



Workplace training hit the national spotlight February 17 when President Obama signed into law a stimulus bill that included billions of dollars worth of training as part of his economic recovery plan.



Training Stimulates Economic Recovery

The massive \$787 billion stimulus legislation, called the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (HR 1), includes more than \$5 billion in training for a variety of programs across a number of U.S. federal agencies.

The bill invests heavily in new technologies, infrastructure projects, and healthcare. It also calls for investments to help individuals who have been laid off get back to work. An important part of the legislation allocates \$3.9 billion to the Department of Labor, and \$2.95 billion of that money will be used for training and employment services throughout FY 2009.

As a learning professional, what should you know about this bill, and what can you do to help your organization take advantage of these opportunities? The majority of the training funds will be allocated through the publicly funded workforce system. You can access information about how much of these resources are coming to your states and communities by reaching out to the executive director of your local Workforce Investment Board (WIB) or to the manager of the local One-Stop Career Center in your community. For information about how to contact these agencies, visit www.servicelocator.org/wibcontacts/.

A significant portion of training funding—\$750 million—is being devoted to competitive grants for high-growth industries, and \$500 million of these funds will be devoted to projects in the new Green Jobs Act. If history repeats itself, the competitive grants will require active private-sector participation with community colleges or higher-education institutions. Additional information about the grants will be available on the Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration website (www.doleta.gov). In the meantime, if your organization is interested in partnering on a future grant opportunity, it is a good idea to reach out to the president of your local community college, technical school, or university.

With billions of dollars devoted to training, it is clear that U.S. lawmakers understand the important connection between learning, job creation, and economic recovery. This increased focus on training means that workplace learning professionals have a huge opportunity to engage in the economic recovery efforts. Let's work together to help our organizations and communities make the best use of their investments in training and development.

PS.: A summary of the training investments included in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act is highlighted on page 25.

Jennifer Homer

Vice President, Communications and
Member Relations, ASTD
jhomer@astd.org

C. Michael Ferraro

President and CEO, TRAINING
SOLUTIONS, Inc.
ferraro@trainingsolutions.com