



Legislative Hearing

August 20, 2013

Department of Community Services & Development

Community Services Block Grant State Plan Application, Federal Fiscal Years 2014 and 2015

I. Purpose of hearing

The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) is administered at the federal level by the Office of Community Services within the Administration for Children and Families of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

This hearing considers the State Plan for federal fiscal year (FFY) 2014 and 2015 for the CSBG program. The CSBG is a federal program designed to provide resources to reduce poverty, revitalize low-income communities and empower low-income families and individuals in rural and urban areas to become fully self-sufficient.¹ California received \$56,379,949 for this purpose in FFY 2013.

The Budget Control Act of 2011 imposed a series of automatic spending reductions (known as the Sequester) on federal discretionary programs, which include CSBG. Allocation projections for FFY 2014 and 2015 may be subject to change based on Sequestration and federal budget authorization; at such time, CSD would adjust the CSBG eligible entity allocations accordingly.

Due to the Sequester, CSD's FFY 2013 CSBG final award resulted in a reduction of 6.2 percent from FFY 2012. CSD worked with California's network of CSBG providers to help mitigate the immediate impact of the reduction, and was able to provide some relief through the state's CSBG discretionary funds to back fill 3.56 percent of the reduction.

Federal law requires that for a state to qualify for CSBG funds, it must prepare and submit to the Secretary of HHS a State Plan and Application (State Plan) covering a period of at least one and not more than two fiscal years.² The lead state agency must (1) hold at least one hearing in the state "with sufficient time and statewide distribution of notice ... to provide to the public an opportunity to comment on the proposed use and distribution of funds to be provided through the

¹ 42 U.S.C. §9901(1)

² 42 U.S.C. §9908(b)

grant ... for the period covered by the State Plan,”³ and (2) hold at least one legislative hearing every three years in conjunction with the development of the State Plan.⁴ This legislative public hearing allows the state to meet both of these requirements. The state's designated agency is the Department of Community Services and Development (CSD) within the California Health and Human Services Agency (CHHS).

State law provides that the "appropriate policy committee of the Assembly or the Senate, or both, shall conduct one or more public hearings on the proposed use and distribution of funds provided under the California [CSBG] Program" and requires that prior to the hearing CSD forward to the committees a list of activities it has identified as statewide priorities.⁵ After the hearing, CSD shall adjust the State Plan as a result of public comments received.⁶ The committee(s) conducting this hearing shall determine whether the concerns of low income Californians have been addressed in the State Plan, and the committee chair(s) shall certify that the plan conforms to state law.⁷ The committee chair(s) holding the legislative hearing shall submit a letter certifying this requirement to CSD, which is included in the final State Plan submitted to HHS by September 1, 2013.

II. State Plan Requirements

Federal law requires the State Plan to contain a series of assurances about the use of CSBG funds, including delineation of the populations to be served and the activities for which CSBG resources may be used, information about its service delivery system, procedures for terminating funding for a grantee, and development of community needs assessments by entities that receive funds.⁸ Among households for whom services are to be especially directed are families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds (CalWORKs in California), the homeless, migrant or seasonal farmworkers, and elderly low-income individuals and families.⁹

The California CSBG Plan for FFY 2014-2015 contains the necessary programmatic and administrative assurances required by federal law. It describes State law governing the mission, responsibilities and goals of CSD, and sets forth the estimated distribution of CSBG funds for FFY 2014-2015.

The budgeted distribution of CSBG funds pursuant to the annual Budget Act is as follows:

Categories	Percent
Community Action Agencies	76.1
Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Agencies	10.0
Native American Indian Agencies	3.9
Discretionary Funds	5.0
State Administration	5.0
Total CSBG	100.0

³ 42 U.S.C. §9908(a)(2)

⁴ 42 U.S.C. §9908(a)(3)

⁵ Government Code §12741(b)

⁶ Government Code §12741(c)

⁷ Government Code §12741(d)

⁸ 42 U.S.C. §9908 (b)(1)(A)

⁹ 42 USC §9908(b)(1)(A)

III. Eligible activities

State law sets forth eligible activities for which CSBG funds may be used. These are "designed to have a measurable and potentially major impact on causes of poverty in the community or those areas of a community where poverty is a particularly acute problem."¹⁰ The activities include those which will secure and retain meaningful employment, attain an adequate education, make better use of available income, obtain and maintain adequate housing, obtain emergency assistance, remove obstacles blocking the achievement of self-sufficiency, achieve greater participation in the affairs of the community, address the needs of youth in low-income communities, and make more effective use of other programs related to the purposes of the program.

Local and statewide community action programs use CSBG funds to provide or contribute to a variety of services and functions for low-income households, with emphasis on education, emergency services, employment, self-sufficiency, and health. Examples include:

- **Northern Californian Indian Development Council, Inc. (NCIDC)** (Humboldt, Del Norte, Siskiyou and Trinity Counties; other areas statewide): There are four primary counties (Humboldt, Del Norte, Siskiyou and Trinity Counties) with designated pockets of poverty having the largest concentration of American Indian/Alaskan Native populations in NCIDC's service area. In these service territories NCIDC educates children and families through the Indian Education Center (IEC) afterschool program by exploring academic and cultural opportunities for personal and family growth that include: cultural classes, a tobacco education program, parenting classes, a resource library, advocacy services, social service referrals, community workshops/meetings, General Educational Development and adult vocational training assistance, computer access and career counseling.
- **Community Action Partnership of Riverside County** (Riverside County): Provides disaster preparedness and relief as a member of the Riverside County Emergency Services Collaborative; lead agency for countywide Cool and Warm Centers; creates and distributes food support resource directories.
- **City of Los Angeles, Community Development Department, Human Services & Neighborhood Development Division** (Los Angeles County): Through co-located partner agencies, the City of Los Angeles, Community Development Department, Human Services & Neighborhood Development Division administers the FamilySource Program in 21 FamilySource Centers. Core services at the FamilySource Centers include case management, pre-employment/employment support, parenting classes, financial literacy, adult education, computer literacy, tutoring, mentoring, youth leadership, recreational activities, cultural activities, supportive services, legal services, multi-benefit screening, and information and referral services.
- **Long Beach Community Action Partnership** (Los Angeles County): Enhances

¹⁰ Government Code §12745(a)

access of low income community members to local community-based health care providers and educators by connecting providers with facilities, clientele, and a public access television station, supporting the mission of improving community health and combating critical adult health care needs in Long Beach and Los Angeles County.

The State Plan describes some "innovative community and neighborhood-based initiatives"¹¹ developed through the community action planning process. Below are some examples of the programs:

Center for Employment Training (CET)
(Women's Two Year Pilot Project)

CET received a \$2,050,000 Walmart Foundation grant which was enhanced by a \$100,000 CSBG Discretionary Award to administer a new women's two-year pilot project. The project will be implemented in San Diego, Gilroy, and San Jose. During the period of June 2013 through March 2015, CET will provide 200 economically disadvantaged unemployed women with comprehensive vocational training in historically male-dominated fields of employment or in jobs with a career path to middle skill level jobs. The objective is to offer a roadmap to success to women with multiple barriers to employment by providing vocational training with a complement of supportive services and an empowerment training model that will move them from poverty to sustainable employment in non-traditional occupations. The larger goal of the project is to empower low-income women by building self-confidence to succeed in a mostly male-centric environment.

This two-year pilot project will empower women with the skills, knowledge, and self-confidence to make their own choices and achieve economic self-sufficiency through employment. Enhanced support will come from the combination of intensified case management and monthly group sessions to share of "challenges and successes." Additionally, training, empowerment workshops, and limited financial support with child care, transportation, housing, food and clothing are provided.

CET is developing a Women's Technical Advisory Committee consisting of women professionals (particularly those employed in non-traditional fields of employment) and female CET alumni who are employed, who will act as mentors and careers advisors. The ultimate goal is that program participants can aspire to leadership positions with greater responsibility, authority and long-term employment in their chosen careers.

Over the course of the project, CET projects of the 200 women in the pilot program, 80 percent or 160 women will graduate/complete vocational skill training, 130 women will be placed in employment at a living wage, a minimum of 20 women will obtain industry recognized certificates, and 18 women will obtain their GED. The women in this program will have higher wages, enjoy the independence and possibilities that come from increased economic choices and serve as role models for their family members and the community at large.

¹¹ 42 U.S.C. §9908(b)(3)(D); 2014-2015 Draft California State Plan and Application, pp. 20-23.

San Joaquin County Department of Aging and Community Services
(Computer Builder and Life-Skill Development Program)

One of San Joaquin County's Community Centers currently hosts a Computer Builder and Life-Skill Development Program which will be expanded to at least 5 additional Community Centers. The Computer Builder and Life-Skill Development Program seeks to increase the marketable skills and self-esteem of those individuals who complete the computer training program and actively seek employment. The participants learn valuable technical skills, such as understanding the components of computers, how the components function together, troubleshooting malfunctions, and ultimately putting these skills to work to build a computer. While learning these skills that prepare them for employment in today's market, youth also receive mentoring and valuable life skills as they work together to accomplish their goals. The project was designed on the premise that every student should have the resources to help them explore and pursue education, career interests, and job opportunities.

Youth participants are also required to invest in their own communities by participating in community service. These community projects include: providing computer skills tutoring for senior citizens, community clean-up projects, and other similarly related efforts. Parent involvement is a required component of the program (particularly for participants under 18), to encourage and support youth in their personal growth and skill development.

Community Action Partnership of Sonoma County (CAPSC)
(Evidence-Based Strategy)

CAPSC has adopted an evidence-based strategy to ensure that programs are designed and implemented using the most innovative practices in each field of endeavor. The original creators of the AVANCE program are considered the architects. CAPSC staff coordinates with the architects of evidenced-based programs to make modifications informed by local conditions, and to evaluate these modifications. By working collaboratively with local public and private entities to advance collective impact across the county, CAPSC has adopted a Cradle-to-Career strategy with its core approach to support family strengthening. It is the intent of the CAPSC to address self-sufficiency while children are young, breaking the intergenerational roots of poverty. Parents are supported in this effort through programs such as AVANCE, Padres Unidos and Pasitos to not only be the first teacher of their children, but to advocate for them and the family. Parents are encouraged to also build upon their strengths and, when possible, provided opportunities to improve their financial standing through ESL classes, microenterprise development and post-secondary trainings.

Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo County (CAPSLO)
(Mother/Father Engagement Project)

CAPSLO administers the Family Engagement Project for Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Head Start participant families, including specific groups for men and women who are parents or guardians, or who are important in the life of a Head Start child, regardless of whether the child is served by a Head Start center or a licensed childcare provider. The

project brings these groups together to participate in learning how to resolve parental challenges and how to support the growth and development of children.

Both male and female parent groups enhance their knowledge of early childhood development, school readiness, health, social and emotional wellbeing, economic well-being, parenting and disciplinary styles, leadership, advocacy, quality time spent with children, interpersonal relationships, working as a team with their partners, accountability, self-awareness, and communication. Participants address challenging and potentially harmful behaviors such as drug and/or alcohol abuse and domestic violence.

Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission (Fresno EOC)
(School of Unlimited Learning (SOUL))

SOUL has targets high-risk and disadvantaged youth in the Fresno metropolitan area by providing alternative educational services and social support services to high school youth and their families to strengthen the possibilities of their becoming productive and self-reliant members of the community. The objectives of SOUL are to foster effective communicators, academic achievers, critical thinkers and problem solvers, information processors, self-directed learners, and responsible and productive citizens.

SOUL enrolls students that have not yet received a high school diploma and are at high risk of dropping out of school. These students range from ages 14 through 22 and grades 9 through 12. Most SOUL students live in low-income neighborhoods with high incidents of gang and criminal activity. Many students come from homes plagued by substance abuse, domestic violence, and neglect. Each student receives case management services primarily aimed at cultivating a stronger personal and social awareness. Due to the typical SOUL student's history of poor academic performance, truancy, and misbehavior, meeting with a SOUL case manager is often times the first positive interaction parents have had with the educational system in years.

Many enrolled SOUL students lack a connectedness to the traditional high school setting, leaving them unmotivated and at risk of dropping out. To address this, SOUL developed a diagnostic approach to providing intervention and support services to its students. In addition to the aforementioned intervention strategies dealing with a student's academic needs, special resources are made available to address the student's personal, social, mental, emotional, and, in some cases, physical needs.

For nearly six consecutive years, SOUL's Academic Performance Index (API) has increased steadily. SOUL's API rose from 455 in 2005 to 604 in 2011, resulting in an increase of 149 points. This level of growth remains unmatched by any Alternative Schools Accountability Model school within the Fresno Unified School District. Additionally, in 2011, nearly 90 percent of SOUL seniors pursued a post-secondary educational plan, either at a community college, private post-secondary, adult education program, or the military. As recently as spring 2013, a record number of 20 SOUL seniors pre-registered at Fresno City College. A record number of 50 SOUL graduates participated in SOUL's graduation ceremony on June 13, 2013. These accomplishments are a reflection of SOUL's commitment to curriculum and

instruction improvement, coupled with a thoughtful dissemination of crucial individualized support services.

**Economic Opportunity Council of San Francisco (EOCSF)
(Music Art and Culture Transitional Age Youth (MACTAY))**

Since 2008 the MACTAY program has targeted inner city youth ages 10 to 18 and young adults ages 19 to 24. MACTAY deters participants away from the violence and substance stricken streets in the Portrero Hill neighborhood of San Francisco. The program provides opportunities to youth and young adults to work with professionally established hip-hop music studios throughout the Bay Area. Additionally, enrollees can learn skills such as video editing and shooting, fashion design, audio engineering, and beat making.

Approximately 18 youth and young adults enroll in the weekend program each fiscal year. The program has provided a forum in which participants have an avenue of self-expression through different options offered through the program.

A guest speaker volunteer provides fashion design classes where participants learn how the fashion and hip-hop industries complement each other. Students learn the importance of fashion's influence in the hip-hop industry.

The goals of the music program and classes are to introduce and engage participants into the various areas of music and related career fields that exists outside of being music artists. The program has been so successful EOCSF was able to create its own music studio in Portrero Hill. The studio is open to the public, with specific studio time set aside for program participants and fashion design classes. Participants in the program have been successful in creating their own music, CDs, and have edited their own music videos. The programs impact has been rewarding and has positively affected the lives of the San Francisco youth and young adult participants. Even after completing the program, participants continue to create and produce their music in the studio and work with the fashion design instructor.

IV. Discretionary funding

CSD will use five (5) percent of its annual CSBG funding for discretionary purposes which support Limited Purpose Agencies (LPAs), training and technical assistance, targeted initiatives and innovative projects¹², and disaster assistance.

LPAs are private nonprofit organizations which received direct funding under the federal Economic Opportunity Act in 1981 and, under the CSBG Act, have operated continuously since then. The Plan states that these community-based nonprofit organizations operate without tripartite boards, which are otherwise a condition of CSBG funding.¹³ The services that LPAs provide focus on training, technical assistance and special support programs.¹⁴

¹² Under the FFY 2013 grant award, discretionary funding will not be available to support targeted initiatives and innovative projects as this funding was redirected to help mitigate the reduction impacts under the Sequester.

¹³ 42 U.S.C. §9910(a)

¹⁴ Government Code §12775

The Plan lists four LPAs to be supported with discretionary funds:

Del Norte Senior Center (DNSC) assists the vulnerable elderly and disabled population through a range of services, including senior nutrition programs, onsite and home delivered meals, tax preparation assistance, community activities, free legal services, and senior apartments that provide semi-supported living arrangements.

Campeños Unidos, Inc. (CUI) provides no cost childcare and development support. The child development services offered by CUI combine individual and group activities that promote learning and development at physiological, social, emotional, cognitive and academic levels.

The Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC) improves the quality of life for rural communities and disadvantaged people in California through partnerships, technical assistance and access to resources. RCAC strives to help community-based organizations and rural governments increase their own capacity to implement solutions to their problems. RCAC provides a wide range of housing and community development services to achieve this mission. These services increase the availability of safe and affordable housing; improve drinking water, wastewater and solid-waste systems, build the capacity of local officials and community-based organizations, and develop the knowledge base of the rural public through education, outreach, and training. In addition, RCAC is a certified Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), providing loans for projects in rural communities, including affordable housing development, environmental infrastructure, community facilities and business.

Community Design Center (CDC) provides organizations and residents of low-income communities with resources and consultation services on housing programs, construction processes, loans, permits, building regulations and codes. CDC assists community groups and residents with projects to repair, remodel and rehabilitate buildings for affordable housing and community activities.

Pursuant to California Government Code 12785(a), if the state's annual CSBG award is reduced by any amount up to 3.5 percent from the prior year, the discretionary distribution shall be reduced proportionately to restore eligible entities to prior year funding levels.

V. Accountability and outcome measurement

The federal Act requires that, as of October 1, 2001, states must participate in the Results Oriented Management and Accountability System (ROMA), or another federally-approved performance system, and ensure that all eligible entities in the state also participate in a performance measurement system.¹⁵ All states must annually prepare and submit to HHS a report on the measured performance of the state and the eligible entities in the state. This framework led to the creation of six national goals and 16 National Performance Indicators (NPIs).

¹⁵ 42 U.S.C. §9917

The six national goals are:

- (1) Low-income people become more self-sufficient;
- (2) The conditions in which low-income people live are improved;
- (3) Low-income people own a stake in their community;
- (4) Partnerships among supporters and providers of service to low-income people are achieved;
- (5) Agencies increase their capacity to achieve results; and
- (6) Low-income people, especially vulnerable populations, achieve their potential by strengthening family and other supportive systems.

The State Plan lists the 16 National Indicators of Community Action Performance. For example, within the first goal (low-income people become more self-sufficient); the number of participants in community action initiatives who get a job or become self-employed is one such indicator.

For FFY 2012, the State reported that 43 California community action agencies enrolled 22,091 unemployed persons, and of these 11,941 obtained a job. Similarly, 25 community action agencies enrolled 6,770 employed persons, and of these 5,214 achieved a “living wage” employment and/or benefits.

Provided below is a sample of other indicators reported by the State for FFY 2012:

Indicator	Outcome
NPI 1.2 A. Obtained skills/competencies required for employment.	11,976
NPI 1.2 E. Obtained care for a child or other dependent.	19,671
NPI 1.3A. Enhancement 1. Number of participants in tax preparation programs who qualified for any type of federal or state tax credit and the aggregated dollar amount of credits	47,504 (\$101,642,009)
NPI 3.1 Total number of volunteer hours donated by low-income individuals to Community Action.	1,298,637
NPI 6.3 B. Youth 5. Youth increase academic, athletic, or social skills for school success	17,790