

Crawford Co agencies expect deep cuts from White House budget

Written by

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BUCYRUS -- For the past 46 years Ohio Heartland Community Action Commission has worked to build, enhance, partner and support the Marion and Crawford and, more recently, Morrow County communities.

That support is in jeopardy because of proposed cuts in the Community Services Block Grant announced in President Barack Obama's budget, released Monday.

The federal grant provides core funding for locally-controlled programs that meet community needs. With this funding, the action commission has created a comprehensive, integrated array of services that enable families to get on their feet, building a future as taxpaying citizens and responsible parents, advocates say.

"CSBG creates opportunities for all members of our community," said action commission board President Bruce Angell.

Some programming provided by the local agency through its federal block grant:

- The collaborative United Community Rx Program.

- Enhancing the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program for Marion, Crawford and Morrow counties. The program delivers more than 50,000 volunteer hours to the community annually.

- The Salvation Army unit for Galion, including a local food pantry and a multi-county clothing outlet.

- The only high school equivalency diploma program available in Crawford County.

- Staffing for the Emergency Food and Shelter Programs in Marion, Crawford and Morrow counties and for the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing program in Crawford County.

- Staffing the county food bank in Morrow County.

- Operation of the Marion CSBG Center, which houses the Marion Senior Nutrition

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site and the distribution site for delivered meals to more than 280 homebound seniors in Marion County daily.

"CSBG is truly a unique community program. It empowers the local board members to address the individual needs of the community and to leverage a variety of programs to provide creative and responsive local services," said Angell, an RSVP volunteer who serves as an instructor in the Crawford County GED program.

"The loss of CSBG funding will impact our entire community. Thousands of families are served monthly."

Angell said the action commission's base funding is the Community Services Block Grant. The loss of that grant funding could have a ripple effect on all commission programming.

"OHCAC served over 16,000 people during 2009. These comprehensive services work together to provide opportunities for communities and individuals," Angell said. "For a relatively small federal outlay, CSBG-funded programs pay off many times over."

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