

# ***ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES***

## ***Senate Committee Report***

***Excerpts from the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriation Bill, 2004***

***(Public Law 108-081)***

### **ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

## **PAYMENTS TO STATES FOR CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT AND FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAMS**

Appropriations, 2003	\$2,779,348,000
Budget estimate, 2004	3,245,970,000
Committee recommendation	3,292,270,000

The Committee recommends \$3,292,270,000 be made available in fiscal year 2004 for payments to States for child support enforcement and family support programs. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2003 is \$2,779,348,000 and the budget request includes \$3,245,970,000 for this program. The Committee recommendation provides the full amount requested under current law. The budget request includes savings of \$47,000,000 based on proposed legislation.

These payments support the States' efforts to promote the self-sufficiency and economic security of low-income families. These funds also support efforts to locate noncustodial parents, determine paternity when necessary, and establish and enforce orders of support. The appropriation, when combined with the \$1,100,000,000 in advance funding provided in last year's bill and an estimated \$179,300,000 from offsetting collections, supports a program level of \$4,572,270,000.

The Committee also has provided \$1,200,000,000 in advance funding for the first quarter of fiscal year 2005 for the child support enforcement program, the same as the budget request.

## **LOW-INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

Appropriations, 2003	\$1,688,950,000
Budget estimate, 2004	2,000,000,000
Committee recommendation	2,000,000,000

The Committee recommends \$2,000,000,000 for fiscal year 2004 for LIHEAP. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2003 is \$1,688,950,000 and the budget request includes

\$2,000,000,000 for this program. LIHEAP is made up of two components: the State grant program and the contingency fund.

The Committee recommendation includes \$2,000,000,000 for fiscal year 2004 for the State grant program. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2003 is \$1,688,950,000 and the budget request includes \$1,700,000,000 for this program. LIHEAP grants are awarded to States, territories, Indian tribes, and tribal organizations to assist low-income households in meeting the costs of home energy. States receive great flexibility in how they provide assistance, including direct payments to individuals and vendors and direct provision of fuel. These resources are distributed by formula to these entities as defined by statute, based in part on each State's share of home energy expenditures by low-income households.

The Committee does not include resources for fiscal year 2004 for the contingency fund. The budget request includes \$300,000,000 designated as non-emergency funding for this program. The contingency fund may be used to provide assistance to one or more States adversely affected by extreme heat or cold, significant price increases, or other causes of energy-related emergencies. The Committee is committed to ensuring that sufficient resources are available in the fund, to provide additional assistance to households with energy burdens not met by the regular program, and to meet the objectives of the authorizing statute. The Committee intends to monitor household energy burdens that might require action in future appropriations bills.

The Committee intends that up to \$27,500,000 of the amount recommended for LIHEAP for fiscal year 2004 be used for the leveraging incentive fund. The fund will provide a percentage match to States for private or non-Federal public resources allocated to low-income home energy benefits.

## **REFUGEE AND ENTRANT ASSISTANCE**

Appropriations, 2003	\$478,048,000
Budget estimate, 2004	461,626,000
Committee recommendation	428,056,000

The Committee recommends \$428,056,000 for fiscal year 2004 for refugee and entrant assistance. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2003 is \$478,048,000 and the budget request includes \$461,626,000 for this program.

The Refugee and Entrant Assistance Program is designed to assist States in their efforts to assimilate refugees, asylees, Cuban and Haitian entrants, and adults and minors who are trafficking victims, into American society as quickly and effectively as possible. The program funds State-administered transitional and medical assistance, the voluntary agency matching grant program, programs for victims of trafficking and torture, employment and social services, targeted assistance, and preventive health.

Based on an estimated refugee admission ceiling of 80,000, this appropriation, together with prior-year funds available for fiscal year 2004 expenses, will enable States to continue to provide at least 8 months of cash and medical assistance to eligible refugees and entrants, a variety of social and educational services, as well as foster care for refugee and entrant unaccompanied minors.

The Committee is committed to ensuring that the American public is safe and not exposed to potential security risks. However, the Committee also is concerned about the additional hardships imposed on individuals fleeing their homes from civil strife, persecution, and torture as they await a multitude of security procedures in potentially dangerous temporary locations and refugee camps. As a result of these delays, almost 40,000 refugees, who were eligible under the admissions ceiling for fiscal year 2002, were not allowed to resettle in the United States. In addition, current estimates indicate that actual refugee admissions for fiscal year 2003 will be equally short of the admissions ceiling.

These unused slots resulted in program savings due to fewer transitional, medical, and support services provided than estimated under prior appropriations. The Committee recommendation will not affect the ability of programs to meet fully the demand for services under the admissions ceiling, as sufficient carryover funds are available to offset the proposed reduction. The Committee intends to closely monitor the situation to ensure that sufficient funding is available to meet the critical needs of individuals fleeing persecution.

In order to carry out the refugee and entrant assistance program, the Committee recommends \$180,000,000 for transitional and medical assistance, including State administration and the voluntary agency program; \$9,935,000 for victims of trafficking; \$140,000,000 for social services; \$4,804,000 for preventive health; and \$49,155,000 for targeted assistance.

Due to the realignment of the former Immigration and Naturalization Service [INS], and pursuant to section 462 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, funds are now provided for the care and placement of unaccompanied alien minors in the Office of Refugee Resettlement. Approximately 5,000 unaccompanied alien children are apprehended each year in the United States by INS/Homeland Security agents, Border Patrol officers, or other law enforcement agencies and taken into care pending resolution of their claims for relief under U.S. immigration law, released to an adult family member, or released to a responsible adult guardian. The Committee recommends \$34,227,000 for unaccompanied children.

The Committee also recommends \$9,935,000 to treat and assist victims of torture. These funds may also be used to provide training to healthcare providers to enable them to treat the physical and psychological effects of torture. The Committee acknowledges that well-established treatment centers, such as the Center for Victims of Torture, have developed the knowledge base that has fostered growth of treatment facilities around the country and strengthened treatment services generally. This positive trend may continue if leading centers are able to expand their staffs to create more trainers and improve evaluation and research needed to guide and develop new programs.

Section 412(a)(7) of title IV of the Immigration and Nationality Act authorizes the use of funds appropriated under this account to be used to carry out monitoring, evaluation, and data collection activities to determine the effectiveness of funded programs and to monitor the performance of States and other grantees.

## **CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT**

Appropriations, 2003	\$2,086,344,000
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Budget estimate, 2004	2,099,729,000
Committee recommendation	2,099,729,000

The Committee recommends \$2,099,729,000 for fiscal year 2004 for child care and development block grant. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2003 is \$2,086,344,000 and the budget request includes \$2,099,729,000 for this program.

The child care and development block grant supports grants to States to provide low-income families with financial assistance for child care; for improving the quality and availability of child care; and for establishing or expanding child development programs. The funds are used to both expand the services provided to individuals who need child care in order to work, or attend job training or education, and to allow States to continue funding the activities previously provided under the consolidated programs.

The Committee is aware that the authorization for the child care and development block grant program expired on September 30, 2003. The block grant was last reauthorized in 1996 as part of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act. The Act established the child care and development fund, which consists of mandatory funding provided under the Social Security Act and discretionary funding supported by annual appropriations under the child care and development block grant program. The Committee believes that significant increases in mandatory funding for child care should be supported by the reauthorization of the Welfare Reform Law to pay for additional work requirements and to respond to the needs of low income, working poor families. The Welfare Reform Law established policies that have resulted in a significant increase in working Americans.

The Committee recommendation continues specific earmarks in appropriations language, also included in the budget request, that provide targeted resources to specific policy priorities including \$19,120,000 for the purposes of supporting before and afterschool services, as well as resource and referral programs. This represents the Federal commitment to the activities previously funded under the dependent care block grant. The Committee expects that these funds will not supplant current funding dedicated to resource and referral and school age activities provided by the child care and development block grant. The Committee strongly encourages States to address the matters of before and afterschool care and the establishment of resource and referral programs with the funds provided in this program.

The Committee recommendation includes an additional \$272,672,000 for child care quality activities, and sets aside \$100,000,000 specifically for an infant care quality initiative. These funds are recommended in addition to the 4 percent quality earmark established in the authorizing legislation. The Committee has provided these additional quality funds because of the considerable research that demonstrates the importance of serving children in high quality child care settings which include nurturing providers who are educated in child development and adequately compensated. While considerable progress has been made, the Committee believes States should continue to invest in education and training linked to compensation of the child care workforce in order to improve the overall quality of child care.

The Committee recommendation also provides \$10,000,000 for child care research, demonstration and evaluation activities.

The Committee recommendation for resource and referral activities also includes \$1,000,000 to continue support for the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies' information service, Child Care Aware, and the national toll-free information hotline which links families to local child care services and programs.

## **SOCIAL SERVICES BLOCK GRANT**

Appropriations, 2003	\$1,700,000,000
Budget estimate, 2004	1,700,000,000
Committee recommendation	1,700,000,000

The Committee recommends \$1,700,000,000 for fiscal year 2004 for the social services block grant. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2003 is \$1,700,000,000 and the budget request includes \$1,700,000,000 for this program.

The CARE Act of 2003 included bill language allowing States to transfer up to 10 percent of their annual allocations under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families to the Social Services Block Grant program. Under current law and the budget request, in 2004 States would be limited to transfers of up to 4.25 percent. The Committee recognizes that the block grant is a vital source of support for many vulnerable children and families, the elderly and single adults and continues to support this important State flexibility.

## **CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICES PROGRAMS**

Appropriations, 2003	\$8,645,276,000
Budget estimate, 2004	8,687,382,000
Committee recommendation	8,780,002,000

The Committee recommends \$8,780,002,000 for fiscal year 2004 for children and families services programs. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2003 is \$8,645,276,000 and the budget request includes \$8,687,382,000 for this program. In addition, \$6,000,000 in transfers are available under section 241 of the Public Health Service Act.

This appropriation provides funding for programs for children, youth, and families, the developmentally disabled, and Native Americans, as well as Federal administrative costs.

### *Head Start*

The Committee recommends \$6,815,570,000 for fiscal year 2004 for Head Start. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2003 is \$6,667,533,000 and the budget request includes \$6,815,570,000 for this program. The Committee recommendation includes \$1,400,000,000 in advance funding that will become available on October 1, 2004.

Head Start provides comprehensive development services for low-income children and families, emphasizing cognitive and language development, socioemotional development, physical and mental health, and parent involvement to enable each child to develop and function at his or her

highest potential. At least 10 percent of enrollment opportunities in each State are made available to children with disabilities.

The Committee understands the serious need for additional and expanded Head Start facilities among Native American populations and in rural areas. The Committee believes that the Department could help serve these needy communities by providing minor construction funding, as authorized, in remote Native American communities.

The Committee recommends continued support sufficient to maintain the current funding level for existing grantees and to provide a new grant competition in fiscal year 2004 under the Tribal College and University Head Start Partnership program. While current law requires that 50 percent of Head Start teachers in center-based Head Start programs have not less than an associate degree in early childhood education or a related field, American Indian Head Start programs are generally located in areas that are isolated from mainstream colleges where such degrees can be earned. This program provides accessible, high-quality, and accredited education opportunities to American Indian Head Start agency staff, enabling them to better deliver services that enhances the social and cognitive development of low income American Indian children. The Committee is disappointed that the Head Start Bureau neglected to direct sufficient funding to allow current grantees to extend their programs thus allowing them a full 5 year program, but believes that continued support of new 5-year grant competitions can help remedy this situation and improve outcomes for American Indian Head Start programs.

The Committee strongly supports the effort to strengthen the qualifications of Head Start teachers. The Committee encourages Head Start to continue to work toward the goal of having all of their teachers in center-based Head Start programs have an associate, baccalaureate, or advanced degree in early childhood education, or a degree in a related field with experience in teaching preschool children. The Committee expects the Department to focus staff development efforts on increasing the educational level of Head Start teachers in order to meet this goal.

The Committee is aware that the Department's 'Descriptive Study of Seasonal Farmworker Families' published in September 2001 revealed that just 19 percent of eligible children of migrant and seasonal farmworkers are served by Migrant Head Start programs. The study also concluded 'that Migrant Head Start agencies greatly improve the lives of migrant and seasonal farmworker families, and in doing so, help to strengthen local agricultural economies.' The Committee urges the Head Start Bureau to continue to provide sufficient funds for Migrant Head Start programs proportionate to the overall increase in the Head Start appropriation.

The Committee is conscious of efforts currently being undertaken to improve pre-literacy skills in Head Start children and lauds the administration for its commitment to this effort. However, the Committee cautions against anything that would detract from the comprehensive nature of the program in delivering early childhood development and family services. While school readiness is front and center in the goals of Head Start, the elements necessary to achieve that readiness range from adequate nutrition and health screening, to social and emotional development and family building, as well as the cognitive growth of young children.

The Committee is cognizant that the goal of the Head Start program is to ensure the social competence and school readiness of children upon completion of the program. It has long been proven that investments in Head Start yield significant savings by long-term reduction of

incarceration rates and rates of participation in public assistance. Much of these savings are due to the social and emotional lessons learned from participation in Head Start. The Committee expects the Department to continue to promote learning and brain development to accelerate and improve the cognitive development of Head Start children. The Committee expects the Department to monitor Head Start programs to ensure that a majority of children participating in Head Start programs meet the minimum educational performance measures and standards upon completion of the program as outlined in the Head Start Act, as amended in 1998.

The Committee commends the outstanding successes of the Head Start program and appreciates the Head Start Bureau's dedication to the continued improvement of the comprehensive services provided to eligible children and families. However, the Committee is concerned that proposed assessments will focus only on literacy and math. While these skills are an important part of the Head Start curriculum, the Committee is concerned that the assessments will not fully represent the comprehensive nature of the program, specifically the nutrition, social, emotional, and cognitive aspects of the curriculum. The Committee is troubled by the potential use of these assessments in deciding grant status, particularly for children in the Early Head Start program. The Committee is aware that many child development experts believe that testing children under the age of 6 does not show an accurate picture of their development, and could be potentially detrimental to them. The Head Start Bureau shall report to the Committee by April 2004 on the steps the Bureau has taken to ensure that the proposed assessment is age-appropriate and on the proposed use of the assessment results. The report should include the extent to which funding decisions will be based upon the assessments, the impact such a decision will have on rural programs facing greater obstacles, and the ways in which the Bureau intends to incorporate the comprehensive physical, social, and emotional benefits of the program into funding decisions.

#### *Consolidated Runaway and Homeless Youth Program*

The Committee recommends \$89,978,000 for fiscal year 2004 for the consolidated runaway and homeless youth program. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2003 is \$89,978,000 and the budget request includes \$88,043,000 for this program. The Committee recommends \$49,473,000 for basic centers and \$40,505,000 for transitional living programs.

This program addresses the crisis needs of runaway and homeless youth and their families through support to local and State governments and private agencies. Basic centers and transitional living programs help address the needs of some of the estimated 300,000 homeless youth, many of whom are running away from unsafe or unhealthy living environments. These programs have been proven effective at supporting positive youth development, securing stable and safe living arrangements and providing the skills required to engage in positive relationships with caring adults and contribute to society. The Committee looks forward to the release of performance outcome data available through the new management information system.

Under current law the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act requires that not less than 90 percent of the funds be allocated to States for the purpose of establishing and operating community-based runaway and homeless youth centers, as authorized under Parts A and B of the Act. Funds are distributed on the basis of the State youth population under 18 years of age in proportion to the national total. The remaining 10 percent funds networking and research and demonstration activities including the National Toll-Free Communications Center. This section is up for reauthorization this year.

Grants are used to develop or strengthen community-based programs which assist homeless youth in making a smooth transition to productive adulthood and social self-sufficiency; and to provide technical assistance to transitional living programs for the acquisition and maintenance of resources and services.

The basic centers program, authorized under Part A of the Act, supports grants to community-based public and private agencies for the provision of outreach, crisis intervention, temporary shelter, counseling, family unification and aftercare services to runaway and homeless youth and their families.

The transitional living program [TLP] provides grants to local public and private organizations to address shelter and service needs of homeless youth, ages 16-21. The program's goals are to have youth safe at home or in appropriate alternative settings and to help them develop into independent, contributing members of society.

A homeless youth accepted into the program is eligible to receive shelter and services continuously for up to 540 days. The services include counseling; life skills training, such as money management and housekeeping; interpersonal skill building, such as decision-making and priority setting; educational advancement; job preparation attainment; and mental and physical health care.

The Committee recommendation does not include the \$10,000,000 requested in the budget for a separate maternity group homes program. The Committee is aware of the need for and shares the administration's interest in funding residential services for young mothers and their children who are unable to live with their own families because of abuse, neglect, or other circumstances. The Committee notes that pregnant and parenting youth are currently eligible for and served through the TLP.

The Committee also recognizes the need for and value of expanding transitional living opportunities for all homeless youth. Therefore, the Committee seeks to preserve the flexibility afforded in current law to respond to the needs of the young people who are most at-risk and in greatest need of transitional living opportunities in their communities by providing additional resources to the existing portfolio of consolidated Runaway and Homeless Youth Act programs.

It is the Committee's expectation that current and future TLP grantees will continue to provide transitional living opportunities and support to pregnant and parenting homeless youth, as is their current practice. To further ensure that pregnant and parenting homeless youth are able to access transitional living opportunities and support in their communities, the Committee encourages the Secretary, acting through the network of federally-funded runaway and homeless youth training and technical assistance providers, to offer guidance to grantees and others on the programmatic modifications required to address the unique needs of pregnant and parenting youth and on the various sources of funding available for residential services to this population.

#### *Maternity Group Homes*

The Committee recommendation does not include the \$10,000,000 requested in the budget for the maternity group homes program. The Committee has deferred action on this program pending the enactment of authorizing language. Under this proposed program, the ACF would provide targeted funding for community-based, adult-supervised group homes for young mothers



and their children. These homes would provide safe, stable, nurturing environments for mothers who cannot live safely with their own families and assist them in moving forward with their lives by providing support so they can finish school, acquire job skills, and learn to be good parents.

The Committee expects the Family and Youth Services Bureau to continue to provide the technical assistance needed to enable TLP grantees and their community partners to address the unique needs of young mothers and their children, as well as helping interested entities in identifying sources of funding currently available to provide residential services to this population.

#### *Child Abuse Prevention Programs*

The Committee recommends \$48,171,000 for fiscal year 2004 for child abuse prevention programs. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2003 is \$55,715,000 and the budget request includes \$48,314,000 for this program. The recommendation includes \$21,870,000 for State grants and \$26,301,000 for discretionary activities.

These programs seek to improve and increase activities at all levels of government which identify, prevent, and treat child abuse and neglect through State grants, technical assistance, research, demonstration, and service improvement.

#### *Abandoned Infants Assistance*

The Committee recommends \$12,126,000 for fiscal year 2004 for abandoned infants assistance. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2003 is \$12,126,000 and the budget request includes \$12,086,000 for this program.

This program provides financial support to public and private entities to develop, implement, and operate demonstration projects that will prevent the abandonment of infants and young children. Grants provide additional services such as identifying and addressing the needs of abandoned infants, especially those who are drug exposed or HIV positive; providing respite care for families and care givers; and assisting abandoned infants and children to reside with their natural families or in foster care.

#### *Child Welfare Services*

The Committee recommends \$290,088,000 for fiscal year 2004 for child welfare services. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2003 is \$290,088,000 and the budget request includes \$291,986,000 for this program.

This program helps State public welfare agencies improve their child welfare services with the goal of keeping families together. State services include: preventive intervention, so that, if possible, children will not have to be removed from their homes; reunification so that children can return home; and development of alternative placements like foster care or adoption if children cannot remain at home. These services are provided without regard to income.

#### *Child Welfare Training*

The Committee recommends \$7,449,000 for fiscal year 2004 for child welfare training. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2003 is \$7,449,000 and the budget request includes \$7,470,000 for this program.

Under section 426, title IV-B of the Social Security Act, discretionary grants are awarded to public and private nonprofit institutions of higher learning to develop and improve education/training programs and resources for child welfare service providers. These grants upgrade the skills and qualifications of child welfare workers.

#### *Adoption Opportunities*

The Committee recommends \$27,227,000 for fiscal year 2004 for adoption opportunities. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2003 is \$27,227,000 and the budget request includes \$27,343,000 for this program.

This program eliminates barriers to adoption and helps find permanent homes for children who would benefit by adoption, particularly children with special needs.

#### *Adoption Incentives*

The Committee recommends \$42,720,000 for fiscal year 2004 for adoption incentives. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2003 is \$42,720,000 and the budget request includes \$43,000,000 for this program.

The purpose of this program is to provide incentive funds to States to encourage an increase in the number of adoptions of children from the public foster care system. These funds are used to pay States bonuses for increasing their number of adoptions. The appropriation allows incentive payments to be made for adoptions completed prior to September 30, 2004.

#### *Adoption Awareness*

The Committee recommends \$12,822,000 for fiscal year 2004 for adoption awareness. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2003 is \$12,822,000 and the budget request includes \$12,906,000 for this program.

This program was authorized in the Children's Health Act of 2000. The program consists of two activities: the Infant Adoption Awareness Training Program and the Special Needs Awareness Campaign. The Infant Adoption Awareness Training Program provides grants to support adoption organizations in the training of designated health staff, in eligible health centers that provide health services to pregnant women, to inform them about adoption and make referrals on request on an equal basis with all other courses of action. Within the Committee recommendation, \$9,841,000 is available for this purpose.

The Special Needs Adoption Campaign supports grants to carry out a national campaign to inform the public about the adoption of children with special needs. The Committee recommendation includes \$2,981,000 to continue this important activity.

#### *Compassion Capital Fund*

The Committee recommends \$34,772,000 for fiscal year 2004 for the compassion capital fund. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2003 is \$34,772,000 and the budget request includes \$100,000,000 for this program.

The Committee expects funds made available through this program to supplement and not supplant private resources and encourages the Secretary to require private resources to match grant funding provided to public/private partnerships.

Funds available will support grants to charitable organizations to emulate model social service programs and to encourage research on the best practices of social service organizations.

#### *Social Services Research*

The Committee recommends \$31,812,000 for fiscal year 2004 for the social services research. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2003 is \$34,749,000 and the budget request includes \$5,982,000 for this program.

The Committee has funded \$6,000,000 of this program through transfers available under section 241 of the Public Health Service Act. These funds support cutting-edge research and evaluation projects in areas of critical national interest. Research includes determining services that are more cost-effective and alternative ways to increase the economic independence of American families.

The Committee is pleased with the results of ACF's work with the State information technology consortium, an effort that is helping States with the difficult task of streamlining service delivery, while also meeting TANF record-keeping and reporting requirements. As a result of this collaborative effort, States and ACF are now able to share systems information on TANF, child support enforcement, child welfare, and child care activities. The Committee is also pleased with the CSE program's work with the consortium, an effort that is improving the child support collection process by using web-based technologies to speed the flow of information between relevant agencies and the court system. The Committee recommends that both collaborative efforts with the State information technology consortium be continued at their current levels.

#### *Community-Based Resource Centers*

The Committee recommends \$33,200,000 for fiscal year 2004 for community-based resource centers. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2003 is \$33,200,000 and the budget request includes \$33,403,000 for this program.

These resources support two purposes: assisting each State in developing, operating, expanding and enhancing a network of community-based, prevention-focused, family resource and support programs and supporting activities that foster an understanding, appreciation, and knowledge of diverse populations in order to be effective in preventing and treating child abuse and neglect.

#### *Disabled Voter Services*

The Committee recommends \$15,000,000 be made available in fiscal year 2004 for election assistance for individuals with disabilities. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2003 is \$15,000,000 and the budget request does not provide funds for this program. Of these funds,

\$10,000,000 is to promote disabled voter access, and the remaining \$5,000,000 is for disabled voters protection and advocacy systems.

The election assistance for individuals with disabilities program was authorized in the Help America Vote Act of 2002. The program enables an applicant to establish, expand, and improve access to, and participation by, individuals with disabilities in the election process.

#### *Developmental Disabilities Programs*

The Committee recommends \$150,763,000 for fiscal year 2004 for developmental disabilities programs. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2003 is \$144,763,000 and the budget request includes \$140,442,000 for this program.

The Administration on Developmental Disabilities supports community-based delivery of services which promote the rights of persons of all ages with developmental disabilities. Developmental disability is defined as severe, chronic disability attributed to mental or physical impairments manifested before age 22, which causes substantial limitations in major life activities.

#### *State Councils*

The Committee recommends \$73,515,000 for fiscal year 2004 for State councils. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2003 is \$71,135,000 and the budget request includes \$69,800,000 for this program.

State Councils on the Developmental Disabilities program assist each State in promoting the development of a comprehensive, statewide, consumer and family-centered system which provides a coordinated array of culturally-competent services, and other assistance for individuals with development disabilities. State councils undertake a range of activities including demonstration of new approaches, program and policy analysis, interagency collaboration and coordination, outreach and training.

#### *Protection and Advocacy Grants*

The Committee recommends \$38,644,000 for fiscal year 2004 for protection and advocacy grants. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2003 is \$36,263,000 and the budget request includes \$35,000,000 for this program.

This formula grant program provides funds to States to establish protection and advocacy systems to protect the legal and human rights of persons with developmental disabilities who are receiving treatment, services, or rehabilitation within the State.

#### *Projects of National Significance*

The Committee recommends \$11,642,000 for fiscal year 2004 for projects of national significance to assist persons with developmental disabilities. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2003 is \$12,403,000 and the budget request includes \$11,642,000 for this program.

This program funds grants and contracts providing nationwide impact by developing new technologies and applying and demonstrating innovative methods to support the independence,

productivity, and integration into the community of persons with developmental disabilities. The Committee recognizes the potential benefits that assistive technology can have for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Within the Committee recommendation, \$4,000,000 is available to expand activities of the Family Support Program. The Committee is aware that the term 'family support' is defined in Title II of the Developmental Disability Act as 'supports, resources, services, and other assistance provided to families of children with disabilities that are designed to support families in the efforts of such families to raise their children with disabilities in the home; strengthen the role of the family as primary caregiver for such children; prevent involuntary out-of-the-home placement of such children and maintain family unity; and reunite families with children with disabilities who have been placed out of the home, whenever possible.' The Committee's placement of funds for family support within the Projects of National Significance account does not provide ACF with discretion on this definition of family support. The Committee makes a crucial distinction between support services designed for families of children with disabilities and support services designed for an individual with a disability. The Committee intends that these funds be used for the support and assistance of families of children with disabilities, in accordance with the statute.

#### *University-Affiliated Programs*

The Committee recommends \$26,962,000 for fiscal year 2004 for university-affiliated programs. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2003 is \$24,962,000 and the budget request includes \$24,000,000 for this program.

This program provides operational and administrative support for a national network of university-affiliated programs and satellite centers. Grants are made annually to university-affiliated programs and satellite centers for interdisciplinary training, exemplary services, technical assistance, and information dissemination activities.

#### *Native American Programs*

The Committee recommends \$45,457,000 for fiscal year 2004 for Native American programs. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2003 is \$45,457,000 and the budget request includes \$45,119,000 for this program.

The Administration for Native Americans [ANA] assists Indian tribes and Native American organizations in planning and implementing long-term strategies for social and economic development through the funding of direct grants for individual projects, training and technical assistance, and research and demonstration programs.

The Committee continues its significant interest in the revitalization of native languages through education. The Committee encourages ANA to allocate additional resources to support the Native American Languages program and urges the ANA to make schools a part of this effort, consistent with the policy expressed in the Native American Languages Act.

#### *Community Services*

The Committee recommends \$717,620,000 for fiscal year 2004 for the community services programs. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2003 is \$734,509,000 and the budget request includes \$552,312,000 for this program.

Within the funds provided, the Committee recommends \$645,762,000 for the community services block grant [CSBG]. These funds are used to make formula grants to States and Indian tribes to provide a wide range of services and activities to alleviate causes of poverty in communities and to assist low-income individuals in becoming self-sufficient.

The Committee rejects the administration's recommendation to cut the community services block grant funding. Although a restrictive Committee allocation prevented CSBG funding from being substantially increased this year, the Committee continues to recognize the importance of CSBG and the Community Action Agencies it funds in helping meet the extraordinary challenges facing low-income communities.

The Nation's Community Action Agency network relies on CSBG funding to help initiate and administer programs designed to alleviate poverty. The universal characteristic of these CSBG-funded programs is that they provide people with the resources and the tools to become self-sufficient. The Committee understands that the Department of Health and Human Services, and its Office of Community Services in particular, could better use this network in developing future policy initiatives. The Committee notes that in a number of States, including Iowa and Pennsylvania, CAA-initiated family development and self-sufficiency programs are an integral component of welfare reform efforts. The administration is encouraged to look for further nationwide linkages between those individuals seeking to leave the welfare system and become self-sufficient and the many family development and self-sufficiency strategies operated by Community Action Agencies.

The Committee expects the Office of Community Services to release funding to States in the most timely manner. The Committee also expects States to make funds available promptly. The Committee is aware that the Office of Community Services and some States have been extraordinarily delinquent in providing funds to local eligible entities.

In addition, the Committee again expects the Office of Community Services to inform the State CSBG grantees of any policy changes affecting carryover CSBG funds within a reasonable time after the beginning of the Federal fiscal year.

Several discretionary programs are funded from this account. Funding for these programs is recommended at the following levels for fiscal year 2004: community economic development, \$32,546,000; individual development accounts, \$24,828,000; rural community facilities, \$7,203,000; and community food and nutrition, \$7,281,000. The Committee did not provide funds for the national youth sports program.

Community economic development grants are made to private, nonprofit community development corporations, which in turn provide technical and financial assistance to business and economic development projects that target job and business opportunities for low income citizens. The Committee has included bill language clarifying that Federal funds made available through this program may be used for financing for construction and rehabilitation and loans or investments in private business enterprises owned by Community Development Corporations. Of

the total provided, the Committee has included \$5,464,000 for the Job Creation Demonstration authorized under the Family Support Act to target community development activities to create jobs for people on public assistance. This demonstration program provides grants on a competitive basis to non-profit organizations to create new employment and business opportunities for TANF recipients and other low-income individuals. Funding also supports technical and financial assistance for private employers that will result in the creation of full-time permanent jobs for eligible individuals. The Committee recognizes that continued funding of the Job Creation Demonstration program would provide opportunities for more low-income individuals. As in the past, the Committee expects that a priority for grants under this program go to experienced community development corporations.

Most of the drinking water and wastewater systems in the country that are not in compliance with Federal standards are in communities of 3,000 or fewer. Rural Community Assistance Programs [RCAPs] use funds available from the Rural Community Facilities Program to assist a number of communities in gaining access to adequate community facilities, gaining financing for new or improved water and wastewater systems and in complying with Federal standards.

The Committee has included bill language allocating funding to the Office of Community Services for Rural Community Facilities Technical Assistance as authorized under section 680(3)(B) of the Community Services Block Grant Act. In providing this funding, the Committee expects that it be used solely for the purpose of improving water and wastewater facilities in poor, rural communities. As in the past, these funds should be allocated to regional, rural community assistance programs.

The Committee is concerned that many small and very small community water and wastewater treatment systems might be most vulnerable to terrorist attack, and yet least prepared to deal with the issue. The Committee urges OCS to continue to support RCAP Small Community Infrastructure Safety and Security Training and Technical Assistance project, which provides State, regional and national infrastructure safety and security training workshops and on-site technical assistance targeted to small and very small community water and wastewater treatment systems. The goal of the project is to improve the capacity of small systems to better prepare for emergencies, develop emergency preparedness training manuals for small water systems, identify appropriate technologies to secure such systems, and provide technical assistance to small communities struggling to deal with these issues.

#### *Family Violence Prevention and Services*

The Committee recommends \$144,802,000 for fiscal year 2004 for family violence prevention and services programs. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2003 is \$144,364,000 and the budget request includes \$142,422,000 for this program.

#### *Runaway Youth Prevention Program*

The Committee recommends \$15,399,000 for fiscal year 2004 for the runaway youth prevention program. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2003 is \$15,399,000 and the budget request includes \$14,999,000 for this program. This is a discretionary grant program open to private nonprofit agencies for the provision of services to runaway, homeless, and street youth. Funds may be used for street-based outreach and education, including treatment, counseling,

provision of information, and referrals for these youths, many of whom have been subjected to, or are at risk of being subjected to, sexual abuse. The goal of this program is to help young people leave the streets.

#### *Domestic Violence Hotline*

The Committee recommends \$3,000,000 for fiscal year 2004 for the national domestic violence hotline. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2003 is \$2,562,000 and the budget request includes \$3,000,000 for this program.

This is a cooperative agreement which funds the operation of a national, toll-free, 24-hours-a-day telephone hotline to provide information and assistance to victims of domestic violence.

#### *Battered Women's Shelters*

The Committee recommends \$126,403,000 for fiscal year 2004 for battered women's shelters program. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2003 is \$126,403,000 and the budget request includes \$124,423,000 for this program.

This is a formula grant program to support community-based projects which operate shelters and provide related assistance for victims of domestic violence and their dependents. Emphasis is given to projects which provide counseling, advocacy, and self-help services to victims and their children.

#### *Early Learning Opportunities Program*

The Committee recommends \$33,779,000 for fiscal year 2004 for early learning opportunities program. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2003 is \$33,779,000 and the budget request did not include funds for this program.

This program supports grants to local community councils comprised of representatives from agencies involved in early learning programs, parent organizations and key community leaders. Funds are used to increase the capacity of local organizations to facilitate development of cognitive skills, language comprehension and learning readiness; enhance childhood literacy; improve the quality of early learning programs through professional development and training; and remove barriers to early learning programs.

#### *Faith-Based Center*

The Committee recommends \$1,400,000 for fiscal year 2004 for the operation of the Department's Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2003 is \$1,490,000 and the budget request includes \$1,400,000 for this program.

#### *Mentoring Children of Prisoners*

The Committee recommends \$9,935,000 for fiscal year 2004 for mentoring children of prisoners. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2003 is \$9,935,000 and the budget request includes \$50,000,000 for this program.



The mentoring children of prisoners program was authorized in 2001 under section 439 of the Social Security Act. The purpose of this program is to help children while their parents are imprisoned and includes activities that keep children connected to a parent in prison in order to increase the chances that the family will come together successfully when the parent is released. As a group, children of prisoners are less likely than their peers to succeed in school and more likely to become engaged in delinquent behavior.

#### *Independent Living Training Vouchers*

The Committee recommends \$41,727,000 for fiscal year 2004 for independent living training vouchers. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2003 is \$41,727,000 and the budget request includes \$60,000,000 for this program.

These funds will support vouchers of up to \$5,000 for college tuition, or vocational training for individuals who age out of the foster care system so they can be better prepared to live independently and contribute productively to society. Studies have shown that 25,000 youth leave foster care each year at age 18 and just 50 percent will have graduated high school, 52 percent will be unemployed and 25 percent will be homeless for one or more nights.

#### *Promotion of Responsible Fatherhood and Healthy Marriage*

The Committee does not provide funds for fiscal year 2004 for promotion of responsible fatherhood and healthy marriage. The budget request includes \$20,000,000 for this new program designed to promote responsible fatherhood and responsible marriage. Legislation has not been enacted that would create this new program. The purpose of this proposed program was to spur approaches at State and community levels to assist fathers to be more actively and productively involved in the lives of their children.

#### *Program Administration*

The Committee recommends \$179,584,000 for fiscal year 2004 for program administration. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2003 is \$171,873,000 and the budget request includes \$179,584,000 for this program.

The Committee urges ACF to continue to make progress in improving its Annual Performance Plan and Annual Performance Report. The Committee notes that many programs proposed for funding do not have solid data for baselines or performance outcome measures. This lack of objective data makes more difficult the Committee's decisions regarding the allocation of limited resources. The Committee believes that the Agency should work with program grantees and relevant associations to identify the most objective ways in which to evaluate the effectiveness of ACF programs and establish a timeline for producing meaningful data by which programs can be assessed. The Committee urges that steps be taken to improve this situation and expects information regarding such actions to be included in the fiscal year 2005 congressional justification.

The Committee continues its interest in the Department's Child and Family Services reviews. These reviews are an effective method for monitoring the progress States are making in assuring the safety, health, and permanency for children in child welfare and foster care as required in the

Adoption and Safe Families Act. The Committee encourages the Department to make available sufficient resources to ensure full implementation of the new collaborative monitoring system.

## **PROMOTING SAFE AND STABLE FAMILIES**

Appropriations, 2003	\$404,350,000
Budget estimate, 2004	504,978,000
Committee recommendation	404,350,000

The Committee recommends \$404,350,000 for fiscal year 2004 for promoting safe and stable families. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2003 is \$404,350,000 and the budget request includes \$504,978,000 for this program.

Funding available provides grants to States in support of: (1) family preservation services; (2) time-limited family reunification services (3) community-based family support services and (4) adoption promotion and support services. The Committee notes that most of the Federal funding related to child welfare is provided for the removal and placement of children outside of their own homes. Funds available through the Promoting Safe and Stable Families program are focused on supporting those activities that can prevent family crises from emerging which might require the temporary or permanent removal of a child from his or her own home.

The Promoting Safe and Stable Families program is comprised of \$305,000,000 in capped entitlement funds authorized by the Social Security Act and \$99,350,000 in discretionary appropriations.

## **PAYMENTS TO STATES FOR FOSTER CARE AND ADOPTION ASSISTANCE**

Appropriations, 2003	\$4,855,000,000
Budget estimate, 2004	5,068,300,000
Committee recommendation	5,068,300,000

The Committee recommends \$5,068,300,000 for fiscal year 2004 for payments to States for foster care and adoption assistance. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2003 is \$4,855,000,000 and the budget request includes \$5,068,300,000 for this program. In addition, the Committee recommendation concurs with the administration's request of \$1,767,700,000 for an advance appropriation for the first quarter of fiscal year 2005. The Committee's recommendation assumes enactment of proposed legislation creating an alternative funding option for States.

The Foster Care Program provides Federal reimbursement to States for: maintenance payments to families and institutions caring for eligible foster children, matched at the Federal medical assistance percentage [FMAP] rate for each State; and administration and training costs to pay for the efficient administration of the Foster Care Program, and for training of foster care workers and parents.

The Adoption Assistance Program provides funds to States for maintenance costs and the nonrecurring costs of adoption for children with special needs. The goal of this program is to

facilitate the placement of hard-to-place children in permanent adoptive homes, and thus prevent long, inappropriate stays in foster care. As in the Foster Care Program, State administrative and training costs are reimbursed under this program.

The Independent Living Program provides services to foster children under 18 and foster youth ages 18-21 to help them make the transition to independent living by engaging in a variety of services including educational assistance, life skills training, health services and room and board. States are awarded grants from the annual appropriation proportionate to their share of the number of children in foster care, subject to a matching requirement.