



# THE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Thursday, January 22, 2009

This update is published weekly during the General Session and monthly during the Interim and Special Sessions.

## Alerts and News from the Hill

The General Session officially begins on January 26, 2009. Nonetheless, the Legislature met last week and again yesterday to hammer out the base budget with 7.5% cuts for the remaining five months of fiscal year 2009 and 15% cuts for fiscal year 2010. It isn't pretty. Almost everything is facing some kind of a cut and many cuts are deep enough to eliminate programs.

Most of the committee budget cut recommendations have been made as of yesterday, particularly for fiscal year 2009. The committees have also been putting together a wish list of items that they would like to fund if the needed cuts end being reduced or if "backfill" money is provided. Executive Appropriations will meet next week (tomorrow's meeting was cancelled) to finalize the 2009 cuts.

The next big question is what February's revenue forecast will look like. While it was initially, generally assumed that the forecast was going to require smaller cuts, new trend analysis shows that we may be approaching or even surpassing that 15% mark for FY10.

The Legislature will likely spend a considerable amount of time during the Session figuring out where to locate "backfill" money to send money back into certain programs and for new legislation. This might include additional revenue sources (bonding and the Rainy Day Fund) and ways to speed up the

money that makes its way to the State's coffers. It will also include some of the Economic Relief that is coming out of Washington; we will see those federal funding amounts by early February.

Significant dates for the 2009 General Session can be found [here](#).

As an Advocacy Community we would like to send the message to the Legislature that our current budget situation requires a balanced approach that should do more than just cut programs. We also need to make the most of revenue and explore other ways to increase the state's revenue. We should be careful in cutting monies that are used to match federal funds which bring more dollars into the state. It is also essential that state services that help families be a top priority for the state budget, because these families are the ones that have been most affected by the current economic crisis. Aid to low-income families will speed Utah's economic recovery because working families spend immediately and spend locally. We understand that budget cuts are necessary, but it is important that we do not cut the programs that provide services to those who are most in need right now.

## Legislative Priorities

Below is our draft list of legislative priorities.

Please let us know if there are additional items we should be paying attention to.

| Title  | Sponsor        | Description   | Pos | Status |
|--|----------------|---|-----|--------|
| <b>Asset Building</b>  |                |   |     |        |
| Funding for Individual Development Accounts                  | appropriation  | \$50,000 - base budget  | I   |        |
| Resolution Supporting a State Council on Financial Education | Sen. Pat Jones | Bill to create a state council on financial education   | I   |        |
| Funding for EITC/Volunteer Income Tax Assistance             | appropriation  | FY09 funding was \$157,000; we are looking at cuts to below \$50K for FY10  | I   |        |
| <b>Children</b>  |                |   |     |        |
| Childcare Assistance   | appropriation  | Maintain pre-budget cut level; this year's level will be the same because of maneuvering to keep from losing the 4X federal match | I   |        |
| Funding for Head Start Education                             | appropriation  | Maintain at last year's level.  | I   |        |
| <b>Food</b>  |                |   |     |        |
| Emergency Food Network                                       |                | \$50,000  | I   |        |

| <b>Health</b>  |                                 |  |            |                  |
|--|---------------------------------|--|------------|------------------|
| Restore Optional Medicaid Services                     | appropriation                   | Restore Medicaid services that were cut during special session (Eyeglasses, Dental Services, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Audiology)  |            |                  |
| Mini-grant Funding                                     | Rep. Seelig                     | Establishes new line of funding (\$750,000) to distribute mini-grants to nonprofit, community-based organizations to provide outreach and eligibility assistance for populations under-enrolled in Medicaid/CHIP and workplace insurance coverage. |            |                  |
| Children's Health Coverage Initiatives                 | Rep. Holdaway                   | Create a single branding for Utah's Children's Health Programs and strengthen outreach efforts in Utah schools   |            |                  |
| Language Interpretation for Government Funded Services | Rep. Chavez-Houck               | An omnibus (broad) bill calling for statewide adaptation & implementation of the national standards for Cultural and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) across all sectors and thru public-private sector partnership over 3 years.        |            |                  |
| Medicaid Provider Rates Increase                       | appropriation                   | Restore and Increase provider reimbursement for primary care   |            |                  |
| Tobacco Tax  | Sen. Christensen                | Increase of tobacco tax with revenues to fund increased access to health care and cancer research  |            |                  |
| <b>Title</b>   | <b>Sponsor</b>                  | <b>Description</b>   | <b>Pos</b> | <b>Status</b>    |
| <b>Housing</b>   |                                 |  |            |                  |
| Olene Walker Housing Loan Fund                         | appropriation                   | Anticipating cuts of \$350K for FY10 as well as a loss of \$500 for one-time over FY09   |            |                  |
| Pamela Atkinson Homeless Trust Fund                    | appropriation                   | Anticipating cuts of \$100K for FY10 as well as a loss of \$500 for one-time funding over FY09; possibly renew one-time funding  |            |                  |
| Foreclosure notice for tenants                         | Working with a possible sponsor | Provide an earlier foreclosure notice to tenants renting from an owner who is going through the foreclosure process  |            |                  |
| HB 82 Teacher Mortgage Loan Program                    | Representative Hemmingway       | The State Board of Education would provide for teachers a program loan of \$15,000 to be used for purchasing a home which loan can convert into a grant  |            |                  |
| HB 10 Condominium & Community Association              | Rep. Webb                       | Eliminate trust deed foreclosure as an alternative for homeowners associations   | 3          |                  |
| General Housing Plans                                  | Rep. Herrod                     | Will include additional legal incentive to producing adequate plans and may require additional specifications for cities and towns for their plan (details to create housing targeted at families 30, 50 and 80% of area median income)            |            | No bill file yet |
|  |                                 |  |            |                  |

| <b>Welfare/Work Supports</b>  |               |  |   |  |
|-------------------------------|---------------|--|---|--|
| General Assistance            | appropriation | Maintain base budget; a cut to all staff for the program has been recommended  | 1 |  |
| Possible Unemployment Changes |               | Support any increases in timelimits or easing of eligibility for UI, possibly passing "trigger" bill to have changes to into effect if UI Modernization Act is passed by Congress. | 1 |  |
| FEP                           | appropriation | Maintain base budget and funding of all programs.  | 1 |  |
| <b>Other</b>                  |               |  |   |  |
| Weatherization                | appropriation | Maintain base budget   | 1 |  |
| State Budget                  | program cuts  | Anticipated cuts to balance the budget; we are watching that programs that support the poor do not get cut.  | 3 |  |

## Democracy Day

UCAPA, AARP and The Utah Housing Coalition will be hosting Democracy Day at the Utah State Capitol on February 2, 2009. This is a great opportunity to learn about the legislative process, tour the Capitol, and eat lunch with your legislators. Democracy Day is a free event. You can register [here](#).

### Advocate's Calendar

The Family Investment Coalition's Advocate's Caucus will be held every Wednesday during the 2009 General Session in the Olmstead Room of the East Building from 12:15 pm until 1:15 pm. We will discuss our legislative agendas, talk about Session items of interest, and collaborate with other advocates.

Click [here](#) for more information.

Call your elected officials:

Governor - (800) 705-2464  
House - (800) 908-4261  
Senate - (800) 613-0677

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