



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
**DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING &
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Charles D. Baker, Governor ♦ Karyn E. Polito, Lt. Governor ♦ Jennifer D. Maddox, Undersecretary

**Information Memorandum
CSBG – FY 2020 – 07**

TO: CAA EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS/PRESIDENTS, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICERS AND PLANNERS
FROM: DITZAH WOODEN-WADE, ASSISTANT MANAGER, COMMUNITY SERVICES UNIT
SUBJECT: MODIFYING THE FY20 PERIOD 2 CAP TO ACCOMMODATE CARES SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING AND COVID-19 RESPONSE ACTIVITIES
DATE: MAY 26, 2020

The purpose of this IM is to provide guidance to Community Action Agencies (CAAs) on modifying the FY20 Community Action Plan (CAP) Period 2 Report to accommodate supplemental funding received for the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (“CARES Act”) and to reflect activities related to prevent, prepare for and respond to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. **DHCD has extended the CAP Period 2 Report due date to July 10, 2020** to provide agencies additional time to complete these modifications.

The CAP modifications outlined below will capture basic information on the use of CARES funds and COVID-19 response activities to inform, among other things, an amendment to our FY19-20 CSBG State Plan. Please note the modifications outlined below were developed with significant input from the Community Action Plan/Annual Report (CAP/AR) Workgroup, which includes representatives from nine CAAs, MASSCAP and DHCD.

1. Update Need/Goal/Strategy Statements to reflect COVID-19 changes:

Per the DHCD CARES Contract Scope of Services and current guidance from the CSBG National Partners, information from a COVID-19 community assessment must be used to inform the CAP. For FY20, this requirement necessitates an update to the community assessment conducted for the *FY18-20 Community Assessment Report & Strategic Plan (CARSP)*. However, since the definition of “update” can be broadly interpreted, and capacity to conduct assessment activities is limited during the pandemic, DHCD requests agencies document this requirement solely by updating their Need/Goal/Strategy statements connected to activities within the FY20 CAP to reflect changes due to COVID-19.

Furthermore, to help agencies more easily meet this requirement and allow the network to better tell the story of COVID-19 response, the CAP/AR Workgroup is developing common Need/Goal/Strategy statements which will be available in the next few weeks for agencies to utilize. These statements will reflect the MA Community Action network’s most common responses to COVID-19 at this time, supported by national, state, and/or local level CAA data reported informally through various venues. **Should your agency opt to update or create its own statements, please be sure the text begins with the label “COVID-19:” so it can be easily identified.**

To make the changes described above, access the “Organization Information” tile from the CSG Dashboard and click on the Community Assessment Report & Strategic Plan tab. For more detailed directions, refer to the CAP Instructions document available through the “Guidance” folder on the blue task bar within the CAP.

2. Enter FY20 planned CARES Spending for each Program/Initiative/Other:

Planned and actual use of CARES funds will be accounted for through both the Fiscal Reporting System and the CAP. In the Fiscal Reporting System agencies will submit a budget plan broken down by cost categories for the entire CARES allocation and report actual expenditures quarterly through the duration of the award. In the CAP agencies will submit planned spending of CARES funds by Program/Initiative/Other category for each program year and only report actual expenditures in the Period 3 Report. To accommodate this CAP reporting requirement, DHCD worked with our E.Gov software vendor to add a CARES field under the budget tab for each Program/Initiative/Other category. This new field will be installed early next month.

DHCD understands planned expenditures will not match between the two report systems however we do expect actual expenditures reported at the end of each program year to match.

3. Update or Add Programs/Initiatives/Other to reflect COVID-19 response activities:

Agencies should review all Programs/Initiatives/Other activities currently reported in the FY20 CAP and update where needed to reflect changes due to COVID-19. Similarly, agencies should add any new Programs/Initiatives/Other activities being conducted due to COVID-19. Be sure to review and update each tab:

- Description – Were there changes to how the program operates? Are more or less services being offered? Has the target population served changed?
- Budget – Will CARES supplemental funds be applied? Will more or less regular CSBG funding be applied?
- Need, Goal/Strategy Statement – If a Program/Initiative/Other activity is part of the agency's COVID-19 response attach the associated COVID-19 specific Need, Goal/Strategy Statement.
- NPIs - Do the targets/actuals need to be revised? Do new NPIs need to be added?
- Services/Strategies - Do other services/strategies need to be added?

To make the changes described above, follow the steps outlined in the CAP Instructions document available through the "Guidance" folder on the blue task bar within the CAP.

Finally, CSBG State Offices have not received written specifications/guidance from the federal Office of Community Services (OCS) on reporting requirements related to CARES funding. Therefore, it is likely that DHCD will need to make further additions or adjustments to this guidance moving forward. Should changes be required, DHCD will make every effort to communicate and incorporate any changes in the least burdensome way possible.

Please share this IM notice with all appropriate personnel within your agency. If you have any questions regarding this communication, please contact your Program Representative. Thank you for your attention to these matters and your continued cooperation.