

News Release



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U.S. Department of Labor Launches “Pathways to Employment” Initiative Expanding Employment Services for Hurricane Survivors *Career Counseling and Resources for Youths and the Disabled Aim for Rapid Return to Work*

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Labor today announced a new *“Pathways to Employment”* initiative to help evacuees and other survivors of the recent hurricanes find employment and training opportunities. *“Pathways to Employment”* provides targeted assistance to people based on individual needs, through the nationwide network of 3,500 One-Stop Career Centers located across the country.

“Our *‘Pathways to Employment’ initiative* will provide individualized counseling and assistance to hurricane survivors to help them get back on their feet,” said Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao. “This is a multi-prong approach. One, we are deploying experienced career counselors to evacuee centers and other relocation centers where there’s a concentration of evacuees. Two, we’re sending specially-trained experts who can help people with disabilities find employment opportunities and needed services. Three, we’re providing 4,000 Job Corps scholarships to young people impacted by the hurricanes and need a fresh start.”

Under the first part of this initiative, reintegration counselors will be deployed for up to six months in areas with high concentrations of evacuees. Counselors will expand the capacity of One-Stop Career Centers using local and educational opportunities to connect evacuees to employment and supportive services, as needed. Areas with large numbers of evacuees may receive funding for more than one counselor. A total of \$15 million will go toward this effort.

To assist individuals with disabilities, DOL will deploy additional Disability Program Navigators (DPNs) in hurricane-affected states. DPNs are trained individuals experienced in working with persons with disabilities to make employment connections through the One-Stop system and connect to needed benefits and services through the government or community organizations.

“One-Stop Career Centers are on the front lines providing assistance to hurricane-affected individuals who have talent, skills and experience to offer potential employers,” said Assistant Secretary of Labor for Employment and Training Emily Stover DeRocco. “Counselors and other workforce professionals will be in areas with high concentrations of evacuees to supplement the resources already available through the public workforce investment system.”

Finally, DOL’s national Job Corps program is expediting enrollment and transfers of young people affected by the hurricanes. Along the lines of scholarships, Job Corps will provide education, room and board for up to 4,000 economically disadvantaged young people ages 16 through 24.

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