



National Association for State Community Services Programs:

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT REAUTHORIZATION

Today as the Census Bureau releases its most dire poverty statistics in 50 years, it's clear that the same approaches to shoring up economic security in America won't suffice. We've known for some time what needs to be done and now is the time to do it. A real solution requires a sophisticated and multi-layered approach that addresses education, employment, training, asset accumulation, and many other challenges. Federal programs address each of these areas individually but there is no single, comprehensive, streamlined system to help struggling Americans.

The CSBG is the federal government's only anti-poverty program. By connecting CSBG, TANF, and WIA we can create a seamless system where people can get the services they need to achieve economic security and move off of public supports.

CSBG can and does provide the connective structure to create a holistic, seamless approach to ending poverty. There are a few things that need to happen to make this work.

- Make existing programs more effective and assure that resources are appropriate to deploy a full range of services - integrate TANF, WIA, & CSBG through legislative language, funding, and federal technical assistance
- Emphasize the role of improving human, social and financial capital in increasing economic security
- Enhance economic security outcomes - make CSBG the vehicle for State-level planning and coordination of State and local goals
- Increase access to benefits - require State level connections between programs

States and local agencies should be accountable for outcomes while maintaining the flexibility to create State and local solutions to address the unique needs of their State. Strong federal partnership to strengthen State effectiveness through oversight, technical assistance and support is critical. Here's what the CSBG Act needs to provide to create this structure:

- Enable CSBG to address the needs of the growing number of struggling families and create a more robust, seamless approach - increase CSBG funding to at least \$1 billion annually and shift TANF investments
- Ensure State capacity for maintaining compliance to quality standards locally - maintain 5% of CSBG funds for State administration
- Foster State innovation and incubation of new ideas and evaluation of what works both within and outside the CSBG Network - maintain 5% CSBG discretionary funds for development
- Support a comprehensive, networked economic security initiative across the country - continue 90% allocation of CSBG funds to local agencies
- Hold States accountable for outcomes with effective federal oversight
- Support what works - empower States to invest in strategies that really work and to fix or terminate ineffective programs

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