



**American Recovery and
Reinvestment Act
Health Professions Programs**

**Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP)
Questions and Answers**

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The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009

1. What is The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009?

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA or Recovery Act), was signed into law February 17, 2009.

The Recovery Act was enacted to:

- preserve and create jobs;
- promote economic recovery;
- help people most impacted by the recession;
- increase economic efficiency by investing in technological advances in science and health;
- promote long-term economic benefits by investing in transportation, environmental protection and other infrastructure; and
- preserve essential services of States and local governments.

2. Why is the HCOP program funded under the ARRA?

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 provides \$500 million to address health professions workforce shortages. HRSA is making funds available to increase the Nation's ability to address the shortages of primary health care practitioners.

The objective of the Health Professions Programs as supported through ARRA is to address health professions workforce shortages. Programs funded promote training in primary care, nursing and public health, and increase the diversity of the health professions workforce. These programs will also help disadvantaged individuals who might otherwise have to delay their entry into, or drop out of, training programs.

Several types of activities will be funded with ARRA dollars, including direct student support, loan repayment, training program infrastructure, and equipment purchases for health professions training programs. The grant programs funded under ARRA will help increase the diversity of students entering health professions programs, support the training of disadvantaged students, provide training in primary care disciplines, and improve training programs by providing better access to equipment.

The Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP) awards grants to accredited schools of medicine, osteopathic medicine, public health, dentistry, veterinary medicine, optometry, pharmacy, allied health, chiropractic, podiatric medicine, public or nonprofit private schools and those that offer graduate programs in behavioral and mental health, programs for the training of physician assistants, and other public or private nonprofit health or educational entities, including faith-based and community based organizations, that aid educationally or economically disadvantaged students enter health careers. The ARRA-HCOP funding will provide additional Federal support for programs to build a health career education pipeline by extending grant activities to the K-12 educational level. This new focus recognizes the critical role that community, secondary schools, and undergraduate institutions working in partnership play in building a competitive applicant pool.

Nationwide efforts have been focused on achieving racial and ethnic diversity in the health professions workforce and despite this focus significant barriers confront students from lower-income families. An analysis conducted in 2008 by the Association of American Medical Colleges of each year's new medical students family income from 1987-2006 showed that the percentage of students from the highest quintile of family income has never been less than 48.1 percent and the percentage from the lowest quintile has never been greater than 5.5 percent. The extension of HCOP funds through ARRA will provide additional support to address this gap.

The HCOP program is receiving \$2.98 million in ARRA funding in FY 2009.

3. Where can I learn more about the ARRA?

Additional information on the Recovery Act can be found at <http://www.recovery.gov>. Information on activities related to the Recovery Act at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) can be accessed at <http://www.hhs.gov/recovery>. Details on the different funding opportunities that will be available through HRSA can be found at <http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/recovery/>

Purpose

4. What is the purpose of the ARRA-HCOP funding opportunity?

The purpose of the Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP) is to assist individuals from disadvantaged (educationally and economically) backgrounds to undertake education to enter and graduate from a health or allied health professions program.

Summary of Funding

5. How do schools apply for ARRA-HCOP funds?

In FY 2008, HCOP announced a competitive funding opportunity, HRSA-08-057. The ARRA-HCOP awards were selected utilizing the that HCOP competitive review cycle. Based on that competition, additional applicants will be awarded from the rank order listing of approved but unfunded applications.

6. If a school does not receive ARRA-HCOP funds in 2009, will they have an opportunity to compete for ARRA-HCOP funding in 2010?

No, this is a one time award. ARRA-HCOP funds are being awarded for a three-year project period.

7. When will the grant be awarded? What is the date of the project period?

ARRA-HCOP funds will be awarded on or about September 1, 2009. Funds will be awarded for a 3-year project period.

8. Can ARRA-HCOP funding be used to cover costs incurred prior to the award date?

In general, these grants are intended to support costs incurred after the ARRA-HCOP project start date. ARRA-HCOP funds cannot be used to support any costs incurred prior to February 17, 2009 (the date the Recovery Act was signed). Any costs incurred before receipt of the Notice of Grant Award (NGA) are at the recipient's risk.

9. Is there any formal notification of an ARRA-HCOP award from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)?

Yes. HRSA will electronically transmit a formal notification in the form of a Notice of Grant Award (NGA) that will be provided to the ARRA-HCOP applicant organization/institution.

10. What is the timeline for grantees to use the ARRA-HCOP funds?

Recipients of ARRA-HCOP funds should obligate (commit) the grant funds and complete the proposed projects by the end of the 3-year project period. HRSA strongly encourages grantees

to expend (spend) all funds during the 3-year project period to respond to urgent, immediate community needs.

11. Are schools permitted to carryover unused ARRA-HCOP funds?

No. ARRA-HCOP funds must be used within the specified project period, we do not expect schools to have unused funds. Any unexpended ARRA-HCOP funds may be offset at the conclusion of the project period.

Eligible Use of Funds

12. Are there certain eligibility requirements for use of these funds?

Costs incurred prior to February 17, 2009 are unallowable costs under ARRA-HCOP funding.

13. How can I track ARRA-HCOP funds?

To facilitate monitoring and tracking of ARRA-HCOP funds, grants will be provided under a unique grant number and Payment Management System (PMS) sub-account.

14. How will ARRA-HCOP funding be delivered to grantees?

Grantees will receive ARRA-HCOP funds much in the same way schools get regular grant funding via the PMS; an NGA will be issued under a different grant number. For information regarding the drawdown of your awarded funds, contact your account representative at 1-877-614-5533 or <http://www.dpm.psc.gov/>. Grantees should drawdown funds based on the needs of the ARRA-HCOP project.

15. How are applications submitted?

Applications were submitted as a result of the competitive funding opportunity, HRSA-08-057. This opportunity closed on February 22, 2008. No further applications are being accepted for 2009 ARRA-HCOP funding opportunities.

16. Can I decline receiving ARRA funds?

Yes. An applicant may decline receiving ARRA-HCOP funds.

Reporting

17. What are the reporting requirements for Recovery Act funding?

Grantees must continue to comply with the usual and customary reporting requirements of the HCOP, in addition to specific Recovery Act reporting. Recipients of Recovery Act funding will be required to provide periodic reports to ensure that funds are used for authorized purposes and instances of fraud, waste, error, and abuse are mitigated. Recovery Act funds can be used in conjunction with other funding as necessary to complete projects, but tracking and reporting must be separate to meet the reporting requirements of the Recovery Act. Additional information is available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/recovery_default/.

Generally, as required by the Recovery Act, recipients are required to report the following information to www.FederalReporting.gov 10 days after the end of each calendar quarter; submission dates will be October 10, January 10, and April 10.

These reports will include the following data elements, as prescribed by the Recovery Act:

1. The total amount of Recovery Act funds.
2. The amount of Recovery Act funds received that were obligated and expended to projects or activities. This reporting will also include unobligated allotment balances to facilitate reconciliations.
3. A detailed list of all projects or activities for which Recovery Act funds were obligated and expended, including
 - a. The name of the project or activity;
 - b. A description of the project or activity;
 - c. An evaluation of the completion status of the project or activity;
 - d. An estimate of the number of jobs created and the number of jobs retained by the project or activity.
4. Detailed information on any subcontracts or subgrants awarded by the recipient to include the data elements required to comply with the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (P.L. 109-282), allowing aggregate reporting on awards below \$25,000 or to individuals, as prescribed by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

18. Where can I find out more information about the ARRA reporting requirements?

The OMB Section 1512 guidance for recipient reporting can be found at:
<http://www.recovery.gov/?q=node/579>

In addition, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) prepared a series of webinars to train Federal Agencies and recipients of ARRA funding on how to comply with their reporting responsibilities. Links to the recorded webinars can be found at:
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/Recovery/WebinarTrainingMaterials/>

19. Are schools required to submit both the HCOP Annual Operation Report (AOR) and the ARRA-HCOP quarterly reports?

Yes. The HCOP-AOR report is a standard annual reporting requirement for the regularly funded program. Similarly, the ARRA-HCOP program has the requirement for an ARRA HCOP-AOR in addition to the required ARRA specific reporting as described on the Recovery.gov web site. However, it is important to note that the AOR is an ANNUAL report while the additional ARRA reporting requirements are quarterly reporting.

20. Why is the ARRA-HCOP required reporting scheduled quarterly rather than annually?

Quarterly reporting is stipulated for timely measure and transparency of the use and impact of ARRA-HCOP funds.

21. Will the ARRA-HCOP quarterly report be completed and submitted through the HRSA EHBs?

No. ARRA-HCOP reports will be completed and submitted via a centralized system on www.FederalReporting.gov by no later than 10 days from the end of each quarter. This information will then be migrated for public access to the Recovery.gov website upon data quality review by the funding agency.

22. Are schools expected to create new jobs as a result of receiving ARRA-HCOP funds?

Yes. ARRA funds are intended to enhance HCOP funding levels to increase the number of students trained (new jobs) as a result of HCOP-ARRA support. Number of students in this case will be counted as "new jobs" for all intents and purposes of ARRA funding.

Although ARRA-HCOP funds are not permitted to support administrative costs (i.e., staff salaries), schools are encouraged to report on indirect job creation/retention as a result of ARRA-HCOP funding. For example, the additional ARRA-HCOP funds compelled the school to hire additional faculty/program coordinators to support the additional ARRA-HCOP student activity, or a school to retain students/faculty due to increased funding through ARRA-HCOP.