

Request for Emergency ICR Approval: Collecting Information for Conducting a Unique and Urgent Impact Evaluation of Green Jobs, Health Care and High Growth Training Grants

The Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) requests emergency clearance from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for site visits to collect program operational information for the Evaluation of the Green Jobs/Health Care and High Growth grants. Both the grants and the evaluation are funded with American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act) resources. because the grants begin to expire in January 2012, site visits for those grants must be completed before the end of January, 2012, and others must be completed soon afterwards.

In February, 2010, Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis announced nearly \$500 million in green, health care and high growth jobs training grants, as authorized by the Recovery Act. This includes the Healthcare and Other High Growth Emerging Industries (HHG), and Pathways Out of Poverty (POP) grant programs from which the grantees to be evaluated will be chosen. These training grants are designed to teach workers the skills required in emerging and high growth industries, including energy efficiency and renewable energy. The POP grants have a period of performance of two years and, thus, end in January 2012; the HHG grants have a three year period of performance.

The HHG grantees' main activity is to provide education and/or training in a specific healthcare or high growth industry with the end goal of providing individuals with a portable certificate or degree and assisting the individual in attaining and retaining unsubsidized employment. The Pathways Out of Poverty grants are geared towards individuals that are living at or below the poverty level. By providing these individuals with training and supportive services, the grantees hope to help them find "Pathways Out of Poverty" and into economic self-sufficiency through employment in energy efficient and renewable energy industries ("green jobs"). Both these grant programs are seen as models for future employment and training programs and without this evaluation, we will know nothing about the effectiveness of this nearly \$500 million investment nor of training programs that target emerging and high growth industries.

Emergency clearance is necessary for several reasons. The primary reason is that the use of normal procedures will prevent the collection of the information needed for the evaluations, since the POP grants expire in January 2012, and other grants expire soon afterwards. Not visiting the grants while they are still in operation would mean the study would lose its ability to look at green jobs training efforts. The POP grants are the only green jobs training grants available for evaluation. Failure to conduct a rigorous evaluation of these grants will mean that no information will be available on the potential of training for green jobs as a strategy for reducing poverty or increasing employment. Finally, approximately 9 million dollars of ARRA funds are dedicated to evaluating these grants. Failure to conduct a rigorous evaluation with appropriate information will make these evaluations less usable for guiding future policy initiatives. Conducting these evaluations without appropriate data collection would be a waste of the taxpayer stimulus dollars that are currently dedicated to this project.