

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. _____

To amend title V of the Social Security Act to establish a grant program for community-based maternal mentoring programs.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. RUBIO introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To amend title V of the Social Security Act to establish a grant program for community-based maternal mentoring programs.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Community Mentors
5 for Moms Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. GRANTS FOR COMMUNITY-BASED MATERNAL MEN-**
7 **TORING PROGRAMS.**

8 Title V of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 701
9 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

1 **“SEC. 514. GRANTS FOR COMMUNITY-BASED MATERNAL**
2 **MENTORING PROGRAMS.**

3 “(a) IN GENERAL.—In addition to any other pay-
4 ments made under this title to a State, the Secretary shall
5 make grants to eligible entities to conduct demonstration
6 projects for, and enable such entities to deliver services
7 under, community-based mentoring programs that satisfy
8 the requirements of subsection (c) to eligible mothers in
9 order to promote improvements in maternal and child well-
10 being, financial stewardship, child development, parenting,
11 and access to social services and other community re-
12 sources.

13 “(b) APPLICATION.—The Secretary may not award
14 funds made available under this subsection on a non-
15 competitive basis, and may not provide any such funds to
16 an entity for the purpose of carrying out a community-
17 based mentoring program unless the entity has submitted
18 an application to the Secretary that includes—

19 “(1) a description of how the programs or ac-
20 tivities proposed in the application will improve ma-
21 ternal mental and physical health outcomes in a
22 service area identified by the entity, substantially in-
23 crease the number of eligible mothers in a service
24 area with access to a community-based mentoring
25 relationship, utilize community volunteer mentors,
26 and supplement, including by avoiding duplication

1 with, existing social services and community re-
2 sources;

3 “(2) a description of how the program will part-
4 ner with other community institutions, including pri-
5 vate institutions, in identifying eligible mothers in
6 need of a mentor and, as applicable, creating sup-
7 port communities among eligible mothers;

8 “(3) a description of the populations to be
9 served by the entity, including specific information
10 on how the entity will serve eligible mothers who be-
11 long to high-risk populations as identified in sub-
12 section (d);

13 “(4) a description of the maternal and child
14 health indicators, financial well-being, and other
15 needs of populations to be served by the entity as
16 described in paragraph (3), including, to the extent
17 practicable, the prevalence of mentoring opportuni-
18 ties for such populations;

19 “(5) the quantifiable benchmarks that will be
20 used to measure program success;

21 “(6) a commitment by the entity to consult
22 with experts with a demonstrated history of men-
23 toring and case management success in achieving
24 the outcomes described in subsection (c)(2)(A) in de-
25 veloping the programs and activities;

1 “(7) a commitment by the entity to ensure
2 mentors to not refer or counsel in favor of abortions;
3 and

4 “(8) such other application information as the
5 Secretary may deem necessary, with the goal of
6 minimizing the application burden on small non-
7 governmental organizations that would otherwise
8 qualify for the grant.

9 “(c) REQUIREMENTS.—

10 “(1) CORE COMPONENTS.—A community ma-
11 ternal mentoring program conducted with a grant
12 made under this section shall include the following
13 core components:

14 “(A) Provision of community-based men-
15 toring relationships for eligible mothers, which
16 may include dedicated individual mentors and
17 networks of peer and community support
18 groups.

19 “(B) An individualized needs assessment
20 for each eligible mother participating in the
21 program, to be administered at the outset of
22 the program.

23 “(C) Recruitment and utilization of com-
24 munity-based, volunteer mentors.

1 “(D) Provision of training to participating
2 mentors to equip them with mentoring best
3 practices and knowledge of public and private
4 resources available to eligible mothers (includ-
5 ing public social services).

6 “(2) MEASURABLE IMPROVEMENTS IN BENCH-
7 MARK AREAS.—

8 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The eligible entity
9 shall establish, subject to the approval of the
10 Secretary, quantifiable, measurable 3- and 5-
11 year benchmarks demonstrating the program
12 results in improvements for eligible mothers
13 participating in the program in the following
14 areas:

15 “(i) The number of eligible mothers in
16 the eligible entity’s service area with access
17 to a community-based mentoring relation-
18 ship.

19 “(ii) Improved maternal and child
20 health, including mental and behavioral
21 health.

22 “(iii) Improved financial literacy.

23 “(iv) Improved family economic self-
24 sufficiency.

1 “(v) Improved coordination and refer-
2 rals for other community resources and
3 supports, including public and private re-
4 sources.

5 “(B) DEMONSTRATION OF IMPROVE-
6 MENT.—

7 “(i) REPORT TO THE SECRETARY.—
8 Not later than 30 days after the end of the
9 third year in which the eligible entity con-
10 ducts the program, the entity shall submit
11 to the Secretary a report describing the
12 program’s results in the areas specified in
13 subparagraph (A).

14 “(ii) IMPROVEMENT PLAN.—If the re-
15 port submitted to the Secretary fails to
16 demonstrate improvements in at least 3 of
17 the areas outlined in subparagraph (A),
18 the eligible entity shall develop and imple-
19 ment a plan to improve outcomes in each
20 of the areas specified in subparagraph (A),
21 subject to approval by the Secretary.

22 “(iii) NO IMPROVEMENT OR FAILURE
23 TO SUBMIT REPORT.—If, 1 year after an
24 eligible entity submits an improvement
25 plan under clause (ii), the Secretary deter-

1 mines that the entity has failed to dem-
2 onstrate any improvement in the areas
3 specified in subparagraph (A), or if the
4 Secretary determines that an eligible entity
5 has failed to submit the report required
6 under clause (i), and has not agreed to a
7 reasonable timeline to submit such report
8 under such conditions as may be deter-
9 mined by the Secretary, the Secretary shall
10 terminate the entity's grant and may re-
11 allocate any unpaid grant funds toward fu-
12 ture grants provided under this section.

13 “(3) IMPROVEMENTS IN PARTICIPANT OUT-
14 COMES.—

15 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The program is de-
16 signed, with respect to an eligible mother par-
17 ticipating in the program, to result in the par-
18 ticipant outcomes described in subparagraph
19 (B) that are relevant to the mother (as deter-
20 mined pursuant to an individualized needs as-
21 sessment administered to the mother).

22 “(B) PARTICIPANT OUTCOMES.—The par-
23 ticipant outcomes described in this subpara-
24 graph are the following:

1 “(i) Improvements in prenatal and
2 maternal health, including mental and be-
3 havioral health and improved pregnancy
4 outcomes.

5 “(ii) Improvements in child health
6 and development, including the prevention
7 of child injuries and maltreatment.

8 “(iii) Higher levels of engagement be-
9 tween mothers, children, and their health
10 providers.

11 “(iv) Reductions in mothers’ stress
12 and anxiety.

13 “(v) Improvements in parenting skills.

14 “(vi) Improvement in financial literacy
15 skills.

16 “(vii) Improvements in child’s school
17 readiness and academic achievement.

18 “(viii) Improvements in family eco-
19 nomic self-sufficiency.

20 “(ix) Improvements in the coordina-
21 tion of referrals for, and the provision of,
22 other community resources, including pri-
23 vate and public resources, and supports for
24 eligible families.

1 “(d) PRIORITIZATION.—An eligible entity receiving a
2 grant under this section shall identify and prioritize high-
3 risk populations in provision of services, including—

4 “(1) low-income eligible mothers;

5 “(2) eligible mothers who are pregnant women
6 who have not attained the age of 21;

7 “(3) eligible mothers from populations with a
8 high risk of maternal morbidity;

9 “(4) eligible mothers with a history of sub-
10 stance abuse or victims of domestic abuse;

11 “(5) eligible mothers with children with develop-
12 mental disabilities; and

13 “(6) eligible mothers residing in a qualified op-
14 portunity zone, as designated under section 1400Z-
15 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

16 “(e) MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT.—Funds provided to
17 an eligible entity under a grant awarded under subsection
18 (a) shall supplement, and not supplant, funds from other
19 sources for maternal mentorship or case management
20 services.

21 “(f) EVALUATION.—

22 “(1) ONGOING RESEARCH AND EVALUATION.—

23 The Secretary shall engage in ongoing research and
24 evaluation activities in order to increase knowledge
25 about the implementation and effectiveness of com-

1 munity maternal mentoring programs. The Sec-
2 retary may carry out such activities directly, or
3 through grants, cooperative agreements, or con-
4 tracts, and shall submit a report to Congress not
5 less than annually on the research and evaluation
6 steps being taken to measure the impact and effec-
7 tiveness of programs funded under this section, as
8 well as any interim outcomes that may be available.

9 “(2) REPORT REQUIREMENT.—Not later than 3
10 years after the date of enactment of this section, the
11 Secretary shall submit a report to Congress on the
12 effectiveness of programs funded with grants under
13 subsection (a) in producing the outcomes described
14 in subsection (c)(3)(B), and shall include in such re-
15 port recommendations for improving program design
16 and implementation.

17 “(g) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary shall
18 provide an eligible entity required to develop and imple-
19 ment an improvement plan under subsection (c)(2)(B)
20 with technical assistance to develop and implement the
21 plan. The Secretary may provide the technical assistance
22 directly or through grants, contracts, or cooperative agree-
23 ments.

24 “(h) NO FUNDS TO PROHIBITED ENTITIES.—No
25 prohibited entity shall be eligible to receive a grant under

1 subsection (a), or any other funds made available by this
2 section.

3 “(i) PROTECTIONS FOR PARTICIPATING RELIGIOUS
4 ORGANIZATIONS.—A religious organization shall be eligi-
5 ble to apply for and receive funding for a program under
6 this section on the same basis as a non-religious organiza-
7 tion, and a religious organization’s exemptions, in title VII
8 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (including exemption from
9 prohibitions in employment discrimination in section
10 702(a) of that Act (42 U.S.C. 2000e–1(a))), title VIII of
11 the Civil rights Act of 1968, title IX of the Educational
12 Amendments of 1987, the Americans with Disabilities Act,
13 the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, the Religious
14 Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act, or any other
15 provision in law providing an exemption for a religious or-
16 ganization, shall not be waived by its participation in, or
17 receipt of funds from, a grant provided by this section.

18 “(j) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

19 “(1) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of carrying
20 out this section, there are authorized to be appro-
21 priated \$100,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2024
22 through 2026.

23 “(2) RESERVATIONS.—Of the amounts appro-
24 priated under this subsection for a fiscal year, the

1 Secretary shall reserve 3 percent for purposes of car-
2 rying out subsections (f) and (g).

3 “(3) AVAILABILITY.—Funds made available to
4 an eligible entity under this section shall remain
5 available for expenditure by the eligible entity
6 through the end of the third fiscal year following the
7 fiscal year in which the funds are awarded to the en-
8 tity.

9 “(k) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

10 “(1) COMMUNITY-BASED MENTORING RELA-
11 TIONSHIP.—The term ‘community-based mentoring
12 relationship’ means a relationship with a dedicated
13 mentor and, as applicable, group of mentors or peer
14 support group, who meet regularly with an eligible
15 mother and help that mother address barriers to
16 care, mental, behavioral, and physical well-being,
17 and economic mobility by providing support services
18 and linkages to community resources. A community-
19 based mentoring relationship should, to the extent
20 practicable, have an understanding of the barriers
21 and lived experience of that community, which may
22 include shared lived experience.

23 “(2) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term ‘eligible en-
24 tity’ means a local government, Indian Tribe (or a
25 consortium of Indian Tribes), Tribal Organization,

1 Urban Indian Organization, or nonprofit organiza-
2 tion, including religious organizations, with a dem-
3 onstrated history of serving eligible mothers.

4 “(3) ELIGIBLE MOTHER.—The term ‘eligible
5 mother’ means—

6 “(A) a woman who is pregnant; or

7 “(B) a woman who has primary caregiving
8 responsibilities for a child under the age of 6.

9 “(4) PROHIBITED ENTITY.—The term ‘prohib-
10 ited entity’ means an entity, including its affiliates,
11 subsidiaries, successors, and clinics that, as of the
12 date of enactment of this section, performs, induces,
13 refers for, or counsels in favor of abortions, or pro-
14 vides financial support to any other organization
15 that conducts such activities.”.