

**COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT
ALLOCATION PLAN**

Federal Fiscal Year 2022
October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2022

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

**NED LAMONT
GOVERNOR**

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The Community Services Block Grant Allocation Plan

FFY 2022

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THE COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT ALLOCATION PLAN
For Federal Fiscal Year 2022
October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2022

I. OVERVIEW OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT

A. Purpose

The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) is administered by the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) through its administrative agency, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Community Services (OCS). The Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS or the Department) is designated as the principal state agency for the allocation and administration of the block grant within the state of Connecticut.

The purposes of the Community Services Block Grant are:

1. To provide assistance to states and local communities, working through a network of Community Action Agencies for the reduction of poverty, the revitalization of low-income communities, and the empowerment of low-income families and individuals to become fully self-sufficient (particularly families who are attempting to transition off a state program carried out under part A of the Social Security Act (42 USC 601, et. Seq.); (the “Act”) and
2. To accomplish the goals described in paragraph (1) through:
 - a) the strengthening of community capabilities for planning and coordinating a broad range of federal, state, local, and private resources related to the elimination of poverty, so that these resources can be used in a manner responsive to local needs and conditions;
 - b) the coordination of a range of services to meet the needs of low-income families and individuals, so that these services have a measurable impact on the reduction of poverty in the community and in helping families and individuals to achieve self-sufficiency;
 - c) the promotion of innovative and effective community-based approaches to addressing the causes and effects of poverty and community breakdown;
 - d) the promotion of participation by the low-income residents and members of the groups served by programs funded through block grants made under this subtitle in planning and coordinating activities and programs designed to respond to the unique problems and needs within their communities; and
 - e) the broadening of the resource base for programs directed at the elimination of poverty so as to secure a more active role in the provision of services for:
 - (1) Private religious, charitable, and neighborhood-based organizations; and
 - (2) Individual citizens, business, labor, and professional groups, who are able to influence the quantity and quality of opportunities and services for the poor.

B. Major Use of Funds

HHS requires that at least ninety percent (90%) of the funds made available to the state are administered through grants to Community Action Agencies (CAAs), Community Action Programs (CAPs), or Limited Purpose Agencies (LPAs) that performed the functions of a Community Action Agency in fiscal year 1981, or their successors. These funds must be used for purposes consistent with the federal goals identified above.

There are currently nine CAAs and one LPA that qualify for CSBG funding in Connecticut. Each CAA has a specified catchment area. In Connecticut, CSBG funds are primarily used by CAAs to provide planning and coordination, organize services, encourage innovative and effective approaches to addressing the causes of poverty, broaden the resource base for programs and services, and for core administrative expenses. With CSBG as base funding and additional assistance through other state agencies, municipalities and private donations, CAAs are able to operate a wide range of programs. The CAAs utilize a holistic approach to address the immediate, short-term, and long-term needs of low- and moderate-income individuals and families to help them achieve and maintain economic self-sufficiency. Programs administered by the CAAs include, but are not limited to, Energy Assistance & Weatherization, Housing & Shelter, Employment & Training, Early Childhood Education and Financial Education, Case Management, and Food & Nutrition Services.

As required under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, CAAs also prepare annual Community Action Plans. Each CAA's plan addresses how the goals of the block grant will be furthered by the efforts of the programs administered by the Community Action Agency. Key components of the individual CAA's Plans include the following: community needs assessment; description of service delivery system, linkages, coordination of funds and innovative projects; and performance measurement outcomes and measures. CSBG funds are required to be used to serve or improve the well-being of individuals with annual incomes at or below 125% of the federal poverty level¹ and may not be used to support political activities or to pay for construction unless a specific waiver is obtained by the state from the federal government.

The state is permitted to retain up to five percent (5%) of the block grant for administration, and may use the remaining five percent (5%) of the funds allocated for a variety of purposes including, but not limited to, training, technical assistance, and capacity building for eligible entities, and innovative programs that further the purposes of the Act. The Department utilizes the administration allotment to provide direct program monitoring, training, and oversight functions to ensure programmatic compliance.

C. Federal Allotment Process

CSBG funds are allotted based on the national appropriation and the states' share of funds distributed under Sec. 221 of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 for federal fiscal year 1981.

D. Estimated Federal Funding

During FFY 2021, the Community Services Block Grant was funded at a national level of \$740 million, which represents no change from FFY 2020's final national funding level. At the time of the development of this plan, federal funding for FFY 2022 has not yet been finalized.

¹ 125% of the federal poverty level = annual income of \$33,125 for a family of four

For purposes of the development of this plan, the federal funding allocation for Connecticut for FFY 2022 is estimated to be \$8,849,555, which is equal to the state’s final FFY 2021 allocation.

E. Total Available and Estimated Expenditures

In total, available funding for FFY 2021 is estimated at \$13,513,215, made up of \$8,849,555 in estimated federal block grant funding and \$4,663,660 in estimated carryforward. Of the total available funding for FFY 2022, this plan proposes to expend \$8,875,821 and to carry forward \$4,004,714 to the following fiscal year.

Section 210 of the federal Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 requires that at least ninety percent (90%) of the CSBG funds made available to the state are to be used to make grants to CAAs or LPAs. Accordingly, the Department proposes that ninety percent (90%) or \$7,964,599 of the estimated FFY 2022 block grant funding will be distributed through grants to CAAs and LPAs in Connecticut plus \$26,266 to reflect the difference between proposed funding levels in FFY 2021 and final funding levels in FFY 2021. This adjustment reduces administrative burden on the Department and eligible entities.

Of the remaining ten percent (10%) of the FFY 2022 block grant funds or \$884,956, the state plans to retain 5% (\$442,478) for administration and 5% (\$442,478) for discretionary projects. The funds retained for administration will be used by the Department to support the necessary quality assurance and programmatic staffing to ensure programmatic and fiscal oversight, training and monitoring activities. The funds retained for discretionary projects will be used by the Department to support training, technical assistance, technology support, statewide projects and innovative programs related to the purposes of the Act.

The chart below delineates FFY 2022 proposed allocations based on estimated expenditures. Table A on page 10 provides program category detail for FFY 2020 (actual expenditures), FFY 2021 (estimated expenditures), and FFY 2022 (proposed allocations).

PROGRAM CATEGORY	FFY 2022 Proposed Expenditure
Grants to Eligible Entities	\$7,990,865
Discretionary Programs	442,478
Administration	442,478
TOTAL	\$8,875,821
Block Grant	\$8,849,555
Carry Forward from Previous Year	\$ 4,030,980
TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE	\$12,880,535

In line with our past practice, this plan proposes to carryforward \$4,004,714 of the total available funding for FFY 2022. Carryforward funding serves as a contingency in case of a decrease of funding in future fiscal years or to support one-time expenditures to address needs identified by the CAA Network. As an example, the state’s final FFY 2021 funding level was subject to a 1% reduction. The Department was able to utilize carryforward funds to ensure that the CAAs were funded at the estimated FFY 2021 level.

The availability of carryforward funding also allows the Department the flexibility to provide additional training and technical assistance in support of the CAA Network. As an example, the Department is required to complete the Center of Excellence Organizational Standard review on an annual basis. The purpose of this review is to ensure compliance with all federal requirements. We utilize the results of this review to identify and provide training and technical assistance to the CAA Network to support the network’s ability to maintain and/or improve adherence with federal standards. During FFY 2021, DSS utilized carryforward funds from FFY 2020 to provide the CAA Network with technical assistance to ensure their ability to reach and maintain full compliance with Organizational Standards, ROMA Next Generation and the CSBG Annual Report.

In FFY 2022, the Department will work with the CAA Network to establish a resource center entitled “CT Virtual ROMA Resource Center.” This virtual resource shall be available to all CT nationally-certified ROMA Trainers and Implementers to assist the CAA Network with activities to support its continual operations of the ROMA Cycle.

F. Proposed Changes From Last Year

Overall, the Department’s administration costs (personal services, fringe benefits and other expenses) are proposed remain steady in FFY 2022 from FFY 2021 levels. Proposed increases within the category will fund the hiring of staff for the vacant positions in the Division responsible for the administration of the CSBG program. FFY 2022 Personal Services and Fringe estimate 2.75 FTE staffing composition for a full year. Funding for the Other Expenses line item is proposed to decrease, offsetting the above increase, as FFY 2021 expenditures included one-time costs that are not necessary in FFY 2022. This reduction will not negatively impact the program or result in any loss of services.

G. Contingency Plan

The development of this allocation plan is based on the assumption that the FFY 2022 Community Services Block Grant for Connecticut will be funded at the level of \$8,849,555. In the event that anticipated funding is either increased or decreased, federal law, as noted above, specifies the proportion of funds allocated to Community Action Agencies, Discretionary Programs, and Administration. Should a significant decrease in federal funding occur as a result of sequestration, the Department, with input from Connecticut Association for Community Action (CAFCA) and the CAAs, will develop a process to determine priorities for applying reductions. If additional funds become available, they may be carried over into FFY 2023 in order to ensure ongoing programmatic coverage and to mitigate the potential for future reductions.

In accordance with section 4-28b of the Connecticut General Statutes, after recommended allocations have been approved or modified, any proposed transfer to or from any specific allocation

of a sum or sums of over fifty thousand dollars or ten per cent of any such specific allocation, whichever is less, shall be submitted by the Governor to the speaker and the president pro tempore and approved, modified or rejected by the committees. Notification of all transfers made shall be sent to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to appropriations and the budgets of state agencies and to the committee or committees of cognizance, through the Office of Fiscal Analysis.

H. State Allocation Planning Process

Sections 17b-885 through 17b-895 of the Connecticut General Statutes implement the federal requirements governing Community Action Agencies and further stipulate that allocated funds be distributed through an agreement negotiated between the Department and Community Action Agencies. Under the present agreement, negotiated and implemented in 1997, each CAA will receive a base amount that equals one-half of their FFY 1996 allocation. Remaining funds are allocated to CAAs based on the number of individuals in each CAA catchment area (as a proportion of the state total) at or below 125% of the federal poverty guidelines according to census data.

I. Grant Provisions

In order to obtain CSBG funding, Connecticut must submit and obtain federal approval of the state plan that satisfies the requirements of Sec. 676 of the Reauthorization Act. Under these requirements, the state must:

- designate a state agency to serve as lead agency;
- hold a public hearing to provide the public an opportunity to comment on the proposed use of funds;
- conduct monitoring in accordance with Section 678B of the Reauthorization Act;
- hold a legislative hearing at least once every three (3) years in conjunction with the development of the state plan;
- use funds received to support activities which assist low-income families and individuals to:
 1. achieve self-sufficiency;
 2. secure and retain meaningful employment;
 3. attain an adequate education;
 4. make better use of available income;
 5. obtain and maintain adequate housing;
 6. obtain emergency assistance; and
 7. achieve greater participation in the affairs of the community;
- address the needs of youth in low-income communities;

- ensure that CSBG funds are used to coordinate with and make more effective use of other programs with related purposes;
- describe how it uses its discretionary funds;
- include information provided by eligible entities on how CSBG funds will be used;
- ensure that eligible entities provide emergency food, supplies and related services to combat hunger and malnutrition;
- ensure that the state and eligible entities coordinate with and establish linkages between governmental and other programs to avoid duplication;
- provide for coordination between programs to ensure that energy crisis intervention programs are conducted in each community;
- ensure that the state will cooperate with related federal investigations;
- ensure that funding for eligible entities will not be terminated or reduced below their proportional share without cause;
- provide opportunities for state and eligible entities to form partnerships with other organizations, including religious, charitable and community organizations;
- establish mechanisms for low-income individuals or organizations that feel they are under-represented on the board of a CAA to petition for representation;
- require that each CAA submit a Community Action Plan as a condition of funding;
- require that all eligible entities participate in the Results Oriented Management and Accountability system; and
- require that each eligible entity have a Board of Directors composed of equal numbers of low-income persons, local elected officials or their designees, and other individuals or organizations serving low-income people in the community.

Additional Federal Requirements:

Through the collaborative efforts of OCS and the CSBG Network, including CSBG eligible entities, state CSBG Lead Agencies, state Community Action Agency Associations and national partners, a new Performance Management Framework for CSBG was developed and implemented in 2015.

This Framework includes:

- Organizational Standards for CSBG eligible entities;
- Federal and State Accountability Measures; and
- Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA).

These elements were designed to increase effectiveness and accountability across the CSBG network (federal, state, and local) and generate more robust results for the people and communities we serve.

On October 2, 2015, OCS issued an Information Memorandum Transmittal No. 144 regarding State and Federal Accountability Measures and Data Collection Modernization. Pursuant to the terms of the memorandum, OCS required states, no later than FFY 2016, to collect data and analyze and report on CSBG Accountability Measures through their online State plan and annual reports.

The thirteen (13) State accountability measures address efficiency and effectiveness characteristics such as timeliness, accuracy, standards, and stakeholder satisfaction in the critical activities and functions listed below:

- Development of State plan, including involving the eligible entities
- Implementation of State plan including:
 - Distribution of funds
 - Use of remainder/discretionary funds
 - Grantee monitoring and corrective action
 - Data collection, analysis, and reporting
 - Organizational standards for eligible entities
 - State linkages and communication

The Department began successfully complying with the identified state accountability measures during FFY 2016 and continues to comply with these requirements.

In addition to accountability measures for states, on January 26, 2015, OCS issued Information Memorandum Transmittal No. 138 referencing the “State Establishment of Organizational Standards for CSBG Eligible Entities under 678B of the CSBG Act, 42 U.S.C. § 9901 et seq.” The categories associated with the Organization Standards for CAAs are as follows:

1. Maximum Feasible Participation
 - Consumer Input and Involvement
 - Community Engagement
 - Community Assessment

2. Vision and Direction
 - Organizational Leadership
 - Board Governance
 - Strategic Planning

3. Operations and Accountability
- Human Resource Management
 - Financial Operations and Oversight
 - Data and Analysis

The Department and the CAA network continue to work collaboratively to ensure compliance with all federal requirements. It is the Department's expectation that through this process of consistent communication, Connecticut CAAs will remain informed and aware of compliance requirements for each of the categories associated with the above-mentioned organizational standards. The Department will also utilize this process to assist with the identification of training that is above and beyond the standard training.

Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA)

The Department and the CAA network continue activities related to ROMA Next Generation (ROMA NG). ROMA NG is the next level of ROMA principles, practices and resources implemented in FFY 2018. ROMA NG focuses on integrating information on people served, services and strategies provided, and outcomes achieved by eligible entities on 3 levels: community, individual and family. The ROMA NG efforts are reflected in the final CSBG Annual Report, which was approved by the federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) on January 12, 2017. Implementation and reporting in the new format for the National Performance Indicators began during FFY 2018. Connecticut successfully submitted its FY 2020 Annual Report as required.

In closing, FFY 2022 holds great promise for the CAA Network as it continues to align and maintain its functionality and organizational capacity with federal requirements to ensure that the national and local CAA discussion covers uniform topics: community level; individual and family level; and agency expenditures, capacity and resources.

II. Tables

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Table A

COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT RECOMMENDED ALLOCATIONS

PROGRAM CATEGORY	FFY 20 Expenditures	FFY 21 Estimated Expenditures	FFY 22 Proposed Expenditures	Percentage Change from FFY 21 to FFY 22
Grants to Eligible Entities ^{1, 4}	\$7,015,275	\$8,597,280	\$7,990,865	-7%
Discretionary Programs	300,372	442,477	442,478	0%
Administration ²	198,359	442,478	442,478	0%
TOTAL	\$7,514,006	\$9,482,235	\$8,875,821	-6%
SOURCE OF FUNDS				
Block Grant	\$8,878,739	\$8,849,555	\$8,849,555	0%
Carry Forward from Previous Year ³	3,298,927	4,663,660	4,030,980	-14%
TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE	\$12,177,666	\$13,513,215	\$12,880,535	-5%

Notes

¹ FFY 2021 estimated expenditures include costs incurred during FFY 2020 and paid during FFY 2021. FFY 2022 proposed expenditures reflect the base award amount each CAA receives per the current agreement stipulated under §17b-888 of the Connecticut General Statutes. Individual CAA detail is detailed in Table D.

² FFY 2022 Personal Services and Fringe costs are associated with 2.75 FTE dedicated to the CSBG program. These staff will provide appropriate oversight of the program consistent with federal requirements. COVID-19 impacted the Department's ability to fully staff the program during FFY 2021; staff vacancies existed during October 2020 – September 30, 2021.

³ FFY 2021 carryforward amount of \$4,663,660 includes \$366,972.67 in CSBG programmatic funds to CAAs due to the timing of the payments issued to 3 CAAs. The CSBG office continues to work with CAAs to ensure issuance of timely payments.

⁴ FFY 2022 Grants to Eligible Entities Department proposes that ninety percent (90%) or \$7,964,599 of the estimated FFY 2022 block grant funding will be distributed through grants to CAAs and LPAs in Connecticut plus \$26,266 to reflect the difference between proposed funding levels in FFY 2021 and final funding levels in FFY 2021. This adjustment reduces administrative burden on the Department and eligible entities.

Table B
COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT
SUMMARY OF PROGRAM EXPENDITURES

	FFY 20 Expenditures	FFY 21 Estimated Expenditures	FFY 22 Proposed Expenditures	Percentage change from FFY 21 to FFY 22
Number of Positions (FTE) ¹	2.75	1.75	2.75	
Personal Services	89,142	130,130	198,932	53%
Fringe Benefits	71,669	113,592	202,692	78%
Other Expenses ²	37,548	198,756	40,854	-79%
Equipment				
Contracts				
Grants to:				
Local Government				
Other State Agencies				
Private Agencies ^{3,4}	7,315,647	9,039,757	8,433,343	-7%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$7,514,006	\$9,482,235	\$8,875,821	-6%
	Sources of FFY 20 Allocations	Sources of FFY 21 Allocations	Sources of FFY 22 Allocations	Percentage change from FFY 21 to FFY 22
Carry Forward from Previous Year	3,298,927	4,663,660	4,030,980	-14%
Federal Block Grant Funds	8,878,739	8,849,555	8,849,555	0%
TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE	\$12,177,666	\$13,513,215	\$12,880,535	-5%

Notes:

- ¹ FFY 2022 Personal Services and Fringe costs are associated with 2.75 FTE dedicated to the CSBG program. These staff will provide appropriate oversight of the program consistent with federal requirements. COVID-19 impacted the Department's ability to fully staff the program during FFY 2021.
- ² FFY 2021 Other expenses included one-time costs associated with software enhancements to the CSBG contract reporting compliance system, which includes submission of Center of Excellence Organizational Standards documentation; indirect costs and conferences/workshop hosting. FFY 2022 proposes to reduce Other Expenses. This reduction will not negatively impact the program or result in any loss of services.
- ³ FFY 2021 estimated expenditures include costs incurred during FFY 2020 and paid during FFY 2021. FFY 2022 proposed expenditures reflect the base award amount each CAA receives per the current agreement stipulated under §17b-888 of the Connecticut General Statutes as well as the unallocated balance of FFY 2021, which was the difference between proposed and final award. Individual CAA detail is detailed in Table D.
- ⁴ Grants to Private Agencies represents grant amounts plus discretionary funding.

Table C
COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT
SUMMARY OF SERVICE OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Service Category	Objective	Service/Activity	Number Served FFY 20*	Performance Measures
Core Funding for Eligible Entities	Provide core administrative support for CAAs to organize services and coordinate funding for programs that serve individuals and families at or below 125% of the federal poverty level.	Provide planning, administrative, and financial management support to Community Action Agencies to coordinate grants and services to low-income residents.	181,183 persons served through 9 CAAs in FFY 2020	See below

* As reported in Module 4 Section C, Line A of the annual federal CSBG Annual Report for 2020.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

AS REPORTED IN THE ANNUAL CT FFY 2020 COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT ANNUAL REPORT

Conditions of poverty reduced or eliminated as measured by the # of clients who, as a result of CSBG assistance, received the following services:

1. Employment indicators and services collect data on outcomes achieved by low-income participants who are either unemployed and seeking earned income, or employed and seeking increased earned income and/or employment benefits. **[Employment Indicator]**
2. Income and Asset Building indicator collects data on participants' increase in financial assets or improving financial well-being. **[Income and Asset Building Indicator]**
3. Education and Cognitive Development indicators and services collect data based on activities that produce developmental and educational outcomes for children, youth, parents/caregivers, and other adult participants. **[Education and Cognitive Development]**
4. Housing indicator and services collect data on outcomes achieved by participants that access emergency housing, obtain and maintain stable housing, reduce eviction or foreclosure or improve home's safety. **[Housing]**
5. Health and Social/Behavioral Development indicator or services collect data on individuals who achieve outcomes such as: improving physical, mental or behavioral health, increase household member's interaction skills, demonstrate ability to live independently or decrease household member's recidivism rate. **[Health and Social / Behavioral Development]**

6. Civic Engagement and Community Involvement indicators and services collect data on participants who increase leadership skills, social networks and knowledge to improve conditions in the community.
[Civic Engagement and Community Involvement]

Table D

COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT

PROPOSED EXPENDITURES BY PROGRAM CATEGORY

	FFY 2020 Expenditures	FFY 2021 Estimated Expenditures¹	FFY 2022 Proposed Expenditures¹
Major Program Categories	(including carry forward funds)	(including carry forward funds)	(including carry forward funds)
Grants to Eligible Entities			
Alliance for Community Empowerment (ACE)	457,136	1,192,995	1,158,306
ACCESS Agency, Inc.	467,762	496,660	482,211
Community Action Agency of New Haven, Inc. (CAANH)	990,729	1,518,570	1,156,250
Community Action Agency of Western Connecticut, Inc. (CAAWC)	801,710	744,598	722,936
Community Renewal Team of Greater Hartford, Inc. (CRT)	1,843,943	1,957,863	1,900,903
Connecticut Association for Community Action (CAFCA)	196,240	289,285	242,762
Human Resources Agency of New Britain, Inc. (HRANB)	529,990	562,732	546,361
New Opportunities, Inc. (NOI)	1,037,781	1,101,965	1,069,838
TEAM, Inc.	227,534	241,592	234,563
Thames Valley Council for Community Action, Inc. (TVCCA)	462,450	491,020	476,735
Formula Allocations – Total	\$7,015,275	\$8,597,280	\$7,990,865
Discretionary Programs²	300,372	442,477	442,478
State Agency Administration³	198,359	442,478	442,478
TOTAL CSBG	\$7,514,006	\$9,482,235	\$8,875,821

Notes:

¹ FFY 2021 estimated expenditures include costs incurred during FFY 2020 and paid during FFY 2021; in addition to a one-time increase totaling \$239,442 which was not allocated during FFY 2020 due to the notice of final FFY 2020 award. FFY 2022 proposed expenditures reflect the base award to each CAA pursuant to §17b-888 of the Connecticut General Statutes and aligns with the FFY 2021 allocation, less the FFY 2020 increase.

² CSBG discretionary resources will be utilized as follows: 80% capacity building activities; 15% other CSBG purposes; and 5% other purposes to support the Connecticut's compliance with the CSBG Act. Examples of services funded through discretionary resources include: training and technical assistance for ROMA training; Center of Excellence Organizational Standards performance benchmark initiative, CAA Network support; Data Warehouse annual maintenance, Board training; Conferences, Meetings, Annual Needs Assessments, etc.

³. FFY 2022 Personal Services and Fringe costs are associated with 2.75 FTE dedicated to the CSBG program. These staff will provide appropriate oversight of the program consistent with federal requirements. COVID-19 impacted the Department's ability to fully staff the program during FFY 2021; staff vacancies existed during October 2020 – September 30, 2021.