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August 19, 2025

The Honorable Gene L. Dodaro  
Comptroller General of the United States  
U.S. Government Accountability Office  
441 G Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro:

It has come to my attention that several crucial federal safety net programs administered through the Office of Community Services (OCS) within the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, including the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), and the Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP), have experienced significant service disruptions in recent years.<sup>1</sup> Ensuring the provision of services as proscribed by federal law is essential to serving low-income individuals under these critical federal programs.

In Florida, a disruption was particularly severe in LIHEAP, reportedly shutting off critical utility assistance throughout the state for a significant period during the spring of 2024.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, but less severe than in the LIHEAP program, several Community Action Agencies (CAAs) in Florida faced a period of service disruptions, staff furloughs, and even temporary closures under CSBG. Over the past few years, the Committee has heard additional concerns about the lack of timely distribution of funds from states to CAAs. Funding delays threaten to impede the provision of services to low-income individuals and communities under federal programs authorized in law and administered by CAAs; these programs assist with housing, utilities, child care, transportation, employment, and much more to improve the economic security of low-income individuals and their families while also improving economic conditions in their communities.<sup>3</sup> These delays also raise questions as to whether current federal policies are

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<sup>1</sup> See Letter from Ranking Member, Robert C. "Bobby" Scott, of the House Education and Workforce Committee expressing concern with service disruptions (Sep. 27, 2023), [https://democrats-edworkforce.house.gov/imo/media/doc/ranking\\_member\\_scott\\_letter\\_to\\_hhs\\_re\\_florida\\_csbgi\\_liheap\\_lihwapi\\_funding.pdf](https://democrats-edworkforce.house.gov/imo/media/doc/ranking_member_scott_letter_to_hhs_re_florida_csbgi_liheap_lihwapi_funding.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Alex Harris, *Florida froze program to help with power bills. Advocates worry it could happen again*, Miami Herald (Aug. 23, 2023), <https://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/environment/article277473348.html>.

<sup>3</sup> *Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)*, Off. of Cmty. Servs., Dep't of Health & Human Servs., <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ocs/programs/community-services-block-grant-csbgi> (last visited Aug. 28, 2023).

sufficient to enforce the efficient and timely distribution of federal funds by states for authorized purposes. To that end, I respectfully request that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) examine the administration of OCS block grants—including CSBG, LIHEAP, and LIHWAP—to ensure that the programs are effectively serving families who need assistance in a timely fashion.

1. What is known about the timeliness of the obligation and spend down of funding within the above-mentioned OCS grant programs, including the frequency with which funding has been spent down outside of the respective programs' performance periods resulting in noncompliance?
2. To what extent have service interruptions occurred in the last three fiscal years and what is known about the causes of those interruptions?
3. What federal policy tools (e.g., statutes, regulations, enforcement mechanisms, etc.) exist to ensure the timely distribution of these grant funds by states to eligible entities? To the extent feasible, please identify any state fiscal policies that present challenges to compliance or otherwise conflict with federal policies. Do federal agencies have sufficient policy tools under these OCS grant programs and other agency tools to enforce timely distribution of federal funds from states to eligible entities?
4. To the extent that service interruptions have occurred, what have the impacts been on the populations served by these programs and the entities administering the programs, including CAAs?

I ask that GAO keep my staff updated on the progress of this review. Please contact Jessica Schieder with the Committee on Education and Workforce Democratic Staff at 202-225-3725 or [Jessica.Schieder@mail.house.gov](mailto:Jessica.Schieder@mail.house.gov) for any questions related to this request.

Sincerely,



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**ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT**

Ranking Member