



# NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: John Carpenter, Public Information Officer ♦ Office: (405) 557-5469 ♦ Fax: (405) 525-0139  
E-mail: john.carpenter@oesc.state.ok.us ♦ Website: oesc.state.ok.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## FORMER COLLINS & AIKMAN WORKERS DECLARED ELIGIBLE FOR TRADE BENEFITS BY U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

### *Special Status Granted to Laid-off Employees Under Trade Act of 1974*

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK (May 9, 2007) – Former employees of Collins & Aikman in Oklahoma City have been ruled eligible for the Trade Readjustment Assistance (TRA) program by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL). TRA provides assistance to those who lose jobs or significant work hours because of increased imports or a shift in production out of the country. TRA-certified workers can access services such as income support, relocation and job search allowances, and health coverage tax credits. Those that need retraining for suitable employment may receive occupational training. The goal is to reconnect laid-off workers with suitable employment quickly.

In a recent ruling, the USDOL found that former Collins & Aikman employees meet all requirements to receive TRA according to the Trade Act of 1974 (19 USC 2273). There are three criteria to qualify for TRA. First, workers must be laid off or threatened with layoff. Next, employer sales or production must decrease. Finally, increased imports of products like or directly competitive with the firm's products must contribute to layoffs or the threat of layoffs. Once certified, TRA recipients must enroll in training, although the state can waive this requirement in certain cases.

Former Collins & Aikman employees are also eligible for Alternative Trade Adjustment Assistance (ATAA), a program that provides workers 50 years and older, for whom retraining may not be suitable, with the option of accepting re-employment at a lower wage in return for a wage subsidy.

The USDOL report concludes "all workers of Collins & Aikman, Plastics Division, Oklahoma City, Okla., who became totally or partially separated from employment on or after February 13, 2006, through two years from the date of certification, are eligible to apply for adjustment assistance...and are also eligible to apply for alternative trade adjustment assistance..." The first day of eligibility (date of certification) is March 26, 2007.

Separated employees who want to apply for TRA should contact their nearest Workforce Oklahoma Center at 1-888-980-WORK (9675).

###