



PRESS RELEASE

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Funding

East Texas Programs to receive funds from the Stimulus Bill

Kilgore, TX, March 25, 2009: East Texas Council of Governments (ETCOG) directors traveled to Austin for the Texas Association of Regional Councils (TARC) Quarterly meeting last week to receive information on Stimulus Package funding coming to the East Texas region. ETCOG departments notified of funding allocations to date are as follows. State amounts are preliminary estimates as of March 20, 2009 and are subject to change based on the release of federal guidelines within 30-60 days.

TRANSPORTATION

ETCOG's Rural Transit District (RTD) will receive \$1.32 million for vehicle replacement from the Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT) Stimulus allocation. This funding will replace 16 of the RTD's 41 vehicle fleet. For more information, contact Interim Director of Transportation, Tommy Hibdon at (806) 368-0249.

AREA AGENCY ON AGING

The East Texas Area Agency on Aging (AAA), administered by ETCOG, will receive grants for the establishment and operation of nutrition projects for seniors. Federally, AAA programs will receive \$100 million, with \$5.6 million allocated to Texas AAA programs. Of the federal total, \$65 million is for Congregate Nutrition Services, \$32 million for Home Delivered Nutrition Services, and \$3 million for Native American nutrition services. The Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) will use \$280,400 for state administration and must provide \$70,100 to match these funds. The remaining is passed along to 28 AAAs for service based on the state's funding formula. Allocation to the East Texas AAA has not been announced. For more information, contact the Director of Aging, Claude Andrews at (903) 984-8641 x214.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

The ETCOG region will receive \$1,247,656 of additional Criminal Justice program funding from the Byrne Justice Assistance Recovery Act. In addition, ETCOG has been offered a 13 month contract in the amount of \$54,399.61 to hire an additional Criminal Justice Planner to provide technical assistance to applicants and grantees, coordinate the Criminal Justice Advisory Committee meetings at which local grant applications will be prioritized, perform preliminary grant reviews on applications, and perform in-region monitoring of the eventual grants.

The State of Texas has been allocated \$147 million in Justice Assistance Grant funding. Of this amount, 40% will go directly to specific communities through direct allocations and the other 60% (about \$90 million) will be administered by the Texas Criminal Justice Division (CJD). Of that \$90 million, \$40 million will be allocated among the 24 COGs to be scored and prioritized locally. ETCOG's allocation mentioned above, is part of this \$40 million.

In addition to the amounts discussed above, Texas should receive about \$2 million in additional Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding, and up to \$9 million in additional Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) funding; these amounts will be added to the pool to be used for the grant applications already ranked by the Criminal Justice Advisory Committee. For more information, contact the Director of Criminal Justice and Public Safety, Angela Norton, at (903) 984-8641 x251.

PUBLIC INFORMATION & REGIONAL SERVICES

ETCOG serves as the regional planning organization for economic development in East Texas. At the conference, ETCOG was notified of \$150 million to Economic Development Administration (EDA) for economic development assistance to states, cities, and counties. Of the total, \$50 million is for economic adjustment assistance for areas of the nation that have experienced sudden and severe economic dislocation and job loss due to corporate restructuring. Up to \$50 million may be transferred to regional economic development commissions. ETCOG will assist eligible entities in applying for the available funds.

ETCOG administers the East Texas Regional Development company, which makes loans to small businesses throughout the state of Texas through the Small Business Administration (SBA) 504 program. In the Stimulus Package, SBA has waived all of the fees associated with the 504 loan program up to \$636 million in order to stimulate small business lending. It is expected that fees will return in December. Refinancing under the 504 loan program is also being made available through the Stimulus Package. Certified Development Companies are expecting to make these loans available in a few months.

The Department of Energy (DOE) is estimated to receive \$24.9 billion in federal funding for energy efficiency and renewable energy conservation block grants, weatherization assistance, transportation electrification, and other projects. ETCOG will assist eligible entities in applying for the available funds.

For more information contact the Director of Public Information and Regional Services, Luke Kimbrough at (903) 984-8641 x219.

WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS EAST TEXAS

The Workforce Solutions East Texas Board is one of 28 local Workforce Solutions Boards located throughout the state. The board serves Henderson, Van Zandt, Rains, Wood, Upshur, Camp, Marion, Harrison, Panola, Gregg, Rusk, Cherokee, Anderson and Smith counties. ETCOG serves as the administrating agency of the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board. Planning estimates allocated from the Texas Workforce Commission to the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board is as follows:

- \$1.4 million in Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funds to provide training and services for dislocated workers
- \$904,675 in WIA funds to provide training and services to low income adults
- \$1.97 million in WIA funds to provide training and services for economically disadvantaged youth
- \$421,054 in Wagner-Peyser funds to provide temporary staffing at East Texas Workforce Solutions centers to assist with claimants on Unemployment Insurance
- \$252,633 in Wagner-Peyser funds to provide temporary staffing at East Texas Workforce Solutions centers to assist with center services

For more information, contact the Director of Workforce, Wendell Holcombe at (903) 984-8641 x 254.

For more information on Stimulus Package funds, visit the Texas State Comptrollers web site at <http://window.state.tx.us/recovery/>.

About ETCOG

The East Texas Council of Governments (ETCOG) is a voluntary association of counties, cities, school districts and special districts within the fourteen-county East Texas region. ETCOG assists local governments in planning for common needs, cooperating for mutual benefit and coordinating for sound regional development. Established in 1970, ETCOG, either directly, or through its contractors, provides programs and services for East Texas seniors, employers, and job seekers. ETCOG and its contractors also build the 9-1-1 emergency call delivery system, provide peace officer training and homeland security planning services; and deliver rural transportation services, business finance programs, and environmental grant funding for the region.

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