Outreach, Facilitating and Increasing Telework Opportunities, and Increasing Employment Opportunities in Technology-Related Industries.**

*Lead Agencies:* The Department of Labor's lead agencies in this effort will be the Office of Disability Employment Policy, the Employment and Training Administration, the Office of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Workforce, and the Presidential Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities.

*Purpose:* The purpose of this activity is to increase the availability, affordability, and accessibility of technology, and develop appropriate technology-related training, so that people with significant disabilities have access to the assistive and information technology they need to successfully move into the work place and into the community.

*Background:* Electronic and information technology have fundamentally changed the workplace and the requisite skills and knowledge needed to fully participate in the 21st century workplace. Technology is leveling the work environment by removing physical and communication barriers. For example, assistive technologies such as voice recognition systems, computers that can be operated by eye movements, and innovative methods to render electronic, screen-readable versions of documents are now opening the doors of opportunity for many Americans with disabilities. In addition, telecommunications technology is changing the notion of what constitutes the work place, affording many people the option of telecommuting, working from their own homes or nearby telework centers. Finally, by reducing some of the disadvantages that small companies face in competing with larger companies, technology also offers a way to unlock growth potential and create new jobs in small business and entrepreneurship.

The record growth of jobs in the information technology (IT) industry is opening up an enormous range of opportunities for meaningful and stable careers for people with disabilities. It is estimated that by 2006, half of all jobs will be in information technology. This phenomenon can be directly attributed to market globalization and the reduction, if

not eradication, of geographic boundaries. Companies that were once limited to conducting business in a specific and limited area are now equipped, through technological innovations such as e-mail, the Internet, teleconferencing, and fax machines, to compete in markets outside of their traditional boundaries. As companies move to adjust their current way of conducting business to capture or maintain their share of the global market, employees and workers who are skilled in electronic and information technology will continue to be in high demand. At the same time that the demand for technology workers is increasing, however, demographic data indicates that in the next 10 to 20 years, America will experience a reduction in its workforce due to the aging of the population. Therefore, the skills of every American must be developed and promoted.

While the accelerated development and use of electronic and information technologies in the home, school, and workplace appears to offer seemingly endless possibilities, it also has the potential to create new challenges regarding access and use by persons with significant disabilities, particularly those with cognitive disabilities. Technology can be a great equalizer, but it also has the capacity to further divide the class of citizens with significant disabilities who are neither computer literate nor connected to information. The *New Freedom Initiative*, however, promises to level the playing field by ensuring that Americans with disabilities have affordable access to the best technologies of today and that even better technologies will be available for them in the future. If people with disabilities are to reap the full benefit of the high-tech industry boom, and participate in this rapidly expanding area, however, access is only one piece of the puzzle. There is also a need for comprehensive training and skills development activities to ensure that people with disabilities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce are equipped with the tools they need to succeed.

There are several ongoing initiatives at DOL relating to technology and employment of individuals with disabilities, including the following:

- ETA's Disability Information Technology Initiative recognizes the potential of the IT industry to provide significant employment opportunities to persons with disabilities. In June 2001, ETA awarded six grants, totaling \$3.25 million, to Local Boards to provide training in IT skills to persons with disabilities, in partnership with private IT and nonprofit entities. Partners participating in the grants include community-based organizations focused particularly on services to individuals with disabilities and independent living centers.
- ETA is funding a technology initiative to identify and develop web-based information on promising practices. The project is profiling exemplary skill and employment training programs for individuals with disabilities and will provide technical assistance to the One-Stop Center system on these practices. Successful disability employment projects will be profiled, as well as model memorandums of understanding, assistive technologies, and other One-Stop issues.

- Many of the DOL services that benefit people with disabilities are offered electronically through America's Career Kit and its information systems – America's Job Bank, America's Career InfoNet, America's Learning Exchange, America's Service Locator, and O\*NET (a database of occupations and their requirements that can be used by job seekers, employers, educators, and training professionals). O\*NET staff have been engaged in an extensive outreach effort with a variety of groups to assure that it supports the needs of individuals with disabilities as users of the information system and the needs of employers in hiring individuals with disabilities. O\*NET is working with many organizations and associations to identify and implement accommodations and information to assist in employment-related needs of individuals with disabilities. ETA has also entered into a new partnership with Monster.com, the largest private electronic job bank, which will allow DOL and Monster.com to collaborate in a variety of areas for their mutual benefit.
- ETA has underway a technology-related project geared specifically to Native Americans with disabilities under a contract with the American Indian Disability Technical Assistance Center. The goal is to create a culturally relevant IT training curriculum for use by employment and training service providers serving Native American communities. The development of the curriculum involves input from Native Americans with disabilities, tribal leaders and colleges, the advisory council to ETA's programs, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and representatives of the IT industry.
- ETA reaches out to the employment and training community and the general public through its "disAbility Online" web site, which provides access to extensive information and resources relating to employment issues for individuals with disabilities.
- ODEP recently awarded grants to 12 organizations to develop demonstration High School/High Tech program sites, aligning their programs with WIA's youth-related programs. High School/High Tech provides young people with disabilities with opportunities to explore their interest in technology-related careers in a year-long program of corporate site visits, mentoring, job shadowing, guest speakers, after school activities and paid summer internships.
- DOL, through the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO), is responsible for ensuring compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, as it relates to electronic information technologies accessibility for persons with disabilities. Due to the importance of the Internet and related web requirements, DOL launched a major initiative in 1998 to identify accessibility issues, and deficiencies in bringing public Internet documents into compliance. DOL's web masters have taken aggressive steps to ensure all DOL web pages are accessible and available in an alternative text format. Each published document was evaluated

against accessibility standards outlined in Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, and modifications were made as required.

*Plan of Action:* To ensure that people with disabilities have access to information and assistive technology and to the skills training needed to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce, the following activities comprise DOL's initial plan of action:

- ODEP will work with the Task Force, the Department of Education, HHS, the Department of Agriculture (USDA), and other agencies and departments as appropriate, to coordinate and implement a plan that improves the availability, affordability, and accessibility of technology in the school, home, and workplace for youth and adults with significant disabilities. One area of focus will be on developing proposals for incentives to allow both employers and individuals to offset ancillary costs such as specialized training, and access to assistive technology and high-speed telephone service. Another area will include exploring the possibility of arranging for Internet service usable by people with disabilities through local and regional offices of USDA, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the U.S. Postal Service.
- DOL, in conjunction with other Task Force member agencies, will work with industry leaders in electronic and information technology to develop effective accessibility strategies, to anticipate access issues associated with new technologies or designs, and to test and evaluate prototype devices and systems.
- ODEP will work across DOL to expand opportunities in the critical high-tech area for young people and adults with significant disabilities, and to provide information and technical assistance to employers about the benefits of hiring people with disabilities as employees. One goal of this effort will be to encourage the incorporation of IT marketable skills and related initiatives (developed with industry involvement and support) into WIA-sponsored programs and activities.
- ODEP will evaluate existing DOL-funded or -administered technology programs, projects, and activities to determine how best to use technology to assist people with disabilities in obtaining and maintaining jobs and to ensure coordination across DOL programs and services.
- The Women's Bureau will hold a series of virtual conference calls on ten technology-related topics designed to (1) increase the number of girls and women, including those with disabilities, who participate in technology-related education and training programs, and (2) increase the number of women who choose to stay in technology-related careers or who wish to advance in their fields.

- ODEP will provide opportunities for students with significant disabilities to explore careers in science, mathematics, and technology through the High School/High Tech Program. Success in this effort will depend largely on fostering public-private partnerships to provide the resources and experiences needed to allow participants to explore an expanded range of career choices and the chance to develop their own customized training and career path.
- ODEP will work with ETA and other appropriate DOL agencies to explore how telementoring can best be used to improve employment outcomes for young people with disabilities.
- ODEP will collaborate with the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) to explore using volunteers to help improve information technology skills of youth with disabilities and to encourage the CNS State Commissions to expand support of demonstrations that include youth with significant disabilities.
- ODEP will expand its DisAbilityDirect.gov web site to better serve the employment-related needs of people with disabilities. An interagency portal will give employment information and links; provide educational and life-long learning opportunities for people with disabilities, employers, organizations, and other interested people; and aggregate federal resources providing access to assistive and universally based technologies. The site will be designed to allow people from local municipalities and states to locate and identify services relating to employment opportunities available to them within their own communities. A series of general on-line learning modules will be developed, as will learning modules specifically directed to helping interested stakeholders understand and gain access to federally supported programs, including grant opportunities. Other DOL resources will also be available through DisAbilityDirect. For example, the Women's Bureau, in collaboration with ODEP, will be developing an online community resource guide to provide consumers and workforce professionals with a listing of community and faith-based services available in their local communities.

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*We have found in our effort that assistive technology, meaning computers that utilize, for example, speech, printed enhancement devices or make technology accessible is truly the only way that individuals cannot only compete in employment but at school, at home... – Dale Otto, Consumer, President and CEO of the Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind, Washington, D.C.*

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**C. Increase Innovative and Strategic Partnerships Between the Federal Government and Employers, People with Disabilities, Family Members, Providers, Community Organizations, and Others in the Private Sector, including Foundations and Faith-Based Organizations.**

There is a growing consensus across America that successful government programs cannot do it all. Innovative initiatives must be developed and implemented at the national level if the inclusion of people with disabilities in the workplace is to become a routine part of how employers, businesses, and people with and without disabilities go about their normal activities. Effectuating such broad sweeping change will require that government work cooperatively and collaboratively, through appropriate legal arrangements, with private industry and problem solvers representing all sectors of the community. Foundations, which represent billions of dollars of private funding, and faith-based and other community organizations must be included in this effort.

One area in which partnerships can be particularly effective is in combating attitudinal barriers, which often impede people with disabilities from obtaining work in the private sector. In the last few years, education strategies and public-private partnerships have begun to open the doors of offices and minds of business executives to recruiting and hiring people with disabilities. Partnerships are not merely an important way to affect this type of change - they are essential. Universities' curricula need to be developed with private sector and service provider input, and corporate policy should reflect collaboration with union practices, service providers, and government services such as transportation. Entrepreneurs with disabilities must be able to count on the same access to capital, management advice, and business mentors available to other people with good ideas. The broader the representation of various community sectors engaged in and committed to this end, the greater the likelihood for success.

Currently there are a number of public-private and interagency partnership activities associated with DOL initiatives and programs, including the following:

- The Employment and Training Administration awards Work Incentive Grants to individual organizations or consortia of entities to improve services, provide outreach to the disability community, and link public and private providers in the disability community to the One-Stop system. For example, these grants may be used to inform State departments of mental health and their provider organizations about America's Career Kit or other ETA-funded employment and training resources.
- ETA also has worked with the Department of Education's Office of the Assistant Secretary of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (OSERS) in a number of areas to promote full implementation of WIA. ETA and OSERS staff meet on a monthly basis to identify and resolve workforce issues and coordinate activities in an effort to provide greater opportunity for individuals with disabilities to benefit from

WIA programs and services.

- Under an Interagency Agreement with the Department of Education's National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) and the DOL's Civil Rights Center, ETA provides funding towards technical assistance on disability issues to the One-Stop system.
- ETA and the Social Security Administration have worked closely for several years to foster One-Stop participation as an Employment Network under the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act, thereby increasing access by individuals with disabilities to employment and training services through the One-Stop system. ETA also worked closely with ODEP in developing comments on the Ticket to Work Notice of Proposed Rulemaking. In addition, ETA has provided \$450,000 over the past three years to SSA to support 12 state partnership grants, which foster the development of state and local partnerships.
- O\*NET staff have been engaged in an extensive outreach effort with a variety of groups and agencies to identify and implement accommodations and information to assist in employment-related needs of individuals with disabilities. O\*NET – the Occupational Information Network – is an easy-to-use database accessible from any web browser. It replaces the Dictionary of Occupational Titles and contains comprehensive information on job requirements and worker competencies. O\*NET development has been a collaborative effort, joining the public and private sector interests, and has given employers of all sizes and across all fields a powerful means for accessing critical information that affects their bottom-line every day.
- ETA's Welfare-to-Work Office cooperates extensively with the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services to address disability concerns, and has conducted workshops on disability at numerous conferences and sponsored forums on hidden disabilities, highlighting its technical assistance guide on learning, psychiatric, mild mental retardation, and other hidden disabilities.
- Project EMPLOY is a joint initiative of the ODEP and the Society for Human Resource Management, in partnership with employers, to address employment barriers resulting from negative stereotyping of individuals with significant cognitive disabilities such as mental retardation, psychiatric disabilities, brain injuries, and autism. Persons with significant cognitive disabilities are often relegated to entry level, dead-end jobs without any individualized assessments of their desire to perform other work – despite the fact that many individuals have demonstrated the interest and ability to perform more complex jobs. Through a combination of outreach, education, and technical assistance, Project EMPLOY focuses on identifying and placing a qualified labor pool of people with significant disabilities in a variety of occupations and industries that provide salaries above the minimum wage, offer fringe benefits, and have career development potential. Project EMPLOY is

particularly relevant to *Olmstead* issues because it directly affects persons with cognitive disabilities who represent a large percentage of the individuals with disabilities who live in nursing homes, group homes, or other types of institutions, or who are at risk of being placed in these facilities.

- ODEP is working with the Business Leadership Network (BLN), a national employer-led initiative of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. The National BLN promotes BLN partnerships with state and local BLNs, which are led by employers and supported by disability employment service providers. The BLN advances promising disability practices to enhance employment opportunities for people with disabilities and encourages two primary personnel policies: diversity practices that include people with disabilities and hiring practices that target candidates with disabilities. The BLN operates on a principle commonly accepted by the business community – a business will adopt a practice when told by another business that the practice is good business.

The continuation of these activities, in combination with the following, comprise DOL's initial action plan in this area:

- 1. ACTION #1 – The Department of Labor will work to aggressively promote positive images of people with disabilities as workers and community participants through a multi-part public awareness campaign.**

*Lead Agencies:* The Department of Labor's lead agency in this effort will be the Office of Disability Employment Policy.

*Purpose:* The purpose of this activity is to eradicate the misconceptions, prejudices, and attitudes that prevent many individuals with disabilities from becoming employed or self-employed, and otherwise fully participating in American society.

*Background:* The existence and persistence of erroneous stereotypes has contributed to making the quest for meaningful employment unsuccessful for the overwhelming majority of adults with disabilities. There is a pervasive lack of understanding of the needs and abilities of people with disabilities, even among people with disabilities themselves. In the past, people with disabilities were not expected to work. As was noted by President Bush, however, in announcing the *New Freedom Initiative*, "Old misconceptions about physical and mental disability are being discredited. Old barriers are falling away. Our task is now clear: We must speed up the day when the last barrier has been removed to full and independent lives for every American with or without disability."

Whether born from ignorance, fear, or misunderstanding, these attitudes keep people from appreciating – and experiencing – the full potential a person with a disability can achieve. In addition, these attitudes are frequently coupled with a focus on a person's disability rather than on his or her abilities. Information and familiarity are key to defeating these negative images, myths, and stereotypes. And they must be defeated if full inclusion in the community is to become a reality.

Like employment generally, our society has not traditionally viewed self-employment as a realistic expectation for people with disabilities. If, however, the right policy and program innovations are in place, people with disabilities can work and small business ventures hold potentially limitless possibilities for increasing the employment rate of this population. Outreach and awareness-raising efforts are needed to educate the public, individuals with disabilities, government agencies, financial institutions, and business development professionals about the rich talents of this untapped labor pool, and of the viability of business ownership for people with disabilities.

*Plan of Action:* ODEP will launch a comprehensive and coordinated public awareness/education campaign to decrease stigma, eliminate attitudinal barriers, and increase employment opportunities for adults and youth with significant disabilities. This multi-faceted campaign will target business and industry, lenders, small businesses, families, and others, with a particular emphasis on hiring people with significant disabilities, and will consist of the following activities:

- ODEP, in collaboration with the Small Business Administration, will distribute educational packets that promote the viability of small business ownership for people with disabilities through federal and state banking associations, with the goal that lenders recognize people with disabilities as potential commercial customers. The campaign, which will be national in scope and directed toward state- and federally-chartered banks and other lending institutions, will include portrayals of business owners with disabilities who are succeeding in business and educational presentations by entrepreneurs who have disabilities. This activity could be complemented by local efforts.
- A portion of the campaign targeting business and industry will focus on getting mainstream business and small business development programs to recognize the viability of people with disabilities as potential customers, and on getting employers in general to view employees with disabilities as an investment which will increase the efficiency or profitability of their businesses.
- The campaign will include efforts that focus on making people with disabilities aware of mainstream employment-related services, letting them know that these services are available to them, and providing highly visible role models. Successful entrepreneurs who have disabilities will also be profiled through a variety of

mainstream media outlets to increase awareness about the self-employment potential of people with disabilities.

**2. ACTION #2 – The Department of Labor will work to encourage partnerships with employers, members of the disability community, families, providers, foundations, faith-based organizations, and other important partners.**

*Lead Agencies:* The Department of Labor's lead agency in this effort will be the Office of Disability Employment Policy.

*Purpose:* The purpose of this activity is to encourage and initiate collaborative, creative, and innovative approaches that further partnerships between the public and private sector.

*Background:* For people with significant disabilities to fully participate in the workforce of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, increased cooperative and collaborative activities between the government and private sector partners will be critical. Employers, members of the disability community, families, and providers are essential partners in creating employment possibilities and needed supports for people with disabilities. Many public and private entities have begun hiring people with disabilities. Others may be unaware of how to access this untapped resource of potential employees, or are uncertain of how to organize supports for accommodating them into the workplace. Partnerships are essential to begin addressing these and other areas. In addition, businesses willing and eager to hire people with disabilities must be able to find candidates who have the skills needed to perform the jobs in question. Businesses will also benefit from incorporating job-carving and other strategies for customizing employment into their work places. Finally, to increase employment for young people and adults with disabilities, foundations must be enlisted and leveraged as partners in states and local communities.

*Plan of Action:* The following activities constitute DOL's initial plan of action:

- ODEP, in conjunction with other appropriate agencies and departments, will convene a key group of foundation leaders for a foundation summit to examine how government agencies, businesses, and the foundation sector can work together to facilitate employment for young people and adults with disabilities. The summit will provide an opportunity to elevate understanding of issues related to employment of people with disabilities, and the increased role that the foundation community could play in addressing barriers. It will also provide the opportunity for foundation leaders to integrate initiatives relating to employment for people with disabilities into existing foundation initiatives, and ensure that such initiatives are accessible to people with disabilities.

- ODEP will ensure that its Employment Assistance Referral Network (EARN) program, a national toll-free telephone and electronic information referral service to assist employers who are seeking potential workers with disabilities in their geographic area, includes expertise on customizing employment for people with disabilities. EARN acts as an intermediary for the employer by surveying the relevant agencies and reporting to the employer those agencies that have applicants with disabilities who meet the employer's requirements. EARN facilitates access to employment because employers need only make one contact to find qualified applicants with disabilities. EARN also supports implementation of the *Olmstead* Executive Order by identifying and incorporating information into the EARN database about disability service providers who are working with individuals with significant disabilities who are seeking to leave institutions or who want to avoid institutionalization.
- ODEP will work with the Business Leadership Network and other employer stakeholders to secure their input, and to ensure that they have the information and assistance they need to facilitate customized employment for people with significant disabilities. In addition, ODEP will encourage BLNs to consider the particular needs of people with significant disabilities as they develop their activities. This activity will be coordinated with the public awareness campaign targeted to employers, so that they understand the benefits of strategies for customizing employment.
- PWBA will work with the other agencies with which it shares jurisdiction in administering the health laws to provide expanded education and outreach, guidance, and other activities to provide a coordinated and comprehensive program for the disabled community.

**3. ACTION #3 – The Department of Labor will work to increase participation of community organizations in providing customized employment services and opportunities to individuals with disabilities, and encourage their role in partnerships with other providers at the local level.**

*Lead Agencies:* The Department of Labor's lead agencies in this effort will be the Office of Disability Employment Policy and the Employment and Training Administration, working closely with the Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives.

*Purpose:* The purpose of this activity is to encourage and initiate innovative community-based employment programs, both secular and faith-based, offering another potential avenue for increasing employment services for people with disabilities.

*Background:* President Bush's Faith-Based and Community Initiative mandates that federal policy and programs be realigned to better collaborate with community organizations such as grassroots, nonprofit and faith-based organizations. Historically, while many secular and faith-based organizations have focused on meeting the needs of people with disabilities for food, housing, and/or health services, there has been significantly less focus on providing the types of direct employment and training services which foster long term self-sufficiency.

*Plan of Action:* The following constitutes initial actions to be undertaken in this area:

- ODEP will collaborate with ETA to reach out to community organizations, both secular and faith-based, to encourage them to include people with disabilities in their programs. ODEP and ETA will also work together to foster the development of promising practices as models for organizations interested in increasing employment opportunities for people with disabilities.
- ODEP will develop technical assistance and training to help small community organizations, both faith-based and secular, to increase their capacity, improve their competence, and expand their programs relating to the employment of people with disabilities.
- ODEP will coordinate with ETA to provide these types of organizations with the information they need for the following: effective grant writing; responding to requests for proposals and other solicitations; and accessing other funding opportunities relating to employment of people with disabilities.
- ODEP will assist DOL's Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives in conducting outreach, providing technical assistance on matters relating to accessibility, and helping obtain input and buy-in from the disability community.

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*And we would challenge you to prepare the community by educating people in industries like restaurants and hotels and even going into churches to assist people with sensitivity training and communication so that people could have more involvement in the community. – Marilyn King, Family and Friends Actively Communicating Together for Successful Supports, Kenton, Tennessee.*

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**D. Increase the Number of People with Disabilities Working in the Federal Workforce, with the Department of Labor Leading by Example Through its Commitment to Hiring People with Disabilities.**

*Lead Agencies:* The Department of Labor's lead agencies in this effort will be the Office of Disability Employment Policy, the Office of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Workforce, and the Office for the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management.

*Purpose:* The purpose of this activity is to increase hiring of people with disabilities in the federal workplace. As the President's Executive Order on Community-Based Alternatives for Individuals with Disabilities is implemented, employment of people with significant disabilities within the federal government should represent a viable pathway to economic independence and inclusion within the workforce and the community.

*Background:* America cannot afford to leave anyone behind as it moves into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Every American should have the opportunity to reach his or her full potential in life, particularly in the workforce. Consistent with the ideals recognized in the *New Freedom Initiative*, there is a need to explore new frontiers that will bring more Americans with disabilities, including those with significant disabilities, into the workforce and into the mainstream of American life. The federal government must lead by example.

A structural mechanism is already in place to facilitate DOL's activities in support of this effort. OASAM's Human Resources Center (HRC), which has general oversight responsibility for all aspects of human resources management within DOL, works with DOL's agencies in implementing workforce planning and restructuring efforts, including recruitment of people with disabilities, ensuring equal access to job vacancies for people with disabilities within DOL, and providing assistive technology and services to qualified applicants and DOL employees with disabilities. HRC is also responsible for implementing DOL's *Plan for Recruitment and Hiring of People with Disabilities*. This plan outlines steps to increase the hiring of people with disabilities in DOL over the next five years.

HRC's Disability Employment Program supports people with disabilities in seeking and attaining employment by providing a single point of contact for all recruiting efforts and for intern programs within DOL for persons with disabilities. The Disability Employment Program Manager represents DOL at job fairs, workshops, conferences, and on several government-wide committees regarding the employment of persons with disabilities, building partnerships with community-based organizations in the local Washington, D.C. metropolitan area and around the country to assist persons with disabilities in finding employment within DOL.



HRC's Central Office of Assistive Services and Technology (COAST) program supports people with disabilities by providing a "one-stop" shop for accommodations and assistive services. Services available include: sign language interpreting services; technical assistance on disability-related issues; documents in alternative formats; work site accessibility assessments; a limited amount of assistive equipment available for loan; and other disability-related services. The Safety and Health Center's Return to Work Program seeks to help injured DOL employees on worker's compensation in returning to work. As a result of these and other related recruitment efforts, DOL is proud to report that since October 1, 2000, 110 people with disabilities have been hired.

*Plan of Action:* DOL's initial plan of action will focus on four areas: recruitment and placement; reasonable accommodations; employment opportunities for young people with disabilities; and promoting telecommuting to increase employment of people with disabilities.

- *Recruitment and Placement:* The following actions will be implemented to ensure that DOL's goal of hiring more people with disabilities is met and that the number of people with targeted disabilities increases as part of this effort:
  - The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy (OASP) will seek to identify proposed DOL policies, programs, and regulations that may have the unintended effect of discouraging people with disabilities from achieving full employment and community integration, and will work with the appropriate agencies to address these barriers.
  - OASAM will ensure that all DOL vacancy announcements include a statement on the availability of reasonable accommodations for applicants with disabilities.
  - HRC will work with the Social Security Administration to develop a Memorandum of Understanding that promotes DOL recruitment and hiring of individuals with disabilities who are participating in SSA's Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Program.
  - A number of individual agencies within DOL will also be implementing plans for recruiting people with disabilities and identifying organizations and associations representing persons with disabilities that can be utilized to expand outreach to this sector of applicants.
- *Reasonable Accommodations:* DOL will continue its efforts to provide reasonable accommodations to employees with disabilities. The following initial action plan will be implemented to ensure the availability and provision of reasonable

accommodations, a factor that is critical to the retention of employees with disabilities:

- CRC is in the process of finalizing a DOL-wide process for responding to requests for reasonable accommodation. A management information system database was created by OASAM's Information Technology Center for CRC's use in tracking information required by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Agency managers and supervisors will be responsible for submitting the Request for Reasonable Accommodation Form to CRC for data input. CRC will also be providing training on DOL revised reasonable accommodation procedures as part of the EEO training for managers and supervisors.
- HRC's COAST program will continue to support the reasonable accommodations needs of employees with disabilities by providing interpreting services for employee training and technical assistance for DOL employees, and providing training to employees regarding disability etiquette and TTY use.
- HRC's Disability Employment Program will: (1) develop a database for tracking all services that will assist in complying with EEOC guidelines; (2) make information about all HRC's services available; and (3) work in partnership with other federal agencies such as the Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program at the Department of Defense to formalize access to regional programs and services to assist DOL employees in identifying appropriate accommodations in both regional/field offices, and the National Office.
- *Employment Opportunities for Young People with Disabilities:* As a model employer, DOL's efforts to increase employment for people with disabilities must include young people, including college-age youth. Using existing internship and mentoring programs, DOL will implement the following activities:
  - ODEP's Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP) will continue to serve as a resource for hiring highly motivated post-secondary students and recent graduates with disabilities who are eager to prove their abilities in the workforce. In FY 2002, DOL estimates it will be able to hire 50 interns.
  - ODEP will coordinate DOL's activities around year long mentoring for young people with disabilities, including DOL's annual participation in Disability Mentoring Day in 2002.

- ODEP will work with HRC to establish and promote the WRP program in each DOL agency.
- *Promoting Telecommuting:* In announcing the *New Freedom Initiative*, President Bush stated, "Some 40 million Americans today work out of their homes. For most, it is a convenience. For workers with disabilities, it is a revolution." The following activities constitute DOL's initial plan relating to increasing telecommuting opportunities for people with disabilities within DOL:
  - ODEP and OASAM's HRC will work together to identify current positions within DOL that can be relocated to home-based or other off-site facilities. This significant initiative is intended to help boost awareness of the potential, and expand opportunities, for all federal employees to telework, including those with disabilities, by harnessing the power and potential of new communications and information technologies.
  - ODEP and HRC will work together to recruit people with disabilities to work in DOL's customer-service 1-800 number call center. This call center allows the public to call in on an "800" number to ask questions and get information about a large number of DOL agency programs and activities.
  - HRC and ODEP will work in partnership with OPM to provide technical assistance and support on identifying possible ways in which DOL jobs can be redesigned to allow for teleworking.
  - HRC will work with ODEP to implement the federally mandated telecommuting initiative, guided by OPM and General Services Administration (GSA). Each executive agency is required to establish policies on telecommuting, with 25% of federal employees covered by such policies in 2001, and the remaining covered, in 25% increments, over the next three years. A new OPM/GSA web site will provide guidance to DOL and other agencies as they implement their new telework plans for current employees.

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The Department of Labor (DOL) appreciates the opportunity to respond to President Bush's Executive Order 13217, *Community-Based Alternatives for Individuals with Disabilities*, by completing this comprehensive review of DOL policies and programs. Secretary Chao, the Office of Disability Employment Policy, and other DOL agencies, look forward to working with the Administration to help ensure that all Americans have the opportunity to live close to their families and friends, live more independently, engage in productive employment, and fully participate in community life

## **IV. APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX 1**

**SUMMARY OF PROPOSED  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR ACTIONS**

## Appendix 1

### SUMMARY OF PROPOSED DEPARTMENT OF LABOR ACTIONS

#### A. *Increase Access to, and Choice and Customization of, Employment Services*

- Increase and improve access to mainstream workforce development programs, services, and systems by people with disabilities – particularly those individuals who are transitioning from institutions to their communities, at risk of institutionalization, or in non-work settings – and coordinate and leverage resources among those systems at the federal, state and local levels.
- Increase employment choices and earnings opportunities for people with disabilities by expanding capacity for individually designed jobs and customized employment through the workforce investment system.
- Increase successful transitions by young people with disabilities to customized employment and post-secondary activities.
- Expand self-employment, small business, micro-enterprise development, and other entrepreneurial opportunities for people with disabilities who want to transition from institutions to their communities, or who are at risk of institutionalization or segregation.
- Increase One-Stop Center employment services for people with psychiatric disabilities, including those transitioning to the community from institutions or those who are at risk of placement in residential facilities.

#### B. *Increase Availability and Quality of Personal Care Assistants and Community Workers*

- Increase the availability of, and provide career advancement opportunities for, personal assistants and other direct care staff and community workers.

#### C. *Leverage Technology Resources*

- Ensure that people with disabilities, employers, One-Stop Centers, and others have access to information and to the skills training needed to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce.

**D. Increase Innovative and Strategic Partnerships**

- Aggressively promote positive images of people with disabilities as workers and community participants through a multi-part awareness campaign, countering negative and erroneous stereotypes and attitudinal barriers.
- Promote public-private partnerships with employers, members of the disability community, families, providers, foundations and other critical partners.
- Increase participation of community organizations, both faith-based and secular, and foundations in providing customized services to individuals with disabilities, including their role in partnering with other providers at the local level.

**E. Increase the Number of People with Disabilities in the Federal Workforce**

- Work across DOL agencies to facilitate access to qualified applicants with disabilities, including applicants with significant disabilities.
- Ensure provision of reasonable accommodations and assistive services to people with significant disabilities in the DOL.
- Increase the participation of young adults with significant disabilities, including those transitioning to the community from institutions, in internship and mentoring programs.
- Collaborate with DOL agencies to increase telework awareness and opportunities for federal employees with disabilities and conduct a research effort to learn more about telework's potential impact on workers, employers and the American workforce.

**APPENDIX 2**

**SUMMARY OF  
CROSS-DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATIONS**



## Appendix 2

### **SUMMARY OF CROSS-DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

- ODEP will work to foster collaboration between DOL and other federal departments on activities that relate directly or indirectly to employment of people with disabilities. These agencies/departments include, but are not limited to the following: the Department of Education's Rehabilitation Services Administration and Office of Special Education Programs; the Social Security Administration; the Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services; the Small Business Administration; the Department of Housing and Urban Development; and the Department of Transportation. ODEP will work with the Presidential Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities to implement this collaboration.
- ODEP will facilitate the development of an employment-focused memorandum of understanding (MOU) between agencies and departments that are essential partners to the workforce investment system. The purpose of the MOU would be to (1) clarify integrated employment as a goal for adults with significant disabilities; (2) coordinate agency resources and capacity building initiatives at the federal level; and (3) serve as a model for state level coordination to ensure that employment becomes part of the planning process for people transitioning to the community.
- ODEP will collaborate with the DOL Employment and Training Administration, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Department of Transportation to integrate housing and transportation services within One-Stop Centers.
- ODEP will work to increase development of micro-enterprise opportunities for people with disabilities, including individuals with significant disabilities, through participation on the Federal Interagency Workgroup on Microenterprise Development, an entity that encourages development of micro-enterprise in America through policymaking, support, technical assistance, and funding for micro-enterprise programs.
- ODEP will work with other relevant agencies, including the Small Business Administration, the Social Security Administration, the Treasury Department, and the Rehabilitation Services Administration, to educate lenders about the viability of small business ownership for people with disabilities. Any strategy addressing this area must consider the effects of current policy, as well as the need for access to micro-loan and venture capital funds.

- ODEP will collaborate with relevant federal agencies to examine the possibility of increasing government procurement opportunities for small business owners with disabilities.
- DOL recommends convening a conference on micro-enterprise, self-employment and small business for people with disabilities. Such a conference would elevate and promote increased self-employment, micro-enterprise and other small business opportunities among people with disabilities, including people with significant disabilities transitioning to the community from segregated environments.
- The Department of Labor will work with other agencies to promote the full inclusion of people with psychiatric disabilities in workforce investment programs and services. ODEP will consult with the Task Force, HHS's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, SBA, OPM, as well as relevant stakeholders.
- ODEP will work to develop a cross-agency action plan to increase the availability and quality of personal assistants, and to identify options for educational, training and career advancement opportunities for personal assistants and other direct care staff and community service workers.
- ODEP and the Task Force will work with the Department of Education, HHS, IRS, the Department of Agriculture (USDA), HUD, and other agencies as appropriate, to improve the availability, affordability, and accessibility of technology in the school, home, and the workplace for youth and adults with significant disabilities. Possible activities include developing incentives that allow both employers and individuals to offset ancillary associated costs (such as specialized training, access to assistive technology, and high-speed telephone service) and exploring the possibility of arranging Internet service usable by people with disabilities through local and regional offices of the USDA, HUD, and the U.S. Postal Service.
- ODEP will collaborate with the Corporation for National and Community Service's program to encourage its State Commissions to expand support of demonstrations that include youth with significant disabilities, and use of volunteers to focus on improving information technology skills for youth with disabilities.
- ODEP will expand its DisAbilityDirect.gov web site into an interagency federal portal to better serve the employment-related needs of people with disabilities.
- ODEP will collaborate with relevant federal agencies to launch a multi-faceted public awareness and education campaign to decrease stigma, eliminate attitudinal barriers, and increase employment opportunities for adults and youth with significant disabilities. This effort will target business and industry, lenders,

small businesses, families, and others, with a particular focus on hiring people with significant disabilities.

- ODEP, in conjunction with other appropriate agencies and departments, will convene a key group of foundation leaders for a foundation summit to examine how government agencies, businesses, and the foundation sector can work together to facilitate employment for young people and adults with disabilities. The summit will provide an opportunity to elevate understanding of the issues related to employment of people with disabilities, as well as the role that the foundation community could play in addressing barriers. In addition, it will provide the opportunity for foundation leaders to integrate initiatives relating to employment for people with disabilities into existing foundation initiatives and ensure that such initiatives are accessible to people with disabilities.

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AGENCY REPORTS AND SELF-EVALUATIONS**

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3-A	Bureau of International Labor Affairs
3-B	Bureau of Labor Statistics
3-C	Employment Standards Administration
3-D	Employment and Training Administration
3-E	Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management
3-F	Office of the Chief Information Officer
3-G	Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy
3-H	Office of Small Business Programs
3-I	Pension and Welfare Benefits Administration
3-J	Veterans Employment and Training Service
3-K	Women's Bureau

**APPENDIX 3-A**

**BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL LABOR AFFAIRS  
(ILAB)**

## Appendix 3-A

### **BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL LABOR AFFAIRS (ILAB) Agency Self-Evaluation: Narrative**

#### **Mission**

The Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB) carries out DOL's international responsibilities and assists in formulating international economic, trade, and immigration policies affecting American workers by doing the following:

- Representing the Secretary of Labor on international issues in the inter-agency policy-making processes chaired by the National Economic Council and the National Security Council.
- Representing the U.S. government at the International Labor Organization.
- Implementing the North American Agreement on Labor Cooperation, the labor supplemental agreement to NAFTA.
- Issuing reports on international child labor issues and funding international programs to eliminate child labor exploitation.
- Representing the U.S. government in the Human Resources Working Group of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum.
- Preparing G-7 and EU meetings involving labor market policy issues.
- Representing the U.S. government in the Employment, Labor and Social Affairs (ELSA) Committee of the OECD.
- Assisting the U.S. Trade Representative in international trade negotiations, including immigration-related issues.
- Providing labor market technical assistance programs in foreign countries.
- Undertaking research on the impact of international trade and immigration policies on U.S. workers.

#### **Activities Supporting the Employment of Persons with Disabilities**

*Foreign Technical Assistance* - Through its Office of Foreign Relations, ILAB foreign technical assistance programs address a wide range of labor market issues, including the employment of persons with disabilities. ILAB assistance is helping countries

implement the 1998 ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, including nondiscrimination in employment. In Bangladesh and El Salvador, ILAB projects foster the employment of persons with disabilities. ILAB projects help other nations improve their employment services and encourage host countries and their employers to improve employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. By helping other nations improve their occupational safety and health projects, ILAB aims to reduce workplace injuries. Finally, ILAB-managed projects are helping combat the spread of HIV/AIDS through workplace-based education that encourages nondiscrimination of persons with HIV/AIDS.

At this time, no changes or modifications to ILAB's foreign technical assistance programs are needed with regard to helping persons with disabilities transition to or secure employment. No additional funding is required for this purpose.

*Coordination with International Agencies* - Through its Office of International Organizations, ILAB is assisting the International Labor Organization in developing an international code of practice for the management of disability issues in the workplace. The next meeting is scheduled for October 2001. As international trade and other global developments have an increased effect on the US economy, so will international labor market trends and standards have an increased effect on the US labor market. ILAB engagement with the ILO on an international code of practices regarding the employment of persons with disabilities will influence the international employment opportunities of American workers.

At this time, no changes or modifications to ILAB's coordination efforts with international agencies are needed with regard to helping persons with disabilities transition to or secure employment. No additional funding is required for this purpose.

*International Labor Diplomacy* - Through its Office of Foreign Relations, ILAB is an actively engaged member of the U.S.-European Union Working Group on Employment and Labor Related Issues. The working group is considering a proposal for a conference on the employment of persons with disabilities. One purpose of the conference would be to develop concrete policies for implementation in 2003, the "European Year on Disabilities."

At this time, no changes or modifications to ILAB's international labor diplomacy activities are needed with regard to helping persons with disabilities transition to or secure employment. No additional funding is required for this purpose.

**BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL LABOR AFFAIRS (ILAB)**  
**Agency Self-Evaluation: Summary**

<b>Program, Initiative, Activity, Statute, Regulation or Policy</b>	<b>How It Promotes and Supports People with Disabilities in Seeking, Attaining and/or Retaining Employment or Self-Employment</b>	<b>Needed Changes, Additions, or Modifications</b>
<b>Coordination with International Agencies</b> (ILAB Office of International Organizations)	Through the International Labor Organization, developing international code of practice for the management of disability issues in the workplace. Next meeting in October 2001.	On-going activity, no changes required.
<b>Foreign Technical Assistance</b> (ILAB Office of Foreign Relations)	<p><i>Worldwide:</i> ILAB technical assistance programs help countries implement the 1998 ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, including non-discrimination in employment; ILAB also manages projects combating the spread of HIV/AIDS through workplace-based education that encourages non-discrimination of persons with HIV/AIDS.</p> <p><i>Bangladesh and El Salvador:</i> ILAB manages projects to foster employment of people with disabilities.</p> <p><i>Multiple Countries:</i> Through its projects supporting employment services, ILAB encourages host countries and their employers to improve employment opportunities for persons with disabilities; in addition, through its occupational safety and health improvement projects, ILAB aims to reduce workplace injuries.</p>	<p>None</p> <p>None</p> <p>None</p>
<b>International Labor Diplomacy</b> (ILAB Office of Foreign Relations)	As part of the U.S.-European Union Working Group on Employment and Labor Related Issues, considering proposal for a conference on employment of people with disabilities targeting development of policies for implementation in 2003, the "European Year on Disabilities."	On-going activity, no changes required



**APPENDIX 3-B**

**BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS (BLS)**

## Appendix 3-B

### **BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS (BLS) Agency Self-Evaluation: Narrative**

#### **Mission**

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) is the principal fact-finding agency for the federal government in the broad field of labor economics and statistics. It is an independent national statistical agency that collects, processes, analyzes, and disseminates essential statistical data to the American public, Congress, other federal agencies, state and local governments, businesses, and labor. The BLS also serves as a statistical resource to DOL. Data are available relating to employment, unemployment, and other characteristics of the labor force; consumer and producer prices, consumer expenditures, and import and export prices; wages and employee benefits; productivity and technological change; employment projections; occupational illness and injuries; and international comparisons of labor statistics. Most of the data are collected in surveys conducted by the BLS, the Bureau of the Census (under interagency agreements), or on a cooperative basis with state agencies.

#### **Data Dissemination Activities**

The BLS strives to have its data satisfy a number of criteria, including relevance to current social and economic issues, timeliness in reflecting today's rapidly changing economic conditions, accuracy and consistently high statistical quality, and impartiality in both subject matter and presentation. The basic data are made available in numerous ways: monthly, quarterly, and annual news releases; bulletins, reports, special publications, and periodicals; by telephone and fax; and on the BLS public web site at [www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov). Regional offices also issue additional reports and releases, usually presenting locality or regional detail.

Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, requires federal agencies to make their electronic and information technology accessible to people with disabilities. The BLS is in full compliance with Section 508, with the exception of the availability on its website of formats for custom data tables that are accessible by equipment designed for the visually impaired. Through ongoing systems redesign work, BLS is in the process of bringing this remaining portion into full compliance.

#### **Designing and Implementing a Statistically Reliable and Accurate Method to Measure the Employment Rate of Adults with Disabilities**

Statistical data about the prevalence and distribution of disability, and the characteristics and experiences of people with disabilities, is critical to planning services, evaluating programs, and formulating public policy. Federal agencies, the disability community, and other stakeholders all need accurate and reliable employment statistics for the

disability population.

Executive Order 13078, *Increasing Employment of Adults with Disabilities*, established the Presidential Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities. The Order directed the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Census Bureau, in cooperation with the Department of Education, the Department of Health and Human Services, the National Council on Disability, and the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, to design and implement a statistically reliable and accurate method to measure the employment rate of adults with disabilities. Under the leadership of the BLS and the Census Bureau, the Task Force created the Employment Rate Measurement Methodology (ERMM) Work Group to fulfill the mandate set forth in the Order.

In 1999, the Work Group completed a thorough review of disability survey instruments. The review indicated that there were serious problems with the survey questions that were currently available. In 2000, the Work Group conducted cognitive tests of disability questions. Currently, questions that were tested are being placed in the National Comorbidity Survey (NCS), which is being administered between February 2001 and April 2002. The results from this field test will be used to determine if a disability question can be placed in the BLS Current Population Survey (CPS), the official source of labor force data for many demographic groups and, therefore, the most appropriate survey for identifying the disability population. When the data from this project and from the CPS become available, researchers will understand many things about the disability population that can be used to guide policies, develop new programs, and improve existing programs to enhance the employment status of the disability population.

**BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS (BLS)**  
**Agency Self-Evaluation: Summary**

<b>Program, Initiative, Activity, Statute, Regulation or Policy</b>	<b>How It Promotes and Supports People with Disabilities in Seeking, Attaining and/or Retaining Employment or Self-Employment</b>	<b>Needed Changes, Modifications or Additions</b>
<b>Design and implement a statistically reliable and accurate method to measure the employment rate of adults with disabilities, pursuant to Executive Order 13078.</b>	<p>Federal agencies, the disability community, and other stakeholders need accurate and reliable employment statistics on individuals with disabilities. The Current Population Survey, sponsored by the Census and BLS, is the official source of labor force data for many demographic groups and may be the most appropriate survey for collecting information for people with disabilities.</p> <p>When the data from this project and from the CPS become available, researchers will understand many things about the disability population that can be used to guide policies, develop new programs, and improve existing programs to enhance the employment status people with disabilities.</p>	Not applicable (N/A)

<p><b>Data dissemination activities through the BLS web site</b></p>	<p>Federal agencies, the disability community, and other stakeholders need accurate and reliable employment statistics regarding people with disabilities.</p>	<p>BLS is in full compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, with the exception of Website custom-formatted data tables; systems work currently is underway to bring these kinds of tables into compliance.</p>
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**APPENDIX 3-C**

**EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS ADMINISTRATION (ESA)**

## Appendix 3-C

### **EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS ADMINISTRATION (ESA) Agency Self-Evaluation: Narrative**

#### **Mission**

The Employment Standards Administration (ESA) is both an enforcement and benefit delivery agency. ESA administers programs to implement over 100 laws enacted by Congress to protect the basic rights of workers, including minimum wage, child labor, and overtime pay standards, equal employment opportunities for employees of federal contractors, workers' compensation benefits, as well as workers' rights as union members. Nearly every worker in America is protected by laws and regulations administered by ESA programs. The more than 4000 employees who carry out ESA's mission are located in 200 offices throughout the country to make ESA programs as accessible as possible to the American public.

#### **Wage and Hour Division**

The Wage and Hour Division (Division) is the agency responsible for the enforcement and administration of federal worker protection statutes, two of which have particular impact on persons with disabilities: The Fair Labor Standards Act, which covers minimum wage, overtime and child labor; and the Family and Medical Leave Act, which covers job-protected leave for serious health conditions, and the birth or adoption of a child.

- ***The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), Section 14(c)***

The FLSA has, since its enactment in 1938, contained provisions allowing for the employment of workers with disabilities at wage rates less than the federal minimum wage to prevent the "curtailment of employment opportunities." Section 14(c) represents just one option available to workers with disabilities, and their families and guardians, to acquire, experience, and sustain meaningful employment. Section 14(c) authorizes payment of special minimum wages to workers with disabilities when their productivity is affected by their disabilities to the extent that the required payment of the full minimum wage would curtail their employment opportunities. A special minimum wage must be a commensurate wage, based on the actual productivity of the individual compared to the productivity of, and prevailing wages paid to, an experienced worker without a disability performing the same work in the same vicinity. Prior to paying special minimum wages, employers must first apply for and obtain a certificate from DOL authorizing the payment of special minimum wages. Generally, employers must renew their certification every two years.

*How Section 14(c) Supports Employment of Persons with Disabilities -- About 6,100 employers holding certificates authorizing the payment of special minimum wages collectively employ about 424,000 workers with disabilities at special minimum wages.*

Eighty-four percent of certificate holders (4,700) are nonprofit community rehabilitation programs (CRPs), formerly known as “sheltered workshops,” established to provide support services, training, and employment to individuals with disabilities; 9% are private businesses; 5% are hospitals and residential care facilities that may employ patient workers; and 2 % are schools that often operate “work experience programs” for their students with disabilities.

Employees with disabilities paid special minimum wages perform a variety of work, most of which involves hand assembly or is service-related, including such things as janitorial contracts, mail distribution, grounds maintenance, and commissary stocking. Although workers who are paid special minimum wages have a wide range of physical and mental conditions that impair their productivity, about three-quarters of all workers employed by CRPs have mental retardation or some other developmental disability as their primary impairment. Almost half (46%) of the workers have more than one disability.

The Section 14(c) program is an integral component of the services CRPs provide to their consumer – the workers with disabilities. In addition to meaningful employment, the services provided by CRPs often include training in life skills, medical and rehabilitation treatment, financial management, housing, transportation and recreational activities. Many CRPs would be financially unable to include work experience as part of their rehabilitation programs without the Section 14(c) authority to pay special minimum wages.

Because workers with severe disabilities may not understand or be able to protect their rights, the FLSA and the accompanying regulations also contain several “key provisions” that work to both protect the workers with disabilities from exploitation and to prevent the curtailment of employment opportunities for workers with disabilities. The Division administers the Section 14(c) program through a multi-pronged strategy of certification, education and outreach, enforcement, and partnerships with advocacy groups, agencies and associations including NISH, Goodwill, Easter Seals, the Department of Education, and other government agencies to better serve workers with disabilities.

The Wage and Hour Division’s efforts are designed to encourage the legitimate use of Section 14(c) certificates to increase the employment of workers with disabilities while at the same time protecting their rights and preventing their exploitation. In addition, these efforts emphasize the importance of preventing violations by providing employers with important information that will help them attain and maintain compliance with the provisions of Section 14(c).

The certification process is being streamlined. Forms and instructions are being simplified. The Division has also increased outreach efforts to encourage each applicant, and potential applicant, to “get to know” and develop a working relationship with Wage and Hour staff assigned to cover the applicant’s geographic area. And the revised certificate processing computer system, which will be operational in early 2002,



will automatically generate employer reminders regarding such things as renewal applications, the conducting of prevailing wage surveys.

The Division is committed to expanding education and outreach activities, and forming partnerships with those who work for or with workers with disabilities. In addition, the Division will provide more and better compliance assistance materials for the certification process and expand employer participation in seminars – many conducted in partnership with national advocacy groups, State agencies, or employer associations – designed to help employers achieve and maintain compliance with the FLSA.

The proposed changes should be accomplished within the existing budget.

- ***Family and Medical Leave Act***

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) helps workers with disabilities maintain employment by providing necessary time off (within the limits established by the statute), job protection, and the continuation of group health insurance for qualifying health reasons. It also provides similar help to employed parents who must care for children (including adult children) not capable of self-care because of mental or physical disability.

The FMLA entitles eligible employees of covered employers to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave each year—with continued group health insurance coverage—for specified family and medical reasons. The FMLA permits employees to take leave on an intermittent basis or to work a reduced schedule under certain circumstances. Private employers are covered under FMLA if they have employed at least 50 employees during 20 or more calendar workweeks in the current or preceding calendar year; all public employers are covered. Employees are eligible under FMLA if they have worked for their employer for at least 12 months, have worked at least 1,250 hours during the 12 months preceding the start of leave, and are employed at a work site where the employer employs at least 50 employees within 75 miles. The 12 months the employee has to have worked do not have to be consecutive.

*How FMLA Supports Employment of Persons with Disabilities* – Unpaid leave must be granted to an eligible employee for any of the following reasons: (1) for the birth of a son or a daughter, and to care for the newborn child within one year of birth; (2) for placement with the employee of a son or daughter for adoption or foster care, and/or to care for the newly placed child within one year of placement; (3) to care for the employee's spouse, son or daughter, or parent who has a serious health condition; and (4) for a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform his/her job.

The Division is increasing employer knowledge and promoting compliance through a combination of education and outreach, policy review, and enforcement activities.

Review of the FMLA compliance program will be accomplished using resources already budgeted.

## **Office of Workers' Compensation Programs**

- ***Vocational rehabilitation services under the Federal Employees Compensation Act (5 U.S.C. 8101, et seq.)***

As part of its administration of the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA), OWCP provides vocational rehabilitation services to injured federal employees. In so doing, OWCP assists these injured federal employees in returning to the active workforce, both in the federal workforce and in private employment. FECA staff and management and SOL will be meeting to examine ways of increasing use of rehabilitation services under FECA and to look for ways of identifying injured workers who might benefit from such services and moving these customers into the program.

Budget impact is yet to be determined, but it will be conducted within the requested budget.

- ***Vocational rehabilitation services under Longshore and Harbor Workers' Compensation Act (LHWCA), 33 U.S.C. 901, et seq.***

The LHWCA covers individuals in maritime employment who sustain injuries as a result of that maritime employment. While OWCP administers the LHWCA, the benefits are often paid directly by the employer or the employer's insurance company. As part of its administration of the LHWCA, OWCP provides vocational rehabilitation services to injured workers. In so doing, OWCP assists these injured workers in returning to the active workforce, whether in the maritime industry or in other employment.

Longshore is in the process of surveying rehabilitation service providers and injured workers to determine which programs have been beneficial in returning people to work, with the objective of trying to increase the number of people who voluntarily elect to participate and complete a rehab program.

Budget Impact - No additional resources are needed in FY2002.

## **Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP)**

- ***Monitoring/compliance assistance for federal contractors and subcontractors under Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974***

*How the program supports employment of persons with disabilities* - For almost 30 years, OFCCP has had a major role in the employment of individuals with disabilities through its monitoring to ensure that federal contractors and subcontractors comply with their obligations of nondiscrimination and affirmative action in all personnel practices. Procedures used include:

- Offering compliance assistance to contractors to help them understand the regulatory requirements and the compliance review process.
- Conducting comprehensive compliance reviews and complaint investigations of federal contractors' personnel policies, practices, and procedures.
- Obtaining conciliation agreements from those in violation of regulatory obligations, and monitoring contractor progress in fulfilling terms of their agreements.
- Forming linkage agreements between contractors and OFCCP to help employers identify and recruit qualified applicants for employment opportunities.
- Recommending enforcement actions to the Solicitor of Labor that cannot be resolved through the conciliation process.

Aspects of these efforts with particular impact on persons with disabilities include regulations that (1) require federal contractors to actively disseminate their employment policies and to make good faith efforts of active outreach and positive recruitment of qualified individuals with disabilities when opportunities occur, target areas that OFCCP closely examines during the compliance process [41 CFR 60-741], and (2) require federal contractors to actively disseminate their employment policies and to make good faith efforts of active outreach and positive recruitment of qualified veterans with disabilities, veterans of the Vietnam era, and other covered veterans when opportunities occur , target areas that OFCCP closely examines during the compliance process [41 CFR 60-250].

- **Reasonable accommodation**

Federal contractors are also required to make reasonable accommodations to the known physical and mental limitations of qualified individuals with disabilities including veterans with disabilities unless a contractor can demonstrate that the accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the operation of the business. Reasonable accommodations by federal contractors may include but are not limited to:

- Ensuring their facilities are accessible and usable by individuals with disabilities, including veterans.
- Making modifications or adjustments to the job application process that enable qualified applicants with disabilities, including veterans with disabilities, to be considered for employment opportunities.
- Making appropriate adjustments or modification to examinations, training materials, or policies.

- Making modifications or adjustments that enable individuals with disabilities, including veterans with disabilities, to enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment.
- Making acquisitions and/or modifications to equipment or devices.

OFCCP reviews programs/initiatives on an ongoing basis to determine if additional changes are necessary.

Budget Impact - Services can be provided within requested budget.

- ***Exemplary Voluntary Efforts Award (EVE), Exemplary Public Interest Award, and the Secretary's Opportunity Awards***

*How they support employment of persons with disabilities* -- These awards recognize the exemplary employment practices of federal contractors and other stakeholders. Award winners have included contractors and service organizations that have made sustained efforts in the employment, referral, and training of individuals with disabilities.

Action Needed and Budget Impact - No action needed and it can be conducted within requested budget.

- ***Best Practices Technical Assistance Guide***

*How it supports employment of persons with disabilities* - The guide will provide contractors (and other interested employers) with information on promising practices for recruiting, hiring, and retaining persons with disabilities.

Action Needed and Budget Impact – The guide has been researched, is in preparation, and can be accomplished within requested FY 2002 budget.

### **Office of Management, Administration, and Planning and the Equal Employment Opportunity Unit**

- ***ESA recruitment and hiring practices***

*Actions taken and needed* – The Division of Human Resources Management (DHRM) reviewed recent recruitment efforts and hiring results for FY 2001 to identify possible improvements for FY 2002 and beyond. The FY 2001 ESA Hiring Plan for Persons with Disabilities seeks to increase hiring of individuals with disabilities for positions serviced out of the National Office. As of August 27, 2001, ESA National Office hires totaled 182 individuals, 8 of whom identified themselves as having a disability. The EEOU provided support to the national office and the regions in identifying candidates for hire through the Workforce Recruitment Program, which provides job candidates with disabilities the opportunity to be considered for summer hire and permanent employment by federal agencies.

In addition to utilizing electronic postings of all vacancy announcements through LaborNet for internal recruitment, DHRM also uploads all external postings onto the OPM USA Jobs web site. This effort has attracted many individuals with disabilities to apply for these positions and they are referred to managers on concurrent certificates as individuals eligible for noncompetitive appointments based on their identified disability.

In an effort to further increase ESA employment of persons with disabilities, DHRM will work with the Department's Human Resources Center Diversity Staff to identify electronic addresses of organizations and associations representing persons with disabilities that can be utilized to expand ESA's outreach to this sector of applicants.

*Budget Impact* – Services can be provided within requested budgets.

- ***Reasonable accommodation***

*How it supports employment of persons with disabilities* – The Office of Management, Administration and Planning (OMAP) provides support to ESA managers in the national office in responding to requests for reasonable accommodation to enable employees with disabilities to be fully effective in their positions. The Equal Employment Opportunity Unit (EEOU) helps to facilitate such accommodation in the national office and the regions.

*Action needed* – EEOU will work with the Civil Rights Center to ensure development of information tools and delivery of training on reasonable accommodation to ESA supervisors in all regions when revised guidance is published. EEOU will also provide how-to information on reasonable accommodation for employees in brownbag sessions and via Intranet.

*Budget Impact* – The services can be provided within requested budgets.

- ***Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794d)***

*How it supports employment of persons with disabilities* – EEOU has the lead, working closely with IT staff in OMAP, for assuring accessibility of ESA's web-based information to employees, as well as to citizens with disabilities. OMAP/DITMS has the responsibility for oversight of ESA's web presence, though the bulk of ESA's 10,000 web pages are controlled directly by ESA programs. DITMS encourages program staff to attend Section 508 training and works with them to ensure compliance with Section 508 requirements prior to moving pages into production.

*Actions needed* – DITMS' support of Section 508-compliant web-page design and review of new pages is ongoing.

*Budget Impact* – This work can be supported within requested budgets.

**EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS ADMINISTRATION (ESA)**  
**Agency Self-Evaluation: Summary**

<b>Program, Initiative, Activity, Statute, Regulation or Policy</b>	<b>How it promotes and supports people with disabilities in seeking, attaining and/or retaining employment or self-employment</b>	<b>Needed changes, modifications or additions</b>
<p><b>Employment of Workers with Disabilities under Special Certificates</b></p> <p>Section 14(c) of Fair Labor Standards Act, 29 USC 201, et seq.; 29 CFR Part 525.</p>	<p>Wage and Hour Division: 14(c) provisions are designed to prevent the curtailment of opportunities for the employment of people with disabilities; provides for the employment of individuals with disabilities at special minimum wage rates which are commensurate with those paid to workers who are not disabled for the work to be performed employed in the vicinity for essentially the same type, quality, and quantity of work.</p>	<p>WH is implementing several administrative changes that will facilitate the certification process, allow for better program accounting, and provide employers with important compliance information.</p>
<p><b>Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993</b>  [29 U.S.C. 2601, et seq.; 29 CFR Part 825]</p>	<p>Provides increased job security for employees who have serious health conditions that prevent them from working for temporary periods.</p>	<p>Review program to determine if any changes are needed.</p>

<b>Program, Initiative, Activity, Statute, Regulation or Policy</b>	<b>How it promotes and supports people with disabilities in seeking, attaining and/or retaining employment or self-employment</b>	<b>Needed changes, modifications or additions</b>
<p><b>Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA)</b></p> <p>5 U.S.C. 8101, <u>et seq.</u></p>	<p>FECA is the workers' compensation program for federal employees. As part of its administration of the FECA, OWCP provides vocational rehabilitation services to injured federal employees, assisting them in returning to the active workforce, in both federal and private employment.</p>	<p>Upcoming meeting to (1) examine ways of increasing use of rehabilitation services under FECA and (2) look at ways of identifying injured workers who might benefit from such services and ways of moving these customers into the program.</p>
<p><b>Longshore and Harbor Workers' Compensation Act (LHWCA), 33 U.S.C. 901, <u>et seq.</u></b></p>	<p>The LHWCA covers individuals in maritime employment who sustain injuries as a result of that maritime employment. While OWCP administers the LHWCA, the benefits are often paid directly by the employer or the employer's insurance company. As part of its administration of the LHWCA, OWCP provides vocational rehabilitation services to injured workers. In so doing, OWCP assists these injured workers in returning to the active workforce, whether in the maritime industry or in other employment.</p>	<p>In the process of surveying rehabilitation service providers and injured workers to determine which programs have been beneficial in returning people to work; goal is to increase the number of people who voluntarily elect to participate and complete a rehab program.</p>

<b>Program, Initiative, Activity, Statute, Regulation or Policy</b>	<b>How it promotes and supports people with disabilities in seeking, attaining and/or retaining employment or self-employment</b>	<b>Needed changes, modifications or additions</b>
<b>Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act, and VEVRAA</b>	<p>For almost 30 years, OFCCP has had a major role in the employment of individuals with disabilities through its monitoring to ensure that federal contractors and subcontractors comply with their obligations of non-discrimination and affirmative action in all personnel practices. Procedures used include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Offering compliance assistance to contractors to help them understand the regulatory requirements and the compliance review process.</li> <li>▪ Conducting comprehensive compliance reviews and complaint investigations of federal contractors' personnel policies, practices, and procedures.</li> <li>▪ Obtaining conciliation agreements from those in violation of regulatory obligations, and monitoring contractor progress in fulfilling terms of their agreements.</li> <li>▪ Forming linkage agreements between contractors and OFCCP to help employers identify and recruit qualified applicants for employment opportunities.</li> <li>▪ Recommending enforcement actions to the Solicitor of Labor that are not able to be resolved through the conciliation process.</li> </ul>	<p>OFCCP will review its programs and initiatives to determine if additional changes are necessary.</p>



<b>Program, Initiative, Activity, Statute, Regulation or Policy</b>	<b>How it promotes and supports people with disabilities in seeking, attaining and/or retaining employment or self-employment</b>	<b>Needed changes, modifications or additions</b>
<p>41 CFR 60-741</p> <p>Linkage Agreements and MOUs</p>	<p>Requires federal contractors to actively disseminate their employment policies and to make good faith efforts in outreach and positive recruitment of qualified individuals with disabilities when opportunities occur; target areas that OFCCP closely examines during the compliance process. When a violation is found, OFCCP implements a “linkage agreement” with the contractor to help identify and recruit qualified applicants. OFCCP regional offices have memoranda of understanding with their state rehabilitation agencies under which those agencies refer persons with disabilities to federal contractors for possible employment.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>Awards:</b> Exemplary Voluntary Efforts, Exemplary Public Interest, and the Secretary’s Opportunity Awards</p>	<p>Recognize the promising practices of federal contractors and other stakeholders in exemplary and sustained employment practices. Award winners have included contractors and service organizations that have made sustained efforts in the employment, referral, and training of individuals with disabilities.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>Best Practices Technical Assistance Guide</b></p>	<p>Research has been completed towards development of this guide to provide contractors with information on promising practices for recruiting, hiring, and retaining persons with disabilities.</p>	<p>Document is in preparation.</p>

<b>Program, Initiative, Activity, Statute, Regulation or Policy</b>	<b>How it promotes and supports people with disabilities in seeking, attaining and/or retaining employment or self-employment</b>	<b>Needed changes, modifications or additions</b>
<b>Chapter 306: Reasonable accommodation</b>	<p>Office of Management, Administration, and Planning provides support to ESA managers in the national office in responding to requests for reasonable accommodation for employees with disabilities in compliance with Departmental guidance (at Chapter 306). The Equal Employment Opportunity Unit helps to facilitate accommodation in the national office and the regions.</p>	<p>EEOU will work with the Civil Rights Center to ensure training on reasonable accommodation to ESA supervisors in all regions when revised guidance is published. EEOU will provide information on RA for employees in brownbag sessions and via Intranet.</p>
<b>Section 508, Rehab Act</b>	<p>EEOU has the lead, working closely with IT staff in OMAP, for assuring accessibility of ESA's web-based information to employees, as well as to citizens with disabilities.</p>	<p>Review program web sites for accessibility.</p>

**APPENDIX 3-D**

**EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
ADMINISTRATION (ETA)**

## **Appendix 3-D**

### **EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION (ETA) Agency Self-Evaluation: Narrative**

#### **Mission**

The Employment and Training Administration (ETA) administers a wide array of workforce development and labor market transition programs through which individuals with disabilities can find, maintain or improve their place in the labor market. ETA also has sought to make its services more accessible and useful to individuals with disabilities through a variety of initiatives, most of which also will be of help to individuals with disabilities who are re-establishing themselves in community settings or who are at risk of having to return to institutions.

ETA's programs, administered primarily at the state and local levels, fund occupational skills training, job readiness preparation, rapid response to layoffs, unemployment insurance, labor exchange, career information, and apprenticeships. The largest programs that currently provide or have potential to provide more services to individuals with disabilities are discussed below, including current initiatives to enhance service to individuals with disabilities, and new areas to explore to assist this population, including individuals who are transitioning into community settings.

#### **The Workforce Investment Act (WIA), Title I**

WIA provides career information, job vacancy information, job search assistance, placement assistance, counseling, and training through 605 local workforce areas managing over 1,200 local One-Stop Career Centers. Persons with disabilities can take advantage of a wide range of training, education, and employment programs through the One-Stop system. WIA also requires the participation in the One-Stop system of nineteen mandatory partners and programs, including those under parts A and B of title I of the Rehabilitation Act. Vocational rehabilitation agencies are required to have representatives on state and local workforce investment boards, which provide oversight and guidance for the implementation of services under the One-Stop system. State and local boards are business-led and have a majority of business members, in addition to the required partner agencies and programs. The law also encourages the participation of other partners, which may include disability-specific organizations.

The One-Stop system provides three tiers of service. Core services, available to any interested individual, include vacancy listings, career information, labor market trend data, and initial assessments of skills and needs. Many of these universally available services are offered electronically through America's Career Kit ([www.eworkforce.org/careerkit/](http://www.eworkforce.org/careerkit/)) and its suite of information systems consisting of America's Job Bank ([www.ajb.org](http://www.ajb.org)), America's Career InfoNet ([www.acinet.org](http://www.acinet.org)), America's Learning eXchange ([www.alx.org](http://www.alx.org)), and America's Service Locator ([www.servicelocator.org](http://www.servicelocator.org)). In addition, ETA also funds and manages O\*NET

([www.doleta.gov/programs/onet](http://www.doleta.gov/programs/onet)), a database of occupations and their requirements that can be used by jobseekers, employers, educators and training professionals. America's Career Kit and O\*NET are appealing to individuals with disabilities who are able to access these systems via computers at various locations such as home, school, and One-Stop Centers. O\*NET also includes three career exploration tools.

Under WIA, local One-Stop systems are also required to provide "intensive" and training services to adults, eligible youth and dislocated workers (including individuals with disabilities). In the event of limited funds for adult services, priority or preference for intensive and training services must be given to public assistance recipients and low-income adults (and may include those with disabilities who meet eligibility criteria).

Intensive services can be provided by One-Stop Center staff, through contracts, or by partner agencies and programs. Training services are to be paid for primarily through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) and must be delivered by eligible training providers (included on state and local lists as a result of applications approved by local boards and overseen by a state agency). There are limited exceptions to the use of ITAs where local boards can use contracts for training: for on-the-job or customized training, when the board determines there are too few eligible providers to accomplish the purpose of ITAs, and when the board determines there are training services of demonstrated effectiveness offered by community-based or other private organizations to special populations with multiple barriers to employment. These populations can include hard-to-serve groups, including those defined by the Governor, who could target individuals with disabilities.

Implementation of all three tiers of services under WIA continues to evolve, and ETA is currently undertaking a review of the entire WIA-funded system, working with state and local practitioners, to develop guidance and technical assistance to enhance implementation of key system features, including how to enhance partnership relationships with other programs.

A key partner in the One-Stop systems created under WIA is the Wagner-Peyser funded Employment Service, provided through state-run agencies and designed to help employers find the workers they need and workers find the jobs they need. To carry out this function, states offer self-service options through resource rooms, Internet-based systems for job matching and referral, and facilitated self-help, as well as staff-assisted services for those who need additional support. As part of their service delivery, states are required to promote and develop employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities as well as to provide for job counseling and placement for such individuals.

### **Unemployment Insurance (UI)**

Unemployment insurance is administered by a federal-state partnership that provides eligible jobless workers with temporary partial wage replacement. The federal-state unemployment compensation (UC) program, created by the Social Security Act of 1935, offers the first economic line of defense against the ripple effects of unemployment.

Through payments made directly to eligible, unemployed workers, it ensures that at least a significant proportion of the necessities of life, most notably food, shelter and clothing, can be met while a worker searches for employment. To qualify for benefits, UI claimants must have earned a specified amount of income or worked a certain number of weeks or calendar quarters in covered employment during some recent specified time period.

As an increasing number of individuals with disabilities enter and re-enter employment and become subject to the vagaries of the labor market, more of them likely are to become eligible for UI benefits at some point and will need to have access to the UI system. Many states now allow claimants to file their UC claim over the telephone or over the Internet. DOL has actively supported state efforts to implement telephone and Internet initial claims filing systems by offering competitive grants to help states develop these systems. These new filing methods help to expand worker access to the UI program and provide additional filing options to claimants. TTY/TDY telephone service is available to hearing impaired claimants.

### **Welfare-to-Work**

Another component and partner in local One-Stop systems are Welfare-to-Work (WtW) grantees, who receive monies from local workforce areas from formula funds and through national competitive grants. WtW programs are targeted to the hardest-to-employ custodial and non-parents under Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Grants are used to provide placement, transitional employment, and other support services.

### **Youth Activities**

Under WIA, the youth services portfolio includes: “formula-funded” services provided to States and local communities; “Youth Opportunity Grants” competitively awarded to serve to youth in high-poverty urban, rural, and Native American communities; and residential education and work preparation services offered through the Job Corps.

Local workforce investment boards administer formula-funded youth services and their associated Youth Councils to provide a variety of in-school and out-of-school services targeted to low-income youth based on family income. By law, local boards and their Youth Councils must ensure that services are inclusive of youth with disabilities. For eligibility determination purposes, section 664.250 of the WIA regulations permits local programs to calculate the income of young people with disabilities based on their own income rather than their family’s income. The regulations also allow local programs to disregard minimum income eligibility requirements for up to 5% of participants who have other barriers to employment, including disabilities.

Youth Opportunity Grants, awarded to 36 different communities throughout the country, are intended to serve both in-school and out-of-school youth 14 to 21 living in high-poverty communities. The legislative goal of the Youth Opportunity Grants is increase long-term employment of these youth, which is reflected in three measurable objectives:

to increase high school graduation, college enrollment, and the employment of out-of-school youth in the targeted communities. All Youth Opportunity Grants share the following components: a youth center and satellite centers within the target community; a large number of staff working directly with youth; job training, remedial education, and job placement offerings for out-of-school youth; dropout prevention and college bound activities for in-school youth; and youth development activities for both in-school and out-of-school youth.

ETA provides technical assistance to grantees through a variety of means, including the Youth Opportunity Grant Leadership Institute, founded by ETA and national foundations to provide ongoing training to local project coordinators and staff in areas such as program management, developing community partnerships, employer engagement, and staff development. In addition, teams of federal staff provide extensive technical assistance and monitoring to help ensure that each Youth Opportunity Grant will result in high quality services and produces meaningful outcomes. Technical assistance is also provided through ETA's Office of Youth Services web site.

Job Corps is America's largest residential training program for economically disadvantaged youth, who are 16 through 24 years old. Job Corps Centers offer a full-time, highly structured, year-round residential program that includes supervised dormitory-style residences, meals, basic medical care, and counseling. Since it was established in 1964, Job Corps has helped nearly two million young people escape lives of poverty and unemployment. Job Corps students spend an average of seven months learning occupational skills as well as reading, math, and employability skills. Occupational training is offered for more than 100 different fields, including construction, auto mechanics and repair, business and clerical, retail trades, health care, computer services, and culinary arts. Job Corps Centers serve youth with disabilities by ensuring that all youth receive a full assessment of their needs and abilities and making accommodations.

Working through a network of state apprenticeship offices, ETA also administers a national system for registering apprenticeship programs. Registered apprenticeship is a formalized system of occupational training that offers a combination of structured on-the-job training and related theoretical instruction, both tailored to industry requirements. Every year, more than 440,000 Americans become apprentices, receiving training through approximately 37,000 apprenticeship programs. These programs generally are operated either by individual employers, employer associations, government entities or partnerships between businesses and labor unions. ETA is undertaking a broad-based marketing initiative that will include an examination of strategies for outreach to individuals with disabilities.

ETA also administers a number of specialized programs all of which serve or have the potential to serve individuals with disabilities. Included here are: the Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker and the Indian and Native American programs, which provide funds to grantees serving the employment and training needs of these groups; the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) which provides grants to

national organizations and states to provide part-time employment, training, and job placement to low-income workers 55 years of age or older; H-1B training grants funded from employer fees for H-1B visas for temporary high-skilled workers; and a variety of pilot, demonstration, research, and technical assistance projects.

ETA's demonstration projects include some focused particularly on young offenders. These projects are currently being expanded into a larger collaborative project, involving the Departments of Justice and Health and Human Services, and will contain a new focus on addressing mental health and substance abuse problems.

### **Current Initiatives to Promote Employment of Individuals with Disabilities**

*Choice and Customization Initiatives* - ETA has a number of initiatives that aim to enhance the quality of services to meet the unique needs of individuals with disabilities in finding and preparing for new jobs and careers. For example, the Work Incentive Grant program provides competitive grants for developing innovative approaches to ensuring that people with disabilities can obtain comprehensive services through the One-Stop Career Center System. Many grants will be used to make facilities more accessible and to train staff to work with individuals with disabilities. From the current \$20 million in funds, 23 grants of \$500,000 to \$1 million were awarded in October 2000, to state and local agencies, nonprofit organizations, or consortia of these entities. The FY 2001 appropriation provides an additional \$20 million for a second round of grants awarded in the fall of 2001.

In addition to making resources available to state and local One-Stop systems through Work Incentive Grants, ETA provides technical assistance to a variety of program practitioners on promising practices and in service delivery to this client group. Promising practices identified through grants administered by DOL's Office of Disability Employment Policy (such as their Customized Employment project) will also be transmitted through this technical assistance effort and may be included in Work Incentive Grant activities in the coming years.

As it has for the last 25 years, ETA also administers Disability Employment Grants (totaling \$6.8 million in PY 2000), which have been awarded to national organizations with multi-site projects across the U.S for training, employment and career counseling services to people with disabilities. The organizations have included the Institute for Community Inclusion, Goodwill International, Community Options, the Marriott Foundation, and the International Association of Psycho-Social Rehabilitation Services. Other recipients these have been nationally known organizations such as the National Federation for the Blind, which focus on a specific type of disability and customize services to address specific barriers. The grantees also explore innovative approaches, such as entrepreneurship and self-employment of individuals with significant disabilities (as in a project conducted by the Montana Job Training Partnership and the Rural Institute at the University of Montana). In addition, most of these organizations work in partnership with local Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies and establish linkages with



local One-Stop systems to develop and replicate innovative employment and training strategies for individuals with disabilities.

Under the Welfare-to-Work (WtW) program, ETA has awarded a total of 15 competitive grants that specifically target services to people with disabilities, including individuals with mental, physical, learning and “hidden” disabilities. Over \$43.7 million has been awarded for these grants from FY 1998 and 1999 funds. Some of these grants have focused on the creation of telecommuting and self-employment options for the people with disabilities, nontraditional occupations for women, televised ESL classes, expanded or accessible transportation, and services targeting the hardest-to-serve in specific industries. Evaluation of these grants is ongoing, and will identify promising practices.

Under its WtW effort, ETA has also developed a guide, *Building Employment Success for Persons with Disabilities under Welfare Reform: An Introduction to Learning Disabilities, Mental Retardation, Psychiatric Disabilities, and Addictive Disorders in the Context of Welfare-to-Work and TANF*, which will help frontline staff provide enhanced services for individuals with these disabilities. It’s expected the guide will be published in the fall of 2001 or winter of 2002, and is currently in clearance in DOL’s Solicitor’s Office for Civil Rights.

*Technology Initiatives* – ETA also has several initiatives relating to technology and individuals with disabilities. The Disability Information Technology Initiative recognizes the potential of the information technology (IT) industry to provide significant employment possibilities to persons with disabilities. In June 2001, ETA awarded six grants, totaling \$3.25 million (from PY 2000 funds), to local workforce investment boards to provide training in IT skills to persons with disabilities, in partnership with private IT and non-profit entities. Partners participating in the grants include community-based organizations focused particularly on services to individuals with disabilities and independent living centers.

ETA also is funding, through a task order, another technology initiative to identify and develop web-based information on promising practices. The project is profiling exemplary skill and employment training programs for individuals with disabilities and will provide technical assistance to the One-Stop system on these practices. Successful disability employment projects will be profiled, as well as model MOUs, assistive technologies, and other One-Stop issues. The cost of the project is \$350,000, from PY 2000 funds.

ETA reaches out to the employment and training community and the general public through the “disAbility Online” web site ([wdsc.doleta.gov/disability/default.cfm](http://wdsc.doleta.gov/disability/default.cfm)) which provides access to extensive information and resources relating to employment issues for individuals with disabilities. It receives more than 150,000 hits per month and is one of the most used homepages in ETA. Expenditures associated with developing and maintaining this site were subsumed under other technology projects.

ETA has strongly emphasized disability issues at its national conferences, such as the annual JETT\*CON conference, and has highlighted service to individuals with disabilities as a major theme in numerous workshops, plenary sessions, and exhibitions of technology.

O\*NET Online (<http://online.onecenter.org>) is a web site that provides detailed O\*NET data and information to the public. The site provides two alternative versions, a low-vision version and a text only version, for easier access by the visually impaired. The low-vision pages provide larger text with white and color text on black background conforming to industry standards. A mechanical/software reader can read the text only version so that the visually impaired can “hear” the information provided on the site. O\*NET Online also provides links to about 60 sites on job accommodations including the Job Accommodation Network (JAN), and the Searchable Online Accommodation Resource (SOAR). The design of O\*NET Online and the accommodation linkages involved significant review and representation from the disability community. Costs associated with these accommodations are subsumed in the larger contract for this activity.

ETA also has a technology-related project geared specifically for Native Americans with disabilities under a contract with the American Indian Disability Technical Assistance Center for the creation of a culturally relevant Information Technology training curriculum for use by employment and training service providers serving the Indian and Native American community. In developing this curriculum, there will be a consultation process to garner substantive input from Native Americans and Indians with disabilities, tribal leaders, Indian community colleges, the advisory council to ETA’s programs, the Bureau of Indian Affairs and representatives of the IT industry. The cost of this project is \$99,998, funded from PY 2000 monies.

*Partnership Initiatives* – Work Incentive Grants, as discussed above, are awarded to individual organizations or consortia of entities to improve services, provide outreach to the disability community, and foster linkages among both public and private providers in the disability community to the One-Stop system. For example, these grants may be used to inform state departments of mental health and their provider organizations about America’s Career Kit or other ETA-funded employment and training resources potentially available to their clients.

ETA also has worked with the Department of Education’s Office of the Assistant Secretary of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (OSERS) in a number of areas to promote full implementation of WIA. ETA and OSERS staff hold monthly meetings to identify and resolve workforce issues and coordinate activities in an effort to provide greater opportunity for individuals with disabilities to benefit from WIA programs and services. There are no budgetary implications associated with these initiatives.

ETA has provided \$450,000 over the past three years to the Social Security Administration (SSA) to support 12 state partnership grants. ETA also provided \$3 million to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) for System Change grants in

six states. These demonstration grants were initiated in 1998 to address systemic employment barriers in state systems, such as initiating state Medicaid buy-in provisions or fostering partnership between Vocational Rehabilitation and other workforce investment programs. These grants predated the passage of the Ticket-to-Work legislation of 1999 and the Work Incentive Grant appropriation but bear some similarity in purpose and intent. ETA staff also have participated in a number of interagency conferences related to both the SSA and the Systems Change grants.

Under an Interagency Agreement with the Department of Education's National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) and DOL's Center for Civil Rights, ETA made available \$300,000 in PY 2000 for technical assistance on disability issues to the One-Stop system. These funds were included in NIDRR grants to ten regional Disability Business and Technical Assistance Centers (DBTAC) with expertise on the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and Section 188 of WIA all of which concern non-discrimination in the workforce system. DBTAC staff conducted numerous presentations at workforce conferences held around the nation and provided individualized training to local One-Stops. They have provided an important resource to ETA Regions on disability issues, as well as technical assistance on access and accommodations to state and local workforce investment services.

The Social Security Administration and ETA have worked closely for several years to foster One-Stop participation as an Employment Network under the Ticket to Work and Work Incentive Improvement Act. ETA also has worked closely with the Office of Disability Employment Policy in developing comments on the Ticket notice of proposed rule-making. These activities are intended to increase access by individuals with disabilities to employment and training services through the One-Stop system and there are no budgetary implications associated with this initiative.

Regarding the development of O\*NET, staff have been engaged in an extensive outreach effort with a variety of groups to assure that O\*NET will support the needs of (1) individuals with disabilities as users of the information system and (2) employers in hiring individuals with disabilities. O\*NET is working with a task force of 13 organizations and associations, such as the American Occupational Therapy Association, the American Physical Therapy Association, the National Rehabilitation Association, the International Association of Rehabilitation Professionals, and the Occupational Injury Prevention and Rehabilitation Association, to identify and implement accommodations and information to assist in employment-related needs of individuals with disabilities. Costs associated with these developmental efforts are included in overall project expenditures.

ETA's Welfare-to-Work Office cooperates extensively with the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services to address disability concerns. The Office and Departments have conducted workshops on disability at numerous conferences. In addition, the Office has sponsored forums on hidden disabilities, including learning disabilities, psychiatric, mild mental retardation, and other hidden disabilities.

*Accessibility Initiatives* – ETA has developed a draft *One-Stop Guide to Accessibility and Accommodation for Persons with Disabilities* to provide guidance to the workforce development system on requirements of WIA's section 188 non-discrimination provisions related to people with disabilities, including facilities checklists, casework examples of accommodations, and tools to address legislative and regulatory disability compliance requirements. The *One-Stop Guide* is currently under review at the Office of the Solicitor for Civil Rights. Expenses associated with the *Guide's* development and printing are subsumed under other projects.

As noted earlier, ETA is undertaking a marketing initiative regarding apprenticeship, to identify new strategies for reaching out to different client groups, including individuals with disabilities. Costs for the component to reach out to individuals with disabilities are subsumed under the overall costs of the marketing initiative.

To ensure access for youth with disabilities, ETA provides on-site training to *Job Corp Centers'* admissions counselors and directors on disability sensitivity, the reasonable accommodations process, and the availability of community resources. ETA developed a web-based tutorial for center and admissions staff on how to work with students with disabilities and, over the past year, also provided training to various Job-Corps-affiliated groups. ETA also developed and disseminated a series of directives and resource guides to assist staff in providing services and in understanding and complying with disability legislation. Job Corps Center staff have been provided with descriptions of disabilities most common to the Job Corps student population and resources on where to get additional information on disability related subjects.

ETA also actively provides technical assistance on an ongoing basis to its Youth Opportunity Grantees as it relates to serving young people with disabilities. For example, a memorandum from ETA to Youth Opportunity Grantees described approaches that need to be considered when planning and implementing services for youth with disabilities. The memorandum also asked grantees to assess their program's readiness to serve all eligible youth including those with disabilities, and requested highly detailed information, such as how individuals and organizations from the disability community are involved in planning and service delivery and what program elements are in place to identify, accommodate, and address the unique needs of all youth, including those with disabilities.

The Year Two Assessments of Youth Opportunity Grant, to be conducted from October 2001 to February 2002 by ETA staff, will examine how well grantees are serving youth with disabilities. Sites will be assessed on their outreach activities to youth with disabilities, how actively are they recruiting youth with disabilities, and partnerships with organizations that serve persons with disabilities. In addition, as part of the assessment, ETA staff will visit each of the youth centers to ensure that they are all ADA-compliant.

In addition to these efforts, the JETT\*CON 2001 conference featured a simulated center, called the "Youth Zone," which was fully accessible to individuals with disabilities and included examples of adaptive technology such as a workstation and software for the visually impaired. The Youth Zone also included information and resources on various areas such as health, transportation, sports, arts, recreation, and learning disabilities. Costs associated with this simulated center were subsumed under other projects.

ETA has undertaken two initiatives to assist Indians and Native Americans with disabilities. First, ETA staff are working with the Native American Employment and Training Advisory Council to assure access, both physical and programmatic, to tribal employment and training programs for Native Americans and Indians with disabilities. Significant technical assistance has been provided on the implementation of WIA section 188 as well as on the implementation of the Rehabilitation Services Act section 508 IT accessibility requirements. Second, ETA staff are working with the Consortium of Administrators of Native American Rehabilitation and the Rehabilitation Services Administration on issues relating to tribal programs and DOL-funded employment and training programs serving Native Americans and Indians with disabilities. These activities have been conducted as part of ETA's overall administrative activities and no budgetary implications have been identified for these initiatives.

The O\*NET database provides key information on capabilities and characteristics including cognitive, psychomotor, physical, and sensory abilities. This information can be extremely useful in examining and developing accommodations, if appropriate, for individuals with disabilities and thus ensuring they have access to the full range of occupational opportunities. There are no additional costs associated with this information.

### **New Areas to Explore**

The preparation of ETA's self-evaluation of the ability of its programs to provide services to individuals with disabilities (including those returning to the community from institutions) will afford an opportunity to identify new areas for discussion and review, including possible initiatives in conjunction with DOL's Office of Disability Employment Policy, the Presidential Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities, and other federal departments.

A number of ideas have surfaced in the course of this review and are discussed below. These ideas are preliminary and intended to be consistent with ETA's primary approaches to changing practice in the workforce delivery system through administrative guidance, technical assistance, and incentives (primarily in the form of grants to implement and develop new or promising practices). Such approaches also are designed to respect the high levels of discretion afforded legislatively to the state and local government agencies that bear the responsibility for implementing most of

ETA's larger programs. Some preliminary ideas that may be explored are:

- Identifying ways to make the One-Stop system more responsive to the needs of individuals with disabilities through: strengthening system partnerships with the local Vocational Rehabilitation agencies; ensuring access to training and intensive services by individuals with disabilities; providing additional information to local One-Stop offices about qualifying as Employment Networks under the Ticket to Work and Self-sufficiency program; ensuring that providers of training services under vocational rehabilitation are familiar with the requirements of eligible training provider systems and that eligible providers understand requirements to become vendors in the vocational rehabilitation system; developing complementary or common performance measures; addressing issues relating to cost allocation in serving individuals with disabilities; reviewing administrative guidance on eligibility determination and documentation; developing integrated case management or management information systems with other programs; and reviewing participant data reporting elements on, or types of, workers with disabilities.
- Identifying existing curricula, apprenticeship training (such as the Missouri-based apprenticeship program for Direct Support Professionals) and other training and professional development for Personal Assistant Services (PAS); determining, with industry involvement, if a model new curriculum or apprenticeship program is needed; and if so, working with the industry to create new or replicate existing programs.
- Expanding the training of Job Corps administrators and staff on issues relating to serving youth with disabilities.
- Expanding awareness of hidden disabilities and determining how the Welfare-to-Work technical assistance guide, *Building Employment Success for Persons with Disabilities under Welfare Reform*, might be modified for use by program operators for other target groups, such as youth, low income adults, and dislocated workers who are served through core, intensive or training services in the One-Stop Career Center System.
- Building on and expanding evaluations of projects serving individuals with disabilities under the Disability Employment, Work Incentive, and Welfare-to-Work grants; identifying promising practices from these projects; and systematically disseminating the knowledge to the workforce development system. Among other activities, ETA may create a common database across these different groups of grants in ETA, programs in other federal agencies, or with practitioner or research networks.
- In broad-based evaluation research of the WIA system, adding questions regarding the amount and nature of services to individuals with disabilities

(including those who are leaving or have left institutional settings) and the effectiveness of technical assistance and outreach efforts.

- Exploring the role of faith-based and community organizations in providing services to individuals with disabilities, including their role in partnering with other providers at the local level, and identifying ways to help such organizations become aware of and compete for federal grants.

## **Conclusion**

The Employment and Training Administration is committed to enhancing service to individuals with disabilities who want to enter, remain or advance in the labor market, and in particular, those who are transitioning from institutional settings back to the community. From simple physical changes in One-Stop Career Center facilities to tapping into the vast employment potential of people with disabilities in the information technology industry, ETA will work to identify new ways to effectively meet the employment and training needs of persons with disabilities.

**EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION (ETA)**  
**Self-Evaluation: Summary**

<b>Program, Initiative, Activity, Stature, Regulation or Policy</b>	<b>How it promotes and supports people with disabilities in seeking, attaining and/or retaining employment or self-employment?</b>	<b>Needed changes, modifications, or additions?</b>
<p><b>The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998</b></p>	<p>People with disabilities can take advantage of a wide range of training, education and employment programs through the One-Stop System, this includes services offered by disability-specific organizations, such as VR, as well as targeted intensive and training services for adults and dislocated workers. People with disabilities also take advantage of the One-Stop-System's electronic information systems: America's Career Kit, which consists of America's Job Bank (<a href="http://www.ajb.dni.us">www.ajb.dni.us</a>), America's Career InfoNet (<a href="http://www.acinet.org">www.acinet.org</a>), and America's Learning eXchange (<a href="http://www.alx.org">www.alx.org</a>). These sites provide information on job vacancies, employment trends, and availability of training respectively. America's Career Kit appeals to people with disabilities because of its ease of access. It can be accessed at various locations: home, school or One-Stop Center.</p> <p>Local One-Stop systems require the participation of nineteen mandatory partners and programs, including those under parts A and B of title I of the Rehabilitation Act. WIA also encourages the participation of other partners, including disability-specific organizations. Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is also a required member of the Local Board.</p> <p>Prior to the passage of WIA, ETA undertook a wide range of projects, including: a directive on the need to develop One-Stop Centers that are welcoming to people with disabilities; formation of an ongoing partnership with Rehabilitation Services Administration resulting in joint issuances and co-funding of various projects; regional conferences on serving people with disabilities in a One-Stop environment; and development and distribution of a video on facilitated self-service.</p>	<p>Implementation of WIA did not occur until July 1, 2000. Therefore, it is difficult to make an accurate assessment of needed changes, modifications or additions at this time. However, some States have indicated the need for (1) a guide to physical and programmatic accessibility, which is currently in final departmental clearance; and (2) onsite training of front-line staff.</p> <p>ETA does recognize that there are several crosscutting policy issues with particular implications for people with disabilities such as Individual Training Accounts, Eligible Training Providers, that will be raised in the context of ETA's WIA Readiness Review process and other WIA policy forums.</p>



Program, Initiative, Activity, Stature, Regulation or Policy	How it promotes and supports people with disabilities in seeking, attaining and/or retaining employment or self-employment?	Needed changes, modifications, or additions?
<b>Work Incentive Grants Year 2</b>	\$20 million has been appropriated for a second round of Work Incentive Grants. The Solicitation for Grant Application is in process for departmental approval.	N/A
<b>Disability Employment Grants</b>	ETA has awarded discretionary grants for national and multi-site training and employment programs for people with disabilities for 25 years. These grants also establish linkages with the One-Stop system to the extent possible and provide the opportunity for the development and replication of innovative employment and training strategies for individuals with disabilities.	N/A
<b>Disability Information Technology Initiative</b>	ETA awarded six grants in June, 2001, totaling \$3.25 million to Workforce Investment Boards working in partnership with private IT and non-profit entities to provide training in the Information Technology industry for people with disabilities. This initiative is designed to address skills shortages in the IT industry and provide intensive training and employment opportunities.	N/A
<b>Social Security Administration Interagency Agreement</b>	ETA has provided \$150,000 for the past three years to the Social Security Administration to support 12 State Partnership Grants. ETA staff has also participated in a number of Interagency Conferences related to these and the RSA Systems Change grants noted below.	N/A
<b>Department of Education/RSA Interagency Agreement</b>	This agreement provided \$1 Million to the Rehabilitation Services Administration for System Change grants in six states. These grants are intended to foster change in service delivery strategies for individuals with disabilities.	N/A
<b>One-Stop Guide to Accessibility and Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities</b>	This guide will, when published, provide comprehensive guidance on physical and programmatic access in the workforce delivery system as set forth in WIA section 188 provisions on non-discrimination. It is currently in review at the Office of the Solicitor for Civil Rights.	N/A

<b>Program, Initiative, Activity, Stature, Regulation or Policy</b>	<b>How it promotes and supports people with disabilities in seeking, attaining and/or retaining employment or self-employment?</b>	<b>Needed changes, modifications, or additions?</b>
<b>DOL/ETA disAbility Online Web Site</b>	disAbility Online at <a href="http://wdsc.doleta.gov/disability">wdsc.doleta.gov/disability</a> provides access to extensive information and resources relating to employment issues for individuals with disabilities. It provides links to SSA, HHS and other agency web sites and receives more than 150,000 hits a month, one of the most used homepages in ETA.	N/A
<b>Work Incentive Grants Technical Assistance contract</b>	This contract has provided technical assistance and staff support to the Work Incentive Grantees in support of the departments objectives. The overriding goal being to increase the quality of employment outcomes and to further enhances opportunities for self-sufficient employment.	N/A
<b>Promising Practices Task Order</b>	This contract is for the development of web-based promising practices information to profile exemplary skill and employment training programs for people with disabilities and to provide TA to the One-Stop system on these practices. Successful Disability Employment Grant projects will be profiled, as well as model MOUs, assistive technologies, and other One-Stop issues.	N/A
<b>JETT*CON and Other Conferences</b>	Disability issues have also been a strong focus at annual JETT*CON or other national conferences. Disability Unit staff have worked closely each year with the development and implementation of conferences to highlight assistive technologies, include plenary speakers and topics related to people with disabilities in the workforce, and to incorporate workshops representing the Disability Employment Grantees or disability related partners.	N/A

<b>Program, Initiative, Activity, Stature, Regulation or Policy</b>	<b>How it promotes and supports people with disabilities in seeking, attaining and/or retaining employment or self-employment</b>	<b>Needed changes, modifications, or additions</b>
<b>American Indian Disability Technical Assistance Center</b>	<p>This contract is for the development of an Information Technology training curriculum for American Indians and Alaska Natives that can be implemented through Tribal colleges and other Tribal programs. The contract allows for extensive consultations with Tribes, Tribal entities, Tribal members, and IT industry experts. The resulting curriculum will be culturally appropriate and readily adaptable throughout Indian country.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<b>DEPU/DINAP collaboration</b>	<p>DEPU staff has worked closely with DINAP staff to assure access, both physical and programmatic, to Tribal employment and training programs for American Indians with disabilities. Staff has also worked closely with the Native American Employment and Training Advisory Council on these same issues.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<b>DEPU/RSA/CANAR Collaboration</b>	<p>DEPU has worked closely with the Consortium of Administrators of Native American Rehabilitation (CANAR) and RSA on issues relating to the implementation of WIA in Indian country and in particular on relationships between Tribal programs and DOL funded employment and training programs.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<b>Welfare-to-Work Initiatives</b>	<p>The Welfare-to-Work Office has sponsored forums on hidden disabilities and developed a technical assistance guide on learning, psychiatric, mild mental retardation and other hidden disabilities. They have worked extensively with the Department of Education and HHS to address disability concerns with this population and conducted workshops on this topic at a number of conferences.</p>	<p>N/A</p>

<b>Program, Initiative, Activity, Stature, Regulation or Policy</b>	<b>How it promotes and supports people with disabilities in seeking, attaining and/or retaining employment or self-employment?</b>	<b>Needed changes, modifications, or additions?</b>
<b>Apprenticeship Training – Marketing Initiative</b>	<p>Apprenticeship training programs provide formal on-the-job training and classroom instruction to almost 400,000 apprentices a year in an array of occupations. ETA is undertaking a broad-based marketing initiative that will include an examination of strategies to outreach to individuals with disabilities.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<b>Workforce Investment Act Youth Services Portfolio Formula-Funded Youth Activities Youth Opportunity Grants</b>	<p>Under WIA, all youth programs providers must ensure that all services are inclusive of youth with disabilities. In addition, up to 5% of participants assisted under Section 129(c)(5) in each local area may be individuals who do not meet the minimum income criteria to be considered eligible youth, if such youth are within specific categories, such as individuals with disabilities. Local areas have also been encouraged to include young people with disabilities on their Youth Councils and/or youth programs providers that serve young people with disabilities.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<b>Job Corps - Disability sensitivity training to Job Corps admissions and center staff</b>	<p>Provided on site training to admissions counselor counselors and Center Directors Designees (approximately 500 persons at three meetings) on disability sensitivity, the reasonable accommodations process, and announcing the availability of community resources. Developed a web-based tutorial for center and admissions staff on working with students with disabilities. Provided disability training at more that 10 additional onsite training to various groups affiliated with Job Corps or working with Job Corps students with disabilities in the past year.</p>	<p>N/A</p>

<b>Program, Initiative, Activity, Stature, Regulation or Policy</b>	<b>How it promotes and supports people with disabilities in seeking, attaining and/or retaining employment or self-employment?</b>	<b>Needed changes, modifications, or additions?</b>
<b>Providing disability materials and resources to center staff</b>	<p>Materials such as directives and resource guides assist staff in understanding and complying with disability legislation that applies to Job Corps, descriptions of various types of disabilities most common to the Job Corps student population, and resources on where to get additional information on particular disability-related subjects. Job Corps disability-related directives include: Disability Resources: Center for Independent Living and Job Accommodation Network (JAN), Cooperative Agreement between Job Corps and the Rehabilitation Services Administration, and Reasonable Accommodation Guidelines. A disability resource manual is currently under development.</p>	<p>N/A</p>

**APPENDIX 3-E**

**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR  
ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT (OASAM)**

## Appendix 3-E

### **OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT (OASAM) Agency Self-Evaluation: Narrative**

#### **Mission**

The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration (OASAM) provides administrative support and oversight for the administration and management programs of DOL. This responsibility includes ensuring programmatic and physical accessibility of persons with disabilities in DOL financial assistance and federally conducted programs, providing reasonable accommodation to qualified applicants and DOL employees with disabilities, and increasing the employment of persons with disabilities at DOL, through targeted recruitment and the return-to-work program. Additionally, services provided by DOL under the auspices of OASAM, such as the DOL Day-Care Center, the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and the Center for Assistive Services and Technology (COAST), assist persons with disabilities to maximize their employment with DOL.

#### **OASAM/Civil Rights Center**

##### **▪ *Statutes***

The Civil Rights Center (CRC) enforces various federal laws and regulations that prohibit discrimination (1) in DOL funded programs and activities; (2) on the basis of disability by certain public entities and in DOL conducted activities; and (3) within DOL itself.

There are more than 1,000 federal grant recipients including One-Stop Centers, including all state Employment Service and UI Programs, all Job Corps Centers, Older Worker Programs and the Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers Program. These programs reach the entire civilian labor force.

The Civil Rights Center enforces the following laws which are supportive of Executive Order 13127: applicable sections of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 188 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and Executive Order 13160. Together these laws prohibit discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities in federal employment, federally conducted and federally assisted programs and activities, and state and local programs and activities.

*Changes Needed* – No changes are needed at this time.

*Budget Impact* -- The FY 2003 budget proposes 48 FTE for this budget activity, which is contained in DOL's departmental management appropriation. All CRC staff are involved on disability issues on a day-to-day basis.

- **Regulations**

The Civil Rights Center enforces regulations implementing Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, section 188 of WIA, and Title II of the ADA. Regulations implementing Section 504 (29 CFR Part 32) prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability. Specifically: §32.4(b)(2) provides, in part that "For the purposes of this part, aid, benefits, services and training...must afford individuals with disabilities equal opportunity to obtain the same results, to gain the same benefit, or to reach the same level of achievement, in the most integrated setting appropriate to the person's needs; §32.4(d) provides that" recipients shall administer programs and activities in the most integrated setting appropriate to the person's needs" §32.27(c) provides that "in choosing among available methods for meeting the requirements of §32.27(a) a recipient shall give priority to those methods that offer programs and activities to persons with disabilities in the most integrated setting appropriate." Regulations implementing section 188 include similar languages requiring integration of services, as does Title II of the ADA and 29 CFR Part 33.

*Changes and/or Modifications Needed* – CRC's FY 2003 budget proposes to review the program and physical accessibility of the One-Stop Centers in the Local Workforce Investment Areas (LWIAs) of New York City and Miami. CRC will then provide training to the LWIA's based on the results of the review. In FY 2004, post compliance reviews will be conducted to assess action taken by the two LWIAs to increase accessibility of their One-Stop Centers.

*Budget Impact* -- The reviews of One-Stop Centers described will be done within the FY 2003 budget resources provided to CRC.

- **Accessibility of Job Corps Program**

CRC assisted Job Corps in developing policies and procedures to provide services to individuals with disabilities in an integrated setting most appropriate. Prior to this time, Job Corps would frequently assign individuals with disabilities to one of three Job Corps Centers.

*Changes/ Modification Needed* – No changes are needed at this time.

*Budget Impact* – None.



- **Review of WIA Five-Year Strategic State Plans**

CRC conducted reviews of five-year strategic state plans required under WIA. As part of the plan, each state was required to describe how it would serve individuals with disabilities. In several cases, states indicated that individuals with disabilities would be served exclusively through Vocational Rehabilitation Services. CRC identified this as a problem in that individuals with disabilities would be served in a segregated, rather than an integrated setting. With CRC guidance, each state revised its plan to design procedures whereby individuals would be served at One-Stop Centers in the most integrated setting appropriate.

*Changes/ Modification Needed* – No changes are needed at this time.

*Budget Impact* – None.

- **Implementation of Executive Order 13164**

CRC developed reasonable accommodation procedures to facilitate the employability of applicants for employment with DOL as well as the continued employment and retention of DOL employees. A database was developed to track all data elements which need to be monitored in accordance with EEOC guidance implementing the Executive Order.

*Changes/ Modification Needed* – In FY 2002 and beyond, CRC will disseminate information to employees through the LaborNet, and educate managers and supervisors on their responsibilities for reasonable accommodation in the workplace.

*Budget Impact* – None.

- **CRC National EO Conference, and Other Compliance Assistance and Training Efforts**

CRC's National EO Conference, held July 25 to 27, 2001, included several disability-related workshops, including: "Assessment of WIA State Plans from the Disability Perspective", "Reasonable Accommodation", and "Getting Technical Assistance to Meet Disability Requirements", as well as a presentation on the New Freedom Initiative. In addition, disability issues are an important part of CRC's ongoing compliance assistance and training effort on a state by state and regional basis.

*Changes/ Modification Needed* – In FY 2002 and beyond, CRC will continue to provide compliance assistance efforts to the states on disability issues.

*Budget Impact* – None.

## **OASAM/Human Resources Center**

The Human Resources Center (HRC) is responsible for directing all aspects of human resources management within DOL, including DOL's workforce planning and restructuring efforts. HRC also has responsibility for recruiting persons with disabilities, ensuring equal access to job vacancies for persons with disabilities within DOL, and providing assistive technology and services to qualified applicants and DOL employees with disabilities. Two HRC staff members co-chair the HR Team on Section 508 of the Rehabilitation of 1973, as amended.

### ▪ **Disability Employment Program**

*Description* – This program supports people with disabilities in seeking and attaining employment through a single point of contact for all recruiting efforts and for intern programs within DOL for persons with disabilities. The Disability Employment Program Manager represents DOL at job fairs, workshops, conferences, and on several government-wide committees regarding the employment of persons with disabilities. The Disability Employment Program Manager builds partnerships with community-based organizations in the local DC metropolitan area and around the country to assist persons with disabilities in finding employment within DOL.

The Center is in the process of program development in the following areas: a database for tracking all services that will assist in complying with EEOC guidelines; marketing materials on all services; and, partnership development with other federal agencies such as the CAP Program at DOD to formalize access to regional programs and services that would assist DOL employees in identifying appropriate accommodations in those regional/field offices, as well as become a resource for the National Office.

*Changes/ Modification Needed* – In FY 2002 and beyond, HRC will continue to recruit persons with disabilities to meet the workforce planning efforts of DOL.

*Budget Impact* – None.

### ▪ **Central Office of Assistive Services and Technology (COAST)**

*Description* – This program supports people with disabilities by providing a One-Stop shop for accommodations and assistive services. Services available include: sign language interpreting services; technical assistance on disability related issues; documents in alternative formats; worksite accessibility assessments; a limited amount or loan assistive equipment and other disability related issues.

*Changes/ Modification Needed* – In FY 2002 and beyond, HRC will continue to provide persons with disabilities with accommodations to maximize employability within DOL. Program continues to be under development.

*Budget Impact* – None.

### **OASAM/Safety and Health Center**

The Safety and Health Center (SHC) is responsible for directing all aspects of safety and health management within DOL, including DOL's return to work, and employee assistance program (EAP).

- **Return to Work Program**

*Description* – The worker's compensation program in DOL has a Return to work effort focused on returning injured, including employees with disabilities, to work.

*Changes/ Modification Needed* – There is little financial incentive for agencies to return injured employees to work. This is particularly so if the returned employees are counted against an agency FTE ceiling. SHC will look at ways of developing a financial incentive for agencies to return injured employees that could enhance success in return to work efforts.

*Budget Impact* – Unknown at this time.

- **Assessment for worksites for Safety and Health Issues**

*Description* – Evaluating worksites with attention to physical barriers and/or hazards that may affect people with disabilities differently and removing those hazards, can support people with disabilities, in seeking or retaining employment.

*Changes/ Modification Needed* – Training for safety and health focused on challenges confronted by individuals with disabilities.

*Budget Impact* – None.

- **Employee Assistance Program**

*Description* – The Employee Assistance Program helps employees who may be experiencing personal difficulties, including disability-related problems, to remain productive in the workplace.

*Changes/ Modification Needed* – None.

*Budget Impact* – None.

## **OASAM/Business Operations Center**

The Business and Operations Center (BOC) is responsible for providing a complete range of administrative services in support of DOL programs, to develop and manage the DOL procurement and grants management programs. In addition, the BOC oversees and manages DOL's space and telecommunications, building security, parking, and alterations/renovations to ensure efficient operations.

### ▪ **Frances Perkins Building Day Care Center**

*Description* – The Frances Perkins DOL Day Care Center is an independently run childcare facility that provides quality child care for children of DOL employees as well as working parents in the community. The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management serves as a key member of the Board of Directors for the Day Care Center. As a member of the Board, DOL is able to ensure that all accessibility requirements are met to promote the efficient and effective operations in this DOL facility.

*Changes/Modification Needed* – No changes needed at this time.

*Budget Impact* – None.

### ▪ **Section 508 Compliance in the DOL Procurement process**

The OASAM Business Operations Center (BOC) provides administrative support and management/coordination of DOL's Section 508 Program. DOL has put procedures in place to ensure that requirements related to compliance with Section 508 are adhered to in all procurement purchases made through DOL's procurement system.

*Changes/Modification Needs* – In FY 2002 and beyond, BOC will continue to evaluate procurement practices and develop additional guidance as need to ensure all DOL purchases continue to meet the requirements of Section 508.

*Budget Impact* – None.

**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR  
ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT (OASAM)  
Agency Self-Evaluation: Summary**

<b>Program, Initiative, Activity, Statute, Regulation or Policy</b>	<b>How it promotes and supports people with disabilities in seeking, attaining and/or retaining employment or self-employment</b>	<b>Needed changes, modifications or additions</b>
<b>OASAM/Human Resource Center Disability Employment Program</b>	Provides a single point of contact for all recruiting efforts and intern programs within DOL for persons with disabilities. The Disability Employment Program Manager represents DOL at job fairs, workshops, conferences, and on government-wide committees regarding the employment of persons with disabilities, and builds partnerships with community-based programs to assist persons with disabilities in finding employment within DOL.	To be determined (TBD)
<b>OASAM/HRC Central Office for Assistive Services and Technology (COAST)</b>	Provides a “one-stop” shop for accommodations and assistive services, including sign language interpreting services; technical assistance on disability-related issues; documents in alternate formats; worksite accessibility assessments; loan of assistive equipment and other disability related services.	None at the present time; program is under development
<b>OASAM/Safety and Health Center  OWCP/Return to Work Effort</b>	The workers’ compensation program in DOL has a Return to Work effort focused on returning injured employees, including those with disabilities, to work.	Developing a financial incentive for agencies to return injured employees would greatly enhance success in return to work efforts.

<b>Program, Initiative, Activity, Statute, Regulation or Policy</b>	<b>How it promotes and supports people with disabilities in seeking, attaining and/or retaining employment or self-employment</b>	<b>Needed changes, modifications or additions</b>
<b>OASAM/SHC Assessment of worksites for Safety and Health Issues</b>	Evaluating worksites with attention to physical barriers and/or hazards that may affect individuals with disabilities differently and removing those hazards, can support people with disabilities in seeking or retaining employment	Training for safety and health focused on challenges confronted by individuals with disabilities
<b>OASAM/SHC Employee Assistance program</b>	The Employee Assistance Program helps employees who may be experiencing personal difficulties, including disability related problems, to remain productive in the workplace.	N/A
<b>OASAM/Day Care Center</b>	The day care center in the Frances Perking Building provides a source of quality care for children for persons with disabilities seeking employment.	N/A
<b>OASAM/Information Technology Center</b>	Evaluating accessibility of technology to be in compliance with section 508 requirements of the Rehabilitation Act.	Training for ITC and procurement staff to identify issues in this area
<b>The OASAM/ Civil Rights Center enforces the following statutes:</b>  Applicable sections of Rehabilitation Act, Section 188 of WIA, Title II of the ADA and Executive Order 13160.	These statutes prohibit discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities in federal employment, federally conducted and federally assisted programs and activities, and state and local programs and activities.	TBD

<b>Program, Initiative, Activity, Statute, Regulation or Policy</b>	<b>How it promotes and supports people with disabilities in seeking, attaining and/or retaining employment or self-employment</b>	<b>Needed changes, modifications or additions</b>
<p><b>The OASAM/ Civil Rights Center enforces the following regulations:</b></p> <p>Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 188 of WIA, and Title II of the ADA</p>	<p>Regulations implementing Section 504 (29 CFR Part 32) prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability. Specifically, §32.4(b)(2) provides that “For the purposes of this part, aid, benefits, services and training must afford individuals with disabilities equal opportunity to obtain the same result, to gain the same benefit, or to reach the same level of achievement, in the most integrated setting appropriate to the person’s needs.”</p> <p>§32.4(d) provides that “recipients shall administer programs and activities in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of qualified individuals with disabilities”; and §32.27(c) provides that “in choosing among available methods for meeting the requirements of §32.27(a), a recipient shall give priority to those methods that offer programs and activities to persons with disabilities in the most integrated setting appropriate.”</p> <p>Regulations implementing section 188 includes similar language requiring integration of services, as does Title II of the ADA.</p>	<p>OASAM/CRC’s FY 2003 budget proposes to review the program and physical accessibility of the One-Stop centers in the Local Workforce Investment Areas (LWIA) of New York City and Miami. CRC will then provide training to the LWIA’s based on the results of the review. In FY</p> <p>2004 post-compliance reviews will be conducted to assess action taken by the two LWIA’s to increase accessibility of their One-Stop centers. There are thousands of such centers throughout the country.</p>

<b>Program, Initiative, Activity, Statute, Regulation or Policy</b>	<b>How it promotes and supports people with disabilities in seeking, attaining and/or retaining employment or self-employment</b>	<b>Needed changes, modifications or additions</b>
<b>Job Corps Initiative</b>	<p>OASAM/CRC assisted Job Corps in developing policies and procedures to provide services to individuals with disabilities in an integrated setting most appropriate. Prior to this time, Job Corps would frequently assign individuals with disabilities to one of three Job Corps centers. Job Corps Centers serve thousands of students annually.</p>	TBD
<b>Review of WIA Five Year Strategic State Plans</b>	<p>OASAM/CRC conducted reviews of five-year strategic state plans required under WIA. Each state was required to describe how it would serve individuals with disabilities. In several cases, states indicated that individuals with disabilities would be served exclusively through VR. CRC identified this as a problem in that individuals with disabilities would be served in a segregated, rather than an integrated setting. With CRC guidance, each state revised its plan to design procedures whereby individuals would be served at One-Stop centers in the most integrated setting appropriate.</p>	TBD
<b>OASAM/CRC National Conference</b> (and other technical assistance and training efforts)	<p>OASAM/CRC's National Conference, held July 25 to 27, 2001, included several disability-related workshops, including: "Assessment of WIA State Plans from the Disability Perspective", "Reasonable Accommodation", and "Getting Technical Assistance to Meet Disability Requirements", as well as a presentation on the New Freedom Initiative. In addition, disability issues are an important part of OASAM/CRC's ongoing technical assistance and training effort on a State by State and regional basis.</p>	<p>OASAM/CRC's training and technical assistance efforts will continue</p>



**APPENDIX 3-F**

**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER  
(OCIO)**

## Appendix 3-F

### **OFFICE OF THE CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER Agency Self-Evaluation: Narrative**

#### **Mission**

The Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) is responsible for the management of all aspects of information technology at DOL including the accessibility of information to persons with disabilities in accordance with section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

#### **Accessibility of DOL Information Systems Related to Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**

DOL, through the OCIO is responsible for ensuring compliance with section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as it relates to electronic information technologies accessibility for persons with disabilities. Public and employee access will become both easier and more beneficial as DOL implements plans to establish a uniform Information Technology architectural base.

Due to the importance of the Internet and related web requirements, DOL launched a major initiative in 1998. This initiative involved a significant effort to identify accessibility issues, and deficiencies in bringing our public Internet documents into compliance with the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA). DOL's webmasters have taken aggressive steps to ensure all DOL web pages are accessible in an alternative text format. Each published document was evaluated against accessibility standards outlined in Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, and modifications were made as required. Staff provided hands-on support and assistance to document creators in eliminating and correcting deficiencies. Formal training and written guidance was provided to document creators to ensure future web pages developed on DOL web sites will remain consistent with the ADA requirements. DOL's web page developers also used "Bobby" (a web-based tool developed by the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST)) to analyze web pages and test compatibility with commercial browsers to ensure accessibility to people with disabilities.

Currently, in addition to Bobby, DOL also uses the accessibility component of HotMetal 5.0 to assist document creators in evaluating accessibility during document creation. All DOL document creators have received training to ensure all web pages developed are compliant with established guidelines. In addition, our technical staff regularly attends seminars sponsored by the Federal Webmasters Consortium to further their knowledge of ADA compliance issues.

*Changes/ Modification Needed* – In FY 2002 and beyond, IT will continue to provide persons with disabilities with assistance to maximize access to DOL programs and employability with DOL.

*Budget Impact* – None.

**APPENDIX 3-G**

**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT  
SECRETARY FOR POLICY (ASP)**

**Appendix 3-G**

**Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy (ASP)  
Agency Self-Evaluation**

<b>Program, Initiative, Activity, Statute, Regulation or Policy</b>	<b>How it promotes and supports people with disabilities in seeking, attaining and/or retaining employment or self-employment</b>	<b>Needed changes, modifications or additions</b>
<p><b>Working Partners for an Alcohol and Drug-Free Workplace Program</b> is a public education campaign that informs employers and others about the benefits of a drug-free workplace program (DFWP) and equips them with tools to implement programs that protect public safety and also respect employee rights.</p>	<p>Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, employers may not discriminate against qualified individuals who are in an alcohol/drug rehabilitation program or who have a history of drug/alcohol addiction on the basis of their past use of alcohol or drugs.<sup>2</sup></p> <p>Although DFWP programs are designed to keep current drug users out of the workplace, sound policy and programs also provide opportunities for treatment so that rehabilitated employees can return to work drug-free. DFWP programs also create workplace environments that support and sustain qualified people with disabilities, including those in recovery from alcohol or drug addiction, as well those with other mental disabilities.</p> <p>Workers who have made a “wrong turn” at some point in their lives and become addicted to alcohol or drugs, often get “left behind” when they are trying to make it back after rehabilitation. Others who seek out employment and training services through the workforce investment system are unable to reap the benefits because of unidentified substance abuse problems. <i>Working Partners</i> develops materials, technical assistance and training curricula to equip WtW and workforce development staff to recognize, engage, refer to treatment and provide coordinated follow-up case management services to those customers whose alcohol or drug addiction have prevented them attaining and retaining employment.</p>	<p>Achieve greater recognition of the potential of drug-free workplace programs to foster the employment of people who have received treatment for drug/alcohol addiction.</p> <p>Improve dissemination of materials and services addressing addictive disorders throughout the entire One-Stop Center system.</p> <p>Increased coordination and collaboration between substance abuse prevention and treatment</p>

<sup>2</sup> Employees and applicants currently engaging in the illegal use of drugs are not protected by the ADA when an employer acts on the basis of such use. Employers may hold individuals who are illegally using drugs and individuals with alcoholism to the same standards of performance as other employees.

		<p>communities and the One-Stop Center system.</p> <p>Identify and explore public policies that keep people with histories of drug addiction from benefiting from the very programs that could help them to live more independently and to engage in productive employment (<u>e.g.</u>, disqualification from eligibility for TANF if convicted of drug felony).</p> <p>Educate those who are working to place people with histories of alcohol and drug addiction in employment, so that they understand what they should and should not share with prospective employers about their customers' past.</p>
<p><b>Policy Reviews</b></p>	<p>During policy reviews, OASP will identify proposed DOL policies, programs and regulations that may have the (unintended) effect of discouraging people with disabilities from achieving full employment and community integration – and will work with the appropriate agencies to address these barriers.</p>	<p>TBD</p>

**APPENDIX 3-H**

**OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS PROGRAMS (OSBP)**

## **Appendix 3-H**

### **OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS PROGRAMS (OSBP) Agency Self-Evaluation: Narrative**

#### **Mission**

To expand outreach to individuals with disabilities who are small business owners and/or interested in entrepreneurship, including veterans with service-connected and nonservice connected disabilities, the Office of Small Business Programs will conduct at least two small business procurement initiatives in the form of vendor OSBP outreach sessions. In addition, OSBP will attend targeted conferences (such as those held by Centers for Independent Living, the Association of Service-Disabled Veterans, and the American GI Forum) and will conduct training for veterans with service-connected and nonservice connected disabilities in the new small business procurement initiatives, as well existing DOL procurement opportunities. OSBP will also work to increase the existing database of veterans with disabilities who are entrepreneurs by participating at monthly meetings and annual conferences of veteran organizations.

The small business regulatory compliance assistance staff will continue collaborating with Coordinated Compliance Assistance for Business (Crosscut) program partners (*i.e.*, Small Business Development Centers and the Department of Agriculture's Cooperative Extension Service program) to identify and include entrepreneurs with disabilities in regulatory compliance assistance seminars and workshops, including individual and group counseling.



**OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS PROGRAMS (OSBP)**  
**Agency Self-Evaluation: Summary**

<b>Program, Initiative, Activity, Statute, Regulation or Policy</b>	<b>How it promotes and supports people with disabilities in seeking, attaining and/or retaining employment or self-employment</b>	<b>Needed changes, modifications or additions</b>
<b>Office of Small Business Programs</b>	All Internet materials are in compliance with ADA requirements; Participate in the summer intern programs; National Disability Policy Fellowship Program.	N/A
<b>Procurement</b>	<p>Specific outreach to persons with disabilities, including veterans with service-connected disabilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Bimonthly vendor outreach sessions, periodically targeted to veterans with service-connected and nonservice-connected disabilities.</li> <li>▪ Attend conferences for people with disabilities and veterans with service-connected disabilities.</li> <li>▪ Using PRO-Net, identify small businesses that are owned by people with disabilities and veterans with service-connected disabilities for existing procurement opportunities.</li> <li>▪ Participate in monthly meetings of the Task Force for Veteran's Entrepreneurship, which promotes entrepreneurship opportunities for veterans, particularly those with service-connected disabilities.</li> </ul>	<p>Will target two for FY 2002.</p> <p>Joint conference between VA and USAF. Added 500 small businesses to OSBP database.</p>
<b>Small Business Regulatory Compliance Assistance</b>	Attend conferences during the year targeting people with disabilities and veterans with service-connected disabilities; Collaborate with Coordinated Compliance Assistance for Business program partners (i.e. Small Business Development Centers and Department of Agriculture's Cooperative Extension Service program) to identify and include entrepreneurs with disabilities in regulatory compliance assistance seminars and workshops, including individual and group counseling.	Partnering with Small Business Development Centers in Delaware, Florida, Maryland, New York, Virginia, and Penn State Cooperative Extension in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

**APPENDIX 3-I**

**PENSION AND WELFARE BENEFITS  
ADMINISTRATION (PWBA)**

## Appendix 3-1

### **PENSION AND WELFARE BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION (PWBA) Agency Self-Evaluation: Narrative**

#### **Mission**

DOL, through the Pension and Welfare Benefits Administration, is responsible for the administration and enforcement of Title I of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA). ERISA governs approximately 2.6 million private employers and union-sponsored group health plans. These plans cover 129 million American workers, retirees and dependents (including those with disabilities), representing nearly one-half of all Americans and two-thirds of all those with private health insurance.

Since the enactment of ERISA the most fundamental change in the employee benefits field has taken place in the health care area. Along with the rising cost of health coverage, there has been a shift from fully-insured group health plans to greater reliance on self-insurance. Subsequent to this shift, the increased popularity of the use of managed care has temporarily stabilized the rising cost of health care but has raised many significant issues with regard to the delivery and quality of medical care received by American workers and their families.

Initially, states led the way in formulating approaches to deal with the various health care issues raised by the increased use of managed care. These approaches were intended to help resolve issues surrounding access, portability, quality, and the delivery of medical care. But because of ERISA's preemption clause, states could never regulate employment based self-insured group health plans and thus the states' ability to bring about broad based fundamental change was severely limited. In addition, the response of individual states varied greatly, leading to a diverse and uneven framework of statutory and regulatory health care standards.

It is against this background that Congress has gradually developed initiatives in the area of health care. After rejecting the comprehensive reform initiated early in the 1990's, Congress has now moved to a "fill in the gaps" approach of targeting issues through incremental reform. This approach looks at the experience of the states as "mini-laboratories" to gauge what has been successful and then considers adopting such approaches to provide uniform federal minimum standards based on these state experiences.

As this approach suggests, health legislation at the federal level has been very specific and discrete, unlike the original broad based provisions enacted in ERISA pertaining to fiduciary duties, reporting and disclosure, and preemption. The following examples illustrate the congressional approach in fashioning such federal standards and their effect on individuals with disabilities.

## **Consolidated Omnibus Reconciliation Act (COBRA)**

In the mid-1980s, Congress looked at the various state laws concerning continuation health coverage and decided to create more uniform requirements on a federal level. In 1985, Congress amended ERISA and created the first major federal substantive provisions relating to group health plans by enacting the continuation health care coverage provisions known as “COBRA.”

COBRA provides employees and/or their families who may lose coverage because of a termination of employment, death, divorce, or other life event with the right to pay the premiums in order to continue their coverage under the employer’s group health plan for limited periods of time, usually 18 months but in some cases, as much as 36 months. Individuals who become disabled within the first 60 days of COBRA continuation coverage and who provide notification of the disability determination to plan officials will be entitled to purchase 11 additional months of coverage. The additional 11 months means that a person with disabilities may be able to continue health coverage for a total of 29 months.

PWBA presently conducts an extensive outreach program through the Health Benefits Education Campaign and the Dislocated Worker Program of educating participants and beneficiaries of their rights under COBRA. In addition, PWBA provides individual assistance to participants or beneficiaries who have encountered difficulty in exercising their right to purchase continued health coverage.

The COBRA framework established a series of requirements by creating a new Part 6 of ERISA. These requirements were specifically directed at group health plans, including the requirement that group health plans offer health care continuation coverage to former employees and their dependents for a period of 18 to 36 months after the end of employment. Significantly, Congress put identical COBRA provisions in the Internal Revenue Code (the Code) and the Public Health Service Act (PHS Act) but gave primary interpretive responsibility to the Department of the Treasury, with DOL being responsible only for COBRA’s reporting and disclosure provisions.

## **The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA)**

The next major development establishing substantive requirements for group health plans occurred in August of 1996. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) created a new Part 7 in ERISA adding several significant new requirements for group health plans. HIPAA also added identical provisions to the Code under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Treasury and the PHS Act under the jurisdiction of the Department of Health and Human Services. HIPAA creates shared jurisdiction among the three Departments.

HIPAA benefits individuals with disabilities by generally limiting preexisting condition exclusions, prohibiting discrimination based on health status and guaranteeing renewal of health care coverage for certain types of multiple employer sponsored plans. Many experts in the employee benefit field view HIPAA as the most significant new law in the pension and welfare benefit plan area since ERISA was enacted in 1974.

HIPAA makes it much easier for workers, including those with disabilities, to change jobs without losing health coverage. The General Accounting Office estimated that about 25 million people, with and without disabilities, will benefit from the protections provided under HIPAA.

### **The Mental Health Parity Act of 1996**

In September of 1996, a month after the passage of HIPAA, Congress added the Mental Health Parity Act (MHPA) provisions to ERISA. As with HIPAA, these provisions were also incorporated into the Code and the PHS Act and established shared jurisdiction between the three Departments. MHPA benefits individuals with mental health disabilities by generally requiring parity between mental health benefits with medical/surgical benefits with respect to the application of aggregate lifetime and annual dollar limits under a group health plan.

Since the passage of MHPA, PWBA has devoted a significant amount of time and resources to conducting an extensive Educational Outreach Program to educate individuals, including States and local government officials, on MHPA's protections. We are continuing to make presentations at conferences and other public events on MHPA and the other new health care laws.

### **PWBA Outreach and Educational Initiatives**

In addition to oversight with regard to the laws discussed above, PWBA conducts extensive outreach and educational initiatives to employers and American workers and their families (including those with disabilities) with regard to their rights and responsibilities under ERISA. The following are a few of the ongoing initiatives conducted by PWBA.

- ***Health Benefits Education Campaign***

DOL's Health Benefits Education Campaign provides education and outreach on a number of laws providing important protections under private employment based health benefit plans. The Campaign focuses on life and work events, such as changing or losing a job, marriage, divorce, retirement, and family care, and how they affect employees' health benefit needs and choices with respect to their health plans. The Campaign has seventy partners from public and private organizations including business, consumer and labor groups.

In addition, DOL has developed a number of educational materials by itself and with the Campaign partners. These materials are distributed through DOL's website ([www.dol.gov/pwba](http://www.dol.gov/pwba)) and its toll-free publication telephone number, (800) 998-7542. The Campaign provides both information for consumers on their health benefit rights and compliance assistance for employers, third party administrators, insurers and other plan service providers. The Campaign's outreach efforts include providing information to consumers and providing compliance assistance to plan practitioners. The Campaign's message is that information is key: know your benefit rights.

The Campaign supports people with disabilities who are seeking employment, are currently employed, or are considering a job change, by educating workers and their families about their benefit rights with respect to job-based health plans so they can make informed benefits decisions. These rights are provided under a number of health benefit laws, including ERISA, COBRA, HIPAA and the MHPA, as well as under DOL regulations, which are administered and enforced by PWBA. These rights include the right to disclosure of specified important information about health benefit plans, a regulation ensuring a timely and fair process for benefit claims, the right to elect temporary continued group health coverage after losing coverage, the right to receive a certificate evidencing health coverage under a plan, the right to recover benefits due under the plan, and parity between mental health benefits and medical/surgical benefits provided under a plan.

We also have compliance assistance materials available to help those starting their own business (if they have one common law employee, their health benefit plan would be subject to ERISA and the recent health laws). These educational materials are available upon request through a toll-free telephone line and through PWBA's accessible web site (ADA compliant). Upon request, this information can also be made available on audiotape. These educational tools are supported by nationwide outreach activities to provide answers to individual questions.

The program can be expanded to provide more education and outreach, directed specifically towards Americans with disabilities who are entering the workforce. We currently have materials addressing the importance of health benefits coverage and the important choices to be made about health benefits when entering the workforce. If there are additional specific questions, we could address them in more focused publications and outreach.

- ***Retirement Savings Education Campaign***

DOL's Retirement Savings Education Campaign provides education and outreach to encourage American workers and their families to save for a secure future. The Campaign focuses on three groups, women, minorities and the small business community, which face particular challenges in saving. DOL partners with the Department of the Treasury and 65 public and private organizations in these efforts. DOL has developed a number of educational materials itself and in cooperation with the Campaign partners to demonstrate the importance of saving and provide help on how to

get started. Additional educational tools highlight retirement benefit plan rights for private employment based plans and assistance to small employers to encourage them to establish retirement plans for their workers and themselves. These educational materials are distributed through the Campaign partners as well as through the DOL's toll-free publication hotline and the DOL web site. On the fifth anniversary of the Campaign, DOL unveiled its new campaign logo and slogan, "Saving Matters," providing a clear message that is easily remembered.

The Campaign supports people with disabilities who are seeking employment, are currently employed or are considering a job change or retirement by educating workers and their families about the need to save for a secure future and their benefit rights with respect to job-based retirement plans so they can make informed decisions. This includes the dissemination of important information to encourage saving through job-based retirement plans, helping individuals understand how to protect their retirement benefits, as well as, determine how much they need to save to attain a financially secure retirement. The Campaign also has educational tools, both publications and interactive web sites, to assist small employers in evaluating various retirement plan options for their workers and themselves. These educational tools are supported by nationwide outreach activities to provide answers to individual questions.

The program can be expanded to provide more education and outreach directed towards people with disabilities who are entering the workforce. We currently have materials addressing the importance of saving for a secure future and help on how to do it as well as information on retirement benefit plan rights. If there are additional specific questions, we could address them in more focused publications and outreach. However, additional funds would be needed to conduct these efforts.

- **Dislocated Workers Outreach**

Workers involved in plant and business closings, downsizing, and/or a reduction in hours need to understand that they are not only facing unemployment and the loss of income, but they will also experience changes in their health benefits coverage and other employment related benefits (i.e., pension distributions). This program targets individuals whose employment status changes due to plant and business closings, etc. by providing certain time-sensitive information to help enable them to make informed and timely decisions about their pension and health related benefits. PWBA maintains relationships with state dislocated worker personnel so that informational material can be disseminated to affected participants and beneficiaries during Rapid Response meetings and through the state One-Stop Centers. Agency personnel are often made available to assist in providing benefit rights information during the Rapid Response meetings held to inform employees of services that will be available to them while they transition to new employment. PWBA provides continued assistance to these workers and their beneficiaries through its compliance and participant assistance program. This program addresses any worker who is affected regardless of whether he or she is disabled.

**PENSION AND WELFARE BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION (PWBA)**  
**Agency Self-Evaluation: Summary**

<b>Program, Initiative, Activity, Statute, Regulation or Policy</b>	<b>How it promotes and supports people with disabilities in seeking, attaining and/or retaining employment or self-employment</b>	<b>Needed changes, modifications or additions</b>
<b>Health Education Campaign</b>	Goal of the campaign is to educate participants about their rights under ERISA, COBRA, HIPAA, and the MHPA. The campaign includes representatives from the disability community, including the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill. Educational information is available upon request from the customer service line; it can also be downloaded from PWBA's web site, which complies with Section 508 requirements. In addition, the information can be made available on audiotape for people with visual impairments.	Within existing budget, modify the program to more specifically target people with disabilities who are entering the work force, since health insurance coverage is often a primary concern.
<b>Retirement Savings Campaign</b>	The campaign is designed to help Americans strengthen their retirement savings. Educational information distributed by the campaign is available upon request from the customer service line or can be downloaded from PWBA's web site. This web site is ADA compliant. The information is also available on audiotape.	Within existing budget, modify to more specifically target people with disabilities who are entering the workforce, to educate them on the benefits of saving for their retirement to enhance their future financial security.



<p><b>Dislocated Workers Outreach</b></p>	<p>This program targets individuals whose employment status changes due to plant and business closings, downsizing and reductions in hours.</p>	<p>This program addresses any worker who is affected regardless of whether or not they have a disability.</p>
<p><b>Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA)</b></p>	<p>COBRA provides terminated employees or their families who may lose coverage because of termination of employment, death, divorce, or other life events may be able to continue the coverage under the employer's group health plan for themselves and their families for limited periods of time. Individuals who are disabled can continue coverage up to 36 months. PWBA presently conducts an extensive outreach program informing participants of their rights under COBRA.</p>	<p>TBD</p>
<p><b>Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)</b></p>	<p>HIPAA includes protections for millions of working Americans and their families who have preexisting medical conditions or who might suffer discrimination in health coverage based on a factor that relates to the individual's health. PWBA presently conducts an extensive outreach program informing participants of their rights under HIPAA.</p>	<p>TBD</p>

**APPENDIX 3-J**

**VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICE  
(VETS)**

## **Appendix 3-J**

### **VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICE (VETS) Agency Self-Evaluation: Narrative**

#### **Mission**

The mission of the Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) is to help veterans, reservists, and National Guard members in securing employment (and the associated rights and benefits), through existing programs, the coordination and merger of programs, and the implementation of new programs. Services provided are to be consistent with the changing needs of employers and the eligible veterans' population. VETS looks forward to assisting ODEP and the Presidential Task Force on the Employment of Adults With Disabilities with strategic planning and technical assistance to help federal agencies meet anticipated personnel shortages through increased recruitment and hiring of qualified veterans with service connected disabilities.

To work towards this mission, VETS will develop and carry out a coordinated public awareness and technical assistance campaign among human resource decision makers within federal government agencies, including the development and/or procurement of appropriate training materials and resources, and an evaluation of the campaign.

**VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICE  
Agency Self-Evaluation: Summary**

<b>Program, Initiative, Activity, Statute, Regulation or Policy</b>	<b>How it promotes and supports people with disabilities in seeking, attaining and/or retaining employment or self-employment</b>	<b>Needed changes, modifications or additions</b>
<p><b>Veterans' Workforce Investment Program (VWIP).</b> PL. 105-220, Section 168 or 29 USC 2913.</p>	<p>\$7.3 million, offered through a competitive Solicitation for Grant Application (SGA) to the Governors in each State. The funds are for Employment and Training grants or contracts for programs to meet the needs for the workforce investment activities of veterans with service-connected disabled veterans, veterans with significant barriers to employment, veterans who served on active duty in the armed forces during a war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized, and recently separated veterans.</p>	<p>In their performance reports, VWIP employment and training grantees are required to include performance outcomes for individuals, including those with disabilities. DOL should carefully analyze VWIP grantee performance reports to assure veterans with disabilities are receiving the necessary training to obtain employment.</p>
<p><b>Federal Contractor Program (FCP), Title 38, USC, Chapter 42</b></p>	<p>Covered Federal contractors or subcontractors in receipt of a contract of at least \$25,000 or more are required to take affirmative action to employ and advance in employment protected veterans, including qualified special disabled veterans.</p>	<p>Place more emphasis on encouraging federal contracting officers to ensure that contractors and sub-contractors are taking appropriate steps to meet their mandated responsibilities.</p>

<p><b>Veterans' Employment Opportunities Act (VEOA) of 1998, PL. 105-339, Section 3309, 5 USC 2018(3)(C)-(G) (Veterans' Preference)</b></p>	<p>Veterans are to be given preference in hiring for federal job vacancies. They are to receive additional preference points to their qualifying grade for entrance into competitive service. Disabled veterans are to receive 10 additional points.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
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**APPENDIX 3-K**

**WOMEN'S BUREAU (WB)**

## Appendix 3-K

### **WOMEN'S BUREAU Agency Self-Evaluation: Narrative**

#### **Mission**

The mandate of the Women's Bureau is to formulate standards and policies that promote the welfare of wage-earning women, improve their working conditions, increase their efficiency, and advance their opportunities for profitable employment.

Since its establishment, the Women's Bureau has carried out its mandate in a variety of ways, e.g. by awarding grants; sponsoring or cosponsoring conferences, seminars, roundtables, and programs; organizing and/or moderating workshops and panels; hosting or co-hosting fairs; serving on advisory panels and expert groups; and preparing fact sheets and other publications. The Bureau has long been an advocate for programs assisting people with disabilities. Further modifications to current and new programs can afford greater access for this population. The agency's national and regional programs that have components addressing individuals with disabilities are listed below.

#### **Activities Supporting the Employment of People with Disabilities**

- ***Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations (WANTO) Grants***

*Description* – The Women's Bureau, in partnership with the Office of Apprenticeship Training, Employer and Labor Services, has administered the WANTO grant program for the past eight years. Congress established this program by passing the Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations Act of 1992 (29 U.S.C. 2501, et seq.). While the program is funded through the Office of Apprenticeship Training, Employer and Labor Services and is jointly administered with the Women's Bureau, the Bureau has the responsibility for implementing the grant process.

The WANTO program is designed to provide employers and labor unions assistance that leads to the increased participation of women in apprenticeship and nontraditional occupations. Through an annual grant solicitation process, funds are distributed to qualifying community-based organizations. These organizations are responsible for providing technical assistance to employers and labor unions to increase the numbers of women placed and retained in apprenticeship and nontraditional occupations. Applicants must indicate their potential for providing technical assistance, give evidence of relationships with employers and labor unions and demonstrate their leadership in promoting economic equity, justice, and social improvement for women and their families.

*How the Program Supports Employment of People with Disabilities and Any Needed Changes/Modifications* -- The WANTO grant program, as administered in past years,

has not specifically promoted and/or supported people with disabilities in securing employment or in becoming self-employed. This year, the notice of availability of funds and solicitation of grant applications specified that DOL would award bonus points to applicants who demonstrated experience providing, or the intent to provide, services to enable women with disabilities to be placed into apprenticeships and nontraditional jobs. These women would benefit from increased opportunities to obtain apprenticeship and nontraditional jobs where earnings and benefits are generally better than jobs in more traditional fields.

*Budget Impact* -- The ability to award grants under the WANTO Act is dependent upon annual appropriations of funding for this program. No change in the budget is expected as a result of encouraging community-based organizations applying for WANTO grants to provide services to enable women with disabilities to be placed into apprenticeships and nontraditional occupations.

- ***Women's Bureau Web Site***

*Description* -- In September 1995, DOL, including its sub-agencies, established Internet web sites. The Women's Bureau web site contains detailed information about these topic areas: *About the WB* – biography of each WB Director, key personnel with telephone numbers and addresses, organizational chart, mission statement, strategic plan, and our accountability report; *Library* – press releases, speeches, publications, and Freedom of Information Act data; Programs and Services; Statistical Information; and Related Sites.

*How the Program Supports Employment of People with Disabilities and Any Needed Changes/Modifications* -- The Women's Bureau's web site includes information that helps persons with disabilities understand their rights in the workplace. Amendments to Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act require federal agencies to comply with certain web site and information structures. We have restructured our web site to meet the requirements of Section 508. The Women's Bureau has created text versions for every web page containing tables, graphs, or text presented in columnar form. These are generally the types of data that people with visual disabilities have difficulty accessing. All graphical images now have imbedded "alternate text" explanations that appear whenever a mouse or screen reader touches the image. The Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations grant solicitation notice is posted on the Women's Bureau's web site in a format that can be viewed by all.

*Budget Impact* -- No additional budgetary funds were required to achieve Section 508 compliance for the Women's Bureau web site.

- ***Women's Bureau Publications***

*Description* – The Women's Bureau is exploring the possibility of updating two publications that promote and support people with disabilities in seeking, attaining, and/or retaining employment or self-employment: *Women with Work Disabilities* and



## *Disability Discrimination.*

### *How the Program Supports Employment of People with Disabilities and Any Needed Changes/Modifications –*

- The *Women with Work Disabilities* fact sheet provides important information on the Americans with Disabilities Act, employment profiles of working women who have disabilities; occupational distribution of women with disabilities; and federally-funded employment assistance programs.
- *Disability Discrimination* brochure provides facts on the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, with information on what to do and where to get help when experiencing discrimination.
- The *1993 Handbook on Women Workers: Trends and Issue* includes information on the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Both publications, *Women with Work Disabilities* and *Disability Discrimination*, can be updated to focus more on the workforce of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and opportunities for persons with disabilities. In addition, the Women's Bureau expects to rename and update the *1993 Handbook on Women Workers: Trends and Issues* during the next two fiscal years.

*Budgetary Impact* – The cost to update the two publications is approximately \$1,500 each (for 50,000 copies). The new Women's Bureau handbook will initially be placed on the Internet. If the Bureau were to publish the handbook, it would cost approximately \$250,000.

### ▪ ***Online Learning Demonstration Project***

*Description* – In collaboration with the Employment and Training Administration (ETA), the Women's Bureau has provided funding to the New Jersey DOL to develop and implement a two-year online learning demonstration project targeted to 100 low-wage, low-skilled or underemployed single mothers with school-aged children in four New Jersey counties. The goal of the demonstration project is to test the efficacy of online learning in helping participants attain a certificate or associate's degree through online courses versus traditional educational settings and methods. The demonstration will begin in January 2002, with anticipated completion expected in June 2003. The fields of study are intended to reflect the occupational and growth opportunities for high wage jobs in the participant's local community. In addition to online learning, the participants will be provided case management services, mentoring, and supportive services through their community One-Stop Center.

*How the Program Supports Employment of People with Disabilities* – The goal of this program is to test the efficacy of online learning programs in expanding opportunities for women to obtain a certificate or associate's degree. The project's goal is the placement

of women in jobs with career ladders and higher earnings. Online learning programs would greatly increase access to education and training sources, as well as enhance employment prospects and alternatives for persons with disabilities.

*Needed Changes, Modifications or Additions to Existing Program* – Although the demonstration is not focused specifically on women with disabilities, the New Jersey DOL has obtained the state’s Office of Vocational Rehabilitation’s assistance in developing disability indicators, which will be included in the demonstration project’s identification and assessment instruments.

*Budget Impact* – The budget for this year’s demonstration project is \$500,000. There is no direct impact to future budget years by including women with disabilities in the pilot.

- ***Community Resource Guide***

*Description of the Program* – The Women’s Bureau, in collaboration with the Office of Disability and Employment Policy (ODEP), will develop an online community resource guide to provide consumers and workforce professionals with a listing of community, faith-based, and social services available in their respective local communities. This guide will be provided electronically through the Women’s Bureau web site. The foundation for the community guide has been developed by ODEP and is available at [www.disabilitydirect.gov](http://www.disabilitydirect.gov) (previously [www.disability.gov](http://www.disability.gov)). As a part of this collaboration, Women’s Bureau regional staff will locate community social services specifically targeted to women with disabilities.

*How the Program Supports Employment of People with Disabilities* – The resource guide will include specific local resources for individuals with disabilities, including One-Stop Centers, Vocational Rehabilitation offices, and other employment and training resources identified within a particular community.

*Changes, Modifications, or Additions to Existing Programs* – ODEP is responsible for the original design and implementation of the Online Resource Guide. The Women’s Bureau is collaborating with ODEP to add another layer to the guide that is specifically focused on services to women in local communities.

*Budget Impact* – There are no funds from the Women’s Bureau allocated to this project.

### **Women’s Bureau Technology Virtual Conference Calls**

*Description* – This project will consist of presentations on 10 technology-related topics via conference calls and web site programs. Participants will be invited to enter information about information technology training and support programs directly onto an accessible web site. The project is directed at 150 employers, educators, workers, and community-based organizations. A desired outcome of the project is an increase in the number of girls and women who participate in technology-related education and training programs and an increase in the number of women who choose to stay in technology-

related careers or wish to advance in their fields. Women's Bureau Regions V, VI, VIII, IX and X will sponsor the project.

*How Program Supports People with Disabilities in Securing Employment* – Virtual conferencing allows people with disabilities to participate in conference calls to learn more about opportunities for technology training and employment. For many people with disabilities, enhanced technological skills would increase their access to information and increase their earning potential.

*Changes, Modifications, or Additions to Existing Program* – One of the Virtual Conference Calls will include issues related to women with disabilities and technology. Participants will be able to provide feedback on how the virtual conferencing is beneficial to individuals with disabilities.

*Budget Impact* – This program is funded with FY 2001 funds and no long lasting effect on the budget is expected.

**WOMEN'S BUREAU (WB)**  
**Agency Self-Evaluation: Summary**

<b>Program, Initiative, Activity, Statute, Regulation or Policy</b>	<b>How It Promotes and Supports People with Disabilities in Seeking, Attaining and/or Retaining Employment or Self-Employment</b>	<b>Needed Changes, Modifications or Additions</b>
<b>Women in Apprenticeship &amp; Nontraditional Occupations (WANTO) Grants</b>	<p>WB publishes an annual notice of availability of funds under the WANTO grant program, soliciting grant applications. A review panel rates the applications according to criteria set out in the notice. This year WB added a bonus point category to encourage community-based organizations to consider how they could encourage employers and labor unions to train, hire, and retain women with disabilities. Applications could be awarded up to 10 additional points for indicating they could provide services for women with disabilities to be placed in apprenticeships and nontraditional occupations.</p>	<p>Project currently provides incentives to grantees to include services to women with disabilities; possible to revise so that grantees are required to address needs of women with disabilities.</p>
<b>Women's Bureau Web Site</b>	<p>To comply with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Women's Bureau redesigned and restructured its web site so that it is completely accessible. There are now text versions for every web page containing tables, graphs, and/or text presented in columnar form, and all graphic images have "alternate text" explanations.</p>	<p>The Women's Bureau works with DOL to continuously update its web site so that it is fully accessible to people with disabilities.</p>

<b>Program, Initiative, Activity, Statute, Regulation or Policy</b>	<b>How It Promotes and Supports People with Disabilities in Seeking, Attaining and/or Retaining Employment or Self-Employment</b>	<b>Needed Changes, Modifications or Additions</b>
<b>Women's Bureau Publications</b>	<p>During the 1990s, the Women's Bureau issued two specific publications that promote and support people with disabilities in seeking, attaining and/or retaining employment or self-employment: <i>Women with Work Disabilities</i> and <i>Disability Discrimination</i>. In addition, the <i>1993 Handbook on Women Workers: Trends and Issues</i> contained information on the Americans with Disabilities Act.</p>	<p>WB could update <i>Women with Work Disabilities</i>.</p> <p>WB is also planning to revise the <i>1993 Handbook</i> in FY 2002; a section of the Handbook could be used to promote and support women with disabilities who are seeking, attaining, and/or retaining employment or self-employment.</p> <p>All of the Women's Bureau publications could be provided in alternate formats.</p>

<b>Program, Initiative, Activity, Statute, Regulation or Policy</b>	<b>How It Promotes and Supports People with Disabilities in Seeking, Attaining and/or Retaining Employment or Self-Employment</b>	<b>Needed Changes, Modifications or Additions</b>
<b>Community Resource Guide</b>	The Women's Bureau, in conjunction with ODEP, will be developing an electronic community resource guide, which may be used by women and service provider communities.	As a participant in this project, the WB will be responsible for locating services specifically targeting women with disabilities.
<b>Skills Development Through Distance Learning Demonstration Project</b>	This project is a two-year demonstration project to discover the impact of distance learning on opportunities for occupational skills development and career advancement of low-skilled or underemployed working single mothers with school aged children in New Jersey. The project will be implemented in at least three sites beginning in January 2002, with anticipated completion in June 2003. The fields of study are intended to reflect the occupational and growth opportunities in high skill and high wage jobs in the State.	Consideration could be given to targeting some of the project slots to single mothers with disabilities. As part of this initiative, the Women's Bureau could collaborate with SBA on distance learning resources for self-employment opportunities that will also be available to individuals with disabilities.
<b>Technology-Related Virtual Conference Calls</b>	This project will consist of presentations on 10 technology-related topics via conference calls and web site programs, and is directed at 150 employers, educators, workers and community-based organizations. The desired outcome is an increase in the number of girls and women who participate in technology-related education and training programs and an increase in the number of women who choose to stay in technology-related careers or advance in their fields.	One of the Virtual Conference Calls will include issues related to women with disabilities and technology. Participants will also be able to provide feedback on how the virtual conference is

		beneficial to individuals with disabilities.
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