



## ECEC Quick Guide to the Federal Budget Process

### Federal Budget Timeline *At-a-Glance*

**February:** President releases budget proposal

**April 15:** Budget Resolution is to be completed

**Spring:** Appropriations Committees hold hearings

**Summer:** Appropriations Subcommittees and Committees vote

**September 30:** deadline for completion of Appropriations bills unless a Continuing Resolution is passed

**October 1:** Start of new federal fiscal year

### Administration's Budget Proposal

The President's budget proposal is the start of the annual federal funding process. It includes the President's priorities, but typically does not include a lot of detail. It is a conceptual framework, and is essentially a nonbinding request to Congress.

### Congressional Budget Resolution

First, the House and Senate Budget Committees create a Budget Resolution. This is a blueprint which sets revenue and spending targets. The House and Senate vote on this measure, but a signature from the President is not required. Sometimes Congress is not successful in passing (or mutually agreeing to) a Budget Resolution. It's not technically required and the Appropriations Committees can move forward without it.

### House and Senate Appropriations Committee Action for "Discretionary" Funding

The Appropriations Committees in Congress have subcommittees that determine individual program funding. The House and Senate Subcommittees on Labor, Health and Human Services and Education work on funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and Head Start.

The Subcommittees hold hearings to gather information about how funds are used and what funds are needed. The Subcommittee then drafts, marks up, negotiates and votes on their individual bills. These bills are then brought to the full Appropriations Committee for votes.

### House Ways and Means and Senate Finance Committee Action for "Mandatory" Funding and For Tax/Revenue Proposals

The federal budget also includes proposals for "entitlement" programs (a portion of CCDBG dollars are considered in this way), as well as tax and revenue proposals (like credits and deductions). The House Ways and Means Committee and the Senate Finance Committee have jurisdiction over the legislation for these kinds of proposals.

**Funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant** is, by design, a mix of what's known as "discretionary" and "mandatory" money. Different committees in Congress work on the different types of funding.

### **House and Senate Approval of Committee Bills**

After clearing the Appropriations Committees, each bill then moves to the House and Senate floors for a vote. Then, like with any piece of legislation, a Conference Committee is convened with members from both Committees to work out the differences and send one bill to the President for signature. This is all supposed to be completed in time for the start of the fiscal year on October 1.

### **What if This Work Isn't Completed By October 1?**

#### **The Continuing Resolution**

If Congress has not completed work on all twelve appropriations bills by the end of the fiscal year, a Continuing Resolution (CR) must be passed to continue funding for federal programs (usually at current/existing funding levels) until Congress can finish their work.

#### **The Omnibus Appropriations Bill**

If individual bills cannot be completed, even after a CR, Congress can create an omnibus bill that rolls some or all of the twelve appropriations bills into one bill for debate and vote on the House and Senate floor.

For the latest on the budget process for this year, please visit [www.ececonsortium.org](http://www.ececonsortium.org)