



## **Employment and Training Task Force Annual Report 2008**

The Employment and Training Task Force continued its involvement with a wide spectrum of issues important to the employment of people with disabilities. Throughout the year, the task force monitored developments with the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), Rehabilitation Act, Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act and Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act and followed the appropriations process for the Title I Vocational Rehabilitation Program. The task force also followed regulatory and administrative activities of the Department of Labor (DoL) and the Rehabilitative Services Administration (RSA).

Early in the year, the task force wrote to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) in support of the addition of disability questions in the Current Population Survey that will, for the first time, allow for measurement of the employment rate of people with disabilities. A meeting took place in February with Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) Commissioner Christine Griffin to discuss the low rate of federal employment by people with disabilities. In response to that discussion, the task force sent a letter to Government Reform and Oversight Chairman Henry Waxman urging him to hold a hearing on the poor performance of the federal government.

In March, several members of the task force traveled to Louisville, KY at the invitation of the Social Security Administration to take part in the Ticket to Work Summit that highlighted the new Ticket to Work regulations. Those final regulations were issued in May and tracked closely to the recommendations made by the task force in its comments to the NPRM issued in 2005.

In June, the task force commented on research priorities outlined by the National Institute on Disability Research and Rehabilitation and changes to the regional research and training centers. The task force also reviewed the draft strategic plan and performance goals for RSA.

Over the course of 2008, meetings took place with Hill staff concerning the reauthorization of WIA and the Rehab Act and the task force filed a statement with the HELP Committee in response to its November listening session on WIA reauthorization. The task force heard presentations on a variety of programs including the Demonstration to Maintain Independence and Employment, the Department of Labor's Disability Program Navigator and America's Heroes at Work.

A subcommittee of the task force worked for several months on a statement of principles for employment of people with disabilities. Covering a wide spectrum of issues from proper enforcement of the ADA to recommendations for addressing employment needs of specific sub-populations of people with disabilities, the final document was posted to the CCD website in November.

In November, the task force sent a letter to the Congressional leadership asking that efforts to improve the employment of people with disabilities be included in any economic stimulus package and met with agency review team representatives for the incoming Obama Administration.

The task force – which meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month -- expects that 2009 will be an active year and plans to use the issues identified in its Principles document as an agenda template for the forthcoming term Congress. Several important elements of TTWWIIA expire in 2009 and will need to be reauthorized. Aspects of health reform may have an impact on employment of people with disabilities and there is renewed interest on Capitol Hill in taking concrete steps to renew WIA and the Rehab Act. Other issues that the task force has identified for its attention include: work opportunity tax credit and other tax incentives to promote employment of people with disabilities; Medicaid funding of employment services; Schedule A and federal employment of people with disabilities; employment provisions in SAFETEA-LU and DD Act; JWOD modernization; regulations implementing the ADA Amendments Act; future of the Office of Disability Employment Policy; veterans employment issues; contracting opportunities for entrepreneurs with disabilities; appropriations.

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