



West CAP – Developing the social and economic assets of low-income families and their communities

Local Impact of Losing Community Services Block Grant Funding

West CAP serves seven counties in west central Wisconsin. We are a community based organization, and our twenty-one person board includes three representatives from each county - a county board member, a community or business representative, and an elected low-income representative. West CAP utilizes Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funding in a variety of ways: basic support for operation of core programs, coordination of partnerships with local service providers, leveraging additional resources, and helping to develop innovative program options that provide local solutions to local problems. West CAP received \$378,036 in regular Community Services Block Grant funding in 2010. **The House is proposing to completely eliminate funding for the Community Services Block Grant on March 4th, 2011. This dramatic cut will have a significant impact on West CAP programs, and could lead to the eventual elimination of some programs that are vital to low-income families.**

- West CAP is often the first call when families face the kind of serious and unexpected problems that are common in an economic downturn – loss of a job, utility shut-off, lack of housing. As a local organization, West CAP is able to respond to their situation and then help them develop a plan for a longer term solution. **These services provide a path to economic security during difficult times.** In 2010, West CAP provided services to 4,979 households and received thousands of additional calls for assistance and referrals. Without our resources these requests will be directed to already over stretched county services staff and budgets.
- West CAP programs **focus on building self-reliance and personal motivation.** We can often provide the key support needed to access resources for job access and skills training. For example, our JumpStart car program provides low-income workers with access to financing to purchase a reliable car to get to work or get a job. Homebuyer counseling classes help families improve personal finances and prepare for responsible mortgage financing. Our Family Table Cooking Clubs provide an opportunity for families to support each other in learning healthy cooking skills and stretching tight family food budgets. CSBG funding is essential in developing these and other innovative programs.
- West CAP's structure allows us to **operate programs in a highly cost-efficient manner,** and to provide for ongoing evaluation of effectiveness. Our administrative expenses are only 8% of total

program costs, much lower than similar public services. Our professional staff is flexible and not tied to long-term contracts or benefit packages. This structure **gives us the capacity to develop innovative solutions to emerging local problems without creating expensive and difficult to end program structures.** Community Services Block Grant funding provides West CAP, and our CAP partners around the country, with the flexibility to adapt to new policy directions and deliver cost effective and accountable local programs.

- West CAP is often the **key community partner in leveraging outside funds for local projects.** This is especially important in rural areas where there are few organizations that can coordinate work between several different counties and communities. The **Community Services Block Grant funding is especially helpful because it is flexible and can be targeted to meet specific local needs and support new approaches to solving problems** – including building private sector partnerships. Our Jumpstart Car program, for example, is able to use a modest amount of federal funding to leverage over \$1.1 million in low interest car loans from local lenders, helping low-income workers finance the affordable purchase of reliable cars. West CAP’s annual CSBG Allocation is \$378,000. In 2010, West CAP leveraged an additional \$418,000 in local support and matching funds for our programs.
- West CAP is directly connected the communities we serve. Our **board members are selected by their community and they have direct control over program decisions** and ongoing evaluation of effectiveness.

West CAP serves the counties of Barron, Dunn, Chippewa, Pepin, Pierce, Polk and St. Croix. The President of the 21 member board of Directors is Paul Streif, who is appointed from the Barron County Board of Supervisors. West CAP’s Executive Director is Peter Kilde.

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