

RAILROAD RETIREMENT BOARD



AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT OF 2009



**Economic Recovery Payments
(ERP)
Program Plan**

Prepared by Office of Programs
May 2009

RAILROAD RETIREMENT BOARD
Program-Specific Recovery Plan

Program Title: Economic Recovery Payments

CFDA #: 57.005 Economic Recovery Payments

I. OBJECTIVES

Program Purpose:

Under the Recovery Act, a one-time economic recovery payment of \$250 will be paid to adults (including disabled adult children) who receive railroad retirement, social security, Supplemental Security Income or veterans disability benefits. The Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) is responsible for payments to eligible beneficiaries on its rolls. The RRB expects to make payments of approximately \$135 million to about 540,000 individuals.

Public Benefits:

The Recovery Act is an unprecedented effort to jumpstart our economy, in part by providing economic relief to beneficiaries of the Railroad Retirement Board, the Social Security Administration and the Department of Veteran's Affairs. These payments are provided to entitled individuals without any restrictions, to be used in whatever way the beneficiary deems best.

II. PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

The Economic Recovery Payments program is a single project which involves the identification of entitled individuals, release of notices to those individuals, and payment by the Department of the Treasury to each one. The RRB estimates its total payments at approximately \$135 million, and total administrative expenses at about \$1.4 million.

III. CHARACTERISTICS

Type of Financial Award to be Used:

Economic Recovery Payments are "Direct Payments with Unrestricted Use" according to the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA).

Type of Beneficiary:

Recipients of the Economic Recovery Payments will be individuals. Specifically, the payments will be issued to adults (including adult disabled children) who receive railroad retirement benefits and who meet other eligibility criteria as defined in the Recovery Act.

IV. MAJOR PLANNED PROGRAM MILESTONES

Schedule with Milestones:

The following are the major milestones planned to implement the Economic Recovery Payments program:

Milestone 1: April 14, 2009, Completion of the beneficiary match between the RRB and SSA.

Milestone 2: April 27, 2009, Issuance of advance notices to beneficiaries who will be paid economic recovery payments by the RRB.

Milestone 3: No later than May 31, 2009, Issuance of economic recovery payments to most RRB beneficiaries

Milestone 4: Various dates, Quarterly data matches with SSA and catch-up payments beginning in August 2009 to beneficiaries who are due an ERP but are identified after the initial payment operation in May.

V. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The RRB will track all Economic Recovery Payments issued and returned to ensure that funds provided specifically for this purpose under the Recovery Act are kept separate from other agency funding. Specific Treasury Appropriation Fund Symbols have been established for this express purpose. In addition, the RRB is using its existing cost accounting system, which is integrated with the agency's financial system, to track administrative expenses specifically related to the Economic Recovery Payments.

The principal risk involved with this program is the potential for making duplicate payments to individuals who are entitled to regular benefits under more than one program (i.e., Social Security, Railroad Retirement, Veterans benefits, or Supplemental Security Income). This risk has been mitigated through extensive interagency coordination to ensure that the interagency beneficiary match works as intended, is well-documented and thoroughly tested. The overall ERP program is being overseen by an executive-level interagency committee with representatives from each involved agency (SSA, VA, RRB and Treasury). This committee reviews all major project plans, information releases, and discusses operational issues and progress on a routine basis.

During the summer of 2009, each agency involved in administering the ERP program will conduct and document a risk assessment on its own operations as well as its part in the overall interagency ERP operation. This assessment will focus on identifying any risks that could potentially result in improper payments. The RRB will assess its processes that resulted in beneficiary identification and will participate in assessing the beneficiary matching process with SSA and VA.

VI. MEASURES

This program is not a pre-existing PART program, and therefore does not have pre-existing PART measures. The principal measures that are meaningful for the Economic Recovery Payments are:

- Payment Timeliness:
Target: Payments are to begin no later than 120 days from enactment.
(measure: number of days from enactment that payments begin)
- Case Accuracy:
Target: 99.9% of payments to be made without duplicates.
(measure: % of non-duplicate payments)

Both of these are one-time-only measures, since the nature of this program is to make one-time-only payments.

Frequency of reporting: Annual

SES Official responsible for achieving the goals: Dorothy Isherwood, Director of Programs

VII. TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The RRB provides more detailed information about the Economic Recovery Payments on its website at <http://www.rrb.gov/recovery/default.asp>. The public can find Frequently Asked Questions about the Economic Recovery Payments, detailed eligibility criteria, information on the taxability of these payments, as well as information about potential offset through the Treasury Offset Program. In addition, the site links to Recovery Act press releases and to other agencies that are involved in the Economic Recovery Payments program. Finally, the site includes a link to the RRB Office of Inspector General website, where information can be found regarding the OIG's oversight related to RRB's Recovery Act responsibilities.

The RRB has designated the Director of Programs as the Senior Accountable Official for the ERP program. She and her staff work closely with other agency senior officials, including the Chief Financial Officer, the Chief Information Officer, the Director of Administration, and the General Counsel to oversee all aspects of the project. These aspects include program/policy development and coordination of benefits, new procedures, financial and cost accounting, legal opinions and advice, and release of information to the public. All of these senior officials are members of the agency's Executive Committee, which is responsible for agency operations overall, and which reports to the head of the agency (the three-member Board).