

News Release

Lifeline for the Empowerment and Development of Consumers, Inc.

PO Box 496, Painesville, OH 44077

(440) 354-2148 carried@lclifeline.org

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Contact: Carrie Dotson

440-354-2148

carried@lclifeline.org

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White House budget slashes core funding for Lifeline, Inc.'s Community Services Programs

For 38 years, Lifeline, Inc. has worked to build, enhance and support Lake County. Most visibly and most recently, Lifeline, Inc. worked hard to increase access to healthcare for those lacking adequate insurance and to help provide job training opportunities for those looking to make a job transition in the changing economy. This local work is now at risk due to proposed cuts in the Community Services Block Grant, announced in President Obama's budget released today.

CSBG is a federal funding stream that provides the core funding that supports locally-controlled programs that meet community needs. With that funding, Lifeline, Inc. has created a comprehensive, integrated array of services that enable poor families to get on their feet, into affordable housing and jobs, enrolled in career development and education programs, building a future as active, tax-paying citizens and responsible parents.

"CSBG creates opportunities for all members of our community," said Jeremy Iosue, Board President of Lifeline, Inc., attorney and President of Dylan, Iosue & Associates. "CSBG helps people find jobs, get educated and become secure. CSBG leads to additional income streams that fund our community. Lifeline, Inc. leverages those dollars and uses them to bring about the changes Lake County needs."

Without CSBG, Lake County will lose:

- CSBG funds sustain several of our largest programs, most significantly our health services program. As the economy has become more challenging, many Lake County residents—even hardworking, employed residents—are losing health insurance. Lifeline, Inc.'s health services program has traditionally provided a safety net and sought to increase access to healthcare for those lacking adequate health insurance. This program, which helped 870 Lake County households in 2010 with medical necessities like prescriptions, diabetic supplies and equipment, medical tests and eye exams, stand to be dramatically reduced without CSBG funds. Some components may even be eliminated altogether.
- Created using the American Recovery & Reinvestment CSBG funds in 2009, Lifeline's Employment Training Program was designed as a collaborative approach to helping Lake County's residents obtain the training and education needed to transition into new or better jobs in today's changing economy. Since its inception in the fall of 2009, we've assisted 57 residents in completing job training programs. This program is likely to be significantly impacted by

reductions in CSBG funding.

- Lifeline's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance site, in partnership with the IRS, is also in jeopardy of being scaled back with the elimination of CSBG funding. The VITA Clinics provide low-income residents an opportunity to have their taxes prepared in a confidential, high-quality manner for no charge. IRS-trained volunteers prepare tax returns, helping our clients to maximize their returns by finding all the tax credits they are eligible for. During the 2010 tax season, 78 households were assisted, over \$58,000 in returns were generated and 353 volunteer hours were accrued. Due to increased outreach efforts, for the 2011 tax season, we're anticipating over \$200,000 in returns generated for local residents. CSBG cuts would likely mean the elimination of this program, thus limiting the amount of dollars brought back into our community through tax returns.
- Other programs likely to be completely eliminated based on the loss of CSBG funding include our life skills workshops, which teach very basic skills to low-income and mentally ill residents; our transportation assistance vouchers, which provide low-income residents the ability to travel to and from work, school and medical appointments; and our assistance through the Ohio Benefit Bank, which allows us to link eligible families to county-wide services necessary to stabilize them.
- Additionally, Lifeline, Inc. has always been uniquely poised, as a Community Action Agency with flexible funding, to aid our local community when it is most needed. An example of this ability to meet emerging needs was during the 2006 Lake County flooding. We were able to respond quickly and in coordination with local relief efforts to provide assistance which residents could not get elsewhere. With the loss of CSBG funding, we will also lose much of our ability to respond quickly and effectively to emerging and critical needs like those experienced during this disaster.

"The loss of CSBG will impact our entire community," said Rita McMahon, City Manager for the City of Painesville. "The ripple effect will be far-reaching because the impact of these programs is so deep and so strong."

Lifeline, Inc. served over 1,250 Lake County residents with its community services programs during 2010. These comprehensive services work together to provide opportunities for communities and individuals.

"For a relatively small federal outlay, CSBG-funded programs pay off many times over as they get people working and paying taxes, prevent expensive emergency shelter placements and keep low-income community residents off the unemployment and welfare rolls, at huge savings to taxpayers," said Iosue.

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