

Department of Public Health and Human Services	<b>SECTION:</b> GENERAL INFORMATION
COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT	<b>SUBJECT:</b> The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Program

The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) provides federal funds to states, territories and tribes for distribution to local agencies to support a wide range of community-based activities to reduce poverty. CSBG funds are administered at the federal level by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Community Services (OCS).

The origins of the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) date back to 1964 when the Economic Opportunities Act (P.L. 88-452; 42 U.S.C. § 2701) established the War on Poverty. The Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) authorized the Community Action Program under which a nationwide network of Community Action Agencies (CAAs), known in Montana as Human Resource Development Councils (HRDCs), was developed. A key feature of Human Resource Development Councils is the ~~direct~~ involvement of low-income people in the design and administration of antipoverty activities through mandatory representation on the HRDCs' governing boards, even though those representatives do not need to be low income themselves, a democratic selection process must have been used for the election of the board representatives.

The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act was enacted as part of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 (P.L. 97-35, Title VI, Section 671; 42 U.S.C. § 9901). The CSBG Act was last authorized in 1998 under P.L. 105-285.

The Governor of the state of Montana authorizes the Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) to administer the CSBG program. The Intergovernmental Human Services Bureau (IHSB), of the Human and Community Services Division (HCSD) of DPHHS, contracts with the ten (10) Human Resource Development Councils in Montana to provide CSBG services.

CSBG funds are used for activities designed to have a measurable and potentially major impact on causes of poverty.

A wide variety of activities can be undertaken on behalf of low-income families and individuals, including welfare recipients, homeless, migrants, seasonal farm workers and the elderly.

Funds are to be used for activities to help families and individuals achieve self-sufficiency, find and retain meaningful employment, attain an adequate education, make better use of available income, obtain adequate housing and achieve greater participation in community affairs. Funds are also used to address the needs of youth in low-income

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communities, coordinate with related programs, including state welfare reform efforts and provide emergency food-related services.

The Intergovernmental Human Services Bureau (IHSB) manages CSBG funding for the state by acting as a partner in the network of ten (10) Human Resource Development Councils (HRDCs) throughout the state.

IHSB plays a strategic role in promoting collaboration among agencies to address the needs of the low-income. Use of the CSBG funds is geared to assisting low-income individuals and families become self-sufficient.

Some of the programs administered by IHSB:

- Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) – These funds are allocated to the Human Resource Development Councils to provide a wide range of community based human service programs.
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) to assist low-income individuals and families with home heating costs during the heating season.
- Weatherization programs which include funding from the Department of Energy (DOE) as well as other funding sources.
- Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) program to assist individuals and families with housing needs.
- Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA).
- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Commodity Food Distribution programs including The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP).
- Commodity food storage and distribution for USDA commodity foods for elderly feeding sites and storage of USDA food for distribution to school lunch programs.

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