



FEDERATION OF PROTESTANT WELFARE AGENCIES

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### **2009-2010 New York State Legislative and Budget Agenda**

The Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies (FPWA) promotes the social and economic well-being of greater New York's most vulnerable by strengthening human service organizations and advocating for just public policies. FPWA substantial team of expert policy analysts combine policy analyses along with input from member agency executives and staff, our Board of Directors, and coalition members to create an advocacy agenda that reflects the needs of our member agencies and the New Yorkers they serve.

This document outlines specific legislative and budget agenda items across our primary portfolio areas: Child Welfare, Early Childhood Education, Elderly Welfare, HIV and AIDS, Income Security, Workforce Development and Youth Services. We look forward to working closely with the Executive Branch and legislators as the State budget season unfolds in the next few months. For additional information or questions, please contact us.

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## Child Welfare

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### **Support the Governor's proposed extension of the 65/35 open-ended child welfare services funding stream for three years, but restore funding lost to the FY 2009 2% budget cut by reimbursing the full 65% State share.**

FPWA commends the Governor's proposed FY 2010 Executive Budget for extending the 65/35 open-ended child welfare services funding stream for three years and for increasing the amount allocated to this by \$16.9 million. However, we urge the Governor and the Legislature to reimburse counties for the full amount of the 65% State match for open-ended child welfare services, which is currently reimbursed at 63.7% as a result of the 2% cut to local assistance programs in the FY 2009 budget. It is essential that New York State reimburse the full State match for these critical services, including protective, preventive, aftercare, post-adoption, and independent living services. This funding, and in particular the 65/35 match, encourages counties to invest in high-quality services that strengthen families, improve child safety, decrease the use of costly foster care, and save the State money in the long run.

### **In addition, FPWA calls on New York State to restore other vital preventive services funding streams that were cut or eliminated in the proposed FY 2010 Executive Budget, including the following:**

- The Home Visiting Program, which was cut from \$25.2 million to \$23.3 million as a result of the 2% cut to local assistance programs in the FY 2009 budget and the 6% cut in the August special session, was further reduced by 25% to \$17.5 million in the proposed FY 2010 Executive Budget.
- \$34 million for Community Optional Preventive Services (COPS) was eliminated entirely in the proposed FY 2010 Executive Budget.

### **Restore \$9.6 million to continue a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for preventive services workers.**

FPWA is disappointed to see that funding to continue a COLA for preventive services workers was eliminated altogether in the FY 2010 Executive Budget. Preventive services are an essential part of the State's efforts to support families, and workers in these programs are dedicated to helping parents and protecting children. FPWA urges the State to recognize the valuable role of these workers, as well as the importance of this COLA for them and their families during these difficult economic times.

### **Invest \$2.14 million in a pilot program offering higher education scholarships for older and former foster care youth attending an in-state undergraduate program or vocational training program (A.6002; sponsored by Assemblymember William Scarborough).**

The expense of attending college is out of reach for most foster care youth. Foster youth with any hope of affording a post-secondary education are forced to piece together numerous grants and take on loans, a process that can be extremely daunting without family help, guidance counselors, or the many other supports upon which non-foster youth rely. A state-funded scholarship program that provides tuition and non-tuition assistance would encourage older and former foster care youth to obtain a post-secondary education, ultimately giving them the power



to participate in the workforce, earn higher wages, and pursue opportunities for advancement. Our initial draft estimate indicates that the total State investment needed to support a pilot version of this legislation for roughly 330 students would be \$2.14 million in its first year of operation.

**Invest in subsidized guardianship as an alternate permanency option for children in foster care.**

In light of new federal legislation, the *Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008* (P.L. 110-351), which would provide federal funding, FPWA strongly encourages the State to implement subsidized kinship guardianship as a permanency option for children in foster care. Adoption does not work for every family, and subsidized guardianship would allow children in long-term care who are unable to return to their parents to exit the system into secure living situations, often with kinship caregivers. Research shows that kinship care is associated with improved permanency and social outcomes for foster children and that kinship guardianship is an important option for both older youth, who are at risk of aging out of the system, and communities of color, whose cultural norms already support caregiving for children by extended family members.

**In addition, FPWA calls on the State to restore \$1.15 million for Kinship Services.**

FPWA urges the State to restore funding for Kinship Care programs and for the Kinship Information and Referral Network, which were originally funded at \$2.15 million before being reduced by 2% in the FY 2009 budget, 6% in the August Special Session, and 50% in the proposed FY 2010 Executive Budget. These programs provide vital support services for grandparents and others who provide loving homes for related children.

**Implement child welfare caseload guidelines recommended by the NYS Office of Children and Family Services.**

The 2006 New York State Child Welfare Workload Study published by OCFS examined the effects of high caseloads on child protective, foster care, and preventive services caseworkers and found that excessive caseloads undermine their ability to provide families in the child welfare system with high-quality services. The study suggests caseloads of 11-12 children per foster care case planner and 12-16 families per preventive case planner, which would allow caseworkers to spend more time with the children and families that they serve. FPWA urges the State to implement caseload guidelines and to provide counties with the necessary resources to support caseload reductions.

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## Early Childhood Education

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FPWA, working in coalition with Winning Beginning New York, believes that New York State should strengthen its commitment to providing quality child care and early education programs to low-income families.

### **Increase New York State's investment in quality early care and education programs.**

Quality early care and education programs prepare children for a lifetime of learning and increase the chance of success in school and adult life. Increased availability of child care and improved access are crucial to ensuring that working parents in low-income and public assistance families can obtain care for their children. FPWA urges New York State to:

- **Remove \$356 million from the Flexible Fund for Family Services and transfer it to the Child Care Block Grant.**
- **Restore funding for child care subsidies by adding \$30 million.**
- **Eliminate the child support requirement for families seeking subsidized child care (A.3657/S.2091, sponsored by Assemblymember William Scarborough and Senator Velmanette Montgomery).**
- Cap child care co-payments at 10% of gross family income and eliminate co-pays for families living under the federal poverty level (S.1274/A.5460, sponsored by Senator Velmanette Montgomery and Assemblymember Michele Titus).
- Address county-by-county disparities in child care co-pays and create a statewide co-payment system that is both equitable and affordable.

### **Maintain funding for Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) at the FY 08-09 appropriation level for the next two years and increase flexibility for districts utilizing this funding.**

FPWA asks the State to maintain UPK funding at the FY 2008-2009 appropriation level for the next two years in order to provide critical early learning opportunities to children across the State. In addition, FPWA urges the State to increase *the flexibility* that districts have in utilizing UPK money. With greater freedom to spend this money on UPK-related needs, such as start-up expenses, full day pre-kindergarten options that better fit the schedules of working parents, and professional development opportunities for staff, districts will have the ability to implement and expand UPK in ways that best meet the unique needs of the children and families they serve.

### **Further invest in *Qualitystars NY*, New York's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS).**

FPWA applauds the State for the progress made in developing a QRIS, known as *Qualitystars NY*, which can be used in the future to assess and rate the quality of early care and education programs across New York State. Such a system will not only assist early care providers in evaluating their programs and improving the quality of the services they provide, but it will also help parents identify high-quality programs for their children. In order to more fully develop *Qualitystars NY* and enhance child care quality overall, FPWA urges the State to:

- Provide \$600,000 to attract private funding and build up the resources available to support *Qualitystars NY*.



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- Provide financial supports and incentives for providers who implement quality improvements under *Qualitystars NY*. Programmatic and structural improvements require a significant commitment of time and resources on the part of child care programs, and financial support is crucial to helping programs sustain advancements in quality.

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## **Elderly Welfare**

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### **Restore \$1.9 million for senior transportation services.**

The Governor's Executive Budget includes funding in the amount of \$921,000, down from \$1.9 million in the 2008-09 budget, for vehicle operating expenses for elderly service providers. In addition to meal delivery to homebound seniors, these vehicles transport the elderly to important services and activities including senior centers, adult day services, medical appointments and food shopping. Operating expenses include costs for insurance, maintenance, and fuel. Due to the continually increasing costs for insurance and vehicle maintenance, a funding restoration is critical. FPWA requests that the amount of funding for this program be restored to \$1.9 million.

### **Support \$2 million in funding for Geriatric Mental Health Services**

The Governor has included \$2 million in the Executive Budget for geriatric mental health programs. \$2 million was previously allocated to establish demonstration programs under the Geriatric Mental Health Act. Funding is being utilized for the creation of state of the art service demonstration programs to provide innovative geriatric mental health services as well as education and training programs for primary care physicians in the identification and treatment of depression among older adults. Due to the dramatic increase in the older adult population, we urge the legislature to support the continued funding of \$2 million to provide these innovative geriatric mental health services to older adults.

### **Restore \$928,000 in funding for Social Model Adult Day Service Programs**

The Governor's Executive Budget includes funding in the amount of \$872,000 down from \$928,000 in the 2008-09 budget for social model adult day service programs. SADS programs are designed to provide a variety of long term care services to older New Yorkers with functional impairments in a congregate setting and according to an individualized service plan. Social Adult Day Services are a cost effective way to care for frail elders and enables them to live in their homes and communities, averting premature nursing home placement. Due to the elimination of funding for these vital programs by the City of New York, it is crucial this allocation be restored so that one of the most vulnerable populations can continue to receive care in a non-institutional setting.

### **Restore \$250,000 in funding for the enriched model of social adult day services.**

The Governor has eliminated funding in the amount of \$250,000 for the enriched model of social adult day services in the Executive Budget. The enriched model of social adult day services affords program providers the opportunity to expand the range of services offered, allows the elderly to remain in the community longer and deters or delays nursing home placement. Facilities need the flexibility to adjust to the range of services needed by the clients they serve. Examples of services provided under this program include assistance with toileting, mobility, transferring, eating, and medication dispensing by a Registered Nurse, R.N. FPWA respectfully requests funding be restored in the amount of \$250,000 for this program in 2009-2010.

### **Restore the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) state benefit**

The Governor proposes to reduce the SSI supplemental state benefit provided to aged, blind and disabled individuals. Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a critical program that provides a monthly income to poor elderly, disabled and visually impaired individuals of any age. New York State's portion of the SSI benefit is not indexed to inflation and has been increased only



once since 1989. Currently, SSI recipients must survive on a benefit which is about \$140 per month below the poverty level. New York State needs to institute an increase in the SSI benefit level for the elderly, disabled and visually impaired target populations and continue to ensure the federal COLA gets passed through each year to recipients.

### **Restore \$11 million to Adult Day Health Care Transportation**

The Governor's Executive Budget proposes a reduction in adult day health care transportation rates. With the high costs of insurance and maintenance and repairs for program vehicles, FPWA is particularly concerned about the financial strain this reduction will place on program providers running adult day health care programs. FPWA urges the Governor and Legislature to restore this critical funding so seniors can continue to be transported to vital programs.

### **Oppose rate reductions to the Long Term Home Health Care Program (LTHHCP) and Certified Home Health Agencies (CCHA)**

The Governor proposes to eliminate trend factors for home care and personal care providers. In addition, his budget proposal recommends the reduction of CHHA and LTHHCP rates. FPWA is concerned about the impact these rate reductions will have on program providers and the seniors who need to access these critical services. For example, the current LTHHCP rate of reimbursement to social adult day care programs is currently far less than the actual cost of services. The highest rate of reimbursement to one program is \$45 per day when the actual cost for a social adult care day is at least \$70. With the projected growth of the elderly in the coming years, sufficient financial resources need to be in place for the continued provision of home care and long term home health care services for seniors. An investment in these community options needs to be made as nursing home placement is a much more expensive option. We request the Governor and Legislature rescind the suggested trend factor and rate reduction plan.

### **Oppose the Expansion of Managed Care to Dual-Eligibles**

The Governor's Executive Budget calls for the aggressive enrollment of dual eligibles in managed care plans that participate in both Medicaid and Medicare programs. The State expects \$3.0 million in savings during 2009-10 as a result of this initiative. FPWA is concerned about this proposal as some seniors who have Medicaid and Medicare are finding there are no providers in their area who will accept managed care plans. Thus seniors are being forced to travel into other neighborhoods for health care and are unable to get there due to physical limitations. In addition, seniors are unable to access homecare and skilled nursing services as some providers do not have managed care contracts.

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## HIV and AIDS

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FPWA urges the Governor and Legislature to continue protecting direct service provision to people living with HIV or AIDS. This epidemic continues to disproportionately impact people of color in poor communities. In New York State, more than 65% of people living with HIV/AIDS are either on Medicaid or pending to receive Medicaid. Moreover, a recent study of NYC DOMHM showed that the HIV infection rate in New York City is spreading at three times the national rate. HIV/AIDS service providers that receive State funding have already experienced two cuts (2% + 6%) in the current fiscal year. Any further budget reduction will negatively impact the infrastructure of these providers and more importantly, the system of coordination and the quality of care, which took many years to build.

### **Restore \$1.4 million for the HIV Welfare-to-Work Program**

FPWA strongly supports restoration of funding for the HIV Welfare-to-Work Program – a joint project that was created between NYS Department of Health (DOH)'s AIDS Institute and the State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) in 1999. People living with HIV/AIDS who receive public assistance have long been perceived as “unemployable.” Currently the only employment program designed specifically for this population in New York State, the HIV Welfare-to-Work program provides vocational training and sustainable employment with health benefits to individuals who are living with HIV/AIDS.

Organizations serving this population must offer intensive job placement services to help HIV positive individuals enter or re-enter the workforce and provide the necessary case management services to ensure that the continued health and supportive services needs of participants are not compromised once they go to work. Employment that participants obtain through this initiative must offer health benefits, and selected contractors must ensure that other health coverage is in place until employer health benefits become effective. Participants of this program are able to improve their overall well being and are equipped with the vocational skills needed to obtain living wage employment. FPWA urges the Governor and Legislature to keep this item on OTDA's budget and continue to allocate sufficient funds to support this vital program that responds to the employment needs of individuals living with HIV and AIDS on public assistance in New York State.

### **Restore \$52.7 million for Part D “Wrap-Around”**

As a proud member of Medicaid Matters New York (MMNY), FPWA stands united with MMNY coalition members to express our concern that the Governor's Budget proposal would eliminate more than \$50 million in Part D “wrap around” coverage provided through the Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage (EPIC) Program and Medicaid programs for drugs not covered by the Medicare program. This proposal will negatively impact hundreds of thousands of low-income New Yorkers who rely on these programs to help pay for their medication.

The current Medicaid wrap pays for four specific categories of drugs including atypical anti-psychotics, anti-depressants, anti-retrovirals used to treat HIV/AIDS, and anti-rejection drugs used by organ and tissue transplant recipients. The Medicaid wrap around provides a critical safety net to vulnerable residents and needs to be maintained. This proposal contradicts the state's assurance last year that the elderly and poor would not go without the medication they need. We ask that this proposal be rescinded.



### **Secure sustainable funding source for ADAP**

FPWA is deeply concerned about the proposed financing changes for the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP). Under the Governor's budget proposal, ADAP will be removed from the Department of Health's (DOH) FY 2009-2010 budget, an item originally funded as part of the Health Care Reform Act (HCRA). Instead, it will be financed by a combination of funds made available through drug rebates and federal funds. ADAP is considered as the last resort for prescription coverage for those who do not qualify for Medicaid and are unable to afford private insurance.

Although this one-time action has helped to prevent DOH and the AIDS Institute from making cuts to HIV/AIDS programs, FPWA, however, is disappointed about the State's decision to set this unprecedented example, which may unintentionally lead current and future administrations to walk away from the responsibility for providing medication to a vulnerable population. We ask the State to seek and secure sustainable funding sources for ADAP.

### **Ensure sufficient outreach resources for the expansion of mandatory managed care enrollment to HIV + Medicaid beneficiaries**

No Additional Cost: FPWA, representing more than fifty HIV and AIDS service providers and working closely with Medicaid Matters New York and the New York AIDS Coalition, believes that sufficient outreach and education resources is crucial in ensuring no medical care and services received by HIV+ Medicaid beneficiaries be disrupted during the expansion of mandatory managed care enrollment. Alarmed about the experience of navigational challenges posed when people with serious and persistent mental illness and SSI recipients move to managed care plans, FPWA urges DOH and the AIDS Institute to consider offering a longer grace period for HIV+ Medicaid beneficiaries before they are locked in with a managed care plan. Before any attempt is made to implement mandatory managed care enrollment, FPWA asks DOH and the AIDS Institute to disclose details of its implementation plan and timeline with clients and service providers.

### **Support an amendment to the New York Public Health Law in relation to HIV related testing (A.11461 / S.8722 of 2008)**

No Additional Cost: This bill revises the informed consent requirements associated with HIV/AIDS testing by providing an option for a durable written general consent that would specifically include HIV testing. This legislation updates current testing requirements to reflect medical advances, tailors counseling information and protects health care workers.

### **Support an amendment to the New York Social Service Law limiting shelter costs (A.5473/S.2890 of 2008)**

This amendment intends to limit the percentage of income payable towards shelter costs by persons living with HIV and AIDS. The purpose of this amendment is to provide that certain persons living with HIV or AIDS shall not be required to pay more than 30% of the household income towards the cost of shelter.



**Demand mandatory comprehensive sex education**

- **FPWA supports the passage of an amendment to the New York Education Law in relation to mandating sex education in elementary and high schools (S.6205 of 2008)** – This bill proposes to add a new section to the existing education law to “create and establish a comprehensive, medically accurate and age appropriate sex education curriculum which shall be taught in grades one through twelve in all public and charter schools.”
- **FPWA supports the passage of an amendment to the Public Health Law in relation to establishing the age-appropriate sex education grant program, to be referred to as the healthy teens act (A.2856 of 2008)** – This bill would establish an age-appropriate sex education grant program within the Department of Health. The Department, from amounts annually appropriated, will make grants to school districts, boards of cooperative educational services, school-based health centers, and community-based organizations with a proven history of success in reaching the adolescents of this state, to assist them in conducting a thorough and comprehensive education program aimed at preventing unwanted pregnancies and occurrences of sexually transmitted diseases among youth.

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## **Income Security**

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### **Move implementation of Basic Public Assistance Grant to April 1, 2009 and continue annual Cost of Living increases beyond 2012**

We strongly support the Governor's proposal, which mirrors the Assembly proposal put forth in recent years, to increase the grant by 10% for each of the next three years effective January 1, 2010. The basic grant, which has not been increased since 1990, is woefully inadequate to cover the costs of a family's basic needs at the current level of \$291 per month for a family of three. This is currently equal to less than 50% of the federal poverty level (FPL). The cost of living has increased nearly 62% since 1990, particularly for housing, energy, and many basic consumer goods. The reduced value of the cash grant over time has placed families receiving public assistance at greater risk of losing employment, being unable to meet their families' needs, and becoming homeless. While a 30% increase does not reflect the full rise in the cost of living between 1990 and 2009, we are supporting the current proposal with the goal of moving the implementation date to April 1, 2009 and continuing annual cost of living increases in the future. Given the reality of the economic crisis, more families are turning to public assistance after losing a job. In addition, families in poverty are struggling even more to make ends meet with increasing competition for low-wage positions and funding cuts to non-profit agencies providing food, housing assistance, and other social services.

### **Eliminate the 185% of Standard of Need (SON) income eligibility requirement for Public Assistance (A.1296 of 2009)**

Current State Social Services Law makes families ineligible for public assistance once their income reaches 185% of the SON for their household size and county of residence. Therefore, since this measure now falls below FPL in all counties, families cannot earn their way up to the poverty level before they become ineligible for public assistance. Furthermore, since FPL is adjusted upward every year to reflect the rise in inflation, the gap between the income eligibility level (fixed at 185% of SON) and the poverty level increases each year. This means that each year there are more families who fall below the poverty level, yet are ineligible for public assistance. The State should eliminate the 185% SON eligibility rule, which would also improve the work incentive created by the Earned Income Disregard.

### **Increase the Earned Income Disregard (EID); Extend EID to ALL families, including households WITHOUT dependent children (A.1296 of 2009)**

The EID encourages work by ensuring that earnings will actually increase the income of families receiving public assistance. Recipients with children who have earned income currently receive a 50% EID for the purposes of determining their grant amount. This percentage is adjusted annually to reflect the changes in the most recently issued federal poverty guidelines. There is also a small \$90 work expense disregard applied to gross income before the percentage disregard is considered. For households without dependent children, this \$90 disregard is the only one applied. We support A.1296 of 2009 introduced by Assemblyman Wright, which would increase the EID to 67% in Social Services Law. However, the State should ultimately increase the EID to 100% of wages below FPL to stabilize economic security for families as they increase their earnings to rise out of poverty. The State should also extend the EID percentage to all households.



### **Increase Funding for Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP)**

We strongly support an increase of \$4.4 million for HPNAP, for a total of \$30.9 million in the Governor's SFY 2009-10 Executive Budget. HPNAP provides funding to approximately 2,500 Emergency Food Relief Organizations (EFROs) throughout the State, including food banks, food pantries, soup kitchens and emergency shelters. This funding supports staffing, rent, utilities, food transportation, assistance in gathering and distributing food, along with nutrition and health information that is provided to families in need. In SFY 2008-09, HPNAP was cut by 16% compared to the funding allocated in the previous year – a devastating reduction for these EFROs. Struggling families are now experiencing the combined impact of rising food, energy and housing costs; reductions in public and private funding for food assistance programs; and the reduced purchasing value of Food Stamps (a direct result of the rising food costs). In its SFY 2008-09 Mid-Year Budget modification, the State cut an additional 6% (\$1.2 million) to HPNAP, resulting in even further harmful impact. FPWA supports the Food Bank of NYC's Anti-Hunger Policy Platform for New York State and City to increase funding by 6.8% per year for HPNAP to adjust for inflation, increased need, and the rise in the statewide poverty rate since 2002. HPNAP should receive \$33.5 million to provide what is needed to emergency food providers.

### **Increase the Minimum Wage to \$10 Per Hour (A.9168-A of 2007-08 increases it to \$8.25)**

No Additional Cost: FPWA supports restoring the purchasing power of the minimum wage to its 1970 value and indexing it to inflation in future years. The current real value of the minimum wage has eroded significantly and is currently 16% below its peak value. Increasing the minimum wage is essential, as so many low-wage workers struggle to make ends meet. While many working New Yorkers benefitted from the minimum wage increase to \$7.15 per hour that took effect on January 1, 2007, it is still far from enough to cover the basic costs of living in New York State for an average household. This increase has helped low-income families without directly hurting small businesses or low-wage employment opportunities. Today, even if a person works 40 hours per week at minimum wage earnings, this worker's gross income is still less than \$15,000 per year. This is below the poverty level for a family of three (2008 Federal Poverty Level = \$17,600) with one wage-earner in the household. Therefore, we strongly urge the State to increase the minimum wage to \$10/hour, so that low-income working families can have an opportunity to rise out of poverty.

### **Provide State Funding for Operating support of NYC Housing Authority (NYCHA) State-Financed Public Housing**

The NYCHA deficit is currently \$183.1 million in FY2008 and \$177.5 million in FY2009. A third of this deficit has resulted from Governor Pataki's elimination of State funding for NYCHA in 1998. Although NYCHA has reduced spending and generated new revenue, these actions cannot fully compensate for chronic under-funding—at all levels of government—and increases in non-discretionary costs. The NYCHA deficit is having a disastrous ripple effect on other critical services provided to New York City residents. Many low-income individuals rely upon the NYCHA network of community and senior centers for nutritious meals, afterschool programs, and other positive social activities. In addition, NYCHA partners with job training providers that offer residents job skills training, job placements, paid apprenticeships and other educational services. If no new funding is provided, NYCHA units will deteriorate or be lost, services will be cut, Section 8 vouchers will be diverted away from waiting list families to support NYCHA operations, and more low-income families will be left without affordable housing. To meet the costs of operating the 15 State-built NYCHA developments and to prevent further



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harm to those who rely upon NYCHA-sponsored services, the State should provide \$68 million in operating assistance to cover the current shortfall and enact legislation to ensure NYCHA (and other State-financed public housing across New York) receive adequate funding in the future.

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## Workforce Development

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### **Create a Young Worker Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) (A.4875)**

The State EITC is a valuable support for working poor families. For childless workers age 25 and over, the combined maximum federal and state EITC provides up to approximately \$569 for Tax Year 2008. Yet, there are many young low-income workers between the ages of 16 and 24 who are not eligible for the EITC, simply because of their age and the fact that they are not parents. While New York recently established a State-funded EITC for non-custodial parents who are current in their child support payments, the young adult working population without children remains excluded from eligibility for any federal or state EITC. Furthermore, in New York City alone, there are 200,000 disconnected youth who would receive a strong incentive to enter the workforce by becoming eligible for the EITC. The State should create an EITC for working young adults between ages 17-24 who are established as an independent household and do not have children equal to 1.3 times the amount of the federal EITC for childless workers (equal to State + Federal EITC that childless workers over age 25 currently receive).

### **Add \$6 Million Total for Career Pathways: \$3 Million in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Surplus and \$3 Million in Workforce Investment Act (WIA)**

We urge the Legislature to re-direct \$3 million in TANF funding included in the SFY 2009-10 Executive Budget for Intensive Case Services (ICS) into the Career Pathways program, along with a \$3 million match in WIA funds for a total of \$6 million. While we strongly support the concept and legislative intent in providing ICS to sanctioned families, we are disturbed by the reality of how this program has been implemented in some counties, particularly New York City. The NYC Human Resources Administration (HRA) has closed the majority of cases served by this program, which is opposite of the legislative intent to assist sanctioned clients in removing barriers to work. Included for the first time in the SFY 2008-09 Enacted Budget, the Career Pathways program is unique in blending federal TANF and WIA funding to offer sector-based training in high-demand industries to low-income families facing significant barriers to work. As these new programs are implemented in 2009, it is essential that funding will be made available to sustain these programs for the long-run. However, the funding (\$5 million) appropriated in SFY 2008-09 will only support the current contracts through January 31, 2010. Therefore, the State must provide the funding to ensure that OTDA can release a new RFP or renew current contracts beyond that date. These job training programs offer a positive approach to connecting public assistance recipients to living wage jobs and career advancement opportunities that open a sustainable pathway out of poverty.

### **Add funding for the following programs previously funded by TANF Surplus dollars:**

- Adult and Family Literacy
- Adult Basic Education
- Language Immersion/ESL
- Technology Training/ATTAIN
- BRIDGE
- Transportation
- Wage Subsidy
- VESID/LIVES
- EDGE



### **Create a GED to College Transition Pilot Program**

Many New Yorkers with low literacy skills and education levels have great potential to succeed in higher education or occupational certificate programs. However, efforts must be made to re-align our education systems to promote transitions from Adult Basic Education (ABE), English as a Second Language (ESL), and GED preparation classes to community colleges and other institutions of higher education. The State should expand the capacity of existing GED-to-College programs, including those available through SUNY/CUNY Educational Opportunity Centers (EOCs) and others at SUNY/CUNY community college campuses and non-profit agencies. In addition to expanding existing programs, the State should set up a series of pilot programs that offer: 1) Intensive, individualized college advising services provided by a Transition Advisor, 2) Bridge program of Dual Enrollment in both basic education and higher education, and 3) Intensive Pre-Collegiate academic courses. These services should be tailored to the unique needs of low-income youth and adults without a GED or high school diploma and those who have earned a GED or high school diploma, but face barriers to enrollment in a higher education program. In addition, the State should organize and integrate all GED-to-College programs through one central government office, which would be responsible for conducting outreach to eligible populations, identifying under-served regions, assisting students in overcoming barriers to success in GED-to-College programs, and evaluating programs and making recommendations for improvement.

### **Create a Transitional Jobs Program for public assistance recipients facing significant barriers to work**

Transitional jobs are time-limited, wage-paying jobs for welfare recipients that combine meaningful work, skill development, and supportive services. Workers earn a real wage, subsidized with public funds, in paid work experience programs for up to 12 months, with a possible 6 month extension period. In addition to work experience, programs offer job readiness, basic education, vocational skills and other barrier-removal services. Participants spend four days per week in paid employment and one day per week in education and training. Transitional Jobs are more successful than unpaid work experience programs in linking clients to the labor market and progressing on a career path. In addition, Transitional Jobs are an excellent means of increasing the State's federally required work participation rate. Time spent in "subsidized employment" counts as a primary work activity, and time spent in "job skills or education directly related to employment" counts as a non-core work activity. The State should create a Transitional Jobs program to be operated by local social services districts, and clients should be shifted from unpaid work experience programs into these new Transitional Job opportunities.

For More Information, Contact:

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## Youth Services

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### **Oppose the Youth Services Block Grant Proposal**

The Governor has proposed consolidating an array of current youth programs into a \$90 million Youth Programs Block Grant. FPWA is greatly concerned about this proposal. This allocation represents a reduction of \$28 million in funding for critical youth programs. Services in this block grant include Detention Services, Youth Development and Delinquency Prevention (YDDP), Special Delinquency Prevention Program (SDPP), Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA), Alternatives to Detention and Alternatives to Residential Placement. FPWA asks that the Legislature restore the allocations for these services since the juvenile justice programs that are included are mandated and the consolidation may mean devastating reductions to critical youth programs.

### **Restore \$8 million in funding for the Advantage After-School Program (AASP)**

The Governor has proposed reducing funding for the Advantage program in the Executive Budget from \$27.2 million to \$19.2 million. Advantage After-School Programs (AASP) provide quality youth development opportunities to school-age children and youth for three hours directly after school. These programs are supported by school, community, public and private partnerships. AASP offer a broad range of educational, recreational and culturally age-appropriate activities that integrate school day experiences. These critical programs also provide support and peace of mind to the working parents. We urge the Legislature to restore funding for this important initiative to \$27.2 million so programs may remain intact.

#### For More Information, Contact:

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