

## Recommended Talking Points for CSBG

**#1. Say Thanks.** Most members are supportive of the CSBG Block Grant and CAA programs. Thus, it would be appropriate to start a conversation by saying “Thank You”. Thank them for helping secure adequate funding for the programs and then defending the program from the cuts that were proposed for the current year, 2003. Politicians by nature like to be given credit for doing positive things. This is an easy one to give them credit for.

Conventional wisdom dictates that once a politician is given credit for having done something good, they are more likely to support that effort in the future. Also, if you have board members that are close associates of the Member, bring their greetings.

**#2. Tell them the program is being reauthorized this year and that you hope to have their support.** Tell them Community Action hopes for a clean bill that will focus on poverty reduction and local solutions managed by local community leadership. Tell them we want to strengthen the program, continuing the gains at the local level and imposing measures and standards at the state and federal levels as well.

**#3. Explain how your agency is able to use CSBG to leverage additional resources, to set up partnerships, involve the community, fill gaps in other programs.** Use specific examples. At some point, work into your conversation that CSBG is a small program that helps many other aspects of your organization and the CAA network to operate successfully.

### Highlight your faith-based partnerships.

- Share data, anecdotes on your faith-based partnerships. Explain the history, the fact that you entered the partnerships voluntarily (as opposed to potential forced relationships under Charitable Choice).
- Leave the Member with the understanding that CAA is already a model of community-based/faith-based partnership that is working.
- Tie in your efforts with faith-based organizations to the Members interests/priorities. Perhaps she/he is affiliated with a local church, synagogue, etc. with which you work.

### Describe your services for the working poor and their families.

- Explain how you help these families fill the gaps where their wages fall short, and help them move toward self-sufficiency.
- Explain how you respond to economic needs in your community (e.g. layoffs) and provide emergency assistance for short-term crises (but emphasize your comprehensive services first.)

**#4. Tell them about your efforts to measure results. Provide any good ROMA or other outcome measures you have to share.** Tell them that CSBG is one of the few programs that is setting up such measures and working on tailoring them to local programs that coordinate funds from half a dozen or more purposes. (This will help to counter the Bush argument that no one knows our outcomes.)

**#5. Explain what you would have to cut if CSBG were reduced.** The President's budget proposes a \$155 million cut in the CSBG appropriation. In this tight budget year, we are simply seeking a freeze in CSBG funding, nothing more.

**Try to leave the meeting with:**

- A commitment from the Member to support a strong CSBG reauthorization and level funding for FY 2004.
- A commitment from the Member to come visit your agencies CSBG program.
- Offer additional reasons for continuing to have contact with the Member.