

# **Requests for Community Services Block Grant Discretionary Grant Application (RFA) Guide**

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**Arkansas Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)**  
FFY 2021 Discretionary Funds

**Awarded Funds Will Be Available**  
For Use through September 2022

Total Grant funds available: \$ 499,603.00

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**Application Due Date:** December 17, 2021

## INTRODUCTION AND INTENT

The Arkansas Department of Human Services, DCO, Office of Community Services (ARDHS/DCO/OCS) establishes guidelines for the awarding of discretionary grants as authorized by the Arkansas Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) State Plan.

The primary intended use of the grant funds awarded to the state of Arkansas and to Arkansas subgrantees is “to provide assistance to local communities in Arkansas, working through a network of Community Action Agencies and other neighborhood-based organizations, for the reduction of poverty, the revitalization of low-income communities, and the empowerment of low-income families and individuals in rural and urban areas to become fully self-sufficient.”

CSBG Purpose and Goals:

- Promoting maximum participation of people and communities with low-income
- Leveraging resources of other anti-poverty programs
- Strengthening community capabilities for planning or coordinating resources for local needs and conditions of poverty
- Using innovative approaches to address causes and conditions of poverty
- Measuring impact to ensure accountability and ongoing data-driven quality improvement

### The National Community Action Network Theory of Change Community Action Goals

1. Individuals and families with low incomes are stable and achieve economic security.
2. Communities where people with low incomes live are healthy and offer economic opportunity.
3. People with low incomes are engage and active in building opportunities in communities.

As described in the authorizing legislation ([CSBG Act](#)), these “goals are achieved through:

- A. the strengthening of community capabilities for planning and coordinating the use of a broad range of Federal, state, local, and other assistance (including private resources) related to the elimination of poverty, so that this assistance can be used in a manner responsive to local needs and conditions;
- B. the organization of a range of services related to the needs of low-income families and individuals, so that these services may have a measurable and potentially major impact on the causes of poverty in the community and may help the families and individuals to achieve self-sufficiency;
- C. the greater use of innovative and effective community-based approaches to attack the causes and effects of poverty and of community breakdown.
- D. the maximum participation of residents of the low-income communities and members of the groups served by programs assisted through block grants made under (the CSBG Act) to empower such residents and members to respond to the unique problems and needs within their communities; and

- E. the broadening of the resource base of programs directed to the elimination of poverty to secure a more active role in the provision of services for private, religious, charitable, and neighborhood-based organizations; and individual citizens, and business, labor, and professional groups, who are able to influence the quantity and quality of opportunities and services for the low-income.”

This RFA seeks applications for:

1. **Innovative Programs / Activities**
2. **Training / Technical Assistance**
3. **Educational Scholarships**
4. **Community Action Agency Network Media and Communications**
5. **Agency wide Needs Assessment/Strategic Planning**
6. **Comprehensive Case Management activities and targeted outreach**

Applicants are advised that **direct services** funded by CSBG are **restricted to Arkansas residents** with household incomes that fall at or below **125 percent of the [Federal Poverty Guidelines](#)**.

## APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

Agencies eligible to submit proposals for FFY2021 CSBG discretionary funding are Arkansas Community Action Agencies (CSBG eligible entities) providing services in Arkansas, the Arkansas Community Action Agencies Association (ACAAA) and other non-profit organizations whose primary purpose is that of eliminating the causes and effects of poverty in Arkansas and are in partnership with the Arkansas Community Action Agencies.

## AVAILABLE FUNDS, PROJECTS, and PROJECT PERIOD

### A. Projects

#### 1. **Innovative Programs and Projects**

For the purposes of this funding opportunity, proposals will be considered **“innovative”** if they:

1. Support a project that is new to the agency and/or
2. Support a modification to an existing project to make it more effective or efficient and/or
3. Address an unmet need of the agency or community (based on needs assessment) and/or
4. Support a collaboration that addresses poverty in their communities.

When explaining how an organization or project is innovative, it is important to also consider why the innovative solution is better than the more traditional method(s). Possible reasons include:

- Saves time
- Is more cost-effective or efficient
- Increases reach and potential beneficiaries
- Reaches new beneficiaries that would not have been reached otherwise
- Provides a more holistic, community-lead, or sustainable solution

Innovation as specific form of change can be defined with respect to various aspects, including:

- Product/service innovations
- Process innovations
- Organizational innovations
- Marketing innovations

## 2. Training and/or Technical Assistance Projects

Applicants should describe how the proposed project will provide training and/or technical assistance activities to benefit or successfully work to improve lives for low-income families, communities, and the Arkansas Community Action network.

Continuous learning and continuous improvement to achieve better outcomes for the families and communities of low-income served by CSBG are the focus for these efforts. Enhanced and focused Training and Technical Assistance at all levels of the network (Federal, State, and community-level) continue to be needed to continue to meet the promise of the Performance Management Framework.

For the purposes of this funding opportunity, **“training and/or technical assistance”** examples include:

Training and Technical Assistance Programs that provide Arkansas’ Community Action Agencies with quality training, technical assistance, best practices, and tools to build capacity and strengthen the role of Community Action Agencies in the provision of anti-poverty initiatives.

- **Category One:** All training and Technical Assistance in this category must be performed by a Nationally Certified ROMA Trainer as defined by the National Peer to Peer Training Project.
  - Provide Local theory of Change training and follow-up implement to eight of the Community Action Agencies in an in person or virtual training setting.
  - Host four ROMA Work Group sessions and provide Comprehensive training in ROMA tools and concepts to all 15 Arkansas Community Action Agencies.
  - Comprehensive technical assistance to link family and community level national performance indicators. This includes review of intake and other agency tracking forms to capture demographic and implement and enhance the use of results-orientated (ROMA) service and outcome tools.

- Host two NCRI classes to the certification level. Each class to consist of at least five persons.
- Host two NCRT recertification classes. Provide guidance on development of logic model and co-training necessary for recertification.

➤ **Category Two:**

Provide Spring Annual Training Conference for the Community Action Agencies with sessions focused on ROMA implementation, and other relevant CSBG topics.

➤ **Category Three:** Reserved for the Individual Community Action Agency to build agency capacity

- Purchase training materials for use in agency staff development
- Poverty simulation materials and staff training
- Multigenerational Approaches for addressing poverty
- Staff Leadership Development
- Self-Sufficiency Model Training Development Plans by outside Consultants
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and Implicit Bias training for staff
- Serving Underserved Areas — Strategies for working in rural areas or communities with limited community services

- 3 Educational Scholarships
- 4 Community Action Agency Network Media and Communications
- 5 Agency-wide Community Needs Assessment/Strategic Planning Training by outside Consultants
- 6 Comprehensive Case Management activities and targeted outreach

**B. Available Funds**

The amount of funding available through this funding opportunity is: \$499, 603.00.

Applicants may submit proposals for any amount up to the full amount available or a lesser amount **and be willing to accept a lesser award than applied for.**

**C. Project Period**

- I. The period of availability for FFY 2021 discretionary funding extends through September 30,2022

## APPLICATION SUBMISSION DEADLINE

Applications must be received by email to Beverly Buchanan, CSBG Program Manager, at [DHS.CSBG.Team@DHS.Arkansas.gov](mailto:DHS.CSBG.Team@DHS.Arkansas.gov) by 4:30 p.m. on December 17, 2021.

## REPORTING & ACCOUNTABILITY REQUIREMENTS

- I. Successful applicants will be advised of applicable reporting requirements within the Grant Agreement. Reports may include, but are not limited to:
  - A. **Grant Expenditure Report:**

The monthly **Grant Expenditure Report** provides information on expenditures during the month. Monthly reimbursements will be made based on this report and any accompanying documentation. The report is due to the CSBG Team 15 days following the end of each month for which expenditures are claimed for reimbursement.
  - B. **Program Narrative Report:**

The subgrantee shall submit a final narrative report specific to the approved project and describing the subgrantee's progress toward the project's objectives, challenges and successes that resulted from the project's implementation.
- II. DCO/CSBG staff will conduct project analysis and on-site grant monitoring reviews.
- III. Other reports may be required to meet the evolving needs of the Federal government, State of Arkansas or ARDHS.

## I. APPLICATION LOGISTICS

The 2021 CSBG Discretionary application packet consists of the below electronic files.

1. RFA Guide
2. Application Checklist
3. Budget Workbook in Microsoft Excel
4. CSBG Assurances

The application template and budget workbook are editable and may be adjusted to enable presentation, complete responses and, in the case of the budget worksheets, details supporting both the assigned cost and the calculation of the cost.

The Application Cover Sheet and the Assurances for Community Services Block Grant Applications must be signed by the applicant's **executive director** and by the **president, or chair**, of the governing board.

One complete application should be submitted by email to Beverly Buchanan, CSBG Program Manager, CCSP, NCRT, at [DHS.CSBG.Team@DHS.Arkansas.gov](mailto:DHS.CSBG.Team@DHS.Arkansas.gov) no later than 4:30 p.m. on December 17, 2021.

Applications submitted after the deadline will not be considered for funding.

Upon receipt of the application, the CSBG Program Manager will provide the identified contact person with an email communication acknowledging receipt of the application.

## II. APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

### APPLICATION CHECKLIST

The application checklist must be completed and submitted with the application to ensure that all required information is included in the application packet.

#### SECTION 1 - COVER SHEET

**Item 1.1** – Provide requested information in the adjacent cell

**Item 1.2** – Provide requested information in the adjacent cell.

**Item 1.3** – Provide requested information in the adjacent cell.

**Item 1.4** – Signature of the entity's executive director and board chair are required.

#### SECTION 2 - PROPOSED PROJECT

**Item 2.1** – The project description should provide a detailed description of the proposed project, including

- geographic description of the service area,
- target population to be served by the project,
- primary needs the proposal seeks to address, and
- a clear, concise description of how the entity plans to use CSBG funds to produce meaningful outcomes.

**Item 2.2** – Describe how the proposed project relates to purposes of the CSBG authorizing legislation ([CSBG Act](#)) and will ameliorate the causes and conditions of poverty.

**Item 2.3** – Identify key personnel to be involved in the proposed project. The description should clearly identify if CSBG funds will be used to support these positions.

**Item 2.4** – Describe other resources (volunteers, in-kind, agency personnel, partnerships, additional funding, etc.) that will support the project.

**Item 2.5** – Timeline. Detail the project’s proposed start date, intermediate benchmarks, and end-date, as applicable.

### SECTION 3 – ENTITY SUMMARY

**Item 3.1a** – Use the vacant row below to enter the mission statement.

**Item 3.1b** – Use the vacant row below to enter the vision statement. “N/A” if none exists.

**Item 3.1c** – The entity overview should be a concise description of the entity. Suggested items to include are the organization's basic structure, its capacity to provide programs and services to low-income people and communities; and major lines of business/programs.

**Item 3.2a** – Describe entity attributes that contribute to its ability to **successfully execute** the project. The description should include the applicant’s experience with providing similar services as described in the RFA.

**Item 3.2b** – Describe applicant’s experience with the Community Services Block Grant or similar federal grants.

**Item 3.2c** – How will project performance be evaluated, analyzed, reported, and adjusted through the term of the project?

**Item 3.2d** – Use the vacant row to describe the entity’s sustainability plan. The applicant should describe the entity’s plan to continue the project and/or sustain gains made because of the project if applicable.

**Item 3.3** – Logic Model Presentation - Using the provided logic model, define and detail the project(s) for which CSBG discretionary funds are sought. Copy and extend the logic model template as necessary to provide for each unique, singular project. The logic model(s) should demonstrate how the proposed activities/outputs will impact the defined need and are likely to produce the stated outcomes.

**Item 3.3a** – Header - Provide a title for the proposed project.

**Items 3.3b** – Situation/Needs Statement - Present a problem or need statement that provides the rationale for the service, activity or intervention being proposed. Data should be included to support the needs statement.

**EXAMPLE:** In 2020, there were approximately 1,500 homeless families in need of housing in XYZ County; more than 250 of these families were turned away from overnight shelters at some point during the year.

**Item 3.3c** – Activities/Interventions - Define and quantify the scope of the activity or interventions proposed as a response to the Situation/Need Statement. Include, as applicable, target populations, the volume of service, timeframes, organizations/partners engaged, etc.

Identify, on the research continuum, the level of investigation that has guided the selection of activities/interventions.

**Item 3.3d** – Outcomes - Detail the positive benefit, behavior change or change in condition or functioning that is anticipated to accrue to individuals, families, communities and/or the entity as result of the activity. Outcomes are the consequence of delivering outputs. Outcomes, typically, must meet the following characteristics:

- Measurable.
- Simple, clear, and understandable.
- Realistic.
- Manageable.
- Identifies, or clearly infers, a specific group of clients.
- Specifies, or relates, to a time frame and
- Measures an end, not a means to an end.

**EXAMPLE:** 65% of participants (52 of 80 families) will move to market-rate, subsidized, or supported public housing within 60 days of program entry.

**Item 3.3e** – Evaluation - Describe how the entity will know that the desired outcome has been achieved. Specifically, how will the outcome be demonstrated? This section should provide an adequate plan to determine what happened and how it is known.

- Measurement Tool(s) – Identify the type of tool(s) used to collect/measure the outcome.
- Data Sources/Collection Procedures – Describe the sources of data, how it is collected and by whom.
- Frequency of Data Collection – Identify how often data collection occurs.

**Item 3.3f** – Desired or Intended Result Statement - Using complete sentences and with citation(s), validate the intended result of the selected strategy/strategies by indicating why the applicant believes the strategy/strategies will measurably impact the situation.

**EXAMPLE:** Research conducted by the Economic Mobility Project (2019) shows greater upward mobility among children of parents who have relatively high liquid savings compared to children whose parents have relatively low savings.

**Item 3.4a** – In order to avoid duplication of effort and to encourage coordination and

collaboration, non-CSBG-eligible applicants whose targeted service area overlaps that of a CSBG-eligible entity (Community Action Agency) **must demonstrate that they have consulted with the local CSBG-eligible entity.**

#### **SECTION 4 – BUDGET**

Applicants are required to submit a detailed budget proposal that will provide a full explanation of all proposed project costs. Proposals with incomplete or insufficient financial information will not receive favorable consideration. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to provide clear, complete, and detailed planned expenditures.

**Item 4.1** – Budget Workbook - Applicants must use the pre-formatted budget workbook (Microsoft Excel) contained within the application packet. Information provided within the budget spreadsheet should clearly define anticipated expenses in each of the object classes

**Item 4.2a** Applicants should supply sufficient detail to explain how specific costs were derived to demonstrate that proposed expenditures are justified and reasonable. The applicant entity must provide detail to show that each item of expense is necessary for the execution of the proposed project as described within the application.

#### **SECTION 5 – CERTIFICATIONS and CSBG ASSURANCES**

The CSBG Assurances for the Community Services Block Grant Discretionary Grant must be signed by the applicant's **executive director** and by the **president (or chair)**, of the entity governing board.

1. Single Audit Certification
2. CSBG Assurances