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## Ingram Micro Unveils Stimulus Demand Gen Program For VARs

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Ingram Micro Tuesday debuted IMStimulus, a slate of demand generation services the distributor is rolling out to help the VAR community take hold of opportunities presented by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

IMStimulus, which according to Ingram will become available in July, will include everything from end user needs assessment and stimulus deal tracking to grant writing and ARRA-specific sales training.

"There must be 1,000 people in cottage industries tracking stimulus dollars," said Bob Laclede, vice president of business development for Ingram Micro and executive chair for Ingram's sales and services efforts related to stimulus programs. Channelweb.com interview. "We wanted to go far beyond that and get an action plan together that linked our solution providers with where that money was. We wanted to get them engaged so they could get some of it rather than wait for a competitive RFP and sit there with everybody else."

Laclede is spearheading IMStimulus, and he will step back and share leadership of Ingram Micro's GovEd Alliance with the sector VAR community with other Ingram executives while he focuses principally on the distributor's stimulus outreach.

"In February, [Ingram Micro President, North America] Keith Bradley asked me to come out of the day-to-day running of GovEd. Stimulus is now No. 1 on my line card," Laclede confirmed. "I'm also looking into our health-care vertical and working on a number of new business initiatives there."

The two main components of IMStimulus are, first, a lead generation program in which Ingram Micro uses business intelligence tools to match up members of its VAR community with stimulus opportunities, and second, IMGrants.com, a service designed to help solution providers with every stage of the grant process, from a high level understanding of grants to the actual writing of the grants themselves.

Laclede estimated that of the \$60 to \$80 billion of the \$787.2 billion stimulus available for technology projects, about 50 percent is coming through grants while the rest is coming, more or less, through traditional line-item budgets where agencies use existing contract vehicles.

"There's no question that the economic stimulus funds spell big opportunity for our channel partners and IT vendors with approximately \$32 billion tied up in grants, earning the business and ensuring that customers understand the opportunity is going to take a lot of time, added resources and investment," said Michael Paddock, CEO of the Grants Office, in a statement.

Grants Office is working with Ingram Micro on the grants end of IMStimulus.

"When the stimulus came up, I sat down with Michael and said, 'Take me through this whole thing,'" Laclede said.

discovered is that they have built a tremendous database that can update what grants are available and where. To both the end user and the solution provider on obtaining grant money. It really takes some of the black art out of the process, and they have a great track record."

According to Laclede, Ingram Micro views stimulus opportunity in the public sector as falling into "six big buckets," health care No. 1, education No. 2, public safety (including first responders and homeland security) as No. 3, energy No. 4, infrastructure as No. 5 and broadband as No. 6, ranked in terms of the size of opportunity available to solution providers.

For Tina Mooring, store manager at Computer Central, a Wilson, N.C.-based solution provider and 20-year Ingram partner, bringing broadband connectivity to the more rural areas of her part of the state is a high priority. Mooring's Channelweb.com interview that she welcomed the distributor's help with gaining a better understanding of the whole process, and Laclede said it's solution providers such as Mooring who brought broadband to Ingram's attention as stimulus opportunity with major VAR potential.

"A lot of people are moving here, and they need access to quality health care and quality schools," Mooring said. "To live out in the country, though, it's harder to get those things easily, and harder to work from home, which is something that's important because a lot of government agencies now allow people to work from home a couple of days a week to save money and make things more efficient. We need broadband for all of this."

In addition to the IMStimulus services, Ingram Micro also has scheduled 36 stimulus-specific Webinars in the next few months, Laclede said, and will continue to scale IMStimulus as money continues to flow and deals are won.

"You, as a solution provider, should be much better than 50-50 odds to get a stimulus deal," Laclede added. "We want to get an actual plan to empower [your stimulus opportunity]. We want to show you how to apply for the money and take action once that money becomes available."

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