

Colorado Half in Ten Partner Hosts Economic Recovery Forum Tour

Introduction and background

9to5, National Association of Working Women, in collaboration with FRESC for Good Jobs and Strong Communities, Colorado Progressive Coalition, and NAACP of Colorado Springs, is working hard to educate Coloradoans about the benefits of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, or ARRA.

The groups worked together to organize multiple community forums on ARRA's benefits, which also covered how to access specific educational and work programs and provided participants opportunities to take action for policy reform. The community forums have served as an opportunity to advance broader conversation about the need for fiscal reform. All of the forums were held in traditionally underserved communities to further the goal of expanding educational opportunities and work supports to all. Just a small fraction of the thousands of people, small businesses, and local governments who have benefited from the more than \$7 billion in Recovery Act funds were brought together to discuss how they can work to protect such programs.

ARRA was one of the first pieces of major legislation that President Barack Obama signed into action within his first 30 days in office and was signed in Denver, Colorado in 2009. This landmark policy brought \$800 billion into states to help protect our most vulnerable communities and pave the road to recovery for millions of families hit the hardest by the worst economic recession in the United States since the Great Depression. ARRA helped stimulate the economy, save and create jobs, prevent more devastating state budget cuts, and protect important safety-net programs helping families make ends meet. Stimulus money put more than 46,000 Coloradans to work over the last year.

Event details

The Economic Recovery Forum Tour took place in several sites across the state, including Denver, Aurora, Greeley, Fort Collins, Colorado Springs, and Pueblo. The forums began in June 2010 and ended in December 2010. Most of the forums were held in community churches or at ally organizations. Nearly 200 people attended these forums.

At the forums, a panel of experts presented the vast range of benefits of ARRA to our communities and explained how individuals can access these benefits. Topics ranged from information on how to apply for unemployment insurance to how to access green jobs, TANF dollars, health care, and Pell grants for community college, to finding tax credits for working families and starting a small business. Presenters also discussed state fiscal issues that voters considered on the November ballot. Participants took action on federal policy issues by signing a petition to senators to extend ARRA-funded safety-net programs, filling out voter pledge cards, and sharing their personal stories.

Event planning and replication tools

Local partners

9to5, National Association of Working Women, FRESC, and Colorado Progressive Coalition are part of the ARRA Alliance. All three grassroots organizations support economic justice for families in Colorado and are dedicated to improving policies for low-income families. NAACP of Colorado Springs helped plan the event in Colorado Springs.

Timeline

9to5, National Association of Working Women in partnership with allied organizations began planning for the Economic Recovery Forum tour at the beginning of 2010. Planning included program development, advertising, and logistics such as securing location and food.

Speakers

The panel of presenters included experts on tax policies and ARRA funds, community college financial experts, a representative from the workforce development center, small business owners, and others who could speak about educational and training opportunities. The speakers differed slightly depending on the location of the forum, as local authorities were invited. In Pueblo, the district's state representative spoke. At a forum in a community church in Aurora, the pastor introduced the panel and spoke about his support for these policies, which gave sanction to the presenters.

Press outreach

Outreach to individuals included advertising the event on the sponsoring organizations' websites, community calendars, and Facebook. Other approaches included emailing constituents, distributing flyers door-to-door in neighborhoods near the events, and sending postcards to 560 individuals in Colorado Springs. The *Colorado Springs Independent* and *Gazette* also advertised the event in their newspapers. To view the posting in the *Colorado Springs Independent*, visit <http://www.csindy.com/colorado/noted/Content?oid=1886073>.

Funding

Funding for the forums came through a grant that the ARRA Alliance from the Open Society Institute, a foundation that funds work to improve the lives of low-income people and promote social justice. These funds helped pay for venue space, refreshments, childcare, and translation. The venue space and some food were often donated or offered at a discount price.

Next steps

The ARRA Alliance sent a thank you email to all participants of the forums with contact information of speakers and resource information that was provided at the forums. The alliance continues to meet and is making decisions for community outreach and education for 2011.

Template appendix

- Outreach checklist
- ARRA forum agenda and resource list
- Email invitation
- Postcards that were sent to individuals in Colorado Springs
- 9to5 calendar posting

Outreach checklist for ARRA forums

Reach out to at least three media outlets

- Get PSAs, ads, and or articles printed
- Letters to editor in community newspapers
- Op-ed pieces

Post event on community calendars

- Also include a posting on Coloradononprofits.org

Reach out to community partners in local communities

- Distribute to all relevant contacts and networks

Convene community partners for informational meeting about the event and get them to commit to a certain amount of member turnout

Post and distribute event fliers to:

- Community resource centers
- Local workforce development centers
- Local libraries
- Coffee shops
- Pride/GLBT Centers
- Social ministries
- Community centers
- Community calendars/ craigslist
- Churches, church bulletins
- Barbershops
- Goodwill
- Salvation Army
- Mission centers
- Soup kitchens
- County departments of human services/ social services
- Tech colleges/ community colleges/ women's studies alliances
- Local businesses near the forum location site
- Organizational newsletters
- Democratic organizations (especially when including election/ballot information before the election)
- ARRA Alliance> to be forwarded to all their networks
- Union networks> to be forwarded to all their networks
- C3 Roundtable> to be forwarded to all their networks
- Community shares
- Planned Parenthood
- Mi Casa, Continuum of Care Consortium
- Project Self-sufficiency
- Posada
- YWCA
- Chambers of Commerce

Send three emails to local members/contacts

- Save the date
- 1st reminder 1 week before event
- 2nd reminder the day before event

Make calls to local members/contacts a few days before the event

ARRA forum agenda and resource list

Learn How to Increase Your Dollar\$

How you can benefit from the Recovery Act

Gay and Lesbian Fund 315 E. Costilla St.

Thursday, October 28, 2010

Agenda

- 5:30-6:00** **Registration, networking, and refreshments**
- 6:00-6:10** **Welcome and agenda for economic recovery forum:**
Rosemary Harris Lytle, Colorado Springs Branch NAACP
- 6:10-7:40** **Presenters panel**
- ARRA introduction:
Maggie Gomez, 9to5 Colorado
- ARRA expanded tax benefits:
Ali Mickelson, Colorado Fiscal Policy Institute
- Unemployment insurance, UI, and workforce center services:
Terence Jackson, Pikes Peak Workforce Center
- Green jobs and training:
Felicia Barbera, Pikes Peak Workforce Center
- Pell Grants and continuing education at Pikes Peak Community College:
Dr. Regina Lewis, director of Women's Forum at PPCC
- Ugly Three: Amendments 60, 61, and Prop 101:
Ali Mickelson, Colorado Fiscal Policy Institute
- Call to action:
Linda Meric, 9to5 National Association of Working Women
- 7:40-7:50** **Q&A**
- 7:50-8:00** **Closing: Maggie Gomez**

Economic Recovery Forum Resource List

9to5 National Association of Working Women-Colorado
655 Broadway #800 Denver, CO 80203
Phone: (303)-628-0925 / Job Survival Hotline:
1-800-522-0925
www.9to5.org

Colorado Springs Branch NAACP
603 S El Paso St # B
Colorado Springs, CO 80903
Phone: (719)-475-7255
www.coloradospringsnaacp.org

Pikes Peak Workforce Development Center
2306 E. Pikes Peak Avenue,
Colorado Springs, CO 80909
Phone: (719)-667-3700
www.ppwfc.org

Pikes Peak Community College/ Women's Forum
5675 S. Academy Blvd. Colorado Springs, CO 80906
Phone: (719)-502-4044
Email: PPCCWomen'sForum@ppcc.edu
<http://www.ppcc.edu/current-students/special-assistance-programs/womens-forum/>

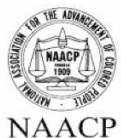
Colorado Fiscal Policy Institute
789 Sherman St., Suite300
Phone: (303)-573-5669
www.cclponline.org

Colorado Progressive Coalition
1029 Santa Fe Dr. Denver, CO 80204
Phone: (303)-866-0908 / (866)-329-0908 (toll-free)
www.progressivecoalition.org

FRESC
140 Sheridan Blvd. Denver, CO 80226
Phone: (303)-477-6111
www.FRESC.org

Investing in Colorado's Future
www.colorado.gov/recovery

9to5, National Association of Working Women–Colorado Chapter is an inclusive membership organization working for economic justice for low-wage women. To join, please call 9to5 Organizer Maggie Gomez at (303) 628-0925 or Maggie@9to5.org. Visit our website at www.9to5.org to learn more.



Email invitation



Dear [FNAME],

Learn How to Increase your Dollar\$
How you can benefit from the economic recovery package

TODAY, Thursday, October 28, 2010
6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Gay and Lesbian Fund
315 East Costilla St.
Colorado Springs, CO 80903

FREE forum - Free child care - Refreshments and light snacks

President Barack Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, ARRA, to assure an economic stimulus. Join us and learn how you can get a piece of the \$787 billion being funneled through the system.

Come learn:

- How to INCREASE your unemployment insurance check by continuing your education
- Where green jobs are being created
- What tax credits are available for families

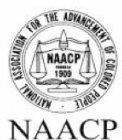
Scheduled presenters:

- 9to5, National Association of Working Women
- Pikes Peak Workforce Development Center
- Pikes Peak Community College
- Colorado Fiscal Policy Institute

If you have any questions please contact Maggie Gomez at (303)-628-0925 or maggie@9to5.org. Visit our website at www.9to5colorado.org to learn more about our organization.

Sincerely,

Maggie Gomez
Organizer, maggie@9to5.org



Postcards that were sent to individuals in Colorado Springs

9to5 National Association of Working Women- Colorado

655 Broadway #800 Denver, CO 80203

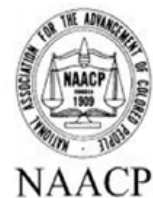
P: 303.628.0925 | www.9to5.org Maggie@9to5.org

**Tough Economic Times?
Learn how the Stimulus Package can help you!**

**The Economic Stimulus has been paving the road to
recovery for thousands of people;
find out how you can get plugged in!**

Economic Recovery Community Forum
Thursday October 28, from 6-8pm
Gay and Lesbian Fund 315 E. Costilla St.
Colorado Springs, CO 80903

Co-sponsored by 9to5, Colorado Progressive Coalition,
FRESC & Colorado Springs Branch NAACP



Learn How You Can Benefit from the Economic Stimulus Package: Aurora Community Forum

Local Chapter: Colorado

When: Wednesday, December 1, 2010 - 5:30pm - 7:30pm MST

Location: St. Therese Church, 1243 Kingston St. Aurora, CO 80010



Are you unemployed or experiencing tough times?

Last year, President Obama signed the **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)** to fund the nation's economic recovery and help those communities most in need.

Come learn:

- How to **INCREASE** your Unemployment Insurance check by continuing your education and getting new job skills.
- Where Green Jobs are being created and how to get them.
- All about tax breaks due to ARRA

FREE dinner and child care provided!

All are welcome!

To RSVP or request more information: Please contact Maggie Gomez, ARRA Organizer, at 303-628-0925 or maggie@9to5.org.