

Education & Workforce Session Takeaways

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ARRA Successes

- The State of Pennsylvania Department of Education has already received more than \$2B and these resources have been vital in maintaining existing services and providing additional educational opportunities to economically disadvantaged children
- ARRA resources will also be distributed through a competitive process that is encouraging school districts to “race to the top” by building comprehensive strategies that address standards, data systems, teachers, and turnaround
- In workforce, ARRA money has already been entirely distributed in some counties such as Lancaster
 - The ARRA money in Lancaster has gone into programs that have led directly to jobs—indeed, some participants in training programs have been hired on the same day they receive their credential
 - The reason that Lancaster County was successful in distributing its money so quickly and so effectively is that it had existing infrastructure, including 11 industry partnerships
- A significant part of the ARRA allocation in workforce was aimed at youth
 - In Philadelphia, more than 2,700 youth were placed into summer internships thanks to ARRA money
 - This successful placement program in Philadelphia was due to existing infrastructure—the Philadelphia Youth Network had a summer program that was already accustomed to placing over 5,000 youth each summer

ARRA Challenges

- There was not adequate time to put together meaningful proposals or to implement effective partnerships
- Eligibility requirements embedded in ARRA have made it difficult to tell who can be served

Recommendations for State Action

- Continue to allow local areas to use funding for pre-employment training as a supplement to ITAs
- Require a workforce readiness assessment and remediation before investing funds in training
- Require Title II providers to invest WIA funds in workforce readiness and contextualized learning or change the way that Title II funds are distributed (directly to WIBs)

Recommendations for Federal Action

- Allow local areas to develop ITA providers and courses in a more flexible way that recognizes employers needs for more skills and less education
- Re-examine eligibility criteria for youth
 - Current WIA income eligibility for summer youth programs is complex and burdensome for the youth, the non-profit administrator, and the employer partners
 - More than 16,000 youth applied last summer in Philadelphia and only 31% were eligible
 - Eligibility should be reformed in two ways:
 - Allow proxies (e.g., free and reduced lunch, zip codes) to be used for in-school youth
 - Waive income eligibility requirements for out-of-school youth