

Tracking the Stimulus: Resources for Providing Information on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA)

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One of the key issues during the 2010 ~~term~~ elections was whether the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) was successful in ~~just~~ starting the United States economy. ARRA was signed into law by President Barack Obama on February 17, 2009 in response to the most severe economic downturn since the Great Depression. The bill includes federal tax cuts, expansion of unemployment benefits and other social provisions including increased domestic spending in education, health care and infrastructure (most notably in the energy sector). Such massive, sweeping legislation will surely elicit questions from patrons as to how ARRA will affect their financial welfare. Other patrons, more skeptical of the law, might be interested as to how, where and to whom ~~the~~ stimulus funds were distributed and how the funds are being used. Here are a few resources to assist you in helping your patrons.

Recovery.gov
<http://www.recovery.gov>

Recovery.gov is the United States government's official website for accessing data related to ARRA spending. Through the use of charts, graphs and maps, Recovery.gov shows funding usage data reported by agencies and recipients. The creation of this site ~~was~~ mandated by the law itself to foster accountability and transparency in the distribution of funds. Jobseekers have access to a listing of job, contract, grant and loan opportunities made available by ARRA.

WhiteHouse.gov
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/recovery>

WhiteHouse.gov is the official website of the White House. Citizens can download the PDF version of the entire bill, read "recovery stories" of how the Act has ~~saved~~ created jobs and monitor milestones in the economic recovery. There is also a Tax Savings Tool that taxpayers can use to determine their potential eligibility for various tax benefits. CAUTION: Taxpayers are warned not to rely on the Tool to determine their actual benefits. Final authorization can only be determined by consulting the appropriate IRS forms and instructions or a tax professional.

United States Department of Labor
<http://www.dol.gov/recovery/>

The Department of Labor, through the use of ARRA funds, provides worker training for newly created jobs

reductions and how to get assistance and a fact sheet that lists the changes under ARRA and eligibility requirements for premium reductions.

Small Business Administration
<http://www.sba.gov/recovery>

The Small Business Administration received \$730 million in ARRA to help unlock the small business lending market and get capital flowing to small businesses. The SBA received an additional \$305 million to continue some ARRA programs through May 2011. The site lists the SBA recovery efforts up to date, including \$29 billion in Recovery Loans to small businesses and the various SBA programs, including two new programs that expand loan eligibility for more than 70,000 small businesses and inventory financing for vehicle dealerships.

for those seeking opportunities to improve their financial welfare and for that skeptical patron who wants to make sure that his or her taxes are being used wisely.