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| TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT NOTICE | NO. 18-09 |
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TO: ALL STATE WORKFORCE AGENCIES
ALL STATE TRADE COORDINATORS
ALL ONE-STOP CENTER SYSTEM LEADS

FROM: JANE OATES *Jane Oates*
Assistant Secretary

SUBJECT: Release and Availability of Four Reports from the National Evaluation of the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program

1. **Purpose.** The Employment and Training Administration (ETA) announces the release and availability of four reports on the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program:

- *Initial Implementation of the Trade Act of 2002;*
- *Assessment, Case Management, and Post-Training Assistance for TAA Participants;*
- *Linkages between TAA, One-Stop Career Center Partners, and Economic Development Agencies;* and
- *Rapid Response and TAA.*

2. **Background.** The Evaluation of the TAA program, which began in January 2004 under a contract with Social Policy Research Associates (SPRA), is designed to examine program administration as well as to estimate the impacts of TAA services and benefits on participants. The four reports focus on how the program was administered. Included is a study of initial implementation of the 2002 amendments and three reports examining key operational issues. Data for these reports were collected during site visits conducted by SPRA in 2004 through the summer of 2006, in states and localities where TAA services were being provided. Other reports will be forthcoming, including a report on patterns of program participation, to be released later this year, and a final report with impact estimates, which will be produced in late 2011.

3. **Publication Description.** The following provides key findings from the four reports:

- a. The *Initial Implementation of the Trade Act of 2002* is based on site visits conducted in May and June of 2004 in 12 state agencies and in 12 local offices. The report covers reactions to the changes generated by the amendments, such as the shorter time for petition review, the new Alternative TAA program, the Health Coverage Tax Credit, and waivers. Many of these changes presented considerable challenges to state and local program operators. Other changes, such as the extension of time for Trade Readjustment Allowance (TRA) benefits in some circumstances and the extension of allowable breaks in training, were strongly welcomed by program administrators. Researchers found a high degree of variation as to the nature and amount of services offered to and received

by TAA participants, determined primarily by the degree to which services were coordinated with other One-Stop programs and whether participants were co-enrolled in a Workforce Investment Act (WIA) dislocated worker program.

- b. *Assessment, Case Management, and Post-Training Assistance for TAA Participants* examines services provided to TAA participants at all stages of their involvement with the TAA program—from initial introduction to workforce services by the Rapid Response team, through job search, initial assessment, case management, training, and post-training placement services. The report discusses how restrictions on the use of TAA funds are a decisive factor in some states regarding the amounts of, and organizational arrangements for, delivering these services. The report also highlights promising practices in the provision of these services.
- c. *Linkages between TAA, One-Stop Career Center Partners, and Economic Development Agencies* examines the nature and extent of linkages between the TAA program and other workforce and economic development programs. This report also discusses what factors support the development and maintenance of these linkages. TAA programs generally had strong linkages with the Employment Service, Unemployment Insurance, and the WIA Dislocated Worker program, and these linkages appeared to have had positive effects on TAA participants. Co-enrollment in WIA was common, but the percentage of TAA participants co-enrolled varied widely among the states and local areas visited. Factors impeding stronger linkages included TAA's limited staffing and the lack of alignment of rules and requirements across different programs.
- d. *Rapid Response and TAA* focuses on the role of Rapid Response, authorized under WIA, in serving TAA participants. The report documents that states and local areas exceeded the statutory requirement to initiate Rapid Response whenever a TAA petition is submitted or certified. Rapid Response teams, which provide services for all significant dislocations whether trade-related or not, appeared to trigger the filing of TAA petitions as often as they responded to existing petitions. Direct participation of TAA staff on the Rapid Response team was limited until after certification occurred, but there was an active exchange of information and direct coordination when trade-related dislocations occurred or were expected. Rapid Response presentations to workers typically provided only a general overview of TAA, saving the details on TAA's more generous benefits and training until after certification.

4. **Availability.** To download the reports, visit the ETA Research Publication Database Web site at: <http://wdr.doleta.gov/research/keyword.cfm>.

5. **Inquiries.** Questions on the content of the reports may be directed to Heidi M. Casta, Director, Division of Research and Evaluation, Office of Policy Development and Research, Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor at (202) 693-3700 or casta.heidi@dol.gov.