

CDO gets \$1M in government funds

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Stimulus plan allows for further training, work opportunities

By Denise Richardson
Staff Writer

The CDO Workforce Investment Board will offer added training, education and work opportunities, thanks to more than \$1 million from the federal stimulus plan.

Programs through the Chenango- Delaware-Otsego Workforce Investment Board will include upgrading skills and summer jobs for workers ages 16 to 24, said Kevin Price, executive director. The funding will help expand programs and reach more people, he said.

The CDO Workforce Investment Board will receive \$1.028 million through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, known as the stimulus plan, a media release issued Friday said. Price said all 33 Workforce Investment Areas across the state received stimulus funding.

The stimulus funding doubles this year's federal allotment to the CDO Workforce of \$864,000, Price said. The \$1 million allotment will be divided equally between jobs programs and summer-employment programs, he said.

The stimulus funding is to help individuals affected by the economic downturn with a focus on people who are unemployed, low-income, underskilled, disadvantaged youths and/or veterans, the release said. Unemployment in March was above rates a year ago in Otsego, Delaware and Chenango counties, according to the state's most recent data. The area's unemployment rate last month ranged between 8.8 percent and 10.1 percent.

Every bit of funding that can help the economy and return people to work is good news, Rob Robinson, president and chief executive officer at the Otsego County Chamber, said Sunday. The Chamber will work with CDO Workforce to identify businesses that might participate, he said, and the youth-focused funding is important to generate interest and opportunities in local employment.

CDO Workforce officials have been meeting with educators at local Boards of Cooperative Educational Services and State University of New York colleges in Delhi and Morrisville to identify educational and training categories, Price said.

Businesses, employers, workers and jobseekers are being sought as programs are organized, he said.

Programs will offer education to learn skills, train to upgrade skills and ongoing support for unemployed workers, he said. Areas identified in addition to traditional offerings include green industries and technology; medical coding, billing specialist and medical office administrator; construction safety, surveying, welding and heavy equipment operations; electrical and photo-voltaic; industrial welding; residential weatherization and home inspection; certified nurse assistant; and entrepreneurial training.

Strengthening the skills of workers not only makes good economic sense, the release said, but also enhances the competitiveness and better positions business for when the economy expands.

CDO also to focus on summer jobs for young workers CDO Workforce will apply stimulus funds to summer employment and training for 225 individuals ages 16 to 24 between June 15 and Aug. 28, the release said. Stimulus funding will support the area's Workforce Investment Area 2009-10 Year Round Youth Program, which has 135 participants.

Emphasis will be placed on recruiting individuals between ages 20 and 24 into the ARRA Funded 2009 Summer Employment Program because officials said the area is expected to receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Summer Youth Employment funds. TANF funds can be used only to support subsidized employment for youth aged 14 to 20.

Recruitment for the summer program will begin next month and be announced in area newspapers, the release said.

CDO Workforce also is seeking area businesses and organizations willing to provide educational work-related experiences in the summer-employment program.