

**** DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY ****

HISPANIC OUTREACH INITIATIVE ACTION PLAN MAY 21, 1999

BACKGROUND

The Hispanic Outreach Initiative (HOI) was introduced in 1996 by former Secretary Hazel O'Leary and was later endorsed by former Secretary Federico Peña as a vehicle to promote partnership efforts that address the needs of the Nation's Hispanic community. The HOI's purpose is to address the historic under representation of the Nation's Hispanic community in the Department's everyday activities. With the HOI, the Department of Energy committed to improving its responsiveness to the needs of Hispanics in areas that correspond to our national missions, including national security, energy resources, environmental management and science and technology.

This Action Plan, developed by Secretary of Energy Bill Richardson, builds upon that legacy of achievement by creating a strategic plan to partner with the Hispanic community. The Action Plan was developed with the cooperation of Department of Energy employee groups, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda and key outside constituents. Its strength is that it takes a comprehensive approach in its partnership efforts. The Action Plan will integrate the Hispanic community as part of the Department's stakeholders and customers in five critical areas: outreach/communications, education, employment, business, and the environment.

In addition, this Action Plan responds to President Clinton's call to build a bridge to the 21st Century that draws on the strengths and talents of *all of our citizens*. By forming partnerships with the dynamic and burgeoning U.S. Hispanic community, the Department of Energy is building a stronger foundation for itself and for the Nation -- a foundation that will prove invaluable as our Nation enters the 21st Century.

OVERVIEW

This Action Plan will build on initial successes to ensure the Department has a comprehensive and constructive relationship with the U.S. Hispanic community. This will be accomplished through three implementation steps:

- C First, we will document the successes of the HOI to date and raise the profile of ongoing initiatives and commitments throughout DOE that benefit the Hispanic community.

- C Second, we will address any unmet needs and take vigorous steps to include all Department of Energy Program and Field Offices, national laboratories, and major facilities in the HOI.
- C Third, we will strengthen Department-wide efforts in the areas covered by the HOI, for example: expanding outreach/communication efforts to inform the Hispanic community about how DOE missions relate to their daily lives; partnering with other Federal agencies, academia, and industry to address the under representation of Hispanics in engineering, science, and technical fields; developing a Department-wide diversity employment plan; and, adding a health and environment section.

ROLE OF DOE LABORATORIES, PROGRAM AND FIELD OFFICES

In January of 1997, every DOE Field Office was tasked by Secretary O’Leary to submit a blueprint of programs and initiatives they would promote as HOI partnerships with the Hispanic community in the areas of employment, education, and business/procurement. At the same time, major DOE Program offices made specific commitments to improving their outreach and involvement with Hispanic businesses and educational institutions.

But much more must be done. Field Offices, after submitting their initial implementation plans, have not regularly reported on their successes. Program Offices were not required to develop comprehensive implementation plans and their initial efforts have proved to be haphazard. And the national laboratories and facilities have engaged in a wide variety of initiatives that could have served as best practices for other organizations, but have failed to be emulated.

As a next step, we need to document the successes of the HOI by having each DOE Program and Field Organization, Laboratory and facility provide a status report of their HOI activities and identify new partnership opportunities that tie the Hispanic community to DOE’s mission areas and programs. In particular, the scope of the plans should be expanded to include FY1999 and FY2000 priorities.

ENHANCING DEPARTMENT-WIDE HOI EFFORTS

The following are short-term action items that should be taken that will re-energize and refocus Department-wide efforts to implement the HOI:

1. Outreach: Develop a proactive approach to inform the U.S. Hispanic community about DOE’s missions to the nation. Key would be establishing an HOI Partnership Council consisting of members of national Hispanic organizations and private companies. This Council will serve as a vehicle to obtain views on the development and implementation of the HOI, including forming working groups in employment, education, business, and the environment. In addition, the Department will organize annual outreach meetings where Program Offices provide informational briefings to community leaders about their budgets,

initiatives and new areas of emphasis.

2. Education: As the Federal government's premier science and technology organization, the Department has a special responsibility to provide leadership in the areas of research and development. According to the National Academy of Engineering, the National Academy of Science and other major scientific organizations, the U.S. Hispanic community has not participated fully in the technology explosion created by the Internet and other new technologies. Secretary Richardson has recognized that obtaining world class education and training in math and science is a key to fuller participation and that the Department of Energy can accelerate this effort by taking a number of steps, including:

- o Encouraging the formation of a Latino Science and Engineering Consortium that has as its primary mission addressing the under representation of Hispanics in the science, engineering, and technical fields. The Department should work closely with the other federal agencies, the private sector, U.S. science organizations, and Latino science and technology groups to establish the Consortium, which would be housed at the National Academy of Sciences. The consortium would also provide national policy, advocacy, and program development.

DOE will co-host a workshop and signing ceremony at the National Academy of Sciences to launch this effort. It could also serve as a platform for the President to announce a new OSTP report, ACreating the 21st Century U.S. Scientific, Engineering and Technical Workforce,@ which makes recommendations designed to improve the diversity of the nation's scientific and technical workforce.

- o Support the White House Initiative of Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans by helping to sponsor its regional conferences. In addition, the White House Initiative will work with DOE to create the Latino Science and Engineering Consortium.
- o Leverage DOE model internship and fellowship programs. DOE's labs and facilities, with their proven infrastructure and capabilities, serve as a training ground for students. DOE should partner with higher education institutions, particularly those that graduate the largest number of Hispanic and minority scientists, engineers, and technicians. For example, support and expand the Office of Science Institute of Biotechnology, Environmental Science, and Computing for Community Colleges; and expand fellowship awards to Hispanic students from 4-year colleges and universities under the Office of Science's Energy Research Undergraduate Laboratory Fellowship Program.
- o Update and improve the DOE's 1991 partnership with the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU). As the group that represents higher education institutions that graduate the most Hispanic students, HACU is uniquely situated to provide DOE with advice and assistance as efforts are made to improve the under representation of Hispanics in scientific and engineering fields.

2. Employment: Hispanics are under-represented at all levels of the DOE workforce, regardless of grade level. Hispanics comprise only 6% of the DOE workforce nationwide (less than 2% at DOE headquarters) and 2% of SES-level employees, compared with 11% of the national civilian labor force. The Department has developed a comprehensive plan that is part of the Workforce 21 Initiative to address Workforce diversity and Hispanic underemployment. The plan addresses:
 - o Accountability: Senior managers will be evaluated annually on their performance to improve their office's diversity and specific goals will be set for different organizations. A preliminary review of Department of Energy staffing needs has been conducted and will be used to guide future hires.
 - o Opportunities for current employees: Current DOE Hispanic employees will be offered training and development that provides opportunities for advancement; and personnel offices will provide succession planning initiatives that make full use of current talents and resources.
 - o Outreach, Recruitment, Selection, & Hiring: Program Offices and other Departmental organizations will provide specific plans designed to improve their success in attracting and hiring new Hispanic employees.

4. Business: By Congressional mandate, the Department is responsible for including small, minority and women-owned businesses in its procurement opportunities. In addition, the Department's acquisition regulations were changed in 1997 to encourage major contractors, through a Diversity clause, to improve their diversity performance when conducting educational, procurement, civic, and personnel activities. New initiatives would include:
 - o Business Outreach: DOE will host business roundtables with DOE Program Offices that educate Hispanic businesses about the potential benefits of entering into contracts and procurements with the Department. In addition, DOE Program Office representatives will regularly attend Hispanic business meetings to fully understand the needs and requirements of the U.S. Hispanic business community.
 - o Diversity Clause Implementation: The Offices of Procurement, Field Management, and Economic Impact and Diversity will be given the responsibility of overseeing the implementation of the Diversity Clause in all major contracts.

5. Health & Environment near DOE Sites: The Department has a responsibility to address health and environmental concerns near our sites and is committed to improving its responsiveness to Hispanic health and environmental issues where there are specific concerns. In addition, because Hispanics have been traditionally under represented in the fields of environment, health and safety, the Department is also committed to increasing the number of Hispanic professionals in these areas as part of its Workforce 21 initiative. Finally, wherever the Department's business activities have an impact on an Hispanic

community, the Department will ensure that bilingual materials are available for the community that address environmental, safety and health issues.