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| ***Community Services*** ***Block Grant******Dear Colleague Letter*** | **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services** **Administration for Children and Families** **Office of Community Services** **Division of Community Assistance** **330 C Street, S.W., 5th Floor** **Mail Room 5425****Washington, DC 20201** <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/programs/csbg> |
| **Re:** **Update on CSBG Performance Management**  | **Date:** **August 18, 2017** |

Dear Colleagues:

This message provides an update on the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Performance Management Framework. Operation of CSBG in accordance with these plans will be dependent on enactment of FY 2018 appropriations supporting this program. In an effort to help the CSBG Network increase accountability and achieve results, the Office of Community Services (OCS) continues to implement a network-wide accountability and performance management system for CSBG. This framework will ensure eligible entities, states, and OCS function consistent with federal law and regulation, and will build accountability and continuous management improvement into all three levels of the Network (local, state and federal).

**Background – The CSBG Performance Management Framework**

The CSBG Performance Management Framework is designed to promote continuous improvement and accountability for a national network of eligible entities focused on the following Community Action Goals:

* Individuals and families with low-incomes are stable and achieve economic security;
* Communities where low-income people live are healthy and offer economic opportunities; and
* People with low-incomes are engaged and active in building opportunities in communities.

Key elements of this CSBG Performance Management Framework include:

* *Organizational Standards* – Through a Center of Excellence grant, OCS supported the development of standards organized in three thematic groups comprising nine categories and a total of 58 standards for private, nonprofit eligible entities and 50 for public entities. These standards were disseminated through CSBG [Information Memorandum No. 138](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ocs/resource/csbg-im-138-state-establishment-of-organizational-standards-for-csbg-eligible-entities).
* *State and Federal Accountability Measures* – OCS, in partnership with a task force, worked to develop accountability measures focused on key state and federal responsibilities. These measures were disseminated through CSBG [Information Memorandum No. 144](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ocs/resource/csbg-im-144-state-and-federal-accountability-measures-and-data-collection-modernization).
* *National Performance Indicators* – As part of a Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) Next Generation initiative, OCS developed and disseminated new individual, family, and community performance indicators that can be selected based on local Community Action Plans. These indicators are included in the content of a CSBG State Annual Report approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and communicated through CSBG [Information Memorandum No. I52](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ocs/resource/csbg-im-152-annual-report).

These three efforts are complementary and integrated. As shown in the updated Community Action Theory of Change (Appendix 1), these efforts are designed to help in answering:

* How well did the CSBG Network perform? and
* What difference did the CSBG Network make?

Ultimately, through using these new and enhanced tools and information, it is expected that the CSBG Network will make better program decisions and generate stronger results for low-income families and communities.

**Performance Management Update**

Information needed to support the Performance Management Framework is collected through an updated online CSBG State Plan, an online CSBG State Annual Report, as well as the American Customer Satisfaction Index Survey (ACSI). New developments are highlighted below.

* *Organizational Standards Preliminary Snapshots –* OCS has completed a preliminary review of state submissions for the Administrative Module for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 CSBG State Annual Report. This year, the reports were due April 7. To meet its own Federal Accountability Measure to provide feedback to the states within 60 days, OCS provided each state with feedback on clarity and completion of submissions. In addition, OCS developed two snapshots, which contain preliminary, baseline analysis from the Annual Report, Section D, *Organizational Standards for Eligible Entities*. One snapshot contains information about the percentage of eligible entities in each state that met all, 90%, 80% or 70% of the organizational standards. The second snapshot shows the percentage of eligible entities that met all of the standards by categories.

In June, OCS sent each state their two preliminary snapshots, and informed the states that the results are preliminary baseline information, intended for continuous improvement and for discussion purposes. OCS, along with its training and technical assistance grantees hosted a webinar on July 13, 2017 to provide additional guidance and respond to questions from the states.

* *ACSI Survey –* In 2015, to improve performance across the CSBG Network, OCS launched the ACSI survey seeking feedback from each State CSBG Lead Agency and eligible entities. The results of the survey were used to guide OCS’ training and technical assistance efforts and provide baseline data to the State CSBG Lead Agency that was used in developing the following year’s State Plan.

The second round of the ACSI Survey for CSBG Eligible Entities opened June 12, 2017 –July 14, 2017. To build on the 2015 survey, OCS sought feedback from CSBG eligible entities about services provided by the state CSBG Lead Agencies, as detailed in the new State Accountability Measures, in order to better understand and determine where to best focus its training and technical assistance (T/TA) efforts for the State CSBG Lead Agencies and to assist states in developing and implementing their State Plan.

On June 9, 2017, OCS disseminated an Action Transmittal document to notify CSBG State Grantees, eligible entities and T/TA grantees about the launch of the ACSI Survey for CSBG Eligible Entities. The survey is being administered by CFI Group, an independent third-party research group. OCS, its T/TA grantees, State CSBG Lead Agencies and CFI Group are working diligently to secure adequate and timely feedback from the survey through consistent and reminders to the eligible entities. The survey is authorized by OMB.

* *CSBG Annual Report, Modules 2, 3, and 4 –* As detailed in IM-152, the automation of the CSBG State Annual Report is being implemented in two phases. The first phase – states submitting Module 1 through the On-Line Data Collection system (OLDC) – was completed for the first time April 7, 2017. The second phase, which includes the implementation, training and technical assistance, and submission through OLDC of Modules 2, 3, and 4, began in February 2017.[[1]](#footnote-1)[1]

OCS has also begun developing Modules 2, 3 and 4 within OLDC with the help of the National Association for State Community Services Programs (NASCSP) and the Administration for Children and Families’ GrantSolutions Center of Excellence (GSCOE). OCS, NASCSP and GSCOE meet regularly to ensure that Modules 2, 3, and 4 are built securely and accurately. After the completion of each Module, OCS and NASCSP will complete the first round of testing for each Module.

In addition to this effort, the Data Task Force began meeting in February 2017. Led by NASCSP, in partnership with OCS, the Data Task Force members include people from all levels of the CSBG Network – federal, national, state, and local. The Data Task Force will assist in creating manuals for Modules 2, 3, and 4 and in testing OLDC prior to states completing their first submission of the full CSBG State Annual Report in March 2019.

OCS is continuing to work with the ACF Grants Management Center of Excellence and with other partners such as NASCSP to develop online data submission tools for Modules 2, 3 and 4 for the CSBG Annual Report.

* *Updates to Online CSBG State Plan –* The OMB approved CSBG State Plan is set to expire July 2018. In preparation, OCS has begun updating the current CSBG State Plan. Updates are based on feedback received from the states during the FY2016 and FY2017 submission periods and updates to the OLDC system. Additionally, OCS is reviewing the state responses in the past plans to ensure that the questions are adequate.

In updating the CSBG State Plan, OCS intends to make the State Plan a more streamlined and useful tool for states as part of the Performance Management Framework. OCS’ goal is to begin the new clearance in October 2017. This will have no effect on the FY2018 State Plans.

*Federal Accountability Measures*

OCS engaged in the following activities in its goal to report its performance on the Federal Accountability Measures to the CSBG Network:

* *Establishing Baselines* – Using available data sources, OCS defined its data collection methodology to calculate the baseline for each Federal Accountability Measure. For those measures where no data was available (e.g., Measure 1Fa-3), OCS identified improvements to the applicable process to enable future data collection efforts. The baseline measures serve as starting points in which OCS sets targets.
* *Setting Targets* – Considering the baseline, program resources, and CSBG Network expectations, OCS set targets for each Federal Accountability Measure with an established baseline. The targets serve as the guideposts for monitoring whether progress is being made and promote transparency and accountability by making available information on whether results have been achieved or not over time.
* *Measuring Progress* – OCS plans to measure its progress on an (at least) annual basis.  OCS developed two types of documents to support its monitoring and share the results of its performance measurement to the CSBG Network:
	+ Dashboard: CSBG Federal Accountability Measures (Appendix 2), a high-level document showing whether OCS met the target for each measure.
	+ Report: CSBG Federal Accountability Measures (Appendix 3), a more detailed document showing data in the dashboard, as well as each measure’s data source and baseline.

Draft versions of the Dashboard and Report are included with this Dear Colleague Letter for the CSBG Network’s reference. Updates to the Dashboard will be made as data becomes available.

**Conclusion**

As noted above, OCS continues to move forward with the implementation of a multi-tiered performance management framework for CSBG. OCS and its technical assistance partners will continue to provide updates on the progress of the performance management framework through training events, webinars and individual consultations with States. As always, thank you for your continued partnership in this critical work.

Sincerely,

J. Janelle George                                                                     Seth Hassett

Acting Director                                                                       Director, Division of Community Assistance

Office of Community Services                                                Office of Community Services

**Attachments:**

Appendix 1 - Community Action Theory of Change
Appendix 2 - CSBG Federal Accountability Measures Dashboard
Appendix 3 - CSBG Federal Accountability Measures Report

1. [1] For details about Modules 2, 3 and 4, review IM-152 CSBG Annual Report <https://acf.hhs.gov/ocs/resource/csbg-im-152-annual-report> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)