

**Accessing American Recovery and
Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds to
support summer learning programs**

National Center for Summer Learning

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Background: On February 17, President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to stimulate the economy and make key investments in a variety of areas, including education, which received over \$100 billion in funding. While ARRA contains no funds explicitly targeted for summer learning programs, **several funding streams can be accessed to support summer programs.** In fact, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan has recently discussed the importance of summer learning, stating:

What I worry about a lot is summer reading loss. You have kids who don't have a lot of books at home and aren't read to. ... [Y]ou get kids to a certain point in June, and when they come back in September, they're further behind than when they left you three months ago. It's heartbreaking. I'm not saying we need to do more of the school day in the summer, but it's all the opportunities that middle class kids have, to develop a skill or interest, to get drama or athletics, to get tutoring or be read to.

— United States Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, *Education Daily*, March 25, 2009

Following is an overview of these key federal funding streams and strategies for summer program providers and schools to successfully use these funds to support high-quality summer learning programs. For a shorter, web-based version of this paper, please visit: www.summerlearning.org/recovery

Funding Opportunities

1) Title I

Background: Title I is part of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and the largest and oldest federal education program, serving 12.5 million children in over 50,000 schools. Funds are targeted to students and schools with high percentages of low-income families. The overarching goal of Title I is to provide extra academic support to low-income students through a variety of strategies, including extended programs such as summer and afterschool. While the U.S. Department of Education does not currently track the amount of Title I funds spent on summer, a 1996 USDE survey showed that 37 percent of Title I principals used funds for summer learning programs. Traditionally, Title I funds many remedial summer school programs, although it can also provide additional learning activities.

Title I, Part A (Grants to Districts) received \$10 billion in new funding through ARRA, in addition to \$3 billion in funding for school improvement grants for schools not meeting state standards. All of this funding can be used for summer learning programs. Half of the Title I funds were distributed to states

on April 1, meaning that funds will be available for use in summer 2009. The second half of funds will be distributed in September and will be available for summer 2010. These funds are in addition to the regular Title I allocations districts receive, resulting in significantly more funding available to districts over the next two years. For more information on Title I ARRA grants, including how much school districts and states will receive, please visit: <http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/factsheet/title-i.html>

Opportunities

While this new funding is unprecedented and offers a wonderful opportunity to expand investments in summer learning, there is no requirement or guarantee that funds will be used to support summer learning programs. As a result, schools and summer program providers must make the case that summer programs can improve student achievement and other youth outcomes. Following are some questions both schools and summer program providers should ask when deciding whether to access these funds:

Providers

- 1) Does my program focus on increasing academic student achievement? If not, is this a direction the program should pursue?
- 2) Does my program's academic content align with state standards and local curricula?
- 3) Does program staff have the capacity to deliver high-quality academic content? If not, can the program realistically increase this capacity?
- 4) Does my program collect data on student achievement and other outcomes? If not, does the capacity exist to collect data for program evaluation?
- 5) Does my program's content reflect available research on promoting student achievement? Is it based on scientific research or can it demonstrate a basic level of effectiveness?
- 6) Does my program offer enrichment and cultural activities that have an academic focus?

Schools

- 1) How is my district and school currently investing in and supporting summer learning programs?
- 2) What has the impact of our past and current summer learning programs been on academic achievement and other youth outcomes?
- 3) Do we currently partner with any outside organizations to provide summer learning opportunities?
- 4) How can we use ARRA Title I funds to strengthen and create innovative summer learning programs?
- 5) How many jobs will this create or save?
- 6) Have we studied the role of summer learning program in closing the achievement gap?

Allowable Uses of Funds

Generally, schools have wide flexibility in using Title I funds to design summer school programs.

- The same requirements that apply to use of Title I funds for regular school programs also apply to summer school.
- Title I-funded summer programs need to be linked and aligned with the school's improvement goals.
- Title I funds can be used for a variety of activities including, but not limited to, enrichment activities and cultural programs with an intentional academic focus.
- Title I funds can be coordinated with community groups and used to supplement other federal education programs such as the 21st Century Community Learning Centers, as well as state and local funding sources.
- If the school is a School-wide Title I program, services can be provided for all students; if the school is a Targeted Assistance Title I school, services can only be provided to eligible students based on multiple selection criteria.

Key Points of Contact:

Once a program decides to try and access Title I funds, they must make the case with key decision-makers to partner with your organization. Providers should try to meet with the following key points of contact:

- District Superintendent
- District Chief Academic Officer
- District Title I Director
- School Principal
- School Board
- Parent Councils
- School Improvement Committees

Examples of how funds could be used:

Schools

- Schools can establish, expand, or improve high-quality summer learning programs for eligible students needing extra academic instruction.
- Schools can use funds to supplement summer learning programs from other funding sources, including 21st Century Community Learning Centers.
- Schools can increase the amount of funding for summer learning programs and expand access to all students, rather than only to struggling students.
- Schools with summer programs can consider partnerships with other public and private organizations to provide afternoon enrichment programs.

- Schools can use funds to create a more comprehensive vision of summer school that incorporates integrated academic enrichment activities throughout the day and involves community partners.

Summer Providers

- Funds can also be used for school-CBO partnerships that maintain a focus on closing the achievement gap and use highly qualified teachers.
- Funds can be used to help develop a new vision for summer school that is more comprehensive and engaging to students and teachers.
- An increase in summer school programs provides opportunities for public agencies and summer program providers to collaborate with school districts to provide seamless afternoon enrichment services that build on the morning activities.
- There are also opportunities within Title I through Supplemental Education Services (\$2 billion) for summer program providers to play a role by expanding the role of tutoring activities during the summer months.

Promising Practices

Montgomery County (MD) Extended Learning Opportunities - Summer Adventures in Learning (ELO-SAIL) Program: This program combines Title 1 and 21st Century Community Learning Centers funds to provide a free four-week summer program in 22 Title I elementary schools in Montgomery County, Maryland. The ELO-SAIL program, initiated in 2002, features a four-hour instructional day of reading, language arts, and mathematics to entering kindergarten and first- to- fifth-grade students, and provides an arts and recreation program in the afternoons through 21st CCLC funds to complement and reinforce the academic skills taught in ELO-SAIL.

The ELO-SAIL program reaches students most in need by inviting all students enrolled in entering K- to-grade-5 in all Title 1 schools, and provides free transportation, breakfast and lunch for all students. The program curriculum aligns with the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) reading/language arts and mathematics curriculum, and aims to accelerate learning by previewing concepts, strengthening basic skills, alleviating the loss of academic skills experienced over the summer, and providing continued English language instruction for speakers of other languages.

The Afternoon Complement Program, funded through 21st Century Community Learning Centers, works in partnership with Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County, Department of Recreation, MCPS/Montgomery County Linkages to Learning, Montgomery County Collaboration, and Council for Children, Youth and Families. The Complement Program provides students with experiences that enrich their background knowledge, and provide for the needs of the total child in a safe and secure environment.

Springfield (MA) Public Schools and BELL:

In 2008, BELL and the Springfield Public Schools system (Springfield, Massachusetts) spearheaded a collaborative effort to serve 800 students at 11 sites using a resourceful summer learning program structure. Prior to enrolling in the summer program, the students were either at risk of being retained in grades 5 or 8 or had received grade point averages below a "C." As a result of the collaborative effort spearheaded by BELL and the Springfield Public Schools system, the new scholars gained 9 months' worth of grade equivalent skills in literacy and math and 100 percent of the scholars who were at the risk of not being promoted to the next grade advanced on to the next grade level. The partners demonstrated an ability to work with district officials, principals, teachers, parents, and union representatives to provide high-quality summer learning programs at 11 sites. Reaching out to other stakeholders in the Springfield community, the partners were able to significantly augment the school district's funding with contributions from foundations, corporations, and individuals. Through this leveraged investment for youth, BELL and the Springfield Public Schools system were able to deliver a dynamic summer learning program model resulting in great outcomes for the 800 scholars.

This effort led by BELL and the Springfield Public Schools system is particularly groundbreaking with regard to the collaborative aspect. By leveraging the experience of BELL program managers from New York and Baltimore with the Springfield Public Schools site facilitators, who are familiar with the school environment, student population, and community resources, the partners ensured that each site would maximize its resources necessary for the scholars' development. At the beginning of the eight hour days in July and August, the scholars started the day with breakfast provided by the school. Scanning technology, utilized by BELL, was used to track and reinforce daily attendance. In the morning, BELL's academic instruction model included three hours of instruction in literacy and math, Monday through Thursday, using Houghton Mifflin's *Summer Success: Reading* and *Summer Success: Math* curriculums, which are both designed for an intensive six-week summer learning environment. In the afternoon, enrichment activities included social or physical science class, arts class, and a physical activity class, along with community service activities and field trips in Springfield.

The structured balance of enrichment activities helped scholars apply abstract concepts learned during the academic instruction component to real-life situations. The program administered tests to scholars at the beginning of the program and toward the end to quantify gains in literacy and math skills. Surveys were administered to collect qualitative data from teachers, parents, and scholars. Program graduates outpaced nation norms in acquiring new literacy skills and math skills as demonstrated by positive NCE (Normal Curve Equivalent) gains. Particularly in this time of economic uncertainty, the collaborative effort by the BELL and the Springfield Public Schools system is an example of a successful model that can be used to contend that program providers can leverage resources from partnerships to supplement government funds and produce quality summer learning programs.

2) Workforce Investment Act/Summer Jobs:

ARRA includes \$1.2 billion in funding for youth employment and training activities through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), with a focus on creating up to one million summer jobs for eligible youth. Recent guidance from the Department of Labor **strongly recommends using these funds to create summer jobs for low-income youth ages 14-24 during the summer of 2009**. Schools and youth-serving organizations operating summer learning programs that engage young people between the ages of 14-24 in academic, youth development, recreation, and other enrichment activities make ideal partners for local workforce systems.

Guidance from DOL provides further insight into the process for distributing these funds. Following are some key highlights:

- Summer employment activities should be designed to encourage participants to take responsibility for their learning, to understand and manage their career options, and to develop social skills and a maturity level that will help them to interact positively with others.
- DOL is encouraging state and local areas to use their funds on innovative and effective approaches to workforce development.
- State and local areas are encouraged to expose youth to opportunities in “green” educational and career pathways.
- States and local areas may provide wages or stipends to youth for participation in classroom-based activities if the young person also receives a summer work experience. A minimum of 30 percent of funds must be spent on youth not enrolled in school.
- Eligibility requirements include age, income levels, and other factors determined by the state and local workforce boards. Check with your local WIB for specific eligibility requirements.
- ARRA-funded summer employment activities can occur anytime between May 1 and September 30.
- Funds can begin being used February 17, 2009, and must be expended by June 30, 2011, although funds should be spent in 2009, if possible.
- Funds were allotted on March 19, 2009.

Summer employment activities can be any combination of approved youth program activities as long as the young person is also provided with a work experience. The 10 approved youth program elements, or activities, are:

1. Tutoring, study skills training, and instruction leading to completion of secondary school or equivalent
2. Alternative secondary school services
3. Summer employment linked to academic and occupational learning
4. Paid and unpaid work experience.
5. Occupational skills training
6. Leadership development

7. Supportive services
8. Adult mentoring during program participation and at least 12 months after
9. 12-month follow-up support after program completion
10. Guidance and counseling

These developments have significant implications for summer program providers. Following are some potential opportunities:

Summer Learning and Youth Workforce Programs: Potential for Partnering

Summer Learning Programs could:

1. Assist workforce agencies with summer employment recruitment by encouraging youth in your school or program to apply for the local summer jobs program (the workforce agency will most likely take on the responsibility of determining whether the youth meets all federal, state, and local eligibility requirements).
2. Serve as work sites for youth who are deemed eligible to be paid for summer employment by the local workforce system (If your program gives the youth a job, the workforce system would pay the youth a wage or stipend provided the young person meets all eligibility criteria).
3. Apply for funding (from the local workforce agency or possibly through a sub-contract with a youth workforce service provider) to provide other approved services to youth who are eligible to participate in the summer work experience (regardless of whether the work experience is provided by your organization or another youth service provider). Other approved services include:
 - Tutoring, study skills training, instruction leading to completion of secondary school or equivalent
 - Alternative secondary school services
 - Occupational skills training
 - Leadership development
 - Supportive services
 - Adult mentoring during program participation and at least 12 months after
 - 12-month follow-up support after program completion
 - Guidance and counseling
- 3) School-based programs could potentially pay stipends to students that attend classroom-based summer learning programs, particularly if there are components that focus on workforce development, college readiness, and dropout prevention.

It should be noted that WIBs will likely approve youth service providers with the capacity, infrastructure, and expertise to provide high-quality youth employment activities quickly this summer. However, this again provides opportunities for summer learning programs to partner with approved YSPs to either hire eligible youth to staff their summer programs or recruit participating youth to fill secured employment slots.

Youth Eligibility:

- *Age:* Must provide legal documentation that individual's age is 14 through 24 at the time of enrollment.
- *Citizenship:* Must provide legal documentation of citizenship in order to determine whether each youth is legally entitled to work in the United States. Documentation of social security number is usually required.
- *Selective Service Registration:* Applies to those who are 18 or older; almost all male U.S. citizens, and male aliens living in the U.S. who are 18 through 25, are required to register with Selective Service. This rule applies to applicants who are 18 through 21 years of age at the time of application.
- *Family Income and Family Size:* Must provide legal documentation that he/she is either in a low-income family or enrolled in the 5 percent window for exceptions. The eligible income level and required documentation is state or locally defined.
- *Barriers to Employment:* The participant must have one or more barriers to employment such as:
 - be deficient in work readiness skills (based on locally defined definition and assessment created for the purpose of the Recovery Act);
 - be deficient in basic literacy skills;
 - be at risk of dropping out of school (behind credit for current grade level; failed a high school proficiency exam; have behavioral or attendance issues; failed a core high school course; have a GPA of 2.0 or lower);
 - be a school dropout;
 - be a homeless, runaway, or foster care youth or former foster care youth;
 - be involved with the juvenile justice system;
 - be pregnant or parenting;
 - have a documented disability including learning, mental health, emotional and behavioral disabilities;
 - be limited English proficient; or
 - have a parent who is incarcerated.

Performance Measurement & Reporting Requirements

Grantees will be required to track and report whether or not each youth participant meets a work readiness skills goal. The local workforce agency will decide how to define work readiness and what measurement or reporting instrument the grantee should use. Grantees can expect the local workforce agencies to require the program to complete some basic objective assessment and individual service plan for each youth participant in order to measure and report whether the work readiness goal is reached for each participant.

Key Steps to access Summer Jobs Funding

- 1) **Reach out to your local Workforce Investment Board ASAP!** For a listing of local WIBs, please visit: <http://www.nawb.org/WorkforceBoardWebSites/tabid/167/Default.aspx>
- 2) Based on your contact with the WIB, determine if they are still accepting applications for funding for this summer. If so, determine if your organization would like to find employment slots for participating youth and apply for funding.

If the RFP period is concluded or your organization can't secure employment slots—but your organization would still like to provide summer employment opportunities for participating youth—ask the WIB for a listing of participating summer programs and contact those organizations to see if they are interested in partnering. For example, if you are running a summer program in the morning for 50 students, you could contact the approved youth service provider and let them know that you have students interested in working in a summer job for the afternoon hours. This would both provide comprehensive full-day programming for students and help youth service providers recruit students to fill employment slots.

Key Player Definitions

Youth Service Provider: Generally a non-profit organization that receives youth employment funding from the local WIB. The YSP will then work with employers to find jobs for their participating students. YSPs provide a variety of services for participating youth, including job training, mentoring, supervision, and other support services.

Workforce Investment Boards: State and local workforce agencies that are the fiscal agents for youth employment funding. WIBs generally award funding through to local youth service providers through a competitive RFP process.

Youth Councils: Subgroup of the local WIB that focus specifically on youth employment activities and generally include schools and other youth development stakeholders. There also may be opportunities for your organization to request a seat on the Youth Council if they are not currently represented.

Promising Practices

LA Scholars

LA Scholars, piloted during the summer of 2008, is a Los Angeles-based workforce development initiative providing college preparation, work experience, and training to recent and incoming L.A. Unified School District (LAUSD) high school graduates interested in working with children and youth after school in a city where typically one-third of the 10,000 after-school positions are vacant on any given day. LA Scholars partners include the Community Development Department, L.A. Unified School District (LAUSD), L.A. Community College District, L.A. Area Chamber of Commerce and local afterschool employers to provide college preparatory classes at one of seven community colleges throughout Los

Angeles for six weeks during summer. In addition to classes, LA Scholars attend over 30 hours of training and complete 24 hours of job shadowing as LAUSD employees in local programs preparing them to work with youth.

Last summer, over three hundred recent high school graduates and incoming seniors earned \$8 an hour for 50 hours of training and job shadowing. Upon completion of the six-week program, a L.A. Scholars job fair was hosted with after-school employers to connect students with permanent employment opportunities in the after-school field. Between 50 to 75 percent of LA Scholars found part-time employment in the after-school field. While the economy is shedding jobs and government is cutting programs this year, most of the summer youth employment programs face uncertain prospects. However, L.A. Scholars is looking forward to expanding the program to serve hundreds of recent high school graduates and incoming seniors this year by tapping into the \$1.2 billion ARRA has designated for youth programs, including summer job programs. This summer, the program will expand beyond the after-school field to also offer work experience opportunities in other industries, such as video game design and the energy sector. Federal funds for summer jobs will allow L.A. Scholars to help hundreds of youth in Los Angeles to earn money, gain work experience, and prepare for college in the midst of a current economic crisis.

Philadelphia Youth Network

Philadelphia Youth Network (PYN) was established in 1999 and has gradually developed over the past decade as a nationally recognized leading intermediary. PYN partners with dozens of organizations and launched WorkReady Philadelphia, a summer job program for youth. PYN runs WorkReady for the city and schools, and administers WorkReady Philadelphia on behalf of the Philadelphia Workforce Investment Board and its Youth Council. Employers support WorkReady by hiring interns and offering summer jobs to youth ages 14 to 21 at 1,400 work sites.

PYN is funded by government, corporations, and foundations. This year, funding is reduced due to the recession. Yet PYN plans to provide summer jobs to thousands of youth by tapping into new, dedicated ARRA summer jobs funding. These funds will support WorkReady Philadelphia, enabling more than 7,900 youth to earn money and gain job skills this summer despite cutbacks due to the economic crisis.

PYN also partners closely with the School District of Philadelphia and this year will pilot a number of programs that focus on critical transitions and new models of work and learning to prepare youth for high school and future career success. PYN has determined that youth employment and summer jobs are critical components of an overall strategy to ensure college and career success.

4) **State Stabilization and Innovation Funds**

ARRA includes \$53.6 billion to help stabilize state and local government budgets in order to minimize and avoid reductions in education and other essential public services. These funds are divided into three sections:

- 1) \$48.3 billion will be awarded to Governors as a one-time appropriation to restore cuts in education programs in exchange for a commitment to advance key education reforms. While the bulk of these funds must be used to restore state budget cuts and prevent education layoffs, any funds left over after restoration of cuts can be used to fund any ESEA, IDEA, and the Perkins program. As a result, the particular budget situation of each state will determine if any funds will be available for additional investment in education programs, of which summer learning would be an allowable use.
- 2) \$4.3 billion distributed by the U.S. Secretary of Education competitively to states that meet certain requirements in closing the achievement gap and supporting innovation.
- 3) \$650 million distributed competitively by the U.S. Secretary of Education to districts and/or partnerships of districts and non-profit organizations to scale up innovative reform models.

Combined, this \$5 billion Race to the Top fund will be made available in summer 2009 and guidance is expected later this year. For more information on these funds, please visit:

<http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/factsheet/stabilization-fund.html>

The Center believes high-quality summer learning programs are in an excellent position to be considered for both the state and local innovation funds. In fact, Secretary Duncan has highlighted expanded learning time as a key component of applications for this funding.

Key Points of Contact

For state grants:

Governor
Governor's Education Advisor
State Legislature
State Education Chief

For local grants:

U.S. Secretary of Education
Congressional Delegation
State Education Chief
District Superintendent
Non-profit organization with success in closing the achievement gap

Summer Funding Opportunities

- High-quality summer learning programs could be a component of a state's grant application if it is helping to make progress in closing the achievement gap.

- Innovative summer programs that have successfully partnered with school districts and made progress in closing the achievement gap would be excellent candidates for the district-level grants. A portion of these funds can be reserved to either maintain or scale up existing summer programs at the local level and to fund innovative pilot programs that complement school-day and after-school learning. Funds can be used to develop more robust data and assessment systems that measure what students know and are able to do beyond just academic test scores. Such systems ensure states have the data to not only judge academic progress, but the effectiveness of a wider range of programs that support academic success, such as programs for summer, after-school, teacher training, professional development and teacher recruitment.

For more information on state level funding for summer and ARRA, please visit:

<http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/80/21/8021.pdf>