



ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES

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Office of Community Services

Dear Colleague Letter

DCL#: OCS-DCL-2022-20

DATE: September 28, 2022

TO: OCS Grant Recipients, Partners, and Stakeholders

SUBJECT: OCS Launches the Freedom From Hunger Initiative to Support the White House National Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health

ATTACHMENT(S): N/A

Dear Colleagues,

Today, the Biden-Harris Administration is hosting the [Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health](#), the first of its kind in over fifty years. The Conference comes at a critical time with many families and individuals still recovering from the economic disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic and with food prices at a historic high; according to the [July 2022 Consumer Price Index](#), over the last year, the food-at-home index increased 13.1 percent, the largest 12-month increase since May 1978-1979.

To prepare for the conference, yesterday, the White House unveiled a [National Strategy](#) to support the goal of ending hunger and increasing healthy eating and physical activity by 2030 so fewer Americans experience diet-related diseases – all while reducing health disparities. The purpose of this Dear Colleague Letter (DCL) is to inform Office of Community Services (OCS) grant recipients, partners, and stakeholders of our work to support anti-hunger efforts and our inclusion in the National Strategy.

White House Conference & National Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health

The White House Conference held in-person today in Washington, D.C. (and broadcast live on the [White House YouTube page](#)), will catalyze the public and private sectors around a coordinated strategy to achieve the White House's goal of ending hunger and increasing healthy eating and physical activity by 2030. The National Strategy outlines actions the federal government will take to achieve this goal; these actions are organized into five pillars: 1) Improving food access and affordability, 2) Integrating nutrition and health, 3) Empowering all consumers to make and have access to healthy choices, 4) Supporting physical activity for all, 5)

Enhancing nutrition and food security research. OCS' Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) is included in the National Strategy's first pillar to improve food access and affordability.

Specifically, the Strategy highlights two ways CSBG can help support ending hunger:

1. Supporting outreach to families that may be eligible for SNAP and nutrition programs, and best practices to support their enrollment by developing research, training and tools for state and community-based grantees of CSBG.
2. Issuing guidance to help grant recipients maximize CSBG funds to implement or scale anti-hunger efforts, including nutrition and prepared meal programs, and developing communication materials to help grant recipients maximize CSBG to strengthen anti-hunger efforts; and develop a website that will disseminate case studies and best practices on anti-hunger and nutrition programs within the CSBG network.

CSBG Background and Connection to Anti-Hunger Work

CSBG supports pathways out of poverty, including services designed to ameliorate the causes and conditions of poverty by assisting individuals and families with low incomes and underserved communities with services based on local needs (i.e., food, employment, education, and adequate housing). The social and support services funded by CSBG are administered by 55 directly funded tribes and over 1,000 CSBG-eligible entities, commonly referred to as Community Action Agencies (CAAs). To date, CSBG funding has supported the development and implementation of multiple innovative anti-hunger programs. CSBG has also supported innovative anti-hunger programs through the [Project Impact Rapid Cycle Programs](#) funded by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act).

These CSBG-funded programs advance promising innovations in combating food insecurity in a variety of ways including ensuring equitable access to healthy food through grocery giveaways, nutrition education, cooking classes, meal programs, food banks and food pantries, community gardens, hydroponic farming training programs, partnerships with local farmers, and other new programs and partnerships. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2020, 812 CSBG eligible entities provided 54 million boxes of food and groceries, 12.9 million prepared meals, over 250,000 nutrition courses, and over 20,000 community garden activities.

CSBG Freedom From Hunger Initiative

As a first step in our work to support the National Strategy, OCS is excited to launch our [Freedom from Hunger Initiative](#), an effort to highlight the impact of CSBG funded anti-hunger programs. Over the past few months, OCS researched and interviewed innovative CSBG anti-hunger programs across the country. Today we are releasing eight Freedom from Hunger case studies that highlight programs that have made a significant impact on food insecurity in their communities.

OCS is also releasing infographics highlighting the impact of two anti-hunger Project Impact Rapid Cycle Projects: [Action for Boston Community Development, Inc.'s \(ABCD\) GoodBEANS Project](#) and [United Community Corporation's \(UCC\) Mobile Food Program](#). In addition to the infographics, we have filmed two spotlight videos on the [ABCD](#) and [UCC](#) projects. Finally, OCS is

also releasing a CSBG-wide [anti-hunger infographic](#) that highlights how program funds support anti-hunger efforts across the country, as well as an [animated video](#) on the reach of CSBG. All of these materials, and more, are available in both English and Spanish on the [Freedom from Hunger landing page](#).

These tools provide examples of promising approaches that CSBG-funded entities CAAs across the country can implement and scale to address food security needs in their communities. We encourage all OCS grant recipients, partners, and stakeholders to review these materials and to share them widely. As OCS continues to do our part to support the National Strategy and drive solutions related to hunger, nutrition, and health challenges, we call on our grant recipients to do the same and join us in spotlighting the highly innovative, creative, and responsive anti-hunger programming funded by CSBG.

Thank you for your attention to these matters. OCS looks forward to continuing to provide high-quality services to OCS partners.

/s/

Dr. Lanique Howard
Director
Office of Community Services