

## **Got Stimulus Money? Great! Ready for Some Intense Scrutiny?**

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As 2009 rolls on, the first wave of stimulus money is showering down upon the states in an effort to get people back to work and to take advantage of opportunities to fund big projects that the Obama administration hopes will yield better roads, public education, and healthcare efficiencies, to name just a few things.

If your organization or region is in line for a big check, congratulations. But before you start spending, consider this: the media and other watchdogs are going to monitor the way these funds are spent with an intensity we've not seen in this country for a long time. The furor over corporate malfeasance and irresponsibility in the banking and automotive sectors that received bailouts will seethe for a long time. The media will be at great pains to identify who is wasting the public's money and who is spending it successfully. In addition, anti-stimulus watchdogs will be on the lookout for boondoggles and wasteful deployment of public money.

Public-private partnerships and agencies receiving stimulus cash would be wise to invest in the best project management they can find to ensure that they have identified the person or organization in charge for the success of their stimulus funded projects. Doing so signals to the media and watchdogs that someone has been designated as the official go-to person who is accountable to them for answers regarding progress of government funded projects. But it also provides something that many public officials truly need and want: Cover. If the project goes bad, they know exactly to whom they can point the finger. But if the project goes well, they can still take the credit for ensuring that it was run properly in the first place.

Now that's a win-win at a time when beleaguered officials and cash strapped organizations really need one.