

DRAFT

COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Community Services
Division of State Assistance
370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20447

Information Memorandum

Transmittal No. **Draft** xxxxx

Date: **January 28, 2015**

TO: State Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Administrators, U. S. Territory CSBG Administrators, Eligible Entities, and State Community Action Associations

SUBJECT: State and Federal Accountability Measures and Data Collection Modernization

RELATED REFERENCES: Community Services Block Grant Act 42 U.S.C. § 9901 *et seq.*, hereafter referred to as “the CSBG Act.”

In collaboration with the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Network, the Office of Community Services (OCS) developed State and Federal Accountability Measures to track organizational performance by State CSBG Lead Agencies and OCS. These measures are part of an enhanced framework for accountability and performance management across the CSBG Network.

OCS requires States, no later than FY 2016, to collect, and begin reporting on, State CSBG Accountability Measures through their online State plan and annual reports. Concurrently, OCS will collect and begin reporting on Federal CSBG Accountability Measures in FY 2016.

We are issuing this Information Memorandum (IM) in draft, as we did with the IM on organizational standards for CSBG-eligible entities last March. We expect to issue this final IM in about 60 days, which corresponds with the public comment period on the revised CSBG Model State Plan. OCS is revising the Model State Plan to streamline and automate content and to incorporate the State accountability measures.

Performance Management for CSBG

Budget constraints, high poverty levels, changing demographics, and income inequality demand that the CSBG Network remains vigilant in our shared mission of creating opportunity and security for all Americans. We must look at all levels of the CSBG Network – local, State, and Federal – to assess and increase CSBG impacts. The CSBG Network is far-reaching and nationwide. Together, we have the potential to achieve even greater results, in every community, by improving our accountability to one another, our customers, and our communities.

In an effort to help the CSBG Network increase accountability and achieve results, OCS launched several initiatives in 2012. One focused on establishing organizational standards for eligible entities. Under this effort, CSBG Network leaders developed and recommended a set of organizational standards to strengthen the capacity of the more than 1,000 eligible entities providing services across the country.

A second performance management initiative focused on enhancing the CSBG Network's performance and outcomes measurement system for local eligible entities – identified in the CSBG Act as Results Oriented Management and Accountability System (ROMA). Finally, a third initiative focused on creating State and Federal-level accountability measures to track and measure organizational performance by State CSBG Lead Agencies and OCS.

These three efforts are complementary and integrated; together they comprise a network-wide accountability and management system for CSBG. They will ensure eligible entities, States and OCS operate within Federal law and regulation and will build accountability and continuous management improvement into all three levels of the Network (local, State and Federal). As shown in Appendix 1, *Measuring the Success of Community Action and CSBG*, these efforts will help us answer the questions: How well did the Network Perform? And what difference did it make? Ultimately, using these new and enhanced tools and information, the CSBG Network will make better program decisions and generate stronger results for low-income families and communities.

State and Federal Accountability Measures - Background

OCS developed the State and Federal accountability measures with guidance and assistance from the Urban Institute and in consultation with the CSBG Network. The effort included multiple listening sessions (conducted online and in-person), three CSBG Performance Management Task Force meetings comprised of representatives from all three levels of the Network, and two expert meetings.

OCS issued a Dear Colleague Letter on February 28, 2014 to solicit comments on a list of proposed State and Federal accountability measures, and received 38 sets of comments from States, State associations, national organizations, and eligible entities. OCS carefully considered those comments, as well as input from a small working group of States and eligible entities, as we revised the accountability measures.

The State and Federal accountability measures are designed to create transparency and accountability for performance at the State and Federal levels, and to help OCS and the States identify successful practices and areas for improvement.

State and Federal Accountability Measures

The State Accountability Measures capture performance data about the critical activities and functions performed at the State level. They indicate *how efficiently and effectively* the State implements the activities described in the State plan, and *what impact* the State's efforts have on the performance of local eligible entities.

The 13 State accountability measures address efficiency and effectiveness characteristics such as timeliness, accuracy, standards, and stakeholder satisfaction in the critical activities and functions listed below:

- Development of State plan, including involving the eligible entities
- Implementation of State plan including:
 - Distribution of funds
 - Use of remainder/discretionary funds
 - Grantee monitoring and corrective action
 - Data collection, analysis, and reporting
 - Organizational standards for eligible entities
 - State linkages and communication

See Appendix 2 for more information about the State accountability measures.

The Federal Accountability Measures are tied to the critical roles and responsibilities of OCS, and, where applicable, align with the State measures. The Federal accountability measures indicate OCS's effectiveness and efficiency as well as the impact its efforts have on improving the performance of State CSBG Offices.

Like the State measures, the twelve Federal measures address such efficiency and effectiveness characteristics as timeliness, accuracy, standards, and stakeholder satisfaction in the following critical activities:

- State plan review and acceptance
- Distribution of funds
- Grant monitoring and corrective action
- Data collection, analysis, and reporting
- Organizational standards
- Training and technical assistance
- Communications
- Grantee satisfaction

See Appendix 3 for more information about the Federal accountability measures.

These State and Federal accountability measures are implemented within current Federal and State administrative authorities. The CSBG Act requires States to report on performance, according to the annual reporting provision in Section 678E, 42 U.S.C. § 9917, and allows OCS to request additional information through the State plan, as described in Section 676(b), 42 U.S.C. § 9908(b).

State Accountability Measures - Data Collection and Analysis

States will collect data on State accountability measures using three mechanisms: the CSBG Model State Plan, the State CSBG Annual Report, and a nationally administered survey. Generally, States will not need to collect accountability measures data outside of the State plan

and annual report. Because OCS will manage the national survey, there will be no survey-related costs or burden for the States. States will collect data on the majority of measures on an annual basis, and, at some point in the future, more frequently on a very small number of measures.

States will collect accountability data in a seamless, integrated fashion, through regular planning and reporting processes and through the national survey. For example, States will enter information in the State plan about planned performance in critical activity areas (e.g., development of the State plan, use of funds, grant monitoring, and training and technical assistance). In the annual report, States will enter information on the actual performance in these same areas. Finally, the States will receive feedback on their performance in these activity areas from the national survey.

OCS is currently revising the Model State Plan for the FY 2016 application cycle (for applications due September 1, 2015) to streamline and automate content and to incorporate items related to accountability measures. Similarly, OCS, through a cooperative agreement with our national partner the National Association for State Community Services Programs (NASCSPP), plans to revise the annual report forms in the coming year to include State accountability measures data.

OCS is automating these revised forms through ACF's On-Line Data Collection (OLDC) system. The OLDC Model State Plan and annual report forms will include definitions and instructions and will apply data logic and validity checks to assure that data are reported accurately and consistently. Automation provides new opportunities for integration of data sources and for using data to make program and resource decisions by comparing results over time. While States may need additional time to complete the new automated Model State Plan in the first year, they will save time significantly in subsequent years because of automation.

The American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI)

In 2012, OCS used the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) as the methodology for surveying States' perceptions of OCS performance. OCS plans to use this same methodology in order to survey eligible entity perceptions of the States.

The ACSI provides an independent, cost-effective, highly valid and reliable measure of satisfaction. The ACSI methodology is the "gold standard," and has been cleared *in advance* by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for government-wide use. The ACSI allows for the collection of consistent, uniform information, and will provide OCS and the States with actionable insights to improve their customer experience and, ultimately, boost program results.

OCS is preparing to conduct the first survey of CSBG eligible entities in 2015. After the survey is completed, each State will receive their results with a comparison to overall results. OCS will not distribute data comparing States. OCS will engage members from the CSBG Network in both the development of the survey and in discussions about how the results will be used to improve performance. For more information about OCS' use of the ACSI see Appendix 4.

Data Reporting and Analysis

Once States have collected data on accountability measures through the Model State Plans, annual reports, and nationally administered surveys, States and OCS will 1) analyze the data, 2) identify performance strengths and weaknesses, 3) make performance management decisions (to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of their CSBG operations), and 4) report on these efforts to OCS and their eligible entities.

States and OCS can use accountability measures data to identify areas for improvement and determine if program changes are appropriate. For example, a State's accountability measures might indicate the State is not meeting the timeframes for disseminating monitoring reports or distributing funds. The State could then take actions to improve performance in those areas. By collecting consistent data over time, OCS and States will illuminate performance issues and encourage continuous improvement. In the short-term, States can aim for performance improvement over the previous year. In the longer term, consistent performance data across the entire CSBG Network can provide network-wide information about performance and best practices.

OCS will issue each State a State-specific report on accountability measures at the end of the reporting period, after States have completed their annual reports. OCS expects States to communicate their performance data to their eligible entities, and to use the data as part of their ongoing strategic planning.

We encourage States to do additional analysis to supplement the State-specific reports from OCS. Under the new CSBG cooperative agreement mentioned earlier, NASCSP will help create a data warehouse that will make it easy for States and other CSBG Network partners to produce reports that compare the State's performance over time, with national averages and with selected groups of similar states. OCS will engage States in discussions of data configurations and reporting that will guide decisions about State program performance.

OCS will use the State-specific reports and any additional analysis in its oversight and guidance of States to encourage States to improve their organizational performance. OCS will communicate progress on State accountability measures to CSBG stakeholders through the OCS website and other means, as appropriate.

Federal Accountability Measures - Data Collection and Analysis

For the Federal Accountability Measures, OCS will collect data corresponding to the critical Federal activities and functions included in the measures by using the ACSI survey and other means. OCS will begin to collect data on the Federal measures in FY 2016, at the same time as States. Like the States, OCS will analyze and use the data to improve its performance. It will communicate progress on the measures to the States and other stakeholders through the OCS website and other methods.

Implementation Timeline and OMB/PRA Clearance

In order to implement the State accountability measures, OCS must obtain approval for the revised and automated State plan and annual report forms from OMB, as required under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA). The PRA requires agencies and OMB to ensure that information collected from the public minimizes burden and maximizes practical utility. The OMB/PRA review and approval process includes a 60-day and a 30-day public comment period for each submission. For more information about the OMB/PRA clearance process, please see the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) on the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service's website.

OCS will inform the CSBG Network about this PRA process and all opportunities for public comment. OCS encourages all stakeholders to share their observations and comments with OCS, so adjustments to the forms can be made for easier, more effective data collection and analysis.

OCS anticipates formal OMB approval for the automated Model State Plan, incorporating the State accountability measures, by spring 2015. States will begin entering data, using OLDC, for the 2016 State plans due on September 1, 2015. OCS will begin the OMB approval process on the annual report forms, with NASCSP support, starting next spring.

To prepare States for these changes, OCS and our national providers will provide training and technical assistance through webinars, presentations at conferences and other communications.

The tables below describe the implementation time frames for OCS and States. If you have questions, please contact an OCS CSBG program specialist. The list of OCS staff and contact information is posted on the OCS website at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/resource/csbg-staff-assignments-by-region.

OCS Responsibilities

Responsibilities	Time Frame
<i>CSBG Model State Plan</i> : Complete the first revision with CSBG Network input	Fall 2014
<i>IM on State and Federal Accountability Measures</i> : Publish	January, 2015
<i>CSBG Model State Plan</i> : Program into the ACF Online Data Collection (OLDC) system	Approximately 6 months winter 2015 – spring 2015
<i>CSBG Model State Plan</i> : Request public comments; Get HHS and OMB approval	Approximately 6 months winter 2015 – spring 2015
<i>CSBG Model State Plan</i> : Publish and provide training and technical assistance	Spring/summer 2015
<i>Annual Report</i> : Revise, automate, and get OMB approval; with the National Association for State Community Services Programs (NASCSP)	2015 - 2016
<i>Federal Accountability Measures</i> : Gather data; begin accountability measures analysis	Federal Fiscal Year 2016

State Responsibilities

Responsibilities	Time Frame
<i>CSBG Model State Plan</i> : Provide comments to OCS	Winter, 2015
<i>CSBG Model State Plan</i> : Take training and complete the new State plan through OLDC	Summer, 2015 State plan due by September 1, 2015
<i>Annual Report</i> : Provide comments to OCS	2015
<i>Annual Report</i> : Take training, complete reporting through OLDC; Begin accountability measures analysis	Federal Fiscal Years 2016 - 2017

Conclusion

Together we must insist upon accountability and performance management across the CSBG Network. The CSBG State and Federal Accountability Measures have the potential to protect and enhance the structural integrity of this national network by assuring that all States that receive CSBG funds, as well as the Federal CSBG office, are performing as efficiently and effectively as possible to support CSBG's response to the complex social problems that contribute to poverty. We look forward to working with the CSBG Network to successfully implement the accountability and performance management framework.

As noted earlier, we expect to issue this final IM within 60 days, which corresponds with the public comment period on the revised CSBG Model State Plan. During this period, if you have any comments on this draft IM, or on the State and Federal measures themselves, please submit them by email to LaToya.Smith@acf.hhs.gov at the Office of Community Services. Thank you.

Jeannie L. Chaffin
Director
Office of Community Services

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Measuring the Success of Community Action and CSBG

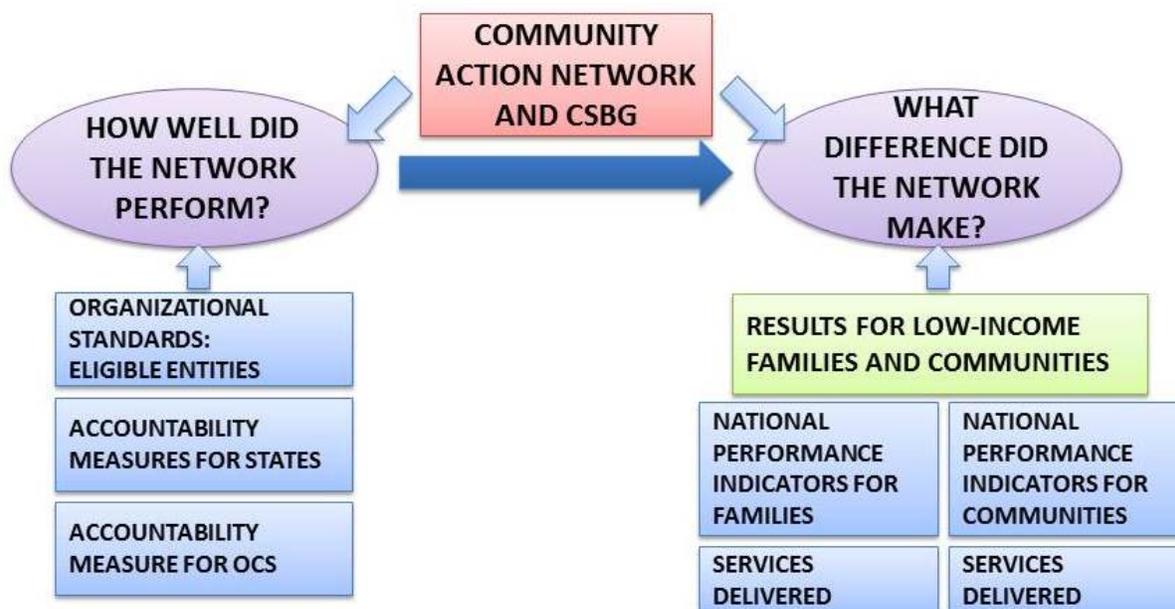
Appendix 2: State Accountability Measures

Appendix 3: Federal Accountability Measures

Appendix 4: American Customer Satisfaction Index and the CSBG State and Federal Accountability Measures

Appendix 1: Measuring the Success of Community Action and CSBG

**MEASURING THE SUCCESS OF
COMMUNITY ACTION AND CSBG**



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Appendix 2

STATE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES

These measures are tied to the critical activities required by the CSBG Act and laid out in the State plan. They are an indication of *how efficiently and effectively* the State implemented the elements of the State plan, and *what impact* the State's efforts had on the performance of local eligible entities. The "performance period" for each of the measures is generally the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY). These measures apply to the States' interactions with all eligible entities.

Development of the State Plan

During the performance period...

- 1Sa. The State's Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) State Plan
 - i. Included a statewide vision with CSBG-specific goals and strategies¹ for meeting the intent and purpose of the CSBG Act; and
 - ii. Explained specific steps the State took in developing the State plan to involve the eligible entities.
- 1Sb. Using data from a nationally administered survey² of eligible entities, and feedback from OCS and other sources, the State adjusted its plan (in the next State plan submission), as appropriate, to improve performance regarding:
 - i. The extent of eligible entity participation in developing the State plan; and
 - ii. How well the State plan reflects the input of the eligible entities.³

Implementation of the State Plan

Distribution of Funds

During the performance period...

- 2Sa. The State made funds available to eligible entities within 30 calendar days after Federal and State authority was provided.
- 2Sb. Using data from a nationally administered survey⁴ of eligible entities and feedback from OCS and other sources, the State adjusted its plan (in the next State plan submission), as appropriate, to improve the quality of grant administration.

Use of Remainder/Discretionary Funds

During the performance period...

- 3Sa. The State used its discretionary funds in accordance with the strategy and dollars/percentages outlined in the State plan.⁵

¹ Strategies would include use of CSBG 90 percent and discretionary funds, a T&TA plan, a communication plan, use of organizational standards, and partnership strategies, as detailed throughout the State plan.

² OCS will use the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), OMB-approved methodology.

³ State Accountability Measures 1Sb, 2Sb, 3Sb, 3Sd, 4Sb, and 7Sb are measures of eligible entity satisfaction with the state's performance of critical elements of the State plan.

⁴ OCS will use the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), OMB-approved methodology.

⁵ At some future point, possibly FY 2017, this will be a semi-annual measure.

- 3Sb. Using data from a nationally administered survey⁶ of eligible entities, and feedback from OCS and other sources, the State adjusted its plan (in the next State plan submission), as appropriate, to improve its use of remainder/discretionary funds.
- 3Sc. The State completed the training and technical assistance activities specified in its State plan.⁷
- 3Sd. Using data from a nationally administered survey⁸ of eligible entities, and feedback from OCS and other sources, the State adjusted its plan (in the next State plan submission), as appropriate, to improve the training and technical assistance provided to the eligible entities.

Grantee Monitoring and Corrective Action

During the performance period...

- 4Sa. The State...
 - i. Conducted monitoring activities as directed by the CSBG Act and outlined in the State plan;
 - ii. Disseminated monitoring reports to local entities within 60 calendar days; and
 - iii. Reported serious deficiencies⁹ to OCS.¹⁰
- 4Sb. Using data from a nationally administered survey¹¹ of eligible entities, and feedback from OCS and other sources, the State adjusted its plan (in the next State plan submission), as appropriate, to improve its monitoring activities.
- 4Sc. Percent of eligible entities resolved identified deficiencies within the schedule, agreed upon by the State and eligible entity, outlined in the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).¹²
- 4Sd. Percent¹³ of eligible entity single audits that require a management decision for which the State issued a management decision within six months of acceptance of the audit report by the FAC (Federal Audit Clearinghouse).¹⁴

Data Collection, Analysis, and Reporting

During the performance period...

- 5S. The State submitted to:

⁶ OCS will use the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), OMB-approved methodology.

⁷ At some future point, possibly FY 2017, this will be a semi-annual measure.

⁸ OCS will use the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), OMB-approved methodology.

⁹ “Serious deficiency” means a finding that the Eligible Entity is not in compliance with Federal or State laws or eligible entity bylaws; or that the Eligible Entity has committed fraud, is in financial difficulty, or is not able to provide services.

¹⁰ At some future point, possibly FY 2017, this will be a semi-annual measure.

¹¹ OCS will use the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), OMB-approved methodology.

¹² At some future point, possibly FY 2017, this will be a semi-annual measure.

¹³ The goal for this measure is 100% compliance with Uniform Administrative Requirements for issuance of management decisions. The State will establish a baseline percentage in the first year and if the percentage is less than 100% will track improvement in subsequent years.

¹⁴ As required by Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, And Audit Requirement for Federal Awards (2 CFR 200.521).

- i. OCS, accurate program data, in the nationally prescribed format, about the State’s ‘actual performance against planned performance’ for the State accountability measures, (as specified in the State plan);
- ii. OCS, required data reports¹⁵ needed for the State’s annual report submission by the OCS-established deadlines;
- iii. The eligible entities, written feedback regarding each entity’s performance in meeting ROMA goals, as measured through National Performance Indicator (NPI) data, within 60 days of submitting the State’s annual report.
- iv. The eligible entities and State Community Action association, information about ‘actual versus planned performance’ on the State accountability measures, within 60 calendar days of getting feedback from OCS.

Organizational Standards for Eligible Entities

During the performance period...

- 6Sa. “x” percent¹⁶ of assessed eligible entities in the State met the State-adopted organizational standards.
- 6Sb. The State had in place...
 - i. Technical assistance plans (TAPs) for all assessed eligible entities with unmet standards that could be resolved within one year; and
 - ii. Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs) for all assessed eligible entities with serious deficiencies¹⁷ in meeting the state-adopted organizational standards.¹⁸

State Linkages and Communication

During the performance period...

- 7Sa. The State provided both quantitative data and examples of how the State CSBG Office maintained and created linkages within State government to assure the effective delivery of services to low-income people and communities.
- 7Sb. Using data from a nationally administered survey¹⁹ of eligible entities, and feedback from OCS and other sources, the State adjusted its plan (in the next State plan submission), as appropriate, to improve its communication efforts.

¹⁵ Data reports include the National Performance Measures and other data elements in the Annual Report.

¹⁶ The State will establish a baseline percentage in the first year and if the percentage is less than 100% will set targets for improvement in subsequent years.

¹⁷ “Serious deficiency” means a finding that the Eligible Entity is not in compliance with Federal or State laws or eligible entity bylaws; or that the Eligible Entity has committed fraud, is in financial difficulty, or is not able to provide services.

¹⁸ At some future point, possibly FY 2017, this will be a semi-annual measure.

¹⁹ OCS will use the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), OMB-approved methodology.

Appendix 3

FEDERAL ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES

These measures are tied to the critical roles and responsibilities of OCS, as required by the CSBG Act, and are an indication of its *effectiveness and efficiency as well as what impact* their efforts had on improving the performance of the States. The “performance period” for each of the measures is generally the FFY.

State Plan Review and Acceptance

During the performance period...

- 1Fa. “x” number²⁰ of State plans reviewed and accepted within 30 business days of receipt of the complete State plan; “x” number of State Plans reviewed and accepted within 60 business days of receipt of the complete State plan.
- 1Fb. Using data from a nationally administered survey²¹ of the States and feedback from other sources, OCS made organizational adjustments, as appropriate, to improve performance regarding its grant management services:
 - i. Clarity, ease and timeliness of information about grant requirements;
 - ii. Quality of feedback provided about the State plan.²²

Distribution of Funds

During the performance period...

- 2Fa. “x” percent²³ of States, tribes and territories received funding within 15 business days of OMB/Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) apportionment of funds and acceptance of the State plan.
- 2Fb. Using data from a nationally administered survey²⁴ of the States and feedback from other sources, OCS made organizational adjustments, as appropriate, to improve the quality of grants administration.

Grant Monitoring and Corrective Action

During the performance period...

- 3Fa. “x” percent²⁵ of draft State assessment reports sent within 60 calendar days of State assessment site visit.
- 3Fb. “x” percent²⁶ of deficiencies noted in the State assessment reports resolved or a corrective action plan initiated within six months.

²⁰ OCS will establish a baseline percentage for number of plans accepted within 30 days and number accepted within 60 days. OCS will track and report on improvements in subsequent years.

²¹ OCS will use the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), OMB-approved methodology.

²² Federal Accountability Measures 1Fb, 2Fb, 3Fd, 4Fb, 6F, 7F and 8F are measures of state satisfaction with OCS’ performance of critical program elements.

²³ The goal for this measure is 100%. If the baseline percentage is less than 100%, OCS will track and report on improvements in subsequent years.

²⁴ OCS will use the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), OMB-approved methodology.

²⁵ The goal for this measure is 100%. If the baseline percentage is less than 100%, OCS will track and report on improves in subsequent years.

²⁶ OCS will establish a baseline percentage in the first year and set targets for subsequent years.

- 3Fc. “x” percent²⁷ of States that met the agreed upon schedule to resolve corrective action plans required by the Office of Community Services (OCS) as a result of State assessments.
- 3Fd. Using data from a nationally administered survey²⁸ of the States and feedback from other sources, OCS made organizational adjustments, as appropriate, to improve its grant monitoring activities.
- 3Fe. “x” percent decrease²⁹ of States with repeat audit findings.

Data Collection, Analysis, and Reporting

During the performance period...

- 4Fa. “x” number³⁰ of State reports (including required data reports) reviewed and accepted, and feedback provided within 60 business days of receipt of the information.
- 4Fb. Using data from a nationally administered survey³¹ of the States and feedback from other sources, OCS made organizational adjustments, as appropriate, to improve the quality of feedback provided by OCS about the State reports.

Organizational Standards

During the performance period...

- 5F. “x” number of States in which “x” percent³² of assessed eligible entities in the State met the state-adopted organizational standards.

Training and Technical Assistance

During the performance period...

- 6F. Using data from a nationally administered survey³³ of the States and feedback from other sources, OCS made organizational adjustments, as appropriate, to improve performance with regard to:
 - i. Staff-provided technical assistance (TA)
 - ii. Staff-provided training
 - iii. Contractor-provided technical assistance
 - iv. Contractor-provided training

Communications

During the performance period...

- 7F. Using data from a nationally administered survey³⁴ of the states and feedback from other sources, OCS made organizational adjustments, as appropriate, to improve its communications.

²⁷ OCS will establish a baseline percentage in the first year and set targets in subsequent years.

²⁸ OCS will use the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), OMB-approved methodology.

²⁹ OCS will establish a baseline percentage in the first year and set targets in subsequent years.

³⁰ OCS will establish a baseline percentage in the first year and set targets in subsequent years.

³¹ OCS will use the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), OMB-approved methodology.

³² During the first year of reporting on standards, OCS will analyze State results and

³³ OCS will use the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), OMB-approved methodology.

³⁴ OCS will use the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), OMB-approved methodology.

Grantee Satisfaction

During the performance period...

8F. By 20xx, OCS achieves an overall grantee satisfaction score of “x” (TBD).³⁵

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³⁵ OCS will use the ACSI. The targets will be determined based on the results of the 2016 ACSI survey results.

Appendix 4

AMERICAN CUSTOMER SATISFACTION INDEX AND CSBG ACCOUNTABILITY

What is the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI)?

The ACSI is the only **national cross-industry/government measure of customer satisfaction** in the United States. Since 1994, the ACSI has measured satisfaction, its causes, and its effects, for seven economic sectors, 41 industries, and more than 200 of the largest U.S. corporations. The ACSI has been used to measure hundreds of services and programs of Federal Government agencies since 1999, ranging from retirement benefits and tax returns to national parks and Federal grants.

The ACSI is co-sponsored by the American Society of Quality (ASQ), the University of Michigan Business School, and the CFI Group, a global company based in Ann Arbor, Michigan, which is the entity that administers the survey for Federal agencies. Read more on the ACSI Website: www.theacsi.org.

Why did OCS select the ACSI methodology as the survey tool for the CSBG Accountability Measures?

The ACSI provides an independent, cost-effective, highly valid and reliable measure of satisfaction. The ACSI methodology is the “gold standard”, and has been cleared *in advance* by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for government-wide use.

Use of the ACSI will allow for the collection of consistent, uniform information from States and eligible entities across the country, and will provide OCS and the States with actionable insights to improve their customer experience and boost program results.

What is the history of the ACSI and OCS?

In 2009, as part of an effort to maximize program performance, OCS’ Assets for Independence (AFI) program conducted its first ACSI survey of grantees to assess satisfaction with the services it provided to grantee organizations. A second survey was conducted in 2011. Another is planned for 2015.

In 2012, OCS used the ACSI survey to measure the experience of CSBG and Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) grantees. OCS tailored the survey to address five critical areas of grantee satisfaction: Grants Requirements and Reporting; Accessing Grant Funds; Technical Assistance provided by OCS staff; Training provided by OCS staff; and OCS-Funded Technical Assistance. Based on feedback from the survey, CSBG and LIHEAP undertook efforts to improve in these areas. These efforts are ongoing and OCS remains committed to improving the service and tools it provides States so they, in turn, can provide support and training to their local agencies in order to achieve the goals of CSBG and LIHEAP.

In 2015, OCS is planning to expand its use of the ACSI to obtain feedback from CSBG eligible entities about services provided by the States as detailed in the new State Accountability Measures.

A second survey of the States to assess satisfaction with the service OCS provides as laid out in new the Federal Accountability Measures is planned for 2015.

Will States be involved in administering or disseminating the survey to their eligible entities?

No, the survey will be administered by the CFI Group. States will be required to provide contact information for all of its eligible entities. OCS will also be forming a small work group with representatives from States and eligible entities to assist the CFI Group in developing the survey instrument in line with the State Accountability Measures.

How would the survey results be used? Would the survey results be publically available?

OCS will provide information about individual State survey results to that State. OCS and the States will use the results from the survey to learn about performance in several areas addressed in the Accountability Measures, and will then use that information to identify areas for improvement. The ACSI cause and effect model is helpful in identifying specific improvements that will have the greatest impact on customer service.

Which State Accountability Measures would the ACSI survey measure?

The ACSI will be used to collect information from the eligible entities on the following State Accountability Measures. (See, also, Appendix 2.)

Development of the State Plan

- 1Sb. Using data from a nationally administered survey¹ of eligible entities, and feedback from OCS and other sources, the State adjusted its plan (in the next State plan submission), as appropriate, to improve performance regarding:
- i. The extent of eligible entity participation in developing the State plan; and
 - ii. How well the State plan reflects the input of the eligible entities.²

Implementation of the State Plan

Distribution of Funds

- 2Sb. Using data from a nationally administered survey of eligible entities and feedback from OCS and other sources, the State adjusted its plan (in the next State plan submission), as appropriate, to improve the quality of grant administration.

Use of Remainder/Discretionary Funds

- 3Sb. Using data from a nationally administered survey of eligible entities, and feedback from OCS and other sources, the State adjusted its plan (in the next State plan submission), as appropriate, to improve its use of remainder/discretionary funds.
- 3Sd. Using data from a nationally administered survey of eligible entities, and feedback from OCS and other sources, the State adjusted its plan (in the next State plan submission), as

¹ In these State and Federal measures, “a nationally administered survey” refers to the ACSI methodology.

² State accountability measures 1Sb, 2Sb, 3Sb, 3Sd, 4Sb, and 7Sb are measures of eligible entity satisfaction with the state’s performance of critical elements of the State plan.

appropriate, to improve the Training and Technical Assistance provided to the eligible entities.

Grantee Monitoring and Corrective Action

4Sb. Using data from a nationally administered survey of eligible entities, and feedback from OCS and other sources, the State adjusted its plan (in the next State plan submission), as appropriate, to improve its monitoring activities.

State Linkages and Communication

7Sb. Using data from a nationally administered survey of eligible entities, and feedback from OCS and other sources, the State adjusted its plan (in the next State plan submission), as appropriate, to improve its communication efforts.

Which Federal Accountability Measures would the ACSI survey measure?

The ACSI will be used to collect information from the States about the following Federal accountability measures: State plan review and acceptance; distribution of funds; grant monitoring and corrective action; data collection, analysis, and reporting; training and technical assistance; and communications. (See Appendix 3.)

State Plan Review and Acceptance

1Fb. Using data from a nationally administered survey of the States and feedback from other sources, OCS made organizational adjustments, as appropriate, to improve performance regarding its grant management services:

- i. Clarity, ease and timeliness of information about grant requirements;
- ii. Quality of feedback provided about the State plan.³

Distribution of Funds

2Fb. Using data from a nationally administered survey of the States and feedback from other sources, OCS made organizational adjustments, as appropriate, to improve the quality of grants administration.

Grant Monitoring and Corrective Action

3Fd. Using data from a nationally administered survey of the States and feedback from other sources, OCS made organizational adjustments, as appropriate, to improve its grant monitoring activities.

Data Collection, Analysis and Reporting

4Fb. Using data from a nationally administered survey of the States and feedback from other sources, OCS made organizational adjustments, as appropriate, to improve the quality of feedback provided by OCS about the State reports.

³ Federal accountability measures 1Fb, 2Fb, 3Fd, 4Fb, 6F, 7F and 8F are measures of State satisfaction with OCS' performance of critical program elements.

Training and Technical Assistance

- 6F. Using data from a nationally administered survey of the States and feedback from other sources, OCS made organizational adjustments, as appropriate, to improve performance with regard to:
- i. Staff-provided technical assistance (TA)
 - ii. Staff-provided training
 - iii. Contractor-provided technical assistance
 - iv. Contractor-provided training

Communications

- 7F. Using data from a nationally administered survey of the States and feedback from other sources, OCS made organizational adjustments, as appropriate, to improve performance its communication efforts.

Grantee Satisfaction

- 8F. By 20xx, OCS achieves an overall grantee satisfaction score of “x” (TBD).⁴

⁴ For this measure, OCS will use the ACSI methodology to formulate a grantee satisfaction score.