



FIRST THINGS FIRST
The right system for bright futures

Federal Budget and Grant Update – February 2010

Federal Budget

On February 11, 2010, President Obama released his 2011 budget. Provisions of this budget directly impacting families with children birth through age five include:

- Expansion and continuation of the Child Care Tax Credit
- Providing an additional \$989 million for Head Start and Early Head Start. The increase will allow for double the number of children served by Early Head Start.
- An additional \$1.6 billion in funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant. The increase will allow for an increase in funding set aside for quality improvement. The Administration proposes to use the additional CCDBG funding to support a reauthorization of the program that would encourage the establishment of high standards of quality across child care settings, an expansion of professional development opportunities for the early childhood workforce, and coordination among early childhood education programs.
- A \$10 billion increase over 10 years for child nutrition programs to support their reauthorization including the Child and Adult Care Food Program.
- Temporary increase in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly Food Stamps, to help strengthen the food purchasing power of low-income families during these tough economic times. The budget also provides additional resources for food banks and community-based food providers.
- An \$11 million Increase in the Maternal and Child Health block grant to states.
- References to the Early Learning Challenge Fund (shown below) under consideration by the Senate. This initiative would make \$8 billion over 10 years available for competitive grants to the states to improve the quality of early learning programs to help children enter kindergarten ready to succeed.

FTF Grant Activities:

Early Learning Challenge Fund (ELCF), Title IV of HB 3221: As previously reported, the ELCF has not moved from the Health Education Labor and Pensions committee of the Senate. However, the legislation is referenced in President Obama's budget and is considered a priority for passage out of the Senate. 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. Development of the proposal has started with a target date for submission of June 1, 2010.

Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Grant (ECCS): Staff are implementing the activities outlined in the grant to achieve the goals and objectives specified under this funding. Current funding is \$105,000 with renewal request of up to \$140,000 annually for an additional three years.

Zero to Three Policy Center: Technical Assistance to States on Including and Expanding Early Head Start in Early Childhood Systems: An application was submitted January 29th on behalf of First Things First as the lead agency, the State Head Start Collaboration Office, and the Arizona State Head Start Association to receive technical assistance in integrating Early Head Start and developing early childhood systems so that more infants and toddlers receive high-quality services. A decision will be communicated to applicants by mid to late February.

Race to the Top (ARRA Funds): Arizona submitted its Race to the Top Proposal on January 15, 2010. The grant was developed by the P-20 Council with support from the Boston Consulting Group. First Things First is referenced in two places in the proposal. First to “work with ADE to align the State’s early education standards to the Common Core” (p.48); and second, to work with ADE to “develop methods to assess children in early childhood and early education, so as to improve practices at these levels and ensure that all children enter kindergarten ready to learn” (p.54). The full proposal may be found at the following link: http://az.gov/recovery/assets/docs/arizona_rttt_app.pdf

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 K-12 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.

America’s Healthy Futures Act of 2009 is the US Senate’s legislation for Health Care reform. As passed by the Senate, this act includes \$1.5 billion for Home Visiting programs to be administered through the Maternal and Child Health Block Grant. The outcome of the provisions outlined in Title V of this legislation is tied to the outcome of health care reform reconciliation process that Congress has yet to take up.

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.