



Social Services Block Grant

ACTION

- Cosponsor and support bipartisan legislation introduced in both the Senate (S. 501) and the House of Representatives (H.R. 1470) to authorize and restore Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) funding to \$2.38 billion and preserve states' ability to transfer 10% of their Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant funds into SSBG.
- Appropriate \$2.38 billion in FY 2002 for SSBG. Funding for SSBG has been cut severely in recent years, jeopardizing vital services to vulnerable children and families.

HISTORY

SSBG (Title XX of the Social Security Act) is a major source of federal funding to address the needs of vulnerable children and youth. SSBG frequently serves as a link between government funding and private and charitable sources. SSBG funds supplement local and charitable efforts by providing federal dollars to fill a gap local efforts cannot meet.

SSBG was created in 1981 as a block grant to states. States no longer were required to provide matching funds and were free to decide whom to serve and what services to provide. SSBG was established as a capped entitlement, with funding set at \$2.4 billion. As a capped entitlement, SSBG funding was intended to bypass the annual appropriations process and be automatically provided at the level set in the statute. Congress, however, has set funding for SSBG below the authorized capped level for the past several years.

The 1996 welfare reform act (P.L. 104-193), which created the TANF block grant, cut SSBG entitlement funding from \$2.8 billion to \$2.38 billion for FY 1996 through FY 2002. The law intended to reestablish SSBG funding at \$2.8 billion in FY 2003. The law also allowed states to transfer 10% of their TANF block grants into SSBG.

Despite the restoration and transfer authority written into law for FY 2003, SSBG was amended again in 1998 by the federal highway law. To accommodate increased federal spending for transportation, authorized funding for SSBG was lowered to \$1.9 billion in FY 1999 and \$1.7 billion by FY 2001. As a way to stop states from drawing more of their TANF dollars to replace lost SSBG funds, the highway law also restricted states' ability to transfer TANF funds into SSBG from 10 % to 4.25%.

KEY FACTS *

States can use SSBG funds to prevent or remedy neglect or abuse of children or adults, to achieve or maintain economic self-support, to reduce unnecessary institutionalization, to achieve or maintain independence, and to secure referral and screening for appropriate institutional care. Twenty-nine services can be funded to address these goals. In FY 1998, more than \$620 million in SSBG funds were spent on services to children and youth, including adoption, foster care, child protection, independent living, and residential services.

Adoption

Thirty states used \$21.4 million in SSBG funds in 1998 to assist in the adoption of children. Of the more than 560,000 children in foster care in that year, 110,000 had a goal of adoption, 115,000 received services as a result of SSBG funds, and 36,000 children were adopted from foster care.

Adoption services are designed to facilitate timely placements of children with adoptive families. Services include counseling for biological parents, recruitment of adoptive homes, and pre- and post-placement training and counseling.

Foster Care

In 1998, 34 states used nearly \$233.4 million SSBG dollars for foster care services to more than 317,000 children. That year, 560,000 children were in out-of-home care.

States use SSBG to pay foster care costs for the board and care of children not eligible for federal Title IV-E foster care assistance. Foster care services are designed to secure living arrangements for children or youth who have been abused and neglected and cannot live at home. These children and youth may live with foster families, including relatives; in group homes, emergency shelters, residential facilities,

or pre-adoptive homes; or in supervised independent living arrangements. Services include needs assessments, case planning, case management, medical care, child counseling, parent or foster parent counseling, and recruitment of foster families.

Child Protection

Thirty-eight states used more than \$207.6 million SSBG dollars in FY 1998 to protect children from abuse and neglect. Child protective service agencies received an estimated 2,806,000 reports of child abuse and neglect in 1998. SSBG funds assisted 1.3 million of these children.

Child protective services are designed to prevent or remedy abuse, neglect, or exploitation of children who may be harmed through physical or mental injury, sexual abuse or exploitation, and negligent treatment or maltreatment. Services include investigation, medical care, emergency shelter, case planning, child counseling, family counseling, legal assistance, and foster care placement.

Independent and Transitional Living Services

In FY 1998, 17 states used \$20.1 million in SSBG funds to provide independent and transitional living services to more than 20,000 youth and 17,000 adults. Supervised independent and post-foster care services for youth are designed to help older youth in foster care or homeless youth make the transition to independence. Services include educational assistance, employment training, training in daily life skills, and housing assistance.

Residential Treatment Services

In FY 1998, \$111.2 million in SSBG funds supported residential treatment to more than 24,750 youths and 12,000 adults in 20 states. Residential treatment services provide short-term residential care and comprehensive treatment for children who cannot be cared for at home or in foster care and who need specialized services. Services include psychological evaluations, alcohol and drug treatment, family counseling, individual counseling, remedial education, vocational training, case management, and supervised recreation.

Special Services for Youth at Risk

Twenty states used \$36.4 million in SSBG funds in FY 1998 to help 110,680 juveniles involved in the justice system. Support for youth at risk is often fragmented between the juvenile justice, mental health, and child welfare systems. SSBG allows states to cut across different systems and provide youth the help they need. Services are targeted at youth who are or who may become involved with the juvenile justice system, and their families, and are designed to enhance family functioning and increase positive youth development. Services include counseling, residential services, and medical care.

* Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. (2000). *Social Services Block Grant program: Annual report on expenditures and recipients, 1998*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.

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