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Read the report: <http://www.policymattersohio.org/TradeAdjustmentAssistance2009.htm>

Trade Assistance to Expand, Providing an Opportunity for Ohio 20,000 trade-related job losses certified here over 27 months, but many don't get benefits

The Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program, which provides income support and retraining to workers who lose their jobs due to rising imports or shifts in production overseas, undergoes a huge expansion today. Under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, workers in service industries will be covered for the first time, as will more manufacturing workers affected by production shifts abroad, while benefits will increase.

U.S. Department of Labor certified 20,912 Ohio job losses because of trade between January 2007 and March 27, 2009. However, many Ohio workers dislocated by trade do not participate in the TAA program today. Many are not properly identified as having been affected by trade, and even fewer workers receive training for a new line of work. The underuse of the program, along with the major expansion of it, provide a real opportunity for improvements in outreach efforts that will allow more trade-affected workers across the country and Ohio to benefit.

That was one of the key conclusions of a study released today by Policy Matters Ohio. "Far more Ohio workers should be able to participate in this important program," said Zach Schiller, one of the report's authors. "A strong outreach effort and the program expansion will allow more Ohioans to benefit."

Trade Adjustment Assistance offers jobless workers some of the best opportunities for income support and retraining. Under the newly expanded program, certified workers will be eligible for training, up to 130 weeks of income support and a subsidy of 80 percent of their health-care premiums.

Ohio has been a national leader in job losses certified under TAA. In the federal fiscal year ended last September, only Michigan exceeded Ohio in the number of workers certified by the labor department. The 20,912 workers certified in the recent 27-month period amounted to 16 percent of the net decline in the state's manufacturing jobs during that time frame. Although not all layoffs are captured in this data,



it provides a minimum estimate of job losses due to import competition and moving production overseas.

Montgomery, Wood, Cuyahoga, Trumbull and Seneca Counties together accounted for 43 percent of the workers certified over the period. Montgomery County alone accounted for 26 petitions and 3,667 workers certified, more than half again as many workers as the next leading county. However, the total of 179 certified petitions covered job losses across Ohio, located in 58 of the state's 88 counties. Certifications were concentrated in the auto industry.

A surprisingly small share of the workers certified to receive Trade Adjustment Assistance benefits – both nationally and in Ohio – actually receives them. According to data from the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services, only 1,494 workers received TAA training in the 2007 federal fiscal year, and 1,984 received training in FFY2008. While an exact comparison is difficult, that is only a small proportion of the total certified.

The Policy Matters report explores the reasons for this and makes recommendations for how to improve participation.

Policy Matters Ohio is a nonprofit, nonpartisan research institute with offices in Cleveland and Columbus.

The study was supported by the Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks, lead agency of the Ohio Benefit Bank, a web-based, counselor-assisted program to connect low- and moderate-income Ohioans to work supports such as tax credits and public benefits.

