



**FIRST THINGS FIRST**  
*The right system for bright futures*

**Federal Budget and Grant Update – December 2009**

**Federal Budget**

**Continuing Resolution:** No further action has been taken since the Senate passed a continuing resolution on the budget to keep programs running at FY09 funding levels through the next fiscal year. The continuing resolution is good until February, and then Congress will have to either pass new budgets or pass another continuing resolution.

**FTF Grant Activities:**

**Early Learning Challenge Fund (ELCF), Title IV of HB 3221:** The ELCF has not moved from the Health Education Labor and Pensions committee of the Senate. Judy Walruff and Sandy Carpenter have contacted our Washington DC advocacy organizations for updates, and they have no news. Judy spoke with Penelope Jacks of CAA, and she has not received any updates from her affiliation with Voices for America's Children. Elliott and Sandy C. met with Congressman Pastor to provide education on the value of the ELCF to Arizona. Staff is working on appointments with McCain and Kyle staff. During the holiday break none were available to meet, and the Senators were not in Arizona long enough to schedule meetings. Judy has contacted Congressman Grijalva's staff as he was a sponsor of HB 3221. Talking points on the benefits of this legislation to Arizona have been created and are available to advocates and other stakeholders that may be talking with Senators McCain and Kyle.

**State Early Childhood Advisory Council Grants (ARRA Funds):** A summary of the funding available to the Early Childhood State Advisory Councils through Head Start reauthorization has been prepared to brief incoming FTF Executive Director Evans-Allvin. The draft includes a recommendation that a proposal be developed to fund the Quality First Rating implementation. As soon as a specific project is approved, the proposal process will proceed.

**QIC-CA&N Research and Demonstration Grant:** FTF submitted a letter of inquiry to the Quality Improvement Center on Early Childhood in response to a research RFP that would focus on the impact of collaborations and home visitation. FTF was one of 55 organizations approved to submit full proposals. Only 3-5 proposals will be funded. After some preliminary work and conferring with partner organizations that would be involved in this research effort, the decision was made to suspend the proposal submission. This decision was due to limited time to submit a quality proposal, changes made by the funder in the focus of the research, and insufficient funding available to carry out a quality research effort.

**Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Grant:** The award was received 11-23-09 clearly showing First Things First as the Grantee. As requested by FTF, any carry-over funding up to an additional \$35,000 was approved.

**St. Luke's Health Initiative (SLHI) HV Support Grant:** A \$1,500 grant was received from SLHI to support the Home Visiting Task Force convened by FTF.

**Race to the Top (ARRA Funds):** As noted in the previous report, the timeline for submitting a proposal in the first round is January 19, 2010. Early learning is now an official "invitational priority", which means the federal government is very interested in seeing applications that include and highlight reform in early learning programs; however, the inclusion of early learning does not garner any additional points when the application is scored. First Things First is represented by Elliott Hibbs and Karen Woodhouse on the Governor's P-20 Council and the Standards and Assessment Taskforce respectively, which are guiding the RTTT application for Arizona. Amy Kemp also attends the Data Taskforce meetings. Core concepts for inclusion in the grant were reviewed by the P-20 Council and the four Taskforces in December. BCG has assured First Things First and ADE that early childhood education will be included in the core RTTT areas; however, a draft of the grant proposal has not been available for review.

#### **Tracking Other Grant Opportunities and Federal Legislation:**

**Investing in Innovation (i3) Fund (ARRA Funds):** There has been no change in this competitive grant to expand implementation of, and investment in, innovative and evidence-based practices that significantly improve K12 achievement. FTF will continue to monitor the grant in order to determine how to support applicants from our state. Guidance will be available late winter or early spring 2010 with proposals due summer of 2010. First awards will be made in late summer or early fall 2010.

**Education Begins at Home Act of 2009, S.244 & H.R. 2205:** There has been no action on these bills which support early childhood home visitation and public information and educational campaigns directed to families with children under five years of age; FTF will continue to follow the bills.

**Balancing Act of 2009, H.R.3047:** No action has occurred. FTF staff will continue to monitor the House bill, which would provide for paid family leave and grants that provide home visiting, medical need assistance, child care assistance (including teacher quality improvement), in-school and afterschool assistance, family care assistance, and encouraging the establishment of family-friendly workplaces.