



The Workforce Investment System Must Actively Provide Opportunities for Women to Prepare for Nontraditional Employmentⁱ

Revised May 29, 2007

Increasing women's access to nontraditional jobs—which typically offer wages that are 20 to 30 percent higher than jobs in which women traditionally predominateⁱⁱ—is a compelling strategy for advancing family economic self-sufficiency. Across the United States, women remain segregated in low-wage service sector occupations with limited benefits and opportunities for advancement, while positions in the skilled trades and technology sector are left unfilled. The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) should work to bridge this gap.

To date, however, WIA has not made significant efforts to actively inform women about opportunities in nontraditional jobs or to provide women with assistance in pursuing these opportunities. According to data submitted in PY 2004, only 2.9 percent of women adult exiters were employed in nontraditional jobs in the quarter after exit. ⁱⁱⁱ This is a significant missed opportunity that can and should be corrected in reauthorization.

Adult Exiters in Nontraditional Employment^{iv}			
July 1st, 2002 – June 31st, 2004			
State	Exiters in Nontraditional Employment	Total Employed Exiters	Percentage of Employed Exiters in Nontraditional Employment^v
Alabama	64	6,437	0.99%
Alaska	56	1,013	5.53%
Arizona	263	5,111	5.15%
Arkansas	20	1,856	1.08%
California	1,777	58,205	3.05%
Colorado	102	2,922	3.49%
Connecticut	16	649	2.47%
D.C.	65	1,002	6.49%
Delaware	20	938	2.13%
Florida	620	17,236	3.60%
Georgia	145	5,725	2.53%
Hawaii	2	1,987	0.10%
Idaho	154	873	17.64%
Illinois	393	8,589	4.58%

Adult Exiters in Nontraditional Employment^{iv}
July 1st, 2002 – June 31st, 2004

State	Exiters in Nontraditional Employment	Total Employed Exiters	Percentage of Employed Exiters in Nontraditional Employment^v
Indiana	391	4,886	8.00%
Iowa	16	917	1.74%
Kansas	61	1,656	3.68%
Kentucky	23	3,726	0.62%
Louisiana	82	6,399	1.28%
Maine	86	1,335	6.44%
Maryland	59	6,320	0.93%
Massachusetts	1,021	2,421	42.17%
Michigan	477	12,157	3.92%
Minnesota	77	2,775	2.77%
Mississippi	274	22,450	1.22%
Missouri	43	5,217	0.82%
Montana	36	624	5.77%
Nebraska	17	532	3.20%
Nevada	291	2,946	9.88%
New Hampshire	7	790	0.89%
New Jersey	34	5,999	0.57%
New Mexico	69	2,816	2.45%
New York	339	63,382	0.53%
North Carolina	54	5,502	0.98%
North Dakota	20	999	2.00%
Ohio	109	4,791	2.28%
Oklahoma	188	2,742	6.86%
Oregon	205	7,494	2.74%
Pennsylvania ^{vi}	*	*	*
Puerto Rico	655	8,985	7.29%
Rhode Island	8	869	0.92%
South Carolina	249	4,619	5.39%
South Dakota	19	1,067	1.78%
Tennessee	66	8,021	0.82%
Texas	695	26,285	2.64%
Utah	73	1,084	6.73%
Vermont	29	405	7.16%
Virginia	14	4,602	0.30%
Washington	543	5,376	10.10%
West Virginia	17	3,622	0.47%

Adult Exiters in Nontraditional Employment^{iv} July 1st, 2002 – June 31st, 2004			
State	Exiters in Nontraditional Employment	Total Employed Exiters	Percentage of Employed Exiters in Nontraditional Employment^v
Wisconsin	72	5,485	1.31%
Wyoming	15	664	2.26%
Total	10,131	352,503	2.87%

ⁱ The data presented in this brief are drawn from the Workforce Investment Act Standard Record Data (WIASRD), an individual-level data set reported annually by States to the Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration. Nontraditional employment is one of the outcomes determined for persons who are employed in the quarter after exiting WIA. Nontraditional employment is defined as employment in an occupation or field of work for which individuals of the participant's gender comprise less than 25 percent of the individuals employed in such occupation or field of work [Workforce Investment Act of 1998 §101(26)]. Nontraditional employment data can be based on either local or national data.

ⁱⁱ *Women and Nontraditional Work*, Wider Opportunities for Women, 2003. Calculations based on Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics data.

ⁱⁱⁱ *2004 WIASRD Data Book*, Social Policy Research Associates, February 2, 2006. This version of the Data Book uses data provided by States in their PY2004 submissions, which contain information on individuals who finished their participation in WIA in PY2004, PY2003, and PY2002.

^{iv} Accessed 5.22.07 via the Federal Research and Evaluation Database (FRED) at <http://www.fred-info.org/WIA.htm>.

^v The State percentages calculated in this brief include both male and female exiters, because reliable state-level data on nontraditional employment is not available cross-tabulated by gender using the FRED tool. Because nontraditional employment numbers are higher for women than men, this may have the effect, in some States, of slightly under representing the extent to which women specifically are entering into nontraditional employment. While the percent of all adult exiters during PY2002-PY2004 employed in nontraditional fields was 2.8 percent, the percent of female adult exiters employed in nontraditional fields was 2.9 and the percentage of male adult exiters was 2.6.

^{vi} Data unavailable via FRED.