



**American Recovery & Reinvestment Act of 2009:  
White House Briefing for Nonprofits**

On April 9, the White House held a special “briefing for outside organizations about the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)” to provide an opportunity “to learn about how the ARRA funds are being distributed in the various departments and how you as organizations can participate.” The White House Office of Public Liaison arranged for more than twenty government officials from 13 federal agencies to provide information, including presentations from the Vice President’s Office that is overseeing the Recovery efforts. The National Council of Nonprofits attended the briefing and is publishing this Special Report so nonprofits across the country can have equal access to this important information.

The Report is divided into two sections. The first section takes a step back from particular data points that individual speakers provided and instead weaves together some key general themes of information that nonprofits need to know. The second section relays the main points of interest to nonprofits made by particular presenters and identifies the handouts they distributed and provides links to the documents so nonprofits across America can have equal access to that information.

**Special Insight for Small & Midsize Nonprofits**

Before turning to general themes and specific points, community-based nonprofits should consider a truth not spoken at the briefing but one that common sense and past experience support: Rather than diverting a lot of energy chasing after dreams of a pot of gold in the form of a federal grant that won’t exist for most nonprofits, review your organization’s past history of government funding.

**1. If you haven’t received federal funds before, then you face an uphill battle trying to start now with fast-moving stimulus funds.** If you have received federal grants or contracts before, then your positive track record may position you to receive such funds again. So before expending a lot of energy worrying about how to get federal stimulus funds, first consider whether this route would be a wise use of your time.

**2. Partner with State & Local Governments.** When community-based organizations receive government funds, it’s usually via state or local contracts or grants. So instead of seeking money directly from the federal government, consider whether you should focus your energy on partnering with state and local governments. Some of the federal funds to the states will require them to work with and through partnering nonprofit organizations.

Of course, every nonprofit should weigh all the facts and trends to determine its own course of action. This ‘special insight’ simply seeks to emphasize that with the federal government focused on getting money out quickly to revive the economy, its need for speed via high volume seems to trump the desires of many to create new partnerships.

## I. Larger Themes of Information

### A. Timelines

One of the most frequent questions posed to the National Council these days is “what are the timelines for applying for and getting stimulus funds?” The resounding answer from the briefing is: It depends on the government agency and the program.

The Act often imposes specific deadlines on different federal agencies to get funding for particular programs out by certain times. The briefing revealed the federal government will be distributing about \$370 billion through formula and block grants, \$85 billion through competitive grants, and between \$60-65 billion through direct contracts. So far, the government already has obligated about \$40 billion meaning there is about an additional \$480 billion more to go.

As for the competitive grants, federal agencies are still designing many of them. The people from the Office of Management & Budget (“OMB”) overseeing the Recovery program said they anticipate many more will be announced soon and expect a flurry of activities in July and August.

Accordingly, nonprofits need to look carefully at what programs they realistically might qualify for and then keep watching for announcements about those. **WARNING:** Some of these grants have been fast-moving, with only two to four-week turnarounds from notice until an application is due. Therefore, nonprofits knowing they will want to apply for stimulus funding need to:

1. Complete as much “pre-application” work as possible, such as making sure you have the required special numbers to insert into your application. If your organization has not received a federal grant before, then you will need to get a Data Universal Number (DUNS number), register with the Central Contractor Registration (CCR), set up an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR), and more. The steps in this process normally – without the crush of groups rushing to register now – can take up to a couple of weeks each. Here is a link to the on-line guide on how to walk through the registration process:  
<http://www.grants.gov/assets/OrgRegUserGuide.pdf>
2. Register in advance so you can get notice of the opportunity:
  - a. For grants (when the federal government issues a grant to an organization to perform certain functions): register at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov)
  - b. For direct contracts (when the federal government hires a particular entity to do something): register at [www.fbo.gov](http://www.fbo.gov) [“FBO” = Federal Business Opportunities”]
  - c. For either: many agencies allow you to register directly with them for information. For instance, the Recovery site for the Department of Health & Human Services allows you to sign up to receive emails or RSS feeds; see the lower right sidebar at <http://www.hhs.gov/recovery/>.

### B. Access to Information

The National Council also is hearing a hunger for information about the stimulus package and a growing frustration that the Act seems both incomprehensible and impenetrable. Three points need to be made.

#### 1. Go to the Web

The predominant theme repeated *throughout* the four hour-plus briefing is that the “information is available on the web.” From the opening speaker who walked people through the main [www.Recovery.gov](http://www.Recovery.gov) website to almost every presenter, the federal government’s position is: if you want information, go to the web.

## 2. Nonprofits Should Not Feel Slighted

Independent of this briefing, the media have been reporting the increasing number of law firms, lobbying firms, and other for profit enterprises that are creating small boutique practices to help paying clients (businesses and governments) decipher the complexity of the Act to identify ways for those clients to access stimulus funding. So while nonprofits seem frustrated by the lack of clarity and information, we need to recognize that this reaction is normal and rather universal.

## 3. Be Creative

Small and midsize community-based nonprofits don't have the resources to hire a fancy law firm or retain a contract lobbyist to find angles to get access to federal dollars. Instead, we must do what we always do: innovate, collaborate, and use our community connections to creatively monitor for mission-related opportunities:

- a. Members of Congress – Many are posting special websites to let their constituents know about possibilities, so watch what they post. Indeed, if your issue is significant, consider asking your U.S. Senators and Representative to watch your issue for you as well. See, for example, this excellent resource published by Senator Hagan: [http://hagan.senate.gov/files/Hagan\\_ARRA\\_Resource\\_Guide\\_for\\_NC.pdf](http://hagan.senate.gov/files/Hagan_ARRA_Resource_Guide_for_NC.pdf).
- b. Regional, State, and Other Federal Offices – Many federal agencies are divided into regional offices, and others have state and sometimes even local offices, so reach out to them to let them know of your interest. If they are working in your state, that means they live there and they want to see you – their neighbors and communities – succeed. If you present your idea in a compelling way, they may be able to help you in ways that you might not have even considered.
- c. Your state's Recovery website – You should check it daily. To find yours, go to: <http://www.recovery.gov/?q=content/state-recovery-page>
- d. Your Governor's Office – Don't be shy or timid; work with them. Most Governors' Offices are divided into units of expertise. So if you are interested in funding for the arts or environmental protection or mentoring youth at risk, you likely will be sent to different specialists on staff. Essentially, their job is to help make the Governor's actions look good to voters. These staff members often carry heavy workloads. So if you can quickly show them that you want to help people in your state in a significant way, you may find a staff member who will be your champion.
- e. Your Mayor's Office – During the White House briefing, a presenter identified the Mayor of Philadelphia as being a forward-thinking leader who has created a room geared to oversee bringing as many dollars to Philadelphia as possible. Because some of the federal funds flowing to states and local governments formally will require receiving governments to have community partners, establish those positive relationships immediately. If your Mayor doesn't already have outreach efforts underway, then step forward to help create pathways that help your community.
- f. Additional Websites – The issues of interest to nonprofits are limitless, but think about who else might be tracking the issue of most interest to your nonprofit. For instance, the National Council of State Legislatures has a strong website with information it is tracking for state legislatures that may reveal insights of interest to your nonprofit. <http://www.ncsl.org/statefed/2009economicstimulus.htm> Also, the websites of various national or statewide issue-based coalitions (such as housing coalitions) offer excellent resources.

## II. Information from the Speakers

The following grid presents the information in the order of the various speakers at the briefing and provides links to the handouts they provided. *WARNING:* The handouts provided at the event and attached hereto should NOT be viewed as the definitive statement about what is available. Rather, they may be seen as a possible point of entry for additional information that will be available on the agency's web site and at [www.Recovery.gov](http://www.Recovery.gov).

White House Office of Public Liaison	<p><b>Buffy Wicks</b>, Deputy Director, White House Office of Public Liaison</p> <p>Welcomed attendees and emphasized that the ARRA is “really about transparency.”</p> <p><i>Handout</i> → Agenda <a href="http://www.councilofnonprofits.org/files/arra/Overview.pdf">http://www.councilofnonprofits.org/files/arra/Overview.pdf</a></p>
Office of Management & Budget	<p><b>Ed DeSeve</b>, Special Advisor overseeing the Recovery efforts</p> <p>Identified the five main tasks of the Recovery Team:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. “<i>Get money out the door quickly, effectively, and fairly.</i>” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The federal government already has obligated more than \$40 billion.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. “<i>Getting money under contract.</i>” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Happening at an ever-increasing pace.</li> <li>• Therefore groups need to know the process and timing.</li> <li>• <b>Watch where the funds are going to be going; e.g., cities will be applying for block grants, so be prepared to partner with cities.</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>3. “<i>Build a reporting &amp; performance infrastructure.</i>” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ARRA contains extraordinary provisions regarding reporting money and performance.</li> <li>• In October, both grantees AND subgrantees will have a rigid deadline for reporting both about money and performance.</li> <li>• If you will be a grantee or subgrantee, then keep watching for reporting requirements being issued by OMB.</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. “<i>Develop performance measurements people care about.</i>” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rather than just sending money out, they also are developing systems for seeing how well the money is being spent.</li> <li>• Trying to use the KISS principle (“Keep It Simple, Stupid”) so people can fill out paperwork quickly and easily for meaningful data rather than wasting time gathering and reporting on worthless items.</li> </ul> </li> <li>5. “<i>Maintain the support of the American people, Congress, and stakeholders.</i>”</li> </ol> <p>Then walked people through the Recovery website.</p> <p><b>Danny Werfel, Deputy Controller</b></p> <p>Shared data regarding raw dollar figures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$370 billion will go out via formula and block grants</li> <li>• \$85 billion will go out via competitive grants (anticipates a flurry of activity in July and August)</li> <li>• \$60-65 billion will go out via direct contracts (784 contracts have been entered so far; dollar amounts are unknown for direct contracts)</li> </ul> <p>Emphasized three new items that will apply to grants via the new standard terms and conditions for performance requirements published April 1 in the Federal Register:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Data collection requirements – will relate to dollars and performance</li> <li>2. Davis-Bacon Act will apply – payment of prevailing wage rates will start applying to grants as well as to contracts</li> <li>3. Buy American – when purchasing goods, a new preference for using items made in the USA</li> </ol> <p><i>Handout</i> → OMB said it purposefully did not provide any; information is on the Recovery website.</p>
Dept. of Labor	<p><b>Ray Uhalde</b></p> <p><i>Handouts</i> → <a href="http://www.councilofnonprofits.org/files/arra/Labor.pdf">http://www.councilofnonprofits.org/files/arra/Labor.pdf</a></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Overview of Unemployment Insurance Provisions (1 page)</li> <li>2. Overview of Job Training Provisions (1 page)</li> <li>3. Training and Employment Notice # 30-08 (March 4, 2009) – Overview of the Employment and Training Administration's implementation strategy for</li> </ol>

	Workforce Investment Act and Wagner-Peyser funding under the ARRA (7 pages)
Dept. of Energy	<b>Matthew Rogers</b>
Small Business Administration	<b>Christine Koronides</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walked through 6 new loan programs for “small businesses”</li> <li>• When asked whether nonprofits could qualify for any of the items she had described, replied that they cannot.</li> </ul>
Dept. of Transportation	<b>Joel Matthew Szabat</b> , Deputy Assistant Secretary for Transportation Using the handout, Mr. Szabat explained how USDOT has separate statutory guidelines regarding Disadvantaged Business Enterprises. <i>Handout</i> → <a href="http://www.councilofnonprofits.org/files/arra/Transportation.pdf">http://www.councilofnonprofits.org/files/arra/Transportation.pdf</a> USDOT TIGER – Transportation’s Implementation of the ARRA (3 pages)
Dept. of Housing & Urban Development	<b>Fred Karnas</b> , Senior Advisor to the Secretary Of the \$13.6 billion HUD received from ARRA, HUD sent out 75% of the money via formula grants within 8 days of the President signing the ARRA into law. Because most of HUD’s funds went out via formula grants, he urged nonprofits to focus more on the competitive grant programs. Used the handout to identify <i>at least</i> 3 programs through which nonprofits may be able to pursue grants and/or partnerships: the Community Development Block Grant Program, the Neighborhood Stabilization Program, and the Homelessness Prevention Fund. <i>Handout</i> → <a href="http://www.councilofnonprofits.org/files/arra/HUD.pdf">http://www.councilofnonprofits.org/files/arra/HUD.pdf</a> ARRA Implementation at the Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (6 pages)
Dept. of Treasury	<b>Donna Gambrell</b> , Community Development Financial Institutions Funds <i>Handout</i> → <a href="http://www.councilofnonprofits.org/files/arra/Treasury.pdf">http://www.councilofnonprofits.org/files/arra/Treasury.pdf</a> Programs Administered by the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund (5 pages)
Dept. of Justice	<b>Amy Suzanne Loder</b> , Office of Violence Against Women Before Ms. Loder spoke, another (very good) presenter from DOJ shared information about two grant opportunities listed on the first DOJ handout. The first (Internet Crime Against Children) may be too specialized for most, but the other (Mentoring) may be a special opportunity for nonprofits with a national presence interested in mentoring at risk and high risk youth. NOTE: Application deadline for the Mentoring grants is April 20. (See handout for more details.) The programs Ms. Loder addressed sounded interesting, but the application deadline already has closed. <i>Handouts</i> → <a href="http://www.councilofnonprofits.org/files/arra/Justice.pdf">http://www.councilofnonprofits.org/files/arra/Justice.pdf</a> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention “Recovery Act” (1 page)</li> <li>2. The ARRA and Violence Against Women Grant Awards to States (2 pages)</li> </ol>
Dept. of Homeland Security	<b>Thomas Mason</b> , Director of Acquisition Policy and Workforce Mr. Mason said that the comparatively small amount appropriated to DHS via ARRA is to fund special border construction projects that do not provide grant opportunities for nonprofits.
Dept. of Commerce	<b>Ellen Herbst</b> , Senior Advisor for Recovery Act Implementation Ms. Herbst, very energetic and helpful, indicated that nonprofits can qualify for some Commerce grants, such as for Economic Development Administration “grants to economically distressed areas across the Nation to generate private sector jobs.” <i>Handouts</i> → <a href="http://www.councilofnonprofits.org/files/arra/Commerce.pdf">http://www.councilofnonprofits.org/files/arra/Commerce.pdf</a> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Overview – PowerPoint slides (6 pages)</li> <li>2. Economic Development Administration – listings of contacts (12 pages)</li> <li>3. U.S. Census Bureau Regional Offices (3 pages)</li> <li>4. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (3 pages)</li> </ol>

Dept. of the Interior	<p><b>Darryl Beckmann</b>  <b>Chris Henderson</b>, Special Advisor to Interior Secretary Ken Salazar</p> <p>Following a presentation by Mr. Beckmann about aspects of the lower Colorado River basin, in response to a question about the grants to repair trails and other programs that could involve youth organizations, the new appointee (Chris Henderson) spoke up and then met with about a dozen groups out in the hallway to describe Secretary Salazar's interest in helping. That evening Mr. Henderson sent an email to those who followed up with him in which he said he "wanted to connect those of you interested in our youth programs with Ray Rivera, our Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, who is leading the Secretary's youth initiative. I'm happy to help on other issues, but Ray is the right point of contact on youth. Ray, there was significant interest from many of these folks in being part of the conversation regarding our youth efforts and how we can engage a more diverse group of young people than maybe we've seen in the past."  <a href="mailto:Ray_Rivera@ios.doi.gov">Ray_Rivera@ios.doi.gov</a></p> <p>NOTE: Mr. Henderson's action of immediately sending the follow-up email reinforced another theme witnessed during the briefing: that while many of these people are very new to their jobs (having been there for 3 weeks or less as the new Administration is being assembled), most of them seem sincerely interested in helping people.</p> <p>Handouts → <a href="http://www.councilofnonprofits.org/files/arra/Interior.pdf">http://www.councilofnonprofits.org/files/arra/Interior.pdf</a></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. (untitled) overview of the Department of Interior's role in ARRA (2 pages)</li> <li>2. Listings of 3 grants on Grants.gov web site (6 pages)</li> </ol>
Environmental Protection Agency	<p><b>Renee Wynn</b>, Acting Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response</p> <p>Handout → <a href="http://www.councilofnonprofits.org/files/arra/EPA.pdf">http://www.councilofnonprofits.org/files/arra/EPA.pdf</a>  Recovery Act Activities and Socio-Economic Procurement Projections for the Superfund Remedial Program (4 pages)</p>
Dept. of Agriculture	<p><b>Cheryl Cook</b></p> <p>Offering advice based on her years of experience out in the states (she, too, had just been hired to her new position just two weeks ago), she emphasized that the USDA has a long history of having field offices in each state so people with questions should feel free to contact the USDA offices in their own state for the latest information.</p> <p>Handouts → <a href="http://www.councilofnonprofits.org/files/arra/Agriculture.pdf">http://www.councilofnonprofits.org/files/arra/Agriculture.pdf</a></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Community Facilities Loans and Grants (2 pages)  NOTE → These loans and guarantees "are available to ... nonprofit corporations."</li> <li>2. Rural Housing Options for Elderly People (2 pages)</li> <li>3. Water and Environmental Programs (2 pages)</li> </ol>
Dept. of Health & Human Services	<p><b>John T. Monahan</b>, Counselor to the Secretary  <b>Richard Turman</b>, ARRA Coordinator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Of the entire funding going out through ARRA, 23 cents of every dollar (\$137 billion) goes through DHHS, with most of that going out to state governments via formula grants.</li> <li>• DHHS is proud of its "robust" system, so you can get more information via its website or contacting the 10 regional offices in different parts of the nation.</li> </ul> <p>Handout → <a href="http://www.councilofnonprofits.org/files/arra/HHS.pdf">http://www.councilofnonprofits.org/files/arra/HHS.pdf</a>  Discretionary Items in HHS (1 page)</p>

### Special Reports on Economic Recovery

This Special Report is one in a series prepared by the National Council of Nonprofits to help nonprofit leaders, grantmakers, policymakers, and the general public better understand the intersections between the nonprofit sector and our nation's economic recovery. Review the other Special Reports at [www.councilofnonprofits.org/stimulus](http://www.councilofnonprofits.org/stimulus)