



Electronic health records technology - big price tag, even bigger project for ARRA



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Although there is a vast amount of news coverage daily related to stimulus funding, very little money has actually reached end-users. And, even fewer end-users have announced solicitation procedures, considered bids, made decisions and hired government contractors to begin work on specific projects. In fact, to date, most of the funding has gone to a middle class battle, enhanced unemployment benefits, more food stamps and to prevent cuts in Medicaid. Some government contractors and public sector vendors are frustrated.

After all, the public has been told repeatedly that government is looking to the private sector to create the new jobs as a result of all the government contracting work that the stimulus funds make available.

(MORE)

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Grants announced for fire stations, port/transit security

\$500M in funds aimed at updating infrastructure, enhancing preparedness

Guidance for applying for the more than \$500 million in preparedness grants as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act has been announced by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The grants are for fire station construction as well as port and transit security.

"These Recovery Act funds will strengthen our economy while improving our ability to prepare for terrorist attacks, major disasters and other emergencies," said Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano. She added that the grants will go directly to local projects, which not only will stimulate local economies, but also update the country's infrastructure and enhance security.

Some \$150 million will be available through the Port Security Grant Program. The funds will be used to protect critical port infrastructure from terrorism and to protect against non-conventional weapons such as improvised explosive devices. They will also help fund a Transportation Worker Identification Credential program.

The Transit Security Grant Program also has \$150 million available for uses such as hiring transit law enforcement officers and anti-terrorism teams. Other security projects that are "shovel ready" can also benefit from the funds.

A total of \$210 million has been set aside for the Fire Station Construction Grant Program, with the funds headed directly to local fire departments to either build or modify fire stations in their communities. Unsafe or uninhabitable structures can be replaced with these funds to expand necessary fire protection in communities.

All of these funds are in addition to previously announced funding for these programs. Applications for the Port Security Grant Program and Transit Security Grant Program can be submitted electronically to DHS-FEMA through www.grants.gov. Applications for the Fire Station Construction Grant Program will be submitted electronically at <https://portal.fema.gov>. Guidance and more information on preparedness grant programs are available at www.dhs.gov.

Energy efficiency funds could enhance manufacturing, IT

Goal is fewer greenhouse gas emissions, cost controls for these industries

Energy efficiency in the nation's manufacturing and information technology industries across the country is the goal of distributing \$256 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds through the U.S. Department of Energy.

The projects funded will include:

- \$156 million for combined heat and power, district energy systems, waste energy recovery systems and efficient industrial equipment. The goal is to increase energy efficiency while ensuring a quality environment and enhancing a strong energy infrastructure. Not only will the projects improve energy efficiency, but they will also help manufacturers control costs and produce less greenhouse gas emissions.
- \$50 million for improved efficiency for information and communication technology. These awards will go to applicants who will conduct research, development and demonstration projects that promote new technologies geared toward improving energy efficiency in this industry sector.
- \$50 million is available to support research, development and demonstration projects relating to advanced industrial materials for fuel flexibility programs, combined heat and power technologies, energy intensive processes and nanomaterials and nanomanufacturing.

Follow the money

USDA to spend \$228 million on Forest Service roads, land

More than 100 road maintenance and decommissioning and watershed restoration projects will be funded for more than \$228 million, according officials at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Recovery Act funding addressed projects on U.S. Forest Service land in 31 states.

Among the projects are road and bridge maintenance, maintenance of other vehicle access areas and road maintenance for vehicles that provide visitor access to National Forests and escape routes in case of emergencies. The decommissioning eliminates other roads to leave the land in a more natural state while watershed restoration and ecosystem enhancement activities help protect the environment. To view the projects and estimated funding needed to complete them, click [HERE](#) and look under RECENT REPORTS.

Wind energy consortia could earn grants up to \$2 million

Grant solicitations for \$24 million for wind energy consortia between institutions of higher education and industry have been announced by the U.S. Department of Energy. The grant program, part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding, was announced in April and the funding announcement was made this week.

The program will fund partnerships between universities and industry that are geared toward research on critical wind energy challenges. The department expects to award two to three grants up to \$8-\$12 million. Applicants must provide at least a 10 percent cost share of the total project costs, including at least 20 percent for research and development.

Applications will be accepted for partnerships for wind research and turbine reliability and wind energy research and development that will improve power system operations, maintenance or repair operation, turbine and component manufacturing and system integration. A letter of intent must precede an application. Those letters are due June 16 and funding applications are due July 30.

Geothermal, solar energy project funding of \$460M being made available

More than \$460 million in grant funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act is being made available for solar and geothermal energy projects aimed at helping the two industries overcome technical barriers, enhance technologies and increase the number of clean energy jobs in the United States.

Solar energy grants available through the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) total \$117.6 million. Some of the funding will be specifically for partnerships among national laboratories, institutions of higher education, local governments and the private sector. DOE has \$51.5 million available for grants for photovoltaic technology development, aiming at making solar energy prices competitive with other solar energy grid sources such as electricity. Another \$40.5 million is available to focus on quick deployment of conventional energy and direct connection to cities and to address training solar energy installers. Finally, \$25.6 million will be available for solar power research and development to improve the reliability of concentrating solar power technologies and to national laboratories to provide test and evaluation support to the industry.

On the geothermal energy front, \$350 million is available to support geothermal demonstration projects, enhanced geothermal systems (EGS) research and development, new exploration techniques and a National Geothermal Data System, Resource Assessment and Classification System. The demonstration projects will benefit from \$140 million in funding to spur geothermal energy production in new areas of the country and from other resources. Funding of \$80 million is available for EGS technology to allow geothermal power generation throughout the nation. Another \$100 million is allocated for exploration techniques such as siting and drilling. A nationwide assessment of geothermal resources will be funded by \$30 million, along with development of a nationwide data system and a geothermal resource classification system to determine site potential.

Commerce funds will address research construction, funding projects, trainees

New building construction, research programs and fellowships are part of the \$235 million in federal economic stimulus funding available through the U.S. Department of Commerce.

A competitive construction grant program for research science buildings will have \$180 million available for institutions of higher education and nonprofits. Some 8-12 projects are likely to be funded in the \$10 million to \$15 million range. The funds will help construct new buildings or expand existing buildings.

Higher education institutions, nonprofits, commercial organizations and state, local and tribal governments can qualify for some of the \$35 million available through the Measurement Science and Engineering Research Grants Program. These grants will focus on energy, environment and climate change, information technology, cybersecurity, biosciences/health care, manufacturing and physical infrastructure. Individual awards of approximately \$500,000 to \$1.5 million are expected for 20-60 projects.

Another \$20 million over three years is available for the Measurement Science and Engineering Research Fellowship Program, which is available to higher ed institutions, hospitals, nonprofits, commercial organizations and state, local and tribal governments. The money will fund scientists and engineers in training to conduct research. One to five awards are expected.

Aquaculture producers can qualify for part of \$50M in funding

Aquaculture producers who suffered losses due to high feed input costs during the 2008 calendar year are eligible for some of the \$50 million in U.S. Department of Agriculture funds that are available from the recovery act. The funds will be directed through the 2008 Aquaculture Grant Program to state departments of agriculture. The funds will be distributed on a prorated basis depending on the amount of aquaculture feed used by each state in the 2007 calendar year. Grants of up to \$100,000 will then be awarded to producers. The comment period for the program closes Aug. 3. Application procedures will be determined by each state.

Stimulus news briefs

Rapid deployment of geothermal heat pumps announced

Nearly \$50 million in Recovery Act funding was announced this week to speed up deployment of commercial geothermal heat pumps. These renewable heating and cooling systems use energy from below the surface of the earth to move heat into or out of a structure.

Also called ground-source heat pumps, these units are more efficient than the widely-used air-source pumps in most businesses and homes. There are three areas for funding for these projects.

The Innovative Technology Demonstrations deal with retrofitting or incorporating at least 50 tons of heating and cooling capacity in various areas and climates in both commercial and residential facilities. Life Cycle Cost Tools projects gather and analyze data related to system costs, performance and installation techniques to help decrease life-cycle costs. National Certification and Accreditation projects funding will be used to increase consumer confidence in the technology, ensure systems are installed correctly and ensure product quality and performance.

Deadline approaching for energy efficiency block grants

The deadline is fast approaching for local governments to apply for a portion of the \$3.2 billion in block grants that are being made available for energy efficiency and conservation through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The deadline is Thursday, June 25, to apply for these funds for programs aimed at conserving energy. Other programs and funding amounts whose deadlines are yet to be announced include: \$500 million for green jobs training, \$9.75 billion for school renovations, \$5 billion for weatherization of homes for low-income families and \$300 million to replace aging appliances with new Energy Star conservation products. Harvard University recently held a "Green Boot Camp" two-day training session to teach participants (state and local government officials, housing authority executives, workforce development agencies, etc.) about financing strategies and marketing, building codes and energy conservation incentives.

Treasury offers tax cuts as incentives for community investments

The U.S. Treasury Department has awarded \$1.5 billion in tax credits to units of JPMorgan Chase, Capitol One Financial Corp. and more than two dozen other organizations - including banks, nonprofits and real estate firms - to help them invest in distressed communities throughout the country. Among the largest awards were \$90 million in tax credits to Capitol One Community Renewal Fund while the ESIC New Markets Partners LP in Maryland was awarded a \$95 million credit. Other large awards included \$85 million to Chase New Markets Corp. in New York, \$65 million to the Urban Development Fund in Chicago and \$55 million to the AHC Community Development LLC in Cleveland.

The awards are through the New Markets Tax Credit program, which has money thanks to the economic stimulus bill. The program's goal is to help the private sector invest in energy, education, health care and manufacturing projects to assist distressed neighborhoods. Credits against federal income taxes are given for making investments in low-income communities. Seven awards, which ranged from \$10 million to \$95 million, went to banks or holding companies, seven are nonprofits and three were awarded to real estate development companies or their subsidiaries. The average award was \$46.9 million.

White House says 150,000 jobs created or saved by ARRA

During its first 100 days, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act has created or helped retain 150,000 jobs, according to White House economic officials. Officials, who based their numbers on projections instead of a tally of actual workers, expect another 600,000 jobs to be created or saved in the second 100 days. Officials of the Office of Management and Budget also said that more than \$112 billion in federal economic stimulus funds were committed during the first 100 days following the act's passage.

Although jobless rates are either climbing or staying static, the White House says those figures would be even higher without the stimulus act. Vice President Joe Biden has predicted that 35 million jobs will be saved or created by September of next year.

Missouri ahead of curve on obligating road, bridge project funds

While the states have until June 30 to obligate at least half of their stimulus funds for roads and bridges, the State of Missouri is already ahead of the curve. Missouri Department of Transportation officials note the state has already obligated more than half of its funds. A total of 91 projects had been awarded \$178.6 million as of last week. That includes funding for repairing or replacing bridges, building new highways, resurfacing roadways and improving shoulders and pavement. The state has until March 2 of next year to obligate all of its funds. The projects in Missouri are expected to create nearly 5,000 jobs directly or indirectly.

Congress gets quarterly report on broadband project progress

A quarterly report on the status of the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act has been presented to the U.S. Congress by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). The report outlines what NTIA has done to launch BTOP, showing a tentative timeline and activities of the first 90 days under the recovery act.

There will be three rounds of grants, the first beginning this summer. To view the report, click [HERE](#) and look under RECENT REPORTS. An example of how states will benefit shows that Vermont could garner \$30-\$70 million in funding to ensure cell phone and broadband Internet access statewide by 2010. Vendors are already lining up with their proposals. The state plans a communications network throughout the state. On the local level, government entities in Maryland plan to pool their share of broadband stimulus funds to create fiber-optic networks instead of using private contractors.

North Carolina transportation projects as much as 20 percent under estimates

North Carolina is reporting bids on its stimulus-funded road and bridge projects that are as much as 20 percent below their original estimated costs. State officials are thrilled, as the savings will allow them to take on even more projects. The competition among construction companies for work is fierce, thus the bids are coming in low. Officials think the state could save as much as \$100 million to dedicate to other projects. One contract actually came in 31.5 percent under the original estimated cost. With the state due to receive \$737 million in transportation stimulus funds, if the below-budget bids keep coming in, the state could reap as much as \$150 million in savings.

States supporting education innovations may qualify for more funding

States that don't embrace school reform, such as support for charter schools, could be shooting themselves in the foot when it comes to their chances to earn grant funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Education Secretary Arne Duncan said states that don't support educational innovations "would not be helping their chances" in competing for funds.

Charter schools are publicly funded and thus not subject to being administered by local school boards. That's why some states shy away from them. But the Obama administration is pushing for more innovative ways to teach children and charter schools are seen as part of the solution. Thus \$5 billion in funding was set up for schools that support such innovations. Duncan said states that support such efforts could see as much as \$100 million in additional funding.

What the states are doing

In **Michigan**, five colleges and a research institute will receive a total of \$2.7 million to support health care research and training. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds will come from the National Institutes of Health. The schools include the University of Michigan, Michigan State University, Wayne State University, Oakland University, Calvin College and the Van Andel Research Institute. The University of Michigan will get the lion's share of the funds - nearly half.

South Carolina school officials fear their state's governor's refusal to take federal stimulus funds will adversely affect them. The state's schools chief met recently with local residents and educators - including some teachers who have been told they will have jobs next year and parents who fear the quality of their children's education will suffer. Some school districts in the state are building their budgets around receiving some of the federal funds and are hopeful they will eventually get the money.

A **Texas** maker of lithium iron manganese phosphate batteries is hoping to tap into \$225 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds over three years. But the Texas company is not alone - a number of other battery also are in hopes of obtaining some of the \$2 billion in the Department of Energy's Electric Drive with \$359 million in state and local taxes and other incentives. Officials say they could build approximately 660,000 battery packs per year with more than a million kilowatt hours storage capacity. With the funding, officials say they could open a plant as early as 2012. The Texas company also will seek up to \$608 million from another DOE stimulus program, the Advanced Technology Vehicles Manufacturing Incentive Program, which has \$25 million available. The Texas firm plans to focus on batteries for electric buses and commercial vehicles before getting into the automobile market.

Alabama's Birmingham Jefferson County Transit Authority held a town meeting to hear from the locals on how to spend the \$8.7 million in recovering funding the authority will receive. Some of the possible projects under consideration include bus hubs billed "super stops," that would increase the number of transfers in the city and in the in-town transit partnership.

New York's governor has announced that every firm that contracts with the state using federal economic recovery funding will be required to post any jobs created by its funds with the New York State Job Bank at www.labor.ny.gov. The goal, according to government officials, is to ensure that those persons looking for jobs can find these openings and the funds will get back to work quicker. The recovery act requires that every state track every job created with the federal funds. New York is taking the edict a step further by allowing residents to apply for jobs as they become available. The New York Department of Labor to concentrate on matching up New York unemployed with these jobs. The state is expected to receive approximately \$26.7 billion in stimulus funding over two years, which the White House estimates will create or retain 215,000 jobs.

In **Washington**, Seattle officials have approved the spending of \$3.2 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding to support local small businesses and assist with building improvements for social service providers. The proposal calls for \$1.4 million of the funds to be used for loans to small businesses that create jobs for low- and moderate-income workers. Almost \$1 million will then be used to fund renovations at community service provider facilities, from food banks to child care providers. Another \$850,000 will be for repairs at residential buildings for low-income seniors managed by the Seattle Housing Authority.

Montana is looking at the possibility of reviving a passenger rail line that once ran between Glendive and Missoula. Officials there are hoping to take advantage of some of the \$1.3 billion in federal stimulus funds set aside to improve Amtrak service. Several other possible routes are being studied in the state. Amtrak's Empire Builder is currently the only passenger line in the state, operating in the northern portion of Montana. The federal funding is another way government officials hope to reduce dependence on foreign energy sources, encouraging rail as an alternative to highway travel.

North Carolina's Cherokee Indian tribe is seeking \$18 million in recovery funds for health care, housing, a new jail and roads on its reservation. Most of the \$1 million that has already been allocated from federal funds will be spent on transportation projects. The 13,500-member tribe lists housing and health care will be two of its immediate, critical needs. Most of the \$3 billion expected to be allocated to Indian tribes will be spent for housing, according to government officials.

Connecticut youth will benefit from 4,500 summer jobs created with federal economic stimulus funds. The state is planning to use \$11 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding to provide jobs for young people in the state ages 14 to 24. The \$11 million is part of some \$3 billion headed to the state to fill holes in local and state budgets, move state transportation projects forward and retain and create jobs. However, millions more will help create jobs in the energy conservation field and the summer jobs program through the state's weatherization program. State officials are hopeful the summer jobs program will lead to permanent employment for some participants.

Washington is expecting to hire 400 new workers in the city of Hanford in the first hiring round funded with some of the \$1.96 billion in federal economic stimulus funds. The U.S. Department of Energy will use the funding to eventually hire or retain up to 4,000 workers in Hanford. The majority of the first round of employment will be doing contamination and demolition work for a remediation company and will be making an average of \$17 per hour with five weeks of paid training. Many of the new workers have never had company benefits like health insurance before.

Texas's Harris County leads the state in the number of transportation and infrastructure projects being funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Fund with 18 projects total. Dallas County already has eight transportation and infrastructure projects under way totaling some \$74 million. Both are part of the \$2.2 billion in American Recovery and Reinvestment Funds that will be spent on transportation projects in the state. Not all of the projects are under contract yet, and some won't be until next year. The Texas Department of Transportation estimates that the first 200 contracts issued in the state will create more than 2,600 jobs.

Connecticut food banks and food warehouses are filling up, thanks to federal economic stimulus funding. The first shipment of food to Fairfield food bank branches netted 22,500 dozen eggs and 24,000 cans of pork. Meat and eggs are a much-appreciated staple for the food banks, say officials, since canned foods, vegetables and peanut butter are usually the leading items on the shelves. The \$1.1 million in funds headed to the state were split by the governor between the Connecticut Food Bank and Foodshare. The two provide food to nearly 1,000 programs throughout the state. The Food Bank also provides food for 650 agencies in six of the state's eight counties.

Pennsylvania schools, unlike the state's transportation department, are still awaiting their share of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding. Federal highway money does not have to be appropriated by the state legislature, but education funding does and the Pennsylvania Legislature has not yet adopted the state budget. Until that happens, schools in the state cannot access their stimulus funds. Nearly two dozen states already have been approved to receive their fiscal stabilization funds from the recovery monies. Deadline for applying for those funds is July 1. The state has only submitted its preliminary request for the funds.

Georgia's Department of Transportation recently awarded its first economic stimulus-funded highway contracts. Three dozen projects valued at about \$50 million were signed off on by the Georgia DOT. Another \$2.6 million for four resurfacing jobs in the Atlanta metro area were part of the total. The DOT is responsible for 70 percent of the \$932 million in highway system stimulus funds headed to Georgia, with the rest going to the state's 15 metropolitan planning organizations.

Other national news

Health care centers eligible for \$81.7 million to expand services

The nation's health care centers will soon be on the receiving end of \$81.7 million to expand their services. Because of the slumping economy, some workers who lose their jobs also lose their health insurance, increasing the burden on local health care centers to provide essential health care. These funds and additional funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act will ensure that health care will continue to be delivered to Americans by these centers.

The ARRA funding includes \$2 billion for grants to health care centers over a two-year period. Of that figure, \$500 million will be used to support new health center sites and service areas, increase service at current sites and ensure that increasing numbers of uninsured individuals are served. The remaining \$1.5 billion will be used for construction, renovation and equipment, including health information technology systems, in health centers and health center-controlled networks.

The \$81.7 million in non-Recovery Act grants include \$25.6 million to expand medical capacity at 43 existing health centers and \$56.1 million to help health centers offset rising costs associated with maintaining current service levels. To view the list of Expanded Medical Capacity grants, click [HERE](#) and look under RECENT REPORTS.

Mann named director of Center for Medicaid, State Operations

Cindy Mann was recently named Director of the Center for Medicaid and State Operations (CMSO), part of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. She comes to CMSO after having served as a research professor and executive director of the Center for Children and Families at Georgetown University's Health Policy Institute. Mann is no stranger to CMSO, after having served the organization as director of the Family and Children's Health Programs from 1999 to 2001, when she helped implement Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Mann also has extensive state-level experience, having worked on health care, welfare and public finance issues in Massachusetts, Rhode Island and New York.

Calendar of events

Virtual Energy Forum is free, two-day event in June

The Virtual Energy Forum, the world's largest online conference for renewable energy and energy-efficient solutions in business is scheduled for Wednesday and Thursday, June 24 and 25. The conference is free and online and will feature speakers, industry-specific presentations in five parallel tracks, live video chats with experts in the field and an emerging technology showcase. Among the speakers will be Amory Lovins of the Rocky Mountain Institute, Fred Krupp of the Environmental Defense Fund and Mark Ginsberg of the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy. All of the presentation will be available on demand after the conference. For more information, click [HERE](#).

Clean diesel project act programs to be announced today

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa P. Jackson will join Ohio public officials today, Wednesday, to announce grants from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act for clean diesel programs in auto communities throughout that state. Following a morning press conference in Columbus, Jackson will hold a second press conference at 2:15 p.m. in Cincinnati at the Montford Heights Elementary School to announce grants for clean diesel school buses. She will be joined by David Pepper, president of the Hamilton County Board of Commissioners, and Ohio Environmental Protection Agency Director Chris Korleski. She was joined this morning by Lt. Gov. Lee Fisher at the Statehouse to announce clean diesel grants for retrofitted construction and transit equipment.

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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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Procurement consulting and advocacy services

Strategic Partnerships, Inc. (SPI) and MultiState Associates Inc., the leading companies in the state and local government procurement and government relations world, have teamed to offer a timely client-customized service that helps companies find and capture state and local government contracts arising from the recently enacted federal stimulus package. [Click here](#) for procurement consulting and advocacy services

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