

Legislative Update

A Publication for the Information of the Kentucky Legislators

www.audubon-area.com

JUNE 2006

Volume 1, Number 3

HEAD START FUNDING

Federal Cut; State Increased

Audubon Area Community Services Head Start will be able to absorb the one percent federal budget cut recently announced for this fiscal year, which ends September 30th. But if more federal cuts come next year, the agency may have to reduce staff.

Last year's reductions in staffing and hours of operations at some sites created an \$80,000 to \$90,000 cushion to cover the cuts to the current budget. The recent cut reduces the current budget by \$113,000.

Cutting from next year, however, may be more difficult. Agency administration is preparing the Head Start budget for next fiscal year, due the end of June, and is projecting a deficit of \$435,261, due from the federal reduction, a one percent salary increase and increases to Kentucky retirement and administrative costs. The existing budget can cover a large portion of that through budget adjustments and no planned capital expenses. But that still leaves \$251,261 that the agency's Head Start must come up with.

Cutting slots will be the last option, said Aubrey Nehring, Head Start director. The program is considering a combination of alternatives to balance the budget, including some staff reductions in annual hours for some staff and changing some classrooms from full day to part day or full year to part year.

Funding from the state, meanwhile, has increased. AACS Head Start partners with nineteen (19) school districts to bring the program into the schools. A portion of the funding for these sites comes from KERA money. This year's General Assembly increased KERA amounts per child by nearly 40 percent, which adds an additional \$1,018 to \$1,934 per child. Additionally, eligibility rates increased from 130 percent of poverty to 150 percent of poverty.

Did you know?

AACS administers Head Start in 16 Western Kentucky counties in the Green River and Pennyriple regions. It operates 56 centers in these areas and employs approximately 450 full and part-time staff. In May the National Head Start Association recognized AACS Head Start as a *Program of Excellence* for the third time. Fewer than 25 programs nationwide have received the honor that many times.

COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT

Chandler Supports Funding

Many thanks to Rep. Ben Chandler for his signature on the Baird-English-Tierney-Simmons FY 2007 joint letter to the U.S. House Appropriations Committee. He joined 142 other House members who requested \$637 million for the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) for fiscal year 2007.

CSBG is a federal block grant that funds a network of Community Action Agencies (CAA), that provide critical services to low-income Americans. Each year, CSBG helps more than fifteen (15) million individuals nationwide reach their fullest potential.

After the Bush Administration called for the elimination of CSBG in its FY 2007 budget, hundreds of CAA leaders have asked Congress to protect the funding. They requested that funding remain level for CSBG, Low-Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP), Weatherization, and Head Start. Audubon Area provides Head Start in sixteen (16) counties in the Green River and Pennyriple areas and Weatherization, CSBG and LIHEAP in the Green River area.

Chandler also was one of seventy-five (75) representatives who signed the Sanders-Boehlert-Grijalva Weatherization Letter which requested level funding for that program. As a result, the House Energy and Water Development Bill for FY 2007 provides \$254.5 million for weatherization assistance, \$90 million more than the President's request.

Audubon Area's Weatherization Program is available to residents in the seven-county Green River area whose incomes fall at or below 125 percent of the federal poverty level. Trained technicians caulk, weatherstrip, insulate and repair or replace heating units at no cost to eligible homeowners.

Eighty-eight (88) percent of homeowners whose homes were weatherized in 2004 by Audubon Area indicated in a 2005 survey that their homes were warmer.

In signing the letters, Chandler listened to low-income constituents, local elected officials and other members of the broad community coalition that supports CSBG.

For more information on services provided by Audubon Area Community Services, call (270) 686-1600 or visit the agency's web site at www.audubon-area.com. To request a brochure or annual report, call Lydia Johnson, public information and outreach director, at (270) 686-1652, or email her at ljohnson@audubon-area.com.

More Updates

CCAP Contract Reduced

The Cabinet for Health and Family Services has cut the contract for the Audubon Area Community Services Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) by seven percent, or \$89,000. Next year's budget will be \$1.25 million. The Division of Childcare will now handle all KTAP and "permanency and protection" cases from its Frankfort offices.

Four Audubon Area CCAP employees will lose their jobs as a result, one in each of the four regions (Green River, Barren River, Pennyryle and Purchase areas) where the agency operates the program.

In addition to Audubon Area's cut, the Lexington area received an 8 percent reduction, and the Louisville area, which handles the largest case load, received a six percent cut. Some CCAP programs in Eastern Kentucky were cut more than ten percent. CCAP provides child care assistance to parents who are working or attending school.

Audubon Area's Child Care Assistance Program is available to families whose incomes does not exceed 150 percent of the federal poverty level.

Caution Advised on Contract

Audubon Area Community Services' Executive Committee approved upon advice of the agency's attorney to withhold signing an agreement to sub-contract with LogisitiCare to provide transportation services in Region 3 (Green River area) of the Human Services Transportation Delivery (HSTD) system.

The Kentucky Finance and Administration Cabinet granted the contract to Logisticare, a for-profit outfit out of Atlanta, in September 2005 after a second round of bidding resulting from protests of the initial award. AACS currently subcontracts with LKLP, another community action agency who initially won the contract in April 2005, to provide transportation services to Medicaid eligible in this region. AACS will continue providing the same quality of service notwithstanding these actions.

The agency's counsel believes it is in the best interest of AACS to not proceed with any further negotiations with LogistiCare in regards to this matter. Jesse Mountjoy, attorney for Audubon Area, sent a letter dated June 1 to Logisticare officials alerting them of this decision.

Kentucky Intensive Services Program (KISP) Contract Renewed

The Kentucky Department for Juvenile Justice (DJJ) has renewed the Kentucky Intensive Services Program (KISP) contract with Audubon Area Community Services for a two-year period, up from the previous one-year contract. Total award is \$2.07 million, effective July 1. The program is available statewide and provides intensive in-home based counseling services to juvenile offenders up to age 18 and their families for up to three months or more if needed. The DJJ refers families to Audubon Area for the program. Trained therapists provide 24-hour crisis intervention, parent education, counseling, education, case management and vocational planning and much more. ***The contracted sites for services to be provided are as follows:***

- East Region: Fayette County
- Central Region: Adair, Hardin, Nelson, Russell, Taylor, and Warren counties
- North Region: Boone, Campbell, Carroll, Franklin, Jefferson, Kenton, Scott, Shelby and Woodford counties
- Southeast Region: Clark, Harlan, Jessamine, Laurel and Madison counties
- West Region: Daviess, Christian, Henderson, and McCracken counties

Audubon Area Community Services, Inc.
1800 West Fourth Street
P.O. Box 20004
Owensboro, KY 42304-0004
(270) 686-1600