



**September 22, 2010 Public Hearing Testimony before the
Connecticut General Assembly
Appropriations, Human Services, and Public Health Committees**

COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT ALLOCATION PLAN FFY 2011

Distinguished Chairpersons, Vice-Chairpersons, Ranking Members, and Members of the Appropriations, Human Services, and Public Health Committees:

Thank you for holding this hearing on the proposed Community Services Block Grant Allocation Plan for FFY 2011. My name is Joe Mann. I am the President/CEO of Norwalk Economic Opportunity Now or NEON and Board Vice-Chair of the Connecticut Association for Community Action (CAFCA). CAFCA is the state association for Connecticut's twelve (12) Community Action Agencies (CAAs)—our state's federally-designated anti-poverty agencies, which serve every one of Connecticut's 169 towns and cities.

As you know, the CSBG provides critical operational support for programs—including energy assistance and child care—that have inadequate administration funds. Additionally, these funds help our CAAs to provide a comprehensive, integrated customer-focused approach, which is greatly needed as our residents struggle to make ends meet in the ongoing recession.

CAAs accept customers at any contact point and guide them through a complex service system, ensuring the most efficient and cost-effective delivery of services, and the best use of taxpayer dollars. The result is improved client outcomes across all state- and federally-funded programs, underscoring the value of integrating diverse funding streams at the local level. As shown by the accomplishments noted in the enclosed packet, investment in Connecticut's CAAs is not just a short-term fix—it is an investment in Connecticut's future.

Certainly, to those families directly affected by the troubled economy, the State's investment in CAAs has never been more important. But the investment is in fact a critical step toward stabilizing the economy for *all* of Connecticut's residents. Since the recession began nearly three years ago, CAAs have witnessed an unparalleled surge in the number of customers seeking assistance and the level of need among our customers. In energy assistance alone, we have seen a more-than-30% increase not only in applications, but in eligible customers, too.

And, in light of growing research showing that effective assistance programs work best in conjunction with each other, CAFCA is launching our innovative Automated Benefits

Calculator, or “ABC.” ABC is a user-friendly, web-based feature that allows users to anonymously enter information and find out whether they might qualify for state or federal assistance programs. Available in English and Spanish, ABC presents a short, self-guided series of questions, then provides an array of valuable information, including likely eligibility and guidance to the appropriate CAA and other resources. Also, when a customer visits a CAA for energy assistance (the most common gateway for families in need), integrated ABC software provides a real-time, “one-stop shopping” eligibility report for other programs. With expansion likely in the future, ABC’s list of programs already includes the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), health care, Head Start, and many more. CAFCA is committed to empowering families to get back on their feet.

Especially at this time of economic uncertainty, we are grateful to policy makers at the federal and state levels for the trust they have given us, but understanding our efficacy doesn’t require a leap of faith. CAAs employ a Results-Based Accountability (RBA) framework called Results-Oriented Management and Accountability, or ROMA. By using ROMA, we are able to measure customer, agency, and community outcomes for the purposes of reporting to stakeholders and pursuing continuous improvement in our administration, coordination, and service delivery. Please see the attached handout for an RBA report on a number of our programs.

Additionally, Connecticut’s CAAs undertake the Quality Community Action Assessment developed and administered by the Northeast Institute for Quality Community Action (NIQCA) to ensure high standards in governance and management. Every three years, each agency undergoes a self-assessment process that encompasses the entirety of their infrastructure—finance, human resources, management information systems, board governance and accountability, planning and development, and facilities. A peer review group analyzes each agency and develops an action plan for continuous improvement based on relevant best practices.

Beyond being accountable to our customers, partners, and local communities for delivering effective, efficient anti-poverty assistance, our network has offered its partnership on other initiatives that might be helpful as the State seeks to cut costs while protecting struggling families. We continue to extend our sincere interest in discussing ways the CAA network might partner with the state to better serve customers and save state funds: Some examples of such partnerships include:

- Pre-application/application assistance for major DSS cash assistance programs and re-determination;
- Outreach, education, and application assistance for federally-funded programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance program (SNAP) and HUSKY;
- Pre-employment services to provide individuals with the skills and paperwork necessary to complete job applications;
- Fiduciary agency for small community-based organizations (CBOs), using a master contracting concept to lessen unnecessary and duplicative paperwork, increase timely payments, and support pilot programs;
- Supportive services that maintain independence for elders; and

- Energy assistance eligibility data to be used as a basis for categorical eligibility for DSS programs (similar to Head Start eligibility being presumptive eligibility for HUSKY).

I thank DSS and the General Assembly—especially the committees represented here today—for understanding the importance of supporting the good work and continuous improvement of Connecticut’s Community Action Agencies. As a network and with our partners, we are deeply committed to empowering people and building communities, and these have never been more necessary efforts than they are now.

Again, thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to take your questions.

(Enclosure: RBA report)

CT Community Action RBA-Connecting to ROMA

*RESULTS THAT
MATTER*



Community Services Block Grant



- In 1981 the creation of the Community Services Block Grant changed the regulatory and funding basis of Community Action Agencies.
- Community action became a funding stream administered by states.
- CSBG serves as core funding for Community Action Agencies and provides underlying support for all CAA functions.

What is ROMA?

- ROMA stands for Results-Orientated Management and Accountability.
- ROMA is a set of practices used by Community Action Agencies to improve the management and accountability of their agency.
- ROMA practices are an integral component of the Human Services Infrastructure(HSI).

Six National Goals

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

The Connecticut Model: Principles of ROMA Implementation

- Developed to help guide CAA managers.
- Changes the way CAAs do business:
 - Interdependence of programs, clients and communities
 - Common In-Take System
 - Comprehensive Intake and Assessment
 - Organize Activities Around the Client
 - Use of Outcome Tools

CT FACS Report and Outcome Catalog

- FACS = Family Agency Community System
- It is a catalog. Agencies and programs decide which outcomes are relevant to their work.
- It is client focused.
- Program outcomes are linked to the FACS Catalog by use of Logic Models.
- Data can be aggregated across programs & agencies.
- It helps us to tell the story of Community Action's impact in CT and allows us to be more accountable and to document results.

CSBG-Information Survey

- Each year CAFCA completes the CSBG-IS for the State of CT.
- This includes the collection, analysis, and dissemination of data pertaining to the CSBG program.
- This report includes all agency activities and demonstrates how CSBG funds are leveraged.
- The CSBG-IS is an accountability tool that documents results.

How Does ROMA Relate to CT RBA?

- ROMA requires that Community Action Agencies be results orientated and outcome focused.
- CAFCA and the Charter Oak Group have cross-walked ROMA with the General Assembly's RBA process
- ROMA and RBA requires comprehensive Community Action Agency reporting that allows us to answer the questions:
 - How much did we do?
 - How well did we do?
 - Is anyone better off?

CT COMMUNITY ACTION SERVICES AGGREGATE RESULTS THAT MATTER

How much did we do?

- At least 387,324 people statewide benefited from CAA services last year.
- Over 117,000 people were linked with necessary services through referrals or other CAA assistance.

How well did we do it?

- CAAs recruited volunteers to help reduce poverty: over 1.3 MILLION hours donated = 500 FTEs=\$8.6 million.
- Over \$11.3 million was returned to our state's economy with volunteer tax preparation assistance.

Is anyone better off?

- Over 380,000 people are on the path to self-sufficiency. Examples:
 - More than 6,000 people went to work.
 - Over 6,500 pre-school aged children are better prepared to start school.
 - Kids did better in school – socially, emotionally, athletically and academically.
 - Over 6,000 people live in more safe, stable housing.
 - Over 14,500 people received needed food from our food pantries.
 - Over 32,000 senior citizens maintain an active, independent life style
 - Over 95,000 households were able to heat their homes

EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING

How much did we do?

- 18,600 barriers to employment were reduced or eliminated.
- 6,123 people obtained employment or self-employment.
- 2,146 people learned skills and competencies required for employment.
- 746 youth obtained job skills.

How well did we do it?

- At least 2,250 people increased their earned income from the previous year.

Is anyone better off?

- Over 6,000 adults moved closer to self-sufficiency by going to work.
- Children emerging from poverty will likely earn, on average, 39% more than the median income.¹

¹ The Cost of Doing Nothing: The Economic Impact of Recession-Induced Child Poverty. First Focus. December, 2008

FINANCIAL LITERACY & ASSET DEVELOPMENT

How much did we do?

- 356 people opened savings accounts and accumulated over \$125,000 in savings.
- 31 people purchased homes, 26 people funded education and 6 capitalized small businesses.
- Over 6,450 tax returns were filed free of charge
- Over 1,300 people learned how to better manage their income and increase savings.

How well did we do it?

- For every dollar of funding invested in Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Programs, \$92 was returned to the community.
- Volunteers donated 6,500+ hours, saving over \$1.1 million in tax preparation fees.

Is anyone better off?

- Families with assets are better able to weather economic storms.
- In 2009 over \$11.3 million was returned to our state's economy with volunteer tax preparation assistance.
- Nationwide, nearly 85% of IDA savers, purchasing homes with conventional fixed rate mortgages, fared well during the subprime mortgage crisis due to financial education & homeownership counseling.²

2 Corporation for Enterprise Development (CFED); "IDA Program Survey on Home-Ownership and Foreclosure" 2008

EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

How much did we do?

- 6,766 children participated in preschool activities.
- Over 7,200 children obtained immunizations and medical care.
- Over 5,600 children received dental care.

How well did we do it?

- For every dollar invested, \$18.89 was saved in lifelong gains.³
- Programs costing \$61.5 million helped 7,427 children improve school readiness skills while saving \$1.1 billion in lifelong gains.

Is anyone better off?

- Over 6,700 children are better prepared to start and succeed in school.
- Over 7,200 are healthier because they received medical and/or dental care.
- Children in well-functioning homes are less likely to get into trouble in school, get involved with crime, have difficulty learning, or need other supportive services, all of which cost taxpayers.
- These programs lead to:
 - increased worker productivity
 - increased wages for parents
 - long term costs for law enforcement, welfare, health care and special education, etc

3 C1 Children's Stock Portfolio C1 Commission on Children, April 2007

HOUSING & SHELTER

How much did we do?

- Over 2,700 households/individuals moved from temporary to safe, stable housing.
- More than 2,500 people received emergency shelter.
- 1,429 emergency rental/mortgage payments were made to prevent homelessness.
- 3,784 households improved home safety through lead removal and other services.

How well did we do it?

- More than 2,600 people maintained safe/stable housing for over 90 days.
- Over 1,500 people obtained permanent housing through home purchase or rental housing.
- 1,024 households avoided eviction for at least 120 days through mediation.
- The assessed value of at least 210 homes increased as a result of rehabilitation.

Is anyone better off?

- Families who live in safer, more stable housing can better manage their daily lives and their children's nutrition, health, developmental and academic performance.

ENERGY ASSISTANCE & WEATHERIZATION

How much did we do?

- Over 95,000 households avoided crises with energy assistance.
- Over 13,500 homes were weatherized, decreasing energy cost and use.
- Over 13,000 households used the utility matching payment program (MPP).
- Over 17,500 people resolved problems with fuel vendors.
- Nearly 600 households improved environmental safety with a new heating or a/c system.
- Over 31,000 people learned more about energy conservation.

How well did we do it?

- For every dollar invested, \$2.97 was saved over the lifetime of the measure.*
- Programs costing \$8.5 million produced saved about \$25.3 million in energy costs over the lifetime of the conservation measures.

Is anyone better off?

- Low-income people avoided utility crises, resolved vendor disputes, improved environmental safety and learned how to save money through energy conservation measures.

* Energy Efficiency, Investing in CT's Future, CT Energy Conservation Management Board Report to the Legislature March 2005

SENIOR SUPPORT SERVICES

How much did we do?

- Over 13,639 seniors remained active in their communities by participating in community programs.
- Nearly 8,933 seniors maintained independent living through support services including home meal delivery, home health or homemaker services.
- 8,184 seniors citizens avoided institutionalization through support services.

How well did we do it?

- For every dollar invested, \$60 was saved.
- Programs costing \$9.7 million yielded 8,184 senior citizens who avoided institutionalization, saving about \$591 million in nursing home costs this year.⁵

Is anyone better off?

- Over 32,000 senior citizens maintain an active, independent life-style.

⁵ Based on the National average per diem nursing home rate of \$198, per The MetLife Market Survey of Nursing Home, Assisted Living, Adult Day Services and Home Care Costs, October 2009. www.metlife.com

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT & AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

How much did we do?

- 748 youth obtained job skills.
- 739 youth improved social/emotional development.
- Over 800 youth improved their academic performance.
- 415 youth avoided at-risk behavior for at least 3 months.
- 275 youth reduced involvement with the criminal justice system.
- Over 1455 youth increased their academic, athletic or social skills through participating in after-school programs.
- 452 non-custodial fathers spent more time with their children.

How well did we do it?

- Potential ROI of \$10.51 for every dollar spent on a sustained investment to develop youth into economically and socially viable adults.⁶
- 478 children at-risk of DCF placement remained with family because of improved family functioning.

Is anyone better off?

- Kids gained a stronger foundation for an economic self-sufficient life.
- Kids did better in school – socially, emotionally, athletically and academically.
- Families stayed together and functioned better.

⁶ Hevener, R.P., Smith, S.F. & Murphy, R. "A Matter of Money: The Cost & Financing of Youth Development in America." Washington, D.C. Academy for Educational Development, Center for Youth Development, 2001.

NUTRITION SERVICES

How much did we do?

- Over 14,500 people received emergency or supplemental food from our food pantries.
- Over 11,000 seniors participated in congregate meal programs.
- Over 5,800 people received home-delivered meals.
- 10,242 children benefited from congregate meals.
- 2,045 people received emergency vouchers for food, formula and/or diapers.

How well did we do it?

- An investment of \$10 per person per year in proven community-based programs to increase physical activity, improved nutrition and prevent smoking and other tobacco use could save the country more than \$16 billion annually within 5 years. CT's ROI is 6.6 to every dollar spent.⁷

Is anyone better off?

- People of all ages stayed healthier by eating more nutritious meals.
- Pregnant women had healthier pregnancies and healthier babies.

7. Phosix Ventures, LLC. Trust for America's Health. "Investment in Disease Prevention Could Save America More Than \$16 Billion in Five Years" July 17, 2009

HEALTH & COUNSELING SERVICES

How much did we do?

- Over 3,284 people obtained access to needed health care.
- Over 1,402 youth improved physical health and development.
- 3,790 learned how to avoid at-risk behavior.
- Nearly 743 maintained health and independence by utilizing shared-ride transportation.

How well did we do it?

- 80% (619 of 777) remained drug and alcohol free for 6 months.
- 2,572 participants improved their family functioning and/or behavior because of counseling.
- 3,889 parents/caregivers improved family functioning as a result of classes or supportive services.

Is anyone better off?

- Thousands of low-income people state-wide lived healthier lives because of the access to health care that they received.
- Children in well-functioning homes are less likely to get into trouble in school, get involved in crime, have difficulty or need other supportive services. Our programs help strengthen families, keep communities safe and save tax payers money.

CT COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCIES LEVERAGE RESULTS THAT MATTER

How much did we do?

- CT CAA's brought over \$213 million of federal funding into CT to fight the causes and effects of poverty in 2009.
- In 2009, our network reported 2,522 partnerships, including 467 new partnerships that were formed in the past year alone:
 - 1095 partnerships to improve and coordinate service.
 - 330 partnerships to improve community planning.
 - 280 partnerships to achieve improved outcomes.

How well did we do it?

- CT CAAs leverage funding sources & community volunteers to fight poverty efficiently.
- Using HSI funds, CAA's form a statewide network to provide a one-stop center of service delivery. Low income residents connect to the network efficiently and easily.
- CAA organizations are lean and efficient because of leveraged funding, partnerships that share resources, dedicated staff, and community volunteers.

Is anyone better off?

- Over 380,000 low-income CT residents from 169,223 families are working towards improved self-sufficiency.
- All CT residents benefit from taxpayer dollars that are efficiently and well spent.

