



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

### TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE APPROPRIATIONS AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEES *August 26, 2020*

*Melissa McCaw, Secretary  
Office of Policy and Management*

#### FFY 2021 Community Services Block Grant & FFY 2020 Community Services Block Grant CARES Act Supplemental

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Chairs Osten, Walker, Moore, and Abercrombie; Vice Chairs Hartley, DiMassa, Slap, and Wilson Pheanious; Ranking Members Formica, Lavielle, Logan, and Case; and distinguished members of the Appropriations and Human Services Committees, thank you for the opportunity to submit written comment and to request your approval of the federal fiscal year 2021 Community Services (CSBG) allocation plan and the federal fiscal year 2020 Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) CARES Act Supplemental allocation plan.

#### **FFY 2021 CSBG allocation plan**

As always, we cannot be certain of the exact funding levels until Congress acts on the federal budget. Our best indications from the federal government are that allocations to Connecticut for CSBG will be level funded at \$8.9 million, which is reflected in the estimated award amounts shown in the submitted plan. The plan does contain a contingency strategy in case more or less funding is awarded to Connecticut than we estimated.

The federal government specifies how CSBG funds must be allotted in each state, requiring 90% of funding to be granted to certain community entities<sup>1</sup>. For this year's plan, that amount is equal to \$7,990,865. In addition, \$239,442 is available from the finalization of the FFY 2020 award, resulting in total available resources of \$8,230,307.<sup>2</sup> Pursuant to the stipulated agreement required in section 17b-888 of the Connecticut General Statutes, each of the state's ten grantees will receive a base amount equal to one-half of their FFY 1996 allocation, with remaining funds allocated based on the number of individuals in each service area at or below 125% federal poverty level. The remaining funds will be split evenly between administration costs (5%; \$443,937) and discretionary programs (5%; \$443,937).

This funding supports our state's anti-poverty network, and is integral in ensuring our local communities have access to services that empower low-income families and individuals to

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<sup>1</sup> Entities eligible for this funding include community action agencies, community action programs, or limited purpose agencies. In Connecticut, there are 9 community action agencies and 1 limited purpose agency.

<sup>2</sup> The plan originally transmitted to legislative leaders totaled \$8,070,487 and did not account for total additional funding that could be made available once the FFY 20 awards were finalized. DSS' written comments today will request an amendment to the allocation plan that will reflect the final funding award.

become fully self-sufficient. These agencies currently offer programming related to energy assistance, housing and shelter, child care and youth development services, holistic case management, and nutrition, and are able to assess and meet the unique needs of their respective communities.

**FFY2020 CSBG CARES Act Supplemental allocation plan**

This supplemental allocation plan is based on federal funding that was allocated as part of the CARES Act in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In total, an additional \$1 billion dollars was allocated for the CSBG program nationally. Connecticut's funding award totaled \$12,041,29 and the funding period is March 27, 2020 through September 30, 2022. DSS has proposed that the funding be distributed as follows: \$10,837,162 in grants for the ten grantees in the initial allocation plan, \$602,065 for discretionary programs, and \$602,064 for administrative costs. This plan follows similar CSBG program provisions except for eligibility income limits. The CARES Act permits states to revise these limits from 125 to 200 percent of the federal poverty level for CSBG services. This exception will provide access to stabilization services for those at risk of falling below the federal poverty line as a result of the pandemic.

Representatives from the Department of Social Services will provide more specific information on each proposed allocation plan. I respectfully request that the committees support this plan and would like to again thank the committees for the opportunity to submit these written comments.