



ARRA REPORT BY THE
INSPECTOR GENERAL AND STATE BOARD OF ACCOUNTS

2009-12-0263

December 29, 2009

ARRA REVIEW OF FSSA FIRST STEPS PROGRAM

Indiana Inspector General Staff Attorney Amanda Schaeffer and State Examiner Bruce Hartman of the Indiana State Board of Accounts report as follows:

This report addresses an evaluation of the funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Part C Grants for Infants and Families¹, known as the First Steps² program, of the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA).

¹ 20 USC §1400. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act seeks to provide early intervention, special education, and related services to children with disabilities, ages birth to 26. Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Act requires that infants and toddlers with disabilities receive early intervention services from birth through age three. 20 USC §1435.

² IC §12-12.7-2. Indiana's First Steps System is a system that provides early intervention services to infants and young children with disabilities or who are developmentally vulnerable.

I

On February 17, 2009, the United States Government enacted the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act³ (ARRA). The ARRA intends to provide a stimulus to the United States economy by providing \$787 billion in program funding and tax credits.⁴

The purpose of this report is to reflect an initial evaluation of ARRA compliance by the First Steps program.

II

In 2009, FSSA was provided \$9,717,801 in ARRA funds to help make available early intervention services to infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. The funds must be obligated by September 30, 2011 and liquidated

³ 40 USC 1606.

⁴ Indiana is expected to receive \$4.3 billion in ARRA funds and perhaps more in competitive grant funds. It is the experience of the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) and the State Board of Accounts (SBOA) that the expenditure of government funds may invite fraud and waste. The Office of the Inspector General's (OIG's) enabling statute states that the OIG "is responsible for addressing fraud, waste, abuse and wrongdoing in agencies." IC 4-2-7-2(b). The OIG is also mandated to "recommend policies and carry out other activities designed to deter, detect and eradicate fraud, waste, abuse, mismanagement and misconduct in state government." IC 4-2-7-3(2). These duties include the authority to "initiate, supervise and coordinate" investigations, IC 4-2-7-3(1), to perform audits, IC 4-2-7-2(a), and to "prepare interpretive and educational materials and programs." IC 4-2-7-3(16). Immediately upon the OIG's creation in 2005, the SBOA provided assistance to the OIG. Many of the two agencies' missions are similar. In addition to the above OIG duties, the SBOA is charged to develop and publish "accounting and uniform compliance guidelines manuals" ("Manuals") to provide guidance to public entities, IC 5-11-1-24(a), to perform audits, IC 5-11-1-9, and to make written findings regarding violations of its Manuals or "any law". IC 5-11-5-1(a). Both the SBOA and OIG also review compliance with the Circulars issued by the State Budget Agency issued under the authority of IC 4-12-1-13(h). Following the above authorities and precedent, both the OIG and SBOA have and continue to confer, research and seek education regarding ARRA. Substantial guidance has been provided by the Indiana Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

by December 31, 2011.

III

A

Findings

From our initial review, we find that the program controls outlined in the First Steps spending plan or other related documentation are adequate to meet the respective federal ARRA and OMB guidelines and requirements.

B

Recommendation

At a later date we will perform additional procedures as deemed necessary to verify compliance requirements. The work papers prepared during this review will be retained as approved by the Oversight Commission on Public Records.

Dated this 29th day of December, 2009.



David O. Thomas, Inspector General