

**COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT
ALLOCATION PLAN**

Federal Fiscal Year 2015
October 1, 2014 – September 30, 2015

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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Submitted by:
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The Community Services Block Grant Allocation Plan

FFY 2015

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THE COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT ALLOCATION PLAN
For Federal Fiscal Year 2015
October 1, 2014 – September 30, 2015

I. OVERVIEW OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT

A. Purpose

The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) is administered by the United States Department of Health and Human Services through its administrative agency, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Community Services. The Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS) is designated as the principal state agency for the allocation and administration of the block grant within the state of Connecticut.

The purposes of the Community Services Block Grant are:

1. To provide assistance to states and local communities, working through a network of community action agencies for the reduction of poverty, the revitalization of low-income communities, and the empowerment of low-income families and individuals to become fully self-sufficient (particularly families who are attempting to transition off a state program carried out under part A of the Social Security Act (42 USC 601, et. Seq.)); and
2. To accomplish the goals described in paragraph (1) through:
 - a) the strengthening of community capabilities for planning and coordinating a broad range of federal, state, local and private resources related to the elimination of poverty, so that these resources can be used in a manner responsive to local needs and conditions;
 - b) the coordination of a range of services to meet the needs of low-income families and individuals, so that these services have a measurable impact on the reduction of poverty in the community and in helping families and individuals to achieve self-sufficiency;
 - c) the promotion of innovative and effective community-based approaches to addressing the causes and effects of poverty and community breakdown;
 - d) the promotion of participation by the low-income residents and members of the groups served by programs funded through block grants made under this subtitle in planning and coordinating activities and programs designed to respond to the unique problems and needs within their communities; and
 - e) the broadening of the resource base for programs directed at the elimination of poverty so as to secure a more active role in the provision of services for:
 - (1) Private religious, charitable, and neighborhood-based organizations; and

- (2) Individual citizens, business, labor, and professional groups, who are able to influence the quantity and quality of opportunities and services for the poor.

B. Major Use of Funds

As federally mandated, at least ninety percent (90%) of the funds made available to the state must be used to make 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 ten CAAs and one LPA that qualify for CSBG funding in Connecticut. Each CAA has a specified service area. In Connecticut, CSBG funds are primarily used by CAAs to provide planning and coordination, organize services, encourage innovative and effective approaches to addressing the causes of poverty, broadening the resource base for programs and services, and for core administrative expenses. With CSBG as base funding, CAAs operate a wide range of programs with other funds from DSS and other state agencies, federal agencies and municipalities, as well as private donations. These programs include, but are not limited to, Energy Assistance, Housing and Shelter programs, Child Care and Youth Development Services, Holistic Case Management Services and Nutrition Services.

It should be noted that during FFY 2014, Norwalk Economic Opportunity Now, Inc. (NEON) officially advised DSS that it would voluntarily de-designate its “eligible entity” status as a Community Action Agency. NEON provided CSBG services to the following catchment areas: Greater Stamford (Greenwich, Stamford and Darien) and Greater Norwalk (New Canaan, Norwalk, Weston, Wilton and Westport). The Department intends to competitively procure CSBG services for the catchment area previously serviced by NEON. Once the entity(ies) are designated as a CAA, it will be eligible to receive CSBG funds based upon allocation methodology and resources previously identified for the Greater Stamford and Greater Norwalk catchment areas.

CAAs also prepare annual Community Action Plans, as required under the Act, which address how the goals of the block grant will be furthered by the efforts of the entire Community Action Agency, rather than just those programs funded directly or indirectly by CSBG. Key components of the Community Action Plan include the following: community needs assessment; description of service delivery system, linkages and coordination of funds and innovative projects; performance measurement outcomes and measures. CSBG funds must be used to serve or improve the wellbeing of individuals with incomes at or below 125% of the federal poverty level. CSBG funds may not be used to support political activities or to pay for construction unless a specific waiver is obtained by the state from the federal government.

The state is permitted to retain up to five percent (5%) of the block grant for administration, and may use the remainder of the funds allocated for a variety of purposes including, but not limited to, training, technical assistance and capacity building for eligible entities, and innovative programs that further the purposes of the Act. The department shall utilize the administration allotment to provide direct program monitoring, training and oversight functions to ensure programmatic compliance.

C. Federal Allotment Process

CSBG funds are allotted based on the national appropriation and the states' share of funds distributed under Sec. 221 of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 for federal fiscal year 1981.

D. Estimated Federal Funding

Federal funding for FFY 2015 has not been finalized. For purposes of this plan, the federal funding allocation for Connecticut for FFY 2015 is estimated to be \$8,005,572, which is equal to the state's final FFY 2014 allocation. During FFY 2014, the Community Services Block Grant was funded at a national level of \$657.4 million.

E. Estimated Expenditures and Proposed Allocations

Provisions of Section 210 of the federal Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 include requirements that at least ninety percent (90%) of the funds made available to the state must be used to make grants to CAAs or LPAs. Accordingly, the state proposes approximately ninety percent (90%) or \$7,205,015 of the 2015 block grant be granted to CAAs and LPAs in Connecticut. The state plans to retain five percent (5%) of the FFY 2015 block grant funds or \$400,278 for administration. Through the administration allotment, the department will provide appropriate quality assurance and programmatic staffing to ensure sufficient programmatic and fiscal oversight and training and monitoring activities. The balance of the allocation, \$400,278 (5%) will be used for discretionary projects that may include training, technical assistance, technology support, statewide projects and innovative programs related to the purposes of the Act. In addition to the FFY 2015 block grant funding, carry forward of previous year CSBG funds (currently estimated at \$1,220,655) will be utilized in Grants to Eligible Entities, Discretionary and Administrative Costs depending upon the allocable categories. (Note: the carryforward amount includes CSBG monies identified for the catchment area previously served by NEON which will be reserved for the catchment area for FFY 2015). The distribution of funds to eligible entities is based on a formula referenced in Sec. 17b-888 of the Connecticut General Statutes and further described in Section H below.

HHS has issued draft State and Federal Accountability and Performance Measures for the CSBG network for implementation in FFY 2015. CSBG State Accountability Measures are as follows:

1. State Plan Development
2. Distribution of Funds
3. Discretionary Funds
4. Grantee Monitoring and Corrective Action
5. Data Collection, Evaluation and Reporting
6. Organizational Standards
7. Training and Technical Assistance
8. Communications
9. Community Engagement.

In addition to accountability measures for states, HHS has issued draft performance measures for CAAs entitled "CSBG Eligibility Entity Organizational Standards." The categories associated with the Organization Standards for CAAs are as follows:

Maximum Feasible Participation

1. Consumer Input and Involvement
2. Community Engagement
3. Community Assessment

Vision and Direction

1. Organizational Leadership
2. Board Governance
3. Strategic Planning

Operations and Accountability

1. Human Resource Management
2. Financial Operations and Oversight
3. Data and Analysis.

The Department and the CAA network will work collaboratively to ensure that a system is in place to ensure adherence to the federal expectations once they are finalized. During FFY 2014, the CSBG Office will have conducted monitoring activities of all CAAs and the LPA to identify areas of best practice, compliance, areas for improvement, etc. and then develop and plan for integration of organizational standards within the CSBG network.

F. Proposed Allocation Changes From Last Year

Block grant regulations specify how funds will be allocated and, as such, the Department does not propose any significant changes in the allocation plan for FFY 2015.

G. Contingency Plan

This allocation plan has been prepared under the assumption that the FFY 2015 Community Services Block Grant for Connecticut will be funded at the level of \$8,005,572. In the event that anticipated funding is either increased or reduced, federal law, as noted above, specifies the proportion of funds allocated to Community Action Agencies, Discretionary Programs and Administration. Should significant federal funding reductions occur as a result of sequestration, the Department, with input from CAFCA (state LPA) and the CAAs, will develop a process to determine priorities for allocating the reductions. If additional funds become available, they will be carried over into FFY 2016 in order to ensure ongoing programmatic coverage and mitigate any future federal reductions in FFY 2016.

H. State Allocation Planning Process

Sections 17b-885 through 17b-895 of the Connecticut General Statutes reflect the federal requirements and further stipulate that funds be distributed through an agreement negotiated between the Department and Community Action Agencies. Under the present agreement, negotiated and implemented in 1997, each CAA will receive a base amount that equals one-half of their FFY 1996 allocation. Remaining funds are allocated to CAAs based on the number of individuals in each CAA service area (as a proportion of the state total) at or below 125% of the federal poverty guideline according to census data.

I. Grant Provisions

In order to obtain CSBG funding, Connecticut must submit and obtain federal approval of the state plan that satisfies the requirements of Sec. 676 of the Reauthorization Act. Under these requirements, the state must:

- designate a state agency to serve as lead agency;
- hold a public hearing to provide the public an opportunity to comment on the proposed use of funds;
- conduct monitoring in accordance with Section 678B of the Reauthorization Act;
- hold a legislative hearing at least once every three (3) years in conjunction with the development of the state plan;
- use funds received to support activities which assist low-income families and individuals to:
 1. achieve self-sufficiency;
 2. secure and retain meaningful employment;
 3. attain an adequate education;
 4. make better use of available income;
 5. obtain and maintain adequate housing;
 6. obtain emergency assistance; and
 7. achieve greater participation in the affairs of the community;
- address the needs of youth in low-income communities;
- assure that CSBG funds are used to coordinate with and make more effective use of other programs with related purposes;
- describe how it uses its discretionary funds;
- include information provided by eligible entities on how CSBG funds will be used;
- assure that eligible entities provide emergency food, supplies and related services to combat hunger and malnutrition;
- assure that the state and eligible entities coordinate with and establish linkages between governmental and other programs to avoid duplication;
- provide for coordination between programs to ensure that energy crisis intervention programs are conducted in each community;
- assure that the state will cooperate with related federal investigations;
- assure that funding for eligible entities will not be terminated or reduced below their proportional share without cause;

- provide opportunities for state and eligible entities to form partnerships with other organizations, including religious, charitable and community organizations;
- establish mechanisms for low-income individuals or organizations that feel they are under-represented on the board of a CAA to petition for representation;
- require that each CAA submit a Community Action Plan as a condition of funding;
- require that all eligible entities participate in the Results Oriented Management and Accountability system; and
- require that each eligible entity have a Board of Directors composed of equal numbers of low-income persons, local elected officials or their designees, and other individuals or organizations serving low-income people in the community.

Connecticut's most recent federal application for CSBG funding was approved for the period October 1, 2012 to September 30, 2014. Connecticut's next federal application for CSBG funding for the period October 1, 2014 to September 30, 2016 is due to ACF by September 1, 2014.

II. Tables

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TABLE A

COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT

SUMMARY OF APPROPRIATIONS AND EXPENDITURES

Program Category	FFY 13 Expenditure	FFY 14 Estimated Expenditure	FFY 15 Proposed Expenditure	Percentage change from FFY 14 to FFY 15
Grants to Eligible Entities	\$7,646,668	\$6,623,305	\$7,786,725	18%
Discretionary Programs	518,899	609,260	460,404	-24%
Administration ¹	262,750	205,674	391,634	90%
TOTAL	\$8,428,317	\$7,438,239	\$8,638,763	16%
SOURCE OF FUNDS				
Federal Block Grant Funds	\$7,627,480	\$8,005,572	\$8,005,572	0%
Carry Forward from Prior Year ²	1,454,159	653,322	1,220,655	87%
TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE	\$9,081,639	\$8,658,894	\$9,226,227	7%

Notes:

¹ FFY 2015 administration reflects full CSBG staffing to ensure comprehensive staffing for the CSBG program.

² FFY 2015 carryforward amount of \$1,220,656 includes \$581,710 in CSBG programmatic funds not issued to Norwalk Economic Opportunity Now, Inc. (NEON) in FFY 2014 due to NEON not meeting CSBG programmatic and financial requirements.

TABLE B

**COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT
SUMMARY OF PROGRAM EXPENDITURES**

	FFY 13 Expenditure	FFY 14 Estimated Expenditure^{1,2}	FFY 15 Proposed Expenditure¹	Percentage change from FFY 14 to FFY 15
Number of Positions (FTE)	2.2	1.8	2.8	
Personal Services	\$122,539	\$98,929	\$191,741	94%
Fringe Benefits	91,229	77,322	123,393	60%
Other Expenses	48,982	29,423	76,500	160%
Equipment				
Contracts				
Grants to:				
Local Government				
Other State Agencies				
Private agencies	8,165,567	7,232,565	8,247,129	14%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$8,428,317	\$7,438,239	\$8,638,763	16%
	Sources of FFY 13 Allocations	Sources of FFY 14 Allocations	Sources of FFY 15 Allocations	Percentage change FFY 14 to FFY 15
Carry Forward from Prior Year	1,454,159	653,322	1,220,655	87%
Federal Block Grant Funds	7,627,480	8,005,572	8,005,572	0%
TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE	\$9,081,639	\$8,658,894	\$9,226,227	7%

Notes:

¹ FFY 2015 Personal Services, Fringe and Other Expenses are increasing due to the hiring of additional staff within the Office of Community Services. These staff will be dedicated to the CSBG program to provide appropriate oversight of the program consistent with federal requirements.

FFY 2015 Other Expenses are increasing due to projected additional Indirect Charges associated with higher staff levels budgeted for the fiscal year, as well as indirect costs not posted during FFY 2014. In addition, Other Expenses includes Admin carryforward from FFY 2014 that accumulated due to staffing delays in hiring staff dedicated to the CSBG program within the Office of Community Services.

TABLE C

COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT

SUMMARY OF SERVICE OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Service Category	Objective	Service/Activity	Number Served FFY 13	Performance Measures
Core Funding for Eligible Entities	Provide core administrative support for CAAs to organize services and coordinate funding for programs that serve individuals and families at or below 125% of the federal poverty level.	Provide planning, administrative and financial management support to Community Action Agencies to coordinate grants and services to low-income residents.	365,827 persons served through 11 CAAs in FFY 13*	See below

* As reported in Part I, Section G, Lines 3 and 4 of the annual federal CSBG MIS report for 2013.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

AS REPORTED IN THE ANNUAL CT FFY 2013 COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT INFORMATION SYSTEM SURVEY

Conditions of poverty reduced or eliminated as measured by the # of clients who, as a result of CSBG assistance:

1. Obtained supports to reduce or eliminate barriers to employment [**Employment**]
2. Increased in financial assets or financial skills [**Income Management**]
3. Participated in education and self-improvement programs [**Education**]
4. Maintained adequate housing/ independent living situation [**Housing**]
5. Advanced towards or achieved self-sufficiency [**Self-Sufficiency**]
6. Obtained emergency assistance [**Emergency Services**]
7. Engaged in activities that support and promote their own well-being and that of their community [**Participation in Community**]

III. ALLOCATIONS BY PROGRAM CATEGORY

COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT FFY 14 ESTIMATED EXPENDITURES AND FFY 15 PROPOSED EXPENDITURES

Major Program Categories	FFY 13 Actual Expenditures (including carryforward funds)	FFY 14 Estimated Expenditures (including carryforward funds)	FFY 15 Proposed Expenditures (including carryforward funds)
Grants to Eligible Entities			
Action for Bridgeport Community Development, Inc. (ABCD)	\$834,187	\$845,380	\$845,380
ACCESS Agency, Inc.	440,504	439,443	439,443
Bristol Community Organization, Inc. (BCO)	183,337	188,416	188,416
Community Action Agency of New Haven, Inc. (CAANH)	1,036,195	1,053,704	1,053,704
Community Action for Committee of Danbury, Inc. (CACD)	286,829	287,301	287,301
Community Renewal Team of Greater Hartford, Inc. (CRT)	1,534,557	1,732,309	1,732,309
Human Resource Agency of New Britain, Inc. (HRANB)	303,629	309,487	309,487
Norwalk Economic Opportunity Now, Inc. (NEON) ¹	990,918	0	0
CAA to be designated through competitive procurement (Greater Stamford area) ¹	0	0	724,516
CAA to be designated through competitive procurement (Greater Norwalk area) ¹	0	0	438,904
New Opportunities, Inc. (NO)	1,260,377	974,953	974,953
TEAM, Inc.	207,095	213,759	213,759
Thames Valley Council for Community Action, Inc. (TVCCA)	422,653	434,453	434,453
Connecticut Association for Community Action, Inc. (CAFCA)	146,387	144,100	144,100
Formula Allocations – Total	\$7,646,668	\$6,623,305	\$7,786,725
Discretionary Programs ²	518,899	609,260	460,404
State Agency Administration ³	262,750	205,674	391,634
TOTAL CSBG	\$8,428,317	\$7,438,239	\$8,638,763

Notes:

¹ NEON voluntarily de-designated as a CAA on May 16, 2014. No CSBG resources were issued to NEON during FFY 2014 due to the Department's inability to verify NEON's ability to adhere to CSBG reporting requirements. A competitive procurement in FFY 2015 will result in the designation of new CAA(s) for the Greater Stamford and Greater Norwalk area which will assume NEON's programmatic responsibilities. One time start-up funding for the new CAA(s) will be derived from NEON's unused FFY 2014 CSBG allocation in addition to the new entity/entities FFY 2015 CSBG programmatic allocation.

² CSBG discretionary resources will be utilized as follows: 80% capacity building activities; 15% other CSBG purposes and 5% other purposes.

³ FFY 2015 Personal Services, Fringe and Other Expenses are increasing due to the hiring of additional staff within the Office of Community Services to ensure that CSBG contractor monitoring and Federal requirements are being followed as directed by HHS.