

What is wpa



What is the WPA program? Will it help the economy? What are the advantages and Disadvantages? How much does it cost? These are all questions most Americans have when Obama planned to bring back the Work Progress Administration (WPA). I am going to tell you what WPA is and the pros and cons of it. During the Great Depression, anxious that the dole not become “narcotic,” in President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s words, the U. S. Congress in 1935 created the WPA to administer \$5 billion for public works. The WPA's goal was to employ as many people as possible on projects that would provide long-term benefit to local communities.

This created jobs to build bridges in disrepair, parks in shambles and fix boarded-up buildings. Ideally, workers would also receive on-the-job training to prepare them for further employment. For example, the WPA made a significant impact on Oklahoma. At the end of the day, of 166, 000 Oklahomans certified for WPA jobs approximately 119, 000 were employed at some point between 1935 and 1937. Including those recruited into a special drought-relief work program, more than half the state's work relief recipients were farmers. To assure that private employment remained appealing, project wages were lower than typical rates.

Organized labor complained that the original unskilled rate of eighteen cents an hour depressed all wages. The Works Progress Administration (renamed during 1939 as the Work Projects Administration; WPA) was the largest and most determined new deal agency, employing millions of unskilled workers to carry out public works projects. This is the same project Obama is trying to reinstate to better the millions of unemployed Americans today: economic relief, a new deal, one that keeps unemployment below double digits by

focusing on refurbishing the United States. Like most notions or strategies there are pros and cons.

The pro to this “ New Deal” is the amount of jobs that will be created. The economic recovery bill by Democrats would spend two years putting more than 4 million Americans to work. Private corporations and city governments have already prepared more than 30, 000 " shovel-ready" projects that need federal funding. But do we know what jobs will be provided or do we care? During the GreatDepression, in our nation's capital, more than 100 men were paid to scare off pigeons. In Brooklyn, men and women worked as fire hydrant decorators. And in Boston, the government sponsored a project to make fish chowder.

Indian tribes were paid to create new totem poles and other artifacts. Does this matter? What skills will they have once the WPA is over? For now, the \$825 billion economic recovery plan doesn't get too specific about the jobs that might be available to the unemployed. But with \$90 billion assigned for organization investment, this being said, construction worker, a transportation expert or just about anyone who works at an airport can expect better times ahead. Retrofitting federal buildings with up-to-date technology to save energy costs is a priority. 19 billion has been set aside for clean water, flood control and environmental restoration investments and ensuring that the United States builds on its digital capacity according to Ross Eisenbrey, the vice president of the Economic Policy Institute. Unlike the original WPA, which wrote checks directly to employees, the new bill is set up so that 90 percent of the projects will be privately run by corporations or nonprofits, which will send in proposals or bid on existing <https://assignbuster.com/what-is-wpa/>

government contracts. Instead of the federal government assigning jobs, qualified workers will be pursued by project managers.

The WPA employed more than 8.5 million people at a total cost of some \$11 billion in its eight years. It conducted more than 1.4 million separate construction projects that built: over 650,000 miles of roads, nearly 1,000 bridges, 125,000 buildings, 8,000 parks, over 800 airplane landing strips, 3,000 tennis courts, 3,300 storage dams, and 5,800 mobile libraries. Bringing this program back will bring the U. S. out of the depression we are in now. During the first WPA there was a problem of race and uneven pay; will this be issues again? Uneven distribution of pay was along regional and racial lines.

The national monthly WPA wage in 1936 was \$52, but in the south it was \$23. WPA regulations stipulated that a prospective WPA worker could not refuse private employment at pay rates prevailing in his/her community. Since the prevailing wage was lower for blacks, blacks refusing a \$3 a week private job might be denied WPA employment. I know that this was a completely different time period but let's be honest there are still close minded people and this might be another issue or disadvantage to consider. There are several different opinions on how our country should be ran, some agree with the WPA programs and others do not understand it.

This is one opinion, " the logic of WPA has got me totally baffled: if a nation can afford to pay people to do infrastructure improvement via WPA, presumably it can afford to pay regular contractors to do the same thing. And the latter would do the job more efficiently than WPA. " Is

spending money on another government program a disadvantage? " Then it means we have wasted hundreds of billions of dollars, piling up additional debt for us and our children. " Ralph Musgrave. If the money the government is going to use to create more jobs is not good investments, what happens?

No just good investments but long enough, will we be going through this again in 50 years. Other questions are will the WPA spending be quick enough to stimulate the economy? As I stated above, more than 100 men were paid to scare off pigeons. In Brooklyn, men and women worked as fire hydrant decorators. And in Boston, the government sponsored a project to make fish chowder. While the WPA created a job for these individuals, what trait or skill were they supposed to use after the program was over? If Obama wants to bring this program back we need to create more jobs with better skills.

All this being said I am for the WPA coming back as long as we work out the minor kinks. Bringing this program back will bring the U. S. out of the depression we are in now. The Works Progress Administration (renamed during 1939 as the Work Projects Administration; WPA) was the largest and most determined new deal agency, employing millions of unskilled workers to carry out public works projects. If Obama reinstates this program millions of unemployed Americans today will be in economic relief. We need a " new deal", one that keeps unemployment around four percent by focusing on restoring the United States.