Requests for Community Services Block Grant Discretionary Grant Application (RFA) Guide

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Arkansas Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)
FY 2025 Discretionary Funds

Awarded Funds Will Be Available
For Use through September 30, 2026

Total Grant funds available: $ 324,949.15

Application Due Date: March 19, 2026

INTRODUCTION AND INTENT

The Arkansas Department of Human Services, DCO, Office of Program and Grant Management (DHS/DCO/OPGM) establishes guidelines for the awarding of discretionary grants as authorized by the Arkansas Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) State Plan.

The primary intended use of the grant funds awarded to the state of Arkansas and to Arkansas subgrantees is "to provide assistance to local communities in Arkansas, working through a network of Community Action Agencies and other neighborhood-based organizations, for the reduction of poverty, the revitalization of low-income communities, and the empowerment of low-income families and individuals in rural and urban areas to become fully self-sufficient."

CSBG Purpose and Goals:

- Promoting maximum participation of low-income people and communities
- Leveraging resources of other anti-poverty programs
- Strengthening community capabilities for planning or coordinating resources for local needs and conditions of poverty
- Using innovative approaches to address causes and conditions of poverty
- Measuring impact to ensure accountability and ongoing data-driven quality improvement

The National Community Action Network Theory of Change Community Action Goals

1. Individuals and families with low incomes are stable and achieve economic security.
2. Communities where people with low incomes live are healthy and offer economic opportunity.
3. People with low incomes are engaged and active in building opportunities in communities.

As described in the authorizing legislation (CSBG Act), these "goals are achieved through:

A. the strengthening of community capabilities for planning and coordinating the use of a broad range of Federal, state, local, and other assistance (including private resources) related to the elimination of poverty, so that this assistance can be used in a manner responsive to local needs and conditions.
B. the organization of a range of services related to the needs of low-income families and individuals, so that these services may have a measurable and potentially major impact on the causes of poverty in the community and may help the families and individuals to achieve self-sufficiency.
C. the greater use of innovative and effective community-based approaches to attack the causes and effects of poverty and of community breakdown.
D. the maximum participation of residents of the low-income communities and members of the groups served by programs assisted through block grants made under the CSBG Act to empower such residents and members to respond to the unique problems and needs within their communities; and
E. the broadening of the resource base of programs directed to the elimination of poverty to secure a more active role in the provision of services for private, religious, charitable, and neighborhood-based organizations; and individual citizens, and business, labor, and professional groups, who can influence the quantity and quality of opportunities and services for the low-income."

This RFA seeks applications for:

1. **Innovative Youth Projects**
2. **Educational Scholarships**
3. **CAA Capacity Building: Certification Training and Conference Trainings**
4. **Statewide Training and Technical Assistance – network training to Arkansas Community Action Agencies**
5. **Software and System Upgrades**

Applicants are advised that **direct services** funded by CSBG are currently **restricted to Arkansas residents** with household incomes that fall **at or below the percentage of the Federal Poverty Guideline allowed by the United States Congress.**

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

Agencies eligible to submit proposals for FY 2025 CSBG discretionary funding are Arkansas Community Action Agencies (CSBG eligible entities) providing services in Arkansas, the Arkansas Community Action Agencies Association (ACAAA), and other non-profit organizations whose primary purpose is to eliminate the causes and effects of poverty in Arkansas and are in partnership with the Arkansas Community Action Agencies.

AVAILABLE FUNDS, PROJECTS, and PROJECT PERIOD

A. Projects

1. **Innovative Youth Projects**
   Examples of youth projects may include, but are not limited to, projects that focus on nutritional, mental and behavioral health, civic engagement, educational opportunities, and other social skill building activities.

2. **Educational Scholarships**
   May include post-secondary education and / or trade school and certification programs.

3. **CAA Capacity Building: Certifications Training and Conference Trainings**

4. **Statewide Training and/or Technical Assistance Projects**
   Applicants should describe how the proposed project will provide training and/or technical assistance activities to benefit or successfully work to improve lives for low-income families, communities, and the Arkansas Community Action network.

Continuous learning and continuous improvement to achieve better outcomes for the families and communities of low-income served by CSBG are the focus for these efforts. Enhanced and focused Training and Technical Assistance at all levels of the network (Federal, State, and community-level) continue to be needed to meet the promise of the Performance Management Framework.

For the purposes of this funding opportunity, **"training and/or technical assistance"** examples include:

Training and Technical Assistance Programs that provide Arkansas' Community Action Agencies with quality training, technical assistance, best practices, and tools to build capacity and strengthen the role of Community Action Agencies in the provision of anti-poverty initiatives.

All training and Technical Assistance in this category must be performed by a Nationally Certified ROMA Trainer as defined by the National Peer to Peer Training Project.

- Host four ROMA Work Group sessions and provide Comprehensive training in ROMA tools and concepts to all 15 Arkansas Community Action Agencies.
- Provide comprehensive technical assistance to link family and community level national performance indicators to CAA workflow. This includes review of intake and other agency tracking forms to capture demographics and implement and enhance the use of results-orientated (ROMA) service and outcome tools.
- Host at least two Introduction to ROMA sessions.
- Host at least two sessions on the use of ROMA Scales and Matrices with measurable outcomes.
- Host up to 20 on demand and / or on-site training.
- Host up to two sessions on the National Theory of Change guiding discussion on how to apply to creating a Local Theory of Change for the CAAs.

5. **Software and System Upgrades** to enhance agency outcomes.

B. Available Funds

The amount of funding available through this funding opportunity is: $ 324,949.15.

Applicants may submit proposals for any amount up to the full amount available or a lesser amount **and be willing to accept a lesser award than applied for, if approved.**

***The agency must have receipt of the Notice of Award (NOA) prior to funding and developing any resultant subgrants.**

C. Project Period

I. The period of availability for FY 2025 discretionary funding ends September 30, 2026.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION DEADLINE

Applications must be received by email to CSBG Team Attn: Beverly Buchanan, CSBG Program Manager, at DHS.CSBG.Team@DHS.Arkansas.gov by 4:30 p.m. on March 19, 2026.

REPORTING & ACCOUNTABILITY REQUIREMENTS

I. Approved applicants will be advised of applicable reporting requirements. Grant Agreements will be sent to applicants for signature. Reports may include, but are not limited to:

A. Grant Expenditure Report:

The monthly **Grant Expenditure Report** provides information on expenditure during the month. Monthly reimbursements will be made based on this report and any accompanying documentation. The report is to be uploaded to the CSBG Quick Base system no later than the 15th of each month.

B. Program Narrative Report:
The subgrantee shall submit a monthly narrative report specific to the approved project and describe the subgrantee's progress toward the project's objectives, challenges, and successes that resulted from the project's implementation.

II. DCO/OPGM/CSBG staff will conduct project analysis and on-site grant monitoring reviews.

III. Other reports may be required to meet the evolving needs of the Federal government, State of Arkansas or ARDHS.

I. APPLICATION LOGISTICS

The 2025 CSBG Discretionary application packet consists of the below electronic files.

1. RFA Guide
2. Application Checklist
3. Budget Instructions
4. Budget Workbook in Microsoft Excel
5. CSBG Assurances

The application template and budget workbook are editable and may be adjusted to enable presentation, complete responses and, in the case of the budget worksheets, details supporting both the assigned cost and the calculation of the cost.

The Application Cover Sheet and the Assurances for the CSBG Application must be signed by the applicant's **executive director** and by the **president, or chair**, of the governing board.

One complete application should be submitted by email to the CSBG Team Attn: Beverly Buchanan, CSBG Program Manager at DHS.CSBG.Team@DHS.Arkansas.gov no later than 4:30 p.m. on March 19, 2026.

Applications submitted after the deadline will not be considered for funding.

Upon receipt of the application, the CSBG Team will provide an email communication acknowledging receipt of the application.

Upon approval of the application and award amount, all information will be entered into the CSBG Quick Base System.

II. APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

The application checklist must be completed and submitted with the application to ensure that all required information is included in the application packet.

SECTION 1 - COVER SHEET

Item 1.1 – Provide requested information in the adjacent cell

Item 1.2 – Provide requested information in the adjacent cell.

Item 1.3 – Provide requested information in the adjacent cell.

Item 1.4 – Signature of the entity's executive director and board president or chair are required.

SECTION 2 - PROPOSED PROJECT

Item 2.1 – The project description should provide a detailed description of the proposed project, including:

- geographic description of the service area,
- target population to be served by the project,
- primary needs the proposal seeks to address, and
- a clear, concise description of how the entity plans to use CSBG funds to produce meaningful outcomes.

Item 2.2 – Describe how the proposed project relates to purposes of the CSBG authorizing legislation (CSBG Act) and will contribute to the amelioration of the causes and conditions of poverty.

Item 2.3 – Identify key personnel to be involved in the proposed project. The description should clearly identify if CSBG funds will be used to support these positions.

Item 2.4 – Describe other resources (volunteers, in-kind, agency personnel, partnerships, additional funding, etc.) that will support the project.

Item 2.5 – Timeline. Detail the project's proposed start date, intermediate benchmarks, and end-date, as applicable.

Item 2.6 – If a continuing project, include success stories from previous year project.

SECTION 3 – ENTITY SUMMARY

Item 3.1a – Use the vacant row below to enter the mission statement.

Item 3.1b – Use the vacant row below to enter the vision statement. "N/A" if none exists.

Item 3.1c – The entity overview should be a concise description of the entity. Suggested items to include are the organization's basic structure, its capacity to provide programs and services to low-income people and communities, and major lines of business/programs.

Item 3.2a – Describe entity attributes that contribute to its ability to **successfully execute** the project. The description should include the applicant's experience with providing similar services as described in the RFA.

Item 3.2b – Describe applicant's experience with the Community Services Block Grant or similar federal grants.

Item 3.2c – How will project performance be evaluated, analyzed, reported, and adjusted through the term of the project?

Item 3.2d – Use the vacant row to describe the entity's sustainability plan. The applicant should describe the entity's plan to continue the project and/or sustain the gains made because of the project if applicable.

Item 3.3a and Item 3.3b – In order to avoid duplication of efforts and to encourage coordination and collaboration, non-CSBG-eligible applicants whose targeted service area overlaps that of a CSBG-eligible entity (Community Action Agency) **must provide a letter of support and proof of partnership from the local Community Action Agency**.

SECTION 4 – BUDGET

Applicants are required to submit a detailed budget proposal that will provide a full explanation of all proposed project costs. Proposals with incomplete or insufficient financial information will not receive favorable consideration. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to provide clear, complete, and detailed planned expenditures.

Item 4.1 – Budget Workbook - Applicants must use the pre-formatted budget workbook (Microsoft Excel) contained within the application packet. Information provided within the budget spreadsheet should clearly define anticipated expenses in each of the object classes.

Item 4.2a – Applicants must supply sufficient detail to explain how specific costs were derived to demonstrate that proposed expenditures are justified and reasonable. The applicant entity must provide details to show that each expense item is necessary for the execution of the proposed project as described within the application.

SECTION 5 – CERTIFICATIONS and CSBG ASSURANCES

The CSBG Assurances for the CSBG Discretionary Grant must be signed by the applicants. **executive director** and by the **president (or chair)**, of the entity's governing board.

1. Single Audit Certification
2. CSBG Assurances