



## **Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Frequently Asked Questions for Tribal Grantees**

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### **What is the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)?**

The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) is a federally funded block grant that provides funds to States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, U.S. Territories and Federally and State-recognized Indian Tribes and tribal organizations, which in turn, funds Community Action Agencies (CAAs), organizations serving migrant or seasonal farmworkers and other organizations designated by the States, Territories, and Tribes in order to lessen poverty in disadvantaged and low-income communities.

### **What is the Purpose of the Community Services Block Grant?**

The purpose of the Community Services Block Grant is to provide assistance to States, Territories, Tribes, and local communities, 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.

### **Who is Eligible to Apply for the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)?**

The CSBG program is a federally funded block grant that provides funding for eligible nonprofit community-based organizations or governmental entities that work to lessen poverty in disadvantaged and low-income communities.

Federally and State recognized Tribes and Tribal Organizations may receive CSBG funding directly from OCS and are eligible for these funds.

### **How do Tribes and Tribal Organizations apply for CSBG funds?**

Tribes and Tribal Organizations are required to prepare and submit to the Office of Community Services (OCS) an application and plan covering a period of not less than one fiscal year and not more than two fiscal years. The plan must be submitted not later than 30 days prior to the beginning of the fiscal year covered by the plan (September 1<sup>st</sup>).

### **Where Can I Find a Copy of the FY19 CSBG Application & Plan Instructions?**

The CSBG Action Transmittal 2018-02 Application for Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Funds Based on the Availability of CSBG Funds, and all FY-2019 CSBG application resources, including all of the webinars from our How to Apply Webinar Series for Tribes & Tribal Organizations, and the CSBG Tribal Application Plan & Annual Report Tool Guide are available on the CSBG Tribal Training & TA Online Resource Center, under Application - Instruction.



## **How Do I Submit the CSBG Application and Plan Once it is Completed?**

To apply, interested Tribes and Tribal organizations must submit a CSBG Tribal Plan and application materials to OCS by September 1 of each year.

Current grantees will submit the SF-424M form and CSBG Tribal application materials, including the Annual Report, via Grantsolutions.gov and the Online Data Collection (OLDC) system.

Prospective grantees must email the OCS CSBG Tribal Program Specialist their DUNS and EINS numbers along with a signed Letter of State Concurrence, regarding population data, by the State CSBG Administrator. The Tribal Program Specialist will then contact the Tribe with specific directions for submission.

## **What is the SF-424M Form?**

The SF-424M is a standard electronic federal form required for submission of the CSBG application. Current grantees will complete this form online via the OLDC system. Prospective may need to submit a PDF copy of the SF-424M by email with their CSBG Tribal application and Plan materials.

## **What if I missed the September 1st deadline?**

If you have missed the deadline, notify the State CSBG Administrator in your state, that the Tribe or Tribal Organization is submitting the CSBG Tribal Plan past the September 1 deadline. The Tribe or Tribal Organization will also need to submit a signed Letter of State Concurrence, regarding late submission, by the State CSBG Administrator. (In accordance with CSBG Action Transmittal 2017-04: Application for FY 2018 Funds for Tribes and Tribal Organizations which states that *“After the September 1 deadline, Tribal applications will be accepted only with concurrence from the State (or States) in which the Tribal or Tribal Organization is located.”*)

## **How Are Funding Allocations Determined?**

The determination of Tribal funding takes into consideration the Tribal population, the incidence of Tribal poverty in the State, and the State poverty population data.

The allocation amount for Tribes is taken from the State’s CSBG allocation and provided directly to the Tribal Government.

## **When Will We Receive Our CSBG funding?**

Fiscal Year funding is not available before October 1. Funding allocations are based on the Federal budget. Congress first has to pass a budget for upcoming Fiscal Year. Once Congress passes a budget, the President must sign it, and then the allocation process can begin.

Once the CSBG Tribal Plan and application review process has been completed, the Office of Mandatory Grants (OMG) is notified of funding approval. A Notice of Grant Award letter is then sent to the CSBG Tribal Program Contact. This is the official document that states the amount awarded and the period covered. Grant awards are allocated quarterly and are based on the availability of funds as appropriated by Congress.



## **How Can CSBG Funds Be Used?**

Under the CSBG program, Tribes and Tribal Organizations use funds to provide a range of services and activities that have a measurable and potentially major impact on the conditions and causes of poverty to promote self-sufficiency, family stability, and community revitalization. The law envisions a wide variety of activities undertaken on behalf of low-income families and individuals. Some specific types of programs operated under the CSBG program include addressing: employment, education, income management, self-sufficiency, youth and seniors, housing, linkages, nutrition, emergency services and/or health to combat the central causes of poverty.

## **Is There an Income Eligibility Requirement for Participation in CSBG Program services and activities?**

The Federal Poverty Guidelines must be used as the primary criterion in determining income eligibility. To receive assistance under any CSBG project involving direct services, an applicant's total household income must not exceed 125% of the poverty level. Total household income is based on income at the time of application.

## **Can Unobligated CSBG Funds be Recaptured and Redistributed?**

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2005, Pub. L. 108-447, and all subsequent legislation appropriating funds for the CSBG have contained language that supersedes Section 675 (C) (a) (3) of the CSBG Act. Funds that have not been spent by the eligible entity/Tribe or Tribal organization shall remain with the entity for carryover into the next fiscal year.

## **What are some CSBG disallowed costs?**

CSBG's purpose differs from most grants because it does not focus on funding a particular service and does not function solely as a "stand-alone" program. Some examples of CSBG unallowable costs, according to OMB Circular A-87- Cost Principles for State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments are as follows:

- Bad debt expenses, entertainment
- Fines and/or penalties
- Certain interest or other financial costs
- Loan processing costs
- Ineligible acquisition or construction of shelter
- Costs to renovate, rehabilitate, or convert buildings owned by religious organizations
- Inspections
- Preparation of work activities that would result in displacement of a place of business
- Lobbying or other political activities

It should be noted that these items are provided as examples only and do not include all potential disallowances based on Federal and State requirements.

## **May CSBG funds be used to transport voters to the polls?**

No. The statute prohibits the use of CSBG funds by a grantee to transport any voter to the polls.