



CT Association For Community Action
555 Windsor Street, Hartford, CT 06120
860-560-5845 – www.cafca.org

COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT:

Providing a Cost-Efficient and Cost-Effective Human Service Delivery System

The elimination of the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), the “core” funding for Community Action Agencies (CAAs), will seriously limit our ability to help Connecticut’s low-income families make progress toward self-sufficiency. CAAs are effective and accountable agencies because of the support of CSBG.

Connecticut’s twelve Community Action Agencies provide a wide variety of services in all of our 169 cities and towns. CAAs provide cost-efficient and cost-effective services to Connecticut’s poor and low-income working individuals and families. With limited resources available, it is more important than ever that government support cost-effective service delivery that helps people move toward self-sufficiency, stay out of poverty and prevent more costly expenditures in the future.

CAAs provide coordinated services using funding from federal and state agencies. These services include employment and training, early childhood services such as child care, school readiness and Head Start, energy assistance and weatherization, Individual Development Accounts and financial counseling, eviction prevention, transitional housing and shelters, food pantries and other emergency services, alternative to incarceration, AIDS and substance abuse prevention, and many others.

Using Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funds, CAAs integrate the funding from these diverse areas, federal, state, local and private funding, into comprehensive programs for our clients. CAAs respond effectively to diverse local and regional needs by planning and delivering services with the direct involvement of our communities’ leaders and residents through municipal, private sector and low-income representation on each agency’s Board of Directors.

The Impact of CSBG Funds in the 4th Congressional District

- **In 2003, ABCD, CTE, and NEON leveraged an additional \$36.8 million for needed anti-poverty programs in the cities and towns of the 4th Congressional District.** These three agencies received \$1.45 million in CSBG funds (**leveraging \$25.38 for every \$1 of CSBG**), which enabled them to bring additional federal, state and private dollars for anti-poverty programs. Statewide, CT CAAs brought in over \$186 million in additional dollars in 2003. **CSBG funds are a solid investment of federal resources in our human service delivery system.**
- **Connecticut Community Action Network is the linchpin of the CT Human Service Infrastructure.** Working in partnership with the **Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS)** and Connecticut’s statewide information and referral system, **211 Infoline**, **CT CAAs** are using information technology to create an automated, statewide, “one-stop” approach to human services delivery. This system is a more efficient way of doing business and is more accountable.

- **CSBG funds are critical for us to continue to provide this comprehensive human service delivery system in our local communities.** In 2003, CT CAAs served over 220,000 clients in a variety of services. Through referrals, direct services, and comprehensive case-management, families gain access to services that help them move towards self-sufficiency. **ABCD, CTE, and NEON served over 45,560 low-income individuals in their communities.**
- **CSBG supports implementation of Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA),** which is used to measure the impact of services to clients and communities, break down “program silos,” and improve management and accountability.
- **ABCD, CTE, and NEON mobilized 15,145 volunteer hours in their communities.** Volunteers donated their time and energy to help their communities. Examples of volunteer in our agencies includes the Boards of Directors, Head Start Policy Councils, Head Start and Child Day Care classrooms, senior services, neighborhood services, and advocacy services. In 2003, **over 853,000 volunteer hours** were donated to programs operated by Connecticut CAAs, equivalent of 468 FTEs.
- **Using CSBG funds, CAAs integrate funding at the local level in innovative ways that meets local needs.** We create partnerships with other community-based providers, the faith community, businesses, and state and local government that leverage in-kind resources, improve program efficiency, coordinate service delivery, and improve community planning.
- **Below is a sample of innovative programs in the 4th Congressional District that would potentially close if CSBG funds were eliminated:**
 - Individual Development Accounts: CTE, Inc. in Stamford has been a national leader in developing IDA programs. NEON and ABCD also operate IDA programs. IDAs are matched savings programs that help low-income people save money to purchase their first home, attend college or capitalize a small business. The federal IDA program provides no funds for program operations, yet because of CSBG, our agencies can integrate IDA services into our existing programs. Currently, CT CAAs are working with 507 IDA participants. Without CSBG funding, we would not be able to bring this innovative program to Connecticut or operate it at such a large scale.
 - ABCD: The Family Reunification Program targets non-custodial fathers to increase their involvement with their children and improve their employment opportunities, thereby improving child support payments. Each father is referred to our trade-apprenticeship program with the Sheet Metal Workers Association. A four-year comprehensive training program is administered with opportunities to earn \$25 -- \$35 per hour as licensed Journeymen. Twelve (12) apprentices completed their tenure in the program. A new endeavor is underway with the City of Bridgeport and Local 38 to train new workers for school construction projects.
 - ABCD: Certified Nursing Assistance Program targets primarily females who have been disconnected from the workforce due to previous support from a significant partner or spouse and no longer receive that support. The program prepares these individuals to become state Certified Nursing Assistant and begin working in the healthcare field. The 2003 results are as follows: Thirty-five participants received state certification and twenty participants have been employed for six months or more.
 - CTE in Stamford, working directly with the Mayor’s Task Force on Affordable Housing, is addressing the serious lack of affordable housing in Stamford.
 - Stamford Alternative Incarceration Center: Since July 1, 2003 clients at Stamford AIC have completed at least 8,442 community service hours in the Stamford, Darien, Greenwich communities and 157 criminally involved clients were placed in jobs and training programs.

- Norwalk Works: Utilizing CSBG funds, NEON has implemented a new approach to offering employment and social services to Norwalk residents—Norwalk Works. Norwalk Works extends employment and social services to vulnerable populations in the greater Norwalk area. Currently, neither the Southwestern CT Workforce Investment Board nor the Department of Social Services has a satellite office in Norwalk. Norwalk Works offers low-income and vulnerable populations in the greater Norwalk area services in overcoming employment barriers. Norwalk Works served over 400 individuals during 2003, assisting them with employment services and social support, with over 50% receiving resume development support and job club assistance; and 65% obtaining local jobs.

These are just a sampling of the many effective programs that CSBG funds support.

The true value of Community Action and the Community Services Block Grant is that it brings about change at the state level, the local level, as well as with the individuals and families served. With CSBG as our foundation, CAAs are able to build strong communities, healthy families and maintain flexible agencies with the capacity to respond to local needs. The CT CAAs look forward to working with Congress in continuing to address the needs of our most vulnerable citizens.

A Sampling of Reported Outcomes by Connecticut CAAs in 2003

- Over **357 partnerships** to coordinate service delivery, streamline administration, improve community planning or to achieve specific family outcomes.
- **98,808 families/households** had their emergency needs, such as food, shelter, or home heating utility payments, reduced or eliminated.
- **25,686 families/households** obtained access to additional needed services.
- **7,503 people** eliminated or reduced barriers to employment and self-sufficiency by receiving job training, childcare and other employment support services.
- **5,665 people** obtained employment or self-employment.
- **1,122 people** demonstrated increased ability to manage income to achieve self-sufficiency, including increased financial literacy, opening IDA and savings accounts, and purchasing assets, such as a home, attending college, or starting a business.
- **1,615 individuals** received free tax preparation services and increased their total household resources.
- Over **\$2.6 million** in federal income tax refunds (including Earned Income and Child Tax Credits) came into low-income communities, through free tax preparation services at CAAs.
- **6,191 children** ages 0-5 attended quality pre-school programs that developed school readiness skills.
- **5,402 adults** demonstrated increased skills and were strengthened through counseling, classes and other support services.
- **9,546 people** obtained, maintained or improved their housing arrangements.
- **31,071 people** improved or maintained their nutrition through congregate meals, meals-on-wheels, child care food programs, food pantries, and other nutrition programs.
- **10,103 Seniors** maintained active, independent living through volunteering, senior employment, meals, homemaker and other services.