



TESTIMONY BEFORE THE
SENATE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE
REGARDING THE COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT (CSBG)

KANSAS HOUSING RESOURCES CORPORATION
March 15, 2016

Chairperson Masterson, Vice-Chair Denning and honorable members, annually, the State of Kansas receives from the Department of Health and Human Services just over \$5.4m in Federal Community Services Block Grant funds. Presently, and in order for the State to remain eligible for these funds, a Legislative Hearing is required once every three years. Thus, my appearance before you today.

My name is Jennifer Sexson, I am the Program Manager for the Kansas Community Services Block Grant. I am here representing the Kansas Housing Resources Corporation (KHRC), a public corporation that administers Federal and State housing programs on behalf of the State. Since 1992, KHRC and its predecessor have been the designated lead agency for the purpose of carrying out State Community Services Block Grant activities. Also here today are members of the KHRC administrative staff and representatives of the organizations that are the State's Community Services Block Grant subrecipients. I am pleased to provide today's overview of Block Grant activities.

The Community Services Block Grant, commonly, referred to as CSBG, is a descendant of the 1964 federally legislated Economic Opportunity Act. Today, it provides core funding for a nationwide network of nearly 1,000 local Community Action Agencies that are at the forefront of the nation's efforts to ameliorate the causes and effects of poverty. Eight such agencies are designated within the State of Kansas. Each is governed locally by a volunteer board of directors. By formula and as directed by Federal legislation, these eight agencies receive 90 percent of the CSBG funds that come to Kansas. The remaining 10 percent of the State's annual CSBG allocation provides for the KHRC's administration of the Grant and for discretionary projects that meet the intent of the CSBG legislation.

Each of the eight eligible entities works closely with KHRC and within the framework of six national goals, plan and deliver a variety of activities and services that meet locally identified needs. The current goals are:

1. Low-Income People Become More Self-Sufficient
2. The Conditions in Which Low-Income People Live are Improved
3. Low-Income People Own a Stake in Their Community
4. Partnerships Among Supporters and Providers of Service to Low-Income People are Achieved
5. Agencies Increase Their Capacity to Achieve Results, and
6. Low-Income People, Especially Vulnerable Populations, Achieve Their Potential by Strengthening Family and Other Supportive Systems

Future goals are reduced to three (drafted January 4, 2016):

1. Individuals and families with low-incomes are stable and achieve economic security.
2. Communities where people with low-incomes live are healthy and offer economic opportunity
3. People with low-incomes are engaged and active in building opportunities in communities.

In Kansas, Community Action Agencies are:

- Helping low-income Kansans meet their basic needs
- Equipping individuals and families with the skills, relationships and assets needed to exit poverty and are
- Advocating for the broadening of the resource base of programs and policies directed to the elimination of poverty.

As reported for the most recent statistical period – Federal fiscal year 2015, here is a small sampling of activities. During the year, Kansas Community Action Agencies:

- Served 19,834 Kansans.
- Distributed 92,802 pounds of food.
- Brokered a health service for 4,030 individuals.
- Helped 1,729 household obtain or maintain housing.
 - Four agencies have developed and now manage 244 affordable housing units in 28 Kansas communities.
- Provided 305 individuals with pre-employment skills.
- Helped 428 unemployed individuals get a job.
- Provided income tax prep services for 254 households; as a result, more than \$500,000 in State and Federal tax credits were returned to the taxpayer.
- Enlisted the support of 6,305 community volunteers who donated 209,198 hours of service. Nearly 85% of those hours were provided by low-income individuals.
- Leveraged nearly 53 million additional dollars including 30.7 million in additional Federal dollars and 19 million in private resources.
- Worked with 1,258 local, community groups, including 250 faith-based organizations, to coordinate and maximize local resources.

