



Navigating the public sector marketplace



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The public sector marketplace can be a confusing place when contractors are new to a state, region or a different government jurisdiction. There is much to learn...and not a lot of consistency. What works in one state may be totally wrong in another one. And, what works for state agencies rarely is the protocol of choice for cities, counties or local governmental agencies.

This column will, in the months to come, be devoted to passing on advice and suggestions that have been tested over the last 14 years. The advice will be the cumulative wisdom of all the procurement consultants and subject matter experts at SPI who help government contractors find, qualify and capture new public sector business. Interestingly enough, we all came from the executive ranks of government.

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800 parks projects to share \$750M in ARRA funds

Include construction, deferred maintenance, energy efficiency, roads

Nearly 800 projects throughout the nation's national park system will share an investment of \$750 million by the National Park Service from the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act. Funding will benefit parks both large and small for a variety of projects. Contracting opportunities for everything from road maintenance to construction and energy efficiency projects will be available. The funds will be used to preserve and protect national icons and historic landscapes, improve energy efficiency and renewable energy use and remediate abandoned mines. Another \$15 million has been set aside as grant funds to protect and restore buildings at historically black colleges and universities.

One of the nation's most famous parks, Yellowstone, has been allocated \$9 million to overhaul its outdated waste water treatment facility. The more than \$10 million to be spent at the Grand Canyon park includes such projects as rehabilitating trails, replacing shingles on some facilities, purchasing alternative fuels transit buses and replacing doors and painting exteriors of some facilities.

There are six types of projects:

- Construction: repair or replace critical infrastructure, upgrade facilities for health and safety, retrofit facilities for energy efficiency, install photovoltaic systems and demolish obsolete facilities.
- Deferred maintenance: replace heating, ventilation and air conditioning equipment; replace utility, water and wastewater systems; remove invasive plants; install fire suppression systems; and stabilize historical structures.
- Energy efficiency equipment replacement: purchase alternative fuel or hybrid transit buses and replace heating, cooling, water and electrical equipment with energy-efficient units.
- Trails: clear vegetation from trails, control erosion, replace deteriorated boardwalks and repair trail surfaces.
- Abandoned mine lands: design and install mine closures (blasting, fencing, safety cable nets) and restore habitat.
- Road maintenance: seal roads, resurface and repave roads, correct erosion and drainage problems and repair culverts.

To view a list of all national park projects by state, click [HERE](#) and go to RECENT REPORTS.

DoD announces \$835 million in Guard facility projects

Texas garners most funding at \$155 million

Army and Army National Guard facilities in 37 states and the District of Columbia will benefit from \$835 million in funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) for more than 850 facility improvement projects. This funding, announced yesterday, is in addition to the \$6.1 billion for infrastructure investment announced in March.

Five states - Texas, Kentucky, North Carolina, Oklahoma and Hawaii - garnered more than half of the funding. Texas will receive the most funding at \$155 million. Kentucky and North Carolina both will receive \$83 million each, Oklahoma gets \$66 million and \$59 million is allocated to Hawaii. Another \$346 million will allow the U.S. Department of Defense to be the front-runner in the nation's efforts to achieve greater energy independence, as those funds will be spent on energy-related projects.

The DoD plans to spend its \$7.4 billion investment in defense-related projects as quickly as possible to stimulate the economy and create jobs. To view the complete list of specific projects announced this week, click [HERE](#) and go to RECENT REPORTS.

Construction, repairs dominate Fish, Wildlife projects

Total of \$280M in ARRA funding set aside to create jobs, promote conservation

Construction and repairs will account for \$227 million of the \$280 million in federal funds to be invested in 830 projects related to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The money is part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and is aimed at creating jobs and promoting conservation. A large chunk of the infrastructure improvement funding will be used to construct visitor centers and improve other existing infrastructure, while promoting conservation at national wildlife refuges and hatcheries throughout the United States.

Construction, repair and energy efficiency retrofits will be funded with \$115 million and another \$165 million is set aside for habitat restoration, deferred maintenance and capital improvements. Headquarters offices will be built in 12 states and include energy-efficient designs. Some of the projects include buildings at San Luis National Wildlife Refuge in California, Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge North Carolina and Mammoth Spring National Fish Hatchery in Arkansas.

Here's how the remainder of the funds break out:

Youth employment - \$5 million - to create approximately 550 seasonal and temporary jobs for young people at 300 of the nation's wildlife refuges and national fish hatcheries.

Energy efficiency retrofitting - \$8.4 million - for 43 projects to make wildlife refuges and fish hatcheries more energy efficient and less reliant on non-renewable energy sources. Includes such projects as wind turbines at Izembek, Selawik and Alaska Penn National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska and photovoltaic arrays on the refuge visitor centers at Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge in Oak Harbor, Ohio and Neosho National Fish Hatchery in Missouri.

Habitat restoration projects - \$50 million - for 173 restoration projects on public and private lands. Includes projects such as reforestation or removal of invasive plants.

For a complete list of projects by state, click [HERE](#) and go to RECENT REPORTS.

ARRA transparency could be precursor to future

Standards for economic stimulus bill spending could carry forward

The strict compliance and transparency regulations that go hand-in-hand with receiving American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding may give both agencies and vendors a look into what government contracting will look like in the future. The bill is setting standards that very well could be how government procurement is handled in the years to come.

The public is seeing exactly how funds are being spent on federal and local government Web sites. That information in many cases not only includes the amount spent, but detailed information about contractors and sub-contractors. The emphasis is on responsibility, accountability and transparency. Many see the "transparency" theme as carrying over to government contracting even after ARRA funds are depleted.

What the states are doing

Kansas' first stimulus-related transportation project has come in 27 percent under budget. A Topeka construction company was awarded the \$64 million project that includes expansion of K-61 in McPherson County to four lanes. The project is one of five American Recovery and Reinvestment Act-funded projects in the state. The funds left over from the low bid will be used to widen K-18 between Fort Riley and Manhattan. The projects will come from the \$378 million in transportation funds awarded to the state of Kansas from the economic stimulus bill.

Ohio officials have unveiled their wish list of water projects to be funded from the federal economic stimulus bill, which includes 69 drinking water projects in more than 50 communities and 255 water pollution projects in 164 communities. The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency will make 100 percent of stimulus funds available as subsidies, more than the 50 percent required by the ARRA. Ohio is expected to get \$58.46 million in an ARRA capitalization grant to combine with \$81 million non-ARRA capitalization grants, bonds and repayments.

Indiana plans to use \$2.3 million in federal stimulus funds for grants up to \$250,000 to upgrade diesel engines or exhaust systems in school buses, city buses and other vehicles used by state and local government. The goal is to cut diesel emissions. Applications are due May 15 to the state's DieselWise Indiana program that over the last four years has awarded \$1.5 million to upgrade some 1,100 government vehicles.

Oklahoma has a goal of improving aging water infrastructure and protecting human health as well as the environment by using \$31.6 million in ARRA funds being delivered to the Oklahoma Water Resources Board. The Recovery Act funds will go to the state's Clean Water State Revolving Fund program, which provides low interest loans for water quality protection projects for wastewater treatment, non-point source pollution control and watershed and estuary management.

Pennsylvania officials are celebrating bids for highway and bridge construction that are coming in as much as 14 percent below their state transportation department's cost estimates. Pennsylvania was allocated \$1 billion for highway and bridge construction from the federal economic stimulus bill. A PennDot official said any savings from lower-than-expected bids would be directed toward other "shovel-ready" projects in the same region.

West Virginia's Randolph County plans to use \$2 million in economic stimulus bill funding to add a truck lane to the west side of Shavers Mountain, a particularly narrow two-lane highway. The truck lane will allow traffic to pass slow-moving vehicles on steep grades. Construction on the highway addition is temporarily on hold awaiting an environmental impact study, but should begin again by next fall and be completed next spring.

California officials are shaking the ARRA piggy bank to make sure the state gets every cent of federal funds for which it is eligible. As a result, California has been awarded the most funding of any state. More than \$13 billion already has been awarded to the state, billions ahead of other states. The state estimates it will receive a total of approximately \$80 billion in federal economic stimulus funds.

Wisconsin this week opened bids on its first 45 ARRA-funded road and bridge projects. In Wisconsin, the projects must be awarded to the lowest responsible bidder. Once the bids are reviewed, the governor will sign contracts and work will begin. Wisconsin has been approved for up to \$529 million in federal economic stimulus funding for transportation improvement projects. The spending of \$300 million of that money was pre-authorized in February for 47 state highway and bridge improvement projects.

Texas has two state agencies that have released a request for information from broadband providers as a precursor to receiving ARRA funding to extend broadband connectivity to all areas of the state. The state's Public Utility Commission is teaming with the Texas Department of Agriculture to help enhance access to broadband service in a state where rural areas abound and there are large areas that are sparsely populated.

Follow the money

\$100 million available for victim assistance programs

Victim assistance and compensation programs throughout the country are in line to receive their share of \$100 million in federal economic stimulus funds from the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). Of the \$100 million total, \$95 million will be distributed to the states based on state formula grants. The DOJ will retain \$5 million of the total funds as discretionary funds it will distribute for training and technical assistance and to support demonstration programs in such areas as child abuse and sexual assault. The award comes as the nation is celebrating National Crime Victims' Rights Week this week. The Crime Victims Fund is supported by fines and penalties from federal criminals. More than \$6.9 billion from the fund has been distributed since 1984. To view the allocations by state, click [HERE](#) and go to RECENT REPORTS.

California to invest \$176M in 'green' transportation

"Green" transportation projects in California will benefit from a \$176 million investment over the next two years from American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding approved by the state's Energy Commission. The state's Alternative and Renewable Fuels and Vehicle Technology Program Investment plan will provide \$46 million for electric vehicles and chargers; \$43 million for natural gas vehicles, fueling stations and biomethane production; \$40 million for hydrogen fueling stations; \$27 million for job training, research, education and technical assistance; \$12 million for advanced ethanol fuel production facilities and E-85 stations; \$6 million for biodiesel facilities and \$2 million for propane vehicles. The state is hopeful to change its transportation system to one that uses less fuel and decreases greenhouse gas emissions.

Florida anticipates \$168 million in funding for energy projects

Florida has \$168 million in ARRA funding headed its way for energy projects - those that reduce energy use, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve efficiency. The state will allocate the money through grants totaling \$74 million for 17 counties, \$64 million for 69 cities, \$243,000 for two tribal governments and \$30 million to the state's Energy Office. Some \$18 million of the state allocation will be used for grants to small cities and counties that are ineligible for direct formula grants.

For information about these and other funding opportunities, contact Reagan Weil or Richard Hartmann at 512-531-3900.

Some states, city governments refusing stimulus funds

Say no more obligates taxpayers for future years to continue programs

Governors of some states have said no to the federal government's offer of certain economic stimulus funds. In one case, the state legislature is out to circumvent its governor's refusal of funds while in another state, the governor is offering an "if you'll scratch my back, I'll scratch yours" approach.

In Texas, Gov. Rick Perry has refused to accept more than half a billion dollars in stimulus funding for unemployment benefits, saying such action would in a few years leave the state having to come up with those funds to continue the program. So the Texas Legislature is debating a bill that would allow the state to accept the funds by allowing unemployment benefits to be laid off workers seeking part-time jobs. The bill has already passed the Senate and is expected to pass the House. Perry still could veto the bill if it passes, but the Texas Legislature could override the veto if all of the maneuvering can be done before the current session ends on June 1.

In South Carolina, Gov. Mark Sanford has thrown down the gauntlet to his state legislature. He said before he accepts \$700 million in federal stimulus funds, legislators must cut an equal amount from the state budget to be used to pay down the state's debt. A bill has been filed to do just that and it has passed in the House. It would require a Joint Study Committee to study state agencies to eliminate duplication of services and remove at least \$350 million in government waste from the state budget by 2010.

State governments aren't the only entities refusing federal funds. The city council in Scottsdale, Arizona, refused to accept stimulus funds amounting to nearly one-quarter of a billion dollars set aside for public safety improvements there. City officials went so far as to discuss three possible projects to use the money on and then decided only to accept federal funds for a \$9,500 auto-dialer that would call defendants about court dates and fines. The county received more than \$10.5 million to divide among 16 cities and towns. The remainder of the nearly \$235,000 set aside for Scottsdale will go back to the county. Warren County, Ohio, commissioners have refused the \$373,000 in federal stimulus funds offered to upgrade the local transit system. They said the funds would only have allowed for extra vans and not only would not expand the service, but also would have left the county paying for associated gas, additional staff and maintenance expenses. And in North Platte, Nebraska, a housing agency said no to almost \$600,000 in stimulus funds. Officials did not see the immediate need for the landscaping and driveway and sidewalk repair the funds would have bought.

Stimulus news briefs

SBA making business loan program 'priority'

The Small Business Administration (SBA) is falling behind on implementation of the numerous provisions necessary to increase lending to small firms as part of the nation's economic stimulus package. One of the key provisions is the SBA's effort to increase the secondary market for loans, where many lenders expect to sell their existing SBA loans to free up more capital for additional new loans.

The SBA hopes to implement two programs in June to help boost the secondary market - making loans to broker-dealers who purchased the guaranteed portion of 7(a) loans from lenders and then pool them to sell to investors. The SBA also plans to guarantee pools of first-lien 504 loans sold on the secondary market. Both of these provisions were to have been implemented in March. Lack of necessary staff was cited as one reason for the delay, as well as the length of time it takes to create new regulations for such programs.

New SBA Administrator Karen Mills said during her Senate confirmation hearing that implementing a new SBA temporary business stabilization loan program that could provide up to \$35,000 to small businesses having problems making payments on existing loans would be one of her top priorities. These loans are expected to become available in May.

Indiana cities planning water upgrades from ARRA funds

Nearly four dozen cities and towns in Indiana will share \$250 million in federal economic stimulus funds to help upgrade sewer and drinking water systems. The federal funding will be coupled with state loans. Forty-three communities were chosen because of the "shovel-ready" status of their proposed projects. Federal stimulus funds of \$122 million have been set aside for the state for waste water and drinking water projects. Of these \$250 million to be spent, \$193 million will come from two state funds that finance low-interest loans for these types of projects and the remaining \$57 million will come from the stimulus funds. The projects are more examples of how local funding is being combined with federal stimulus funds so that more projects can be completed, with even smaller communities qualifying for the funding.

Cities using transportation funds for high-tech projects

Not all transportation funding in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act is being used to construct or renovate roads and bridges. Some cities are using their federal stimulus funds to pay for intelligent transportation systems (ITS) that include such items as traffic synchronizing cameras, electronic message boards, traffic monitoring software and roadway sensors. Some local government officials are looking into whether federal economic stimulus funds can be used to pay in advance for several years of the annual maintenance fees for the software.

Schools in line to receive Stabilization Fund money

While some funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act was distributed to school districts nationwide in April, more for specific school districts is on its way. California has been approved for almost \$5.5 billion, Illinois will receive \$1.4 billion and South Dakota stands to bring in \$85.4 million through education funding in the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund program. These funds will be spread out over two years to help save education jobs, send youth to college, modernize classrooms across the country and advance education reforms. Maine, Mississippi and Utah also have submitted paperwork to receive this funding. According to officials at the U.S. Department of Education, those states could receive funding in the next couple of weeks.

California schools already are applying for some of the funding through the state's Department of Education. More than 250 applications had been received through this week and some of the school districts there can expect to see funding by early May.

Calendar of Events

Johns Hopkins plans Science, Research Job Fair

Today, Wednesday, is the final day to register to attend the Johns Hopkins University Science and Research Job Fair. The university, anticipating increased research funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, will hold its job fair on Saturday, May 2, for specialized science and administrative positions. Those recruited will be experienced professionals and technicians in field that include lab work, information technology, grants and contracts administration and finance. The jobs should last 18-24 months. For more information, click [HERE](#).

Mayors to meet June 12-15 to discuss ARRA implementation

How the nation's mayors plan to use federal economic stimulus funding will be a hot topic at the upcoming 77th Annual Meeting of The United States Conference of Mayors. The conference is set for Friday through Monday, June 12-15, in Providence, Rhode Island. According to officials, the conference will focus on implementation of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). Those attending will be schooled on the multitude of funding and tax incentives contained in the ARRA. Among the invited speakers are President Barack Obama, Vice President Joe Biden and the secretaries of Housing, Energy, Transportation, Education, Justice, Treasury, Commerce, State, Homeland Security and Labor. Some key members of Congress also have been invited to speak.

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All 50 states have own recovery Web sites

All 50 of the states and the District of Columbia now have their own "recovery" sites where citizens can track where ARRA dollars are being spent in their respective states. The states are charged with ensuring accountability and transparency in how the funds are spent and their Web sites show the projects being funded and the amount of ARRA funds allocated. For links to each of the state and District of Columbia recovery Web sites, click [HERE](#).

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act is an unprecedented infusion of \$787 billion into a flailing United States economy. The ARRA is designed to create or save millions of jobs and to address pressing needs throughout the country, from education to infrastructure. To view the bill as passed by the U.S. House and Senate and signed by President Barack Obama, click [HERE](#).

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