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Governor, Director Announce American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Workforce Development Programs

Columbus, Ohio – Ohio Governor Ted Strickland and Director of the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services Doug Lumpkin today announced that the state will utilize \$20.7 million in Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to create four new initiatives in partnership with Ohio's 20 workforce investment boards (WIBs).

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, signed into law by President Barack Obama in February, provides a total of \$138 million to Ohio through the WIA program to assist an estimated additional 20,000 adults, youth and dislocated workers with job training, job search assistance and youth employment services.

The \$138 million includes \$20.7 million for state-funded programs, \$14.6 million for rapid response efforts and \$102.7 million to be distributed by the state's 20 WIBs.

The four new initiatives – Urban Youth Works, Recovery Conservation Corps, Constructing Futures, and Ohio Learning Accounts/Project HIRE – will expand employment opportunities for urban and rural youth and traditionally underserved adults, broaden inclusion in apprenticeship programs across the state and provide an enhanced job matching program to link employers and job seekers to training funds and tax credits in targeted regional industries.

State agencies will coordinate with the workforce investment boards to make optimal use of the ARRA resources, including a portion of the \$102.7 million allocated directly to the WIBs, through the new initiatives.

“This unique partnership among our state agencies and our local workforce investment boards will ensure that we are effectively utilizing this infusion of WIA funds to serve those who are most in need,” said Ohio Governor Ted Strickland. “We’re addressing the evolving needs of our workforce and preparing our next generation of workers with the skills they need to thrive in the 21st century.”

Of the total ARRA WIA funds, 85 percent are distributed to local workforce investment boards based on a federal formula that incorporates variables including unemployment statistics and numbers of disadvantaged low-income individuals.

Of the funds being distributed to the WIBs, \$19.9 million will support services for adults, \$35.1 million will support services for dislocated workers, and \$47.7 million will support programs for youth. The stimulus amounts will supplement existing WIA allocations.

“We are excited to be partnering with the workforce investment boards, as well as the departments of Natural Resources, Development and the Board of Regents to offer these programs for Ohio's unemployed workers and families,” said Lumpkin. “These stimulus funds present us with a tremendous opportunity, and these programs will allow us to fully maximize them, for the good of Ohio's families and our state and local economies.”

Ohio's workforce investment boards establish local policies for the state's workforce system. The WIBs will distribute their funds for these four initiatives and other local programs in strict accordance with Recovery Act guidelines and with full transparency and accountability.

“We are so pleased to be partnering with the state on these initiatives,” said Rosie Picklesimer, director of Workforce Connections, a workforce investment board that serves Adams, Brown, Pike and Scioto counties. “This money could not

have come at a better time, and we can't wait to start using it to get more of our young people and unemployed workers back to work and contributing to our economy again."

Strickland has asked that the Ohio departments of Job and Family Services, Development, Natural Resources and the Ohio Board of Regents work together in partnership with the workforce investment boards on the following four initiatives for Ohioans:

PROGRAMS FOR YOUTH

Urban Youth Works: This initiative will fund workforce development initiatives targeting low-income urban youth in fiscal year 2010. The state will provide \$6.7 million for the program and fund grants ranging from \$50,000 to \$500,000 through an open, competitive Request For Proposal (RFP) process. Priority will be given to those proposals effectively serving the highest number of youth in a 12-month timeframe, and to programs that best lead to permanent jobs.

Recovery Conservation Corps: This initiative will provide employment sites for the workforce investment boards to hire youth ages 16 to 24 to improve Ohio's state parks and natural areas. Focusing on both rural and urban areas, particularly those in economic decline, Corps workers will assist with projects such as building recreation lands, boardwalks, observation areas and trails and curbing the spread of invasive species. The state will provide \$2 million for support services through a partnership with the workforce investment boards on this initiative.

"These workers will gain critical experience and on-the-job training as they improve the state's parks, wetlands, forests and other natural areas," said ODNR Director Sean Logan.

"The time couldn't be better for our youth, including inner city youth, to be introduced to careers in the green market, specifically working with the Department of Natural Resources and participating parks in our cities. We are hopeful that this initiative will stimulate interest in future careers that otherwise may not have been available," said Suzanne Coleman-Tolbert, President and CEO of Central Ohio Workforce Investment Corporation/JOBLeaders. "Our youth will get involved at the ground level of long-term careers with the added bonus of doing something good in the communities and neighborhoods in which they live, work and play."

PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS

Constructing Futures: The State of Ohio will provide \$4 million to offer remedial education, supportive services and pre-apprenticeship training that will lead to trade apprenticeships for low-income and traditionally underserved adults, including minority groups, women, veterans, dislocated workers and ex-offenders.

Ohio Learning Accounts and Project HIRE: Ohio Learning Accounts and Project Hometown Investment in Regional Economies (HIRE) will provide \$8 million for specialized, multi-dimensional support to remove barriers for dislocated workers seeking training and employment

Through Ohio Learning Accounts, Ohio will provide flexible training accounts of up to \$6,000 for individual dislocated workers who require training or certification in order to find jobs. Participants may establish a personalized Career Training Plan, and those who establish plans at their local One-Stop Centers will be able to request state funds for short-term training

Project HIRE continues the process by providing an enhanced job matching program linking employers and job seekers to training funds and tax credits. Using labor market and business community knowledge, the Ohio Department of Development will identify employers in targeted regional industries of high need who are looking for employees with specific skills that may be matched through Project HIRE. The state and local workforce investment specialists will coordinate Project HIRE events to match employees and employers.

The local WIA areas and University System of Ohio will be critical partners in this program, and these initiatives will all work hand-in-hand with OhioMeansJobs.com, the state's online job matching service. OhioMeansJobs.com is the outcome of a Strickland administration initiative to put Ohio employers and job seekers together in a dynamic, user-friendly setting. The online job matching system was created through an innovative collaboration between the State of Ohio, Indeed.com and Monster Government Solutions, in response to feedback from consumers who indicated that the previous state-offered online job matching systems did not include enough job postings or resumes to serve as a useful statewide job matching tool.

INFORMATION FOR OHIO EMPLOYERS AND JOB SEEKERS:

Ohio organizations interested in applying for stimulus funds Urban Youth Works and Construction Futures should submit proposals to **<http://recovery.ohio.gov>**. Requests for Proposal will be issued to all those who express interest. Those interested in local initiatives should contact the workforce investment board in their area. For a map of Ohio's workforce boards and their contact information, go to **<http://jfs.ohio.gov/workforce/localboard/index.stm>**.

Ohio job seekers interested in learning more about their eligibility for employment and training programs – and employers looking to connect with workers – should call or visit their local One-Stop Centers. For a map of Ohio's One-Stop Centers and their contact information, visit **<http://jfs.ohio.gov/workforce/jobseekers/onestopmap.stm>**.

For more information about the American Recovery and Investment Act and Workforce Investment Act programs and guidelines, visit **recovery.ohio.gov**.

Editor's Note: A pie chart showing the distribution of WIA stimulus dollars can be found at <http://jfs.ohio.gov/RELEASES/WIAPieChart.pdf>. For more information about the new initiatives, visit <http://jfs.ohio.gov/releases/ConstructingFuturesInitiative.pdf>, <http://jfs.ohio.gov/releases/OMJProjectHIRE.pdf>, <http://jfs.ohio.gov/releases/RecoveryReinvestmentCorpsInitiative.pdf> and <http://jfs.ohio.gov/releases/YouthEducationEmploymentStrategiesInitiative.pdf>.