

Job Training and Worker Protections

President Bush is acting to expand opportunities for American workers. His proposals will help Americans to access post-secondary education to get the job training and skills to compete in a changing and dynamic economy and fill jobs in emerging industries. The President also seeks to strengthen worker benefit programs and to ensure vigorous enforcement of laws that protect workers' wages promote opportunity.

Since 2001, President Bush has:

- Supported American workers through a variety of proposals to help more Americans find work—including reforms to the Workforce Investment Act to make the workforce investment system more flexible, accountable, and focused on results;
- Launched a High-Growth Job Training Initiative to help train workers in skills that are in high demand by local employers for jobs in the career fields of the 21st Century;
- Signed into law stronger protections for workers' retirement savings;
- Enacted a major expansion of the Trade Adjustment Assistance program that included health insurance tax credits, increasing benefit spending to help trade-displaced workers and certain retirees three-fold from 2001;
- Increased by 52% (from 2001) funding for Pell Grants used at technical schools and community colleges.
- Reduced workplace fatalities to historic lows and secured pension and health benefits and assets totaling \$3 billion since 2001;
- Recovered \$212 million in back wages for workers in 2003 – an 11-year high and a 21% increase over 2002;
- Protected workers by revising outdated and burdensome regulations, including regulations to improve the accountability of large labor unions; and
- Through the Workforce Investment Act grant program proposed doubling the number of workers receiving job training to ensure those programs work better for America's workers, and to close the skills gap so we fill every high-growth job with a well-trained American worker. The President's proposals include:
 - Providing \$4 billion in existing Federal job training funds to state governors with less Federal red tape and more flexibility;
 - Putting strict limits on overhead in major Federal job training programs by closing loopholes and enforcing limits to ensure tax dollars support training for workers who need it – reducing overhead costs by an additional \$300 million;
 - Giving workers more choices about their job training by increasing the use of personal job training accounts, which would be called Innovation Training Accounts; and

- Training an additional 200,000 people for high-growth jobs through programs run by community colleges, unions, and businesses.

The President's FY 2005 Budget ensures a prepared, secure, and competitive workforce and quality workplaces to build on the successes of the last three years. It includes:

- 12.5% more funding than in 2001 for job training and employment assistance – for a total of \$23 billion for 30 programs in 9 agencies. This funding level represents a 2.3% increase (\$500 million) over 2004:
 - Total resources for job training through the Departments of Labor and Education are over \$19 billion;
 - Including programs in the Department of Labor that were identified by the General Accounting Office (GAO) as “job training,” the President’s Budget invests nearly \$7.9 billion (a 5.6% increase) to help workers train for and find jobs through employment and training programs and in direct assistance to workers adversely affected by foreign trade;
 - The Department of Education and, in particular, its Pell Grant program is important contributors to preparing people for the workplace. Education programs identified by GAO as being for job training, including Pell Grants for students at technical and two-year post-secondary schools, total almost \$11.2 billion (a 2.3% increase) in FY 2005;
- \$12.86 billion for Pell Grants, a 47% increase since 2001. Pell Grants are a key funding source for job training. Of the \$12.9 billion requested for Pell Grants, \$7 billion will be used by students in technical, community, and 2-yr. post-secondary schools—a 52% increase since 2001;
- More than \$500 million for the *Jobs for the 21st Century* initiative – designed to help current and future workers receive the skills and training they need to succeed in increasingly skilled jobs in the fastest growing industries:
 - At a time when 80% of the fastest-growing jobs require some kind of post-secondary education, the President’s *Jobs for the 21st Century* initiative provides \$250 million for America’s community colleges to train workers for the industries with the largest growth in new jobs;
 - The President’s plan includes \$120 million to help middle and high school students who fall behind in math and \$100 million for the Striving Readers program. It proposes a \$28 million increase in funding to expand Advanced Placement programs in low-income schools, and provides an additional \$33 million to provide larger Pell Grants for low-income students who prepare for college with demanding courses in high school;
 - The Budget requests \$40 million to create an Adjunct Teacher Corps of professionals to teach core academic subjects, particularly math and science, in secondary schools, and includes \$12 million to help States establish State Scholars programs to encourage young people to complete a rigorous high school curriculum;
- Support for working families by including \$5 million in the Department of Labor to encourage greater use of scheduling flexibility and telework options to help ease the pressures faced by workers and their families;
- \$50 million for innovative Personal Reemployment Accounts of up to \$3,000 each to help unemployed workers who need the most help to return to work;

- Proposed reforms to existing job training programs to meet employers' and workers' needs through the Workforce Investment Act reauthorization;
- \$300 million for a new, four-year prisoner Re-Entry Initiative, calling on faith-based and community organizations to help ex-offenders find work and avoid returning to a life of crime;
- Protection for workers' pension and health plans, and promotion of security for workers' retirement savings with an increase of \$8 million from FY 2004. The Budget also reinforces critical worker protections, including \$737 million for worker health and safety programs in the Department of Labor, and it proposes legislation to give millions more working Americans access to health benefits through Association Health Plans; and
- An additional \$2.5 million for audits and investigations to deter and detect fraud and corruption in pension and health plans and union finances to provide financial transparency and strengthened accountability to prevent victimization of workers.

For Other Information About the President's Accomplishments and Proposals:

FY 2005 Budget

Department of Education: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/fy2005/education.html>

Department of Labor: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/fy2005/labor.html>

Department of Treasury: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/fy2005/treasury.html>

Compassion

The White House: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/compassionate/>

Economy

The White House: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/economy/>

Education

The White House: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/education/>

Faith-Based and Community Initiatives

The White House: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/government/fbci/>

Department of Health and Human Services: <http://www.hhs.gov/fbci/>

Department of Housing and Urban Development: <http://www.hud.gov/initiatives/fbci/index.cfm>