



State of New Jersey

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May 13, 2009

ARRA – TITLE I-A AND SIA-A

To: Chief School Administrators
Charter School Lead Persons

From: Lucille E. Davy
Commissioner

Subject: Use of **Title I** *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)*
Funds During the Summer of 2009

To expedite the use of *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)* funds, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) has developed a "Request for Approval Summer Program 2009" to be used by those districts interested in conducting summer 2009 activities using *ARRA* Title I, Part A and/or SIA, Part A funds. Districts are permitted to obligate up to 50% of the *ARRA* Title I, Part A award and 100% of the *ARRA* SIA, Part A award for 2009 summer activities. The *ARRA* funds are in addition to the regular Title I funds that are annually awarded to districts/schools.

ARRA funds should be used to improve student achievement and help close the achievement gap. The federal government has identified the following areas of focus to help improve student achievement through school improvement and reform:

- Making progress toward rigorous college- and career-ready standards and high quality assessments that are valid and reliable for all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities.
- Establishing pre-K to college and career data systems that progress and foster continuous improvement.
- Making improvement in teacher effectiveness and in the equitable distribution of qualified teachers for all students, particularly students who are most in need.
- Providing intensive support and effective interventions for the lowest-performing schools.
- Improving results for all students, including early learning, extended learning time, use of technology, preparation for college and school modernization.

The NJDOE is making the *ARRA* funds available quickly so that districts can move forward with program implementation during the summer. To this end, districts will be able to use a portion of their *ARRA* Title I funds to conduct a range of activities, such as:

- Title I districtwide summer programs for students
- In-service professional development opportunities
- Parent involvement activities
- Activities and supplies in preparation for the Title I program in September

Schools designated as schools in need of improvement (SINIs) during the 2008-2009 school year may also use their *ARRA* Title I SIA funds during the summer. Specifically, *ARRA* SIA, Part A funds may be used to expand the school improvement program at an eligible SINI as determined by the school's needs assessment and outlined in the Title I Unified Plan. For SIA, Part A, 100% of the *ARRA* funds may be used for the 2009 summer.

Attached you will find the ***ARRA* Title I** allocation notice for your district/agency. The "Request for Approval Summer Program 2009" form can be found on the NJDOE website at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/arra/>. If the district/agency decides to conduct summer activities, the original "Request for Approval Summer Program 2009" should be downloaded, and a separate form should be completed for each program being requested. The application form(s) must be received by the County Office of Education, with a copy to the NJDOE Application Control Center, by June 5, 2009.

The complete *ARRA* application will be available on the NJDOE website through the Electronic Web-Enabled Grant (EWEG) system in mid-summer. All activities outlined in the "Request for Approval Summer Program 2009" must be entered into the *ARRA* EWEG application along with the information for the remaining portion of the *ARRA* allocation. Approved summer expenditures will be available for reimbursement after the complete *ARRA* application is submitted through EWEG and approved by the NJDOE. This means that any *ARRA* Title I, Part A and SIA, Part A funds obligated pursuant to a Request for Approval will not be reimbursed until the *ARRA* EWEG application is approved.

ARRA Title I, Part A funds may be used for districtwide activities for eligible schools. The Title I Reserve Table is included in the Request for Approval for districts to allocate the funds for these districtwide activities. Districts may opt to calculate all Title I reserves in the Request for Approval—up to 50% of the Title I *ARRA* allocation—or only a portion. For example, SES funds may be reserved from *ARRA* to be used to serve additional students eligible for SES this summer.

When the district completes the *ARRA* EWEG application, available mid-summer, the process of determining school eligibility by allocating to individual schools in rank order of poverty must be used for the remaining funds. Note that certain districtwide reserves and the funds allocated to schools require an equitable share for participation of nonpublic students.

The United States Department of Education (USDE) has been developing guidance documents for the *ARRA* funds. As documents become available they will be posted on the USDE website. There is also an *ARRA* link on the NJDOE website homepage. Useful *ARRA* websites are as follows:

- USDE website: <http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/programs.html>
- USDE Fact Sheet: <http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/factsheet/title-i.html>
- Guidance for Title I, Part A: <http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/guidance/title-i.pdf>
- NJDOE website: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/arra/>

The unprecedented level of funding provided under *ARRA* also brings with it unprecedented requirements for transparency and accountability. Therefore, the use of *ARRA* funds will be subject to additional and more rigorous reporting requirements than normally apply to grant recipients. The NJDOE is currently working with the USDE and the Governor's office to establish tracking systems necessary to account for these funds that will be made available with the EWEG application. Districts should also be mindful of the time-limited nature of this funding and should invest the *ARRA* dollars in ways that do not result in unsustainable commitments after the funding expires. The NJDOE anticipates having more information on the required tracking details available with the release of the *ARRA* EWEG application.

The additional funds provided through *ARRA* offer a unique opportunity to enhance your Title I programs and serve academically at-risk students. The FY 2010 allocation notices will be issued shortly in a separate allocation notice and are in addition to *ARRA*. Please contact the Office of Student Achievement and Accountability at arratitle1@doe.state.nj.us if you have questions about the use of your *ARRA* funding for your Title I program.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

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Attachments

c: Members, State Board of Education
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