



FIRST THINGS FIRST

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. Congress has the rest of the year to consider and pass new spending bills, new agency requests, and the President's budget items.

FTF Grant Activities:

Race to the Top (ARRA Funds): Final guidance for the competitive RTTT grant was published in mid-November. The timeline for submitting a proposal in the first round was moved from early December 2009 to 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 on the Governor's P-20 Council, which is primarily responsible for guiding the RTTT application for Arizona, as well as on the Standards and Assessment Taskforce. Boston Consulting Group (BCG) is the consultant organization charged with writing the application. They are currently preparing the first draft for review 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.

Early Learning Challenge Fund [Title IV, Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act (SAFRA)]: Please refer to Consent Agenda item #2K for a full Early Learning Challenge Fund update.

State Early Childhood Advisory Council Grants (ARRA Funds): First Things First will be using the current state system framework process to identify components aligned with this grant opportunity. A preliminary timeline has been developed which includes the planning with community and state agency partners, prioritization of strategies, grant-writing, and budget design for the Arizona's \$2.3 million allocation. The grant proposal will be submitted prior to its due date of August 30, 2010.

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 for the application will be available late winter or early spring 2010 with proposals due in the 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.