

DSS/ARRA 1st Quarter Summary

Background

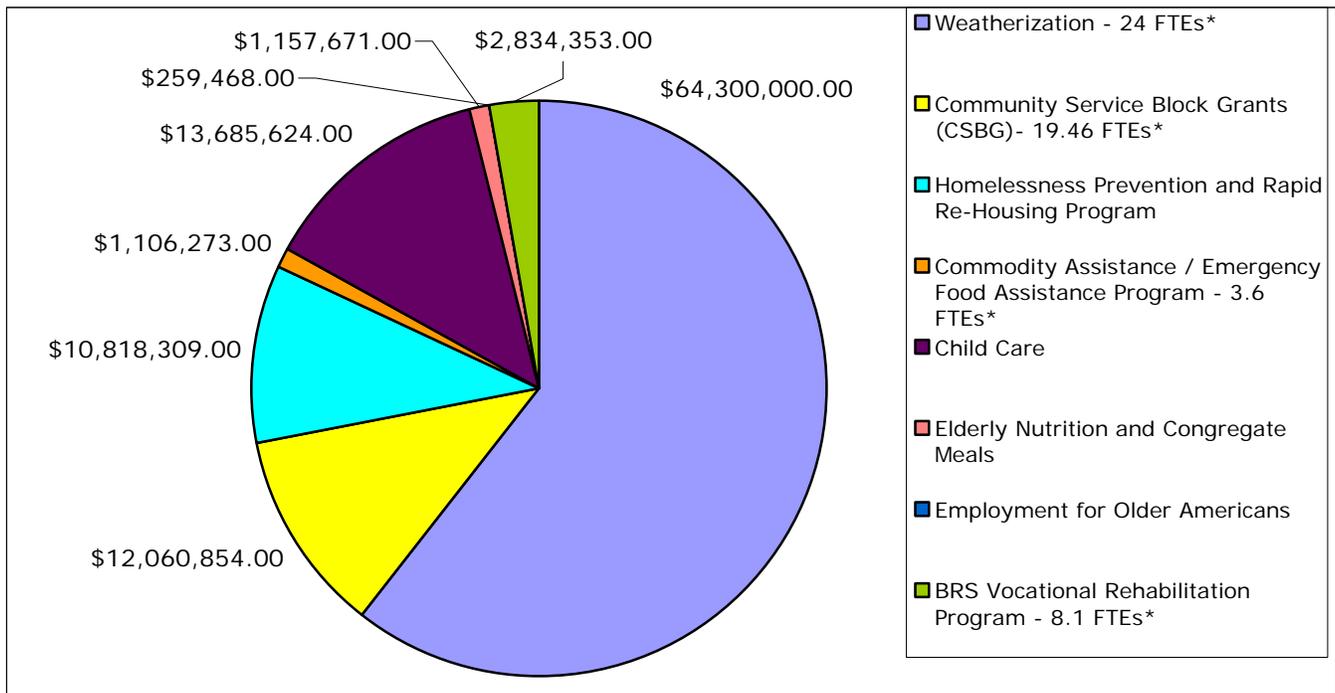
The Department of Social Services is the Connecticut state agency charged with implementing the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) for programs that support a broad range of services to the elderly, persons with disabilities, families, and individuals who need assistance in maintaining or achieving their full potential for self-direction, self-reliance and independent living.

ARRA funds will be used to provide Weatherization, additional services to the residents of CT through the Community Service Block Grant, Emergency Shelter Grants for Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Rehousing, Commodity Assistance through The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), Child Care Assistance, and Elderly Nutrition and Community Services Employment for Older Americans (Titles III and V of the Older Americans Act).

Programs and Activities

During the first quarterly reporting period, a majority of the activities were focused on program development. Many of the ARRA funded programs were launched at the end of the first reporting period. With program structures now in place, DSS expects improvements in project outcomes to be reflected in the next quarterly report.

Included in the report are detailed descriptions of each of the programs and the activities to date. Below is summary data of the ARRA funded programs.



*An FTE is a Full-Time Equivalent, calculated by adding all hours worked within a program, and then dividing by number of hours in a full-time schedule.

ARRA monies entrusted to the Connecticut Department of Social Services were received from the federal agencies below:

- Department of Health and Human Services;
- Department of Agriculture;
- Department of Education;
- Department of Energy;
- Department of Housing and Urban Development;

Fast Facts - What Has The ARRA Money Accomplished To Date

- CT Food Bank purchased three refrigeration vehicles so that vital food commodities can now be transported and distributed to people living in hard to reach communities in our state.
- Foodshare purchased a forklift to help move food in their distribution warehouse and load trucks to dispense food to people who need it.
- Training classes have begun to train people to conduct weatherization audits to determine what weatherization measures can be done in people’s homes. Things like heating system tune-ups and repairs, attic and side-wall insulation, and blower guided air-sealing to reduce drafts.

- In the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (S.N.A.P. – formerly the Food Stamp program) a 13.6% increase in standards has resulted in an extra \$38 a month in benefits for households to purchase food.
- 9 people are participating in job training and employment assistance through increased funding of Community Services Employment for Older Americans (Title V of the OAA).
- Increased reimbursement in the Federal Medical Assistance (FMAP) - Also known as Medicaid, has resulted in \$403,287,875 additional federal monies deposited to General Fund revenue in Connecticut as of June 30, 2009. As of 9/30/09 that amount is \$498,058,407.
- The Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) within DSS has assisted 344 consumers in entering temporary or permanent paid positions since July 2009. BRS's ARRA initiative is completely dedicated to helping persons with disabilities enter, retain and advance in employment.

Program and Reporting Guidelines

In addition to the provision of ARRA enhanced services, DSS must ensure that funds are used according to federal guidelines and must report on its activities and the activities of its sub-grantees. Funds must be kept separate and not commingled with other funding sources. Reporting requirements are stringent and must be transparent. Documents and communications related to activities performed by DSS and its sub-grantees are housed on the agency website.

The distribution of funds in the state was conducted with public input, according to federal guidelines, and to insure equitable access to services.

Second Quarter Forecast

- **Weatherization** – There are 660 units that have been audited and another 460 in the queue to be audited. It is expected that at least 700 of these units will be weatherized during the next quarter.
- **Community Services Block Grant** – Contracted community Action Agencies will begin work at their agencies geared towards:
 - Employment assistance, training, internships and job opportunities
 - Counseling on housing and mortgages, taxes and income management
 - Emergency and nutrition services

- **Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Rehousing (HPRP) Emergency Shelter Grant** – This grant is expected to assist 1,000 people a year over the life of the three-year stimulus grant so they do not become homeless if they are at risk, or be quickly re-housed and stabilized if they are homeless. The 1st quarter was spent creating an infrastructure through 2-1-1, who will now screen and connect eligible callers to the HPRP program in their area.
- **Commodity Assistance/TEFAP** – the majority of this funding has already been used for food commodities (\$884,575) and capital investments (\$175,573). The funds have purchased delivery vehicles that will allow delivery of perishable food to neighborhoods that need it most. We expect more food commodities to be purchased, the amount of which has yet to be determined.
- **Child Care Assistance** – the majority of this funding (\$9.4 m) has been used to pay for child care services for low income families who are working and on Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) or in TFA employment activities. This enables 12,260 families to access quality child care and continue working. Under a proposal currently being reviewed, \$1,786,590 is expected to be spent on quality activities and the child care infrastructure, but it is too early to determine how many jobs will result from these activities.
- **Elderly Nutrition: Home Delivered and Congregate Meals** – As contracts for the Elderly Nutrition Projects have just been signed October 1st, it is difficult to forecast concrete numbers for the second quarter of ARRA funding. However, projects will be started with payments being made, and it is expected some jobs will be created within the program.
- **Community Services Employment for Older Americans (Title V of the OAA)** - there will be 25 additional participants served in the program over the course of the grant. During the second quarter, job skills training, job development and supportive services will be offered.
- **Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS): Vocational Rehabilitation Program** – With continued support services, such as direct job placement, working interviews, on-the-job training programs and interview preparedness program, BRS hopes to have over 400 consumers in employment by the end of next quarter (up from 344 currently placed in employment under ARRA-funded supports).