

**Rural Counties Task Force
RECAP
American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009
March 2010**

There are 26 rural, Regional Transportation Planning Agencies in California. Of those, 18 provided information and insight to this recap of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The 18 participating rural counties are as follows: Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, Colusa, Del Norte, El Dorado, Glenn, Inyo, Lake, Mendocino, Monterey, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, San Benito, Sierra, Tehama and Trinity.

1) How many full time employees are dedicated to Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) efforts in your rural county?

The rural RTPAs reported staffing levels ranging from a low of .5 to a high of 13. The average number of full time employees in responding rural RTPAs is 3.

2) What percentage of RTPA staff time do you estimate has been dedicated to American Recovery and Reinvestment Act efforts since March, 2009?

The rural RTPAs estimated that a low of 10% to a high of 50% of agency staff time was devoted to ARRA. The average percentage of RTPA staff time spent on ARRA efforts from responding rural RTPAs was 25%.

3) How much ARRA RSTP and ARRA TE did your rural agency receive?

The rural RTPAs received from a low of \$162,000 to a high of \$19,000,000 in ARRA RSTP. The average ARRA RSTP funding received by responding rural RTPAs was \$3,280,000. The rural RTPAs received from a low of \$1,000 to a high of \$647,000 in ARRA TE. The average ARRA TE funding received by responding rural RTPAs was \$96,370. One rural RTPA reported receiving an additional \$5,000,000 in State ARRA TE.

4) How much ARRA RSTP and ARRA TE has been obligated in your rural county?

The rural RTPAs reported that 100% of the ARRA RSTP and ARRA TE has been obligated; however, in a follow up query, not all of the funded projects had been awarded or completed. See question #6 for barriers and challenges to project delivery reported by rural RTPAs.

5) What types of projects did your rural agency deliver with ARRA RSTP and ARRA TE?

The vast majority of rural RTPAs delivered road rehabilitation projects with the ARRA RSTP funding. Additional ARRA RSTP projects included signal improvements, storm drains, operational improvements, roadway widening, and right of way acquisition. The majority of ARRA TE was utilized to fund bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Additional ARRA RSTP projects included landscaping, roadside signage, and a virtual transportation museum.

6) Identify any barriers/challenges that impacted ARRA RSTP or ARRA TE project delivery.

The rural RTPAs identified a number of barriers and challenges to project delivery, including:

- Federally required NEPA process
- Limited funding levels
- Changes in Force Account eligibility
- Cumbersome reporting requirements
- Delays in the FSTIP process
- Delays at State Architect review
- 1511 Certification process
- Limited rural RTPA staffing levels
- DBE mandated changes, effective mid-process (June, 2009)
- Lengthy Request for Authorization (RFA) process
- Weather

- Conflicting and duplicative reporting requirements

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7) The rural RTPAs provided the following recommendations to improve implementation of the anticipated Jobs for Main Street 2010 economic stimulus package.

- Provide relief from or reduce NEPA Categorical Exemption process for small projects
- Reduce E76 processing time
- Increase Caltrans Local Assistance staff
- Provide assistance to Division of Transportation Programming for rural FSTIP processing
- Utilize the STIP formula rather than the RSTP formula (higher funding level for rural RTPAs)
- Provide relief from timelines for small rural RTPAs
- Consolidate the Request for Authorization (RFA) paperwork
- Allow small rural RTPAs to “exchange” federal funding for state funding (eliminating the Federal requirements)

8) The rural RTPAs are prepared to obligate and award the anticipated Jobs for Main Street 2010 funding within 90 – 120 days.

KFM: 03/25/10