

Texas Workforce Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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U.S. Department of Labor Grants \$13.4 Million to Serve Hurricane Victims in Texas

AUSTIN – The U.S. Department Labor (DOL) awarded a \$13.4 million National Emergency Grant (NEG) to aid Hurricanes' Katrina and Rita victims with needed workforce services. The grant gives Texas initial funding toward a \$104 million NEG request and helps assist about 7,000 of the 37,500 families still in need of services.

"I'm encouraged by DOL's rapid response to our request for much-needed funds," said Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Chair Diane Rath. "I'm grateful to Senators Cornyn and Hutchison for their extraordinary efforts to secure funding for the thousands of hurricane victims still seeking jobs."

According to the latest Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) registration numbers, nearly 480,000 hurricane victims still live in the state today. Many are still out of work.

TWC and local workforce development boards have thus far assisted over 80,000 hurricane victims but more is needed. Critical DOL funding helps insure such essential services as temporary employment, housing and food, financial aid, child care, vocational training, job search assistance, and crisis and financial counseling.

The NEG award brings temporary relief as Texas already faces an anticipated loss of \$34.6 million in DOL funds from the Workforce Investment Act in Fiscal Year 2007. If that occurs, the state can expect to eliminate service to 11,000 Texans, 1,100 Texas employers and the possible closure of as many as 35 workforce centers across the state.

"Over the past 10 months, the State of Texas has worked tirelessly to help our neighbors and affected Texans," said Rath. "We appreciate this unexpected and early funding toward our requested \$104 million grant."

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The Texas Workforce Commission is a state agency dedicated to helping Texas employers, workers and communities prosper economically. For details on TWC and the programs it offers in unison with its network of local workforce development boards call (512) 463-8556 or visit www.texasworkforce.org.

