



Marin activists look to stimulus package to create local jobs

Richard Halstead

Posted: 05/01/2009 05:55:11 PM PDT

This summer a tiny sliver of the \$787 billion federal stimulus package will fund a summer youth program for 77 at-risk Marin youth ages 14 to 24.

The program, which will cost a mere \$237,800, will include training in solar heating installation and weatherization. The kids accepted into the program will have a variety of barriers to employment. They may lack basic skills; they may lack a high school diploma; they may be homeless.

The funding is just part of the \$1.4 million in stimulus money the county is due to receive for job training, said Mary Donovan, director of Marin County's Workforce Investment Board.

She and others spoke Friday at a meeting of the Grassroots Leadership Network at Pickleweed Park Community Center in San Rafael attended by more than 75 community activists seeking to learn more about how the federal money will be spent and how they might apply for assistance. The leadership network is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting civic participation to reduce poverty and improve the quality of life in under-represented communities.

Representatives of Rep. Lynn Woolsey, D-Petaluma, and state Sen. Mark Leno, D-San Francisco, spoke along with Marin Supervisor Charles McGlashan and other city and county officials.

McGlashan told the gathering that past attempts to shrink the ranks of the chronically unemployed by providing them with training have failed because the

local jobs to hire those people once they were trained never materialized. But McGlashan said the funding contained in the stimulus plan and other federal legislation aimed at promoting green energy alternatives could change that.

He noted that the Marin Energy Authority, formed in November to explore projects to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, is seeking \$63 million of stimulus package money.

"The Marin Energy Authority may provide a very loud and local demand pull for exactly the kind of jobs we want our local citizens to get," McGlashan said.

Linda Jackson, principal planner for the city of San Rafael, said her city will receive more than \$1.24 million in stimulus fund dollars, including \$1 million for resurfacing roads, \$100,000 to reactivate the Citizens Police Academy and a chunk for housing the homeless.

Jackson said the city is still waiting to hear if it will receive additional stimulus money to upgrade the Canal neighborhood's fire station, to hire a police street gangs specialist and a low priority crimes investigator and to improve the Bellam Boulevard/Highway 101 interchange.

"I can tell you how fast things are moving," Jackson said. "I get e-mails: 'Look at this grant, you have 24 hours. Get back to me as to whether you qualify.'"

Jackson added, "If you need a little bit more time to think about it, you are not shovel ready."

Alexandra Walter, a Woolsey aide, said that anyone interested in applying for stimulus grants should go to the www.grants.gov Web site and register immediately because the process can take four to six weeks.

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"If you're not registered when an opportunity comes up, you'll be excluded," Walter said.

She also recommend the following Web sites:

www.recovery.gov , www.cfda.gov and www.woolsey.house.gov .

Read more San Rafael stories at the IJ's [San Rafael](#) section.

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