Notes: StateFedConnect Peer-to-Peer Zoom Call, November 10, 2020

Facilitators: Elizabeth Burke Bryant (Rhode Island Kids Count) and Danielle Ewen (EducationCounsel)

Next Call: These zoom calls are on the first Tuesday of the month at 4 ET, and our next call will be on Tuesday, December 1st, 4:00 ET. You will receive a reminder and zoom link from the Alliance prior to the call.

“Ask Me Anything” Call-In: Tuesdays at 1:00 ET (Ask Danielle for call-in info)

November 10 StateFedConnect Peer-to-Peer Call Agenda:

- Federal overview (Danielle Ewen)
- Overview of Affordable Care Act suit before the Supreme Court and discussion of possible outcomes (Andy Schneider, Georgetown Center for Children and Families and Catriona Macdonald, Linchpin Strategies)
- Peer to Peer discussion on post-election advocacy strategies between now and end of year (moderated by Elizabeth Burke Bryant)

The end of the notes includes a roundup of all the resources shared during the call and found throughout the notes.

Federal Overview

- President-elect Biden Transition Planning
- Continuing Resolution
- Negotiations on Coronavirus Relief Packages
- #SaveChildCare Wednesday Actions

1. President-elect Biden is working on transition plans, and has named the Agency Review Teams (https://buildbackbetter.com/the-transition/agency-review-teams/) who will lead the planning across federal agencies. Linda Darling Hammond of the Learning Policy Institute and the CA State Board of Education will be leading the team for the US Department of Education (USED) and Robert Gordon (Michigan State Department of Health) and Chiquita Brooks-LaSure (Manatt, Phelps & Phillips) will co-lead the team for the US Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Martha Coven (Yale University) will lead the team for the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).
2. Congress has until December 11 to pass a set of appropriations bills to fund the government for the rest of the current fiscal year (FY21). The Senate Appropriations Committee published their draft bills this week, and provided for increases to CCDBG of $50 million and Head Start of $100 million. The House and Senate must agree on final language before a bill can be sent to the White House for final signature. It is unclear whether some or all of the bills will pass in an omnibus package, whether there will be another Continuing Resolution (CR), or whether there will be a combination package, known as a CRomnibus package.

3. Congressional leaders continue to talk about the need to pass a coronavirus relief package, although it is unclear whether there is any agreement on what should be included. Sticking points include the overall size of the package, with Senate leaders focused on a small package of $500 billion, while the House leadership has proposed a package around $2 trillion. The White House has not yet signaled where it stands; however, recent media reports suggest that negotiations may be at a standstill (https://www.politico.com/news/2020/11/12/congress-stimulus-deadlock-436294). It will be critical to highlight the need for investments in child care, health care, nutrition and housing, as well as direct support for families, in the next few weeks.

4. A new Congress will be seated on January 2, with the two Senate races in Georgia on January 5 deciding the makeup of the Senate leadership and committees. If there is a tie, the Vice-President will be called upon to vote on legislation.

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Continuing Resolution

- Government shutdown avoided until December 11: The Senate adopted a continuing resolution (CR) to extend federal funding until December 11. The CR was adopted on a largely bipartisan 84-10 vote. President Donald Trump signed the bill shortly after its passage. A notice from the White House is here. A statement by Senate Appropriations Committee Ranking Member Patrick Leahy (D-VT) is here. A statement by House Appropriations Committee Chairwoman Nita Lowey (D-NY) is here.
- Head Start Designation Renewal System – The CR allows the Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary to extend for not more than two years the designation of a Head Start agency if the Secretary lacks information necessary to make a determination. This applies to Head Start agencies where the HHS Secretary is required to make a decision regarding renewal before December 31, 2020. This language may have been included due to the Head Start Designation Renewal System recently revising its conditions for Head Start agencies and due to challenges with collecting information as a result of the coronavirus (e.g. staff may not be on site, visits to monitor programs may not be possible, etc.)
- Maintains Funding for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Mandatory Child Care Funding to States – The CR maintains funding for TANF and mandatory child care funding to states. According to the Appropriations Committee summary, the extension “will allow HHS to make first-quarter payments to states.”
- P-EBT – According to CLASP (https://www.clasp.org/blog/p-ebt-extended-states-must-act-fight-child-hunger) “P-EBT—created as a temporary measure in March—was set to expire on
September 30, 2020. Thankfully Congress passed a Continuing Resolution (CR) last week that funded the federal government beginning October 1 and extended multiple provisions to help address food insecurity, childhood nutrition, and school meals, including P-EBT. The CR expands P-EBT to provide meals for students participating in hybrid school models (online and in person) and young children in child care facilities who were previously not eligible. The CR also extends WIC administration waivers, child nutrition waivers, and existing SNAP administrative flexibilities that, for example, extend certification periods, simplify recording procedures, and adjust interview requirements.”

*The Alliance for Early Success does not endorse or advocate for specific legislation or candidates.*