

BRIEFLY...

Highlights of Report Number: 21-03-010-03-390, a report to the Assistant Secretary, Employment and Training Administration. August 18, 2003.

WHY READ THE REPORT

Achieving the Workforce Investment Act's (WIA) goal to provide jobseekers and businesses with employment-related assistance depends on the quality of services that the local One-Stop Career system delivers. Under the Act, each local area, designated by the state to receive WIA funds, must establish at least one physical location to connect customers with job referrals, job training, unemployment insurance, and related services.

The New Mexico Department of Labor (NMDOL), a state agency, receives and administers Federal and state funds under WIA. It operates the Las Cruces One-Stop Career Center in Las Cruces, New Mexico. Employees at the center are employed by the NMDOL.

WHY OIG CONDUCTED THE EVALUATION

The OIG conducted their evaluation after reviewing a complaint alleging improprieties occurring at the Las Cruces One-Stop Career Center. The complaint's allegations related to the operation and management of the center, specifically, participant eligibility, state vehicles used for non-official business, and required employee participation in religious activities. We reviewed activities occurring between July 1, 2001, and September 30, 2002.

READ THE FULL REPORT

The full report, including the scope, methodology, and full agency response, is available on the Internet at:

<http://www.oig.dol.gov/public/reports/oa/2003/21-03-010-03-390.pdf>

August 2003

EVALUATION FINDS QUESTIONABLE PRACTICES AT LAS CRUCES, NEW MEXICO ONE-STOP CAREER CENTER

WHAT OIG FOUND

The OIG found that:

- **The center did not follow policies and procedures for processing entitlement applications for family members of NMDOL employees.** Consequently, six family members of center employees were improperly approved to receive benefits in WIA programs.
- **Center staff did not always properly complete the logbook used to document the use of state vehicles.** We could not conclude that state vehicles were always used for authorized purposes.
- **NMDOL investigated a complaint against a center employee, alleging the conduct of religious activities while on the job.** The NMDOL found that a center official improperly gave and encouraged interns to read religious materials during business hours.
- **Center staff improperly enrolled a participant in the Dislocated Workers Program resulting in \$2,210.47 incorrectly charged to the program.** The participant was eligible for the Adult Program.

WHAT OIG RECOMMENDED

We recommended that the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) direct NMDOL to reexamine the need for employees to maintain the state vehicles at their residences after work and during weekends. Since NMDOL had already taken appropriate corrective action related to the other findings, we made no recommendations to ETA on these matters. The NMDOL generally agreed with our findings.