



New York State Community Action Association

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

One Year later: How the Economic Stimulus has Benefited New Yorkers

Albany, NY February 17, 2010 – One year ago today, after several months of planning and negotiation, President Barak Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) into legislation.

According to the White House, ARRA is “a strong start towards economic viability,” but one year later, what has this signing meant for New Yorkers facing poverty?

New York State is expected to receive at least \$31 billion from ARRA funds over the course of the stimulus. So far, these funds have gone to local governments, school districts, businesses and a variety of nonprofits, among others, including the New York State’s 52 Community Action Agencies, representing all 62 New York State counties.

“ARRA has had a tremendous impact on New Yorkers,” said Denise Harlow, CEO of the New York State Community Action Association. “Due to the mounting pressure of our nation’s economic downturn, ARRA has kept thousands of individuals and families from falling into poverty and has provided assistance to New York’s most vulnerable families.”

“The Recovery Act has also been critical to New York’s economy since it has helped replace some of the wages lost in the recession with Federally-funded unemployment benefits, an increase in food stamps, and other payments and tax cuts for moderate and middle-income individuals and families,” said James Parrot, Deputy Director and Chief Economist of the Fiscal Policy Institute. “The Recovery Act helped prevent an estimated 419,000 New Yorkers from falling into poverty in 2009 by helping to bolster their incomes in the face of lost jobs and earnings.”

New York State was awarded \$86.7 million in Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) ARRA funds to be administered among all 52 Community Action agencies across the state. ARRA funds are helping low-income New Yorkers receive on-the-job training, especially in the green building industry, while providing the resources needed to secure full-time employment, keeping New Yorkers out of poverty.

“In addition to providing much needed work today, ARRA has had a significant impact on Community Action Agencies that have been helping New Yorkers already living in poverty prior to our current economic downturn,” said Amy Turner, Board President of the New York State Community Action Association. “Families living in poverty are finding more programs that offer food assistance, transportation services and counseling services.”

Other ARRA funds are going towards a wide array of programs, including transportation services, such as the Wheels for Work program; the creation of family outreach centers, which will provide New Yorkers general information, support and referral, as well as financial counseling and assistance; additional healthcare support, as well as food stamp application assistance among others.

\$394 million will benefit the Weatherization Assistance Program under ARRA, providing more families the opportunity to have energy efficient homes and ultimately protect them from fluctuations in energy prices and supplies. Weatherization also provides job opportunities and trainings for a workforce that will have skills for the growing green economy post-stimulus.

To find the benefits of ARRA funding, you don't have to look too far. Here in the Capital Region, the Commission on Economic Opportunity for the Greater Capital Region will be increasing their Head Start and Early Head Start programs, which promote school readiness by enhancing the social and cognitive development of children through the provision of educational, health, nutritional, social and other services. CEO, because of ARRA funding, will be increasing the amount of slots available for Head Start and Early Head Start and creating approximately 20 new jobs, while providing the necessary training.

Recovery does not end with ARRA. Leaders from across New York will gather at the Holiday Inn on Wolf Road on February 22nd and 23rd during the 4th Annual Symposium on Poverty and Economic Security. This symposium will allow leaders to discuss the economic downturn and to productively seek solutions to build and protect self-sufficiency for all New Yorkers.

"This symposium couldn't come at a more crucial time. The job losses and resulting labor market problems have left rising numbers of formerly middle-income Americans at risk of tumbling into poverty, and has put vulnerable families into an even more precarious position," said Harlow.

More information regarding NYSCAA and the 4th Annual Symposium on Poverty and Economic Security is available from Sean Wyse, Communications Specialist at (518) 690-0491 ext. 28 or email swyse@nyscaaonline.org. Visit us online at www.nyscaaonline.org. The New York State Community Action Association is the statewide membership organization serving the needs of the State's 52 Community Action Agencies.

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