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FFIS WEEKLY UPDATE - DECEMBER 1, 2009

Weekly News:

ENVIRONMENT

EPA Awards \$800,000 for Environmental Justice Projects

On November 24, 2009, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) awarded a total of \$800,000 to five states to support their efforts working with communities to address environmental and public health issues, such as childhood lead poisoning and exposure to air pollution. Additional details are available here: http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/d0cf6618525a9efb85257359003fb69d/99664b8f37c621b185257678006e 958e!OpenDocument

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

1) CBO Releases New Analysis on Health Care Reform and Premiums

On November 30, 2009, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) released an analysis of how the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, the Senate's version of health care reform, would affect premiums in 2016, the point at which the provisions would be fully implemented. According to CBO, some premiums in the individual market would be about 10% to 13% higher compared to the average premium in the same year under current law. However, about half of those enrollees purchasing coverage in the individual market would receive subsidies and have their premiums reduced almost 60% compared to current law. CBO also stated that there would be a relatively smaller effect on the average premium for employment-based coverage. The CBO analysis is available at: www.cbo.gov/ftpdocs/107xx/doc10781/11-30-Premiums.pdf

2) ACF Awards \$41 Million to Native American Communities and Organizations

On November 30, 2009, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) announced \$41 million in grants to Native American communities and organizations located in 28 states and territories for short-term community-based projects that result in social and economic benefits. To view the awards by state, go to: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/news/press/2009/2009 ana grant awards.html

3) CMS Delays Effective Date of Medicaid Final Rules

On November 30, 2009, the Centers for Medicaid and Medicaid Services (CMS) published in the *Federal Register* a final rule that delays the effective date of the November 25, 2008, final rule, "Medicaid Program; Premiums and Cost Sharing" and the December 3, 2008, final rule, "Medicaid Program; State Flexibility for Medicaid Benefit Packages." Both are delayed from December 31, 2009 to July 1, 2010. CMS plans to publish revisions to both final rules to take into account public comments and recent legislation (ARRA and the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization). The *Federal Register* notice is available at: http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/pdf/E9-28569.pdf

LABOR

DOL Releases Question and Answer Document on EUC

On November 23, 2009, the Department of Labor (DOL) released Unemployment Insurance Program Letter No. 23-08, Change 6 to respond to states' questions about the further expansion of the Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC) 2008 program, enacted as part of the Workers Assistance Act. To view the document, see: http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr doc.cfm?docn=2824

NUTRITION

1) FNS Publishes TEFAP Final Rule

On November 30, 2009, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) published in the *Federal Register* a final rule that amends regulations for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) by making state plans permanent and addressing the allowability of certain administrative costs. The final rule is available at: http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/pdf/E9-28611.pdf

2) FNS Releases Report on SNAP Participation Rates

In November 2009, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) released a report that presents estimates of the percentage of eligible persons, by state, who participated in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in 2007. Overall 66% of eligible persons received SNAP benefits. Among states, SNAP participation rates varied from 47% to 100%. To view the report, see:

http://www.fns.usda.gov/ORA/menu/Published/SNAP/FILES/Participation/Reaching2007.pdf

TRANSPORTATION

1) FHWA Releases STEP Presentation

On November 25, 2009, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) released its November 16, 2009, presentation on the Surface Transportation Environment and Planning (STEP) program. To view the presentation, go to: http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/step/webinar11192009.htm

2) FTA Establishes the Federal Transit Administration Advisory Committee for Transit Safety

On November 23, 2009, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) announced the establishment of a federal advisory committee to address transit safety issues. The Transit Rail Advisory Committee for Safety (TRACS) will consist of up to 25 voting members and will provide recommendations to the secretary of Transportation regarding transit safety and other issues. To view the notice, see:

http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/E9-28532.htm

ARRA:

GENERAL

GAO Releases Correspondence on ARRA Contract Oversight

On November 30, 2009, the General Accounting Office (GAO) released correspondence that addresses contract oversight activities of the Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board as well as observations on contract spending in select states. To view the correspondence, go to: http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d10216r.pdf

EDUCATION

ED Updates Race to the Top FAQs

On November 24, 2009, the Department of Education (ED) updated the Frequently Asked Questions section of their Race to the Top website. To access the information, go to: http://www.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/faq.html

ENERGY

1) DOE Announces \$620 Million for Smart Grid Demonstration and Energy Storage Projects

On November 24, 2009, the Department of Energy (DOE) announced that it is awarding \$620 million for projects around the country to demonstrate advanced Smart Grid technologies. This funding from ARRA will be leveraged with \$1 billion in funds from the private sector. For more details, click here: http://www.energy.gov/news2009/8305.htm

2) DOE to Invest \$18 Million in Small Business Clean Energy Innovation Projects

On November 23, 2009, DOE announced more than \$18 million in funding from ARRA to support small business innovation research, development, and deployment of clean energy technologies. In this first phase of funding, 125 grants of up to \$150,000 each were awarded to firms. For more details and a list of awards, click here: http://www.energy.gov/news2009/8300.htm

3) DOE Releases FAQs on Davis-Bacon Compliance

DOE recently updated the frequently asked Davis-Bacon questions and answers page. The page includes answers to questions dealing with compliance with the Davis-Bacon Act requirements for the State Energy Program (SEP) and Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Programs (EECBG). To view the page, go to: http://apps1.eere.energy.gov/state_energy_program/davis_bacon_faqs.cfm

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

1) HHS Plans to Make \$80 Million Available to Support Health IT Workforce

On November 24, 2009, HHS announced that it will make available \$70 million for community college training programs and \$10 million to develop educational materials to support these programs. Both grant opportunities are aimed at addressing the need for skilled health information technology professionals. To view the press release and access the grant application, go to: http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2009pres/11/20091124a.html

2) HRSA to Hold Technical Assistance Call on Health Centers

On December 8, 2009, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) will hold a technical assistance call on ARRA Health Centers Section 1512 reporting for the January 2010 submission. Details on the call are available below: http://bphc.hrsa.gov/recovery/hcqr/

3) ACF Updates Information on TANF Emergency Funds

On December 1, 2009, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) updated its question and answers document on ARRA TANF Emergency Funds. In addition, it released information on approved TANF Emergency Fund applications by category. To view the information, go to: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/

LABOR

DOL Releases Additional Guidance on TAA

On November 20, 2009, the Department of Labor (DOL) released Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 22-08, Change 1 to provide a correction to the formula for calculating the Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance (RTAA) payments and to respond to questions from states about the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program (TAA) under ARRA. The letter is available at: http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr_doc.cfm?docn=2823

TRANSPORTATION

1) FHWA Releases Economically Distressed Area (EDA) Questions and Answers

On November 23, 2009 the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) posted the questions and answers from the November 12, 2009, EDA question and answer session. While most questions pertained to ARRA reporting, there were also questions on non-ARRA EDA reporting and the spending of program funds. The information is available at: http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/economicrecovery/edaqanda.htm

2) FTA Releases Section 1201(c) and 1512 ARRA Reporting Tables

On December 1, 2009, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) posted tables of the information submitted by ARRA grantees in the most recent Section 1201(c) and Section 1512 reporting cycles. To view these tables see: http://www.fta.dot.gov/index 9440 10542.html