

# How States are Using ARRA

BY JAMIE BAXTER

**T**his year has been a very difficult one for the average American worker. Many of us have seen significant job losses in our communities, particularly in fields that appeared relatively stable a short time ago. There is no doubt that this past year has brought to light the need for skilled workers. To help prepare a skilled workforce, the Obama Administration and Congress have placed an emphasis on ensuring that Americans have access to education and training.

In February 2009, Congress injected billions of dollars into the economy with the passage of the historic American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). This law is being used to help states and localities alleviate some of the financial burdens encountered in recent years. The stimulus package included money for training and retraining workers so that they are equipped to be successful in a high-tech workplace.

Some states are deciding to use their stimulus money to accommodate a surge in postsecondary enrollments, others are establishing apprenticeship programs or helping students experience firsthand the broad array of lucrative careers available to them after their schooling. Although how states choose to use their money may differ, all are developing programs that will benefit the entire community. This article highlights a few new programs that are using ARRA money in ways that are innovative and creative, ensuring that youth and displaced workers are learning new skills that can secure their place as successful employees in this rapidly evolving global economy.

In the ARRA, approximately \$3.95 billion was included for programs under the Workforce Investment Act, including \$1.2 billion for youth training programs. Many states are choosing to use that money for career exploration initiatives. Missouri's Next-Generation Jobs Team and California's Green Jobs Corps are just two examples of how this money is being spent on 16- to 24-year-olds.



## California

California has started a pilot program, California Green Jobs Corps, which aims to place at least 1,000 youth into training for skilled jobs in eco-friendly industries. Similar to Missouri's The Next-Generation Jobs Team, the Green Jobs Corps relies heavily on public-private partnerships to link youth to careers that will be fruitful and secure in the future.

# ARRA Money for CTE

## Tennessee

The lack of capacity for the growing enrollment in technical and community colleges is a concern. Tennessee addresses this large surge by using ARRA money to add more than 100 programs to its course listings. These programs will cover a broad array of CTE disciplines, including welding, plumbing, medical technology, nursing and solar panel installation. The additions of these courses are expected to accommodate more than 4,000 additional students.

## Missouri

Missouri's new summer job program, The Next-Generation Jobs Team, was established to help youth explore new high-tech, high-growth areas and make some extra money while doing it. The program connects youth to businesses in their communities, and covers many disciplines ranging from business management to green energy to health care. Because this program is being paid for by ARRA funds, there is no cost to the student or to the business.

## What's Your State Doing with ARRA Funds?

The types of programs listed above are happening all over the country in every state. To find out what your state is doing, visit your state's economic recovery Web site and see ACTE's Issue and Advocacy Web page, where a special section is devoted to ARRA.

If your state, community or school is using ARRA funds in a creative and innovative way, ACTE would like to know about it. Please contact the Public Policy Department with details of how your program is helping the economy to recover! **T**

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