

Labor Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Witness Disclosure Form

Clause 2(g) of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives requires non-governmental witnesses to disclose to the Committee the following information. A non-governmental witness is any witness appearing on behalf of himself/herself or on behalf of an organization other than a federal agency, or a state, local or tribal government.

Your Name, Business Address, and Telephone Number:

David Bradley
The National Community Action Foundation (NCAF)



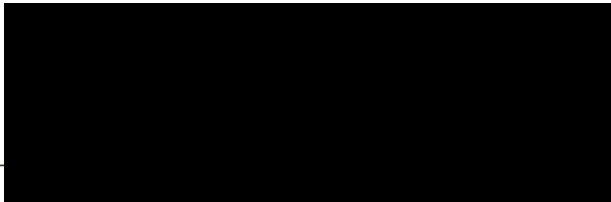
1. Are you appearing on behalf of yourself or a non-governmental organization? Please list organization(s) you are representing.

I am appearing on behalf of the National Community Action Foundation

2. Have you or any organization you are representing received any Federal grants or contracts (including any subgrants or subcontracts) since October 1, 2008?

No

3. If your response to question #2 is "Yes", please list the amount and source (by agency and program) of each grant or contract, and indicate whether the recipient of such grant or contract was you or the organization(s) you are representing.



Signature:

Date: 03/26/2012



Testimony of David Bradley, Executive Director, National Community Action Foundation

**Before the United States House of Representatives
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
March 29, 2012**

Chairman Rehberg, Ranking Member DeLauro, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding the FY2013 Health and Human Services (HHS) Budget. I represent the National Community Action Foundation (NCAF) which serves as an advocate for local Community Action Agencies (CAAs). These agencies promote community economic opportunities, and support low-wage working families and retirees working to become more economically secure.

First, I would like to thank the Subcommittee for your remarkable efforts to sustain the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) at FY2011 levels in FY2012. Despite a recommended 50 percent cut by the Obama Administration and difficult budget constraints, you maintained level funding for this program. I also would like to thank you for your courage to fund LIHEAP at \$909 million above the President's request, despite the complicated fiscal situation. The need is not only a result of high oil prices, but also due to the growth in the number of consumers who have used up their savings and credit as their incomes dropped. LIHEAP is a potent tool for stabilizing their budget by helping to meet a basic need. I also express my appreciation for your decision to fund Head Start programs at \$8 billion, which is an impressive \$424 million above last year. This is making a huge difference in the lives of many low-income children and families.

This testimony will discuss our priorities for 2013 and explain why the President's FY2013 request to cut CSBG funding in half shortchanges low-income families and nearly every community nationwide. An allocation of \$700 million, the 2010 level, in FY2013 for CSBG is essential for meeting local needs. Today, I will center my remarks on the outstanding and innovative work that Community Action Agencies (CAAs) throughout the country are doing to alleviate poverty, highlighting their locally driven approaches and robust reporting requirements.

The nation's roughly 1,100 Community Action Agencies serve about 15 million low-income individuals and families each year. This small program enables communities to have access to thousands of different programs depending on local needs – from worker training, to disaster assistance to direct housing assistance. Importantly, CSBG federal dollars help leverage other funds. In 2010, Montana alone received only \$3.04 million in CSBG funds but local CAAs generated \$11 million in private contributions that would not have been generated otherwise. These statistics, however, do not speak to the true effectiveness of CSBG.

The Administration's proposal – to transform CSBG into a competitive program – contradicts the whole mission of locally driven community involvement, in which 99 percent of counties receive funding. CAAs are locally governed and therefore able to experiment with new approaches and combinations of resources. They use CSBG to provide essential and coordinated services to help low-income families obtain fiscal stability and long-term financial security. CSBG also helps to nurture new community institutions and smaller civic groups. Most importantly, CAAs account meticulously for every dollar that is spent and have a thorough results-management system.

Innovation: Unlike many poverty programs run by government bureaucrats, CSBG funding supports, through CAAs, highly innovative programs to help alleviate poverty in *their* community. The CSBG model allows an agency to assess the needs of their local community and determine the best way to fight poverty with CSBG dollars, which naturally leads to new and innovative approaches. For example, in New Haven, Connecticut, CSBG funds the "Manage Your Future" youth entrepreneurship partnership with local businesses where at-risk young people spend 20 hours weekly in internships and participate in programs teaching financial literacy and employment skills. In Weatherford, Texas, Texas Neighborhood Services used CSBG dollars to address the problem of rural healthcare by launching a mobile health unit that focuses on low-income individuals and is especially geared toward children.

Locally driven: Community Action Agencies are driven by the local communities that they represent. CAA's tripartite boards are comprised of members of the private sector, local government and the low-income community. The Community Action Partnership of Northwest Montana's board includes three local

county commissioners, the Director of Enrollment Planning & Research for Flathead Valley Community College, the Branch Manager from Western Insurance Company and the Vice President of Marketing from Glacier National Bank. In Waterford, Texas board representation for Texas Neighborhood Services includes the Vice President of Bell Helicopter, an Edward Jones Financial Consultant, a county attorney, a social worker from Palo Pinto General Hospital, a retired attorney and two Professors from Tarleton State University. And at Kitsap Community Services in Bremerton, Washington, board members include a manager from Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, 3 directors from 3 school districts, a county treasurer, a representative from Youth for Christ, the manager of Kitsap Credit Union and a manager at Kitsap Physicians Service.

CSBG is based on the principle that policy decisions should be locally-driven by the community. CAAs are governed by the stakeholders in the community who ensure that the services provided are accountable to those communities. These are not Washington bureaucrats. Under the President's proposal to transform CSBG into a competitive grant, federal and state level bureaucrats would be driving the implementation of CSBG dollars. Today, we have a system of immeasurable trust that has been built up over decades. This system has been hard-earned, and though not perfect, it is well-placed within the local community.

Providing essential community services: With their CSBG funding, CAAs provide crucial services to local communities that would otherwise go unfulfilled. For example, CAAs help unemployed workers find jobs, assist low-income workers to improve their skills to help build personal and financial assets. They strengthen families by offering early childhood development programs, education enrichment for school aged children, prevention resources to at-risk youth, and financial literacy training. The Northern Kentucky Community Action Agency, for example, uses CSBG funds to help support the Faith Community Pharmacy to provide free prescriptions for low-income households in eight counties. CAAs also help local charities do their work. At the South Central Community Action Partnership in Twin Falls, Idaho, many smaller organizations, including faith-based groups, rely on the local agency to help implement their initiatives and often give them direct contributions. Last year, the agency leveraged over \$966,000 in private funds with \$377,000 in CSBG. Statewide, CAAs in Idaho utilized their 1,570 community partnerships to generate \$7.9 million in private-sector funds and received \$3.2 million in CSBG funds.

Disaster Relief: One area where CAAs are critical is in disaster relief. With a wealth of community-based partnerships and resources, CAAs are able to utilize CSBG dollars to help coordinate and administer assistance in times of tragedy. CSBG and Community Action Agencies help in making these important FEMA dollars effective. When the deadliest tornado to strike the United States in over 60 years hit Joplin, Missouri in May 2011, the local CAA, Economic Security Corporation of Southwest Area (ESC) used its community-wide partnerships to provide assistance to those trapped by the tornado's wreckage. These community connections enabled ESC to assist FEMA and AmeriCorps by providing transportation for their workers and used their grassroots community network to assist FEMA and other relief organizations with communications. They also helped by disseminating important information to those affected by the tornado.

Comprehensiveness: CSBG dollars support a one-stop place for struggling families to come for services. At the Daniel Boone Community Action Agency in southeastern Kentucky, services include Child Care; a Dislocated Worker program; Employment Services; Energy Assistance; FEMA assistance; Food Pantry; Healthy Marriage services; Homeless Shelters; Housing Programs (new construction and rehabilitation); Medical Transportation; Public Transportation; Rental Assistance Program; Workforce training; Weatherization; and WinterCare. No other federal program offers a one-stop location for low-income communities. Poverty alleviation requires a comprehensive approach, not a patchwork of funding sources. CSBG provides the comprehensiveness that makes our programs effective. Without funding provided by CSBG, many of these services would be eliminated and the burden would be taken on by state and local governments. CSBG also pays for employees of the Community Action agencies that employ individuals with the expertise to coordinate and implement other federal, state and local poverty reduction efforts.

Accountability and Results: It was this Subcommittee's leadership that, 25 years ago, asked NCAF to make sure CAA started reporting on all the different funding streams they deliver as well as the uses of CSBG and the families they served. We went further and voluntarily developed a national results-oriented system. In 1998, the Community Action community requested it become part of law. Now, a CAA's annual CSBG

report tells you every federal, local and private dollar it spent, by category of activity, the number and characteristics of the families and individuals participating in any of its programs (except a few that prohibit taking personal information), the number of child care placements it found for working parents, of housing units it built, and the number of health-care visits it facilitated or funded and dozens more statistics. An agency also benchmarks its work by tracking the results of the investments the local Board of Directors put in its annual plan. It knows not only the count of preschoolers served but how many met their developmental targets. It knows how many of the seniors and disabled adults served were kept in an independent living situation because of supportive services like meals on wheels and or transportation. The Community Boards track the number taxpayers they assisted in filing returns that received refunds and also how much came back to the local economy.

I do not know of another HHS program that has a system that tracks complex programs working toward a general goal in nearly every locality. Importantly, CAAs have transparent accounting methods for taxpayer funds. Our multi-purpose organizations are not simple to manage, but the boards that manage them are made up of experienced, committed and trusted community leaders who ensure that CSBG dollars are spent responsibly and effectively.

In conclusion, I would like to encourage the Committee to reject the 50 percent cut to the Community Services Block Grant that the President has proposed, as this Subcommittee sensibly did for FY2012. By cutting the programs by 50 percent, hundreds of counties throughout the country will lose these important services, and millions of low-income individuals will be forced to turn to state and local governments, which are already financially stressed, for help. These programs support a comprehensive approach to poverty reduction, are accountable to the government and local communities and provide solid, economic opportunity for the poor in almost every county in America. Without CSBG, low-income families as well as communities across the United States will lose a vital resource. I urge the Committee to return to the FY2010 funding level of \$700 million for CSBG to ensure that these CAAs can continue this important work to help America's most disadvantaged individuals and families.

DAVID BRADLEY
Executive Director
National Community Action Foundation

David Bradley gives a voice to the voiceless. For nearly three decades, David has been the preeminent advocate in Washington, D.C. working closely with the Congressional leadership and with numerous Administrations, to ensure federal policies related to major social service programs make a difference in the lives of low-income Americans.

David is the principle author of the Community Services Block Grant, which provides the core funding to the nation's CAA network. David has been widely praised by leaders of both political parties. Sargent Shriver, the first leader in the War on Poverty said it best, "No one has done more to keep the War on Poverty alive and fresh in the minds of individuals."

The unique role he has crafted in Washington and his nearly unrivaled access to powerbrokers in the Congressional leadership has made David a popular presence on the speaker circuit. His speaking engagements provide his audiences with an insider's perspective of the political climate in Washington that is gleaned directly from political and party leaders. He frequently is asked to provide his analysis of upcoming elections, as well as pending legislation.

David has a Bachelors and Masters degree from George Washington University. In 1987, he was a Senior Executive Fellow at the Harvard University John F. Kennedy School of Government. He served in President Carter's Administration as Congressional Liaison at the Small Business Administration.

In his spare time David is part owner of three AAA baseball teams, the Albuquerque Isotopes, the Bowie Baysox and the Frederick Keys.