

September 17, 2024

## NOTICE TO PROVIDERS REGARDING PROCESS FOR REQUESTING ADDITIONAL FUNDING

First Connections will currently continue to use the existing process to request additional funding. Due to the immediate need of providers, however, changes are currently being considered to bring this process more into alignment with the intent of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) by ensuring services are provided that best meet the educational needs of children in the program. Stakeholder groups will be held soon to obtain input on options.

Currently, additional funding may be provided to Part C Provider Programs whose annual allocation is insufficient for growth (accepting new cases) or insufficient to continue provision of quality early intervention to existing children and families.

Additional funding requests will continue to be made on a per child basis using the Form (Process Checklist) linked on the First Connections web site at: <https://www.firstconnectionsar.org/fc-providers>. The form and directions have been updated to remove references to the CDS data system and the de-obligation process. Forms have been updated to a .pdf document so that information can be typed directly into the form using the free version of Adobe and submitted to the Provider Program's assigned monitor. The form also includes space for the monitor's review of each request and feedback. There is a recorded demonstration video on how to complete the request process linked with the forms.

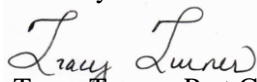
The Lead Agency must ensure that federal funds support both compliance and quality. Additional funding will only be provided for an IFSP service or services when the child record meets minimum IDEA, Part C compliance and quality requirements outlined in FC Policies and Procedures sections #1000-#7000. Provider Programs seeking technical assistance in meeting minimum IDEA, Part C requirements may contact [Ravyn.Hawkins@ade.arkansas.gov](mailto:Ravyn.Hawkins@ade.arkansas.gov) for support.

In response to Provider requests for a more streamlined process for requesting additional funding, First Connections is committed to incorporating Provider feedback in program improvement efforts. The program is hosting a lunchtime Webinar to discuss future changes in the additional funding request process, solicit input from Providers, and answer questions. The Webinar will be recorded for those unable to attend:

**Wednesday, October 23, 2024 12:00 – 1:00**  
**Provider Stakeholder Year in Review Meeting**  
**Topic: Additional Funding Requests and Lead Agency Fiscal Responsibilities**

**Meeting Link:**  
<https://arkansas.zoom.us/j/4921419431>  
Or join by phone:  
(877) 402-9753  
Conference code: 2750386#  
Meeting ID: 492 141 9431

Thank you for all that you do for children and families,

  
Tracy Turner, Part C Coordinator  
First Connections

Arkansas Department of Education,  
Division of Elementary and Secondary Education  
Office of Special Education Programs  
[Tracy.Turner@ade.arkansas.gov](mailto:Tracy.Turner@ade.arkansas.gov)