

COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT ALLOCATION PLAN

Federal Fiscal Year 2020
October 1, 2019 – September 30, 2020

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

**NED LAMONT
GOVERNOR**

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The Community Services Block Grant Allocation Plan

FFY 2020

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THE COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT ALLOCATION PLAN
For Federal Fiscal Year 2020
October 1, 2019 – September 30, 2020

I. OVERVIEW OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT

A. Purpose

The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) is administered by the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) through its administrative agency, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Community Services (OCS). The Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS) is designated as the principal state agency for the allocation and administration of the block grant within the state of Connecticut.

The purposes of the Community Services Block Grant are:

1. To provide assistance to states and local communities, working through a network of Community Action Agencies for the reduction of poverty, the revitalization of low-income communities, and the empowerment of low-income families and individuals to become fully self-sufficient (particularly families who are attempting to transition off a state program carried out under part A of the Social Security Act (42 USC 601, et. Seq.); (the “Act”) and
2. To accomplish the goals described in paragraph (1) through:
 - a) the strengthening of community capabilities for planning and coordinating a broad range of federal, state, local, and private resources related to the elimination of poverty, so that these resources can be used in a manner responsive to local needs and conditions;
 - b) the coordination of a range of services to meet the needs of low-income families and individuals, so that these services have a measurable impact on the reduction of poverty in the community and in helping families and individuals to achieve self-sufficiency;
 - c) the promotion of innovative and effective community-based approaches to addressing the causes and effects of poverty and community breakdown;
 - d) the promotion of participation by the low-income residents and members of the groups served by programs funded through block grants made under this subtitle in planning and coordinating activities and programs designed to respond to the unique problems and needs within their communities; and
 - e) the broadening of the resource base for programs directed at the elimination of poverty so as to secure a more active role in the provision of services for:
 - (1) Private religious, charitable, and neighborhood-based organizations; and
 - (2) Individual citizens, business, labor, and professional groups, who are able to influence the quantity and quality of opportunities and services for the poor.

B. Major Use of Funds

HHS requires that at least ninety percent (90%) of the funds made available to the state are administered through grants to Community Action Agencies (CAAs), Community Action Programs (CAPs), or Limited Purpose Agencies (LPAs) that performed the functions of a Community Action Agency in fiscal year 1981, or their successors. These funds must be used for purposes consistent with the federal goals identified above.

There are currently nine CAAs and one LPA that qualify for CSBG funding in Connecticut. Each CAA has a specified catchment area. In Connecticut, CSBG funds are primarily used by CAAs to provide planning and coordination, organize services, encourage innovative and effective approaches to addressing the causes of poverty, broaden the resource base for programs and services, and for core administrative expenses. With CSBG as base funding and additional assistance through other state agencies, municipalities and private donations, CAAs are able to operate a wide range of programs. These programs include, but are not limited to, Energy Assistance, Housing and Shelter programs, Child Care and Youth Development Services, Holistic Case Management Services, and Nutrition Services.

As required under the Economic Opportunity Act, CAAs also prepare annual Community Action Plans. Each CAA's plan addresses how the goals of the block grant will be furthered by the efforts of the programs administered by the Community Action Agency. Key components of the individual CAA's Plan include the following: community needs assessment; description of service delivery system, linkages, coordination of funds and innovative projects; and performance measurement outcomes and measures. CSBG funds are required to be used to serve or improve the well-being of individuals with incomes at or below 125% of the federal poverty level and may not be used to support political activities or to pay for construction unless a specific waiver is obtained by the state from the federal government.

The state is permitted to retain up to five percent (5%) of the block grant for administration, and may use the remaining five percent (5%) of the funds allocated for a variety of purposes including, but not limited to, training, technical assistance, and capacity building for eligible entities, and innovative programs that further the purposes of the Act. The department utilizes the administration allotment to provide direct program monitoring, training, and oversight functions to ensure programmatic compliance.

C. Federal Allotment Process

CSBG funds are allotted based on the national appropriation and the states' share of funds distributed under Sec. 221 of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 for federal fiscal year 1981.

D. Estimated Federal Funding

During FFY 2019, the Community Services Block Grant was funded at a national level of \$696.4 million, which represents an approximate 0.38% increase from FFY 2018's national funding level. At the time of the development of this plan, federal funding for FFY 2020 has not yet been finalized.

For purposes of the development of this plan, the federal funding allocation for Connecticut for FFY 2020 is estimated to be \$8,612,693, which is equal to the state's final FFY 2019 allocation.

E. Total Available and Estimated Expenditures

In total, available funding for FFY 2020 is estimated at \$11,133,558, made up of \$8,612,693 in estimated federal block grant funding and \$2,520,865 in estimated carryforward. Of this amount, \$8,612,693 is proposed to be expended, with \$2,520,865 proposed to be carried forward as a contingency in case of a decrease of funding in future fiscal years or for one-time expenditures in future federal fiscal years to support identified needs of the CAA Network.

Each year the Department must complete the Center of Excellence Organizational Standard annual review to ensure compliance with all federal requirements. If the results of this review demonstrate there are training needs for the CAA Network in order to ensure adherence with federal standards, DSS must provide the necessary education to CAAs. For example, DSS utilized unobligated program carryforward from FFY 2019 as a one-time resource to continue its technical assistance related to full compliance with Organizational Standards, ROMA Next Generation and the CSBG Annual Report. Maintaining a carryforward amount will allow DSS the flexibility to engage in similar activities in the future if warranted.

Section 210 of the federal Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 requires that at least ninety percent (90%) of the CSBG funds made available to the state are to be used to make grants to CAAs or LPAs. Accordingly, the Department proposes that ninety percent (90%) or \$7,751,423 of the estimated FFY 2020 block grant funding will be distributed through grants to CAAs and LPAs in Connecticut.

Of the remaining ten percent (10%) of the FFY 2020 block grant funds or \$861,270, the state plans to retain \$430,635 for administration and \$430,635 for discretionary projects. The funds retained for administration will be used by the Department to support the necessary quality assurance and programmatic staffing to ensure sufficient programmatic and fiscal oversight, training and monitoring activities. The remaining five percent (5%) of the FFY 2020 block grant funds, or \$430,635, will be used for discretionary projects including training, technical assistance, technology support, statewide projects and innovative programs related to the purposes of the Act.

PROGRAM CATEGORY	FFY 2020 Proposed Expenditure
Grants to Eligible Entities	\$7,751,423
Discretionary Programs	430,635
Administration	430,635
TOTAL	\$8,612,693
Block Grant	\$8,612,693
Carry Forward from Previous Year	2,520,865
TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE	\$11,133,558

The above chart delineates FFY 2020 proposed expenditures. Table A on page 10 provides program category detail for FFY 2018 (actual expenditures), FFY 2019 (estimated expenditures), and FFY 2020 (proposed expenditures).

The distribution of allocated funds is based on a formula referenced in Sec. 17b-888 of the Connecticut General Statutes and further described in Section H below.

F. Proposed Changes From Last Year

Block grant regulations specify how funds will be allocated. In FFY 2020, a total of \$7,751,423 is proposed to be granted to CAAs or LPAs, which represents 90% of total block grant funding. Table D on page 13 documents FFY 2018 actual expenditures, FFY 2019 estimated expenditures, and FFY 2020 proposed expenditures for each of the CAAs. Proposed FFY 2020 allocations for CAAs were calculated utilizing the base amounts that entities should be receiving pursuant to the current agreement stipulated under §17b-888 of the Connecticut General Statutes. Any decrease in these allocations from FFY 2019 to FY 2020 represents an artificial inflation of FFY 2019 expenditures due to costs incurred during FFY 2018 and paid in FFY 2019.

Overall, administration costs (personal services and fringe benefits) are proposed to increase in FFY 2020 from FFY 2019 levels. A staff vacancy existed during October 2018 – April 2019. DSS is currently fully staffed. FFY 2020 Personal Services and Fringe will reflect 2.75 FTE staffing composition for a full year. Funding for the other expenses line item is proposed to decrease, as FFY 2019 expenditures included one-time costs that are not necessary in FFY 2020. This reduction will not negatively impact the program or result in any loss of services.

G. Contingency Plan

The development of this allocation plan is based on the assumption that the FFY 2020 Community Services Block Grant for Connecticut will be funded at the level of \$8,612,693. In the event that anticipated funding is either increased or decreased, federal law, as noted above, specifies the proportion of funds allocated to Community Action Agencies, Discretionary Programs, and Administration. Should a significant decrease in federal funding occur as a result of sequestration, the Department, with input from Connecticut Association for Community Action (CAFCA) and the CAAs, will develop a process to determine priorities for applying any reductions. If additional funds become available, they may be carried over into FFY 2021 in order to ensure ongoing programmatic coverage and to mitigate the potential for future reductions.

In accordance with section 4-28b of the Connecticut General Statutes, after recommended allocations have been approved or modified, any proposed transfer to or from any specific allocation of a sum or sums of over fifty thousand dollars or ten per cent of any such specific allocation, whichever is less, shall be submitted by the Governor to the speaker and the president pro tempore and approved, modified or rejected by the committees. Notification of all transfers made shall be sent to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to appropriations and the budgets of state agencies and to the committee or committees of cognizance, through the Office of Fiscal Analysis.

H. State Allocation Planning Process

Sections 17b-885 through 17b-895 of the Connecticut General Statutes implement the federal requirements governing Community Action Agencies and further stipulate that allocated funds be distributed through an agreement negotiated between the Department and Community Action Agencies. Under the present agreement, negotiated and implemented in 1997, each CAA will

receive a base amount that equals one-half of their FFY 1996 allocation. Remaining funds are allocated to CAAs based on the number of individuals in each CAA catchment area (as a proportion of the state total) at or below 125% of the federal poverty guidelines according to census data.

I. Grant Provisions

In order to obtain CSBG funding, Connecticut must submit and obtain federal approval of the state plan that satisfies the requirements of Sec. 676 of the Reauthorization Act. Under these requirements, the state must:

- designate a state agency to serve as lead agency;
- hold a public hearing to provide the public an opportunity to comment on the proposed use of funds;
- conduct monitoring in accordance with Section 678B of the Reauthorization Act;
- hold a legislative hearing at least once every three (3) years in conjunction with the development of the state plan;
- use funds received to support activities which assist low-income families and individuals to:
 1. achieve self-sufficiency;
 2. secure and retain meaningful employment;
 3. attain an adequate education;
 4. make better use of available income;
 5. obtain and maintain adequate housing;
 6. obtain emergency assistance; and
 7. achieve greater participation in the affairs of the community;
- address the needs of youth in low-income communities;
- ensure that CSBG funds are used to coordinate with and make more effective use of other programs with related purposes;
- describe how it uses its discretionary funds;
- include information provided by eligible entities on how CSBG funds will be used;
- ensure that eligible entities provide emergency food, supplies and related services to combat hunger and malnutrition;
- ensure that the state and eligible entities coordinate with and establish linkages between governmental and other programs to avoid duplication;
- provide for coordination between programs to ensure that energy crisis intervention programs are conducted in each community;

- ensure that the state will cooperate with related federal investigations;
- ensure that funding for eligible entities will not be terminated or reduced below their proportional share without cause;
- provide opportunities for state and eligible entities to form partnerships with other organizations, including religious, charitable and community organizations;
- establish mechanisms for low-income individuals or organizations that feel they are under-represented on the board of a CAA to petition for representation;
- require that each CAA submit a Community Action Plan as a condition of funding;
- require that all eligible entities participate in the Results Oriented Management and Accountability system; and
- require that each eligible entity have a Board of Directors composed of equal numbers of low-income persons, local elected officials or their designees, and other individuals or organizations serving low-income people in the community.

Connecticut's most recent federal application for CSBG funding was approved for the period October 1, 2018 to September 30, 2020. Connecticut's next federal application for CSBG funding for the period October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2022 is due to ACF by September 1, 2020.

Additional Federal Requirements:

Starting in 2015, OCS and the CSBG Network – comprised of CSBG eligible entities, state CSBG Lead Agencies, state Community Action Agency Associations, national partners, and others – have collaborated to create a new Performance Management Framework for CSBG. This Framework includes:

- Organizational Standards for CSBG eligible entities;
- Federal and State Accountability Measures; and
- Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA).

These elements were designed to increase effectiveness and accountability across the CSBG network (federal, state, and local) and generate more robust results for the people and communities we serve.

On October 2, 2015, OCS issued an Information Memorandum Transmittal No. 144 regarding State and Federal Accountability Measures and Data Collection Modernization. Pursuant to the terms of

the memorandum, OCS required states, no later than FFY 2016, to collect data and analyze and report on CSBG Accountability Measures through their online State plan and annual reports.

The thirteen (13) State accountability measures address efficiency and effectiveness characteristics such as timeliness, accuracy, standards, and stakeholder satisfaction in the critical activities and functions listed below:

- Development of State plan, including involving the eligible entities
- Implementation of State plan including:
 - Distribution of funds
 - Use of remainder/discretionary funds
 - Grantee monitoring and corrective action
 - Data collection, analysis, and reporting
 - Organizational standards for eligible entities
 - State linkages and communication

The Department began successfully complying with the identified state accountability measures during FFY 2016 and shall continue to comply with these requirements during ongoing years.

In addition to accountability measures for states, on January 26, 2015, OCS issued Information Memorandum Transmittal No. 138 referencing the “State Establishment of Organizational Standards for CSBG Eligible Entities under 678B of the CSBG Act, 42 U.S.C. § 9901 et seq.” The categories associated with the Organization Standards for CAAs are as follows:

1. Maximum Feasible Participation
 - Consumer Input and Involvement
 - Community Engagement
 - Community Assessment
2. Vision and Direction
 - Organizational Leadership
 - Board Governance
 - Strategic Planning
3. Operations and Accountability
 - Human Resource Management
 - Financial Operations and Oversight
 - Data and Analysis

The Department and the CAA network are working collaboratively to develop and implement a system to ensure compliance with all federal requirements. The Department convened a workgroup comprised of members from the Community Services Block Grant office, as well as representatives from the CAA Network (e.g. senior management, fiscal, human resources, quality assurance, planning, etc.). It is the Department’s expectation that through this process of consistent communication, Connecticut CAAs will be informed of compliance requirements for each of the categories associated with the above mentioned organizational standards. The Department will also utilize this process to assist with the identification of training that is above and beyond the standard training.

Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA)

The Department and the CAA network are continuing activities related to ROMA Next Generation (ROMA NG). ROMA NG is the next level of ROMA principles, practices and resources that was implemented in FFY 2018. ROMA NG focuses on integrating information on the people served, services and strategies provided, and outcomes achieved by eligible entities on 3 levels: community, individual and family. The final stage of the development of the components of ROMA NG was the convening of a workgroup with representatives from state, local, national, and federal levels. The ROMA NG efforts are reflected in the proposed CSBG Annual Report, which was approved by the federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) on January 12, 2017. Implementation and reporting in the new format for the NPIs began during FFY 2018. The revised Annual Report format related to agency, community and individual/family indicators, services and strategies were to be reported no later than April 30, 2019. Connecticut successfully submitted its Annual Report as required.

In closing, FFY 2020 holds great promise for the CAA Network as it continues to align its functionality and organizational capacity with federal requirements to ensure that the national and local CAA discussion covers uniform topics: community level; individual and family level; and agency expenditures, capacity and resources.

II. Tables

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Table A

COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT RECOMMENDED ALLOCATIONS

PROGRAM CATEGORY	FFY 18 Expenditures	FFY 19 Estimated Expenditures	FFY 20 Proposed Expenditures	Percentage Change from FFY 19 to FFY 20
Grants to Eligible Entities ¹	\$6,767,146	\$8,589,681	\$7,751,423	-10%
Discretionary Programs	\$ 357,593	\$ 430,635	\$ 430,635	0%
Administration	\$ 500,779	\$ 430,635	\$ 430,635	0%
TOTAL	\$7,625,518	\$9,450,951	\$8,612,693	-9%
SOURCE OF FUNDS				
Block Grant	\$8,580,324	\$8,612,693	\$8,612,693	0%
Carry Forward from Previous Year ²	\$2,404,317	\$3,359,123	\$2,520,865	-25%
TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE	\$10,984,641	\$11,971,816	\$11,133,558	-7%

Notes

¹ FFY 2019 estimated expenditures include costs incurred during FFY 2018 and paid during FFY 2019. FFY 2020 proposed expenditures reflect the base award amount each CAA receives per the current agreement stipulated under §17b-888 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

² FFY 2019 carryforward amount of \$3,359,123 includes \$787,776 in CSBG programmatic funds to CAAs due to the timing of amendment payments issuance, data warehouse to ensure compliance with federal annual reporting requirements and one-time costs for Community Health Worker training for CAA staff. The CSBG office continues to work with CAAs to ensure issuance of timely payments.

Table B
COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT
SUMMARY OF PROGRAM EXPENDITURES

	FFY 18 Expenditures	FFY 19 Estimated Expenditures	FFY 20 Proposed Expenditures	Percentage change from FFY 19 to FFY 20
Number of Positions (FTE) ¹	2.75	2.75	2.75	
Personal Services	182,585	157,679	201,784	28%
Fringe Benefits	151,663	121,567	165,737	36%
Other Expenses ²	166,531	151,389	63,114	-58%
Equipment				
Contracts				
Grants to:				
Local Government				
Other State Agencies				
Private Agencies	7,124,739	9,020,316	8,182,058	-9%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$7,625,518	\$9,450,951	\$8,612,693	-9%
	Sources of FFY 18 Allocations	Sources of FFY 19 Allocations	Sources of FFY 20 Allocations	Percentage change from FFY 19 to FFY 20
Carry Forward from Previous Year	\$ 2,404,317	\$ 3,359,123	\$ 2,520,865	-25%
Federal Block Grant Funds	\$ 8,580,324	\$ 8,612,693	\$ 8,612,693	0%
TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE	\$10,984,641	\$11,971,816	\$11,133,558	-7%

Notes:

- ¹ FFY 2020 Personal Services and Fringe costs are associated with 2.75 FTE dedicated to the CSBG program. These staff will provide appropriate oversight of the program consistent with federal requirements. A staff vacancy existed during October 2018 – April 2019; however DSS is currently fully staffed. .
- ² The decrease in other expenses is related to FFY 2019 one-time costs associated with accounting/auditing services to ensure compliance with CSBG regulatory and oversight responsibilities; visual media services (outreach); indirect costs and conferences/workshop hosting. This reduction will not negatively impact the program or result in any loss of services.
- ³ FFY 2019 carryforward amount of \$3,359,123 includes \$787,776 in CSBG programmatic funds to CAAs due to the timing of amendment payments issuance, data warehouse to ensure compliance with federal annual reporting requirements and one-time costs for Community Health Worker training for CAA staff. The CSBG office continues to work with CAAs to ensure issuance of timely payments.

Table C

COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT

SUMMARY OF SERVICE OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Service Category	Objective	Service/Activity	Number Served FFY 18*	Performance Measures
Core Funding for Eligible Entities	Provide core administrative support for CAAs to organize services and coordinate funding for programs that serve individuals and families at or below 125% of the federal poverty level.	Provide planning, administrative, and financial management support to Community Action Agencies to coordinate grants and services to low-income residents.	232,498 persons served through 9 CAAs in FFY 2018	See below

* As reported in Module 4 Section C, Line A of the annual federal CSBG Annual Report for 2018.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

AS REPORTED IN THE ANNUAL CT FFY 2018 COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT Annual Report

Conditions of poverty reduced or eliminated as measured by the # of clients who, as a result of CSBG assistance:

1. Employment indicators and services collect data on outcomes achieved by low-income participants who are either unemployed and seeking earned income or employed and seeking increased earned income and/or employment benefits. **[Employment Indicator]**
2. Income and Asset Building indicator collects data on participants increase in financial assets or improving financial well-being. **[Income and Asset Building Indicator]**
3. Education and Cognitive Development indicators and services collect data based on activities that produce developmental and educational outcomes for children, youth, parents/caregivers, and other adult participants. **[Education and Cognitive Development]**
4. Housing indicator and services collect data on outcomes achieved by participants that access emergency housing, obtain and maintain stable housing, reduce eviction or foreclosure or improve home's safety. **[Housing]**
5. Health and Social/Behavioral Development indicator or services collect data on individuals who achieve outcomes such as: improving physical, mental or behavioral health, increase household member's interaction skills, demonstrate ability to live independently or decrease household member's recidivism rate. **[Health and Social / Behavioral Development]**
6. Civic Engagement and Community Involvement indicators and services collect data on participants who increase leadership skills, social networks and knowledge to improve conditions in the community. **[Civic Engagement and Community Involvement]**

Table D

COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT

PROPOSED EXPENDITURES BY PROGRAM CATEGORY

	FFY 2018 Expenditures	FFY 2019 Estimated Expenditures¹	FFY 2020 Proposed Expenditures¹
Major Program Categories	(including carry forward funds)	(including carry forward funds)	(including carry forward funds)
Grants to Eligible Entities			
Action for Bridgeport Community Development, Inc. (ABCD)	984,137	1,228,515	1,123,597
ACCESS Agency, Inc.	439,443	492,566	467,762
Community Action Agency of New Haven, Inc. (CAANH)	862,030	1,373,748	1,121,604
Community Action Agency of Western Connecticut, Inc. (CAAWC)	658,718	738,357	701,274
Community Renewal Team of Greater Hartford, Inc. (CRT)	1,732,309	1,941,717	1,843,943
Connecticut Association for Community Action (CAFCA)	233,602	235,607	235,488
Human Resources Agency of New Britain, Inc. (HRANB)	497,903	558,093	529,990
New Opportunities, Inc. (NOI)	710,792	1,294,506	1,037,781
TEAM, Inc.	213,759	239,601	227,534
Thames Valley Council for Community Action, Inc. (TVCCA)	434,453	486,971	462,450
Formula Allocations – Total	\$6,767,146	\$8,589,681	\$7,751,423
Discretionary Programs ²	357,593	430,635	430,635
State Agency Administration ^{3,4}	500,779	430,635	430,635
TOTAL CSBG	\$7,625,518	\$9,450,951	\$8,612,693

Notes:

¹ FFY 2019 estimated expenditures include costs incurred during FFY 2018 and paid during FFY 2019. FFY 2020 proposed expenditures reflect the base award amount each CAA receives per the current agreement stipulated under §17b-888 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

² CSBG discretionary resources will be utilized as follows: 80% capacity building activities; 15% other CSBG purposes; and 5% other purposes to support the Connecticut's compliance with the CSBG Act. Examples of services funded through discretionary resources include: training and technical assistance for ROMA training; CAA Network support; Implementation of Federal client count / service count reports; enhancements for Data Warehouse, Board training; Conferences, Meetings, Annual Needs Assessments, etc.

³ FFY 2020 Personal Services and Fringe costs are associated with 2.75 FTE dedicated to the CSBG program. These staff will provide appropriate oversight of the program consistent with federal requirements. A staff vacancy existed during October 2018 – April 2019; however DSS is currently fully staffed.

⁴ In FFY 2018, the 5% allowed annual allocation amount for state agency administration was \$428,560. Any expenditures in FFY 2018 exceeding that amount were funded through prior year carryforward funding.