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NASCSP URGES PRESIDENT TO EMPHASIZE LOW-INCOME POLICIES IN JOBS BILL

Citing the fact that more than one in seven Americans now live in poverty, the National Association for State Community Service Programs (NASCSP) today called on President Obama to prioritize policies that will help low-income citizens.

“We recognize the urgency of controlling federal spending and reducing the national deficit, said Tim Warfield, NASCSP’s Executive Director, “but we also believe that deficit reduction should not be accomplished disproportionately at the expense of our nation’s neediest citizens, who have already borne the brunt of the economic downturn.” Warfield called on the President to recommend to Congress the following five policies designed to help low-income Americans achieve economic security:

- **Appropriate \$3 billion to put Americans back to work** rebuilding our infrastructure and creating a modern, energy-saving electric grid. NASCSP members have the network already in place to train low-income Americans with the skills necessary to move into these new jobs quickly.
- **Appropriate at least \$800 million to expand the Community Services Block Grant**, our national anti-poverty strategy. CSBG, a state administered block grant, provides the foundation for 1,060 local agencies, primarily Community Action Agencies (CAAs), in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. In the last year, the CSBG helped more than 20 million Americans achieve economic security. It is the only federal program exclusively focused on reducing poverty and its program design empowers the States to address effectively the root causes of poverty on a local level.
- **Appropriate at least \$750 million for the Weatherization Assistance Program**. WAP is the nation’s largest residential energy efficiency program. It reduces the energy costs of low-income families—particularly targeting the elderly, the disabled, and families with children—by an average of 35%, while creating good jobs, investing in local businesses, and advancing technology. WAP is an ARRA success story: the program is on track to surpass the President’s production target of 650,000 weatherized homes and has created more than 14,450 jobs this spring, more than all but seven other ARRA programs. WAP largely created jobs in areas with the highest unemployment.

ment—places that will be unable to sustain efficiency efforts without continued federal support.

- **Appropriate \$2 billion for a national initiative to train unemployed individuals in the construction trades and clean energy technology**, and to facilitate the purchase of foreclosed homes. The twin objectives of these linked initiatives are to provide jobs rehabilitating homes to make them more energy efficient and healthy and to provide affordable rental housing for low-income Americans who cannot afford the dream of home ownership. The program can be implemented as a public-private partnership with Community Action Agencies, which are experienced in property management, training, and housing rehabilitation.
- **Appropriate Low-Income Home Energy Assistance funding at the FY 2010 level of \$5.1 billion.** LIHEAP assists low-income households, targeting those that pay a disproportionately high percentage of their income on home energy, using money that would be better spent on food, shelter, and medicine. LIHEAP funds are used for cooling in this summer of record heat and by households that cannot afford to pay their utility bills. LIHEAP will serve a record number of households this year – nearly nine million. We believe that demand for service will not decrease during the 2011-2012 heating season, which is why additional funding should be appropriated.

“Enactment of these policies,” according to Warfield, “will mitigate the effects going forward of the economic slowdown on low-income Americans, who have suffered disproportionately in worst economic slowdown since the 1930s.”

The National Association for State Community Services Programs (NASCSPP) is the leading national association advocating and enhancing the leadership role of states in preventing and reducing poverty. A membership organization comprised of state administrators of the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) and Weatherization Assistant Program (WAP), our mission encompasses empowering low-income families to reach self-sufficiency in its broadest context. The mission of NASCSPP is to empower low-income families to attain self-sufficiency in its broadest context, and our network successfully combines Federal, State and local investment and involvement to deliver measurable results for low-income Americans in distressed communities across the nation.

For further information, please contact Arley Johnson at (202) 624-5866 or by email at ajohnson@nascsp.org.