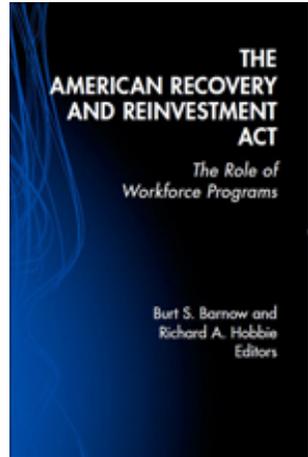


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Other Related Initiatives: Labor Market Information, Green Jobs, and Subsidized Employment

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Capital Research Corporation



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7

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The Recovery Act affected many aspects of the workforce investment system. This section summarizes provisions that were separate from but interacted with the act's provisions for Workforce Investment Act (WIA), Wagner-Peyser, Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), and Unemployment Insurance (UI) programs in at least some of the states included in this study. The three areas discussed here are 1) labor market information (LMI) improvements, 2) green jobs initiatives, and 3) implementation of the subsidized employment programs authorized under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Emergency Fund.

LABOR MARKET INFORMATION SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS

The Recovery Act, along with formula funding, provided either new resources or new motivations to improve, expand, or upgrade automated labor market information systems in many of the study states. Major motivations for the Recovery Act initiatives around LMI were to encourage states to upgrade their LMI systems and to improve their overall workforce investment systems to incorporate emerging or expanding green jobs occupations and industries related to renewable energy and energy efficiency. State Labor Market Information Improvement Grants, funded by the Recovery Act, were awarded to individual

states and consortia of states to enhance and upgrade their LMI infrastructure in various ways, as well as to improve the technology. The grants are listed in Tables 7.1 and 7.2.

All but two study states (North Dakota and Wisconsin) participated in the Recovery Act LMI Improvement Grants. A few examples of how these funds were used follow:

- **Colorado** (consortium participant). Colorado received \$245,000 in grant funds, aimed at providing timely and comprehensive information on current and future industry workforce supply and demand conditions. Licenses for the Help-Wanted OnLine (HWOL) Data Series from the Conference Board were procured in June 2010. The LMI Gateway Web site was updated during the past year and now includes a number of additional features including Help-Wanted OnLine job, occupation, and employer data for Colorado. HWOL data has been referenced in LMI economic analyses and presentations.
- **Michigan** (consortium participant). Under the LMI Improvement grant (on which Indiana and Ohio collaborated), there were a number of important achievements, including the following four:
 - 1) LMI staff in Michigan and Ohio produced a Green Jobs Report, which assessed the types of green jobs emerging in the consortium states and skills required of workers to fill these jobs (including transferable skills that auto workers have, allowing them to make the transition to employment within the green jobs sector).
 - 2) The consortium staff developed a Web site, which it called www.drivingworkforcechange.org. This site disseminates information about the initiative and is a resource on green jobs for employers, job seekers, and workforce development professionals.
 - 3) The Michigan Workforce Development Agency purchased a one-year subscription to the Conference Board's HWOL data. This LMI system provides administrators and staff (including staff in One-Stop Career Centers) with real-time data on job openings, including those in high-demand and emerging occupations. The data from the Help-Wanted OnLine

Table 7.1 State Labor Market Information Improvement—Consortium Awards (study sites in bold)

Organization	City	State	Additional consortium members	Amount (\$)
Indiana Department of Workforce Development	Indianapolis	IN	Michigan, Ohio	4,000,000
Louisiana Office of Occupational Information Services (OOIS), Research & Statistics Division	Baton Rouge	LA	Mississippi	2,279,393
Maryland Department of Labor & Industry	Baltimore	MD	District of Columbia, Virginia	4,000,000
Montana Department of Labor & Industry	Helena	MT	Iowa, Nebraska, North Dakota (opted out), South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming	3,877,949
Nevada Department of Employment Training and Rehabilitation	Carson City	NV	Colorado, Florida, Illinois, New York, North Carolina, Texas , Utah	3,753,000
Vermont Department of Labor	Montpelier	VT	Connecticut, Maine , Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island	3,999,923

SOURCE: USDOL (2009).

Table 7.2 State Labor Market Information Improvement—Individual State Awards, Study Sites

Organization	City	Amount (\$)
Arizona Department of Economic Security	Phoenix	1,211,045
Florida Department of Economic Opportunity	Tallahassee	1,250,000
New York State Department of Labor	Albany	1,112,207
Employment Security Commission of North Carolina	Raleigh	946,034
Ohio Department of Job and Family Services	Columbus	1,015,700
Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry	Harrisburg	1,250,000
Washington State Employment Security Dept.	Olympia	1,060,910

SOURCE: USDOL (2009).

system was found to be extremely helpful and, as a result, the state workforce agency decided to continue its subscription with the Conference Board after American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding was exhausted.

4) The Michigan Workforce Development Agency held a green jobs conference (“Driving Workforce Change”) in Dearborn, Michigan, in May 2009. A total of 225 people attended this conference, including representatives of Michigan Works! agencies, academia, employers, and economic and workforce development officials. A focus of this conference was on the greening of the automotive industry.

- **New York State.** New York received funds under three LMI Improvement Grants to participate in two multistate consortia to develop forecasting methodologies and real-time supply-and-demand modules for green jobs and the skills required for the jobs.
- **Nevada** (consortium participant). In Nevada, funds were used to make technical improvements to the LMI system and to upgrade the state’s projection systems. No staff was added with Recovery Act funds. In order to generate money to support LMI activities in general, the state agency has begun to offer LMI services to other state agencies on a fee-for-service basis. Currently, the state agency has a fee-for-service arrangement with the state treasurer’s office.

- **Nebraska** (consortium participant). Five contiguous states (North Dakota dropped out) joined together to improve LMI and research for enhancing the labor exchange system for careers within the green economy. Nebraska's LMI group completed its survey work and analysis, and those activities have helped shape NEworks, an on-line information site providing a complete set of employment tools for job seekers in Nebraska, improving the state's capacity to provide better and more targeted information related to green jobs employment.

In addition to the Recovery Act LMI grants, most states have been improving their automated information systems used for program management, job matching, and case management, relying on regular annual LMI grants as well as WIA and Wagner-Peysner funds. For example, North Dakota (Box 7.1) and Wisconsin, while not recipients of LMI grant funds, did use other Recovery Act funds and formula funds to initiate improvements to their LMI systems and to conduct important research.

Based on discussions with administrators and staff in the study states, a couple of points can be made about LMI support for green jobs in the Recovery Act period. First, the 2009 LMI grants are being primarily used, as intended, to support research and analysis necessary

Box 7.1 North Dakota's Use of Other Recovery Act Funds

The state initiated research related to the burgeoning oil and gas extraction efforts taking place in the state and produced *Bakken Oil Formation*, a Web publication that explores the relationship between the price of oil and its influence on employment levels in the state's mining and extraction industry sector. *Business Survivability in North Dakota* is a research publication exploring the relationship between the trends in business survivability in the state. This is also a Web publication. These are only two examples of LMI activities, with many more located on the labor market information Web site <http://ndworkforceintelligence.com>.

SOURCE: State and local office site visit reports.

for defining green job occupations, establishing a baseline number of current green jobs in the state, and upgrading forecasting models to project future demand for workers in green jobs. About one-third of the workforce development agencies of the states in the sample are sponsoring surveys of green jobs, engaging in statistical analysis to develop or upgrade forecasting models, or conducting other research to define occupations and skills needed to integrate information on these jobs into existing LMI systems (Colorado, Illinois, Michigan, Montana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Washington). Louisiana and Illinois intend to conduct research and analysis to improve their LMI systems, including new forecasting analysis for Louisiana done by Louisiana State University researchers. Second, many states already had fairly sophisticated LMI systems because of the high federal and state investment in this area over the past decades (e.g., Florida, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Texas, and Wisconsin). In general, administrators in many of these states indicated that little if any of the Recovery Act or LMI grant funds are being used to improve the hardware or technology of those systems. However, in several of these advanced LMI states, there are some notable examples of information technology (IT) enhancements related to program services and management systems that are being made with Recovery Act funds or had been planned prior to the Recovery Act. In several states, improvements are now being accelerated because available resources have allowed investments in one-time upgrades, particularly for improving job matching and integrating more programs into a single system. Some examples of these efforts are as follows:

- **Washington State** is integrating green jobs components into its SKIES system, upgrading the link to UI systems, and upgrading data access and quality control procedures to allow businesses expanded job-matching queries.
- **Virginia** has integrated TAA and UI into the Virginia Workforce Connection's Web-based LMI/job matching/case management system already used for WIA and Wagner-Peyser.
- **Florida**, which also has an integrated LMI/case management system, used Recovery Act funds to increase its available bandwidth and storage capacity, refine job matching, and integrate real-time LMI tools that line staff can use in counseling customers.

Several staff and administrators noted that such upgrades in the LMI systems are especially important now because many more higher-skilled customers are unemployed and seeking employment services than in the past. Having more sophisticated LMI tools allows the workforce investment system to better serve these customers.

Along with the LMI improvements being made in nearly every state, several administrators discussed constraints that have affected some planned LMI-related initiatives. For example, a state hiring freeze in Arizona led the state workforce agency to revise its plan for conducting in-house most of the analysis to improve projections. And North Dakota had been notified by the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) that the state could receive an LMI green jobs grant, but the legislature voted not to accept the grant.

In summary, almost every state in this study has made improvements in LMI systems to support services in workforce investment programs, such as career counseling, occupational assessment, case management, and job matching. And most states report making substantial progress in defining and incorporating occupational information on green jobs into their LMI systems.

GREEN JOBS INITIATIVES

The national priority on the energy efficiency and renewable energy sectors was reflected in the Recovery Act provisions that specifically authorized funds to develop the green jobs workforce. Over the past few years, the federal government has placed a high priority on increasing the number of workers who have the skills needed for various high-demand occupations and industries, and green jobs are among the highest priority for industry-focused training. A number of ETA grant programs have been established to fund the development and implementation of skills training for jobs in these emerging and growing sectors. The main grant programs authorized in the Recovery Act that can be used to develop or expand green jobs training were the following:

- **State Energy Sector Partnership and Training Grants** (\$190 million in 2010) for state workforce boards to establish partner-

ships to develop workforce strategies targeted to energy efficiency and renewable energy industries.

- **Energy Training Partnership Grants** (\$100 million in 2009) for cross-agency partnerships to develop training and employment programs for individuals affected by the broader energy and economic situation, including workers formerly in the automotive sector.
- **Green Capacity Building Grants** (\$5 million in 2009) were awarded to existing USDOL grantees for local green jobs training programs. Local organizations in 14 of the 20 study states received these grants.
- **Pathways Out of Poverty Grants** (\$150 million in 2009) for local programs and local affiliates of national organizations to expand training and employment services for low-income individuals to move into expanding energy-efficiency and renewable-energy jobs.

In all but one of the 20 study states, some funding was received under one or more of these grant programs (the exception is North Dakota). Over half of the state workforce agencies visited had received State Energy Sector Partnership and Training Grants, and in most states, some local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) or community-based organizations received Green Capacity Building or Pathways grants. Several national grantees also served areas in some of the study states—for example, grants to industry organizations such as the International Training Institute for Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning, and nonprofit entities with local affiliates like Goodwill Industries and SER–Jobs for Progress.¹ Several states used the LMI and Energy grants to develop or expand comprehensive integrated state energy workforce strategies (Arizona, Illinois, Nevada, and Florida).

A number of states have implemented major green jobs initiatives using a variety of federal grants and, in many places, WIA and state funds. Interviews with state and local administrators and staff indicate that at least half of the states in this study have major statewide initiatives related to the green jobs economy, and that the Recovery Act funds were leveraged to support and expand those initiatives. A few examples that illustrate how Recovery Act funds were used for different green jobs efforts include the following:

- **Montana** is using federal Energy Training Partnership and LMI grants to expand the state's green economy efforts, particularly as related to renewable energy. The effort started before the Recovery Act with Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) grants from the ETA and state funds. Montana was successful in its application for the Energy Training Partnership discretionary grant, which was developed with state Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committees representing 10 trades and was used to prepare workers for green jobs in renewable energy and energy efficiency.
- **Wisconsin** has set green jobs training as a priority for training under WIA for the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs. State Energy Grant funds along with WIA funds and governor's discretionary funds for WIA are being used, for example, to expand apprenticeship and preapprenticeship training programs as part of a statewide strategy established by the governor.
- **Ohio** has a statewide focus on green jobs, particularly for youth, and used the LMI and State Energy Grants to promote an integrated strategy, including establishing the Recovery Conservation Corps. The state agency also encouraged and supported collaborations between local WIBs and Energy Partnership Grants in the state, including several industry training and apprenticeship programs for youth and dislocated workers.
- **Colorado** is leveraging several funding sources for green jobs training as part of the state's high-priority New Energy Economy initiative (e.g., WIA Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Worker, State Energy Grant, and governor's discretionary funds). Recovery Act funds were used to hire a state green jobs coordinator to facilitate cross-program partnerships and initiatives (e.g., workforce development, registered apprenticeship, economic development, and human services). Funds from several federal Recovery Act funds from ETA and the Department of Energy were used to implement special projects (Green Careers for Coloradans and the Denver Green Jobs Initiative). The Colorado State Energy Sector Partnership (SESP) team developed projects that by their nature are sustainable, including the following five:

- 1) The Clean Energy Business Colorado model has been adopted as the entrepreneurial development model by the Colorado Center for Renewable Energy and Economic Development (CREED). CREED is a cooperative program between Colorado and the National Renewable Energy Lab (NREL).
 - 2) An entrepreneur vetting tool developed by a volunteer of the Clean Energy Business Colorado project has been commercialized under the company Valid Eval, and an unlimited license has been purchased by the Colorado Workforce Development Council (CWDC) for use statewide in helping assess viability of entrepreneurial proposals.
 - 3) GreenCareersCO.com, a career and vocational advisory Web site, was released for public use during the first quarter of 2011. The workforce system, high schools, and colleges use the site to guide individuals interested in careers in energy efficiency and renewable energy. The site is hosted on e-Colorado.com, is maintained by Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE) staff, and is designed to be current and without need of updating for several years.
 - 4) The Green Jobs Workforce Collaborative has led to the development of new partnerships among various community organizations engaged in green jobs. Examples of projects that the groups are likely to continue working on together are the formation of preapprenticeship programs, outreach to employers through customized recruitment events, and continued networking.
 - 5) The Colorado SESP Business Advisory Council was featured in an NGA report on best practices. The Business Advisory Council concept is being adopted around the country as a benchmark for business engagement.
- **Texas** has an increasing emphasis on green jobs, particularly in the area of wind power, and the state workforce agency is supporting several industry training partnerships with governor's discretionary funds as well as Recovery Act funds and grants.
 - **New York** has placed a high priority on supporting the state's green economy, making green jobs one of the three top sectoral

priorities. There are at least 12 Pathways, Green Capacity, and Energy Training Partnership grants in the state, in which the state workforce agency collaborates with other agencies and leads multiagency state initiatives. Investments in green jobs training are occurring across agencies (labor, human services, transportation, and education). These efforts include new green jobs Web sites and cross-departmental collaborative grant programs, which are funding local programs such as the Green Jobs Corps and providing training and subsidized employment in green industries (using TANF emergency funding).

- **Michigan** directed resources toward preparing women, minorities, and disadvantaged individuals for apprenticeship opportunities in a variety of green jobs. This program was called Energy Conservation Apprenticeship Readiness (ECAR—see Box 7.2).

Box 7.2 Recovery Act–Funded Green Jobs Project: Michigan’s Energy Conservation Apprenticeship Readiness (ECAR) Program

ECAR is an effort to prepare women, minorities, and economically disadvantaged individuals for apprenticeship positions, weatherization projects, and other green construction jobs. ECAR builds on the Road Construction Apprenticeship Readiness (RCAR) Program, which was an earlier preapprenticeship program providing tuition-paid fast-track customized training in job readiness skills, applied math, computer skills, blueprint reading, workplace safety, and construction trades. In addition to the 240-hour RCAR Program curriculum, the ECAR program has a 32-hour energy conservation awareness component that includes the following: training on lead, asbestos and confined space awareness; mold remediation and safe working practices; principles of thermal insulation, geothermal energy, and solar energy; and principles of green construction. ECAR and RCAR both also offer supportive services, job placement assistance, and completion certificates.

SOURCE: State and local office site visit reports.

- **Wisconsin** used receipt of the national ARRA discretionary competitive grant of \$6.0 million from the USDOL to fund the Sector Alliance for the Green Economy (SAGE)—an initiative to provide training (with a focus on apprenticeship) in green energy sectors.

During the first round of visits, state staff expressed a concern about the push for green jobs as a means to lift states' economies out of the downturn. This is still a concern. While many believe the focus on green jobs can be a viable long-term strategy, they do not see efforts to train and place customers in green jobs as an immediate solution to unemployment because there are few available jobs. Several state representatives pointed out that in many instances, current occupations are evolving into green jobs; thus there is more of a need to “upskill” workers. Some state staff also mentioned the challenge of defining green jobs accurately and the challenge of avoiding making decisions regarding what industries and occupations should be included as a result of political pressure.

Based on the state visits, it seems clear that green jobs are a high priority in nearly every state visited and that the Recovery Act funds, which include special grants, WIA supplemental funds, and Recovery Act funds from other agencies (e.g., Energy and Health and Human Services [HHS]), are being used strategically to both develop statewide approaches and, more commonly, enhance and expand state green jobs initiatives that had begun before the recession. In addition, many of the projects and initiatives are focusing on providing training and apprenticeship opportunities for dislocated workers (especially from the automotive and steel sectors), minorities, women (in nontraditional occupations), and low-income youth.

SUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT THROUGH THE TANF EMERGENCY FUND

The workforce investment system and the work programs associated with TANF have close linkages in some but not all states. Recovery Act provisions for TANF, therefore, can also affect workforce agencies and local programs. One of the most significant Recovery Act provisions

under TANF is the TANF Emergency Fund (EF). The scale of the program and its interaction with the workforce investment systems make it a unique part of the story of the implementation of the Recovery Act. States were allowed to draw down as much as 50 percent of the TANF block grant amount in emergency funds, which could be used for three purposes: 1) to cover additional TANF benefit costs, 2) for one-time nonrecurrent benefits, and 3) for subsidized employment. The subsidies are not limited to TANF recipients but can be used to subsidize jobs for low-income parents with children under 18, with the states determining monetary eligibility requirements. Most states used the same eligibility requirements for TANF services (aside from cash benefits), which is usually either 200 or 225 percent of poverty.

Subsidized employment has been an allowable expenditure in TANF, but it was not a high priority at the federal or state levels because subsidized employment programs are usually cost-prohibitive. Thus, the Recovery Act guidelines and the amount of funds potentially available to states for subsidized employment created considerable interest. After enactment of the Recovery Act, states were encouraged to submit plans to the national TANF agency, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. States were required to submit their plans for TANF-EF subsidized employment to the ACF for approval. The TANF Emergency Fund ended on September 30, 2010, with states having received the full \$5 billion authorized.

Some states (e.g., New York and Florida) submitted plans in late 2009, but most states submitted plans in early to mid 2010. Much of the increased emphasis on TANF-EF subsidized employment occurred after January 2010, when joint guidance was issued to the field by ETA and ACF (TEGL 12-09). As of July 8, 2010, ACF had approved subsidized employment plans from 31 states, with potential expenditures ranging from \$15,000 in Utah to over \$190 million in Illinois. Fifteen of the 20 states in this study were approved by ACF to operate TANF-EF subsidized employment programs. Table 7.3 details the TANF-EF funding in the 15 states.

Where the program was operational, it was a high priority and the workforce investment system and One-Stop Career Centers usually played a major role.

Table 7.3 TANF Emergency Fund–Subsidized Job Placements (state estimates of total placements with funds available through September 30, 2010)

State	Year-round program (Adult)	Summer Youth	Total
Colorado	1,724	0	1,724
Florida	5,588	0	5,588
Illinois	29,092	6,624	35,716
Michigan	1,365	0	1,365
Montana	444	374	818
New York	4,217	0	4,217
North Carolina	1,036	0	1,036
North Dakota	600	0	600
Ohio	1,759	15,034	16,793
Pennsylvania	14,000	13,000	27,000
Rhode Island	735	0	735
Texas	2,594	22,305	24,899
Virginia	340	0	340
Washington	7,200	0	7,200
Wisconsin	2,500	0	2,500
U.S. total	124,470	138,050	262,520

NOTE: Programs may be funded in whole or in part with TANF emergency funds.

SOURCE: Information was collected directly from state officials or from published documents by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities and the Center for Law and Social Policy. Data as reported by January 31, 2011.

- Illinois's** program, Put Illinois to Work, was second only to that of California in size (California placed a total of more than 47,000 people in jobs, but more than half were summer youth.) The Illinois program planned to draw down over \$194 million and to subsidize 15,000 jobs statewide by September 30, 2010. By hiring for short periods (e.g., three months), each job slot might potentially be filled over time by more than one worker. As of the end of the program, the state had placed over 29,000 adults and over 6,600 summer youth. The initial enrollees in the program were individuals already enrolled in WIA. The program was administered statewide by Heartland Alliance, a large non-profit agency with extensive experience operating transitional

jobs programs, particularly for ex-offenders and homeless individuals. Many local WIBs and nonprofit program providers were subcontractors for the program.

- **Pennsylvania's** Department of Labor and Industry administered the TANF-EF program and issued the request for proposals to local WIBs interested in operating the program.
- **New York's** Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) administered the state's TANF-EF program, with a collaborative role for the Department of Labor. Locally, several WIBs in New York, along with several nonprofit organizations, received OTDA grants for TANF-EF funded subsidized employment programs in early 2010.
- In **Florida**, the state workforce agency, the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO), administers the TANF work program and was responsible for the TANF-EF subsidized employment program called Florida Back to Work. WIBs operated the program locally. Eligibility for Back to Work jobs extended to families whose income was up to 200 percent of poverty with a dependent child. The subsidy model is similar to on-the-job training, with 100 percent of the wage subsidized, for a length of time determined by the local One-Stop center (usually through September 2010). Individuals applied on-line through the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Web site. There was an expectation that private sector employers would attempt to retain the person after the subsidy ended; public and nonprofit employers did not have to make such a commitment.
- The **Texas** Back to Work program was authorized by the legislature in 2009 to subsidize jobs for UI claimants who previously had earned less than \$15 per hour. In collaboration with the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, the Texas Workforce Commission planned the TANF-EF subsidized employment program by modifying the Back to Work program to also serve as the TANF-EF subsidized employment program. This allowed the state to provide assistance to additional low-income residents.

A few insights emerged from the visits to the study states:

- In some states, the state workforce agencies had operational and administrative responsibility for the subsidized employment programs, as they did for TANF work programs. In states such as Florida, much of the responsibility for the success of the program fell to the workforce investment system.
- In several states, workforce development staff at the local level administered and delivered program services, but some initially raised concerns about whether enough employers would sign up to meet the goals set by the state agencies.
- Some staff members were troubled by having to shift their priority to the new program when so many other customers were seeking employment services in the local offices because of the recession.
- Aspects of many of the subsidy programs are similar to OJT. Some states, such as Illinois, have specifically incorporated provisions into the contracts whereby the employer agrees to provide some training. Illinois, along with a few others, had a cap on the wages that could be subsidized. In other states, the training might have been implied but not in the contract per se, and there was no cap on the amount of the wage subsidy.
- In some states, such as Pennsylvania, the TANF-EF subsidized program served youth as well as adult participants. A considerable amount of TANF-EF funds were used to supplement and expand the 2009 and 2010 Summer Youth Programs.
- In August 2009, the Colorado Department of Human Services (DHS) created a subsidized employment program (HIRE Colorado) with \$11.2 million in Recovery Act supplemental TANF reserve funds, which provided a safety net for individuals who had exhausted their UI benefits. The funds were given to workforce centers to implement the program.
- About one-half of the counties in Ohio used TANF emergency funding to support Summer Youth Employment Programs in Summer 2010.

According to administrators and staff in locations where the workforce development system was involved, the majority of adults in TANF-EF funded subsidized jobs were not TANF cash recipients; all were unemployed and many were UI claimants or recent UI exhaustees. Some states have consciously made UI claimants the top priority for subsidized jobs, and staff noted, off the record, that this was considered a way to reduce the cost burden on the UI Trust Fund, even if only temporarily.

Note

1. “SER” stands for “Service, Employment, Redevelopment.”

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