

Regular Session, 2011

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 89

BY REPRESENTATIVE BARROW

A RESOLUTION

To direct the Louisiana Workforce Commission to develop and present the final version of the Community Service Block Grant state plan to the House Committee on Municipal, Parochial and Cultural Affairs prior to submission to the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration of Children and Families, Office of Community Services, for review.

WHEREAS, the Community Service Block Grant (CSBG), awarded by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration of Children and Families, Office of Community Services (DHHS-ACF-OCS), is the federal government's only antipoverty program administered within the local communities by community action agencies; and

WHEREAS, the pending federal budget for CSBG substantially considers performance and innovative initiatives in determining the state allocations on a competitive basis; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana Revised Statutes 23:61 through 23:66 provide state statutory authority for the executive director of the Louisiana Workforce Commission to administer the CSBG for the state of Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 676 of the CSBG legislation (Public Law 105-285-October 27, 1998), at least one legislative hearing must be held every three years in conjunction with the development of the state plan; and

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) failed to comply with this requirement and submitted the current CSBG state plan to DHHS-ACF-OCS despite knowledge that the previous legislative hearing occurred beyond the three-year mandate, on August 27, 2007; and

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Legislative Auditor cited multiple significant findings regarding the LWC's administration and implementation deficiencies of the CSBG program in his most recent audit, dated March 16, 2011; and

WHEREAS, the LWC recently returned \$1,413,434 to the federal government that was intended for investment in CSBG-related initiatives; and

WHEREAS, the LWC should examine the various requests of community action agencies to implement a performance management system designed to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency, responsiveness, and accountability of service delivery to the target population; and

WHEREAS, the most recent CSBG Annual Report 2009 from the National Association for State Community Services Programs reflects Louisiana as one of only four states and Puerto Rico choosing not to invest any discretionary funds allocated to support their designated priority categories of community action agency expansion, competitive grants for exemplary programs, training or technical assistance, or statewide programs; and

WHEREAS, the CSBG Annual Report 2009 identifies thirty-three authorized staff positions but only seven full-time equivalent positions; and

WHEREAS, DHHS-ACF-OCS, recently published Information Memorandum 123, which addresses "A New Strategy for Excellence" necessary for the community action agencies to successfully compete in this new economic climate and for the CSBG to remain viable and which emphasizes the agency's confidence in state associations serving as the training or technical assistance administrators to more effectively increase the capacity of local CSBG-eligible entities to carry out the mandate of the CSBG legislation (Public Law 105-285-October 27, 1998) and ensure results are appropriately measured; and

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Association of Community Action Partnerships, Inc., the statewide association established to provide customized support and services to community action agencies, has consistently demonstrated success in administering, funding, leveraging community resources, and implementing innovative strategies, such as their nationally credentialed state-of-the art weatherization training center, which significantly enhances the quality of life for individuals within the CSBG target population; and

WHEREAS, the LWC, in partnership with the Louisiana Association of Community Action Partnerships, Inc., should conduct best practice reviews in the administration and

implementation of CSBG, particularly as relates to training and technical assistance, innovative service delivery strategies, targeting resources based on local needs/outcomes, and risk mitigation to assure appropriate, timely, and effective expenditure of funds; and

WHEREAS, the United States Census Bureau's American Community Survey identifies Louisiana's poverty rate as the second-highest among all states in the United States; and

WHEREAS, according to Louisiana Executive Order No. BJ 2008-41, the real economic costs resulting from a high rate of poverty are borne by Louisiana's overall population, and negatively affect the state's educational, workforce, and economic development potential; and

WHEREAS, the order also states that the most effective strategies for reducing poverty are those that help individuals move from poverty to self-sufficiency through effective educational and workforce supports.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby direct the Louisiana Workforce Commission to develop and present the final version of the Community Service Block Grant state plan to the House Committee on Municipal, Parochial and Cultural Affairs prior to submission to the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration of Children and Families, Office of Community Services, for review.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that such plan shall have the purposes of promoting economy and efficiency in the operation and management of the purposes of the CSBG and shall include the most recent guidance outlined in Information Memorandum 123 published by DHHS-ACF-OCS.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the LWC may coordinate with the Louisiana Association of Community Action Partnerships, Inc., to develop the CSBG state plan, to develop and implement the most effective service delivery strategy required to meet the outlined criteria, and to more effectively serve the eligible citizens in need.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the executive director of the LWC shall coordinate with the House Committee on Municipal, Parochial and Cultural Affairs to provide quarterly reports and such reports shall include the four priority areas identified in

the Information Memorandum 123 and any further guidance from DHHS-ACF-OCS identifying strategies and directives for successful utilization of the CSBG.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the executive director of the LWC shall submit reports for the preceding quarter to the House Committee on Municipal, Parochial and Cultural Affairs not later than January twentieth, April twentieth, July twentieth, and October twentieth of each year, beginning with the report for the first quarter of 2012, and that a copy thereof shall be submitted to the governor and to the commissioner of administration.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the House Committee on Municipal, Parochial and Cultural Affairs may conduct such hearings as it deems appropriate to review the reports submitted by the LWC and that the LWC shall furnish the committees any information it may request concerning the status and effectiveness of the CSBG.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the executive director of the LWC.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES