

FFIS WEEKLY UPDATE – January 5, 2010

Weekly News:

COMMERCE

1) Census Suspends Challenge Programs

On January 4, 2010, the Census Bureau published a final rule in the *Federal Register* to announce to federal agencies and state and local governments that, beginning on February 3, 2010, it will suspend the Population Estimates Challenge Program during both the decennial census year and the following year, and will indefinitely suspend the Per Capita Income Estimates Challenge Program. During this time, the Census Bureau will not provide the operations necessary to review the July 1, 2009, population or per capita income estimates for state and local governments. The Population Estimates Challenge Program will resume in 2012, using the results of the 2010 Census. To view the rule, go to:

<http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2010/pdf/E9-31171.pdf>

2) Census Releases Last State Population Estimates Before 2010 Census Counts

On December 23, 2009, the Census Bureau released information on state population growth between July 1, 2008, and July 1, 2009. Texas gained more people than any other state in that time period (478,000), followed by California (381,000), North Carolina (134,000), Georgia (131,000), and Florida (114,000). Wyoming showed the largest percentage growth (2.12%), followed by Utah (2.10%), and Texas (1.97%). The only three states to lose population over the period were Michigan (-0.33%), Maine (-0.11%), and Rhode Island (-0.03%). For detailed tables, see:

<http://www.census.gov/popest/estimates.html>

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

1) HHS Releases Core Set of Children's Health Care Quality Measures

On December 29, 2009, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) published a notice in the *Federal Register* seeking comment on the initial, recommended core set of children's health care quality measures for voluntary use by state Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Programs (CHIP). The Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (CHIPRA) of 2009 required the secretary of HHS to develop the measures. Comments must be received by March 1, 2010. To view the notice, see: <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/pdf/E9-30802.pdf>

2) ACF Issues Program Instruction on TANF and Mental Health/Substance Use Treatment Services

On December 28, 2009, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) released a program instruction (TANF-PI-2009-12) discussing ways that federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds and state maintenance of effort (MOE) funds can be used to assist individuals from eligible families in need of short-term mental health and substance use treatment services. To view the program instruction, go to:

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/policy/pi-ofa/2009/200912/pi200912.htm>

3) ACF Releases Guidance on Head Start Facilities

On December 8, 2009, ACF released a program instruction (ACF-PI-HS-09-10) to Head Start grantees that provides responses to facility questions concerning acquisition, rent, and major renovations. The guidance can be found at:

http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ohs/policy/pi2009/acfpihs_09_10.html

4) CMS Issues Report on National Health Spending

On January 5, 2010, the journal *Health Affairs*, published a report by analysts with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' (CMS) Office of the Actuary on health spending in the United States. The analysts found that U.S. health spending grew 4.4% in 2008, reaching \$2.3 trillion, or \$7,681 per person, compared to a 6% growth rate in 2007. The analysts said the decreased rate of growth reflects the severity of the economic recession. In 2008, health care spending as a portion of the gross domestic product was 16.2%, an increase from 2007, when it was 15.9%. The report also discussed effects of the recession on national spending, including the increase in federal Medicaid costs because of the enhanced federal funding under ARRA and the slower growth in personal health care paid for by private sources. The report is available at: <http://content.healthaffairs.org/cgi/reprint/29/1/147>

5) Revised CHIP Citizenship Documentation Requirements

On December 28, 2009, CMS released a letter to state health officials that provides guidance on the implementation

of citizenship requirements included in the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2009 (CHIPRA). Specifically, CHIPRA revised some current law requirements for citizenship documentation, and, effective January 1, 2010, applied these requirements to CHIP. Also, effective January 1, 2010, states are permitted to verify citizenship for individuals newly enrolled using a data file match with the Social Security Administration (SSA). This letter provides an overview and guidance on the new requirements and option. To view the letter, go to: <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/smdl/downloads/SHO09016.pdf>

HOMELAND SECURITY

1) DHS Publishes Official Notice on REAL ID Deadline Extension

On December 28, 2009, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) published a notice in the *Federal Register* announcing the extension of the material compliance deadline for REAL ID. This final rule stays the date of compliance from January 1, 2010, until further notice. Although the material compliance date has been stayed, the full compliance date of May 11, 2011, remains in effect. DHS will announce in a future *Federal Register* document any new material compliance dates. To view the notice, see: <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/pdf/E9-30638.pdf>

2) FEMA Announces Suspension of Community Eligibility for Sale of Flood Insurance

On December 29, 2009, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) published a notice in the *Federal Register* identifying communities where the sale of flood insurance had been authorized under the National Flood Insurance Program, that are scheduled for suspension because of non-compliance with the flood plain management requirements of the program. To view this notice, go to: <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/pdf/E9-30731.pdf>

HOUSING

Final Rule on Enterprise Income Verification System Published

On December 29, 2009, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) published a final rule in the *Federal Register* revising earlier regulations on the use of the Enterprise Income Verification system by public housing agencies and multifamily housing owners and management agents when verifying the employment and income of program participants. To view the rule, go to: <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/pdf/E9-30720.pdf>

INTERIOR

1) Interior Announces \$369 Million in Abandoned Mine Land Grants

On December 22, 2009, the Department of the Interior announced \$369 million in grants to states and tribes to restore abandoned coal mines, an increase of more than \$70 million from last year. To view the amounts by state, follow this link: http://www.doi.gov/news/09_News_Releases/122209a.html

2) Interior Announces \$19 Million in Grants to Protect Coastal Wetlands

On December 29, 2009, the Department of the Interior announced the award of \$19.2 million to support 25 conservation projects benefitting fish and wildlife in 11 states through the 2010 National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program. Click here for the awards and additional information: <http://www.fws.gov/news/NewsReleases/showNews.cfm?newsId=DBF01AE6-EEDA-3551-7392A373D2209C7C>

LABOR

Updated UI and COBRA Resources

On December 23, 2009, the Department of Labor (DOL) issued guidance for implementation of the unemployment insurance (UI) provisions in the FY 2010 defense appropriations bill. The guidance, Unemployment Insurance Program Letter No. 04-10, can be accessed at: <http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/UIPL/UIPL4-10.pdf>

DOL has also published extensive resources on the COBRA provisions including FAQs, a fact sheet, and additional information. To view the information, see: <http://www.dol.gov/ebsa/cobra.html>

NUTRITION

1) WIC Cash Voucher Value Increased for Participating Women

On December 31, 2009, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) published an interim rule in the *Federal Register* regarding cash value vouchers for women in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program. The rule increased the amount of cash value vouchers from \$8.00 to \$10.00 issued to certain participants for the purchase of fruits and vegetables as part of the WIC food packages. For more information, see: <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/pdf/E9-30991.pdf>

2) CSFP Caseload Assignment and Administrative Funding Released

On December 24, 2009, FNS released final caseload assignments for the 2010 caseload cycle and administrative grants for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP). Final caseload and administrative funding by state can be found on the Excel worksheet (http://inside.ffis.org/ff/CSFP_Final_Caseload_and_Admin_Funding.xls)

or found at the links at: http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/whatsnew_fd.htm

VETERANS AFFAIRS

VA Proposes Rule Change for State Cemetery Grant Programs

On December 31, 2009, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) published a notice in the *Federal Register* proposing to amend its regulations governing grants to states for state veterans' cemeteries. For additional details, follow this link: <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/pdf/E9-30873.pdf>

ARRA:

GENERAL

December 29, 2009: GAO Releases Report on ARRA MOE Provisions

On December 29, 2009, the General Accounting Office (GAO) released a report on the maintenance of effort (MOE) requirements and similar provisions included in ARRA. Specifically, the report provides information on the provisions, the guidance federal agencies have issued to implement the requirements, and how responsible federal agencies are in determining whether recipients meet these requirements. To view the report, go to: <http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-10-247>

AGRICULTURE

December 29, 2009: USDA Announces \$116 Million for Rural Water Projects

The Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced the selection of \$116.9 million in water and environmental project loans and grants in rural areas of 19 states. Altogether, USDA has announced \$2.08 billion of ARRA funding for rural water and environmental project loans and grants. Click here for a list of grantees: <http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/!ut/p/.s.7.0.A/7.0.1OB?contentidonly=true&contentid=2009/12/0628.xml>

EDUCATION

December 30, 2009: ED Will Host Three Additional Public Meetings on Race to the Top

The Department of Education (ED) published a notice in the *Federal Register* announcing three additional public meetings in Washington, DC, on the development of a common assessment. These meetings will inform the development of the \$350 million Race to the Top Assessment Competition that would support the state development of new assessments tied to a common set of standards. Prior stakeholders meetings were held in Denver, Boston, and Atlanta. Topic meetings and dates include:

- 1) Project and Consortium Management
Wednesday, January 13, 2010
10:00 am - 5:00 pm
- 2) Procurement
Thursday, January 14, 2010
9:00 am - 12:30 pm
- 3) General and Technical Assessment
Wednesday, January 20, 2010
10:00 am - 5:00 pm

Additional information is available at: <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/pdf/E9-30975.pdf>

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

1) December 30, 2009: Updated TANF Emergency Fund Chart

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) has updated information regarding approved Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) emergency fund applications by category. To view the state-specific information, see: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/tanf/apprTANFemerfund.html>

2) December 24, 2009: Head Start ARRA Guidance on Enrollment

ACF released a program instruction (ACF-PI-HS-09-11) on ARRA program information and enrollment reporting. To view the guidance, go to: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ohs/policy/pi2009/acfpihs_09_11.html

3) December 30, 2009: CMS Proposes Requirements for EHR Medicare and Medicaid Incentive Payment Programs

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) announced a proposed rule to implement the provisions of ARRA that provide incentive payments to eligible professionals and hospitals participating in Medicare and Medicaid programs that adopt and meaningfully use certified electronic health record (EHR) technology. The rule includes a 60-day comment period. To view the proposed rule, see: http://www.federalregister.gov/OFRUpload/OFRData/2009-31217_PI.pdf

The following fact sheet summarizes the provisions in the proposed rule affecting state Medicaid programs and

Medicaid providers:

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/apps/media/press/factsheet.asp?Counter=3562&intNumPerPage=10&checkDate=&checkKey=&srchType=1&numDays=3500&srchOpt=0&srchData=&keywordType=All&chkNewsType=6&intPage=&showAll=&pYear=&year=&desc=&cboOrder=date>

The following fact sheet summarizes CMS's proposed definition of meaningful use:

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/apps/media/press/factsheet.asp?Counter=3564&intNumPerPage=10&checkDate=&checkKey=&srchType=1&numDays=3500&srchOpt=0&srchData=&keywordType=All&chkNewsType=6&intPage=&showAll=&pYear=&year=&desc=&cboOrder=date>

NUTRITION

TEFAP Reporting Requirements Outlined

On December 29, 2009, FNS released a memorandum with updated information on ARRA Section 1512 reporting requirements for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). The memorandum can be found at:

http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/programs/tefap/TEFAP_ARRA_Rept_Requirements_Dec2009.pdf

TRANSPORTATION

1) FTA Announces Section 1512 Training Webinar for Reports Due in January 2010

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will hold a webinar to provide ARRA grant recipients with guidance and technical assistance on the Section 1512 reporting requirements. FTA will discuss recently issued reporting guidance from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and tips on how to make the January reporting process successful. The webinar session is scheduled for Thursday, January 7, 2010. To register for this session see:

https://www.nhi.fhwa.dot.gov/resources/webconference/web_conf_learner_reg.aspx?webconfid=19205

For more information see: http://www.fta.dot.gov/index_9440_10870.html

2) December 31, 2009: FTA Publishes Correction to *Federal Register* Notice on Tribal Transit Programs

FTA published a notice in the *Federal Register* that makes corrections to the December 18, 2009 notice.

Specifically, the corrected version provides two tables: ARRA Tribal Transit Program Allocations and FY 2009

Tribal Transit Program Allocations. To view the notice, go to: <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/pdf/Z9-30197.pdf>