



The Social Services Block Grant (SSBG)

The House budget resolution (H Con Res 34) for FY 2012 zeros out funding for the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG).

SSBG has long supported our most vulnerable children and continues to be a critical resource for child welfare. This flexible funding stream creates and sustains strong communities through a broad range of health and human services, including child abuse prevention and intervention in addition to elder abuse services, adult day care, home-delivered and center-based meal programs for senior citizens, in-home support for families, services to youth and juveniles, and parenting and pregnancy counseling for adolescent parents. Furthermore, in times of emergency crisis, such as the hurricanes that affected many states and communities, SSBG was a critical avenue for Congress to act with immediate crisis relief.

Imposing additional cuts or elimination of SSBG will have serious consequences and CWLA strongly opposes proposals that compromise this critical source of funding to our most vulnerable citizens.

Key Facts

- SSBG is a federal block grant that provides dollars to all fifty states and the District of Columbia every year.
- States have flexibility to use these dollars to invest in 29 different human service programs.
- States determine eligibility standards and can move dollars from year to year between their most pressing needs.
- States are not required to match federal funds with their own revenue.
- States use SSBG dollars to supplement their own funding of programs and in some instances dollars are used to supplement other federal programs.
- SSBG represents 12% of federal funds states spend to provide child abuse prevention, adoption, foster care, child protection, independent and transitional living and residential services for children and youth.
- Many 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.

SSBG Timeline

- In 1956 amendments to the Social Security Act (PL 84-880) were approved that created federal funding for the cost of services provided to welfare families. The goal was to help families on welfare or families who were receiving what was then called Aide to Dependent Children (ADC).
- These new federal funds were created by congress to help move adults off public assistance.
- In 1962 further changes (PL 87-543) were enacted making the funding more flexible as a way to assist states in their efforts to help families on Aid to Families with Dependent Children.
- The federal match rate was increased to 75 percent—one dollar of state money would be matched by three federal dollars.
- In 1972 Congress placed new restrictions on social services spending requiring that most of the dollars be spent only on those who were receiving cash assistance.
- In 1974 legislation would be enacted recreating the social service spending under a new Title XX of the Social Security Act as a way to address the concerns over cost and use of funds a list of permissible services was created.
- Goals were also incorporated for the first time, that are still a part of today's block grant.
- In his 1981 budget, President Ronald Reagan signed in to law a new Title XX with the enactment of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act, PL 97-35.
- All matching fund requirements on states were eliminated and most requirements such as planning, requirements to spend dollars on specific categories and eligibility standards were eliminated.
- The new state flexibility came with a reduction in Title XX funding from a FY 2081 FY total of \$3.099 billion to a capped total of \$2.4 billion.
- Title XX became the "Social Services Block Grant" now referred to as SSBG.
- In 1995 and 1996 SSBG became a target to obtain some of those savings for the welfare reform proposal.
- By the time of final enactment in August 1996, SSBG had been reduced to \$2.38 billion annually (a cut of more than \$3 billion from 1996 through 2002).
- The 1996 welfare act (PL 104-193) did increase SSBG back to \$2.8 billion in 2003 and beyond. That act also allowed states to transfer 10 percent of their new TANF block grants into SSBG.
- For fiscal year 1997, the appropriations committees actually increased funding to \$2.5 billion but in the following year, House and Senate appropriators cut funding.
- In 1998 the Clinton administration proposed a 1999 budget that ultimately used SSBG as an offset for a variety of programs in the Administration for Children and Families in the Department of Health and Human Services. The proposed cuts reduced funding to \$1.9 in 1999 and eventually to \$1.7 billion over the course of the next five years.
- In FY's 2007, 2008, and 2009, President Bush proposed a cut of 30%, or \$500 million, in SSBG funding.
- Currently SSBG continues to be funded at \$1.7 billion.

How States Currently Use SSBG

- According to the latest report in 2008:
 - **39 states** used over **\$235 million** in SSBG dollars to protect children from abuse and neglect in FY 2008.
 - **22 states** used **\$35 million** in SSBG funds to assist in the **adoption** of children in FY 2008.
 - **36 states** allocated **\$377 million** from SSBG for **foster care services** for more than 542,038 children.
 - **18 states** used **\$18 million** of SSBG funds in FY 2008 to **provide independent and transitional living** services to adults and children, this included over 11,000 youth.
 - **21 states** used over **\$111 million** in SSBG funds in FY 2008 to support **residential treatment** to over 16,000 children.
 - **32 states** spent **\$142 million** for **prevention and intervention** services in 2008.
 - **16 states** allocated **\$25 million** in 2008 SSBG funds for Special Services - **Youth At Risk**.