Labor Department Announces IT Job Training Grant

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The Department of Labor announced a multimillion grant to train unemployed people with in-demand computer skills Monday.

"The U.S. Department of Labor awarded CompTIA Workforce Development, LLC and the State of Illinois a $6,175,000 Job-Driven Emergency Grant to train workers who have lost a job through no fault of their own for jobs in high-demand industries such as IT," stated a press release by CompTIA. "Across the country, grants totaling $154.8 million were awarded to implement or expand job-training programs."

The hope is this grant will help put many of the unemployed into the "40,000 job openings for IT positions" within the state of Illinois.

Some observers are skeptical, however. Looking back at the last half century, Chris Edwards, the director of tax policy studies at the Cato Institute, told The Daily Caller News Foundation that these sorts of job training programs, "generally haven't work."

Edwards argues that since the Kennedy administration, there has been "no obvious benefit in the labor force" by implementing such training programs.

One of the primary reasons Edwards points out for such programs not working is that the market is constantly changing, so there is no reliable way of knowing what training will be relevant down the line.

Beyond the technical reasons for why such training programs tend not to work, Edwards also points out a problem of fairness. Not everyone gets their job training funded by taxpayers, he says.

"The grant will fund occupational and work-based training, such as apprenticeships, internships, on-the-job training, job coaching and job matching," according to the statement announcing the federal funds. "Participants will also have opportunities for industry credentialing and certification in a range of IT skills."

The job market for computer science and technology has been the subject of recent debate, with some lawmakers advocating for more foreign workers while others assert unemployment in the field is too high.