

Energy and Environment Session Takeaways

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Panelists: John Hanger, Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection; E. Craig Heim, Executive Director, Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development; Russell McIntosh, Vice President, Herbert, Rowland & Grubic, Inc.

ARRA Successes

- Since April 2009, Pennsylvania has spent \$1.5 billion in state and federal funds on water and sewer infrastructure, four times the normal rate of \$300 to 350 million. There is an enormous amount of new construction going in this area.
- Pennsylvania has received \$1 billion for alternative energy, matched by 600 million in Act 1 money.
- Pennsylvania is also getting world class assets from our investments: Solar farms that operate for 20 years; water and sewer infrastructure that has a life expectancy of 40 years.
- Pennsylvania received \$252 million to weatherize 30,000 homes.
- Six Training centers have been opened in Pennsylvania to address the need for weatherization professionals

ARRA Challenges

- Application process can be time consuming and confusing, as each different department can have a different application process or forms.
- The current funding is all public sector financing.

Recommendations

- Streamline and standardize the application process between the various state agencies.
- More focus and funding for Public/Private partnerships. Neither the government, nor the private sector can get the economy moving alone.
- New Innovative ideas for financing smaller projects to get the money flowing faster.
- Raise the AEP standards higher to get more private money flowing into the state.

Recommendations for State Action

Continue to allow local areas to use funding for pre-employment training as a supplement to ITAs

Require a workforce readiness assessment and remediation before investing funds in training

Require Title II providers to invest WIA funds in workforce readiness and contextualized learning or change the way that Title II funds are distributed (directly to WIBs)

Recommendations for Federal Action

Allow local areas to develop ITA providers and courses in a more flexible way that recognizes employers needs for more skills and less education

Re-examine eligibility criteria for youth

- Current WIA income eligibility for summer youth programs is complex and burdensome for the youth, the non-profit administrator, and the employer partners
 - More than 16,000 youth applied last summer in Philadelphia and only 31% were eligible
- Eligibility should be reformed in two ways:
 - Allow proxies (e.g., free and reduced lunch, zip codes) to be used for in-school youth
 - Waive income eligibility requirements for out-of-school youth