

Stimulus plan will help Ohio's stressed families

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The just-passed federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act will relieve need and help halt the economic hurricane that is devastating Ohio. Lower-income families and distressed communities have been especially hard hit by layoffs and foreclosures and have fewer paths to recovery. The stimulus provides a long-overdue chance to make a down payment on a more prosperous, equitable and sustainable state for all Ohioans, something our organizations have advocated for years. Smart targeting and good oversight will ensure that the stimulus funds do the most to revitalize Ohio communities.

Stimulus resources offer new hope for Ohio. The plan includes funding for renewable energy investments, home repair and weatherization, worker training for the jobs of today and tomorrow, infrastructure improvements and pre-school programs. These will provide immediate spending and put Ohioans back to work, which is crucial in this downturn, but they also represent long-term investments in a stronger economy.

Trained workers will better meet the skill needs of employers and be more likely to earn enough to support their families; children who have attended preschool will require less remedial education; weatherized homes will use less energy and save families money; and improved public transit and infrastructure will attract new economic development to Ohio's urban and rural core communities.

The stimulus funds offer new opportunities to rebuild Ohio sustainably by creating quality local green-collar jobs, training workers for the renewable energy economy and incorporating standards of energy efficiency in development. All of these will help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and dependence on foreign oil.

As Ohio prepares to spend stimulus resources, we want to point to a number of principles that the state should embrace to ensure that the spending is effective, efficient, accountable and green. Doing so will generate the maximum return in the form of jobs, income and a more environmentally sound Ohio....