

1 BEFORE THE OHIO DEVELOPMENT SERVICES AGENCY

2 - - -

3 Community Services Block Grant Public Hearing

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5 TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

6 - - -

7 Thursday, August 20, 2015

8 1:00 p.m.

9 274 East First Avenue

10 Columbus, Ohio 43201

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12 MARILYN K. MARTIN,

13 REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL REPORTER

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23 ANDERSON REPORTING SERVICES, INC.

3242 West Henderson Road, Suite A

24 Columbus, Ohio 43220

(614) 326-0177

25 FAX (614) 326-0214

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APPEARANCES:

Randall Hunt
Melissa Stanford

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P R O C E E D I N G S

1
2 BE IT REMEMBERED THAT, on the 20th day of August,
3 2015, this cause came on for hearing before The Ohio Development
4 Services Agency; and the parties appearing in person and/or by
5 counsel, as hereinafter set forth, the following proceedings
6 were had:

7 - - -

8 MR. HUNT: We're going to go ahead and get started. My name
9 is Randy Hunt with the Office of Community Assistance in the
10 Ohio Development Services Agency. I want to welcome everybody
11 here for the Community Services Block Grant public hearing. I
12 want to especially thank Melissa Stanford, our field unit
13 supervisor, for the hard work that she did on the state plan,
14 spent many hours and, of course, the field unit. Her staff
15 contributed and helped a lot as well. So I do want to thank her
16 and the staff for the hard work you guys do not only in the
17 state plan time of year, but all year long.

18 Also want to make sure we recognize our division chief.
19 Karen Fabiano is here with us. And our assistant office chief
20 Tracy Ballas is here as well. So, again, just want to welcome
21 you all. Thank you for being here. I do hope that we get to
22 hear from some of you in terms of your comments and your view of
23 the state plan. And I'll go ahead and turn it over to Melissa.

24 MS. STANFORD: Thank you very much. I'm very happy to be
25 here today to talk about our Community Services Block Grant

1 state plan for the upcoming program period of 2016 and 2017. As
2 I think you all know, my name is Melissa Stanford. I'm the
3 section supervisor of the Community Services Block Grant and
4 Home Energy Assistance program field unit.

5 And I'd like to echo my boss Randy's remarks in relation to
6 our team of superb field representatives. And I'd like to
7 acknowledge them today and thank them for their work on the plan
8 on the Community Services Block Grant program, which means so
9 much to our low-income citizens around the state of Ohio. If
10 each of you would stand up as I call your name, Alicia Sullivan,
11 Michael Higgins, Mark Alderman, Tamara Johnson and Celeste
12 Krolak. Those are the field representatives for the entire 88
13 Counties of the state of Ohio for CSBG, and they are the
14 individuals that review the agency applications, and some of
15 them we're going to talk about in this plan.

16 I'd also like to acknowledge Linda Sacus [phonetic] who came
17 with us today. She's a new planner in our office, and we're
18 pleased that she'll be with us today as well as the rest of our
19 team, Penny Martin and Whitney Sullinger, our public information
20 officer.

21 The CSBG Advisory Committee process state plan is a public
22 process, and part of that involves a Community Services Block
23 Grant Advisory Committee. The advisory committee is a committee
24 created in the state of Ohio many years ago and that we've
25 continued to utilize each time we prepare a state plan to be

1 submitted to the federal government to obtain Community Services
2 Block Grant funds for the state of Ohio. This year the
3 committee continued to be an important part of our planning
4 process. For the first time we had two meetings of the CSBG
5 Advisory Committee meeting. One was held on April 16, and the
6 other was held earlier this week on April 18. It was attended
7 by 16 stakeholders which included community action agencies,
8 representative from the Ohio Association of Community Action
9 Agencies and also other statewide stakeholders such as the Ohio
10 Association of Food Banks and the Governor's Office of
11 Faith-Based Community Initiatives.

12 We had a robust discussion and review of the plan on
13 Tuesday. The chairman of that committee is Deb Gerken. She is
14 the executive director of the community action agency in
15 northwestern Ohio. And I would like to read into the record
16 this afternoon a letter that I received from Deb Gerken
17 following the Advisory Committee meeting. This is the letter
18 dated August 19, 2015, directed to the Office of Community
19 Services, Family Support Administration, Department of Health
20 and Human Services. "To whom it may concern: I am writing this
21 letter as the chairperson of the Ohio Community Services Block
22 Grant State Advisory Committee. I wish to certify that on
23 August 1, 2015, the Ohio CSBG Advisory Committee met to review
24 the draft of the Ohio CSBG state plan for fiscal year 2016/2017.
25 At the Advisory Committee meeting, opportunity for discussion,

1 comment and recommendations was provided. At the conclusion of
2 the meeting, there were no recommended changes to the draft as
3 presented. Should you have any questions regarding this
4 correspondence, please feel free to contact me. Thank you.
5 Sincerely, Northwestern Ohio Community Action Commission,
6 Deborah A. Gerken, Executive Director."

7 Before I move into the body of the draft plan itself, I
8 wanted to say just a little bit about the results of our work in
9 Ohio -- our collective work in Ohio during program year 2014.
10 2014 is the last year for which information has been collected
11 and submitted to the federal government to show the outcomes
12 associated with the use of Community Services Block Grant funds.
13 The -- It's called the information survey. And the final
14 cleaning of that data is still underway, but I wanted to make
15 just a few comments about that. Ohio expended a little more
16 than \$24 million in total funds in 2014. And there are three
17 main areas that those funds were directed to as the results came
18 in. Of course, the largest area, as is often the case, is
19 emergency services. But interestingly and I think a very good
20 thing for Ohio, the other two areas that received a lot of focus
21 in the work that the Community Action Network did in 2014 were
22 activities and programs and services related to employment and
23 those related to self sufficiency, which is one of the key goals
24 of the Community Services Block Grant. And at a later date, we
25 will have an approved final information survey report for 2014,

1 but I did want to share with you today just those few highlights
2 as we get ready to talk about the state plan.

3 The state plan this year, as many of you know, was done in a
4 new format. For the first time, it will be submitted via an
5 online data system, and it is -- has been structured in such a
6 way that the plan for one year will populate a report for the
7 subsequent year. And I think that as that process gets fully
8 underway, it will be a very efficient process, but it was very
9 different for the State of Ohio doing it for the first time this
10 year and as well as for states around the country.

11 Additions to the body of the plan are in the form of
12 existing documents that are in use by the Office of Community
13 Assistance. Those are the documents that you see on the table
14 on the side. These are things that are products of our work
15 that will be submitted to HHS along with the responses to the
16 questions and the categories that are contained in the state
17 plan as it exists on the online system. You are welcome to take
18 copies if you would like.

19 I would like to highlight certain sections of the plan today
20 and go through those a little bit, and then we will open up the
21 floor for people to come up and provide testimony if there's
22 anyone in the room who would like to do so.

23 Section 2 concerns state legislation pertaining to the
24 Community Services Block Grant. And you can see here the Q and
25 A format. That is the way the plan is set up for this year. So

1 we will be -- We have responded to these questions, and we will
2 be submitting documentation along with our plan in that regard.
3 Noteworthy in Ohio this year is a new amendment that came to us
4 via the budget process. It's an amendment that was promoted by
5 the State association and passed in the final phase of the state
6 budget that provides that 91 percent of CSBG dollars go to
7 eligible entities. The federal requirement is 90. In Ohio it
8 will be 91 percent. And it requires that 4.5 percent go to one
9 or more nonprofit organizations that meet certain criteria. So
10 the -- that new law and existing parts of the state statute that
11 pertain to CSBG, we will be providing copies of that to go up to
12 the federal government along with our state plan. So that is
13 what I wanted to say about Section 2, the most significant
14 occurrence there.

15 Let's see if I can move this. I did want to stop for a few
16 moments in Section 3 because this is where we articulate our
17 statewide goals for CSBG for the upcoming 2016 and 2017 program
18 year. The 3.1 describes our department's mission and the work
19 that we do as the Office of Community Assistance, and then in
20 3.2 are the state plan goals.

21 For this coming program period, there were three things that
22 we thought would be particularly important at this time. The
23 first would be to support Ohio community action agencies in
24 meeting all of the organizational standards. As many of you
25 know, new organizational standards are coming into effect in

1 2016, and that is the first time that community action agencies
2 will be officially assessed as to whether they meet the
3 standards or not.

4 The second statewide goal will be to provide training and
5 information to support better formation, understanding of
6 responsibility and accountability among community action agency
7 tripod boards. And the third would be improvements to customer
8 service. That is something that's a standing goal of ours.
9 It's also a standing goal of our departments and something that
10 is being increasingly emphasized at the federal level in the
11 CSBG program. So those are our three goals.

12 I'm scrolling down now to Section 6. I mentioned
13 organizational standards for eligible entities, which is
14 synonymous with community action agencies, and we have answers a
15 couple of questions here. The first very significant question
16 is whether or not we would be utilizing the organizational
17 standards that came out of the federal government Center for
18 Excellence. And as most of you know, that is our intention. We
19 have not developed an alternative set of organizational
20 standards. We will be using those that are described in IM 138.

21 Our process for assessing community action agencies against
22 the standards is also included in our state plan, and those are
23 the bullet points that you see on the screen to my left. In
24 essence, and in its basic parts, each eligible entity will
25 receive a full on-site review in 2016; and that full on-site

1 review which is -- in a sense, it's the same review that's
2 always been required to be done at community action agencies.
3 The federal requirement is with a frequency of every three
4 years. In Ohio, we do the full on-site review every other year.
5 This time that full on-site review will also include an
6 assessment of the new organizational standards. And our process
7 will be that we will provide local agencies with our monitoring
8 tool in advance of our visit. We will ask them to conduct a
9 self-assessment and collect documentation to demonstrate that
10 they have met a standard, and then we will conduct the
11 monitoring visit.

12 Their first report on the results of the monitoring visit
13 will take place at the time of the exit interview. So local
14 agencies will receive essentially immediate feedback on how we
15 believe they fared in terms of all of those organizational
16 standards as we are departing the site visit at that time. A
17 followup report will be sent to the agency executive director
18 and the CSBG coordinator; and it will indicate the results of
19 the monitoring visit and whether any corrective action is
20 required, either to be able to meet a standard or for any other
21 compliance issue that may be identified.

22 If need be -- and this is a requirement of the federal
23 policy pertaining to the organizational standards -- we are
24 directed that if one or more standards is not met by a local
25 agency that a technical assistance plan is to be put in place.

1 And so if one or more are unmet, there will be a technical
2 assistance plan established in consultation with that agency to
3 enable them to take whatever steps are necessary to meet a
4 standard that has been deemed to be unmet at the time of the
5 visit. Sometimes that can be corrected very easily. Sometimes
6 it's a little more complicated. But basically the Office of
7 Community Assistance sees the TAP, the Technical Assistance
8 Plan, as an administrative mechanism to allow corrective actions
9 to be taken and documented on any unmet standards. However, if
10 they are pervasive or protractive issues that are found at the
11 time of the assessment, then it would be necessary for our
12 office to establish a quality improvement plan with the local
13 agency. And the methodology on establishing a plan and
14 monitoring a plan is given to us in the CSBG law, and we would
15 be operating that in accordance with the CSBG law. But
16 those -- this is a really important part of the new CSBG world
17 in which we're all going to be working in 2016.

18 I'm moving now to Section 7, which talks about allocations
19 and funding. And also following behind it is Section 8 -- 8
20 does come after 7 -- but they're related in terms of talking
21 about both the funding that goes directly to the community
22 action agencies and the remainder or discretionary funding that
23 can be used for statewide projects or for technical assistance
24 and training. So we're going to be using our traditional
25 formula.

1 And, again, we've explained here in response to this
2 question that we have a new amendment that is going to impact
3 how we operate. Nevertheless, the application process that
4 local agencies go through will remain essentially the same.
5 They'll be submitting an application to us for their two year
6 CSBG grant later this fall. They are submitted electronically
7 through our OCEAN system. They are subject to review and
8 approval by an assigned field representative, one of the
9 gentleman or ladies that you were introduced to before. This
10 first comprehensive review by the field representative takes
11 approximately one week on average. It varies depending on the
12 size of t he agency and the number of programs. But that's the
13 most intensive and thorough part of the review.

14 And then additional reviews continue up the line starting
15 with myself as the manager of the unit and going on to our
16 fiscal staff, our fiscal manager and up through the office chief
17 and the higher levels of our agency. And there's a final
18 sign-off that occurs, and then funds equivalent to one month of
19 that particular agency's allocation do form an advanced amount
20 of funds that the agency will receive to help them get their
21 program going.

22 The distribution time frame, I've talked to my colleague Tu
23 Lu, who is our fiscal manager -- that's Tu Lu, two separate
24 words -- and because the federal program operates on the basis
25 of a federal fiscal year and our state programs operates on a

1 calendar program year, Tu has assured me that we will always be
2 timely in getting funds out to agencies because there's a
3 natural built-in cushion for us there in the time that they take
4 action on a fiscal year basis and the time agencies will be
5 getting ready to roll out their programs on a calendar year
6 basis. So that's a nice advantage we have and agencies have in
7 Ohio.

8 The maximum amount available for administrative activities
9 for Ohio under this grant is 4.5 percent. Originally the amount
10 available for our admin was 5 percent, but that changed as a
11 result of the amendment that I described earlier.

12 I also wanted to touch on our plans concerning the remainder
13 in discretionary funds under the Community Services Block Grant.
14 We have determined that our best approach given the new scenario
15 that we have encountered is to -- There's two essential things
16 we wanted to do. One is we wanted to make sure that we can
17 develop a mechanism to allow us to provide discretionary funding
18 on an emergency basis. This is something that our local
19 community action agencies have always come to us for, assistance
20 in an emergency that may be affecting the agency itself or an
21 emergency that is impacting the community that they serve. The
22 last grant period there was a fire in the town of a service
23 territory of one of our agencies, and our office provided
24 assistance using these funds to help them stand up a food pantry
25 located in that area of the state for which funds to enable that

1 to operate were otherwise not available.

2 There was a time previously where an agency itself had been
3 flooded as a result of a flood that took place in that area of
4 the state. So we want to make sure that we have an ability to
5 respond to those types of situations with the discretionary
6 funding.

7 The other thing that the Office of Community Assistance and
8 the Development Services Agency felt made sense this time is
9 to -- during the first quarter of the first fiscal year of this
10 grant, to conduct a thorough assessment with eligible entities
11 of their training and technical assistance needs. And then
12 based on that survey, we would then develop a plan for the types
13 and quantity of services that we felt we should seek as a state,
14 and then that would be our starting point going into the '16-'17
15 CSBG program year.

16 I'm going to move on now to -- I'm going to sort of skip
17 over Section 8 because it's more or less a reiteration of what I
18 just said. It talks about the assessment that we plan to do in
19 the first quarter. And we will be populating then a section of
20 the plan that describes in more detail what the expected
21 activities, programs and services will be.

22 The state linkages in communications section of the plan is
23 a -- has always been important. But it has become increasingly
24 important and emphasized in many new ways with the advent of the
25 new organizational standards, with the accountability measures

1 that will apply to states and the accountability measures that
2 will apply to the federal law office administer of CSBG. In
3 Ohio, I'm proud to say we have very strong linkages. We are
4 part of a department that includes not only the Community
5 Services Block Grant, it also includes HEAP, it includes the
6 Home Weatherization Assistance Program. We have sister offices
7 that run housing programs, and we have ongoing relationships
8 with them and contact with them. And many of our community
9 action agencies run an entire slate of programs that we also
10 administer in our office at the Office of Community Assistance,
11 so we have very strong connectivity there.

12 In addition, representatives of the local Community Action
13 Network, the Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies and
14 other state agencies participate in or serve on our CSBG
15 Advisory Committee and attend those meetings and provide advice
16 and consultation to us on our CSBG state plan. So I would say
17 that our linkages are strong, and they're growing stronger.

18 This year we added to our advisory committee the Office of
19 Workforce Development. And we have begun to work more
20 deliberately and closely with them. We've always had a
21 connection, but we are strengthening that. We have an extremely
22 strong relationship with our association of community action
23 agencies. We have funded them for a long time. The funding
24 we -- that we provide to the association is more than is
25 provided by any other state in the country to their association

1 by more than half a million dollars. So we have a very strong
2 relationship. We have supported them and through them provided
3 technical assistance and training opportunities to our local
4 eligible entities.

5 Now I'm going to move to Section 10. Section 9 continues to
6 talk about partnerships. Before I move to Section 10, I did
7 want to highlight the section on communication with eligible
8 entities and the State Community Action Association. We
9 communicate with eligible entities and the state association
10 routinely. The methods are listed there. You'll see that
11 includes information updates, e-mail blasts, posting on our
12 State website, one-on-one leadership meetings, direct in-person
13 visits to eligible entities. Of course, we have our monitoring
14 visits, but I'm also talking about visits that may occur to
15 celebrate a special event or an agency program. That's
16 something we love to be able to do, those of us at our level and
17 up the line.

18 Attendance at monthly state association board meetings, of
19 course, we do have the CSBG Advisory Committee meetings that I
20 mentioned before. And our members of our staff also provide
21 presentations at association conferences that are sponsored by
22 us as the lead agency through our grant that I mentioned
23 earlier. And we also engaged with them through our grant at
24 times in single-purpose meetings that involve eligible entities
25 and the association. The one that was held rather recently was

1 on May 1, and it was about the organizational standards and how
2 our local community action agencies were getting ready to meet
3 those standards and where they stood at that time. That also
4 involved the Federal Community Action Partnership, which is the
5 national association of community action agencies. So I wanted
6 to be sure to highlight that for you today. Now I'll move on to
7 Section 10.

8 This is an important part because this is the -- our
9 compliance work that we are required to do as the state
10 oversight agency for the Community Services Block Grant. As I
11 mentioned previously, we will be going out in 2016 to do a full
12 on-site review at every agency. That full on-site review will
13 include an assessment of the standard; and if one or more
14 standards are unmet, a technical assistance plan will be
15 required. And if there are more serious issues that are
16 difficult to solve, we will be putting in place a quality
17 improvement plan in accordance with the federal CSBG Act.

18 We also are required, and it would be our intention, to pay
19 special visits to any newly designated agencies. At this time,
20 during 2014, we had two agencies that relinquished their
21 Community Services Block Grant funding. Those territories are
22 currently being served by interim providers. If those entities
23 are successful in receiving local endorsements, they will be
24 designated by our office in accordance with state law. We would
25 be visiting them in their category as a newly designated entity

1 in the state of Ohio. A copy of our monitoring tool as it
2 exists at this time is on the table, and that will be the basis
3 for those visits or something that looks quite similar to that.

4 I also wanted to mention, as I'm about to conclude this
5 formal portion, a direct statement at our meeting, that we have
6 an OC guide to progressive corrective action that we have
7 included in our state plans in the recent year. It will be
8 included as part of our documentation in the plan that is going
9 forward. It is due to HHS by or before September 1, and a copy
10 is available for you of that. Many of you are familiar with it.
11 And I would add that any time we needed to put a quality
12 improvement plan in place, we are required to inform the federal
13 office of that within 30 days of approving a quality improvement
14 plan.

15 So with that, I will conclude my direct remarks, and I will
16 open the floor for anyone who wishes to provide public
17 testimony. Anyone who wishes to come up should try to limit
18 their remarks to approximately five minutes and should state
19 their name clearly and the association or organization they are
20 representing for the benefit of our court reporter.

21 So with that, is there anyone who would like to give
22 testimony this afternoon? Yes. Please come up.

23 MS. HAMLER-FUGITT: Good afternoon. And thank you for the
24 opportunity to provide testimony and comments on Ohio's federal
25 fiscal year 2016-2017 Community Services Block Grant plan. My

1 name is Lisa Hamler-Fugitt. I serve as the executive director
2 of the Ohio Association of Food Banks, Ohio's largest charitable
3 response to hunger. The association is also home of the Ohio
4 Benefit Bank and serves as the lead organization for the Federal
5 Navigator Grant for the centers for Medicare and Medicaid
6 connecting Ohioans to health insurance through the federally
7 facilitated health insurance marketplace.

8 I'd like to begin my comments today and share that the
9 association applauds and commends the management, staff and
10 leadership of the Ohio Development Services Agency, Community
11 Services Division, Office of Community Assurances and Ohio's
12 community action agencies for their partnership and efforts to
13 remove obstacles and provide vital basic services to combat
14 poverty and hunger in communities across Ohio. Our association
15 represents twelve feeding America food banks providing food,
16 funding, training and technical assistance to a network of some
17 3,300 member charities including food pantry, soup kitchens and
18 homeless shelters.

19 Ohio's community action agencies are vital partners in our
20 statewide efforts. We served over two million hungry Ohioans
21 last year through this charitable network that is struggling to
22 meet the rising demand since the Great Recession swept through
23 Ohio's communities. And, in fact, hunger in Ohio has risen by
24 40 percent from 2010 to 2014. The funding provided by the state
25 of Ohio through the Community Services Block Grant to support

1 emergency and nutrition services is critically needed to help
2 address the growing hunger crisis, and we urge the State of Ohio
3 to maintain and strengthen the support to help counteract the
4 conditions on hunger and malnutrition among low-income
5 individuals and families.

6 I would like to highlight just a few of the impacts that
7 CSBG has had over the past year and based on sections of the
8 state plan. Section 14.3: Service delivery coordination and
9 innovation. The Benefit Bank is a technology-based platform
10 that provides community and faith-based organizations who serve
11 low-income Ohioans with direct access to over 23 work support
12 programs and tax credits. These programs help stabilize Ohioans
13 and begin -- to being the process of moving towards economic
14 self-sufficiency. Since its inception in 2006 the Benefit Bank
15 has trained nearly 6,000 counselors in over 1,300 organizations
16 and have provided services to over a half a million Ohio
17 households helping them to access over \$1.3 billion in tax
18 credits and work support programs.

19 The Ohio Development Services Agency Office of Community
20 Assistance and Ohio's community action agencies were the early
21 supporters and adopters of the Ohio Benefit Bank and have been
22 instrumental in helping it grow throughout Ohio. The Benefit
23 Bank is now the largest application assistance program operating
24 in the United States. This program is in line with CSBG in
25 intent. It encourages economic self-sufficiency by helping

1 low-income Ohioans to gain access to programs that encourage and
2 support education, training and work. The Ohio Benefit Bank
3 provides the technology that encourages community and
4 faith-based organizations such as CSBG grantees in helping their
5 neighbors reaching them where they live, work, play, pray and
6 learn.

7 A few other highlights and accomplishments in the service
8 delivery coordination and innovation. The association thanks
9 and commends the CSBG grantees who integrated the Ohio Benefit
10 Bank as a critical tool in their delivery of emergency
11 assistance and self-sufficiency operations. The CAAs operated
12 counselor-assisted OBB sites and now hosts the newer OBB self
13 serve.

14 In addition, during 2015, the association provided eleven
15 CSBG grantee's organizations with \$68,500 in grants allowing
16 them to serve and assist 4,510 low-income residents to prepare
17 and file their state and federal taxes and helping them to claim
18 over \$6.6 million in tax credits and refunds including the
19 earned income tax credit and child tax credit, a return on
20 investment of \$96 for every one dollar invested.

21 Section 9.3: Eligible entity linkages and coordination.
22 Our association is proud to operate one of the nation's largest
23 state-based national service programs dedicating 40 full-time
24 VISTA national service members to help build linkages and
25 develop program services to address hunger and poverty in Ohio.

1 The association's national service programs are honored to
2 partner with -- and highly commend the Northwest Ohio Community
3 Action Agency, Hocking-Athens-Perry Community Action
4 Partnership, the Community Action Council of Portage County and
5 the Washington-Morgan Community Action Agency for providing
6 critical nutrition assistance and partnering with us as we
7 expand linkages and coordinate and leverage community resources
8 in caring out and achieving the CSBG goals.

9 Section 14.4: Eligible entity emergency food assistance
10 services. In partnership with the CSBG, the association was
11 able to expand access to the summer meals program for low-income
12 children through the Governor's Summer Backpack and Innovative
13 Weekend Meal Delivery program by placing 50 part-time AmeriCorps
14 VISTA summer associates at sites across the state of Ohio.
15 Eight community action agencies were critical in this service
16 delivery.

17 They are all listed in my testimony, but just to highlight
18 the impact: These community action agencies who were host of
19 national service summer associates, they operated and
20 distributed 187 -- 187,000, summer meals to low-income children
21 as a result of these programs during the summer of 2015.

22 Two areas of concern: We are continuing to study Section 2
23 as it relates to state legislation and regulations that were
24 included in the recently passed budget. We are studying and
25 reviewing the impact on how these possible changes may pertain

1 to the ability of the state agency and CSBG organizations to
2 operate their programs.

3 Section 9.4: Workforce innovation opportunity Act WIOA
4 Employment and Training activities. The Ohio Association of
5 Food Banks is disappointed that the State's CSBG plan will not
6 be included as part of the WIOA combined state plan as allowed
7 under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. While
8 Ohio's WIOA plan takes some modest strides in coordinating core
9 workforce development programs, the State is missing an
10 opportunity to truly unify the workforce programs by failing to
11 include Ohio's Community Services Block grantees in addition to
12 Ohio's TANF program, Ohio Works First and the Food Stamp
13 Employment and Training program in the statewide plan. This
14 omission disregards both the intent of WIOA and also the
15 economic circumstances and employment barriers which low-income
16 Ohioans face.

17 In closing, the Ohio Association of Food Banks strongly
18 supports and highly recommends the Community Services Block
19 Grant federal fiscal year 2016-'17 state plan as submitted by
20 the Ohio Development Services Agency Community Services Division
21 Office of Community Assistance and Ohio's community action
22 agencies. Thank you again for the opportunity to serve on the
23 CSBG Advisory Committee and to provide testimony at today's
24 public hearing. By working together, we will strengthen our
25 communities and help our most vulnerable citizens meet their

1 basic needs. Thank you.

2 MS. STANFORD: Thank you, Ms. Hamler-Fugitt, for your
3 testimony today.

4 Is there anyone else who would like to testify? Mr. Cole.

5 MR. COLE: Thank you. Good afternoon. I'll Phil Cole. I'm
6 executive director of the Ohio Association of Community Action
7 Agencies. We are an organization that represents Ohio as
8 community action agencies serving every county in the state.
9 Community action agencies are the primary providers of services
10 to eliminate poverty and to assist those who suffer its ravages
11 as they work to become self sufficient.

12 While The Development Services Agency is not the largest
13 funder of most community action agencies in Ohio, I know that
14 you are familiar with our numbers. I'm speaking of the 75,000
15 individual Ohioans we serve; 4,500 people we employ and the over
16 a half a billion dollars we bring to Ohio's economy each year.

17 I'm here to testify about the Community Services Block Grant
18 state plan for federal fiscal years 2016 and '17 as proposed by
19 ODSA Community Services Division the Office of Community
20 Assistance. I want to extend my thanks and our appreciation to
21 Sadicka White, Karen Fabiano, Randy Hunt and Melissa Stanford
22 and all the staff at OCA for the work you put into this plan and
23 the fact that you're doing your jobs well.

24 While the approximately \$26 million of the program is small
25 in comparison to the total funding received by community action

1 agencies, it is the core that makes most other work possible.
2 The plan offers a description of the affects of the CSBG
3 program, the leveraging of these funds by agencies and is wise
4 used in Ohio's communities. We would recommend three
5 suggestions for this plan and future plans. First is to work
6 with the network in the development of the plan. Congress
7 expects it. The Ohio Network would like it to return to that.
8 The plan would be seriously strengthened if they returned to the
9 days when our input was requested and included as we worked
10 together on a plan of the agencies in Ohio.

11 Second, this is the first year that I know of that the CSBG
12 Advisory Committee was not asked to approve the plan. An
13 approval body advisory committee is always a good demonstration
14 of partnership between the network of agencies, the State and
15 the association. This administration says that it wants a
16 partnership, and I believe that it truly does. But to a
17 network, the concept of partnership seems to be slipping away.
18 I hope that DSA will understand our belief that partnership
19 means working together before decisions are made. That leads to
20 better understandings and better outcomes. Neither the State
21 nor the network has all the solutions or is correct all the
22 time; but by working together, we can arrive at the correct
23 solutions more often than not.

24 It is the responsibility of the local corporations which are
25 community action agencies to deal with their local poverty

1 issues. It is the responsibility of the State to ensure that
2 the agencies spend the money legally and follow all laws.

3 Sometimes those things get little a little confused.

4 Third, the plan was not presented to a committee of the
5 General Assembly for a discussion as is called for in both the
6 federal and state statute. I know this has been a challenge
7 over the last several years, and the State has done its best to
8 meet this requirement. However, the Ohio House of
9 Representatives Committee on Community and Family Development
10 was created to discuss poverty problems and propose poverty
11 solutions. They hold issues hearings, and I'm sure Chairman Tim
12 Derickson will be willing to hold a hearing on the CSBG state
13 plan, as he is very familiar with the work of community action,
14 and he's very supportive of community action agencies.

15 I hope the annual presentation called for will be done by
16 presenting what is required of Section 122:7-02 of the Revised
17 Code which states: "The General Assembly shall conduct public
18 hearings each year on the proposed use and distribution of
19 Community Services Block Grant as required in the CSBG Act."

20 Proposed use means the DSA is to testify as to what they
21 plan to do with the funds for the next year. Presentation of
22 the state plan satisfies that requirement. It's always a good
23 idea to keep the General Assembly informed. In the past it used
24 to be the State would present the plan, and I'd go up and defend
25 it. That was way back in the days when you had a committee just

1 for this. It worked out well.

2 Also, as we know, the General Assembly changed the
3 allocation percentage this year to bring DSA practices into
4 alignment with the statute while satisfying the requirements of
5 federal law. Among those changes was a dedication of funding to
6 one or more nonprofit corporations whose primary mission is to
7 provide training and technical assistance to Ohio's community
8 action agencies. And one of the things that I haven't heard
9 mentioned here today was that this was an agreement between the
10 association, DSA and the governor's office.

11 The Ohio Community Action Training Organization continues to
12 appreciate the opportunity to use training and technical
13 assistance funds for the benefit of Ohio's CAA network. As a
14 demonstration of this, we can show our outcomes on all of our
15 training since 2003. We are always searching for new ways to
16 make our efforts for the network even stronger. This year the
17 association has been working with the administration to try to
18 develop a program that will allow for innovation and poverty
19 solutions by Ohio's community action agencies. The proposal
20 includes using part of the new allocation for this as a
21 competitive bid among agencies overseen by the Governor's Office
22 of Workforce Transformation, DSA and Jobs Ohio.

23 If the federal reauthorization of CSBG is passed this year,
24 it will most likely include innovation requirements. This
25 proposal should establish Ohio as a leader in this area, and

1 perhaps it can be a model for other states. I hope the office
2 of Community Assistance will work with us on this.

3 CSBG is a program that works. It is one program which shows
4 strong outcomes. It is one program that shows the successes of
5 leveraging and multiple uses of the same tax dollar. It is one
6 program that shows the successes that occur with the efficient
7 use by both state and local community action agencies. It is a
8 wise use of public resources. Let's work together to continue
9 to make life better for low-income Ohioans. I thank you for all
10 your efforts and all the work that you do. And I don't always
11 show that appreciation. I certainly want you to know that I
12 appreciate you.

13 Thank you very much. Thanks for your time and attention.

14 MS. STANFORD: Thank you, Mr. Cole, for your testimony
15 today. Is there anyone else in the room that would like to
16 testify this afternoon? Hearing none, then I would like to say
17 just a couple of words about what our next steps will be. We
18 will -- We -- The state plan is due at HHS by or before
19 September 1, so based on the draft of the plan for which copies
20 were provided today, we will be getting that ready for
21 submission into the online system.

22 We are not anticipating any substantive changes to the plan.
23 There may be cleanup sorts of adjustments, but we will just be
24 busying ourselves with the work of getting the plan ready to go
25 into the online system. As I mentioned earlier today, these

1 are -- these documents on the side are documents that are
2 supporting documentation that will go up with the plan, and then
3 we would expect to receive either immediate approval of the plan
4 within a period of time or feedback from the federal government
5 if there's anything that they feel we need to include or would
6 like to see us provide to them in a different way.

7 Thank you for your attention today and for your attendance
8 at this public hearing. I'm going to turn the floor over to
9 Randy Hunt now, our office chief.

10 MR. HUNT: Real briefly I'll just say thanks again to
11 everybody for coming here and being a part of this. And
12 especially thank you to Phil and Lisa for your testimony. Thank
13 you for your contribution. And everybody enjoy the rest of your
14 afternoon. Thanks.

15 MS. STANFORD: This hearing is adjourned. Thank you.

16 - - -

17 And, thereupon, the hearing was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

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C-E-R-T-I-F-I-C-A-T-E

I do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true, correct and complete written transcript of the proceedings in this matter, taken by me on the _____ day of _____, _____, and transcribed from my stenographic notes.

Marilyn K. Martin
Registered Professional Reporter
and Notary Public

My commission expires October 15, 2016.

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