

On February 17, President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). I am extremely grateful to President Obama and the Congress for recognizing both the economic and health impacts of biomedical and behavioral research and affording, through the ARRA, to provide economic stimulus to the Nation, while furthering our mission to uncover new knowledge that will lead to better health for everyone.

The goals of the ARRA include:

- preserving and creating jobs
- promoting economic recovery
- increasing economic efficiency by spurring technological advances in science & health

The NEI is pleased that a portion of ARRA funds will reach the vision research community. Full details of the ARRA distribution are not known at this time, but I anticipate that NEI may receive \$175M through the ARRA for use over the next two years (2009 and 2010). The majority of the stimulus will go to support extramural research opportunities to accelerate the pace of vision research and to expand the scope of vision research. I anticipate that 0.5% will be available for use by the NEI Intramural Research Program.

The NEI staff is working to determine how to best invest these resources. A major consideration is that the funds must be distributed and expended by September 30, 2010. Further, this will be a stimulus, and the funds will not add to the NEI funding base. There is no expectation of additional funding beyond two years.

The ARRA is complex and will have multi-layered reporting requirements. The process will be transparent, and information will be available through a public website organized at the NIH- or the DHHS-level.

I cannot yet be specific on mechanisms nor amounts that will be distributed, as NIH as a whole has not yet received full budget guidance. As a general statement, NEI priorities will include

- funding new, competing, and pending R01 applications for projects that can realistically be completed in a two year time period
- providing two year supplements to existing grants for equipment, instrumentation, renovation and repairs, and short-term personnel

In addition to stimulus funds available through NEI, NIH will have several broad stimulus programs available to vision researchers. We will use the ARVO alert system to notify the vision community as these Funding Opportunity Announcements are published.

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