

## The Case of the Missing Jobs Revisited

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Over the weekend the Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board posted the [new ARRA recipient data](#) for the fourth quarter of 2009. The first thing I checked was whether there was a repeat of the phenomenon I [wrote about](#) with the first round of data: projects that are well under way or even completed reporting zero jobs generated.

I found that the mystery of the missing jobs is still with us. The spreadsheets on Recovery.gov include 4,396 federal contracts and 23,719 grants with a zero in the jobs column. Some of these, however, are not yet under way or are not very far along.

If we exclude those projects whose status is designated as "not yet started" or "less than 50% completed," we are left with 1,713 contracts and 3,316 grants, or a total of 5,029.

I then looked at the column showing how much each project has actually received in ARRA funds. Some of those 5,029 report not having received any money as yet. If we remove those 180 contracts and 426 grants, there are 4,423 remaining.

In other words, more than 4,000 ARRA projects have received funds and managed to complete a substantial amount of work but are claiming not to have generated any jobs in the process.

Keep in mind that this time around, recipients were supposed to report jobs in a different way. Rather than guessing which positions were created or retained as a result of Recovery Act funding, they were supposed to simply add up all the hours worked on ARRA-funded projects and divide the total by their definition of a full-time week.

In many cases the message seems not to have gotten through. Many recipients continue to refer to jobs created and retained in the jobs narrative column. And in many cases the narrative is inconsistent with a listing of zero jobs.

One contractor refers in the narrative to "5 full-time correctional officer positions." Another: "Project create work for 1 month for 4 existing positions." And yet another: "This job retained 180 jobs - it takes approx. 70 man hours to complete the piece of equipment."

It seems evident that many contract and grant recipients still think they are supposed to be reporting jobs created and retained, and many of those are still under the misapprehension that retained jobs don't count.

There are even cases in which recipients note the total number of hours worked -- one states: "A total of 1577 hours was worked in this last quarter as a result of Recovery Act funded projects" -- but still put zero in the jobs column.

Recovery.gov [displays](#) the total number of "recovery funded jobs reported by recipients" in the fourth quarter as 599,108. One can only guess how much higher the number would be if all recipients calculated their job numbers in the proper way.

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