



The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and Summer Programming: An Opportunity for School Districts and Summer Program Providers

"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

Many school administrators and teachers share Secretary Duncan's concerns about summer learning loss. Fortunately, the Administration is following through: the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) offers significant support to school districts nationwide and the Administration has made very clear that these funds can be used to support summer learning programs.

This fact sheet will provide information and guidance on how to utilize ARRA funding to provide summer opportunities for disadvantaged students.

Summer Learning Loss: The Facts

A significant body of research over the past 15 years shows conclusively that:

- all students lose math skills over the summer;
- low-income students lose reading ability over the summer, while middle-income students continue to advance;
- the lack of access to learning opportunities during the summer accounts for about *two-thirds* of the achievement gap in reading between lower-income and higher-income students by the 9th grade; and
- the evidence of summer programs' success in reversing learning loss and helping lower-income children, in particular, catch up to their more advantaged peers, is strong.

According to one researcher, "[s]ummer school may be the primary intervention through which educators prevent the cumulative widening of the reading achievement gap."

Background: ARRA and Education Funding

President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 into law on February 17. The \$787 billion stimulus bill includes \$100 billion for early learning, K-12, and post-secondary education nationwide.

- **\$8 billion in ARRA education funding is likely to come to California -- including approximately \$1.2 billion in Title I recovery funds**

Of all the ARRA education sources, it is the new funding for programs under Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (Title I) that is most closely aligned with summer programming.

The Title I recovery dollars are intended to be temporary – for FY 2009 and 2010 – and the US Department of Education (ED) says that schools and Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) thus should “focus these funds on short-term investments with the potential for long-term benefits.”

- **Two summers worth of programming can be supported with these Title I recovery funds.**

Since Title I is an annual appropriation, successful ARRA-funded programs could be implemented beyond 2010, particularly when those programs build partnerships and can leverage local funding once the economy recovers.

Using Title I Recovery Funds for Summer Programming

Federal guidance on the use of the Title I recovery allocation specifically recommends that school districts invest portions of their Recovery Act Title I funds in summer programs, starting this summer.

On March 6, the ED released guidelines to help states and school districts quickly disburse the Title I funds. The guidelines include the following among a list of examples of ways for districts to spend funds in ways that are allowable under the recovery act:

*"Establishing or expanding fiscally sustainable extended learning opportunities for Title I eligible students in targeted assistance programs, **including activities provided before school, after school, during the summer, and over an extended school year.**" (Emphasis added.)*

Summer programming is clearly in line with the government's goals for the Title I funds: to **“improve education for at-risk students and close the achievement gaps while also stimulating the economy.”**

The government's goals for the Title I funds are twofold: closing the achievement gap and stimulating the economy. By improving education and providing immediate jobs for teachers and other staff, summer programming can meet them both.

Distribution of Title I Recovery Funds

The ED is encouraging states to award Title I recovery funds to their LEAs as quickly as possible so that LEAs can begin using the funds. Similarly, an LEA should use its Title I recovery funds “expeditiously but sensibly.”

The first half of the Title I recovery dollars were released to the states on April 1st and awarded under each state’s existing approved ESEA Consolidated State Application. The remaining funds will be released in September, provided that a state submits an amendment to its Consolidated Application that addresses how it will meet ARRA’s recordkeeping and reporting requirements.

The Title I recovery awards will be *in addition to* the regular FY 2009 Title I, Part A grant awards that the ED plans to make on July 1 and October 1, 2009. Together, these four grant awards – **the two phases of the Title I recovery funds and the two phases of the regular Title I funds** – will constitute a state’s total FY 2009 Title I, Part A allocation. While the initial period of availability of funds ends September 30, 2010, funds can be carried over beyond that.

For more information on funding details, including “supplement, not supplant” provisions, see recent guidance from USDE at <http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/guidance/title-i.pdf>.

Supporting Summer Programs With Title I Recovery Funds: What You Can Do Right Now

- California school districts can and should use their Title I recovery funds to establish or expand high-quality summer learning programs this summer.
 - Use funds to supplement summer learning programs from other funding sources, including 21st Century Community Learning Centers.
 - Expand Title I summer programs to serve all students, not only those who are struggling.
 - Work with community partners, including school-year afterschool providers, Park and Rec departments, and CBOs, to attach comprehensive enrichment programming to remedial summer programs, either as afternoon programs after the day’s academic work is done, or incorporated throughout the day as part of a comprehensive summer school.
 - Provide summertime meals through the Seamless Summer Feeding Option (SSFO) or the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), both administered by the California Department of Education.
- Non-school district summer program providers should seek partnerships with summer school programs funded by Title I.
 - Contact local school districts (superintendents, Title I coordinators, Academic Officers, school board members) or individual schools (principals, parent clubs, School Improvement Teams).
 - Educate stakeholders on the value of comprehensive, engaging summer programs.

- Offer evidence of the summer program's focus on increasing student achievement, on alignment of content with state standards, and/or on academic focus of enrichment and cultural activities, if available.
- Develop school-CBO partnerships that maintain a focus on closing the achievement gap and utilize highly-qualified teachers, including development of afternoon enrichment services that build on the morning activities.

Resources:

- **General information on the Recovery Act and its education components**
 - California Department of Education ARRA page: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/fq/aa/ar/>
 - California School Boards Association (CSBA) federal issues page: <http://csba.org/EducationIssues/EducationIssues/FederalEducationIssues2.aspx>
 - US Department of Education ARRA website: <http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/index.html>
 - FY 2009 Title I funding levels by district: <http://www.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/titlei/fy09recovery/index.html>
- **Information on summer programming**
 - National Center for Summer Learning at www.summerlearning.org, and particularly their ARRA analysis at www.summerlearning.org/recovery
 - Bay Area Partnership for Children and Youth at www.bayareapartnership.org/asi/asi-other_fund.htm –for detailed information on how to access and utilize Title 1 funding for out of school time services.
- **Technical Assistance and Support**
 - Katie Brackenridge, Bay Area Partnership for Children and Youth, (510) 830-4200, ext. 1604 or katie@bayareapartnership.org.
- **Summer Food programs**
 - California Department of Education Summer Food Service page: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/Ls/nu/sf/>
 - California Food Policy Advocates (CFPA) summer food page: <http://www.cfpa.net//Summerfood/SummerfoodProgram.htm>