



**NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES**  
**Institute for Youth, Education, and Families**

*Recovery and Reinvestment Plans for America: What They Mean for Your Community's  
Children and Families*  
March 26, 2009

*Moderator:* **Julie Bosland**  
Deputy Director, Institute for Youth, Education, and Families  
National League of Cities (NLC)

*Speakers:*  
**Neil Bomberg**, principal legislative counsel, National League of Cities;  
**Mike Wallace**, senior legislative counsel, National League of Cities; and  
**Matthew Stark**, director of policy and legislative affairs, City of Providence, R.I.

*BOSLAND:* Hi and welcome to today's audioconference entitled: "Recovery and Reinvestment Plans for America: What They Mean for Your Community's Children and Families." My name is Julie Bosland and I am the deputy director at the National League of Cities' Institute for Youth, Education, and Families (YEF Institute). I am glad that so many people across the country could join us today. Not only is this audioconference part of the Institute's monthly series, but it also builds on two prior webinars that have been hosted by NLC to share information with city leaders about the more than \$700 billion in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, otherwise known as the economic stimulus package. Today's call will focus on what is in this law that can help city officials better meet the needs of children, youth, and families in their communities. Just a reminder that we are talking about programs that were funded in the economic stimulus package, but most of those are existing programs, so it is more money going into existing programs on top of an annual budget. Then there are also some other programs out there, obviously, that are funding this type of work that did not get increased funding through the stimulus legislation. So just to keep that as an upfront reminder, as you are thinking about this funding puzzle, that this is just one slice of it looking at the increased funding through the recovery package.

We are joined today by two key members of our federal relations team here at NLC – Neil Bomberg and Michael Wallace – who are going to start us off walking through some relevant funding streams. These funding streams are also outlined in a document that went out with your call in information for the audioconference. Neil and Mike, thanks for joining us today.

*BOMBERG:* Thank you.

*WALLACE:* Thanks.

*BOSLAND:* After they have a chance to go through those funding sources, I am going to take some time to share how the Institute has been thinking about the opportunities that this funding provides to cities to maximize the impact for the children and families in your community. And finally we will hear from Matthew Stark, the director of policy and legislative affairs in the city of Providence, R.I., who is tasked with the big job of leading their local stimulus response team. I am guessing others on the line here may have similar responsibilities, so I think it will be a great opportunity to get that local perspective. Matthew, thanks for joining us today.

*STARK:* Thank you very much.

*BOSLAND:* Let me know turn it over to Neil and we will jump right in. Neil will be talking about a variety of funding streams including workforce development, community service, violence prevention, and others. So Neil, I will give you the floor.

*BOMBERG:* Well thank you very much Julie. I am delighted to be here and hopefully we can be of some help to all of you who are on the call. One of the things that I am sure at this point you have heard an awful lot about is just how much money is coming down, and how important it is that those funds be spent both quickly and wisely. So I want to just underscore that point. I think Matt will be talking a little bit more about that during his presentation but I just want to first say as clearly as I can that all of these funds, as Julie noted, are funds in addition to existing appropriations. There is a 2009 appropriations bill omnibus that was recently passed, signed into law, that funds all of these programs. These stimulus dollars are additional funds meant to be spent to stimulate the economy. Specifically within the arena that I deal with – that is aid to families and individuals – we have a broad range of programs and services that are out there, some of which you in the city world would be directly responsible for or involved with and some that you don't really have any responsibility for, but I want to share with you as well because I think they are both important potentially for your employees and also for your constituents and the folks who reside in your communities.

So let me begin, if I may, on the workforce side, and talk a little bit about the programs there. Most of the workforce dollars have gone into programs associated with the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). As most of you probably know, in most cases an individual city, unless it is a very large city, is not directly responsible for that program; rather the funds go to a workforce investment board that makes decisions about the funding or the expenditure of those funds. In the stimulus package, there is nearly \$4 billion in additional funding for workforce programs and if you add in all of the other workforce-related activities – some of which actually appear in funding for airports and in transportation – the actual funding for workforce programs approached \$5 billion.

I want to focus first on the Workforce Investment Act and specifically the youth, adult and dislocated workers pot. What Congress did when they passed the stimulus bill, was to provide \$1.2 billion in grants to states and then ultimately to localities for youth activities and

most, if not all, of this money can go to summer jobs. This is obviously a quick and easy – easy is the wrong word – but a very quick and effective way of getting money out into the community to individuals who can use the funds and are likely to spend those funds very quickly. It also clearly will be dollars that will benefit low-income families helping them with clothing, food, shelter, or other basic family needs.

On the adult side, there is \$500 million for job training and placement for adults. I think it is really important to note that these funds would be best used, I think, from the congressional perspective, if they focus on programs and opportunities that emerge from the stimulus package, whether it be training workers or placing workers for road construction, for broadband development, for infrastructure development for energy-based programs, or in education programs – any of those would be viewed as an appropriate use of these funds. Similarly there is a huge pot of money – the largest single pot of money – for our dislocated workers, and that is \$1.25 billion in formula dollars for dislocated workers. I think it is really important again to reiterate, all of these dollars are formula dollars; they are all going to come down to your local workforce investment areas. Cities should really be talking to those boards, talking to the directors of workforce investment areas about what kinds of programming those dollars are going to be used for and again, please, use them and use them relatively quickly. I would like to add an important point here that the Department of Labor (DOL) just issued what is called a TEGL, a training and employment guidance letter, on the spending of these dollars.

There is also another pot of money, \$750 million, in competitive grants for worker training and placement in high growth and emerging industries including green technologies. This is funded at the level of \$750 million and workforce investment areas will be able to apply for these as part of a competitive grant program. We anticipate that the Department of Labor will be issuing information or a TEGL on this within 10-14 days. So I urge you to keep visiting the [www.dol.gov/recovery](http://www.dol.gov/recovery) to check on how to apply for these competitive grants. Another important funding stream that is included in the stimulus for workforce is Youth Build. Many of you are probably already familiar with Youth Build. The stimulus includes \$50 million to supplement regular funding for Youth Build programs and to provide job training for at-risk youth ages of 16-24. So you may want to look at this as funds to supplement an existing Youth Build or to begin thinking about developing a Youth Build program within your community.

I want to move on to some other programs no longer in the workforce arena, but before I move on, I do want to mention two other things. All of you are probably well aware that Congress added about \$29 billion – I'm sorry, \$39 billion for additional unemployment insurance coverage and almost \$29 billion for COBRA. These are really important for two reasons. One, we know that some cities are actually experiencing layoffs. You should know that the individuals you are laying off will have access to increased unemployment benefits, extended unemployment benefits and that they will also, in all likelihood, be eligible for a 65 percent reduction in their COBRA premium. The reason that there is a 65 percent reduction is that Congress appropriated funds specifically to be used to help pay for the cost of COBRA. That COBRA cost is a rather – it not quite the simplest procedure but the former employer pays the 65 percent and then gets a reimbursement through the wage withholding system for that payment that they have made but you should know that two things: 1) your employees, if they are laid off, will be eligible for extended and enhanced unemployment benefits and 2) they will be eligible for a 65 percent reduction in their monthly COBRA premiums.

March 26, 2009 *Recovery and Reinvestment Plans for America: What They Mean for Your Community's Children and Families*

National League of Cities' Institute for Youth, Education, and Families

Page 3 of 15

I do want to quickly move on to just a couple of other important programs, for example, the Social Services Block Grant, which will go through the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Here is \$400 million in new funding to states to help with economic self-support or self-sufficiency efforts within communities, so you should be aware of that. You should also be aware that there is \$1 billion in formula grants for community services block grant. Those funds to be sub-granted to community action agencies and other eligible entities which in some cases can be cities. I also want to let you know that there is a wide range of health related funding streams that are covered under the stimulus package. There is funding for community health centers directly through HHS. There is funding through NIH (National Institutes of Health) for construction and rebuilding of important core health facilities within communities. To the extent that cities are either operating community health centers or in some way connected to public or private hospitals within their communities, this may be a way to access some of those funds.

Finally, I want to mention – at least within this discussion of aid to individuals and families – I want to mention a whole range of early care and education programs. The biggest pot of money here is funding to education. LEAs, local education agencies, will receive billions of dollars – of course spread out around the country – but billions of dollars in funding. About \$12 billion will be going for the Elementary and Secondary Education Act Title I program. Another, \$11.5 billion will be going to LEAs to fund special education or IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act) programs. Huge amounts of money are coming down to education systems to help free up other dollars to be used for other purposes – really to help in the case of the IDEA to get to the federal commitment to fund 40 percent of all special education programs. But these are huge sums of money that local education agencies should be taking advantage of and using to enhance their education. In addition, there is the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund, and that is \$54 billion that is coming down to states to be spread out within the states to fund primarily education and school modernization, renovation and repair efforts, but also can be used for other innovative programs in local areas if the states so determine.

Please note that there is also more than \$2 billion in Head Start and Early Head Start funds coming through the Department of Health and Human Services. There is the child care and development block grant which again is coming through the Department of Health and Human Services, and while the bulk of it is going to states which may pass it down to the local level, these are important programs that you should know about to help families purchase child care services and also for just improvement in some programs at the local level.

*BOSLAND:* Neil, if we could just touch quickly on the violence prevention?

*BOMBERG:* Yes, and that was exactly where I was moving next.

*BOSLAND:* Great.

*BOMBERG:* I just want to share with you very quickly – and this is not my issue area so I am really just going to bolt through it – but I just want to share with you quickly the fact that there are two significant pots of money for local areas. The first is the Byrne JAG or the Byrne Justice Assistance Grants which come down to local areas for innovative and creative programs to

address crime issues – especially across, between, and among cities – to help improve interregional or regional cooperation amongst police departments. The other is COPS (Community Oriented Policing Services) Hiring Recovery funds, which will provide \$1 billion in new monies down to cities to help hire and retain police. The important thing here is that there is no match. This is – local areas are free to use all of this money specifically for the hiring and retention of police officers. With that, I am going to end my part of the presentation and turn it over to Mike.

*WALLACE:* Thanks Neil. I am just going to talk about three programs in my talk here: the Community Development Block Grants, the Neighborhood Stabilization Program, and the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Fund. The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), of course, is a very flexible program that cities use to address a lot of different needs. Most cities use it for construction – bricks and mortar stuff – but it can also be used to pay for services to help basically any facet where you are benefiting low-income families. The majority of the funds under CDBG have to benefit low-income individuals and families. Under the Economic Recovery Act, we are not talking about a really large pot of money compared to what you normally get with CDBG. There is \$1 billion available that goes out according to the normal formula and by way of comparison, last year this was funded at \$3.9 billion. The President is proposing \$4.5 billion in Fiscal Year 2010. So if you think about your normal CDBG grant – those that you receive directly from the federal government – trim that down and you will see that you are not getting a huge chunk of CDBG funds. These funds are also going to go to the states, which mean that cities that don't normally receive direct allocations of CDBG can still apply to their state through the normal process to get the funds.

What some cities have done in their youth, education, and families efforts with CDBG – you know, a lot of people have used it for youth centers and community centers and that kind of thing, but I noticed that a couple of cities have used it to actually build playground equipment at low-income child care centers, and they actually pay salaries for some support staff at those centers. So those things are eligible under CDBG. The key thing to remember here is that every program we talk about today, the number one goal for the program, according to the President, is to create jobs. So when you are thinking about what kind of programs you want to do with these funds – although not every program that is geared towards services is necessarily going to be a jobs creator – to the extent that you can demonstrate it does create jobs that will be a plus. With CDBG, because the funding amount is so small, you shouldn't be thinking about it in terms of new projects you can start. Unlike some of the services funding, when you are talking about CDBG and community development, this is where we talk about “shovel-ready” projects. Funds that have to be used as soon as you get them. So really the kind of projects HUD, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, is looking for are those projects that have already probably been vetted out and thought about and only because of lack of funding in previous years that they did not get funded. If you are still doing an approval process or side approval or environmental impact review or any kind of that stuff, this funding is probably not a good fit for that. It is things that are ready to go. The official regulations for CDBG have not been published yet. We expect there to be some tweaks to the normal eligible uses under this. The secretaries have wide latitude to remove things that they would consider obstacles to spending this out in a timely fashion. So make sure that when it does come out, you can look at

[www.hud.gov/recovery](http://www.hud.gov/recovery) to find out when it comes out. They take a fresh look at the regulations because they may not exactly fit what cities are normally used to using for CDBG.

The Neighborhood Stabilization Program is a relatively new federal program that allows cities – it basically provides funding for the cities so that they can go in and purchase housing that has been made vacant by foreclosure. It is really aimed at neighborhoods that, because of the foreclosure crisis – neighborhoods that were doing pretty well prior to the foreclosure crisis but because of lots of foreclosures they are back sliding and becoming blighted or becoming slums and that kind of thing. This funding under the Economic Recovery Act is all competitive for the Neighborhood Stabilization Program. So when you think about these funds, if you are a large city, you know, you are probably pretty good at applying, but if you are a small city that doesn't normally receive direct funds from the government, there are a couple of things you can do to increase your chances. One is that HUD is allowing cities to work across jurisdictions. So if you have a neighboring unit of local government, you can jointly apply. You can also jointly apply with nonprofit organizations, and, in this round under economic recovery, nonprofit organizations can apply on their own.

What we are recommending is that a lot of times, especially smaller cities – the nonprofit may have more capacity to do these real estate transactions than you have in the local government. It might make a lot of sense to team up with your nonprofit and apply together. And to really demonstrate the HUD that you have community support for your projects, it is not a bad idea if the mayor applies to get a letter of recommendation or a letter of support from your nonprofits or vice versa if the nonprofit applies get a letter from the mayor to support these funds. But where they really work for children and families is that a vacant house is a hazard, you know, in neighborhoods. It drives down the property value but it also really, you know, we see through statistics that it encourages crime. It encourages people to come squat or they tear out anything recyclable in it so they can recycle it and get a quick pay off. You can use these funds to either rehabilitate that kind of housing or actually – if it is such a hazard that it could cost more to rehabilitate it than to tear it down – you can tear down those homes, which a lot of cities are including in those plans especially those cities that are shrinking just to get them off the block.

Finally, the Homeless Prevention Rapid Re-Housing Fund, this is probably going to have the most impact in the areas we are talking about today. It makes sense. You don't want to think about these Homeless Prevention Funds like you think about your normal allocation. This is really – the key word here is rapid re-housing. The administration put these funds in to help those families who have been made homeless because of foreclosure, and the real goal here is to catch those families and get them into some kind of housing situation before they become homeless or before the family would be torn apart by homelessness. A lot of cities I know, basically their homeless provider is a situation where you have a men's shelter or women and children's shelter and it is really difficult to keep families together when they lose their homes. This funding can be used to help put those families right back into a rental situation. It can be helpful for a variety of reasons. It can be used to help credit repair for those families, to provide case managers to them, or relocation assistance, but the real goal is to make sure that families don't really experience the effects of homelessness if they get put out of their home because of foreclosure. The last thing I will say is, you know, these programs can be used together. So if you have a Neighborhood Stabilization Program funding stream where you are buying homes off

the market to turn into rental housing or low-income rental housing, it is perfect to use the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Funds to support a family moving into that home that the city has turned into a new low-income rental situation.

*BOSLAND:* Great. Thank you both Mike and Neil for covering, in a short period of time, a lot of different funding streams that can be used to support families that are really vulnerable in these economic times out there. We did have one question come in about uses for CDBGs funding and whether particular ideas were allowable including individual development accounts. Mike, what is the best way for folks in cities out there to get clarity on what is allowable?

*WALLACE:* Sure. Because the program is so flexible, it is really difficult for us to tell you what specific project would be eligible or not because it is a lot of it depends on how the income requirements are met and that kind of thing. The best way to do it, and what HUD has been encouraging cities to do, is to contact their field offices directly. This is especially pertinent now because the secretaries, like I said, have wide latitude to waive certain requirements if it stands in the way of spending of this funding out quickly, or allocating it quickly or if there are any other barriers to what they would think is a good idea for job creation. I think IDAs could make the case probably for job creation there in terms of getting them back into a credit worthy situation where they are stable enough to hold employment, but the best thing to do would be to proactively call the HUD field office and run it up the flagpole there and they could give you a preliminary answer.

*BOSLAND:* Great. Thanks very much and I know there are probably lots of questions out there. There are a lot of funding streams and all sorts of details that I know I have been becoming familiar with over the past month or so. But we also realize that it can be easy to get lost in the pursuit of individual funding streams. So I want to shift the conversation now to more of a discussion of about the broader opportunities that arise out of this stimulus package and the first thing is that the way that we think about it here, and that I am guessing many of you are thinking about it out there, is to focus on what you want to do. We know that a lot of cities out there have done a very good job of setting goals and developing comprehensive plans around children and youth. Just since last fall, at least 100 mayors have joined NLC's Mayors' Action Challenge for Children and Youth, and have been setting goals and measurable targets in four key areas. The first is opportunities to learn and grow, the second is a safe neighborhood to call home, the third a healthy lifestyle and environment, and the fourth a financially fit family in which to thrive. If your city hasn't joined in, we would encourage you to. But in whatever form you are setting those local goals and coming up with your planning, that shared vision that emerges from your community can really be the filter for determining how all the various funding opportunities that are out there in general and then specifically through the stimulus can help you accomplish those goals. For our part here at the Institute, we are trying to help on that front by framing some of the key opportunities that we see arising out of the stimulus funding, whether that money goes to city hall or not, and preparing a series of short papers – probably ultimately eight to ten short papers on opportunities – identifying a goal that may be on the city's agenda and then clarifying the wide range of stimulus funds that could be brought to bear at the

local level and laying out some key options such that municipal leaders could take to maximize the impact of those funds locally.

I am just going to briefly mention four of those that are currently on our Web site at [www.nlc.org/iyef](http://www.nlc.org/iyef). We have one up around early childhood, strengthening families and neighborhoods that have been harmed by the national housing crisis, preventing youth violence, and supporting afterschool, summer and out-of-school time programming. To give you just a taste for what these include, for example, on the afterschool and summer programming, we are talking about bringing together a number of different types of funding streams and encouraging cities to make sure that families are aware of the child care and development block grant that can help them pay for out-of-school time programs for children under the age of 13.

Looking at the variety of education dollars, Neil mentioned a number of those that can be used for teacher training, school construction and rehabilitation to create better spaces that both work for the school hours and afterschool technology, also looking at Americorps and Vista programs to bring in new volunteer support, youth training and employment funds to blend work and learning especially during summer programs, and even the Justice Assistance Grants that were mentioned to create closer partnerships between law enforcement and out-of-school time programs that can help provide positive options for young people who are at risk for gang affiliation or other violence. So that gives you a sense of, in each of these areas, really trying to look at what you want to accomplish locally and then how you can do that with the support of these programs.

I also want to mention that we have some other briefs coming out soon about connecting families to benefits and tax credits that have been expanded through this legislation, modernizing schools that facilitate community engagement, creating multiple pathways to graduation for young people and workforce development opportunities for youth. At the same time we are not trying to duplicate other efforts so we will continue to link you to great resources that others have put together. I will just mention one that is currently on our Web site that was recently put out by Leadership for Healthy Communities Initiative of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. It is a paper entitled "Supporting Healthy Communities" and you can find it on the Web site and again, they have really taken the approach of looking at how you pull together transportation funding, violence prevention funding, nutritional support, CDBG, neighborhood redevelopment in a variety of ways and with some real specific examples to help think about how we promote healthy lifestyles and give children and families access to the nutrition and physical activity opportunities that they need.

At this point I would like to go ahead and hear from Matthew Stark, director of Policy and Legislative Affairs in Providence, R.I., on your experiences in Providence. Maybe you can just start by talking about how you all have gotten organized at the city level to respond to the stimulus, and what some of the basic goals or principles are that have guided your activities.

**STARK:** Yeah. Absolutely, thank you very much for inviting me and I hope that some of our experiences here are helpful for folks on the call. We were looking at this as certainly a big opportunity for the state and the city in particular where a lot of the need fits. And our overarching principle was how can we maximize these dollars in a transparent and accountable way for the people in Providence and so we started putting together a team to take on the task of mining the bill for opportunities and organizing to pursue those opportunities whether they be

programmatic funding or project funding. Our first piece was getting analysis going and breaking the bill up – identifying programs and sorting through it. We had put together in the fall, a wish list of projects when we knew stimulus was in the offering, which was somewhat problematic on one level but ended up being quite useful. Once we identified funding streams, we could start seeing where those projects might be supported by stimulus. So analysis was a key piece, and it is ongoing. Obviously a lot of the rules are still coming down and we continue to monitor and update grids that we maintain with the programmatic funding and the projects and programs that we want to support.

The next piece, or the parallel piece with that, was the management team and the tables we were going to have to put together and the tools we were going to have to use to move this along. I don't want to go into a lot of detail here but we put together a steering committee of five or six folks in the Mayor's Office. We put together a working group of over 20 directors in city government. We put together a compliance team and designated a compliance officer who is – that team is required to do two things: to be able to account for every dollar that the city spends under ARRA, as well as to pull forward the information that we need so that we can comply with all the various requirements in each of these funding streams. And then a communications team as well because so much of this has to do with bringing the community and other stakeholders along and having a transparent process that is based on objective, rational decision-making and documentation.

So we put that basic structure in place and we have been working through designating our opportunities and making sure that there is a lead for each opportunity and that lead has the resources necessary to pursue a project or a program that we want to have funded here. A lot of the projects and programs that we are pursuing in earnest are moving quickly, weatherization is one that we want to pursue, homeless prevention, neighborhood stabilization, CDBG, EDA (Economic Development Administration) grants, COPS, homeland security – I mean it is really a long list of opportunities that we see in the bill.

Maybe I should step back here for a second and just say that as we are putting together our management team, some of the concerns that have popped up along the way are the administrative resources to comply with rules that have not even come down from the various federal agencies. There are some admin dollars in a couple of the funding streams but nothing that really addresses the overarching need for transparency and reporting. I am particularly concerned about dollars that are traveling through existing funding streams where we have people in city government that have been doing compliance for a very long time but we need to bring them around to how this is different now under ARRA. A lot of the competitive grants have those compliance requirements laid out, but the existing funding streams – we need to make sure that ARRA if has new requirements that we are aware of them and that we are compliant.

Another piece is evaluation and being able to demonstrate success. I think it was noted in one of the earlier presentations that the number one goal here is job creation and how are we going to be able to account for this success when many of these funding streams aren't really necessarily going to produce jobs, although they are extremely valuable in the community. So measuring success is going to be very important. Managing expectations of the community, I think, is an extremely key issue. I was in Washington last week at a meeting to prepare for a briefing by the Vice President and a number of department representatives – 14 agencies – came to present to city representatives like myself and in the pre-meeting the night before – 40 cities

represented – all of them saying managing expectations here is going to be a huge challenge because they feel the message coming from the federal government is “Look, help is on the way, we have passed a stimulus.” Meanwhile, we are waiting for rules to be on the way and for us to be able to draw down the money and start to get shovels in the ground and get people back to work and fund programs to strengthen the safety net and so on.

*BOSLAND:* That leads me to a question that I had for you about how you have been thinking about the balance between needing to get money out fast into the economy and as you said, people are expecting it versus the importance for both families and also the future of funding in these areas to some degree of ensuring that the funds are spent well and how have you all been thinking about that at the local level?

*STARK:* Well the first part about that is it has been an education process for us and as our stakeholders. We have been reaching out to stakeholders – whether it is our city council or community groups – we have been coming forward and saying, “Look, we don’t have a dime in hand yet.” Initially we had a meeting with leadership in the city council a couple of weeks ago, and one of the members had come forward saying “I understand that Providence is going to have \$140 million of discretionary spending under the bill.” and we had to say “Well I’m not sure where you got that impression but it is not that way.”

So our starting point was just letting people know, look, a lot of this is competitive grants. A lot of this is formula funding. A lot of it is going to the state and we are going to have to go and wrangle with the state. We, I think, are in a decent position here in Rhode Island where we have good relationships at the state level but I have heard from other states – other cities in larger states – where vying for those dollars that are held at the state level has become quite difficult. But I think getting that message out about what the structure of this bill is and what the funding streams are in this bill has been the first step. The second step is starting to sort through what we know about in terms of requirements. So there are pieces in the bill that lay out non starter projects like the zoo here in Providence and we have the OMB (Office of Management and Budget) guidelines that came out the day after the bill was passed. So we have some starting points and some of the competitive grants that have come down have rules, and we are starting to piece through what we know. And again, we haven’t spent any dollars here yet but we want to make sure that before a dollar goes out the door that we understand what reporting requirements are there and that we are set up to do that.

*BOSLAND:* Right. Now another important piece about thinking about the stimulus funding is that it is short-term funding. I believe Mike was mentioning, you know, to look at shovel-ready projects on the front end to get it out quickly, but also that it goes for – depending on the program, but it is generally a couple of years – but it is expected to be spent quickly, and this is not something that is expected to be sustained at these increased levels. How have you thought about the opportunity that that presents for up front investments and changing how you do your work there or making structural changes that can lead to longer term payoffs for children and families?

*STARK:* Well we are trying to do just what you said. We are trying to see how – recognizing that this is an opportunity – how we can leverage this opportunity to get system changes that will at least carve out a better direction for our programs and policies here. An example of that is, I know at the federal level – from the meeting last week – that HUD and Labor and Energy are trying to work out a memorandum of understanding between their agencies to create a partnership and guidance at the federal level about how to pull together training dollars with infrastructure projects and with energy projects, and we are doing the same thing locally here. We had a meeting last week with our workforce training board, the planning department and our CAP agency the, so there’s weatherization dollars at the table, the workforce training dollars at the table, and we are trying to figure out how we can put together a proposal to bring all that together. Now that is something that can continue to happen after this money comes and goes. It is probably a partnership that we could have had some time ago, but in this moment we want to make the best case that Providence is well positioned to leverage those dollars in each of those funding streams for an even better outcome. So I think that is an example of where we are trying to pull the systems into alignment.

*BOSLAND:* That’s great. I see that we are getting down there on time for this audioconference and I know that there are folks on the line that have questions that they would like to ask to Neil, Mike and Matthew. Maggie, could be open the lines now to questions?

*OPERATOR:* The lines are now open for questions. If you would like to ask a question you can do so by pressing star 1 on your telephone keypad.

*BOSLAND:* Great. And while we wait for the first question to come in, Matthew did you want to say a word about the role for local elected officials in leading these efforts?

*STARK:* Sure. For local elected officials, like our city council for example?

*BOSLAND:* Yeah and the mayor.

*STARK:* Well the city council, when we started putting our team together, the city council put forward a resolution to immediately have oversight of every dollar spent and so they brought us to the table very quickly in terms of needing to bring them up to speed on what this bill is about, how the dollars had to go out, and how that type of process might not work. So on the one hand it was their role for us was let us do our job and spend these dollars, but we has to also acknowledge that they have a role and they have interest. So we have opened up a really good dialogue and relationship with our city council where their value added is becoming part of the “we,” that we are trying to spend this money and we are soliciting projects from them and giving them criteria. So we are providing a lot of analysis on what the opportunities are, and they are letting us know what would be meaningful and useful right down to the street level. So I think they can be very important in terms of helping us to manage expectations but also bringing forward quality projects.

*BOSLAND:* Terrific.

March 26, 2009 *Recovery and Reinvestment Plans for America: What They Mean for Your Community’s Children and Families*

National League of Cities’ Institute for Youth, Education, and Families

Page 11 of 15

*WALLACE:* Hey Julie, if I could just call attention to one of your additional resources.

*BOSLAND:* Sure.

*WALLACE:* For those cities thinking about applying for neighborhood stabilization funds or those who have been awarded them in the last round, you will see on the end of your package, the National Community Stabilization Trust. That is an organization that is put together by several groups in D.C., – Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) and Enterprise, all community development specialists – and they are funding this Community Stabilization Trust to go into cities absolutely for free to try and help develop those stabilization plans. So cities that do not have a lot of capacity, especially I would recommend contacting the Stabilization Trust which could be of real assistance to you.

*BOSLAND:* Yeah. I think that is a great point to remind folks that we – at the end of the list of federal funding streams that was attached to your audioconference call in instructions as well as the opportunity briefs that are posted on the NLC Web site under the Institute for Youth Education and Families, if you look at the end of all of those, we have tried to provide you with the appropriate Web sites and links so that you can connect either with the federal agencies that are overseeing the programs to get further guidance and clarification or supportive organizations that can help you in this work and obviously I want to reiterate that NLC would love to continue to be one of those organizations that is helping you in this process as well. So I hope that you will stay in touch with us and let us know how we can help and also share some of the interesting things that you are doing at the local level so that we can pass those on and help others learn from you as well. Do we have any questions in the queue Maggie?

*OPERATOR:* We do have several questions in queue. Our first question comes from the line of Patricia Senecal with the town of Ignacio. Please proceed with your question.

*SENECAL:* Yes. I am Pat Senecal. I just wanted to confirm again that we can get the web sites for various things, for instance, I am in a tiny town of 700 people, and definitely neighborhood stabilization would be helpful. For instance I never heard of the Stabilization Trust. Where would I even know how to find that? Those are the kinds of questions that I end up with.

*WALLACE:* Sure. I think Julie might be helpful on this but I believe that it is actually on the documents you were sent when you registered for this call.

*BOSLAND:* Right. So if you look to the end of those documents and we can make sure in a follow up email, make sure that everyone has access to all of those.

*SENECAL:* Oh, I didn't see those. I didn't see the follow up documents. That would be great. I am eager to get all the information I can to start. Thank you very much.

*BOSLAND:* Okay. Do we have another question?

*OPERATOR:* Our next question comes from the line of Barbara Rua with the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities. Please proceed with your question.

*RUA:* Hi. I was interested in hearing a little bit more about the COBRA and extended enhanced unemployment funding stream. What sort of city requirements are there?

*BOMBERG:* There are really no city requirements with those. I only alerted you to that because if a city in Connecticut or elsewhere is considering laying off people it is important to know what those benefits are. Where the city does come into play on the COBRA benefits is the city would actually pay the 65 percent each month for the individual's COBRA benefit. The individual would pay 35 percent each month and then the city would get a reimbursement when it forwards its withholding taxes to the federal government, to the treasury. There is actually a line on the document where the city would enter how much it has paid for COBRA benefits and those would be subtracted out from the actual amount that it has to in turn submit to the federal government. I doubt this would ever happen in a city's case, but if in fact the amount of money that was paid out for COBRA exceeds the amount that was withheld in its entirety, then the city would receive a reimbursement check. So that is really one of the few places where the city would get involved with this, but I do think it is important for folks to know that unemployment insurance benefits have been extended for anywhere from 12 to 24 weeks and that the amount has been increased weekly by \$25. These are additional enhanced benefits that city employees who happen to unfortunately be laid off would be able to obtain.

*STARK:* Julie?

*BOSLAND:* Yes?

*STARK:* Can I just jump in for a second?

*BOSLAND:* Sure.

*STARK:* This is one of the things that we are trying to address in terms of outreaching communication in the community. It is not exactly a project or a program the city is going to take on or run but we want to make sure that people are aware of these programs and benefits that are in ARRA, so we are putting together a brochure that outlines what we have been able to dig out of the bill in terms of tax credits, if you're a home owner interested in saving energy, the child care piece, Medicaid coverage, SSI (Social Security income), Veteran's disability, food stamps, and some of the programs that have been mentioned today. These are not things that we will administer, but we want to make sure that the community is aware of these pieces and we are working towards getting a concise document out for folks.

*BOSLAND:* That is a great point how cities can be doing can really be communicating and helping people link to those, and also making sure local nonprofits or others that are eligible for

funding know about funding programs and even supporting their applications. So thanks for adding that piece. Were there any more calls in the queue?

*OPERATOR:* Our next question comes from the line of Angie Kim with the city of Tacoma. Please proceed with your question.

*GARY:* This isn't Angie, this is Gary. But my question is, if you are partnering with cities, schools, or other nonprofits and you are providing a lot of the services – domestic violence, family support, education, health, technology, and education – we are building some community centers and I guess my concern is, who takes the lead on developing the RFP (request for proposals) for these funding sources?

*WALLACE:* Well generally speaking, the rules the administration publishes will determine who takes the lead. Now, I am not sure how it works for some of those other programs but for neighborhood stabilization, it is up to you to decide who would take the lead because it is open to both the state and local governments and nonprofit organizations. So you know, whichever organization has probably the best capacity to do it, but you just have to verify in the specific regulations for the program under economic recovery, you know, who they want to be the primary lead on it.

*STARK:* Julie, again, can I jump in real quick?

*BOSLAND:* Yes.

*STARK:* This is something that it would be great if there was a set of best practices laid out by an organization for cities because this is going to be extremely challenging. As we look at being transparent and making “rational” choices about where we pursue funds, you know, there are going to be some folks that get into a grant and some folks who don't and how we, you know, our position right now is the community organizations may not agree with the choice we made but we will at least be able to make a rationale as to which direction we went in. And just to give you an example, there is a Department of Justice grant for mentoring at risk youth. It will be a municipal grant partnering with community-based organizations, and I already know of three community-based organizations in our city that want to do that grant, but the grant is not big enough to support everybody. So you know, we have a task ahead of us on that one.

*BOSLAND:* Right.

*OPERATOR:* Our next question comes from the line of Desiree Mitchell with the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services. Please proceed with your question.

*MITCHELL:* Hi. Good afternoon. I was inquiring about the workforce development dollars, and I know that the majority of the dollars are intended for summer programs and that another portion of the dollars were intended for creating jobs programs, but I was wondering if you could

Speak to sort of the year-round job training programs and if you knew what percentage of some of these funds were supposed to be dedicated towards them?

**BOMBERG:** Well this is really a local option. You do not have to use your share of the \$1.2 billion for summer jobs. You can use it for year-round programming. There is a requirement that at least 30 percent of the funds be spent on out-of-school youth, whether it is year-round, summer jobs, or a combination of all of those. So it is really your decision. I think when Congress appropriated the funds during the various discussions that occurred on the floor, many members in the Senate in particular, especially Senator Patty Murray from the state of Washington argued strongly that one of the very quick ways to get money into the economy is to pour this money into summer jobs. It is important for a couple of reasons. It gives young people a connection to the workplace and a better understanding of how those connections work, and as I said, it is a quick way to or a way to quickly get the money into the system. But you are able to spend it on year-round programs, and clearly the monies that are coming through the regular 2009 appropriation, which is about a like amount of funds, you can use for year-round activities. Does that help answer your question?

**BOSLAND:** I think she is back into the listening mode here. Unfortunately, I do know that we have some additional questions and we hope that you will follow up with us directly and we can try and get you the answers that you need on those but we are out of time. I just want to thank everyone for listening to this call and a special thanks to our speakers: to Neil, Michael, and Matthew for joining us and sharing the information that you did with all of our listeners. I would encourage everyone to join us again for our next audioconference, on Thursday April 23, 2009 at 2:30 p.m. Eastern time. That one will actually be focusing on the Mayor's Action Challenge for Children and Youth that I mentioned earlier in the call. It's a great way of mobilizing your community and really focusing in on the goals that you all share for children and families in your community.

I also want to mention that registration is now open for the biannual National Summit on Your City's Families which will take place in Boston in October. I would encourage you to take advantage of that opportunity to learn from both national experts and your peers about innovative city efforts to support children, youth, and families. That again can be found on the Institute for Youth, Education, and Families portion of the National League of Cities Web site. I hope everyone found this helpful and thank you again for joining us. Thanks again to all the speakers.