

The American Recovery & Reinvestment Act What Academic Libraries Can Do Now

Although many of the details about the funding programs created by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) have not yet been defined, there will be many opportunities for academic libraries and higher education to pursue funding.

Opportunities

\$53.6 Billion for the State Stabilization Fund

The purpose of this fund is to provide fiscal relief to the states to prevent tax increases and cutbacks to critical services. The ARRA directs governors to use 81.8 percent of the state's allocation to support elementary, secondary, and *higher education*. This funding is flexible and the control rests in the hands of the governor as to how the funding is allocated in the state. Although new construction is excluded, repairing or modernizing buildings is not.

\$120 Million for the Senior Community Service Employment Program

This funding will provide community service jobs at nonprofit and public facilities, including libraries, for an additional 24,000 older Americans. Program participants are placed in a wide variety of community service positions and public facilities, including public and higher education institutions. In most states, the governor has selected the State Office on Aging to administer the program.

\$7.2 Billion for Broadband Programs

There are tremendous opportunities for libraries to benefit from the broadband provisions of the ARRA. \$4.5 billion has been designated for the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) and \$2.5 billion for the Rural Utilities Service (RUS), which includes no less than \$200 million set aside for community computing centers, including public libraries and community colleges. Unfortunately, specific details about these grant or loan programs are not yet defined.

What You Can Do Now

- **Talk with your campus administrators, other higher education institutions, university system and other types of libraries.** What plans do they have for ARRA? What plans do they have for broadband? Will you have to work through them or will your college or university be able to apply directly for ARRA programs?

- **Work with key administrators on your campus to contact potential partners – public and private.** Connect with your university system, consortium, higher education associations (e.g. EDUCAUSE), etc., to explore opportunities to collaborate on grants for ARRA funding.
- **Think creatively, collaboratively and aggregate.** Contact other libraries of all types (including public and school libraries in your area) to find out what they may be planning. Can you work together to aggregate demand for broadband, for example?
- **Connect with your state library agency.** Find out what the state librarian is doing, as he or she may be aware of other initiatives to collaborate. Also, contact any regional or multi-type library cooperatives and other higher education institutions. As you learn more about what other libraries are doing, identify potential models that you may want to adapt for your institution.
- **Help all libraries in your community – public, school and other academic libraries – to get better broadband connectivity.** Most academic libraries already benefit from broadband connectivity. However, academic libraries can help the public and school libraries in their communities and region by advocating for “fiber to the library” and other advanced technologies to enhance library connectivity. Contact your local libraries to see how you can help.
- **Be sure to say “thank you” to your U.S. senators and congressional representatives for passing the ARRA.** Keep them informed about your library services to the campus and how information literacy skills learned in your classrooms relate to job preparedness.
- **Finally, think BIG!** Even a small fraction of the billions available via ARRA is a lot of money. Academic libraries may potentially fit into several parts of the various programs.

ALA’s “Know Your Stimulus” Web site

To learn more about the various ARRA stimulus-funding programs that libraries may be eligible for, please check out the ALA web site www.ala.org/knowyourstimulus/. As details become available on the programs, information will be added to the web site – so please check often!