

Opening Comments for CSBG Legislative Public Hearing April 9, 2019

House Community and Regional Affairs

Thank you, Co-Chair Harriet Drummond, Co-Chair Sara Hannan and other members of the Community and Regional Affairs Committee.

I am pleased to participate in this public hearing concerning the State Plan for the Community Services Block Grant Program for Federal Fiscal Year 2019.

The Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development would like to accept comments from the public on the proposed use and distribution of these funds.

Community Services Block Grant funds are allocated to the Department from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. We anticipate receiving approximately \$2.3 to \$2.5M in FFY 2020 although that number could increase or decrease slightly. Federal requirements restrict the grantees to Community Action Agencies. Rural Alaska Community Action Program, better known as RurAL CAP is the only recognized Community Action Agency in the state of Alaska. By statute, ninety five percent of CSBG funds received are granted to RurAL CAP. The Department is authorized to keep 5% funds to cover administrative costs.

The purpose of the Community Services Block Grant is to impact the causes and conditions of poverty, revitalize the low-income communities, and empowerment of low-income families and individuals in rural and urban areas to become fully self-sufficient (particularly families who are attempting to transition off a State program).

In order to be eligible to receive a grant 42 USC § 9908 (3) require States to hold at least one legislative hearing every three years in conjunction with the development of the State Plan, the last legislative hearing held March 29, 2016. The State Plan, on which we are accepting comment today, outlines how the Department administers the CSBG program and the activities which RurAL CAP proposes to undertake during fiscal year 2019. Because the State Plan is lengthy, I will briefly outline the major components which the Department and RurAL CAP have identified for the program.

RurAL CAP will utilize CSBG funds to serve low-income people throughout the State in several program components. These include Administrative Services; Development and Communication; Child Development; Community Development; Planning and Construction; and Supportive Housing. Each of these components are described in detail in the State Plan.

Also included in this year's Plan are Outcome Measures for each of the program components. Program results are tracked and reported on a quarterly basis in terms of the number of clients who achieve a given milestone. Progress is reviewed by staff who use it to evaluate results and make changes when necessary.

Both the Department and RurAL CAP place a strong emphasis on promoting maximum participation by rural residents in the elimination of the causes and conditions of poverty. I have worked with RurAL CAP in the daily administration of the CSBG grant for eight years. They have demonstrated a sincere interest in helping low income Alaskans.

Thank you for your interest in the Community Service Block Grant program. Again, my purpose today is to educate the public about the program and to accept comment on the proposed use and distribution of funds. If you have any questions, I would be happy to answer them.