

More ARRA Recipients Appear to Be Underreporting Jobs

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The Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board has just [posted](#) spreadsheets with the third round of recipient data, covering the first quarter of 2010. After [analyzing](#) the data, I found that the phenomenon I wrote about in connection with the [first](#) and [second](#) quarters is unfortunately still with us. Large numbers of employers are reporting zero jobs generated on ARRA-funded projects that are well under way or even completed.

The new spreadsheets on Recovery.gov include more than 28,000 projects with a zero in the jobs column. Many of these, however, have not yet started work or are not very far along. If we exclude those whose status is listed as "not yet started" or "less than 50% completed," we are left with 1,511 federal contracts and 6,152 grants, or a total of 7,663.

I then looked at the column showing how much each project has actually received in ARRA funds. Some of the 7,663 report they have not received any funding yet. If we remove those, we are left with 6,806.

In other words, nearly 7,000 ARRA projects have received funds and managed to complete a substantial amount of the work but are claiming not to have generated any jobs in the process. This is a worse performance than the previous quarter, when about 4,400 projects met these mystifying criteria.

Remember that since the second round, recipients are not asked to report jobs created or retained (which caused a great deal of confusion). They are supposed to simply add up all hours worked on ARRA-funded projects and divide the total by their definition of a full-time week.

Many recipients still seem confused about their job-reporting responsibilities. In the separate narrative field about jobs, many mention "no new jobs created" as the apparent reason for the zero in the job number column. Under the new rules, they should be counting everyone working on an ARRA project, even if the position is not a new or retained one.

In some cases the narratives even more directly contradict the zero in the job number field. For example, one recipient states: "This project employs 6 roofers, 2 laborers, 1 superintendent and 1 project manager."

Recovery.gov [reports](#) the total number of "recovery jobs reported by recipients" in the latest quarter as 682,779. As with the previous quarters, one can only wonder how much higher the number would be if all recipients calculated their job numbers properly. Isn't it time they were set straight?

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