

## Watchdog Groups Speak Out on Recovery Act Data

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Organizations associated with States for a Transparent and Accountable Recovery (the STAR Coalition) have been scrutinizing the first round of Recovery Act (ARRA) recipient data released October 30 at the federal Recovery.gov website. Here is a synopsis of some of their initial reactions at both the national and state level.

Good Jobs First, which coordinates the STAR Coalition, is examining the data from a national perspective. It finds evidence indicating that many recipients under-reported their job creation and retention. For example, more than 2,000 contract and grant projects are between 50 and 100 percent completed, yet they report zero jobs. It also finds inconsistencies between the Recovery.gov data and ARRA reports at the USASpending.gov website. Blog posts on these and other ARRA topics: <http://www.accountablerecovery.org/blog>

California: The Center on Policy Initiatives (CPI), a member of the California Green Stimulus Coalition, states that ARRA is a landmark in government transparency, but there are limitations in the usefulness of the data. For example, it points out that the state's largest program in terms of jobs creation/retention (53,390 jobs) is the education grant for state fiscal stabilization. However, all of these jobs are geographically attributed to Sacramento County, making it impossible to determine how many education jobs were created or saved in different counties or school districts. Complete statement: <http://www.accountablerecovery.org/star-coalition-reactions-october-30-data>

Florida: Miami Workers Center, Research Institute for Social and Economic Policy, and Kirwan Institute note that the tracking guidelines established by the Office of Management and Budget have significant shortcomings that will make it difficult for the public to understand the impact of Recovery Act spending. Critical information--such as the quality of jobs created, who benefits from the jobs, and how well the work was performed--is absent from Recovery Act data collection. Complete statement: <http://www.accountablerecovery.org/star-coalition-reactions-october-30-data>

Kentucky: Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, focusing on transportation, energy and weatherization stimulus funds, is concerned about the lack of adequate information about Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant dollars. Of the 20 local governments in the state that applied for EECBG funds allocated to them directly from the federal government, only 10 have been awarded the money. It is unclear where the process stands for the remaining 10 localities. Complete statement: <http://www.accountablerecovery.org/star-coalition-reactions-october-30-data>

New York: Good Jobs New York notes that the October 30 data represent a breakthrough in transparency but has concerns about the quality of the data. It points to problems in the location information, especially the fact that the state's education jobs saved by ARRA are listed as if

they are all in the state capital Albany. It calls for more data on job recipients. Complete statement: <http://www.accountablerecovery.org/star-coalition-reactions-october-30-data>

Ohio: Policy Matters Ohio is concerned about the dire employment situation in its states and is looking for evidence that ARRA is helping. The group is paying special attention to transportation funding. It is pleased with the information disclosed by the state highway projects, but it points to the absence of complete contractor and subcontractor information in the Recovery.gov data. Complete statement: <http://www.accountablerecovery.org/star-coalition-reactions-october-30-data>

Texas: Texas Impact is excited to see the tangible effects of the Recovery Act in Texas, such as the expansion of the American Youthworks green jobs training program. But it hastens to add that the lack of performance and equity metrics make it difficult to determine whether Texas is making gains on the state's unique priorities and needs.