

Transparency and Accountability Session Takeaways

Moderator: Tony Ross, *United Way of Pennsylvania*

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Successes

- Pennsylvania is doing okay in some areas and very well in other cases, for example, Pennsylvania is 6th in transparency out of all 50 states, according to recent report from Good Jobs First.
- The Stimulus Oversight Commission is seen as a good thing with lots of efforts to increase transparency, with the hotline for example. The Commonwealth could expand on these efforts.

Challenges

- The composition of the Stimulus Oversight Commission is troublesome for some constituencies. For example, no members seated have any experience in monitoring issues. Also, some feel that more diversity is needed.
- Decentralization of money flow and reporting is a challenge. Not all money comes through state government; therefore, accounting for every dollar Pennsylvania receives is difficult.
- Additionally, only a certain percentage of money is subject to Federal 1512 reports.

Recommendations

- Data is not required that is important, like race, etc. Need to change or expand reporting requirements. Federal government should get race, wage, etc. Should petition OMB and get Senator Casey to support these data fields.
- Should contrast data with demographic spending so that the impact is understood. For example, compare county spending to poor students in a county instead of just stating how much money went where.
- Create a working group with expertise in monitoring to work with the Oversight Commission. Common Cause, for example, has such experience.