Congress Approves FY 2009 Omnibus Spending Bill

Congress Approves FY 2009 Omnibus Spending Bill, Which Includes Increased and Level Funding for Drug and Alcohol Prevention, Treatment and Research Programming; President Expected to Sign Measure into Law.

Recently, both chambers of Congress approved an omnibus spending bill which is intended to complete the FY 2009 appropriations process. The 2009 fiscal year runs from October 1, 2008 until September 30, 2009. The U.S. Senate approved the FY 2009 omnibus spending bill yesterday, March 10th by a voice vote; the U.S. House of Representatives approved the identical spending measure on February 25th. The FY 2009 omnibus spending bill combines funding for a number of federal agencies, including the Departments of Health and Human Services, Education, Justice and Labor. Funding for drug and alcohol prevention, treatment, recovery and research programming, and programs serving people with criminal records, is included in the FY 2009 omnibus spending bill. The President is expected to sign the measure into law.

Under the FY 2009 omnibus spending bill, most drug and alcohol education, prevention, treatment and research programming will receive increases. Programming for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) will receive $3.33 billion in funding, an increase of $100.9 million over FY 2008 levels and $309.9 million more than President Bush’s FY 2009 budget request. The Safe and Drug-Free School and Communities State Grants program, slated for a nearly $195 million cut in President Bush’s FY 2009 budget, will receive level funding. Specifically, drug and alcohol prevention, treatment and research programming will receive the following funding under the FY 2009 omnibus spending bill:

The Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (SAPT) Block Grant will receive $1.7786 billion, a $19.8 million increase over FY 2008 funding levels. This amount is equal to the FY 2009 budget request; however, although the FY 2009 budget called for a $20 million increase in SAPT Block Grant funds which would be allocated to states demonstrating “superior performance,” the FY 2009 omnibus bill does not include any language indicating support for this proposal and includes report language stating that, “the increase included for the SAPT Block Grant shall be distributed based on the current statutory formula.”
The Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT) will receive $414.3 million, a $14 million increase over FY 2008 funding levels, and $77.5 million over the FY 2009 budget request. Under the FY 2009 omnibus spending bill, specific CSAT programs will receive the following funding levels:

- The Access to Recovery (ATR) Program will receive $99 million, an increase of $2.5 million over FY 2008 funding levels
- The Screening and Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) program will receive $29.1 million, funding level to FY 2008
- Programs in the Criminal Justice Activities portfolio will receive $37.6 million, an increase of nearly $14 million over FY 2008; within this allocation, drug treatment courts will receive $23.9 million, a $13.9 million increase over FY 2008
- Programs in the Children and Families portfolio will receive $20.7 million, a cut of $3.6 million from FY 2008; funding for these programs was slated for elimination in the FY 2009 budget
- The Recovery Community Services Program (RCSP) will receive $5.24 million, funding level to FY 2008
- The Addiction Technology Transfer Centers (ATTCs) will receive $9.08 million, funding level to FY 2008
- Opioid Treatment Programs/Regulatory Activities will receive $8.9 million, funding level to FY 2008
- Programs for Pregnant and Postpartum Women will receive $16 million, a $4.2 million increase over FY 2008
- Minority AIDS programs will receive $66 million, an increase of $2.9 million over FY 2008
- Treatment Systems for the Homeless will receive $42.75 million, an increase of $250,000 over FY 2008
The Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) will receive $201 million, a $6.88 million increase over FY 2008 levels and $43 million more than President Bush’s FY 2009 budget request. Under the FY 2009 omnibus spending bill, specific CSAP programs will receive the following funding levels:

- The Strategic Prevention Framework State Incentive Grants will receive $110 million, $5.3 million more than FY 2008 funding
- Sober Truth on Preventing (STOP) Underage Drinking programming will receive $7 million, a $1.6 million increase over FY 2008 funding
- Minority AIDS programming will receive $41.39 million, a $2 million increase over FY 2008 funding
- The Safe and Drug-Free Schools State Grants program will receive $294.76 million, level to FY 2008 funding; this program was slated for a nearly $195 million cut in the FY 2009 budget.
- The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) will receive $1.033 billion, a $30.8 million increase over FY 2008 spending and $32 million over the FY 2009 budget request.
- The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) will receive $450.23 million, a $13.9 million increase over FY 2008 and $13.5 million over the FY 2009 budget request.


FY 2009 Omnibus Spending Package Includes Funding for Programs in the Department of Justice Serving People with Addiction Histories and/or Criminal Records.

The FY 2009 omnibus spending bill includes funding for a number of programs in the Department of Justice (DOJ) that serve people with drug and alcohol histories and those individuals with criminal records.

Under the FY 2009 omnibus spending bill approved by Congress, these programs will receive the following funding levels:
• The Second Chance Act, recently authorized legislation aimed at helping States and localities address the needs of individuals reentering the community from the criminal justice system, will receive $25 million, $15 million of which would go to the Adult and Juvenile Offender State and Local Reentry Demonstration Grant program located in Section 101 of the Second Chance Act. The remaining $10 million would go to the mentoring and transitional services portion of the legislation (Section 211) through the Department of Labor. Because the Second Chance Act was recently approved by Congress and signed into law in April 2008, FY 2009 would be the first year for which Second Chance programs would receive funding.

• The Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grants (JAG) program, which funds programs providing a number of different prevention, education, community corrections and drug treatment services around the country, will receive $546 million, a $376 increase over FY 2008.

• The Drug Court program, which provides financial and technical assistance to state and local governments and courts to develop and implement drug treatment courts, will receive $40 million, a $24.8 million increase over FY 2008.

• The Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act (MIOTCRA), which provides grant resources to states and local areas to foster collaborations within the criminal and juvenile justice system for adults or juveniles who have a mental illness or co-occurring mental illness and substance use disorder and face criminal charges that are the product of the person's illness, will receive $10 million, an increase of $3.5 million over FY 2008.

• The Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT) program, which helps states and localities to develop and implement residential drug and alcohol addiction treatment programs in state and local correctional and detention facilities, will receive $10 million, a $600,000 increase over FY 2008 spending.