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The Birth to Three Connections program in the Department of Education has received an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) grant of \$2,139,844 to be expended over the next two years in ways that support early intervention services in South Dakota, with an emphasis on retaining or creating jobs.

The first half of the ARRA funds, \$1,069,922, must be obligated no later than September 30, 2010, and expended no later than September 30, 2011. The estimated Birth to Three Connections ARRA budget for this time period is as follows:

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|---|------------------|
| 1) 12-month grants for regional Birth to Three Connections Programs | \$495,000 |
| 2) Birth to Three Connections state office administration costs | \$250,000 |
| 3) Birth to Three Connections state office data system upgrade | \$ 60,000 |
| 4) Birth to Three Connections state office OAE Screeners | \$ 50,000 |
| 5) Birth to Three Connections state office direct service costs | <u>\$214,922</u> |
| TOTAL | \$1,069,922 |

Uses of IDEA, Part C ARRA Funds

All IDEA, Part C ARRA funds must be used consistently with the current IDEA, Part C statutory and regulatory requirements. IDEA, Part C ARRA funds may be used for any allowable purpose under Part C of the IDEA, including the direct provision of early intervention services to infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families, and implementing a statewide, comprehensive, coordinated, multidisciplinary, interagency system to provide early intervention services.

The IDEA ARRA funds constitute a large one-time increment in IDEA, Part C funding that offers a unique opportunity to improve early intervention service delivery and results for infants and toddlers with disabilities. Generally, funds should be used for short-term investments that have the potential for long-term benefits, rather than for expenditures the state may not be able to sustain once the ARRA funds are expended. Some possible uses of these limited-term IDEA ARRA funds that are allowable under IDEA include:

1. Provide in-service training on evidence-based practices to EIS program staff and EIS providers to ensure that infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families receive high quality early intervention services in a timely manner.
2. Expand child-find activities to ensure that all regions meet their performance targets related to serving infants under age one and infants and toddlers birth through age two.

3. Develop intensive programs and initiatives to train and support families, including families whose primary language is not English, in working with their infants and toddlers with disabilities and effectively communicating their children's needs.
4. Support development of high quality state and local data systems to collect valid and reliable data for use in improving the timely delivery of early intervention services, the transition of children receiving services under Part C to the Part B preschool program, the tracking of early childhood outcome data as children exit the program and enter preschool and school, and in meeting data reporting requirements on the state's and EIS programs' performance on early childhood priority areas.
5. Obtain state-of-the art assistive technology devices and provide training to qualified personnel on the use of such devices to support the functional development of infants and toddlers with disabilities.
6. Implement innovative program strategies for improving the statewide services program, such as web-based systems for developing Individualized Family Service Plans and transition plans for toddlers with disabilities as they exit the Part C program.
7. Purchase equipment for use by qualified personnel such as occupational and speech therapists to increase their ability to provide effective services.
8. Develop and implement a joint state policy to provide early intervention services with other early childhood and related programs in the state.

Suggested Uses of ARRA Funds for Regional Birth to Three Connections Programs:

- Professional development
- Parent and provider training
- Expand Child Find outreach services to NICUs, pediatricians and family practice physicians
- Laptop computers, copiers, fax machines, and cell phones for Service Coordination
- Additional Transportation costs for Service Coordination
- Additional Personnel (Local programs should be cognizant that personnel hired with these funds may be temporary.)

How to Apply for ARRA funds:

Applications for ARRA funds are restricted to those local programs which have a proven history with the Department of Education of consistently meeting all of the state and federal statutory and regulatory requirements of IDEA Part C, including restricted indirect cost requirements. The enclosed Grant Agreement specifies the assurances between the Department of Education and the regional Birth to Three Connection program. A budget and a budget narrative for the use of ARRA funds is required as part of the Grant Agreement. In the event the Department of Education is unable to fully fund all proposals, please rate the items on your ARRA budget in the order of importance (1, 2, 3, etc.). Requests may range between \$25,000 and \$50,000 for a 12-month grant period which is retroactive to July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010.

Once the Grant Agreement is received and the budget approved, you will receive 25% of the approved total amount. The second and third quarterly payments of 25% of the total grant amount will be made on or about October 1, 2009 and January 1, 2010. Payments shall be made upon evaluation and acceptance of **quarterly ARRA Expenditure Reports** to determine if grant funds previously received have been expended in accordance with grant objectives. Additional grant payments shall be withheld if local agency has unexpended funds totaling 25% or more of

the total grant award amount. Funds will not be withheld if local agency can provide sufficient documentation or justification showing that funds have been obligated for a specific purpose. A summary statement itemizing the total costs associated with the performance and completion of the grant will be used as a basis for the final payment, subject to the review and approval by the Department of Education and less any unexpended grant funds from prior quarters.

Additional reporting requirements may be required for ARRA funds and will be forthcoming in a separate document. ARRA reporting will be separate from the quarterly reporting required for the regular Part C Service Coordination funds.

Deadline for Submissions:

The signed Grant Agreement, budget, and budget narrative should be postmarked no later than August 3, 2009.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Susan Sheppick

Enclosures