



*Comment before the Appropriations and Human Services Committees  
August 26, 2020*

Good morning, Senators Osten, Moore, Formica and Logan, and Representatives Walker, Abercrombie, Lavielle and Case, and distinguished members of the Appropriations and Human Services Committees, my name is Kathleen Brennan and I am a Deputy Commissioner for the Department of Social Services. I am here before you today to seek your approval of the Governor's Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2020 Allocation Plan for the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)-CARES ACT Supplemental Award Amendment for the Community Services Block Grant Allocation Plan.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, 2020, Public Law 116-36, was signed into law on March 27, 2020, providing \$1 billion in additional funds to the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) program. The funds to states, territories, and tribes authorized under the CSBG Act are intended to address the consequences of increasing unemployment and economic disruption as a result of COVID-19.

The CSBG CARES Act Supplemental Award 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 or Department) is designated as the principal state agency for the allocation and administration of the block grant within the state of Connecticut.

This FFY 2020 CSBG CARES Act Supplemental Award Amendment amends the state's approved CSBG Allocation Plan for FFY 2020 in order to allocate the supplemental award funds.

Under this award, services shall be offered to address a variety of economic and social service supports to help participants who meet the eligibility requirements address the consequences of increasing unemployment and economic disruption as a result of COVID-19; and to assist individuals and households impacted directly or indirectly by the virus to successfully quarantine and self-isolate to prevent the further spread of COVID-19. Examples include, but are not limited to, resources and services to improve and address: employment status; housing stability; medical needs; loss or reduction of income; food insecurity; the ability to social distance while in the community; and the ability to successfully quarantine and self-isolate. As permitted under the

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CARES Act, the state is increasing the client income eligibility level to 200% of the federal poverty level. Expanding eligibility will allow the network to offer stabilization services to those who could fall below the poverty line, and prevent them from needing more significant ongoing public assistance. Some of the individuals and families in this category will not qualify for traditional safety net services at all.

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 CARES Act Supplemental funding in Connecticut. Each CAA has a specified catchment area. CSBG CARES Act Supplemental awards follow the CSBG funding methodology of providing funding to the nine CAAs and one LPA.

The CSBG CARES Act Supplemental Award was funded at a national level of \$1 billion. The funded period is March 27, 2020 – September 30, 2022. For purposes of the development of this amendment to the FFY 2020 Community Services Block Grant Allocation Plan, the federal CSBG CARES Act Supplemental Award funding allocation for Connecticut for FFY 2020 is \$12,041,291.

<b>PROGRAM CATEGORY</b>	<b>March 27, 2020 – September 30, 2022 (FFY 2020) Proposed Expenditure</b>
Grants to Eligible Entities	\$10,837,162
Discretionary Programs	\$602,065
Administration	\$602,064
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$12,041,291.00</b>

Table A on page 4 of the Amendment shows both the recommended allocations of the \$12,041,291 million from the CSBG-CARES Act Supplemental Award and the total source of funds available to support the CSBG program.

At DSS, we continue to work closely with the CAAs to strengthen and improve the CAA network. This unique partnership represents a commitment to improve and maximize the efficiencies of Connecticut's human service delivery system to ensure those in need can obtain the services and supports they desire.

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In closing, we join the Governor and the Office of Policy and Management in recommending the approval of the CSBG-CARES Act Supplemental Award Amendment for federal fiscal year 2020. Thank you for your review and attention in this matter. My staff and I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.