

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Mitzi Hobot, Director of Organizational Development and External Relations
American Indian OIC
1845 East Franklin Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55404
612/341-3358, extension 110
mitzih@aioic.org

U.S. Secretary of Labor, Hilda L. Solis, offered high commendations to the American Indian OIC “Soil to Sky” Health Care Training and Employment Services Program and noted that it is exactly what she and President Obama look for in best-practice models

Minneapolis, MN, April 18, 2011 – The American Indian Occupational Industrialization Center (AIOIC) was highly honored with a visit from U.S. Secretary of Labor, Hilda Solis, on April 13, 2011. She, along with representatives from Betty McCollum, Keith Ellison, Al Franken and Amy Klobuchar’s offices, listened to staff; students and employers talk about the Soil-to-Sky program. Secretary Solis was inspired by the personal stories from graduates and the AIOIC’s strong relationships with employers. She awarded the AIOIC program with high commendations and commented that the program is exactly what she and President Obama look for in best-practice models.

Secretary Solis stated that she was “delighted” to learn about the AIOIC’s accredited Health Care Training and comprehensive Employment Services Program. Health Care courses offered by the AIOIC include: Nursing Assistant, Acute Care Nursing Assistant, Home Health Aide, Trained Medication Aide, First Aid/CPR/AED and Administrative Medical Assistant. Additionally, a Personal Care Assistant program has been added for this summer and a new Proposed Practical Nurse program expected to begin in the fall. The school is accredited through the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI). This accreditation is in accordance with federal regulations and ensures the quality of education provided to the students.

The Employment Services Program includes a thorough client assessment, development of a work plan, work-readiness classes, externship opportunities and a retention program for newly hired clients. The program serves a diverse population of students in the Twin Cities metropolitan area and is focused on meeting the needs of the employers. Secretary Solis was impressed with the complete full continuum of services offered. She noted that she normally doesn’t see programs that are this comprehensive and was impressed with the tremendous success of the program.

The AIOIC was awarded a grant in spring of 2010 through the American Recover and Reinvestment Act of 2009: Health Care Sector and Other High Growth and Emerging Industry Grants. The Soil-to-Sky initiative projects to serve 1830 participants during the 3 year timeframe. In the first year alone, 575 were trained, 770 certificates were awarded and 1200 points of contact were made with students. We expect to continue to show a very positive return on investment.

The American Indian OIC was founded in 1979. It is an NCA accredited post-secondary institution that has educated a workforce of over 20,000 people. Although we are dedicated to serving the American Indian people, our resources and programs are available to all persons regardless of race, creed, color, age or gender.



Author: Jennifer Parkhurst, MBA, Business Strategy and Implementation Contractor

For a **video** of the visit, please go to: <http://www.dol.gov/dol/media/webcast/20110413-solis/>

For a **slideshow of photos** from the visit, please go to:

<http://www.dol.gov/dol/media/photos/slideshows/20110413-minnesota-1.htm>

For more information about the **American Indian OIC**, please visit our website at <http://www.aioic.org>

For more information about the **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009**, please visit:

http://www.recovery.gov/About/Pages/The_Act.aspx

For more information about **U.S. Secretary of Labor, Hilda Solis**, please visit:

<http://www.dol.gov/sec/welcome.htm>

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