

THE AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT OF 2009
(ARRA)
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

1. What is ARRA?

On February 17, 2009, President Obama signed into law the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The legislation contains key investments that will prevent the loss of health coverage, promote prevention programs and lower health care spending for our nation during these challenging economic times. To help older Americans maintain their health and independence, the legislation includes \$100 million for meals and nutrition services under the Older Americans Act (OAA) as specified below:

- \$65 million for congregate nutrition services under Title III;
- \$32 million for home-delivered nutrition services under Title III; and
- \$3 million for Native American nutrition services under Title VI.

2. How will ARRA help older adults and local communities?

These funds will assist communities and the national aging services network hit hard by rising food costs at a time when demand for services is increasing due to the economic downturn and the growing number of older adults. The funds will provide meals to seniors in need of food, restore nutrition services that have been cut and restore positions which may have been eliminated or reduced.

3. When will the ARRA nutrition funds be made available to States and Native American grantees?

Awards to States are available as of mid-March, however; States will not be able to draw down funds until they sign and return the Governor's certification of ARRA funds usage. The Governor only needs to provide one certification for all ARRA funds received in the state, rather than a separate certification for each state agency/program. The Department of Health and Human Services has sent notice to all Governors regarding the procedure for submitting the certification.

As for Tribes, our first priority was to issue the regular Title VI grants to the Tribes which was completed on April 1, 2009 to ensure continuation of their program. We will be issuing the ARRA grants shortly.

4. How will ARRA funds be distributed to States and Title VI grantees?

The ARRA funds will be distributed to States by a population-based formula that takes into account the Older Americans Act (OAA) Title III interstate funding formula minimums, and the 60+ population of each State. The FY 2009 appropriations will satisfy the OAA statutory formula which, in addition to funding minimums and the 60+

population, includes the FY 2006 hold harmless factor, and the guaranteed growth factor which is phased out over five years.

The ARRA funds will be distributed to Title VI grantees by a population-based formula that is used to distributed OAA Title VI funds. This formula takes into account the number of Native American elders, age 60 and older, within a grantee's service area, as defined by the grantee in their approved Title VI grant application.

5. Are states required to use their existing intrastate funding formulas (IFF) for distributing ARRA funds within the state?

States are encouraged to use their existing IFFs as doing so is efficient and defensible, however; this is not required.

6. What is the time frame for expenditure of the ARRA funds?

While funds are appropriated for a two-year period, AoA will obligate all of the ARRA funds as soon as possible. Consistent with the intent of the legislation, the timely obligation of funds by State and Tribal programs is imperative in order to address reported funding cutbacks, impending program closures and waiting lists throughout the country. States are required to obligate all ARRA funds on or before September 30, 2010 and must expend all funds by December 30, 2010.

7. Will State match (non-Federal share) be required for the ARRA funds?

Non-Federal share requirements that mirror the Title III-C service match requirements, i.e., 15%, will be in place for ARRA funds. Technical assistance will be provided to assist States in reaching match requirements through both cash and in-kind sources. There is no specific requirement for cash match or for a percentage of the non-Federal share to come from State sources.

To be used as match for ARRA funds, in-kind contributions must meet the same grant requirements as cash match for OAA funds. The contribution must be verifiable and the records must show how the value of the in-kind contribution was determined. That valuation must be reasonable and is subject to audit. Examples of such in-kind contributions include, but are not limited to:

- volunteer services;
- donated time of employees of other organizations;
- donated supplies and loaned equipment;
- utilities; and
- space.

8. Will States be allowed to transfer ARRA funding for meals to other OAA programs and/or between the congregate and home delivered allocations?

The purpose of the ARRA funds is to increase the number of congregate and home delivered meals provided to older adults, and required reporting must document such increases. To that end, no transfer of ARRA funds will be permitted.

9. Will the ARRA funds be included in the calculation of maintenance of effort requirements (MOE)?

The ARRA funds are considered to be a one time allocation and will not be included in the calculation of MOE.

10. Are ARRA funds subject to OAA non-supplantation requirements?

The ARRA funds are designed, in part, to help address the decrease in state and local funds available during the current economic downturn. To that end, ARRA funds may be used to replace already existing or planned cuts to nutrition programs, however; ARRA funds should not serve as a reason to make new cuts to nutrition services.

11. Will States and area agencies on aging (AAAs) be allowed to use a portion of the ARRA funds for administration?

A reasonable amount of the ARRA funds may be used for administrative purposes, however; the tracking of such use will be stringent and States are to expend the bulk of the funds for meal provision. The Office of Inspector General is charged with tracking the ARRA funds in order to ensure reasonable and allowable costs, accountability and transparency. States may want to use OAA Title III provisions in determining reasonable funding amounts for administrative activities.

12. Can the ARRA funds be used for the purchase of equipment?

The ARRA funds are allocated by Congress to expand the provision of meals, therefore; if equipment is needed in order to provide more meals, States, AAAs and Title VI grantees are encouraged to make such purchases from the regular FY 2009 OAA appropriations.

13. Do ARRA meals have to meet the minimum DRIs?

In order to assure proper nutrition for older adults, meeting the DRIs with ARRA meals is strongly encouraged. Registered dietitians can assist states with meeting the DRIs by using daily or weekly meal averages for meals served. Be advised that only those ARRA meals that do meet the DRIs and all other OAA Title III/VI requirements may be counted for NSIP funds.

14. Will the meals provided with ARRA funds count toward the Nutrition Services Incentive Program (NSIP) allocations?

All meals provided with ARRA funds that meet the same criteria as OAA Title III/VI meals may be counted toward NSIP allocations.

15. Can ARRA funds be used to purchase meals for disaster response?

ARRA funds may be used to purchase meals for disaster response so long as the meals are tracked and are served to individuals consistent with OAA C1 and C2 provisions i.e., older adults, spouses, etc.

16. Can ARRA funds be used to fund nutrition education and nutrition counseling?

Yes, ARRA funds may be used to fund nutrition education and counseling, however; the primary purpose of the funds is to provide congregate and home delivered meals and to create or retain jobs associated with the provision of meals.

17. What type of reporting will be required for ARRA funds?

While specific reporting requirements are still being finalized, States and Tribes will be required to report ARRA data on a quarterly basis via an on-line, internet based system. This data may include the number of home delivered and congregate meals provided, number of people served, number of jobs created and/or retained, as well as, the amount of ARRA funds expended. On Recovery.gov OMB guidance now includes for ARRA funds:

- Expected quantifiable outcomes
- Items to be reported for federal funding in Section 2.9

<http://www.recovery.gov/files/Initial%20Recovery%20Act%20Implementing%20Guidance.pdf>

18. Who should States and Tribes contact for additional information on ARRA?

States and Tribes should contact their respective Regional AoA offices with questions and/or requests for additional information.

Note: The activities described in these FAQs are being funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

To track the progress of HHS activities funded through the ARRA, visit www.hhs.gov/recovery.

To track all federal funds provided through the ARRA, visit www.recovery.gov.