



## Funding Process for Early Childhood Iowa Area Boards Tool TT

### Early Childhood Iowa Area Board Legislated Responsibility

Iowa Code chapter 256I.8 gives Early Childhood Iowa Area (ECIA) boards the authority to administer Early Childhood Iowa grant moneys. The amount of the grant to each ECIA board is made available through an annual state appropriation. Based on the approved community plan, funding decisions regarding the services purchased are the responsibility of the ECIA board.

### The Role of the Legislature

Because ECI funds are appropriated through the Iowa Legislature, it is important to have an understanding of the legislative process. As an overview, the legislative session begins the second week of January each year. The session is comprised of 100 days in election years and 110 days in non-election years. Between the beginning and the end of the legislative session, policy and appropriation bills are drafted and debated. When bills are successfully passed by both chambers, the bills move to the Governor's desk for signature.

Available resources from the Legislative Services Agency to further explain this often lengthy and sometimes confusing process:

- *How an Idea Becomes a Law* flow chart, <http://www.legis.iowa.gov/DOCS/Resources/HowAnIdeaBecomesALaw.pdf>
- *How a Bill Becomes a Law* document, <http://www.legis.iowa.gov/DOCS/Resources/HowABillBecomesALaw.pdf>

***A timeline for ECIA Boards (These times are general and your ECIA board may begin your process before the time period identified below.)***

#### End of January

- The Governor releases budget recommendations to the public.

#### Spring

- ECIA boards begin their funding decision process based on information gathered about community needs and gaps in services and uses the board's process for awarding funds (i.e., issuing an RFP for funds, etc.). Initially, ECIA boards use estimated funding amounts from the Governor's budget recommendations, previous year's allocation amounts or preliminary appropriation bills.
- ECI State Office releases the new fiscal year's 'Funding Opportunity' on IowaGrants for ECIA's to complete and submit the ECIA budget.
- ECIA's notify the State ECI Office when there will be a fiscal agent change in the new fiscal year. NOTE: If notification of a fiscal agent change occurs close to the beginning of the fiscal year or in the middle of the fiscal year, there may be a delay in the ECIA's quarterly payment. (See Tool B for steps and considerations when changing fiscal agents.)

### **Late Spring**

- Education and Health & Human Services Appropriation bills pass both legislative chambers.
- The ECI State Office finalizes School Ready (SR) and Early Childhood (EC) allocation amounts for each ECIA using the School Ready and Early Childhood funding formulas set by ECI State Board policy. The ECI State Office confirms allocation amounts with the Legislative Services Agency (LSA).
- Once the Governor signs the appropriations bills, the ECI State Office emails the agreement (contract), which include the SR and EC allocation amounts, to each ECIA for the board chairperson's signature. The ECI State Office also provides a spreadsheet of final allocation amounts for each category in the School Ready and Early Childhood funding streams.
- The ECIA board electronically signs and returns the agreement to the ECI State Office. Next, the ECI State Office routes the electronic agreement to the appropriate state departments and ECI State Board chair for signatures. When the agreement is executed (i.e., has all signatures), the ECI State Office sends an electronic copy of the agreement to the ECIA board.
- The ECIA board uploads the signed agreement to IowaGrants.
- The ECIA board uploads the signed fiscal agent agreement to IowaGrants.
- The ECIA board submits the ECIA Budget which identifies planned expenditures for School Ready and Early Childhood funding through IowaGrants. The ECI State Office reviews and approves the budget. NOTE: Best practice is to not enter into contracts with contractors or providers until the state approves the budget.
- ECIA boards must strive to have all items in this section accomplished before July 1<sup>st</sup> when the Iowa legislature provides timely information about next fiscal year's funding. Assuming the needed information is timely, the ECI State Office requests ECIA boards submit the ECIA Budget by June 15<sup>th</sup> and signed agreement on or about June 15<sup>th</sup>.

### **Summer**

- July 1 – State fiscal year begins.
- ECIA board uploads the board's contract monitoring schedule for the new fiscal year to IowaGrants by September 15<sup>th</sup>.

### **First Quarter Payments**

The ECI Office must have the following items before the ECIA board can receive the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter payment:

- Signed agreement (contract) by all parties.
- Signed fiscal agent agreement.
- Approved ECI Budget.

For subsequent quarterly payments, the ECI Office must receive the ECIA's annual report (due September 15<sup>th</sup>).