

Strategic Goal 4: A Competitive Workforce *Maintain Competitiveness in the 21st Century Economy*

This goal was introduced one year ago in the FY 2003 – 2008 DOL Strategic Plan. It addresses the global economic issues facing American workers in the 21st Century. Two outcome goals describe strategies the Department has conceived to serve the needs of our country’s changing workforce. Outcome Goal 4.1, *Address demand for new, replacement, and skilled workers*, focuses on workforce gaps that are likely to occur, including labor shortages for new and replacement workers, with an emphasis on knowledge workers, and on adapting the nation’s workforce investment system to match workers and skills with employers’ needs. Outcome Goal 4.2, *Promote job flexibility and minimize regulatory burden*, includes identifying and adopting innovative approaches for effective regulation, and expanding workplace flexibility consistent with the changing nature of work in the 21st Century.

Implementation of this goal occurs primarily in training and job placement programs administered by the Employment and Training Administration (ETA). In addition, the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy (OASP) conducts oversight of all DOL regulatory functions in connection with the second outcome goal. Since creation of Outcome Goal 4.1, ETA has launched several initiatives aimed at gathering information on high growth industries, the skills needed by employers in those industries and adapting training programs to equip workers – especially underutilized segments of the workforce – to satisfy those requirements. Measurable results in connection with this goal are deferred until 2005, however, since the programs associated with this goal are all funded and tracked on a Program Year basis.²⁶ A major accomplishment in the first year under Outcome Goal 4.2 was the addition of net benefit evaluations to all Regulatory Impact Analyses conducted during the year.

Outcome Goal 4.1 – Equip Workers to Adapt to the Competitive Challenges of the 21st Century Program Year performance goals – reporting next year	
To help us better understand potential emerging workforce issues, where worker shortages exist and how to tap into underutilized labor pools, and the necessary components of building a demand-driven workforce system, DOL introduced several new initiatives and enhanced or redirected a number of existing workforce development programs, such as the President’s High Growth Job Training Initiative, the Career Voyages WebSite, and the ETA Management Information and Longitudinal Evaluation (EMILE) reporting system.	
Outcome Goal 4.2 – Promote Job Flexibility and Minimize Regulatory Burden 1 performance goal not achieved	
OASP flexible regulations and workplaces (4.2A) – not achieved.	The target for providing costs, benefits, and net benefits for all Regulatory Impact Analyses was reached, but other targets, such as receiving public input to establish regulatory review priority, developing a plan to examine regulatory reporting and record-keeping requirements, and fully implementing the Flex-Options for Women Project, were not reached.

The outcome goals and programs listed above, along with their results, costs, and future challenges are discussed in more detail on the following pages.

²⁶ Program Year 2004 began on July 1, 2004 and ends on June 30, 2005