

# PRESS RELEASE

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## For Immediate Release

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## COLORADO RECEIVES \$1.14 MILLION TO INCREASE ON-THE-JOB TRAINING

### *National Emergency Grant will assist in economic recovery*

At a conference in Denver today, U.S. Labor Secretary Hilda L. Solis announced that \$75 million in grants were being awarded to 41 states, the District of Columbia and three Native American tribes to increase and strengthen on-the-job training opportunities. Colorado is the recipient of one of the grants totaling \$1,137,558. The money will be used to serve 150 workers who have been unemployed for a long time and who may be struggling with barriers to employment.

“Colorado is grateful for this grant,” said Donald J. Mares, Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment. “As the economy recovers, finding work will still be difficult for the long-term unemployed. Their skills may have deteriorated during their lengthy time away from the workplace and some individuals were displaced from industries in decline. This grant will provide paid work experience and vital on-the-job training to help workers get back on their feet.”

Mares adds that the grant money will act as a hiring incentive inasmuch as it can save local businesses money. “In a tough economy, employers have often had to discontinue the apprenticeship, internship and on-the-job-training programs that for generations gave people a chance to learn while they earn. The programs supported by these grant dollars

will make it more likely that a business will hire a worker, while providing the worker with a more viable future.”

The grant money will focus on developing on-the-job training in industries and occupations currently in demand, including healthcare and energy. Supportive services will also be provided as well as case management and assessment testing.

The job placements will average four months in length and may last up to six months. Employers will be reimbursed between 50 to 90 percent of the training wage, depending on the size of the employer and the participant’s skill gap. The average wage level for these positions is expected to be \$15.00 per hour but wages may be reimbursed up to \$21.47 per hour.

Colorado and its workforce regions have considerable experience in developing strong partnerships and leveraging resources from partner programs to enhance their federal discretionary grants. Among the initiatives already in place that will be leveraged are the HIRE Colorado program, the Denver Green Jobs Initiative, the Energy Sector Green Jobs Training Grant and the E-Learning Initiative.

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