

NJCDD

NJ Council on Developmental Disabilities

the Council

A publication of the New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities

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New Jersey Schools Urged to Freeze Funding

In late January, Education Commissioner Lucille Davy wrote to New Jersey school leaders, recommending that they immediately freeze all nonessential spending and review all expenditures for the rest of this school year. She pledged to identify state mandates that might be lifted to help reduce costs for the 2009-10 school year to save money.

Most school districts are now developing their 2009-2010 budgets, and are looking to the Department for guidance on what to expect in

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Federal Stimulus Package Addresses Disability Issues: Includes Increased Funding for Many Programs

President Barack Obama has signed a comprehensive spending bill to authorize his economic recovery package. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) includes \$787 billion in tax cuts and program funding, among them, a number of disability-related provisions.

The following summary describes the disability specific programs and the amount of increased spending they will receive through 2010:

Health

The bill authorizes \$87 billion to increase the federal government’s share of Medicaid spending. Sixty-five per cent of the funds will be given to all states; the remaining thirty-five per cent will be used for additional payments (in the form of a decrease in a state’s match) for states with high unemployment rates. Each state will receive a “base” 6.2% increase.

A “maintenance of effort” requirement in the bill prohibits states from changing eligibility requirements, but there is no such provision for benefits or services, allowing states to shift funding within their Medicaid plan.

States are now scrambling to understand the bill and maximize benefit from it.

Many questions remain about the stimulus package, including when the funding will be released and how much of it will be subject to regulation or other procedures.

council Profile

New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities Announces New Members



Todd Emmons



Russell Fried



Andrew McGeady



Christopher Miller



Myrta Rose



Walter Fernandez



Leah Ziskin

The New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities has announced the appointment of seven new Council members, five of whom are self-advocates, and 2 of whom are parents or guardians. The new members are Todd Emmons of Voorhees; Russell Fried of Laurel Springs; Andrew McGeady of Jackson; Christopher Miller of Neptune City; Myrta Rosa of Woodbridge; Walter Fernandez of Barnegat; and, Leah Ziskin of Cherry Hill.

“We welcome our new members, as we work together in 2009 to advocate on behalf of this population across a broad range of issues,” said Dr. Alison M. Lozano, NJCDD executive director. “There are many important issues that we are working on, including individual and group rights, community integration and inclusion, and civic participation.”

Comprised of up to 30 members, at least 60 percent of the Council must be individuals with a developmental disability, or parents, immediate relatives or guardians of someone with a developmental disability. These individuals are appointed by the Governor

The remaining membership is comprised of public agency representatives; representatives of the council’s sister agencies — the Boggs Center for

“The appointment of these new members comes at a good time to reinvigorate our membership as we move into a very challenging year. The state and nation are facing difficulties that have the potential to significantly affect people with developmental disabilities and their families.”

-Dr. Alison M. Lozano, NJCDD Executive Director

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Excellence and Disability Rights New Jersey — and a private provider agency representative.

“The appointment of these new members comes at a good time to reinvigorate our membership as we move into a very challenging year,” Lozano said. “The state and nation are facing difficulties that have the potential to significantly affect people with developmental disabilities and their families. So it is vital that we have a strong, diverse membership as we discuss how best to face those challenges.”



Social Security's Economic Stimulus One-Time Payments

Who will receive a one-time economic stimulus payment from Social Security?

Nearly 55 million Social Security and SSI beneficiaries will receive a one-time payment of \$250 each. To receive a payment, the beneficiary's address of record must be in one of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, or the Northern Mariana Islands.

When can I expect to receive my one-time economic stimulus payment?

The Social Security Administration plans to pay all eligible Social Security and SSI beneficiaries by late May 2009, so you should expect to receive your payment no later than the first week of June 2009. The one-time payment will be a separate payment, which will not be included in your regular monthly benefit payment.

Are individuals entitled to more than a single one-time economic stimulus payment?

No, individuals may receive only one \$250 payment regardless of how many types of benefits they receive.

An individual receiving Social Security and SSI or an individual receiving Social Security and Veterans or Railroad Retirement benefits will be entitled to only one payment.

How will I receive my one-time economic stimulus payment?

The SSA will deliver your payment in the same way we currently deliver your Social Security or SSI benefit. If you get your monthly benefit by check, they will deliver your one-time payment by check. If you receive a monthly direct deposit or Direct Express® debit card payment, that is how you will receive your one-time payment.

Are beneficiaries from other federal programs eligible for this one-time economic stimulus payment?

Yes, individuals receiving benefits from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs or Railroad Retirement Board may be eligible for these one-time payments.

En español, por favor



Página informativa sobre el pago especial de recuperación económica de parte del Seguro Social

El Presidente Obama firmó recientemente la ley titulada, «American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009» (Ley de Recuperación y Reinversión Americana del 2009). Esta ley contiene una estipulación de un pago único por la cantidad de \$250 a las personas que reciben beneficios de Seguridad de Ingreso Suplementario (SSI, sus siglas en inglés) o de Seguro Social.

Esperamos que todas las personas que tengan derecho a un pago, lo reciban a fines de mayo del 2009. No tiene que hacer absolutamente nada para recibir este pago.

Actualmente, estamos trabajando en los detalles sobre cómo emitiremos el pago especial a casi 55 millones de nuestros beneficiarios.

PREGUNTA: ¿Quién recibirá el pago único de estímulo del Seguro Social?

RESPUESTA: Casi 55 millones de beneficiarios de Seguro Social y SSI recibirán el pago único de \$250 cada uno.

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Stimulus Package Addresses Disability Issues *continued from cover*

There is an additional \$19 billion for health information technology to jump-start computerized health records; \$1 billion for prevention and wellness to prevent chronic diseases and to increase immunization programs; \$100 million in competitive grants to localities and nonprofits to remove lead paint in low income housing; and \$10 billion to the National Institutes of Health for Biomedical Research.

Education

In the area of education, the bill authorizes an additional \$11.3 billion for the IDEA State Grant Program; \$500 million for the IDEA Part C Early Intervention Program; and, \$400 million for the pre-school program.

Social Security

The bill includes a one-time emergency payment of \$250 to people who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security, disabled veterans, and other selected benefits. (See box); \$500 million to help the Social Security Administration reduce the processing time for claims and appeals decisions; and \$500 million to replace the antiquated National Computer Center to modernize the Social Security Administration.

Employment

The bill includes \$540 million for State grants for Vocational Rehabilitation; funding to modernize the unemployment compensation program, and increase benefits to workers; as well as \$500 million in job training for adult and another \$1.2 billion for youth services.

Independent Living & Housing

The Centers for Independent Living will see an additional \$140 million to assist people with disabilities to live in their communities.

The bill contains a number of provisions aimed at addressing the housing crisis including \$4 billion in Public Housing Capital for building repair and modernization; \$250 million for a new program to fund energy retrofits of Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities, Section 202 for the Elderly and Project Based Section 8 units to make them for energy efficient; and \$2.25 billion for the HOME Investment Partnership, with \$2 billion targeted to fill gaps in approved Low Income Housing Tax Credit projects.

There is \$1 billion in Community Development Block Grants to support housing and services to help hard pressed localities; \$1 billion for housing, food, employment and healthcare to serve areas hardest hit by the recession; \$2 billion for Neighborhood Stabilization to help communities purchase and rehabilitate foreclosed, vacant properties to create more affordable housing; and \$5 billion to weatherize homes of low-income households to reduce energy costs.

Early Childhood

The bill includes new money for childcare and Head Start. \$2 billion in Child Care Development Block Grants will be made available to states to serve an additional 300,000 children from low income working families; \$93.6 million of that is targeted to improve infant and toddler care. An additional \$2.1 billion is earmarked for Head Start to provide services to 110,000 additional children.

States are now scrambling to understand the bill and maximize benefit from it.

Many questions remain about the stimulus package, including when the funding will be released and how much of it will be subject to regulation or other procedures.

Disability Issues High on President Obama's Priorities

Issues of concern to advocates for people with disabilities and their families rank prominently in the agenda posted on The White House Web site, www.whitehouse.gov.

Among 24 items listed in the agenda, including the war in Iraq, energy and health care — topics related to disability issues are well represented.

Obama's plan calls for initiatives to improve education and employment opportunities for people with disabilities, while supporting community-based living and an end to discrimination.

Among the President's disability-specific priorities are the following:

- Full funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, including more funds for early intervention and universal screening;
- Increased college opportunities for people with disabilities, along with a study on transition issues and higher education for people with disabilities;
- Increased funding to enforce the Americans with Disabilities Act;
- Resources and tax benefits to encourage increased employment of people with disabilities in the public and private sectors;
- Support for the Community Choice Act and other initiatives to support choice about whether to live in nursing homes, institutions or independently within their communities;

Autism is the only disability, condition, illness or disease specifically mentioned in Obama's 24-point agenda. For autism, he calls for:

- Increased funding for research, treatment, screenings, public awareness and support services for autism spectrum disorders;
- "Life-long services" for people with autism spectrum disorders, as children and as adults;
- More funding for the 2006 Combating Autism Act, as well as improving state and federal autism programs. The Combating Autism Act promised almost \$1 billion over five years for autism research and development, but Congress had yet to fund the Act, even before the world wide fiscal crisis; and
- Universal screening for all infants for autism disorders, as well as re-screening for all 2-year-olds. Many advocates believe universal screening at an early age is vital and will allow children with autism to begin treatment at an earlier age. Although the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention now recommends that pediatricians screen children during well-baby visits at 9 months, 18 months, and 24 or 30 months, few doctors do, and those who do have often found that the recommended tests weren't sensitive enough to pick up mild autism spectrum disorders.

Página informativa sobre el pago especial de recuperación económica de parte del Seguro Social

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PREGUNTA: ¿Cuándo puedo esperar recibir mi pago?

RESPUESTA: Planificamos pagar a todos los beneficiarios de Seguro Social y SSI que tengan derecho a fines de mayo del 2009, así que debe esperar recibir su pago a no más tardar de la primera semana de junio del 2009. El pago único será un pago por separado, que no se incluirá en su pago regular de beneficio mensual.

PREGUNTA: ¿Cómo recibiré el pago único?

RESPUESTA: Le enviaremos su pago de la misma manera en que enviamos su beneficio de Seguro Social o SSI actualmente. Si le enviamos su beneficio por cheque, le enviaremos su pago único por cheque. Si usted recibe un pago mensual por depósito directo o en una tarjeta de débito DirectExpress, así será como recibirá su pago único.

PREGUNTA: ¿Puede una persona recibir más de un pago?

RESPUESTA: No, las personas sólo pueden recibir un pago único de \$250, no importa cuántos tipos de beneficios reciban. Una persona que reciba Seguro Social y SSI, o una persona que reciba Seguro Social y beneficios de Veteranos o de Jubilación Ferroviaria, tendrá derecho a un pago único solamente.

PREGUNTA: ¿Tienen derecho a este pago único los beneficiarios de otros programas federales?

RESPUESTA: Sí, las personas que reciban beneficios del Departamento de Veteranos de los EE. UU o de la Junta de Retiro Ferroviario podrían tener derecho a estos pagos únicos.



New Jersey Schools Urged to Freeze Funding

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state funding, as New Jersey grapples with a potential \$2 billion shortfall in funds.

While the federal economic stimulus bill, The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), includes some funding for public schools, and analysts broadly agree on estimates that will arrive for New Jersey education, many school districts have already begun cutting back.

School business administrators and boards remain uncertain about when and how the federal monies may begin to flow. Schools also cite concerns that the New Jersey's fiscal crisis might affect the state's new school funding formula. Hearings on a court challenge of the formula by the state's 31 large urban Abbott districts began in February and could result in more state aid to those districts.

Hate Crime Prevention

The Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Action (LLEHCPA) has been identified by the Obama Administration as one of its priorities for the first 100 days. In preparation for the bill to be introduced, The Arc and UCP are collecting stories of hate crimes committed against an individual with disability in the last six months. A hate crime is defined by the underlying motivation of the perpetrator against his or her target of aggression. If the victim is intentionally targeted because of a specific characteristic, such as race, religion, sexual orientation, or disability, then a hate crime has been committed. Please forward any stories of hate crimes against a person with a disability to acosta@thedpc.org.



IRS to Provide More Tax Assistance at Walk-in Centers

Leading a cross-functional campaign to promote March 21, 2009, as Super Saturday: Get Free Tax Help Today! March 21, 2009 is designated as a day to provide extra service to taxpayers, particularly those who are experiencing difficulties during these stressful economic times.

The IRS wants to reach out to those in difficult economic situations, those who may need assistance with prior year returns, those in the community with disabilities, and those who may not be aware of the unique and

diverse services offered by the IRS and its partners. Super Saturday is a nationwide effort and all 170+ IRS walk-in sites called Taxpayer Assistance Centers will be open on March 21. Many of our Volunteer Income Tax Assistance will also be open to provide additional services.

You can find the nearest Taxpayer Assistance Centers by going to <http://www.irs.gov/localcontacts/>. To find a local Volunteer Income Tax Assistance site, please call 1-800-906-9887.



Family Support Center Offers Parents and Caregivers of People with Developmental Disabilities Free Job-Search Services

The Family Support Center of New Jersey (FSCNJ), a clearinghouse for disability information, is offering the parents and caregivers of people with developmental disabilities an opportunity to schedule free computer drop-in hours for employment searching and research.

Interested individuals may plan an appointment to use the center's computer workstations while doing research at the lending library. Jobseekers may also speak to a knowledgeable resource coordinator and make an appointment to learn how to best utilize FSCNJ's comprehensive database. To schedule an appointment, call 1-800-FSC-NJ10. To learn more about other FSCNJ free services and workshops, log on to www.fscnj.org.

The Family Support Center of New Jersey is an affiliate of the Family Resource Network, a family-focused, community-based organization that aims to provide individual and family support throughout the lifespan of people with disabilities and chronic illness. The network is made up of four affiliate organizations including Autism Family Services of New Jersey, Caregivers of New Jersey, the Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey and the Family Support Center of New Jersey. The Family Resource Network has six offices across the state.



Community Calendar

March

- 20 NAMI Basics Class - For parents or primary caregivers of children and adolescents with challenging behavior. Appropriate for developing strategies and responses to behavior in children with a wide range of disabilities. 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. NAMI Mercer Office, Lawrenceville, NJ. Registration required. Call 609-799-8994.
- 27 Families Planning Together; Effective methods for gathering and organizing information, planning, and sharing information to communicate your child's wants and needs; Sponsored by the Elizabeth M. Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities; The Boggs Center, New Brunswick, NJ. Call Beth Ong at 732-235-9327 or email elizabeth.ong@umdnj.edu.

April

- 3 Planting Two Trees with One Seed: Communication Supports for Problem Behavior, Pat Mirenda, Ph.D. presenting; Sponsored by the Elizabeth M. Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities. Woodbridge Hilton, Iselin, NJ. Call Carole Ramirez, 732-235-9307 or email carole.ramirez@umdnj.edu
- 17 The Dance of Change in a Perfect Storm, Renee Pietrangelo, Ph.D. presenting. Sponsored by the Elizabeth M. Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities. Woodbridge Hilton, Iselin, NJ. Call Carole Ramirez, 732-235-9307 or email carole.ramirez@umdnj.edu

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