

TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT NOTICE	<b>NO.</b> 36-09
	<b>DATE</b> March 29, 2010

TO: ALL STATE WORKFORCE LIAISONS  
 ALL STATE AND LOCAL WORKFORCE AGENCIES  
 ALL STATE ONE-STOP CAREER CENTER SYSTEM LEADS  
 ALL STATE AND LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS

FROM: JANE OATES /s/  
 Assistant Secretary  
 Employment and Training Administration

SUBJECT: Release and Availability of Employment and Training Administration (ETA)  
 Occasional Paper 2010-01 Final Report: *Evaluation of the Limited English  
 Proficiency and Hispanic Worker Initiative*

**1. Purpose.** To announce the release and availability of ETA Occasional Paper 2010-01: *Evaluation of the Limited English Proficiency and Hispanic Worker Initiative* (LEPHWI) prepared by Coffey Consulting, LLC and its sub-contractor *Excelencia* in Education.

**2. Background.** In February 2006, ETA awarded five 24-month Limited English Proficient and Hispanic Worker demonstration grants to five sites across the Nation for a total amount of \$4.9 million to test unique and innovative training strategies for services to Limited English Proficient (LEP) individuals and Hispanic Americans.<sup>1</sup> The demonstration program was targeted to incumbent workers, new job entrants or youth who lack the language, basic skills, and occupational skills necessary to succeed in the 21st Century workplace.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, the demonstration emphasized the use of innovative contextualized learning strategies which simultaneously provide language and occupational skills training that open career opportunities and pathways for LEP and Hispanic Americans. The ETA-funded demonstration project concluded in fall 2008.

**3. Publication Description.** This final report provides findings from the evaluation of the LEPHWI. Data was collected from on-site visits conducted during spring and fall of 2008 to learn about the operations of the demonstration in each site. The report focus on cross-site comparisons of project organization and partnering, outreach, recruitment and assessment practices, curriculum development and participant instruction, job development and placement activities, participant support, incentives, project outcomes, sustainability, and lessons learned. As part of this demonstration project, each state was required to track total service delivery to participating individuals. Selected findings from the report include:

<sup>1</sup> The sites were San Diego, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Omaha, Dallas-Ft. Worth, and New York City.

<sup>2</sup> LEP individuals are defined as those who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English.

- The factors critical to the success of the LEPHWI demonstration projects included active engagement of employers in creating or adapting a Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL) curriculum to meet their workplace requirements; support from employers in recruiting and maintaining client participation; the presence of a director of training provided by employers; the active support of participant's immediate supervisor; and the employer's ability and willingness to provide incentives to the workers for their participation in and completion of the VESL training.
- LEP individuals who participated in the VESL training were motivated to do so for diverse reasons. Some LEPHWI demonstration project participants anticipated financial rewards from their involvement in terms of promotions and/or higher pay. Others sought to improve their English language skills with less regard to the potential impact on job and earnings. This group wanted to be able to function better in English-dominated settings in their communities and to help their children with their school work.
- Employers stated that they participated in the initiative because they anticipated an improvement in profitability, worker safety (fewer on-the-job injuries would mean less paid time off, lower worker's compensation costs, and lower insurance premiums), reduced attrition rates (happier workers would be more likely to remain with their employer), and customer service skills (leading to more satisfied customers who would be more likely to make repeat purchases).
- Projects found that personal engagement of and assistance to participants tended to improve their persistence and outcomes, whether the engagement and assistance was through mentors, case managers, involved instructors, supervisors, community-based groups, or other means. Even highly motivated LEP participants faced barriers, but they could often overcome them with assistance from one or more of the aforementioned individuals or entities.
- The experiences of the LEPHWI demonstration projects suggest that LEP jobseekers appear to benefit from exposure to training on how to look for employment in the United States. Relevant topics that were unfamiliar to many participants included aspects of Internet-based job searches, the preparation of a resume using computer software, interviewing skills, and similar traditional components of a job search program. In particular, LEP individuals who come from cultural backgrounds significantly different from those in the United States benefitted from exposure to and discussion of America's norms of interpersonal behavior (e.g., looking someone in the eye, shaking hands), ways that genders typically interact in workplace settings, and related topics.
- In addition to occupationally relevant gains (employer approval, possible wage increases, and potential promotions), many LEP individuals identify several benefits of VESL instruction: improved interaction with other workers and community members through improved language skills, protection from unemployment through skills training, and exposure to strategies for finding new employment.

The authors provided the following two recommendations for policy consideration:

- VESL projects should incorporate approaches that ensure that the needs of both participants and employers (in the case of incumbent workers) are reflected in program designs. To the maximum extent possible, projects should incorporate the following: a convenient location for the participants, a curricula divided in tiers and with a content adapted to the English language fluency and ability of the participants, and programs of instruction that offer either open-entry/open-exit or multiple opportunities to exit after achieving specific levels of competency.
- Measuring the performance of programs serving LEP individuals exclusively may best be done on a program-by-program basis, using measures designed to capture outcome goals that are relevant to each program effort. The measures should be meaningful to distinct stakeholder groups: participants, employers, investors, and educational partners.

**4. Availability.** To download a PDF, or view or print the abstract, executive summary, or full report, please visit the ETA Occasional Papers Series Web site at:

<http://wdr.doleta.gov/research/keyword.cfm> .

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