

# Status Report: Use of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Funds Expanding the Workforce Investment Act Program

## Overview

The Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago (WBMC) has issued this publication to share information on how American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds which augmented workforce development services delivered through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Program have been used in the metropolitan Chicago region. This report provides data about the use of funds, demographic information on the 23,000 adults, dislocated workers and youth benefitting from ARRA WIA funds, and the training and services received through the One Stops.

The metropolitan Chicago region includes the City of Chicago and the following counties: Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, Livingston, McHenry, and Will. The WBMC is a regional consortium of Workforce Boards that have collaborated for the past eight years on initiatives that address workforce and economic development issues. The Workforce Boards oversee development of a workforce system that provides individuals with education and training required for career opportunities in high demand occupations and provides employers with access to a skilled, competitive workforce. More specifically, the Workforce Boards have oversight responsibilities for administration and delivery of the WIA Program in their local areas as well as the ARRA funds authorized for the expansion of WIA services and training.

## Call to Action

ARRA funds have provided low skill, low income adults the opportunity to acquire marketable skills, dislocated workers with an opportunity to acquire the skills needed to pursue new careers, and youth an opportunity to enter the labor force. With the region's unemployment at 9.8% (August 2010) and current year WIA formula program funds nearly depleted in the metropolitan Chicago area, One Stops report that the demand for assistance remains steady. Economists predict that it will be at least another year before we begin to see any significant increase in new jobs. And when the

economy recovers, the type of jobs will be very different. Some industries may never be as robust as previously and many jobs will require high skills. The Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago urges our leaders to increase investments in our country's future workforce through supplemental funding for the Workforce Investment Act Program.

## Introduction

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, more often referred to as the Economic Stimulus Package, represents an investment of \$787 billion designed to "jump start" the nation's economy. In response to the economic crisis facing our county, the ARRA was enacted in February 2009 and with the following goals:



- Create new jobs and save existing ones,
- Spur economic activity and invest in long-term growth, and
- Foster unprecedented levels of accountability and transparency in government spending.<sup>1</sup>

The ARRA provided \$288 billion in tax cuts and benefits for working families and businesses; increased funding for education and healthcare as well as entitlement programs (such as extending unemployment benefits) by \$224 billion, and made \$275 billion available for federal contracts, grants and loans.<sup>2</sup> Recognizing the challenges that the unemployed faced in finding jobs – given the high number of people seeking employment, limited availability of jobs, and a mismatch of skills sets with currently available and future jobs - the ARRA authorized \$3,950,000,000 for increased training and services through the WIA Program.

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.recovery.gov/About/Pages/The\\_Act.aspx](http://www.recovery.gov/About/Pages/The_Act.aspx)

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.recovery.gov/About/Pages/The\\_Act.aspx](http://www.recovery.gov/About/Pages/The_Act.aspx)

# Funding

Illinois's allotment of \$156,526,665 for WIA adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs represents approximately 6% of the funds allotted nationally for these purposes. Figure 1 reflects ARRA WIA funds allocated by the State to the

metropolitan Chicago region – totaling more than \$90 million. The funds reflected in Figure 1 represent both administrative funds (up to 10% of total allotment) and program funds.

Metropolitan Chicago Region ARRA WIA Funds Available by Local Workforce Area Figure 1					
Local Workforce Investment Area	Adult Program	Dislocated Worker Program	Youth Program	Total Funds	& of Regional Funds
Lake County	\$1,104,266	\$2,002,506	\$2,441,257	\$5,548,029	6.1%
McHenry County	\$333,671	\$1,125,554	\$592,093	\$2,051,318	2.3%
Kane, DeKalb, & Kendall Counties	\$977,949	2,647,569	\$2,149,726	\$5,775,244	6.4%
DuPage County	\$538,404	\$3,283,403	\$1,458,570	\$5,280,377	5.8%
South Cook County	\$2,524,025	\$8,935,712	\$5,676,547	\$17,136,284	19.0%
North Cook County	\$808,524	\$3,418,830	\$2,087,677	\$6,315,031	7.0%
Chicago	\$9,066,108	\$14,361,990	\$17,390,077	\$40,818,175	45.1%
Will County	\$917,687	\$1,776,543	\$2,058,862	\$4,753,092	5.3%
Grundy, Livingston & Kankakee Counties	\$429,689	\$1,376,935	\$910,085	\$2,716,709	3.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$16,700,323</b>	<b>\$38,929,042</b>	<b>\$34,764,894</b>	<b>\$90,394,259</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: WIA Notices No. 08-NOT-33, Attachments B and D and No. 09-ARRA-04, Attachment B issued by the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and verified by local areas

The WIA Program and supplemental ARRA funds are administered through One Stops throughout the metropolitan region under the oversight of Workforce Boards. With these additional funds, individuals have received career planning assistance and education/training that has increased their marketability by updating, expanding or acquiring the skills and certifications needed for new, high demand careers. For many, job search assistance has provided them with access to technology and tools that enable them to conduct a competitive job search. Additionally, ARRA funds provided youth with employment during the summers of 2009 and 2010 and work experience opportunities for young people having difficulty entering the workforce.

Data presented in Figure 2 reflects activities through June 30, 2010. In terms of adult program funds, 94.4% of the region's funds are committed, with four of the nine local areas' funds fully committed. In three of the nine local areas, dislocated worker funds are fully committed; 87.2% of the region's total dislocated funds are committed. The youth program funds are depleted in all areas but South Cook. It is anticipated that ARRA funds in the metropolitan Chicago region will be fully expended by June 30, 2011. In fact, there will be few opportunities for additional individuals to benefit from ARRA WIA funds in the metropolitan Chicago region other than through program initiatives supported with federal competitive grants that have been or will be awarded in the future.

Figure 2 identifies funds available for program services and training. The minimum amount to be expended on the delivery of program services that directly benefit dislocated workers, adults, and youth and the amount and percentage of those funds committed for current program enrollees are reflected. For example, costs associated with individuals completing their training or educational programs are included in the "Program Funds Committed" columns. Two things to note, the amount of funds committed may exceed the minimum program funds if the Workforce Board elected to utilize some of its available administration funds for program purposes. Additionally, the ARRA grants expire June 30, 2011; the Workforce Boards have until then to fully expend funds.



Metropolitan Chicago Region  
ARRA WIA Program Funds Committed as of June 2010  
Figure 2

Local Workforce Investment Area	Adult Program			Dislocated Worker Program			Youth Program		
	Minimum Program Funds to be Expended	Program Funds Committed as of June 2010	Committed Funds % of Minimum Required	Minimum Program Funds to be Expended	Program Funds Committed as of June 2010	Committed Funds % of Minimum Required	Minimum Program Funds to be Expended	Program Funds Committed as of June 2010	Committed Funds % of Minimum Required
Lake County	\$993,840	\$895,212	90.1%	1,802,255	\$1,726,121	95.8%	\$2,197,132	\$2,259,488	102.8%
McHenry County	\$300,304	\$258,020	85.9%	\$1,012,999	\$856,835	84.6%	\$532,887	\$532,887	100.0%
Kane, DeKalb, & Kendall Counties	\$880,155	\$851,324	96.7%	\$2,382,813	\$2,059,069	86.4%	\$1,934,754	\$2,039,996	105.5%
DuPage County	\$484,564	\$555,303	114.6%	\$2,955,063	\$2,529,432	85.6%	\$1,312,713	\$1,333,785	101.6%
South Cook County	\$2,271,623	\$1,841,167	81.1%	\$8,042,142	\$8,042,143	100%	\$5,108,893	\$4,243,567	83.1%
North Cook County	\$727,672	\$727,671	100.0%	\$3,076,948	\$2,546,198	82.8	\$1,878,910	\$1,878,910	100.0%
Chicago	\$8,379,396	\$8,054,585	96.1%	\$12,925,792	\$9,933,289	76.8%	\$15,651,070	\$16,811,506	107.4%
Will County	\$725,919	\$725,919	100.0%	\$1,698,889	\$1,698,889	100.0%	\$1,852,976	\$1,852,976	100.0%
Grundy, Livingston & Kankakee Counties	\$386,721	\$388,558	100.5%	\$1,239,242	\$1,239,767	100.0%	\$819,077	\$819,077	100.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$15,150,194</b>	<b>\$14,297,759</b>	<b>94.4%</b>	<b>\$35,136,143</b>	<b>\$30,631,743</b>	<b>87.2%</b>	<b>\$31,288,412</b>	<b>\$31,772,192</b>	<b>101.5%</b>

Source: Information provided by local areas. Local areas may utilize administrative funds to support program costs; therefore, funds committed may exceed the minimum that is required. Local areas have until June 2011 to fully expend ARRA WIA funds.

# ARRA Dislocated Worker Program

With unemployment rates of 9.8% for the region (August 2010), there is no shortage of individuals in need of ARRA dislocated worker services. ARRA dislocated worker funds are intended to assist individuals who have been terminated or laid off and are unlikely to find employment in their previous industry or occupation, individuals who will be or are unemployed due to a plant closure, self-employed individuals who are unemployed as a result of general economic conditions in the community, and unemployed or underemployed displaced homemakers who have lost their financial support.<sup>3</sup> Guidance issued by the U.S. Department of Labor regarding the use of ARRA WIA funds emphasized the need for dislocated workers to be provided assistance in assessing their skills, abilities and career goals and mapping those skills again current and anticipated jobs.<sup>4</sup>

As of June 20, 2010 (Figure 3), a total of 5,956 individuals have been enrolled in the Dislocated Worker Program, with 43% being female and 57% being male. Almost all of these individuals are over 22 years of age (99%). In terms of self-reported race/ethnicity, almost half are White (49%) followed by Black (34%) and Hispanics (18%). The region's enrollments represent 64% of the State's total enrollments. Asians served in the region represent 92% of the State's total Asian enrollments, the region's Hispanic enrollments represent 85% of the State's Hispanic enrollments, and the region's Black enrollments account for 85% of the State's Black enrollments.

Figure 4 provides information on the educational attainment and barriers of dislocated workers enrolled in the program. Dislocated workers with a high school diploma or equivalency account for 35% of the program enrollees. As evidence of how competitive the labor market is, over 50% of the individuals have post secondary education or training with almost 30% being college graduates. In terms of educational barriers, 36% have less than 9th grade math skills, 17% are functioning at less than a 9th grade reading level, and 27% have basic skill deficiencies. These factors impact an individual's acceptance into and success in high skill, high demand occupational training programs.



Metropolitan Chicago Region Demographics of Individuals Enrolled in the ARRA WIA Dislocated Worker Program Figure 3				
	Region Total	% of Region	Region % of State	State Total
<b>Total Dislocated Workers</b>	<b>5,956</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>63.5%</b>	<b>9,384</b>
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	3,370	56.6%	62.7%	5,373
Female	2,586	43.4%	64.5%	4,011
<b>Age</b>				
14 - 18	1	<1.0%	100%	1
19-21	44	<1.0%	41.1%	107
22+	5,911	99.2%	63.7%	9,276
<b>Race/Ethnic Group</b>				
White	2,933	49.2%	50.7%	5,788
Black	1,996	33.5%	84.8%	2,353
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	12	<1.0%	60.0%	20
American Indian/Alaskan Native	17	<1.0%	44.7%	38
Asian	348	5.8%	92.1%	378
Hispanic	1,051	17.6%	85.2%	1,233
Declined	673	11.3%	79.3%	849

Source: Illinois Workforce Development System, Program/Activity Summary for the period of 7/1/09 to 6/30/10, report generated 8/24/10.

Metropolitan Chicago Region Educational Attainment and Barriers of Individuals Enrolled in the ARRA WIA Dislocated Worker Program Figure 4				
	Region Total	% of Region	Region % of State	State Total
<b>Total Dislocated Workers</b>	<b>5,956</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>63.5%</b>	<b>9,384</b>
<b>Educational Attainment</b>				
Dropout	212	3.6%	49.5%	428
Student	2	<1.0%	33.3%	6
HS Graduate	2,055	34.5%	56.7%	3,623
Post HS Attendee	1,270	21.3%	56.6%	2,244
College Graduate	1,722	28.9%	88.8%	1,940
Status Not provided	695	11.7%	60.8%	1,143
<b>Educational Barriers</b>				
Reading Level <9th Grade	1,036	17.4%	62.1%	1,667
Math Level <9 Grade	2,169	36.4%	60.1%	3,606
Basic Skills Deficient	1,625	27.3%	55.0%	2,955
Behind Grade Level	8	<1.0%	34.8%	23

Source: Illinois Workforce Development System, Program/Activity Summary for the period of 7/1/09 to 6/30/10, report generated 8/24/10.

<sup>3</sup> The general description of individuals eligible to receive assistance through the Dislocated Worker Program does not provide detail of legislated eligibility requirements for the program.

<sup>4</sup> Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 14-08, U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration, March 18, 2009, page 14.

Figure 5 provides data regarding unemployment insurance and family status of dislocated workers. It is not surprising that 93% of the dislocated workers are receiving unemployment insurance benefits. The region's dislocated workers represent 64% of the State's total dislocated worker enrollments and the proportion of individuals receiving unemployment insurance benefits (region % of state) is fairly consistent at 65%. In terms of family status, 40% of the individuals are parents, with 27% being two parent families.

Metropolitan Chicago Region UI and Family Status of Individuals Enrolled in the ARRA WIA Dislocated Worker Program Figure 5				
	Region Total	% of Region	Region % of State	State Total
<b>Total Dislocated Workers</b>	<b>5,956</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>63.5%</b>	<b>9,384</b>
<b>Unemployment Insurance Benefits</b>				
UI Claimant Eligible/Not Receiving	129	2.2%	40.3%	320
Receiving Benefits	5,523	92.7%	64.6%	8,553
Exhausted Benefits	188	3.2%	82.8%	227
Not Eligible/Not Determined	116	1.9%	40.8%	284
<b>Family Status</b>				
Parent/One Parent	774	13.0%	57.1%	1,356
Parent/Two Parent	1,633	27.4%	58.4%	2,798
Other Family Member	1,206	20.2%	58.5%	2,062
Not Family Member	2,315	38.9%	74.2%	3,121

Source: Illinois Workforce Development System, Program/Activity Summary for the period of 7/1/09 to 6/30/10, report generated 8/24/10.

### Innovative Program Design

The Workforce Investment Board of Will County used ARRA funds to launch a class-size program designed for dislocated electricians around training for renewable energy resources. The program included the fundamentals of basic electrical, variable frequency drives, power quality, wind turbines, and installing photovoltaic systems. The high demand for installing and maintaining wind turbines is creating a shortage of trained and qualified wind energy technicians, or windsmiths, who provide maintenance on the turbines. Wind Turbine Technical component prepares individuals to work in the emerging wind power energy industry, the design and installation of photovoltaic systems, and involves actual hands-on work with PV systems and equipment. This component is designed to develop a "system-knowledgeable" professional to help ensure the safety and quality of PV system installations.

Figure 6 provides an overview of services and training provided through the Dislocated Worker Program supported with ARRA funds; the data is not all inclusive of services provided. As of June 30, 2010, a total of 3,545 individuals (60% of total enrollments) were in training. Of the individuals in training, 94% (3,545) received occupational classroom training. A total of 442 individuals received training for a "green" occupation. In terms of services, 76% received career planning assistance which is particularly important for career changers - those individuals displaced from occupations which in all likelihood will not be in demand even after the economy recovers. Job search assistance was made available to 48% of the dislocated workers and 18% received job search skills instruction which likely was in the form of workshops addressing resume preparation, interviewing techniques, and job search tools.

Metropolitan Chicago Region ARRA WIA Dislocated Worker Program Training and Services Figure 6				
Services/Training	Region Total	% of Region	Region % of State	State Total
<b>Total Dislocated Workers</b>	<b>5,956</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>63.5%</b>	<b>9,384</b>
<b>Training</b>				
Occupational Classroom Training	3,337	56.0%	65.5%	5,098
Private Sector OJT	51	< 1.0%	50.0%	102
Green Training	442	7.4%	61.0%	724
<b>Services</b>				
Career Planning	4,525	76.0%	71.7%	6,314
Case Management	1,258	21.1%	44.7%	2,813
Other Job Search Assistance	2,868	48.2%	94.7%	3,028
Job Search Skills Training	1,084	18.2%	97.1%	1,116

Source: Illinois Workforce Development System, Program/Activity Summary for the period of 7/1/09 to 6/30/10, report generated 8/24/10.



# ARRA Economically Disadvantaged Adult Program

The intent of ARRA adult funds is to assist an increased number of low income adults with their entry or re-entry into the job market. Recognizing that individuals may need to up-skill or re-skill to compete for limited jobs, One Stops were encouraged to provide career guidance/assistance utilizing labor market data to support their identification of career goals, supportive services and needs based payments to address financial needs, and training for high growth occupations.<sup>5</sup>

As of June 20, 2010, a total of 3,959 economically disadvantaged individuals have been enrolled in WIA programs, with almost 62% being female and 38% being male (Figure 7). The majority of these individuals are over 22 years of age. In terms of self-reported race/ethnicity, the majority are Black (62%) followed by White (24%). While overall the region's enrollments represent 70.8% of the State's total enrollments, Hispanics served in the region represent 90% of the State's total Hispanic enrollments, the region's Asian enrollments represent 90% of the State's Asian enrollments, and the region's Black enrollments represent 85% of the State's Black enrollments.

Metropolitan Chicago Region Demographics of Individuals Enrolled in the ARRA WIA Adult Program Figure 7				
	Region Total	% of Region	Region % of State	State Total
<b>Total Economically Disadvantaged Adults</b>	<b>3,959</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>70.8%</b>	<b>5,591</b>
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	1,514	38.2%	76.2%	1,989
Female	2,445	61.8%	68.4%	3,572
<b>Age</b>				
14-18	19	< 1.0%	42.2%	45
19-21	168	2.7%	56.0%	300
22+	3,772	95.3%	71.9%	5,246
<b>Race/Ethnic Group</b>				
White	936	23.6%	45.4%	2,063
Black	2,439	61.6%	84.9%	2,872
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	7	< 1.0%	63.6%	11
American Indian/Alaskan Native	13	< 1.0%	41.9%	31
Asian	88	2.2%	89.8%	98
Hispanic	661	16.7%	90.2%	733
Declined to Answer	498	12.6%	88.6%	562

Source: Illinois Workforce Development System, Program/Activity Summary for the period of 7/1/09 to 6/30/10, report generated 8/24/10.

Metropolitan Chicago Region Educational Attainment and Barriers of Individuals Enrolled in the ARRA WIA Adult Program Figure 8				
	Region Total	% of Region	Region % of State	State Total
<b>Total Economically Disadvantaged Adults</b>	<b>3,959</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>70.8%</b>	<b>5,591</b>
<b>Educational Attainment</b>				
Dropout	229	5.8%	63.3%	362
Student	4	<1.0%	26.7%	15
HS Graduate	1,490	37.6%	75.2%	1,981
Post HS Attendee	1,180	29.8%	63.4%	1,860
College Graduate	518	13.1%	90.7%	571
Status Not provided	538	13.6%	67.1%	802
<b>Educational Barriers</b>				
Reading Level <9th Grade	718	18.1%	77.3%	929
Math Level <9 Grade	1,541	38.9%	76.9%	2,004
Basic Skills Deficient	1,166	29.5%	73.2%	1,592
Behind Grade Level	10	<1.0%	43.5%	23

Source: Illinois Workforce Development System, Program/Activity Summary for the period of 7/1/09 to 6/30/10, report generated 8/24/10.

In terms of educational attainment (Figure 8), 38% of adults enrolled in the region's programs have either a high school diploma or equivalency. Approximately 43% of the adults have some post secondary education or training and 13% of those have a college degree. With respect to educational barriers, 39% have less than a 9th grade math level and 18% have less than a 9th grade reading level – although only 6% are classified as not completing high school.



<sup>5</sup> Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 14-08, U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration, March 18, 2009, page 10.

Figure 9 data provides some insight regarding the economic and family status of adults benefitting from ARRA WIA training and services. The majority of these individuals, approximately 73%, are not receiving unemployment insurance benefits. Additionally, almost 86% are classified as low income and 60% are Food Stamp recipients. Half of the individuals enrolled in the ARRA WIA adult program are parents, with 37% being a single parent.

Metropolitan Chicago Region Economic and Family Status of Individuals Enrolled in the ARRA WIA Adult Program Figure 9				
	Region Total	% of Region	Region % of State	State Total
<b>Total Adults</b>	<b>3,959</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>70.8%</b>	<b>5,591</b>
<b>Unemployment Insurance Benefits</b>				
UI Claimant Eligible/Not Receiving	172	4.3%	80.4%	214
Receiving Benefits	1,072	27.1%	80.0%	1,340
Exhausted Benefits	112	2.8%	84.2%	133
Not Eligible/Not Determined	2,603	65.7%	66.7%	3,904
TANF Recipient	77	1.9%	72.6%	106
Food Stamp Recipient	2,388	60.3%	69.2%	3,449
Low Income	3,392	85.7%	70.9%	4,786
Non Economically Disadvantaged	567	14.3%	70.4%	805
Under Employed	101	2.6%	27.6%	366
<b>Family Status</b>				
Parent/One Parent	1,473	37.2%	69.2%	2,130
Parent/Two Parent	502	12.7%	61.7%	814
Other Family Member	401	10.1%	61.5%	652
Not Family Member	1,575	39.8%	79.5%	1,982

Source: Illinois Workforce Development System, Program/Activity Summary for the period of 7/1/09 to 6/30/10, report generated 8/24/10.

Figure 10 provides information about services and training provided to economically disadvantaged adults; the data is not all inclusive but does provide a general picture of services and training adults have received through the program. As of June 30, 2010, a total of 1,722 individuals (43.5%) were enrolled in training. Training for “green” occupations has been a priority of the Obama administration; 127 adults have been enrolled in “green” training. In terms of services, 80% received career planning assistance which could include testing and assessment, career guidance regarding suitable careers to pursue based on skills, abilities, and interests, and access to labor market information which provides individuals with an understanding of demand occupations and high growth industries, anticipated earnings, and educational/training requirements.

Job search assistance was made available to 51% which likely included access to computer-based resources to support their job search (e.g., identification of job postings, submission of applications, networking, etc.), resume preparation, and research related to employers and industries in preparation for interviews.

Metropolitan Chicago Region ARRA WIA Adult Program Training and Services Figure 10				
Services/Training	Region Total	% of Region	Region % of State	State Total
<b>Total Economically Disadvantaged Adults</b>	<b>3,959</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>70.8%</b>	<b>5,591</b>
<b>Training</b>				
Occupational Classroom Training	1,668	42.1%	58.2%	2,868
Short Term Pre-Vocational ...Skills Training	128	3.2%	75.7%	169
Green Training	127	3.2%	39.8%	319
<b>Services</b>				
Career Planning	3,188	80.5%	75.7%	4,210
Case Management Services	847	21.4%	65.2%	1,300
Other Job Search Assistance	2,030	51.3%	93.1%	2,181
Job Search Skills Training	407	10.3%	95.8%	425
Job Referral and Placement	1,790	45.2%	95.0%	1,885

Source: Illinois Workforce Development System, Program/Activity Summary for the period of 7/1/09 to 6/30/10, report generated 8/24/10.

### Innovative Program Design

The Workforce Board of Northern Cook County has made additional ARRA funds available to the area’s community colleges to deliver intensive services to participants that have completed occupational training and/or skills upgrades. Harper College’s capstone job search and readiness program provides ARRA WIA students with a competitive advantage in securing employment. Services include:

- Job-ready Skill Assessment
- Technical Computer Skill Assessment
- Career Readiness Course – self esteem building, accountability, business image, business writing
- Communication Skills – interviewing techniques, presentation skills
- Resume Review
- Computer Workplace Skills – keyboards, Word, Excel, portfolio development, Microsoft exam prep
- Stress Management
- Use of Social Media in Job Search

## ARRA Youth Program

Even though ARRA youth funds could be used for multiple activities as authorized under WIA and did not have to be fully expended until June 30, 2011, local areas were strongly encouraged to utilize funds in providing employment opportunities to youth during the summer of 2009. Accordingly the bulk of youth funds in the metropolitan Chicago region did just that – providing employment opportunities to almost 13,000 young people.

As of June 20, 2010, a total of 13,059 youth have been enrolled in the region’s youth programs (Figure 11). Females account for 55% of the youth and 45% are male. The majority of youth are 14 to 18 years of age (64%), 27% are 19 to 21 years, and, 9% are 22 to 24 years. In terms of self-reported race/ethnicity, almost 71% are Black, followed by White (16%) and Hispanic (16%). Overall, the region’s youth enrollments represent 72% of State enrollments.

Metropolitan Chicago Region Demographics of Individuals Enrolled in the ARRA WIA Youth Program Figure 11				
	Region Total	% of Region	Region % of State	State Total
<b>Total Youth</b>	<b>13,059</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>72.3%</b>	<b>18,073</b>
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	5,940	45.5%	70.6%	8,414
Female	7,119	54.5%	73.8%	9,644
<b>Age</b>				
14-18	8,305	63.6%	86.1%	11,236
19-21	3,547	27.2%	71.6%	4,952
22 - 24	1,207	9.2%	64.0%	1,885
<b>Race/Ethnic Group</b>				
White	2,080	15.9%	45.6%	4,558
Black	9,319	71.4%	79.5%	11,720
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	57	<1.0%	96.6%	59
American Indian/Alaskan Native	127	<1.0%	87.6%	145
Asian	176	1.3%	89.8%	196
Hispanic	2,053	15.7%	89.9%	2,284

Source: Illinois Workforce Development System, Program/Activity Summary for the period of 7/1/09 to 6/30/10, report generated 8/24/10.

Metropolitan Chicago Region Educational Attainment and Barriers of Individuals Enrolled in the ARRA WIA Youth Program Figure 12				
	Region Total	% of Region	Region % of State	State Total
<b>Total Youth</b>	<b>13,059</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>72.3%</b>	<b>18,073</b>
<b>Educational Attainment</b>				
Dropout	1,242	9.5%	59.6%	2,085
Student	6,770	51.8%	73.8%	9,177
HS Graduate	2,300	17.6%	70.0%	3,288
Post HS Attendee	1,825	14.0%	79.7%	2,291
College Graduate	84	<1.0%	77.1%	109
<b>Educational Barriers</b>				
Reading Level <9th Grade	1,952	14.9%	68.6%	2,847
Math Level <9 Grade	2,338	17.9%	66.5%	3,515
Basic Skills Deficient	2,741	21.0%	68.6%	3,996
Behind Grade Level	640	4.9%	64.6%	991

Source: Illinois Workforce Development System, Program/Activity Summary for the period of 7/1/09 to 6/30/10, report generated 8/24/10.

Figure 12 identifies educational attainment and barriers of youth enrolled in the region’s program. Only 10% are dropouts with the majority still being students (52%). High school graduates account for 18% of the youth and 14% are attending post secondary education or training. In terms of educational barriers, 18% are functioning at a 9th grade or less math level and 15% have reading skills at less than the 9th grade level. Both of these indicators are better than the adult (math 39% and reading 18%) and dislocated worker populations (math 36% and reading 17%).





Figure 13 provides an overview of activities supported with ARRA youth funds. As was the intent of the legislation, 99% of the youth participated in the summer program and 98% were provided an opportunity to work. As part of the program, many youth received job search skills training (68%) which was of immediate benefit to out-of-school youth and provides future benefit to those returning to school.

Metropolitan Chicago Region ARRA WIA Youth Program Training and Services Figure 13				
	Region Total	% of Region	Region % of State	State Total
Total Youth	13,059	100.0%	72.3%	18,073
Summer Program	12,901	98.8%	73.5%	17,549
Work Related Services	457	3.5%	73.7%	620
Transportation	1,644	12.6%	62.3%	2,637
Cash Incentives/Stipends	905	6.9%	43.4%	2,087
Job Search Skills Training	8,833	67.6%	95.2%	9,283
Paid Work Experience	12,765	97.7%	73.6%	17,343
Short Term Pre-Vocational Skills Training	792	6.1%	75.5%	1,049
Career Planning	664	5.1%	49.9%	1,331

Source: Illinois Workforce Development System, Program/Activity Summary for the period of 7/1/09 to 6/30/10, report generated 8/24/10.



## Conclusion

While there has been criticism regarding how quickly ARRA activities have been implemented, this report provides evidence that supplemental ARRA WIA funding has already benefitted almost 23,000 individuals in the metropolitan Chicago region. The demand for assistance in identifying careers that offer employment opportunities, obtaining the education and training needed to qualify for high demand jobs, and conducting effective job searches have resulted in almost full utilization of available ARRA WIA resources. Workforce Boards in cooperation with One Stops have demonstrated that the nation’s current workforce development system is effective in quickly deploying resources and providing individuals with education, training, and services that maximize their success in securing employment.

*Following is an excerpt from a note received by a career counselor at the DuPage County One Stop from an individual who benefitted from ARRA WIA training.*

“Good news! I have accepted a job offer at a nearby company in Lisle. As a Project Manager for the first 3-6 months I'll be working with the various teams learning the alternative energy side of their business. Then I'll be forming a product team to develop Smart Grid and Alternative Energy services. Exactly what I wanted to do! Thanks for your help, encouragement, and training support this last year! The project management and renewable energy training I took hit the nail on the head. Exactly what I needed to land the job.”

*Most Sincerely  
Bruce Jones*