Notes: StateFedConnect Peer-to-Peer Zoom Call, April 6, 2021

Facilitators: Elizabeth Burke Bryant (Rhode Island KIDS COUNT) and Danielle Ewen (EducationCounsel)

Next Call: The next call will be on Tuesday, May 4, 2021, 4:00 ET (first Tuesday of the month at 4 ET). If you have registered, you will receive a reminder and zoom link in advance of the call. (To register for calls for the rest of the year: https://earlysuccess.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJwrfuqprT0rGtY5k0ySZFki- yRoEp_CMnSv)

And don’t forget: “Ask Me Anything” Call-In: Every other Tuesday at 1:00 ET –. Next call is Tuesday April 13th at 1 pm ET. Agenda will include 1) discussion on Virus relief packages, 2) Infrastructure proposals, 3) annual appropriations advocacy, and 4) discussion of “supplement not supplant” provisions and what advocacy might look like to ensure funds used as intended. To join: https://www.gotomeet.me/DanielleEwen You can also dial in using your phone. United States (Toll Free): 1 877 309 2073 United States: +1 (571) 317-3129 Access Code: 965-856-357

APRIL 6, 2021 STATEFEDCONNECT AGENDA:

- Special focus on the American Rescue Plan – Presentation by Ellen Nissenbaum, Senior Vice President for Government Affairs, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.
- Federal Update (Danielle)
- State Report-Outs and General Q & A (Moderated by Elizabeth)

Overview – American Rescue Plan: Current Status, How to Keep Key Parts of it, What that Means Moving Forward, and What State Advocates Need to Know – Ellen Nissenbaum, Senior Vice President for Government Affairs, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

Ellen Nissenbaum, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities provided us with three important documents in advance of our April 6th zoom call:

"Building an Equitable Recovery Requires Investing in Children, Supporting Workers, and Expanding Health Coverage"

https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/3-24-21pov.pdf
"American Rescue Plan Act Includes Critical Expansion of Child Tax Credit and EITC":

https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/3-12-21tax.pdf

Talking points on American Rescue Plan and What Comes Next:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1zrVNm6HzEVdnqYqplWQCCbaEtgeJUcW/view

Presentation Summary:

- The American Rescue Plan (ARP) makes significant investment in policies that support children and families. It also presents an enormous opportunity/risk as we advocate to keep what families need for the long term. We will need to have a big push to enact ongoing support for families with kids.
- Biggest disappointment was the lack of supports for children in immigrant families.
- ARP has major increases in
  - child care funding,
  - pandemic EBT flows through the summer,
  - increase in WIC
  - state and local relief
- Department of the Treasury has to release detailed guidance on how state and local relief can be used.
- There is a provision in the law that CBPP pushed for that says if states cut net taxes, the amount of the federal funds from ARP that they receive will be reduced by the same amount.
- ARP requires 1 year increase in the Child Tax Credit (CTC): $3,600 for each child under six, $3,000 for children 6 to 17. Millions of families have never filed for Child Tax Credit. There needs to big push to urge them to file for CTC, and big push to make it permanent.
- The administration has first done the American Rescue Plan, next is Recovery in the form of two Infrastructure Proposals.
  - The American Jobs Plan was unveiled March 31st and includes funds for child care facilities, roads, clean energy.
  - The 2nd infrastructure package will be the American Families Plan which will focus on human infrastructure including Medicaid, child care, paid leave and funding for the caregiving infrastructure.
    - For this package, there will be a limit about what can get into the plan and there will be some offsets due to the mechanism that will be used for passage. For example, to make Child Care Tax Credit (CTC) permanent, there will need to be an offset.
    - 41 Senators signed a letter to make the Child Tax Credit permanent (see attached letter).
- The most important thing is the risk that the two infrastructure packages move separately.
- Next will be the President’s proposed budget (to be released on 4/9). There will be no caps on appropriations as there have been in the past. There is likely major increase in discretionary programs including housing, health, education and climate change.
Ellen Nissenbaum followed up after the StateFedConnect call by sending the following documents:

- Letter from 41 Senate Democrats to President Biden in support of making the CTC/EITC improvements permanent
- Letter from Ways and Means Chairman Neal to the House urging the CTC, EITC, and Child and Dependent care expansions to be made permanent

**Federal Update – Danielle Ewen**

- The first budget of the Biden Administration will be released Friday (4/9). It will have minimal detail in it, but should signal the direction the Administration will go in early childhood.
  - **UPDATE:** the Budget released on 4/9 increases the Education Department’s budget by 41% to $103 billion. The biggest increases in K-12 education include more than doubling funding for Title I, from $17 billion to $36.5 billion, and increasing IDEA from $13 billion to $15.5 billion, as well as increasing by $250 million intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities or delays.
  - The budget request also includes a $1.5 billion increase for the Child Care and Development Block Grant and a $1.2 billion increase in Head Start
  - Also included is $1 billion to help schools hire more counselors, nurses and mental health professionals as schools reopen for in-person learning more than a year into the coronavirus pandemic
- Congress has already begun working on the Appropriations process and Members are being asked for their priorities. Now is the time to let your delegation know that increased funding for child care and related programs is important and needed.
- The first of two infrastructure proposals was released last week (detailed summary of the American Jobs Plan is attached). It includes $25 billion for child care facilities. We expect the next piece will be released next week and will include significant funding for the caregiving infrastructure.
  - We need Congress to see these proposals as one piece, rather than two, and to move them together.
  - There are a number of ways that these can move forward in Congress, including another round of reconciliation. Senate leadership is working on a plan to use reconciliation, which needs only a majority of votes, to enact the infrastructure package.
  - Passage will not be easy, as the proposals come with a significant price tag at a time when some in Congress are worried about the debt and the deficit. The President has proposed increases to corporate taxes and other revenue increases.
  - Congress will likely move these proposals forward in mid-summer, if not earlier, and will need to move quickly to get them through before the end of the fiscal year on Sept 30 2021.

Danielle said the main advocacy push should be that state advocates thank their members who supported the American Rescue Plan and say we would like to make key parts of it permanent. She said that with R’s that you know didn’t vote for the ARP, you should emphasize that we know you didn’t vote for this plan, but we do know you are committed to many key items in the plan such as child care and we will continue to be in touch with you on needed early learning, health and development supports for children and families.
• Danielle concluded her federal update by saying that strong, ongoing advocacy will be needed for both Infrastructure proposals as one piece rather than two (ie. that they be moved together) and for FY22 appropriations.
• It continues to be important for states to spend the child care dollars that are coming to them from the December, 2020 Consolidated Appropriations Act and the American Rescue Plan to be able to make a strong case for permanently increasing child care as much as possible.

For a list of what is in the American Rescue Plan that was signed into law on March 11th see notes from March State Fed Connect.

Catriona MacDonald, President, Linchpin Strategies Provided a written update on MIECHV Relief Funds
- MIECHV received an increase of $150 million through the American Rescue Plan (on a base of $400 million annual budget). Although there is a great deal of pressure to move money out the door rapidly, as with all COVID relief funds, the legislation does give a couple of years to spend down the funds.

- The language provides that the funds are to support home visitors in delivering remote home visits, and to provide emergency supplies to families. Typically, MIECHV is not permitted to provide supplies to families - even emergency supplies - and must help families in need of food and other supplies by referring them to other agencies. During the pandemic, MIECHV agencies have been permitted to provide emergency supplies, but prior to now, were not provided with any additional funding to do so.

- Funds may be used to provide devices or connectivity to home visitors or families if needed to provide remote home visits; provide training and technical assistance to staff to provide remote home visits, and provide emergency supplies including cleaning supplies, non-perishable food, diapering supplies, and gift cards for perishable groceries. Agencies are encouraged to work with diaper banks where practicable to provide the diapering supplies.

- We expect that funds will be made available to existing MIECHV awardees, including states and Tribal MIECHV awardees, on a formula basis as a percentage of their current awards. There will be some kind of streamlined application that states and Tribes must submit prior to being granted access to those funds. It isn’t clear if HRSA will distribute funding in one tranche, or put some out as quickly as possible and then make a second round of funds available as additional needs emerge.

- HRSA has drafted guidance for the COVID funds that is now in line for review (along with guidance for all other COVID relief programs). The administration would like to get as much money out the door as possible by the end of April, but that will involve finalizing guidance, releasing it to awardees, having awardees complete applications (even very streamlined ones) and get them approved through state processes. It is likely that the guidance and application will get out by the end of the month, and then states and Tribes will have some period of time to complete and submit the paperwork needed to draw down the funds. States will then need to go through a contract amendment process to get the funds out to local programs.

Elizabeth Burke Bryant asked state advocates to provide updates on how things are going with their legislative sessions and state budget processes, and what impact the coming federal relief is having on state budget discussions. She also said that there will not be an in-person meeting of StateFedConnect in
July, but planning is underway for virtual opportunities to increase peer-to-peer strategizing and engagement with members of Congress, with more information to follow. **Elizabeth also said that Danielle will have a conversation with StateFedConnect state advocates about the issue of Non-Supplantation - what does advocacy look like to ensure funds used as intended. This will be one of the items on the agenda at Danielle’s next “Federal Office Hours/Ask Me Anything” call on Tuesday, April 13th at 1 pm EST using the link at the start of this agenda. After that we will determine best approach for StateFedConnect to take on that issue (eg. Make a statement, individual state advocacy, teaming up with what the Alliance will be doing on this issue, etc).**

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