



DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

News Release

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**DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS ATTAINS
\$5,220,500 NATIONAL EMERGENCY GRANT TO ASSIST DISPLACED
AIRLINE WORKERS STATEWIDE**

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) has been awarded a \$5,220,500 National Emergency Grant (NEG) from the U.S. Department of Labor. The NEG will enable DLIR to assist approximately 710 workers statewide who were dislocated by the closing of the Aloha Air and ATA Airlines. DLIR will also partner with the City and County of Honolulu to assist the former airline employees on O'ahu. The DLIR applied for the NEG in order to provide urgent assistance to employees who were laid off. The U.S. Department of Labor will release \$3,269,812 initially to the state.

On March 30, 2008, Aloha Air issued a notice announcing the abrupt closure of the passenger carrier airline due to bankruptcy and the immediate displacement of 1,900 employees. The DLIR dispatched State Rapid Response teams that met with the employees of Aloha Air on April 3rd to April 9th, 2008, to inform them of the available employment services.

On April 4, 2008 ATA Airlines issued a notice announcing the abrupt closure of their operations around the nation due to bankruptcy and the immediate displacement of 53 employees in Hawaii. The DLIR dispatched State Rapid Response teams that met with the employees of the airline on April 8 and April 9, 2008, to inform them of the available employment services.

The total number of employees laid off by both airlines was 1,953. However, only 710 of them have indicated that they are in need of the DLIR's assistance. The NEG will be used to provide an array of services for these dislocated workers, including skills assessment, individual counseling, career planning, employment development, occupational skills training, on-the-job training, entrepreneurial training, job-readiness training and adult education. Participants may also be provided training in high-demand industries to include health care, construction and commercial truck driving. Project participants may also receive out-of-area job search assistance, relocation assistance and other related supportive services. Support services may include childcare, transportation assistance and job related certifications, uniforms and equipment.

"We are obligated to these workers, and their families, to ensure that that they are given every possible opportunity to find meaningful employment and to have the ability to provide for themselves and their families during this transition period," said Darwin L.D. Ching, Director of Labor and Industrial Relations. "We are especially thankful to Elaine Chao, Secretary of Labor, and her staff for working closely with us on our grant application. We would also extend our thanks to Hawai'i's congressional delegation for their assistance in lobbying for our NEG application."

NEGs are discretionary awards from the Workforce Investment Act that must be approved by the Secretary of Labor and are intended to temporarily expand service capacity at the state and local levels by providing time-limited funding assistance in response to significant dislocation events. Significant events are those that create a sudden need for assistance that cannot reasonably be expected to be accommodated within the on-going operations of the formula-funded Dislocated Worker program, including the discretionary resources reserved at the state level.

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