



Accomplishments Report

U.S. Department of Labor
Washington, D.C.

September 2004
Office of the 21st Century Workforce
Phone: (202) 693-6490

U.S. SECRETARY OF LABOR ELAINE L. CHAO REACHES OUT TO HISPANIC WORKFORCE

U.S. Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao is strongly committed to the well-being of the Hispanic American workforce. With Secretary Chao's leadership, the Department of Labor has undertaken the following selection of activities that benefit Hispanic American workers.

HISPANIC CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

DOL Agreement with the Mexican Government – On July 21, 2004, Secretary Chao and Mexican Secretary for Foreign Affairs Luis Ernesto Derbez, signed a *Joint Declaration* that reaffirms the shared commitment of the United States and Mexico to improve compliance with and awareness of workplace laws and regulations protecting Mexican workers in the United States. Two *Letters of Agreement* were also signed which highlight specific efforts to be undertaken jointly between the Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and the Mexican Embassy and the 45 Consulates in the United States. These initiatives build on existing joint efforts and are designed to protect the rights and the safety of Mexican workers within the United States.

DOL Hispanic Safety and Health Summit – Held on July 22, 2004, in Orlando, Florida, the Hispanic Summit on Occupational Safety and Health brought together over 500 representatives from government, community and faith-based organizations, non-profits, industry, academia and organized labor to share practical safety and health information, present success stories and discuss gaps in communication, training and outreach for Hispanic workers in the United States. The Summit was designed to raise awareness about safety and health issues affecting Hispanic workers. Attendees learned and shared practical information on how to reduce workplace injuries, illnesses and fatalities among Hispanic workers.

Opportunity Conference: Asian Pacific and Hispanic Americans, Building on America's Promise – The September 2003 Opportunities Conference in Washington, D.C., was a huge success and welcomed over 1,500 attendees from around the country. The event covered a range of topics on economic development for the Asian Pacific and Hispanic American communities. The Department of Labor partnered with MANA, the National Association for Hispanic Federal Executives, Virginia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, among others, to reach out to small business owners, non-profit organizations, and community leaders. This innovative conference addressed the needs of the two fastest-growing segments of the 21st century workforce. A second Opportunity Conference is scheduled for October 12, 2004 in Washington, D.C.



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HISPANIC SAFETY AND HEALTH

Injury and Fatalities Numbers Decline – Workplace fatalities for all workers are at historic lows, decreasing by more than half in the last 30 years. Fifteen percent of the workers who died in 2002 were Hispanic, even though Hispanics comprise less than 13 percent of the workforce. Hispanic workers are more likely than the general population to be injured or become ill on the job. In 2002, fatalities among Hispanic workers fell for the first time in 7 years.

OSHA Hispanic Taskforce – Under the leadership of Secretary Elaine L. Chao, the Department of Labor created the OSHA Hispanic Taskforce to respond to the increasing number of injuries and fatalities in the Hispanic workforce. This taskforce meets bimonthly to discuss policy changes, events, training conferences and ways that OSHA can improve safety and health practices among the Hispanic population.

Safety and Health Information on the Web – The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) provides workplace safety and health information in Spanish online, over the telephone, and through print media. OSHA added a Spanish-language option to the OSHA national hotline (1-800-321-OSHA) in June 2002. Additionally, OSHA launched a Spanish-language Web page in February 2002, which has recorded a significant increase in visits from 2,500 in February 2002 to over 28,500 in February 2003. The Web site provides workplace safety and health information to Spanish-speaking employers, workers and Hispanic business owners; an overview of OSHA and its mission; worker/employer rights and responsibilities; a list of safety and health resources; an OSHA Hispanic/English-as-a Second-Language (ESL) coordinators list; and highlights from the agency's extensive Web site. OSHA also has links to Spanish safety and health Web sites and documents. Although research shows that Hispanic use of the Internet is lower than other demographic groups, it is growing, and OSHA expects the number of visitors to its Spanish sites to climb.

MSHA Hispanic Outreach Initiatives – The Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) uses a machine translation program which converts 15,000-plus Web pages into Spanish as they are requested by users. Updates are processed when posted, with no delays by translations. On the average, 2,200 visitors use the Spanish Web site every month. MSHA has developed 10 Web-based interactive problem-solving health and safety training exercises, and 32 percent of MSHA's health and safety training materials are translated into Spanish.

MSHA also provides various services utilizing Spanish-speaking personnel, including assistance by phone and in person. Through the State Grant Program, grantees provide services in Spanish, including training classes and assistance for the development of training plans. Through the Washington, D.C.-based Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities program, students translated MSHA's HazCom Internet Training Program and are currently translating Web-based problem-solving exercises. The International Union of Operating Engineers, through an alliance with MSHA, have also translated health and safety training materials (currently 34 programs) into Spanish.

To support the continuing need for Spanish-speaking instructors, MSHA's Educational Field Services provides training at mines where there is a need for such instruction. MSHA has also announced five positions in its Educational Field Service with a desirable skill of Spanish fluency. MSHA is hiring Spanish-speaking



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employees to work in Program Evaluation and Information Resources to develop Spanish Web-based content and to translate training materials at the National Mine Health and Safety Academy.

OSHA Spanish Materials – OSHA has developed an English-to-Spanish glossary of over 200 frequently/commonly used terms for general occupational safety and health in the construction industry. OSHA also issued publications entitled, *All About OSHA*, *OSHA: Ready to Help You*, *OSHA: Employee Workplace Rights*, and a poster entitled *Job Safety and Health Protection* in Spanish. OSHA maintains a library of 11 Spanish language publications. Additionally, OSHA launched a national campaign on Worker Memorial Day 2003 with the release of two public service announcements (PSAs) to over 650 Spanish radio stations. One spot is meant for employees and their families; the other targets employers. First month figures showed the spots played 93 times, reaching 15.2 million listeners in significant markets including New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, Washington, D.C., Atlanta, and Miami. In the coming months, OSHA will follow up with additional Spanish-language PSAs through the Hispanic Radio Network.

OSHA Spanish-Speaking Employees – OSHA is compiling a database of fluent Spanish-speaking employees that includes 119 in Federal OSHA, 38 in states and territories with OSHA-approved safety and health plans, and 22 in onsite consultation agencies. The agency is actively recruiting Spanish-speaking employees (to add to the 179 who already work for OSHA, State and Consultation Programs) with special emphasis on recruitment of Compliance Assistance Specialists (CAS).

OSHA Office of Small Business Assistance – Under Secretary Chao's leadership, OSHA created the Office of Small Business Assistance. The program is part of the Directorate of Cooperative and State Programs, that not only administers OSHA's nationwide onsite consultation program, but also serves as the point of contact within the agency for small businesses, many of which are owned and run by Hispanics.

Office of Small Business Programs Hispanic Outreach – The Office of Small Business Programs (OSBP) is developing a poster commemorating small businesses owned by Hispanic Americans which will be displayed throughout the Department during Hispanic Heritage Month, September 15 to October 15, 2004. OSBP has also created a Spanish language poster matrix listing DOL posters that must be displayed in small businesses.

WORKER TRAINING

High-Growth Job Training Initiative – The President's High Growth Job Training Initiative, as implemented by the Employment and Training Administration, is a strategic effort to prepare workers to take advantage of new and increasing job opportunities in high-growth/high-demand and economically vital industries and sectors of the American economy. The Initiative is designed to ensure that worker training and career development resources in the public workforce system are targeted to helping workers gain the skills and competencies they need to obtain jobs and build successful careers in these industries. Under the Initiative, ETA has funded several grantees in the biotechnology, healthcare, hospitality, energy, retail, and advanced manufacturing industries that serve Hispanic job seekers and/or workers as part of their broader service population, or are developing training curriculum and related products in Spanish that target Hispanic trainees and workers. Successful approaches, models and products developed under the High-Growth Job Training Initiative grants will be broadly shared with our workforce system, education, and industry partners for replication.



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Hispanic Worker Training Initiative – In March 2004, Secretary Chao announced the Department’s Hispanic Worker Training Initiative, which is focused on helping Hispanic Americans take advantage of job opportunities in high-growth sectors of the economy such as hospitality, health care, retail and construction. These growth sectors of the economy offer ample opportunity for employment and career advancement. The Hispanic Worker Initiative is part of a larger effort at the Department of Labor to link the resources of the \$15 billion public workforce system to job opportunities that exist in growing industries.

The Labor Department’s Hispanic Worker Initiative is pursuing the following strategies to address the challenges faced by Hispanic Americans, and help them prepare for and find good jobs at good wages:

- Help Hispanic Americans develop language and occupational skills;
- Help Hispanic youth stay on an educational path that leads to rewarding careers;
- Encourage collaboration between employers, community colleges and the public workforce system to help Hispanic Americans build the skills required in growing industries.

HI-Demand Project – In March 2004, Secretary Chao announced a \$1.9 million grant to the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees (HERE) for their HI-Demand project. HERE partners with 24 hospitality industry employers and Nevada Partners, Inc., a community-based training provider that houses the Culinary Training Academy. The project demonstrates ways to prepare Hispanic workers to fill the high demand for qualified, trained employees in the growing hospitality industry of Las Vegas, Nevada and Atlantic City, New Jersey. In Las Vegas, HERE will deliver occupational English training to 2,000 new citizens and immigrant workers for entry-level and career ladder hospitality positions through its partnership. Onsite pre- and post-shift occupational English proficiency training will also be offered to 450 incumbent workers at 10 major area hotels. In Atlantic City, HERE will partner with 13 employers and Atlantic Cape Community College to train 45 incumbent workers with limited English skills for jobs as fully trained and skilled cooks.

ALPHA Program – In March 2004, Secretary Chao announced a \$1.5 million grant to the Cuban American National Council, Inc. for its Academic, Leadership, and Career Prep for Hispanic American Youth (ALPHA) Program. This program assists Hispanic youth seeking to overcome educational and employment barriers. The Cuban American National Council (CANC) will operate three Hispanic community centers in Florida – two in Miami-Dade County and one in Orlando – that will serve 300 at-risk Hispanic youth in grades 9-12 and out-of-school Hispanic youth ages 16-21. In Miami-Dade County, the program will serve students in grades 9-12 at Little Havana and Hialeah High School Institute and out-of-school youth at the Youth Center located in South Miami-Dade. In Greater Orlando, the program will serve students in grades 9-12 in Orange and Osceola public high schools. The CANC will also serve out-of-school youth through Workforce Florida’s Institute for the Development of Engaged Adolescents.

Words for Work Program – In May 2004, Secretary Chao awarded a \$1.5 million grant to Digital Learning Group (DLG) for their Words for Work Program. The program assists unemployed and underemployed Hispanics with limited English proficiency that impedes their access to employment. The Words for Work Program is a user-friendly multimedia instruction program that will enhance participant employability by developing occupation-specific English language and related workplace skills training for health care and construction industry employment. The program will provide quick-start training and job



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placement to 225 Hispanic youth and adults in the Baltimore metropolitan area to maximize their chances for job retention by working closely with local employers in demand occupations. DLG is partnering with Anne Arundel Community College, the Governor's Workforce Investment Board of Maryland, a consortium of faith-based organizations serving the Hispanic community, the Maryland Hospital Association, Schuster Construction, a large Maryland-based contractor, and Anne Arundel Medical Center to develop and implement Words for Work.

Hispanic English Proficiency Study – In July 2004, Secretary Chao announced an award of \$600,000 for a study of the level of English proficiency various employers require of their Hispanic workforce. The study will be conducted by HMA Associates, Inc., in partnership with the U.S.-Mexico Chamber of Commerce. The study will engage employer members of the U.S.-Mexico Chamber of Commerce to determine the level of English proficiency expected by local employers; how the level of English proficiency required varies with the type of work performed; methods used by employers to assess applicant proficiency; and services or programs employers use to help workers improve workplace communication.

Growing America Through Entrepreneurship (GATE) Project – Secretary Chao initiated this innovative demonstration project, The Growing America Through Entrepreneurship, or Project GATE, with Administrator Hector Barreto of the U. S. Small Business Administration to help emerging entrepreneurs in rural and urban communities achieve the American dream of owning their own business. Project GATE supports economic freedom through promoting individual entrepreneurship. Project GATE seeks to energize local small business creation and help diverse urban and rural populations create, support and expand small businesses. Project GATE funding is \$9 million over five years. Project funds are allocated for technical assistance and training of Project GATE participants, administrative costs including training of dedicated one-stop center staff, community outreach and data collection and evaluation.

Faith-Based and Community Organization Youth Worker Training – In June and July 2004, Secretary Chao announced a \$2 million grant to the Latino Coalition and a \$2.76 million grant to Nueva Esperanza to help at-risk Hispanic youth train for and find jobs. Through these grants, Hispanic young people will acquire the skills and services needed to get a fresh start building careers and brighter futures.

Safety and Health Training – OSHA offers a variety of training and education programs to help Hispanic employers and employees improve their knowledge of safe and healthful work practices and comply with OSHA standards. OSHA continues to award Susan Harwood Training Grants to a variety of organizations, including colleges, universities and other educational institutions to provide Spanish-language safety and health training programs targeted for hard-to-reach workers.

In September 2002, 26 grants with a Hispanic component were awarded. These grants focused on topics such as: blood-borne pathogens, construction, electrical power generation, transmission and distribution, ergonomics, hard-to-reach workers, and institutional competency building. For example, the agency awarded \$161,150 to the National Safety Council (NSC) to conduct a 10-hour safety and health training for Hispanic workers in the roadway construction industry. NSC will translate recently developed training materials addressing the hazards of highway work zone operations into Spanish for hard-to-reach, vulnerable, immigrant Hispanic workers in the highway construction industry.



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OSHA has increased the number of training centers to help meet the demand for training and provide added value to our outreach efforts including Spanish language courses. Some OSHA Regional Offices around the country provide free training to members of the Hispanic community, offering OSHA's 10-hour construction course in Spanish.

COOPERATIVE OUTREACH

GEM-SETIII/Girls' E-Mentoring in Science, Engineering & Technology for Immigrant Girls – Since 2001, the Women's Bureau has been leading GEM-SET, a demonstration project that links girls, ages 13-18, with volunteer women mentors in the fields of science, engineering and technology via e-mail and a Web site, www.gem-set.org. Through the GEM-SET I and II programs, the Women's Bureau has determined that girls of immigrant backgrounds often have unique needs and concerns that are markedly different from the general student population. GEM-SET III promotes mentorship, family and community involvement to prepare and encourage immigrant girls to study and enter the fields of science, engineering and technology. The project serves primarily Hispanic and Asian immigrant girls in Chicago, New York City, Miami, Houston and Los Angeles. GEM-SET III has over 300 Hispanic girls working with 23 mentors.

Employer-Driven Older Women Workers – The Women's Bureau is partnering with CVS/Pharmacies to reach out to older Hispanic and Asian American women through basic computer and life skills training. Upon graduation, these women can apply for entry-level career ladder positions with CVS. Fifty-two Hispanic women have graduated from the program in Dallas.

Justice and Equality in the Workforce Program (JEWP): In 2002, under the leadership of Secretary Chao, the Department of Labor, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the City of Houston, the Mexican Consulate and the Mexican American Legal Defense Fund joined in a partnership to help all Hispanic workers in different areas of labor rights. The Mexican Consulate established and staffed a dedicated telephone number for taking employee complaints, and then referred the complaints to the appropriate agency. Later in 2002, new partners joined the team, including the Consulates of Colombia, El Salvador and Guatemala. Since its inception, *JEWP* has recovered \$1.5 million in back wages for more than 2,300 Latino workers. Given the success of this initiative, similar programs were begun in Dallas and Las Vegas in 2003. A similar partnership, *EMPLEO*, was launched on June 30, 2004, in Los Angeles where there are an estimated 7 million Hispanic workers.

Alliance with the Hispanic Contractors of America (HCA) - On the national level, OSHA formed an Alliance in March of 2002 with HCA to reach out to Hispanic employers and workers in the construction industry. The goals of the Alliance include outreach and communication to promote safe and healthful work conditions for Hispanic construction workers, training and education to help Hispanic contractors improve knowledge of safe and healthful work practices and achieve compliance with OSHA standards, and increase access to safety and health training resource materials in Spanish.



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Alliance with the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) - OSHA and NAHB signed an Alliance on May 8, 2003, providing NAHB members and others in the residential construction industry with information, training opportunities, and guidance that will help them protect employees' safety and health. The Alliance focuses particularly on reducing and preventing exposure to residential construction industry hazards. The Alliance's goals include: promoting a national dialogue on Spanish-speaking workforce safety and health by working with the various Hispanic contractors associations and other Alliance Program participants to establish a dialogue on residential construction safety issues affecting the Spanish-speaking workforce; working to raise others' awareness of, and demonstrate their respective commitments to, workplace safety and health whenever OSHA and NAHB leaders address groups with specific emphasis on the Spanish-speaking workforce.

FINANCIAL SECURITY

Association Health Plans (AHP) – Secretary Chao joined a bipartisan group of Members of Congress in endorsing legislation giving millions of American small business owners and employees access to quality health insurance through AHPs. This issue is particularly important to Hispanics since there are more than 1.2 million Hispanic-owned businesses in the country that generate more than \$200 billion in annual gross receipts and employ more than 1.3 million people. (U.S. Census)

Retirement and Health Plan Benefits – The Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA) provides assistance in a variety of methods to assist Hispanic workers to understand their rights and responsibilities so that they are able to make informed decisions about their retirement and health plan benefits. This includes outreach and assistance by regional offices with 21 bilingual Benefits Advisors and 50 other bilingual staff members, including Spanish-speaking staff members in each regional office. EBSA's bilingual Benefits Advisors participate in participant assistance activities such as the "Las Mujeres y el Dinero" (Women and Money) Conferences sponsored by the Women's Bureau and also rapid response/dislocated worker activities for Hispanic workers who are affected by plant closings and layoffs. EBSA also provides a toll-free telephone number directing callers to bilingual staff or contract translation service staff. In addition, EBSA offers written responses in 148 languages, working with the same translation service and nine publications have been translated into Spanish including *Top 10 Ways to Beat the Clock and Prepare for Retirement* and *Women and Retirement Savings: What Women Need to Know and Do*.

Women and Money ("Las Mujeres y el Dinero") – Hispanic women face unique challenges when it comes to financial security. According to recent findings, the knowledge about savings and retirement compared to other demographic groups and their retirement confidence level is lower than workers overall. They are most likely to rely on Social Security for retirement and to expect support from their children and family. To address this issue, the Women's Bureau has launched a program called *Las Mujeres y el Dinero* (Women and Money) and is sponsoring a series of 10 financial education conferences across the country for Hispanic women. Seven conferences have already been held, serving over 3,000 participants.



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IMPROVING COMPLIANCE WITH LABOR STANDARDS

The mission of the Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division (WHD) is to promote and achieve compliance with labor standards. This mission is implemented by strategies of compliance assistance and enforcement. One of WHD's priorities is improving compliance in low-wage industries which typically employ large numbers of minority and immigrant populations. WHD pursues strategies to ensure that employers are informed of legal requirements and workers know their rights and protections.

Strategic Partnerships/Business Associations – In 2004, WHD is building on the number of compliance assistance partnerships with agriculture employers' associations. To date, WHD has entered into partnerships with The Nisei Farmers League in California, The Delta Council, Texas Produce, Gulf Citrus Growers Association, Western Growers Association, New Jersey Farm Bureau, and the Mt. Olive Pickle Company, Inc. In June 2004, Wage and Hour signed a compliance agreement with the United Mushroom Farmers Cooperative, Inc., comprised of farms owned by Mexican nationals employing more than 200 workers. WHD began partnering with the North Carolina Growers Association in March 2004 to provide information in Spanish to all incoming H-2A agricultural workers about their rights. To date, WHD staff has reached 4,400 Hispanic workers under this program.

Strategic Partnerships/Community-Based Organizations – In December 2003, the Compliance Outreach to the Asian Community and Hispanics (COACH) program was launched in northern New Jersey. The purpose of the initiative is to acquaint Hispanic and Asian employers and employees with the services of the WHD. To date, they have reached more than 943 businesses and 7,194 employees with 34 percent comprised of Hispanic-owned businesses.

Voluntary Incentive Program (VIP) – The Wage and Hour Division entered into its first VIP program with Labor Ready, a company that provides short-term temporary laborers, many of whom are Hispanic, to millions of small businesses through 750 establishments located throughout the country. As part of the VIP agreement, Labor Ready agreed to distribute compliance assistance information to all of its customers as enclosures with their billing information and distribute wallet-sized cards in Spanish and English to workers placed by Labor Ready.

Informational Materials – The WHD continues to increase its library of industry-specific fact sheets in Spanish. The WHD is prioritizing the translations of fact sheets in industries such as agriculture, restaurants, and construction where minorities are most likely to be employed and enforcement statistics show higher rates of violation. In addition, five industry-specific wallet-sized cards are available for workers in Spanish explaining basic legal protections and providing a toll-free help line to call for assistance. The help line provides Spanish-speaking operators to respond to those needing assistance in Spanish.

Speeches and Presentations – The WHD is increasing the number of presentations targeted to both minority employers and immigrant workers. During the first two quarters of fiscal year 2004, the office reached an estimated audience of some 160,000 through outreach events, including media events, geared towards the Hispanic population. About 6 percent of outreach events were targeted directly to the Hispanic population, and



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an additional 20 percent of the agency's events occurred either in low-wage industries that employ large numbers of Hispanic workers or in connection with the agency's strategic partnerships.

Public Awareness Campaigns – In May 2002, Secretary Chao launched the *YouthRules!* campaign to educate young workers, parents and employers about the jobs young people may do and the hours they may work. Many of the *YouthRules!* partners are business associations whose members employ large numbers of young Hispanic workers. Additional *YouthRules!* materials are being created and published; all are available in Spanish at www.youthrules.dol.gov.

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