

## Sample Letter to President Obama for retaining CSBG Funding

February 14, 2011

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20502

### Dear President Obama:

Please reconsider your proposed cuts to Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funding. Though we applaud your efforts at deficit reduction, we also agree with your State of the Union address when you said: “I am willing to eliminate whatever we can honestly afford to do without. But let’s make sure that we’re not doing it on the backs of our most vulnerable citizens.”

The more than 1,000 Community Action agencies across the country comprise our nation’s most effective local network for supporting our most vulnerable citizens – and guiding them on their paths to fulfilling their dreams and achieving self-sufficiency. In Washington State, our thirty Community Action Agencies, including in Skagit County, build healthy communities by weaving together an array of vital human services in every community throughout our state, rural or urban.

For almost 30 years, CSBG support has allowed Community Action to respond quickly and effectively to local needs by providing a broad range of services, most of which would not be self-sustaining without flexible funding like CSBG. In addition, CSBG allows Community Action agencies to be a center of positive activity in our local communities. Community Action is most often the “first stop” for people in crisis. Community Action is uniquely positioned to understand local needs, and to work across political and cultural divides to convene a broad array of nonprofits, churches, businesses, agencies, service organizations and individual volunteers to craft solutions that restore dignity and put people back to work. Over the years of building broad coalitions and hundreds of positive local partnerships, our community has come to trust and have confidence in Community Action, an irreplaceable asset for purchasing cooperation, coordination and a spirit of optimism.

Furthermore, Community Action leverages the modest amount of CSBG funding many times over in state, other federal, foundation, and individual support, as well as through hundreds of millions of dollars worth of volunteer engagement.

*CSBG is the fuel for a powerful engine that works where it counts most – at the community level.*

The impact of Community Action includes:

- Providing a “first stop” for those in need and critical services to those affected by the severe economic recession;
- Relieving stress and confusion, and addressing the complexity of needs, by navigating people to resources in our communities, including families recently impacted by the economic recession;
- Creating and retaining jobs, and supporting low-income people in a variety of ways that prepare them for and link them with living-wage employment;
- Building more positive communities where businesses both small and large have a better chance of flourishing;

- Helping newly returning and homeless Veterans, homebound and disabled individuals, and senior citizens living on fixed and limited incomes achieve dignity and economic stability;
- Engaging the power of neighbor helping neighbor through well-targeted volunteerism; and
- Strengthening communities by drawing together broad and diverse coalitions to solve local issues.

Flexible CSBG support is the central ingredient in each of these impacts. We thus believe CSBG is the best of all federal strategies: modest federal support activated at the community level, with an enormous return on investment.

Mr. President, we stand by you in these challenging times, and we are committed to working together to protect our most vulnerable, secure the present, and win the future. If you would like first hand proof, we would invite you and Michelle to Washington State to see CSBG in action.

In the meantime, we urge you and members of Congress to preserve CSBG at the current level, so that Community Action agencies can continue to serve our most vulnerable citizens in this time of skyrocketing need.

Sincerely,

**Please send letters (and encourage your friends and community partners to send letters) to the addresses below. We also urge you to click on the links to email messages, as mailed letters to the President and Congress are screened for security and can take up to 3 weeks to arrive:**

**President Barack Obama**

The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20502  
To email: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/contact>

**Senator Patty Murray**

United States Senate  
448 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
To email: <http://murray.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?p=ContactMe>

**Senator Maria Cantwell**

United States Senate  
511 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
To email: <http://cantwell.senate.gov/contact/>

**Congressman Rick Larsen**

United States House of Representatives  
108 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
To email: <http://larsen.house.gov/contact/>

**And please send a copy of your letter to President Obama to (for hand carrying to the White House):**

**National Community Action Foundation**

1 Massachusetts Ave NW, Suite 310  
Washington, DC 20001