



# Department of Justice

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## **ANTITRUST DIVISION ANNOUNCES INITIATIVE TO HELP PROTECT RECOVERY FUNDS FROM FRAUD, WASTE AND ABUSE**

WASHINGTON — The Department of Justice's Antitrust Division today announced the details of its newly formed initiative aimed at preparing government officials and contractors to recognize and report efforts by parties to unlawfully profit from the stimulus projects that are being awarded as part of The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

Consistent with its mission to protect the welfare of the American economy by promoting open and fair competition, the Department's Antitrust Division launched an initiative to help government agencies insulate procurement, grant and program funding processes from collusion and fraud, as well as to ensure that those who abuse those processes are prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

"It is not lost on anyone, public servants and taxpayers alike, that along with the tremendous opportunity to help revive the economy that the Recovery Act provides, comes tremendous responsibility," said Christine A. Varney, Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Department's Antitrust Division. "Fraud, waste and abuse of these stimulus funds will not be tolerated and the Antitrust Division is committed to doing everything possible to help protect the integrity of the government funding processes that are critical to making the stimulus plan a success."

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 was signed into law by President Obama on Feb. 17, 2009. It is an effort to jumpstart the economy and create or save jobs. The Act includes \$4 billion in Department of Justice grant funding to enhance state, local and tribal law enforcement efforts, including the hiring of new police officers, to combat violence against women, and to fight Internet crimes against children.

The Antitrust Division's Recovery Initiative involves training procurement and grant officials, government contractors, and agency auditors and investigators, on techniques for identifying the "red flags of collusion" before stimulus awards are made and taxpayer money is unnecessarily wasted. The initiative makes available to agencies Antitrust Division competition experts who can evaluate procurement and program funding processes. These Division experts will make recommendations on "best practices" that may be adopted by the agencies to further protect processes from fraud, waste and abuse and maximize open and fair competition. Finally, the initiative commits the Antitrust Division to playing a significant role in assisting agencies

investigate and prosecute those who seek to or succeed in defrauding the government's efforts to

maximize competition for stimulus funds.

The Antitrust Division's Recovery Initiative is already making a significant impact. Since March 2009, in partnership with agency Inspector Generals handling stimulus funds, the Antitrust Division has already assisted in training thousands of federal and state procurement, grant and program officials nationwide, with thousands more scheduled to be trained in the coming months. The Antitrust Division has also launched a Recovery Initiative Web site through which consumers, contractors and federal, state and local agencies, can review information about the antitrust laws and the Division's training programs, request training, and report suspicious activity. The Web site is located at [http://www.usdoj.gov/atr/public/criminal/economic\\_recovery.htm](http://www.usdoj.gov/atr/public/criminal/economic_recovery.htm). This Web site is linked to [www.recovery.gov](http://www.recovery.gov), the official website of the Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board. The board is responsible for overseeing federal agencies to ensure that there is transparency and accountability for the expenditure of Recovery Act funds. The Web site is also available through a link on the main Department of Justice homepage at <http://www.usdoj.gov>.

Consumers are encouraged to contact the Antitrust Division if they have information concerning anticompetitive conduct involving stimulus funds by emailing [antitrust.complaints.recovery@usdoj.gov](mailto:antitrust.complaints.recovery@usdoj.gov) or calling 1-888-647-3258.

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