

Audit looks at Portland's use of stimulus money

By [Janie Har, The Oregonian](#)

September 10, 2009, 12:01PM

The city of Portland is in good shape to spend effectively what could be about \$58 million in federal stimulus money this fall, according to a city audit released today. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act was passed by Congress earlier this year as a way to get people back to work and to spur the economy. The money comes with extensive reporting requirements, such as the number of jobs created and provisions to "buy American."

"It's a landmark amount of money coming to the city in a hurry, and that increases the risk" of misuse or abuse, said Drummond Kahn, director of [Audit Services](#).

The city has received about \$21 million of the money. Possible projects include hiring more police and upgrading fire stations.

Auditors said city officials need to stay on track to make sure it's able to report data by Oct. 10, as the federal government requires. In response, Portland Mayor Sam Adams wrote that the city is buying a program from its new computer vendor to track numbers.

The second suggestion by auditors is for the city to beef up its fraud and abuse reporting system, which coincidentally happened to be the topic of an audit released Wednesday.

In it, Portland city Auditor LaVonne Griffin-Valade recommended that employees receive better training on how to detect fraud and a safe way to report it. She plans to have an anonymous hotline operating by October.

-- Janie Har; janiehar@news.oregonian.com