



The Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies (FPWA) is deeply disturbed about the impact of continuing budget cuts on vital services for New York's struggling families. The Deficit Reduction Plan cut funding to a variety of important services, including youth programs, services to seniors and individuals with HIV/AIDS. These cuts would be on top of the 8% across the board cuts to human services programs enacted last year in 2008. The Governor's proposed 2010-11 state budget would add on even more severe cuts. We realize that multiple rounds of budget cuts are part of New York State and City's efforts to responsibly address a worsening economy and growing budget deficits. However, these government cuts disproportionately impact children and families who are increasingly vulnerable during these difficult economic times.

Though we understand the fiscal challenges faced by the state, we also recognize the economic challenges faced by New Yorkers who have lost their jobs, exhausted their unemployment benefits, are at the verge of losing their homes, and have to turn to essential services to feed their families, clothe their children, and pay for heat, medicine and other essentials. Unemployment in New York State was at 9.0 percent in December 2009, matching a 26-year high with 868,600 unemployed New Yorkers. New York City's unemployment rate reached 10.6% in December. Given these inordinately high unemployment rates and the growing needs of jobless New Yorkers, FPWA adamantly opposes any further reductions in funding for human services.

Non-profit agencies are already under-funded and cannot adequately serve all of the individuals and families currently seeking their assistance. A survey conducted by the Human Services Council found that 80% of the non-profit organizations surveyed had major reductions in private funding in the last year, and nearly two-thirds had seen decreases in their public funding. Further reductions to these essential services could be devastating to both community-based organizations and the clients who depend upon these programs. In addition, the long-term costs of such cuts would be much greater than the short-term savings produced in the fiscal year.

We urge New York State and City to preserve services that are essential to supporting struggling families by averting cuts to key human services funding streams in the Fiscal Year 2010-11 budgets, including:

- Life saving resources such as HIV/AIDS prevention, education, outreach, treatment and care, housing, case management and supportive services.
- Services that protect and support vulnerable children such as child care, Universal Pre-Kindergarten, foster care and open-ended child welfare services.
- Essential public benefits for individuals and families living in poverty.
- Access to education and training opportunities that are vital to increasing earnings and making advancements on a career path.

- Services that help elderly individuals maintain their independence so that they may remain in their homes and communities, including social adult day services, senior transportation, and geriatric mental health programs.
- Programs for youth such as afterschool initiatives that provide a broad range of educational, recreational, and culturally appropriate activities essential to a young person's development.

In addition to preserving essential human services programs, FPWA recommends that the state use any public funds available to make strategic investments in programs that will stimulate recovery, job growth, and sustainable economic expansion. The new Green Jobs programs are an excellent example of the type of investment that can produce these outcomes in the long-run by investing today for tomorrow's workforce.

We urge the state to address the annual structural budget deficit by ensuring that we have enough revenue to meet our human and infrastructure needs. We also have substantial "rainy day" funds set aside (Tax Stabilization Reserve Fund and Rainy Day Fund), and New York should use these funds to help close the current budget deficit.