

The Social Services Block Grant Coalition

March 19, 2020

Dear Member of Congress:

Representing a diverse coalition of groups serving vulnerable populations, the Social Services Block Grant Coalition urges Congress to increase funding to the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) by several billion dollars to respond to the growing needs of older people, children and families, and people with disabilities in the midst of COVID-19.

SSBG is a proven key source of support to help communities respond to critical needs in national disasters and an important tool in times of recession because it can provide assistance to cash strapped states quickly. It has been used to assist states hit by catastrophic hurricanes including Katrina and Wilma. Funds were allocated according to FEMA claims and poverty. It served not just states directly hit, but also those states taking in people seeking refuge from the storms. In response to COVID-19 a formula could be used based on positive tests and surges in states. These funds can fill in some of the gaps not covered by other programs and backfill a number of human services. This also needs to include a set-aside for Tribes, which does not exist in current Title XX statute.

SSBG is a major funder to states and counties to help the most vulnerable people, including those services are under extreme increased pressure as a result of COVID-19 such as: child abuse prevention services, child protective services (CPS), child care, children and youth in foster care, adult protective services, Meals on Wheels, domestic violence services, and services for people with disabilities. The coming days will provide many challenges to the provider and non-profit communities, SSBG can provide needed resources to help address those challenges.

As Congress creates packages to response to COVID-19, we strongly urge increased support for SSBG to respond to the most vulnerable—our nation’s older adults, children and families, and people with disabilities.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Strong Families and Communities
Children’s Defense Fund
Children’s Law Center
Child Welfare League of America
Foster Kinship
Generations United
National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA)
National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a)
National Association of Counties (NACo)
National Council on Aging

The National Respite Coalition
Saint Francis Ministries
Youth Villages
ZERO TO THREE