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Governor Granholm Says No Worker Left Behind to Continue as State's Permanent Workforce Policy

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LANSING – Governor Jennifer M. Granholm today announced that the No Worker Left Behind program (NWLB) will continue as Michigan's permanent workforce policy with the goal of helping to diversify the state's economy and give workers the skills they need for new job opportunities. Several federal funding streams will be pooled to maximize the resources available to continue to train Michigan citizens.

"No Worker Left Behind has helped tens of thousands of Michigan workers get the education and training they need to get 21st century jobs," Granholm said.

"No Worker Left Behind is making a critical difference for workers across our state, and it is imperative that the program continues. Given its success, it is not a surprise that No Worker Left Behind has become a model for national workforce policy."

This announcement comes on the heels of the release of the first NWLB Outcomes Report. The report, released Monday by the Michigan Department of Labor, Energy, & Economic Growth (DELEG), found that in the first 18 months of No Worker Left Behind (August 2007-February 2009), 62,206 people enrolled in training. During the period studied, the percentage of unemployed and underemployed workers enrolled in workforce training in Michigan was double the national average. The data provides information about the duration and type of training participants receive, whether they have found jobs, and whether those jobs are related to their training. Overall, 34,355 NWLB participants completed training, and of those who completed training, 72 percent or 24,699 either obtained or retained jobs. Another 9,656 were still searching for jobs.

The Granholm administration launched No Worker Left Behind (NWLB) on August 1, 2007, as an innovative plan to train 100,000 citizens in three years for jobs in high-demand occupations and emerging industries.

By reorganizing and augmenting federal funds currently used for workforce development, NWLB provides up to two years of free tuition at any Michigan community college, university, or other approved training program for qualifying participants. Recognizing the clear link between postsecondary education and employment, NWLB gives Michigan workers the opportunity to acquire the skills they need to win good-paying jobs in today's global economy.

In a little more than two years, 102,413 people have enrolled for training through NWLB. This past September was the program's biggest month yet, with over 6,000 people enrolled – the largest single month enrollment in No Worker Left Behind history.

“There is no silver bullet to turn Michigan around, but a few things are absolute requirements for a bright economic future,” said Andy Levin, deputy director of DELEG overseeing NWLB. “One of them is meeting the demand of our workers to get new skills and degrees so that our already extraordinary workforce is among the best trained and educated in the nation.”

The Obama administration recently awarded DELEG an additional \$38 million in Recovery Act funding for NWLB through a Regional Economic Impact National Emergency Grant. DELEG will use this grant to serve 8,644 Michiganians in 27 different counties throughout Michigan.

According to a new study, Michigan’s Forgotten Middle-Skill Jobs, recently released by The Workforce Alliance and the Skills2Compete-Michigan campaign, an affiliate of the national Skills2Compete campaign, 650,000 “middle-skill” job openings – those requiring more than a high school diploma but less than a four-year degree – are projected for the state by 2016. This study validates Michigan’s strategy of investing in our workforce.

The Department of Energy, Labor, & Economic Growth is investing in Michigan’s future by helping to create the jobs of today and tomorrow, ensuring that our children and adults have the skills these jobs demand, making Michigan a better place to do business, and training and placing those who need jobs now.

To learn more about the No Worker Left Behind initiative, visit the NWLB Web site at www.michigan.gov/nwlb.



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