

OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

MISSION STATEMENT

The Office of Community Services works in partnership with states, tribes, territories, communities and other agencies to provide a range of human and economic development services and activities which address the causes and characteristics of poverty and otherwise assist persons in need. The aim of these services and activities is to increase the capacity of individuals and families to become self-sufficient, to revitalize communities and to build the stability and capacity of children, youth and families so that they become able to create their own opportunities.

MAJOR GOALS

Office of Community Services programs:

- Provide employment and entrepreneurial opportunities through industrial, business, physical or commercial development
- Promote individual self-sufficiency through the creation of new, full-time permanent jobs
- Assist community development corporations and community action agencies in leveraging existing federal, state and local resources for neighborhood revitalization activities
- Provide financial and technical resources to state, local, public and private agencies for economic development and related social service support activities
- Provide energy assistance to low-income households
- Provide matching funds for purchasing a first home, capitalizing a business or finishing secondary education
- Provide training, technical assistance and financial assistance to help faith-based and community organizations increase their effectiveness and enhance their ability to provide social services to those most in need in their communities

PROGRAMS

With a budget of approximately \$7.1 billion, OCS disburses block and discretionary grants to states, tribes, territories and a network of community-based and faith-based organizations. OCS is comprised of four programmatic divisions – the Divisions of State Assistance, Community Discretionary Programs, Community Demonstration Projects and Energy Assistance – as well as the Assets for Independence Program and the Strengthening Communities Fund/Compassion Capital Fund.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Director/Commissioner

Jeannie Chaffin

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Administration for Children and Families
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www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs

Division of State Assistance

- **Community Services Block Grant Program:** This is a mandatory formula grant to 50 States, the District of Columbia, six territories and 66 Native American tribes. Grant recipients work to alleviate the causes of poverty by assisting low-income individuals with employment, education and adequate housing. Grant recipients assist low-income individuals to make better use of their income, solve problems that are blocking the achievement of self-sufficiency and obtain emergency health services, food, housing and employment-related assistance. This program was funded at \$679 million in regular fiscal year 2011 funds. The program received an additional \$1 billion in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act in fiscal year 2009.
- **Social Services Block Grant Program:** This block grant provides funds to 50 States, the District of Columbia, and five territories and insular areas for the provision of social services directed towards achieving economic self-sufficiency, preventing or correcting neglect, abuse, or the exploitation of children and adults, preventing or reducing inappropriate institutionalization and securing referrals for institutional care. Funded at \$1.7 billion in fiscal year 2011 in regular block grant funds, each state has the flexibility to determine what services will be provided and then either provides services directly or purchases them from qualified providers. States also received a supplemental amount of \$600 million in fiscal year 2009 to provide social services to individuals affected by presidentially-declared natural disasters, and \$550 million in supplemental fiscal year 2005 funds to address the 2005 Gulf Coast hurricanes.

Division of Community Discretionary Programs

- **Community Economic Development Program:** These discretionary grants are awarded to nonprofit community development corporations. These grants serve as catalysts for attracting additional private and public dollars; for every CED dollar awarded, three-to-five dollars is leveraged. CED grant funds projects such as: business incubators, shopping centers, manufacturing businesses and agriculture initiatives. A total of \$18 million was appropriated in fiscal year 2011.
- **Job Opportunities for Low-Income Individuals Program:** These discretionary grants awarded to nonprofit organizations to implement a range of job creation strategies. This is a small, highly competitive program. Approximately 10 grants are awarded each year. Job creation strategies for the JOLI program are through self-employment, micro-enterprise, new business ventures and business expansion. A total of \$1.16 million was appropriated in fiscal year 2011.
- **Rural Community Development Program:** These discretionary grants which assist low-income communities in developing affordable, safe water and wastewater treatment facilities. Six regional grantees and one tribal grantee provide services to multiple states. The philosophy of the program is to develop indigenous leadership so that the facilities will be sustained over the long term. While the program does not pay to construct or upgrade facilities, staffs of these programs assist communities in accessing funds for these purposes.

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Division of Community Discretionary Programs (Continued...)

- This program also funds the **Rural Community Development Activities Program/Homeland Security Program**, which supports and promotes water and wastewater treatment systems safety through security and emergency preparedness training and technical assistance to small community water and wastewater utility staff and local officials. A total of \$5 million was appropriated in fiscal year 2011.

Division of Energy Assistance

- **Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program:** This is a block grant program administered by states, territories and tribes through a network of local community-based organizations. The purpose of LIHEAP is to assist low-income households meet their home energy costs. A total of \$4.7 billion was appropriated in fiscal year 2011. Fifty States, the District of Columbia, five territories, and approximately 140 tribes and tribal organizations receive LIHEAP grants each year. State and federally recognized tribes (including Alaska native villages) may apply for direct LIHEAP funding.
- **Leveraging Incentive Program:** The law authorizes supplemental LIHEAP funding for grantees that acquired non-federal leveraged resources for their LIHEAP programs in the preceding fiscal year.
- **Residential Energy Assistance Challenge Option Program:** The law authorizes supplemental LIHEAP funding for grantees to receive competitive grants for implementation through local community-based agencies of innovative plans to help LIHEAP eligible households reduce their energy vulnerability.

Division of Community Demonstration Programs

- **The Assets for Independence Program:** Demonstrates and tests the effectiveness of Individual Development Accounts as a tool for enabling low-income individuals and families to become economically self-sufficient. Participating individuals attend financial literacy classes to learn money management, and they save earned income and receive matching funds in their IDA with the goal of acquiring any of three assets: a first home, a business or post-secondary education. AFI awards grants and provides training and technical assistance to community-based nonprofits and state, local and tribal government agencies that implement IDA projects. Congress appropriated \$24 million for the program in fiscal year 2011. OCS currently administers grants for more than 400 AFI projects throughout the nation. The program has an active portfolio of upwards of \$100 million in grant funding.
- **The Compassion Capital Fund:** Created in 2002, CCF helps faith-based and community organizations increase their effectiveness and enhance their ability to provide social services in their communities. In fiscal year 2010, no monies were appropriated to CCF. However, \$42.7 million was distributed in fiscal year 2009 through CCF which distributes funds through three competitive grant programs:

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Division of Community Demonstration Programs (Continued...)

- **The CCF Demonstration Program:** Works through intermediary organizations that serve as a bridge between the federal government and the faith-based and community organizations on which the program focuses; these intermediaries provide technical assistance and financial sub-awards to local organizations to help increase their capacity.
- **The CCF Targeted Capacity Building Program:** Makes one-time 12-month capacity-building grants of \$50,000 each directly to faith-based and community organizations to build the capacity of their own organizations.
- **The CCF Communities Empowering Youth Program:** Is designed to increase the capacity of community coalitions working to combat gang activity and youth violence.
- **The Strengthening Communities Fund:** Created in the 2009's ARRA, SCF helps faith-based and community organizations increase their effectiveness and enhance their ability to provide social services to address broad economic recovery issues present in communities. A total of \$50 million was appropriated to SCF, which distributes competitive grants through two programs:
 - **Nonprofit Capacity-Building Program:** Makes awards of up to \$1 million to lead organizations to provide nonprofit project partners with capacity building training, technical assistance and competitive financial assistance.
 - **State, Local and Tribal Government Capacity Building Program:** Provides awards up to \$250,000 to state, local or tribal government offices responsible for community and faith-based efforts, including to support start-up efforts and to build the capacity of nonprofit organizations.
- No additional funds were allocated in FY 2010, but grants continued to operate.

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