
COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

Information Memorandum

**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Community Services
Division of State Assistance
370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20447**

Transmittal No. 126

Date: March 22, 2012

TO: States, Tribes, and Territories Administering the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), Eligible Entities for CSBG Resources

SUBJECT: Use of CSBG funds to support summer jobs for youth and related services.

PURPOSE: To inform CSBG agencies of the opportunities to support the summer youth employment efforts with CSBG funds.

INTRODUCTION:

Many Community Action Agencies and other eligible entities that receive CSBG funds have a long history of involvement and support for summer jobs for low-income youth. Youth employment is a critical element of success for young people and can provide valuable opportunities for low-income youth to start a path to self-sufficiency. As we look forward to summer, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) encourages State CSBG offices to work with local CSBG eligible entities to help facilitate the involvement of low-income youth in summer jobs programs and to provide linkages to other supportive services that will help assure successful involvement in jobs programs. Within existing CSBG grant resources—and to the extent justified by local CSBG needs assessment efforts—State CSBG offices are encouraged to promote involvement of local eligible entities in both government-sponsored and private sector summer jobs efforts. State CSBG offices are also encouraged to provide flexibility to allow local eligible entities to adjust current service plans where appropriate to facilitate involvement in summer jobs efforts.

BACKGROUND:

As a pathway to careers and education, meaningful summer employment not only helps young people develop workforce and leadership skills to acquire and maintain good jobs, but also connects them to long term economic opportunity. Summer employment helps introduce youth to the working world and provides the skills and experiences they need to launch their careers. According to a Department of Labor report, nearly 75 percent of low-income youth who participated in summer jobs programming funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Youth Program reported increased work readiness skills. Subsidized employment can provide valuable skills and work experience for young people, and serves as a stepping stone on the path to unsubsidized employment.

CSBG eligible entities have the potential to enhance opportunities for low-income youth at a critical stage of development. By utilizing CSBG resources to support summer youth employment efforts directly, or through supportive services, eligible entities can help young people make use of employment opportunities as a stepping stone to self sufficiency through assistance with financial planning, mentoring, and linkage to other needed services.

INFORMATION:

CSBG eligible entities are required to conduct an annual assessment of community needs. Where appropriate based on identified community needs, CSBG eligible entities may support employment opportunities directly or may offer additional supports for youth in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and applicable WIA programs. For example, CSBG participants also in TANF-funded subsidized employment opportunities can benefit from occupational skills training and other relevant services such as financial planning, mentorship, and linkage to other supportive services. When possible, already-existing CSBG programming for youth can include such summer opportunities. ACF encourages CSBG offices and CSBG eligible entities to work with State and local Workforce Investment Boards and with TANF jurisdictions to explore ways to combine resources in developing or expanding subsidized employment programs.

In addition to partnering with subsidized summer employment programs and supporting youth services directly, CSBG eligible entities can also play an important leadership role in facilitating partnerships with local businesses and private sector charitable organizations. Many of the local eligible entities that provide CSBG services also have strong connections to the local business community, and can offer valuable assistance in identifying low-income youth, publicizing employment opportunities, providing job readiness services, assisting employers in addressing workplace issues through case management, or through other supports.

In the coming weeks, Departments and Offices across the Federal government will be supporting *Summer Jobs+*, an initiative to encourage and support businesses, non-profits, and government to work together to provide pathways to employment for low-income and disconnected youth in the summer of 2012. In support of efforts to serve these youth, State CSBG offices and CSBG eligible entities may make commitments or encourage other public and private sector organizations to make a commitment to provide opportunities for low-income and disconnected youth in at least one of the following three ‘pathways’ to employment:

- **Life Skills:** Provide youth work-related soft skills, such as communication, time management and teamwork, through coursework and/or experience. For example, local organizations can offer resume writing or interview workshops or provide employee mentors.
- **Work Skills:** Provide youth insight into the world of work to prepare for employment. For example, organizations can host job shadow days.

- **Learn and Earn:** Provide youth on-the-job skills in a learning environment while earning wages for their work. For example, organizations can offer paid internships, and/or offer permanent positions that provide on-the-job training. Organizations can also partner with schools and higher education institutions to give youth the opportunity both to strengthen their academic skills while working as well as to connect learning to the context of work.

ACF also encourages State CSBG offices and eligible entities to make information available to disconnected and low-income youth about *Summer Jobs+* opportunities via these three pathways. In the coming weeks, the Federal government will release the *Summer Jobs+ Bank*, a one-stop search tool for youth to access postings for any participating employers seeking to reach youth online. The search tool builds upon an open standard, the *JobPosting* schema endorsed by schema.org in November 2011 in support of the *Veterans Jobs Bank*, and will include technical and promotional support by Google, Internships.com, AfterCollege, LinkedIn and Facebook. CSBG eligible entities have access to families and youth and ACF encourages eligible entities to use their various communication tools and relationships to inform the youth who are most in need of the *Summer Jobs+ Bank* website.

If State CSBG offices and eligible entities have summer opportunities available for youth, ACF encourages them to post their commitments on the *Summer Jobs+ Bank* at the following link: <http://www.dol.gov/summerjobs/addingopportunities.htm>. State CSBG offices and eligible entities should also inform their private and public sector partners of the initiative and ask them to post their commitments online as well.

The latest information on the Pathways Pledge and the *Summer Jobs+* challenge can be obtained on the following website: <http://www.dol.gov/summerjobs/>

Grantees can refer to the following resources for more information about the targeting and structure of subsidized employment programs:

In January, the White House Council for Community Solutions released *A Toolkit for Employers: Connecting Youth and Business*. This toolkit was created in collaboration with the Corporation for National and Community Service and employers to support businesses and communities in their efforts to help young people become productive citizens and connect to greater opportunities, both of which are critical for the long-term strength and competitiveness of the Nation. The toolkit is available at:

http://www.serve.gov/new-images/council/pdf/youth_employment_toolkit.pdf

Additional resources from the White House Council for Community Solutions can be found at: http://www.serve.gov/council_resources.asp

Innovating Under Pressure: The Story of the 2009 Recovery Act Summer Youth Employment Initiative: Chicago, Detroit, Indianapolis & Marion County, Phoenix and Maricopa County, by Susan Curnan and Andrew Hahn, Heller School for Social Policy and Management, Brandeis University, June 2010, available at:
http://wdr.doleta.gov/research/FullText_Documents/Innovating%20Under%20Pressure%20The%20Story%20of%20the%202009%20Recovery%20Act%20Summer%20Youth%20Employment%20Initiative.pdf

Financing and Sustaining Summer Youth Employment Programs, by The Finance Project, June 2010, available at: <http://www.financeproject.org/publications/PPP-SYEP.pdf>

Reinvesting in America's Youth: Lessons from the 2009 Recovery Act Summer Youth Employment Initiative, by J. Bellotti, L. Rosenberg, S. Sattar, A. M. Esposito, and J. Ziegler, Mathematica Policy Research, February 2010, available at:
http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/publications/PDFs/labor/youth_employment_program.pdf

INQUIRIES:

Inquiries should be directed to the appropriate CSBG regional liaison staff. Contact information is available on the following web address:

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/csbg/aboutus/staffassignments.html>

/s/

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