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West Virginia Ranked 4th in Nation for Recovery Act Website

West Virginia state government is doing an exemplary job of providing online information about how federal stimulus funds are being used, according to a new report. About \$1.8 billion are being funneled into the Mountain State through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), which was enacted in February.

The state's Recovery Act website (www.recovery.wv.gov) was ranked fourth best in the nation by Good Jobs First, a non-profit research center based in Washington, DC. The report, "Show Us the Stimulus: An Evaluation of State Government Recovery Act Websites," can be found at www.goodjobsfirst.org/stimulusweb.cfm. The report acknowledged the West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy for its research assistance.

"West Virginia has one of the best state ARRA websites in the country in terms of providing information about both stimulus spending programs and individual projects," said Philip Mattera, research director of Good Jobs First and principal author of the report.

Six states scored 50 or better for their main Recovery Act website: Maryland (80), Colorado (68), Washington (63), West Virginia (60), New York (53) and Pennsylvania (50). The maximum possible score was 100. The average score for all states was 28.2, and the median score was 25.

Each state received a score based on the following features of their websites: planned spending by categories, spending totals broken down in county level data, location of projects, descriptions of projects (including contractor information and dollar amounts of contracts), project status, and the number of jobs retained or created.

West Virginia obtained a maximum score possible for data provided on job creation, perhaps the most important goal of the Recovery Act. The state also received perfect scores for its listing of program allocations and for centralizing all project data on the main ARRA website.

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West Virginia received zero points in the following categories: comparison of allocations to economic need, precise mapping of project locations, identification of project status, and currency of information.

“While there’s room for improvement, our state’s Recovery Act website does a commendable job of letting taxpayers know how their stimulus dollars are being invested,” said Paul Miller, Policy Analyst at the West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy. “Furthermore, this website could serve as an excellent template for disseminating other important information about federal and state government spending in West Virginia.”

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The West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy is a policy research organization that is nonpartisan, nonprofit, and statewide. The Center focuses on how policy decisions affect all West Virginians, especially low- and moderate-income families. More information is available at www.wvpolicy.org.

Good Jobs First is a national policy resource center for grassroots groups and public officials, promoting corporate and government accountability in economic development and smart growth for working families. More information is available at www.goodjobsfirst.org.