



MESSAGE FROM THE ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY

I am pleased to present the FY 2010 President's Budget request for the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). ACF programs strive to promote the economic and social well-being of children, individuals, families and communities with a principal goal of providing Americans essential human services.

The FY 2010 ACF budget makes significant investments in approaches that have proven to be effective, and, where necessary, seeks to realign the scope of existing spending authorities to better address the human services needs of our Nation. For example, the budget reflects President Obama's serious commitment to our youngest learners and belief that investments in early care and education can pay off as children grow by providing a funding increase to continue support for the historic expansion in Head Start and Early Head Start funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The budget also creates an evidence-based Home Visitation program to support low-income families. The program will provide funds to states to establish and expand evidence-based home visitation programs to help give children a healthy start in life. Rigorous research showed one particular model of home visitation resulted in Medicaid savings from reductions in preterm births, emergency room use, and subsequent births, and the budget estimates savings to Medicaid from the program. Additionally, funds are provided for new child welfare demonstration projects to pilot and reward successful approaches to addressing long-term foster care.

The budget also seeks to ensure that programs are responsive to the needs of America's families by: (1) establishing through the Low Income Home Energy Assistance program a trigger mechanism that will ensure a prompt and, when necessary, significant increase in program funding in the event of a spike in home energy costs; (2) proposing a new Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative taking an evidence-based approach to addressing the problem; and (3) providing on-going funding for the recently established Strengthening Communities Fund to broaden the strategy for capacity building by funding non-profit organizations as well as state, local and tribal government offices responsible for outreach to faith-based and community organizations. Taken together, these activities are intended to provide a more effective response to issues facing our Nation's at-risk youth and low-income communities.

Finally, the budget responds to the President's call for a government that is accountable and transparent. In this vein, we will employ rigorous program integrity activities to safeguard the investments sought in this budget and we will set tough performance standards and closely monitor their achievement.

Curtis L. Coy
Acting Assistant Secretary
for Children and Families