

TRANSMITTAL # 7

MEMORANDUM

February 24, 2010

TO: Workforce Development Council

FROM: Roger B. Madsen, Director *Roger B. Madsen*

SUBJECT: ARRA 15% Funds and the Idaho Youth Corps

ACTION REQUESTED: Use of Governor's ARRA 15% Discretionary Funds for Summer Youth Work Experience Opportunities

BACKGROUND:

The Workforce Development Council on April 8, 2009, approved a set-aside of \$50,000 for each area to develop projects in concert with industry and education that offer training opportunities in alternative energy, health care, advanced manufacturing and other high-growth occupations offering good wages. An overview of the proposed regional projects was presented and approved at the September 2009 Executive Committee meeting. The project descriptions from that transmittal are attached for reference.

State staff's recent review of these projects noted that four regions have successfully established the necessary industry and education partnerships to expend funds: \$50,000 in Region I, \$30,000 in Region II and \$50,000 in a project jointly operating in Regions V and VI. As of this writing, Region III is considering a health care apprenticeship in long term care. The feasibility of this opportunity will be determined prior to our meeting on the 24th of February. Due to the current economic situation, other regional partnerships to increase training opportunities have not yet come to fruition and local partners do not anticipate any expenditure prior to the expiration date of ARRA funding in June of 2011. There will be between \$120,000 and \$170,000 remaining at the end of the ARRA program if no other plans are made for the use of these funds.

After the success of last year's WIA Summer Youth Employment Program Governor Butch Otter asked state staff to reach out to private and governmental entities to establish partnerships to provide summer employment opportunities in 2010 for low-income, high risk youth. Currently, the Panhandle, Clearwater/Nez Perce, Boise/Payette National Forests, and the City of Meridian have committed up to \$155,000 to match WIA funds for summer employment projects. Other forests and non-profits have voiced an interest in participating, but have not yet identified match capacity.

In spite of its popularity across the country, we do not expect any additional Federal funding for a summer program this year because of budget deficits. In the budget delivered to Congress, the Obama Administration proposed a competitive opportunity for funding during the summer of 2011. The Department has a proposal before the Idaho Legislature to allow the Department to accept private funding for operation of the Summer Youth Program, called the Idaho Youth Corps. This would allow further expansion of the program that proved so popular through a public-private partnership.

RECOMMENDATION: To ensure timely expenditure of the Governor's 15% funds and to support the Governor's interest in providing summer employment opportunities for targeted youth, staff recommends shifting the balance of these 15% discretionary funds to support WIA summer work experience opportunities.

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PROPOSED 15% PROJECTS

Region I – Northern Idaho

Long-term health providers have a critical need for licensed practical nurses, particularly in rural communities, which have trouble attracting registered and licensed practical nurses. Existing entry-level workers lack resources and access for advanced training in the health care industry. The set-aside will finance a contract with North Idaho College for an online Licensed Practical Nurses Program for 10 currently employed certified nurse assistants living in rural communities. This will provide greater access to training, advanced career opportunities for new and existing workers and the beginning of a solution to the rural nursing shortage. North Idaho College will deliver laboratory and clinical experience at the students' places of employment. The Department of Labor will use local Workforce Investment Act training resources to pay for the training.

Region II - North Central Idaho

To increase employment opportunities in rural communities, the set-aside will support training in health care and the skilled trades involved with plumbing, electrical and heating and cooling. Lewis-Clark State College will be hired to develop a blended on-line phlebotomy course that will provide rural citizens with entry level employment opportunities in physician's offices, acute- and long-term care facilities, laboratories and outpatient clinics. To broaden access to training in skilled trades for those living long distances from Lewis-Clark State College, the school will develop an online Plumbing/Electrical/HVAC Apprenticeship Program. The college and the Department of Labor will work together to determine course priorities. The Department of Labor will use local Workforce Investment Act training resources to pay for the training.

Region III – Southwestern Idaho

This area will target health care and is currently working on two possibilities. With a growing need for career advancement opportunities and skill certification among low-income workers and high school students, one creates an incumbent worker training program at St. Luke's Regional Medical Center – upgrading skills so existing entry level employees can qualify for higher higher-level jobs. St. Luke's will match the financial commitment. The other involves working with local high schools and the College of Western Idaho to develop a CNA-LPN bridge program for students participating in Meridian High School's CNA program. The Department of Labor will use local Workforce Investment Act training resources to pay for the training.

Region IV – South Central Idaho

The dairy and cheese processing industry is one of south central Idaho's largest. The cheese industry in particular has expressed difficulty with recruiting and retaining quality workers. The set-aside will be used in partnership with TechHelp to develop training sessions in general food technology and whey processing for existing and new workers. The industry will provide a match for the development and delivery of training. The Department of Labor will use local Workforce Investment Act training resources to pay for the training.

Region V and VI – Eastern and Southeastern Idaho

Alternative energy and health care continue to expand in eastern Idaho, and the region is facing a current and future work force shortage. In response the region will educate at-risk youth on the growing opportunities in these sectors, broadening their awareness of the career pathways in the energy and health care fields. The region will host career exploration and information events in the fields of energy and health care. The exploration day will involve campus and program tours, hands-on experience, labor market information on the Workforce Investment Act and presentations by professionals in various aspects of these sectors along with a discussion of the next steps towards pursuing careers in these sectors. These events will be funded by Eastern Idaho Regional Medical Center, Eastern Idaho Technical College, Partners for Prosperity, the Energy System Technology Center and the Regional Workforce Innovation Team. The Idaho Department of Labor will use the \$50,000 awarded by the council to support training expenses for at-risk youth in health care or alternative energy programs.