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July 2011

GENERATING GAINS WITH GRANTS

How Grants Can Spur Innovation in the American Economy and Even Government Itself *P1*

World-class grants intelligence, at your fingertips

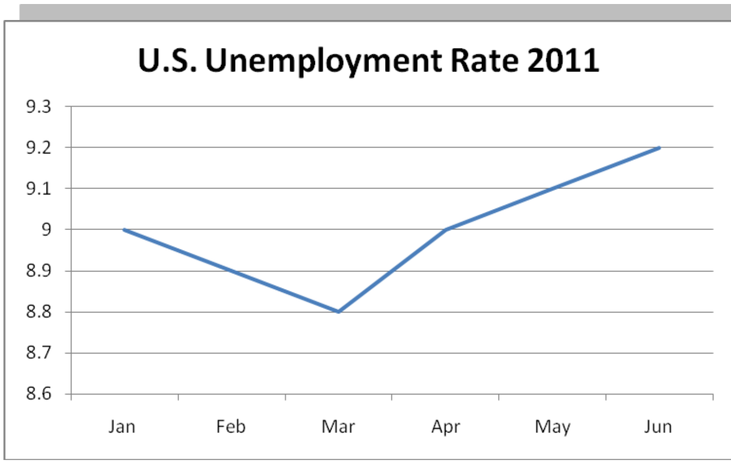
Generating Gains with Grants

How Grants Can Spur Innovation in the American Economy and Even Government Itself

BY CHRISTOPHER HAIGHT, GRANTS DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANT

The United States currently faces twin economic challenges - growing the national economy (more specifically, lowering the unemployment rate) and shrinking the national debt. However, if you were to listen solely to the rhetoric and heated exchanges taking place in Washington, you could be forgiven for thinking our only problem is debt, debt, and more debt. The over 14 million individuals who remain without a job have become a tangential issue to the ongoing debate over debt.

The recent unemployment numbers provided further evidence that jobs should continue to be a priority for policymakers. In the first week of July, the U.S. Department of Labor reported the unemployment rate rose to 9.2 percent, with the U.S. economy generating a net gain of only 18,000 jobs. To put that in a more meaningful perspective, a net gain of over 300,000 jobs per month is required to bring the jobless rate back down to a pre-recession level of five percent within five years.



Since 2008, economic stimulus measures have included:

- American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA): More commonly known as the Stimulus or Recovery Act, ARRA provided over $700 billion in economic support, including over $200 billion in the form of grants, loans, and contracts. This included highly notable programs such as Race to the Top, High-Speed Rail, and Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants, among many others.
- Hiring Incentives to Restore Employment Act (HIRE): The HIRE Act passed in March of 2010 and provided tax credits to businesses that hired new workers throughout the year.
- Extension of the 2001/2003 tax cuts and reduction in employee payroll tax: The end of 2010 brought a new agreement on a two-year extension of the Bush-era tax cuts and a two percent reduction in the employee-paid payroll tax.

Unfortunately, these measures have had only a limited effect in reducing unemployment and spurring economic growth. It would be a fallacy to argue though that just because unemployment did not return to normal levels that any or all of these measures were ineffective. For example, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) still estimates the ARRA saved or created up to 3 million jobs.

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The Great Recession ultimately exacted a far greater toll on the U.S. economy than anyone predicted, including some of the key players in the Obama administration responsible for ARRA. For example, Christine Romer, an economic adviser to the President from 2008 to 2011, estimated unemployment would peak at only eight percent with an enacted stimulus bill. Also contributing to the sustained unemployment has been the gains in productivity, which enabled companies to sell more without necessarily employing more people. Indeed, corporate profits are roughly back to their pre-recession levels and U.S. firms have nearly $2 trillion in cash on hand to invest.

The U.S. economy desperately needs a new impetus for growth, even if that means more deficit spending in the short-term. Nearly every fiscal commission - bipartisan, nonpartisan, or otherwise - has promoted the idea of short-term deficit spending to induce long-term economic growth. One of the most commonly promoted ideas has been to reduce temporarily the employer-paid side of the payroll tax in order to make hiring less expensive.

Peter Orszag, President Obama's first Director of the Office of Management and Budget, recently posited tying such a tax break to the unemployment rate. In effect, Orszag's proposal would reduce the employer-paid payroll tax (currently 6.2 percent of wages) until unemployment hit a certain level (say, five or six percent). While this is appealing on many economic and political levels, it is unclear if the medicine fits the diagnosis.

A look at some main drivers of unemployment reveals the payroll tax may not be what is holding back hiring:

- Demand: Businesses are loath to take on new employees when consumer spending is still weak. The run-up in oil prices due in part to the political turmoil that engulfed the Middle East did little to ease these concerns. Even with the temporary tax incentives to hire, businesses may still be better off doing more with less if demand is not predicted to increase. To address this, backers of this argument tend to believe further direct public investment is needed to offset the lag in private demand.
- Structural Unemployment: Proponents of this idea, including former President Bill Clinton, argue a large part of the problem is that the unemployed workers simply do not have the necessary skills, knowledge, and experience to qualify them for many open positions. Businesses have likewise reported challenges in filling positions with qualified candidates. The answer, at least in part, is investing in training programs to retool the U.S. workforce for a globalized, 21st century economy.
- Public Job Losses: Even while the private business community hires - albeit at a less than desirable pace - the public sector is shedding jobs. The U.S. Department of Labor reported government agencies slashed 39,000 jobs in June continuing a downward trend in public sector unemployment. While the reduction in public workforce may be good, bad, or indifferent from a range of ideological perspectives, it is hard to argue its immediate effect is anything but counterproductive; for a family, a lost paycheck is a lost paycheck, no matter from where it came.

In order to support further increased economic growth, Congress can use grants to embark on further simulative measures that address each of the concerns listed above. Much like the original stimulus bill, grant funding should be a major component in investing in America's future - with some important changes.

For example, the original ARRA included the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF), which provided large formula-based grants to each state largely purposed for sustaining

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jobs in schools. A renewed stabilization effort should aim to assist states avoid large job cuts while also reforming the way states do business.

One of the most commonly sought-after purposes we hear at Grants Office is a desire by public agencies to increase their efficiency in operations. The Federal government can capitalize on this demand and invest more in the national economy simultaneously. A new bill should repurpose the spirit of the highly-touted Investing in Innovation program, funded for education reform efforts under ARRA, towards government services.

Much like the education version of Investing in Innovation (i3), a government-focused i3 should not restrict applicants to a single priority - as needs, circumstances, and challenges can differ vastly across the country. A "Gov i3" may include such priorities as:

- Innovations that Support Data-Driven Decisions: The original i3 included emphasis on the effective use of data and this priority should not be exclusive to the field of K-12 education. This may include bolstered efforts and systems to collect and analyze data at various agencies or could support specific data-collection for research into improving government effectiveness (for example, evaluating whether or not a new service is cost-effective).
- Innovations that Support Inter-Agency Collaborations: Inter-agency collaborations also literally gained currency in the field of education through the new Promise Neighborhoods Program that provided grants up to $500,000 for projects that could replicate the success of the Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ) in New York City. HCZ and the grants it inspired sought to break down the traditional barriers between traditional educational and social services. Gov i3 could support new efforts to increase overall effectiveness by increasing cooperation or shared services among local agencies.
- Innovations that Support Cost-Effective Operations or Productivity: This innovation area should address the actual investment in physical equipment or capital upgrades many public agencies are seeking. The Federal government already has a range of incentives in healthcare for upgrades to Electronic Medical Records (EMRs) and there should be no reason to restrict technological incentives to one industry if they can prove beneficial in quality of services and cost-effectiveness.
- Innovations that Support Local Economic Development: Local or municipal governments should be given the resources to retrain their workforces to meet local needs. Projects supported under this category could be as traditional as workforce development programs or more creative ones that allowed re-granting of funds to local businesses to stay in the community and train new hires.

These Gov i3 grants should also be awarded competitively and award points on objective measures as well as the more traditional subjective review of proposals,

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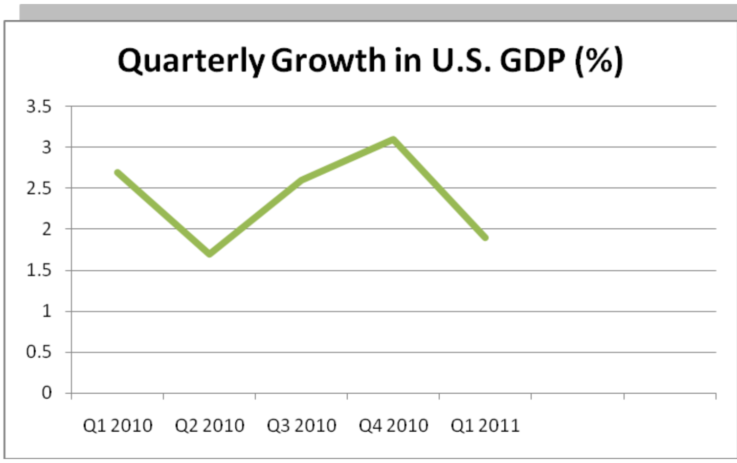
project management, and budget. Objective considerations should definitely include economic indicators, specifically the current unemployment level and historical six-month trend. Communities with unemployment rates higher than the national average should be given priority, as should communities that can demonstrate a sustained or increasing level of joblessness. This would allow the most devastated communities to stand a better chance to receive the support they desperately need.



Another important objective measure should be external sources of funding, whether from an agency's own budget, private or community-based foundation, or state governments. Like other grant programs that require a matching component, this measure would help gauge community-wide commitment to and support of a project and increase its likelihood of sustainability into the future. Applicants should also be required to document the number of jobs supported and created as a result of the funds.

These kind of objective measure would help replicate qualities of programs such as the Distance Learning and Telemedicine program (which also uses metrics of economic need) to ensure grant funds are spent where they are needed most.

In addition to a Gov i3 program, any new bill should consider the continued of support of industries that serve national economic, security, and environmental interests. Specially, an emphasis on energy efficiency measures should be further enhanced. As it currently stands, many grants that directly support purchase and installation of energy efficiency are limited and administered separately by each state. This results in a fractured funding landscape nationally, as some states, such as the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), offer a plethora of grants, loans, and tax incentives for a range of energy-related activities, while others offer little assistance - if any.

Congress should consider an extension of the Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grants (EECBGs) as a Federal funder of energy efficiency measures. In order to make a renewed program as flexible as possible, EECBGs should be available for all kinds of improvements including installation of alternative energy systems, upgrades to lighting or electrical systems, retrofitting buildings, etc. A smaller version of EECBGs should also be made available to individuals, akin to the very popular Cash for Clunkers program that offered consumers rebates to trade in older automobiles for newer, more fuel-efficient ones.

An energy program of this kind would have two key benefits: the first, instigating demand in the energy industry for upgrades and alternative energy sources. Secondly, the reduced consumption and costs should assist making some marginal improvements over time to public budgets.

These are but two kinds of publicly funded grant programs that could address the need for economic investment, governmental reform, and longer-term economic strategic thinking. Another key area often touted as ripe for investment, especially at a time when interest on

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public debt is relatively low, is for upgrades in transportation for both traditional infrastructure such as roads and bridges, as well as new-to-America modes like high-speed rail.

Of course, public grant funding alone cannot resurrect the American economy. Grants take time to solicit, review, and award, making the fiscal impact less immediate than tax cuts implemented with the next paycheck. Still, fiscal stimulus focused solely on tax reduction may not adequately address the fundamental problems of demand and structural unemployment. Lowering taxes even further with so many people out of work and marginal tax rates at historical lows is likely to have a muted effect on demand as most people seek to save or pay down existing debts. And tax cuts alone cannot spur companies to hire if they cannot find the right individuals for the jobs at hand. As for the public sector, further reduction in government revenues (at any level) would likely hasten even more public job losses leading to an even higher unemployment rate.

Grant funding can and should be a part of a renewed effort to put more Americans back to work, in combination with other targeted measures. The proposed ideas here could help agencies, businesses, and nonprofit organizations maintain and increase employment levels while setting the stage for cost-efficiencies later. Awarded competitively, these grants can also be targeted to generate optimal results.

Ultimately, the creation of responsive, flexible grant programs that help local agencies and organizations will accelerate widely-shared prosperity throughout the economy while help shaping a government and economy fit for the 21st Century.

Sources for graphs pictured above:
U.S. Unemployment Rate: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
Quarterly Growth in U.S. GDP: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

Current Funding Opportunities:

- **Promise Neighborhoods Program Planning & Implementation Grants:** Promise Neighborhoods is based on the Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ) in New York City. The grant program seeks to replicate the success of HCZ by investing in projects that foster collaboration among agencies to create "cradle to college" continuum of education and social services. Planning Grants: The estimated amount available is $5,000,000. The estimated Range of Awards: is up to $500,000. The estimated average size of awards is $500,000. Implementation Grants: The estimated amount available is $23,450,000. The estimated range of awards is $4,000,000 to $6,000,000. The estimated average size of awards is $5,000,000 with a maximum of $6,000,000. An applicant for an implementation grant must obtain matching funds or in-kind donations equal to at least 100 percent of its grant award. Full applications must be submitted by ***November 3, 2011.***

- **Documenting Endangered Languages:** This funding partnership between the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) supports projects to develop and advance knowledge concerning endangered human languages. Funding can support fieldwork and other activities relevant to the digital recording, documenting, and archiving of endangered languages, including the preparation of lexicons, grammars, text samples, and databases. Applications are due ***September 20, 2011***, September 15, 2012 and September 15 annually thereafter.

Grant Spotlight: H-1B Technical Skills Training Grants Program

BY VINCE SIRAGUSA, GRANTS DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANT

According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, the nation's current unemployment rate sits at an uninspiring 9%. And with today's economy ripe for continued hard times, this issue is often alarmingly compounded by an associated lack of domestic skilled workers available to fill necessary positions. In that respect, we're presented a most interesting dichotomy. President Obama, in a June speech in Durham, North Carolina, spoke plainly on this issue:

"Right now, there are more than four job-seekers for every job opening in America. But when it comes to science and high-tech fields, the opposite is true. The businesses represented here tell me they're having a hard time finding high-skilled workers to fill their job openings…If we're going to make sure the good jobs of tomorrow stay here in America… we've got to make sure all our companies have a steady stream of skilled workers to draw from."

Congress has previously attempted to address portions of this ongoing scenario by establishing the H-1B Visa, a program, which allows US employers to temporarily hire foreign guest workers to serve in high-skill or specialty occupations. Gaining access to this new foreign workforce does come at a price to employers in the form of a user fee that must be paid in order to legally hire these foreign workers. Costs to the job seekers are equally steep as many are forced to sit on the side lines as "free agents" are brought in to fill those positions. Needless to say, there is much controversy on this visa issue, especially in light of the fact that many of these temporary guest workers send their earned wages back to their country of origin.

Driven by the American Competitiveness and Workforce Improvement Act, however, a portion of those employer-paid user fees has funded a new and innovative $240 million grant program for this Fiscal Year 2011. The H-1B Technical Skills Training Grants program is designed to provide education, training, and job placement assistance in the occupations and industries for which employers are using H-1B visas to hire foreign workers. Not only does the program intend to raise the technical skill levels of American workers so they can obtain or upgrade employment but, over time, these education and training programs will help businesses reduce their use of foreign professionals by having a larger pool of domestic workers from which to hire. For this fiscal year, 75 to 100 grants awards are anticipated with individual grant amounts ranging from $1 million to $5 million.

Two types of training grants are

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"IF WE'RE GOING TO MAKE SURE THE GOOD JOBS OF TOMORROW STAY HERE IN AMERICA… WE'VE GOT TO MAKE SURE ALL OUR COMPANIES HAVE A STEADY STREAM OF SKILLED WORKERS TO DRAW FROM." -PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA

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funded by the H-1B Technical Skills Training Grants, which include 1) On-the-Job Training (OJT) (at least $150 million will be awarded to grantees that provide OJT to all participants) and 2) Other training strategies which might include classroom occupational training; contextualized learning; distance learning; and customized training, including incumbent worker training, for particular employers or groups of employers.

In implementing either type of training program, applicants may propose using grant funds for a wide range of activities provided the project supports the direct education and training for participants. Eligible projects include but are not limited to: recruitment of eligible participants; initial assessment of skill levels, aptitudes, abilities, and competencies; job search and placement assistance; as well as career counseling and costs of program development and curriculum design. Activities and other related services not related to H-1B visas and high-growth industries are ineligible under this program.

Additionally, H-1B Technical Skills grants may be awarded to partnerships of private and public sector entities, which may include: business-related nonprofit organizations; education and training providers, including community colleges and community-based organizations; economic development agencies; and entities involved in administering the workforce investment system.

Applications for grant awards will be accepted over the course of two rounds with the next available deadline of ***November 17, 2011.*** Additional information is available at the U.S. Department of Labor (www.dol.gov/) or in the guidance document available at www.doleta.gov/grants/pdf/SGA-DFA-PY-10-13_Final_H-1BSGA.pdf.

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The Debt Debacle in Washington

WHAT THE DEBT CEILING DEBATE MEANS FOR GRANTSEEKERS

BY CHRISTOPHER HAIGHT, GRANTS DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANT

Ever since last November, when Republicans retook the majority in the U.S. House of Representatives, the G.O.P. has successfully focused the national policy agenda almost entirely on debt and deficits.

The first battle of the newly empowered opposition to President Obama's agenda actually resulted only in a further deficit-widening measure through the year-long extension of all Bush-era tax cuts. The second debt debate targeted the unfinished business of Fiscal Year (FY) 2011 appropriations, which resulted in further cuts to Federal grant programs such as the Teaching American History Grants and Interoperable Emergency Communications Grant Program. The current focus on the nation's debt ceiling could mean further drastic impacts on critical grant programs.

Below, we answer some of the most frequently asked questions about how the debt deal could impact current and future grants:

What is the debt ceiling?

The debt ceiling is the maximum amount of debt the U.S. Treasury may legally incur, as authorized by Congress. The national debt is the overall amount of money owed by the United States, whereas the "deficit" is reflective only of a single year's negative difference between revenues and spending.

How is the debt ceiling different from annual budgets and appropriations?

The Budget, Appropriations, and Debt Ceiling are three separate pieces of legislation, although all affect one another. The Budget is more of a directive plan that broadly outlines revenues and spending. Appropriations bills actually authorize spending measures each year, including specific amounts for individual programs or beneficiaries. The debt ceiling is reflective of how much overall debt the U.S. Federal government owes, rather than for any single budget or appropriations bills (although these collectively contribute to the need to raise the debt ceiling).

Congress may currently pass a Budget and Appropriations bills without raising the debt ceiling simultaneously, even if these bills add to the national debt - that is why a separate action is often necessary. In other instances, such as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), or the "Stimulus," Congress raised the debt ceiling as a part of the overall law so it would not have to take it up separately.

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Failure to raise the debt ceiling would result in higher borrowing costs for all organizations, governments, and individuals and significantly increase the risk of another economic recession.

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When will we reach the debt ceiling?

The United States has, in fact, already exceeded its statutory debt limit but has been able to sustain operations through a series of emergency measures executed by the Treasury Department, headed by Secretary Timothy Geithner. Congress must act to raise the debt limit before August 2 - the date Geithner has indicated is when his emergency measures will no longer be able to finance Federal activities.

What happens to grant programs if there is no increase in the debt ceiling by August?

Absent any action by Congress, grant programs are likely to be the first spending measures to be sacrificed. Even when taken collectively across agencies, grant programs do not measure up to the constituencies for Social Security, Medicaid and Medicare, national defense, and U.S. bond holders. In the event the Treasury must make tradeoffs as to which to continue funding until a debt deal is reached, grant programs are not going to make it to the front of the line.

...and if a deal is made before August?

This ultimately depends on the contours of the debt debate as we edge closer to the brink. A number of options are under negotiation. The initial debt talks, led by Vice President Joe Biden, sought approximately $2 trillion in cuts over ten years. When Republican leadership balked at Democrats' insistence on at least $400 billion in new revenues (mostly through elimination of tax breaks for the wealthier interests), talks collapsed. Since then, President Obama has proposed an even larger deal that could mean up to $4 trillion in a combination of cuts and revenue increases over ten years.

Even if a deal is successfully delivered before August, it is certain to mean more pain for grantseekers looking to Federal sources. Programs previously eliminated in the FY2011 appropriations are not likely to be revived. Also watch for grant programs already funded at low levels to be completely eliminated.

A key trend instructive in considering which grants will survive is to look towards the administration's 2011 and 2012 budgets. These both proposed consolidation of various grant programs into larger, more comprehensive ones. As the final 2011 appropriations illustrated, these proposed "consolidations" actually resulted in out-right elimination of funding, as individual programs themselves did not have the administration's full support and deficit-conscious politicians saw easy targets.

How can a nonprofit organization or public agency strengthen its grants development strategy?

Think like an investor and diversify your funders, partners, and projects. By considering multiple sources of funding (not just Federal grants, but also state or privately funded opportunities), you are better assured some funding will be available. Partnering with other agencies in your community, whether a government agency or nonprofit organization, and considering creative projects "outside the box" can also broaden your eligibility for grants. *See side box for how Grants Office is able to help!*

Are You Getting Your Fair Share: Emergency Preparedness Funding for Health Providers

BY CHRIS LAPAGE, GRANTS DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANT

There are all kinds of disasters that require emergency response. Some of them occur naturally like pandemic influenza and hurricanes. Others are man-made disasters such as exploding bombs and other terrorist attacks. No matter the cause, health care providers play an essential role in the aftermath of these events, caring for the sick and wounded. In addition, health care entities play a major role in preventing certain catastrophes like the spread of infectious diseases. States and other regulatory agencies require hospitals and other health care organizations to be prepared for and able to respond to such emergencies.

However, as if often the case with government mandates, they often times are not funded. For instance, hospitals must have bed tracking software that enables them to secure real time data on availability during crises. Health care entities must be able to communicate with first responders to ensure they are in position to respond to an influx of patients resulting from a disaster. Health care entities must ensure staff are properly trained for dealing with such crises, including proper response protocol. There are supplies to purchase for command centers as well as personal protective equipment for providers in the field. While health care organizations do budget for these items, thin operating margins means that a funding gap typically exists. The good news is that the federal government does make money available for these efforts. However, health care facilities may not be aware of how to access the money or how funds can be spent. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) recently announced $352 million in Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) funds that is being distributed across the United States. HPP is formula-based funding that is passed along to states based on population statistics as well as the likelihood of natural and man-made disasters.

The issue is that each state utilizes its own mechanism for passing through the funding to health care providers. While some states administer the funds directly through their state department of health, others allows hospital associations or similar entities to manage the funding. In addition, once it is at state level, the money is typically passed through as "emergency preparedness" or "disaster recovery" funding so it becomes very hard to track. Many states pass the funds through to regional health care

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Find out how much your state has received through HPP that they must pass through to health care providers at the following link: http://www.phe.gov/Preparedness/planning/hpp/Documents/fy11-fundingtable.pdf.

You can find out more information on HPP at http://www.phe.gov/preparedness/planning/hpp/pages/default.aspx

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providers that are responsible for coordinating efforts for all providers in a specified area. If you are not receiving any emergency preparedness funding from your state, you need to contact your state department of health as a starting point. Sometimes you have to advocate for your patient base and demand a piece of the funding pie. You may find out that the local department of health in your area receives the funding and you simply need to engage them for support. You have to pay close attention for pass through deadlines as many states will still require health care providers to formally apply to them to receive an allocation. If you are receiving state dollars, then it becomes a question of what is being purchased with the dollars. Unfortunately, many providers are unaware of the flexibility of these funding streams that originate with HPP. A provider may choose to update its command center every year not knowing they can spend the funds on bed tracking software and communications upgrades. You may not receive enough HPP money to fund all your emergency preparedness activities, but it is an essential source to supplement your budget in this important area.

In addition to HPP funds, you can coordinate with your local public health department on certain emergency preparedness efforts. Local public health departments have access to a similar stream of funding known as Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) funding. As part of their plans, they may be able to support certain activities carried out by private health care providers. Finally if you are in an high density urban area, you may be able to explore additional emergency preparedness dollars through the "Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI): Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP)" or "Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS)". These are two federal programs offered through the Department of Homeland Security but are administered at the state and local level. Your first point of contact will be the State Administrative Agency (SAA) for these funding sources, which typically is the department of public safety or emergency management agency. However, you will ultimately need to work through the local working group for UASI and municipal officials for MMRS.

Locate your State Administrative Agency (SAA) contact for Department of Homeland Security funding (UASI & MMRS) at the following website: http://www.fema.gov/government/grant/saa/index.shtm.

There are two lessons here when it comes to emergency preparedness funding for health providers… make sure you advocate for your fair share and spend it wisely. This is true whether you are exploring HPP funding or directly with municipal officials in major urban areas.

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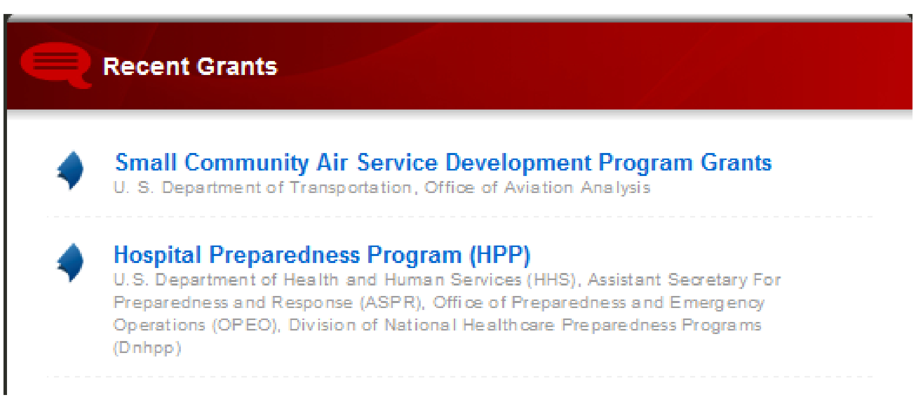

UPCOMING EVENTS

July 2011 Webcasts

- **July 19, 2011:** Funding to Bridge the Digital Divide
- **July 21, 2011:** Building Interoperability Coalitions, *sponsored by Tait Radio Communication*

August 2011 Webcasts

- **August 9, 2011:** Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response Grants - Helping your Department be "SAFER"
- **August 16, 2011:** Grant Funding for Rural Projects

September 2011 Webcasts

- **September 1, 2011:** No-Bake Options: Earmark Pork & Foundation Funding, *Sponsored by Philips*
- **September 6, 2011:** Grantwriting Series: Bringing IT Home
- **September 27, 2011**: Leveraging Homeland Security Funding for Technology

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