

Dear Chairman Scott and Ranking Member Foxx:

We are writing in support of H.R. 5129, the Community Services Block Grant Modernization Act of 2021, which is currently pending before your Committee. As you know, the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) defines and authorizes the nationwide network of 1,000 Community Action Agencies (CAAs) that work to reduce poverty through locally designed and delivered activities tailored to the specific needs of each community. These unique agencies work with multiple private and public partners and operate in virtually every county in the United States. They provide stability for low-income individuals and families and create new and lasting opportunities for self-sufficiency in the communities where people live.

The CSBG Act authorizes flexible funding that our local agency uses to assess and respond to local needs that have no other funding source, to innovate and test new approaches to reducing poverty and to address unforeseen crises that disproportionately affect low-income people. Currently, the Community Action Organization serving our communities receives \$415,817 in regular CSBG funding. This represents roughly 1.5% of the agency budget (pre-COVID). The CSBG funds are critical to the organization's ability to leverage private, local, state and federal investments to impact the lives of nearly 30,000 of our community members each year. With the assistance of CSBG dollars, our Community Action organization provides community-based programs across a variety of categories including financial education, career training, food assistance, energy assistance and efficiency, emergency shelter, housing stability supports, eviction prevention, and early childhood education.

Through years of thorough analysis of community needs and resources, intentional community engagement, and critical partnership building, our Community Action organization has helped build the community infrastructure that we were able to call upon as the health and economic crisis of COVID-19 hit our most vulnerable neighbors. Leveraging a \$600,000 CSBG-CARES Act funding allocation, Community Action was able to coordinate and expand capacity of a broad coalition of faith-based and culturally specific organizations to respond to the needs of our most isolated and vulnerable community members to effectively distribute more than \$60,000,000 of local, state and federal assistance in communities.

The CSBG Modernization Act would both reauthorize and update provisions of the CSBG Act, which has not been revised since 1998. We depend on our Community Action Agency to help address critical local issues. Thus, we need Congress to ensure that CSBG, as the federal authority for Community Action, reflects the current program and provides a solid foundation for the future. We urge you to move swiftly to enact H.R. 5129. Thank you for your leadership on this essential legislation and for your service on behalf of America's communities.

Sincerely,

Lacey Beaty
Mayor, Beaverton OR

Steve Calloway
Mayor, Hillsboro OR

Pete Truax
Mayor, Forest Grove OR

Jason Snider
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Teri Lenahan
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