

SOCIAL SERVICES BLOCK GRANT (SSBG):
**HOW THE BLOCK GRANT PROTECTS
FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES IMPACTED BY
THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC**

FEBRUARY 2018 | SOCIAL SERVICES BLOCK GRANT COALITION

ACROSS THE COUNTRY, SSBG IS HELPING STATES RESPOND TO THE OPIOID CRISIS BY PROTECTING BABIES, CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES FROM HARM AND HELPING THEM GET THE SUPPORT THEY NEED TO HEAL AND THRIVE. SSBG PROVIDES FLEXIBLE FUNDS TO HELP STATES MEET THE UNIQUE AND RAPIDLY INCREASING NEEDS OF COMMUNITIES RESULTING FROM THE CRISIS.

SSBG & THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC

PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM ABUSE AND NEGLECT

In 2015, child protective services removed 100,000 babies, children and youth from their parents' care because of the parents' drug or alcohol use. **In 2014, 39 states relied on \$329 million from SSBG to protect and safeguard children who face abuse, neglect and exploitation.**

In Licking County, Ohio, 71 percent of abused or neglected children entering into custody was due to parent drug use – largely related to the opioid epidemic. The intensity of the opioid epidemic, and the need to quickly intervene and assess families to keep children safe requires flexible and maintainable resources such as SSBG.

Faced with the day-to-day reality of the opioid crisis, John Fisher who serves as the Director for Licking County, Job and Family Services, understands the dire need to protect SSBG. "SSBG funds provide the resources to investigate the allegations we receive of child abuse or neglect...and the elimination of these federal funds would create a void which no other funding source is currently available to fill. **Given Ohio's low level of state funding for services to abused or neglected children, SSBG funding is critical in helping keep our children safe during this drug crisis.**"

IN 2015, IN LICKING COUNTY, OHIO, 71 PERCENT OF ABUSED OR NEGLECTED CHILDREN ENTERING INTO CUSTODY WAS DUE TO PARENT DRUG USE – LARGELY RELATED TO THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC.

HELPING PEOPLE GET TREATMENT FOR ADDICTION

In 2016, more than **63,000 lives were lost due to drug overdoses, making it the most lethal year yet of the drug overdose epidemic.** Of that number, 66 percent of those overdoses – 42,249 individuals – was due to opioids. With the Administration declaring the opioid epidemic a public health emergency, programs that provide funding for individuals to receive substance abuse services must be protected and strengthened.

Among these critical programs is SSBG, which provides funding to states to use for almost 30 different types of services, including substance abuse treatment. In fact, in 2014, 11 states relied on SSBG to help people receive treatment for addiction to opioids and other drugs. SSBG and the funding it provides is even more important as there is an increasing need for drug related services. **In fact, SSBG expenditures for substance abuse services increased by 125 percent from \$6 million in 2010 up to \$13 million in 2014, which helped over 118,000 individuals receive substance abuse treatment or participate prevention programs across the country.**

In Alaska, SSBG plays a crucial role in delivering substance abuse services. For example, Alaska Child Protection workers refer women and their children to primary substance abuse treatment centers, which provide clients with priority access to services or activities that are designed to deter and treat substance abuse. These services are provided by the Alaska Women's Resource Center, which is funded with SSBG dollars, and include counseling, treatment or detoxification services.

SSBG not only offers essential funds for states to provide substance abuse and other family support services to residents, it also helps fill in critical financial gaps for overburdened state foster care systems. With addiction services and foster care systems so underfunded, states, counties and the residents who rely on these services cannot afford to lose SSBG.

SSBG & THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC

SUPPORTING AT-RISK YOUTH

From the earliest days of pregnancy, children whose parents suffer from a substance abuse are at high risk. In addition to prenatal exposure, parents addicted to drugs and without help may be unable to provide children with a stable environment to grow and thrive. No matter what their level of exposure, opioid addiction has a devastating impact. **For parents who are unable to support their children, SSBG provides independent living and special services to help youth at risk get the help they need to thrive as healthy adults.**

As of 2014, the last year for which we have data, 17 states reported SSBG expenditures for special services for youth at risk, totaling \$66 million. **In fact, SSBG expenditures for youth at-risk services in 2014 mark a 62 percent increase from the \$42 million invested in 2010 – helping over 75,000 at-risk youth and their families.** SSBG is particularly important to Missouri, which uses a combination of local and SSBG funds to support six strategies and services for at-risk youth. These strategies are for youth and provide an array of services that aim to reduce inappropriate institutionalization by providing alternative arrangements for care.

These six strategies are critical for at-risk youth when it comes to parent battling a substance abuse disorder. For example, Missouri's program, Short-Term Residential provides a short-term intensive residential treatment program for youth that emphasizes group physical and emotional treatment. These services, which can be conducted individually, or with family members, enhance family functioning – a critical component to a healthy and sustainable lifestyle.

CARING FOR OLDER ADULTS

FOR ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES, SSBG IS THE ONLY SOURCE OF FEDERAL FUNDING TO PROGRAMS, AND IS A CRUCIAL PART OF MANY STATES' BUDGET.

When communities are battling the impact of a drug crisis, everyone is affected. Older adults with limited mobility, may be fearful of leaving their home. Family members may be less able to provide the care they need. Vulnerable adults may be at greater risk of abuse and financial exploitation. From Meals on Wheels to transportation to Adult Protective Services, in **2014 SSBG helped provide crucial services to almost 2 million adults over age 60 in 41 states including DC and Puerto Rico and many more with unreported ages.**

For Adult Protective Services (APS), SSBG is the only source of federal funding to programs and is a crucial part of many states' budgets. At-risk adults in states like North Carolina may face a higher risk of abuse by caregivers stealing opioid prescriptions or financial exploitation to support addictions.

In North Carolina, the county departments of social services rely on a combination of county dollars and federal SSBG to fund APS, specifically older adults suffering from drug misuse. **North Carolina's APS program is being stretched thin as a result of the growing opioid crisis.** Seeing first hand the growing toll the opioid crisis has taken on older adults, Nancy Warren, a retired North Carolina APS Program Administrator, understands the vital need for SSBG. "SSBG provides funding for an already dangerously under-resourced system of protection for vulnerable adults, particularly those suffering from addiction. Whether an older adult's drug misuse results in self-neglect, drug misuse by a caregiver results in caregiver neglect or abuse, or financial exploitation is perpetrated by a family member, **SSBG funding is critical when it comes to protecting older Americans.**"