



## FEDERATION OF PROTESTANT WELFARE AGENCIES

281 Park Avenue South • New York, NY 10010

Phone: (212) 777-4800 Fax: (212) 414-1328

Web site: [www.fpwa.org](http://www.fpwa.org)

### FPWA Final 2008-2009 New York City 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's Policy, Advocacy & Research Department combines analyses by our experienced advocacy professionals 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, Youth Services, and Workforce Development. The inclusion of the Workforce Development portfolio further strengthens the interconnection among FPWA policy areas and was developed to focus on economic opportunities targeting disconnected youth and New Yorkers without employment or who are trapped in low-paying jobs. With our diverse membership, FPWA sends an important message to policy makers: no single issue can be addressed without cross-department cooperation and coordination in the development of policies and programs. We look forward to working closely with you as the City budget season unfolds in the next few months. For additional information or questions, please contact us:

**Bich Ha Pham, J.D.**  
Income Security

Director, Policy, Advocacy & Research  
212.801.1311  
[bhpham@fpwa.org](mailto:bhpham@fpwa.org)

**Esther W. Y. Lok, M.P.A. & M.Ed.**  
HIV and AIDS

Assistant Director, Policy, Advocacy & Research &  
Senior Policy Analyst  
212.801.1312  
[esther@fpwa.org](mailto:esther@fpwa.org)  
*(Next AIDS Leadership Coalition is March 27, 2008)*

**Kathleen Fitzgibbons, M.P.A.**  
Elderly Welfare  
& Youth Services

Senior Policy Analyst  
212.801.1341/  
[kfitzgibbons@fpwa.org](mailto:kfitzgibbons@fpwa.org)  
*(Next Elderly Task Force is Mar 6, 2008)*

**Jill Poklemba, M.P.P.**  
Income Security  
& Workforce Development

Senior Policy Analyst  
212.801.1393  
[jpoklemba@fpwa.org](mailto:jpoklemba@fpwa.org)  
*(Next Workforce Development Task Force is Mar 17, 2008)*

**Vani Sankarapandian, J.D.**  
Early Childhood Education  
& Child Welfare

Senior Policy Analyst  
212.801.1376  
[vanis@fpwa.org](mailto:vanis@fpwa.org)  
*(Next Child Welfare Task Force is March 24, 2008)*



## Child Welfare

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### **Baseline and increase funding to a total of \$6.25 million for preventive caseload reduction**

FPWA urges the Mayor and City Council to work together to restore and baseline the \$4.2 million included in last year's budget to reduce preventive service caseload sizes from 15 to 12, and to increase this funding by \$2.05 million to support additional slots and to maintain supervisory ratios. The 2006 Child Welfare Workload Study published by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services examined the effects of high caseloads on child protective, foster care, and preventive services caseworkers and found that excessive caseloads undermine the ability of caseworkers to provide families with the high-quality services they deserve. Establishing reasonable caseloads reduces the amount of time caseworkers must devote to demanding administrative duties and increases time spent with children and families, allowing workers to build strong relationships with families and resolve crucial issues in an efficient and timely manner. The caseload reduction money restored last year helped preventive agencies lower caseloads and accommodate increasingly complex cases, and it is imperative that agencies be able to rely on this funding in the future.

Furthermore, as agencies hire more caseworkers, additional funding would allow them to hire new supervisors, thus maintaining the appropriate supervisory ratio of 1:5. Supervisors are an integral part of each organization because of the critical role they play in ensuring quality, assisting caseworkers, and training new caseworkers. Caseload reduction is extremely important to preventive services agencies, but its benefits may be compromised if supervisors remain overburdened.

### **Baseline \$2.4 million in City funds for additional preventive services slots**

FPWA commends the Mayor for including funding in last year's budget to support 1,000 new slots for preventive services. Reports of child abuse and neglect in New York City have been increasing and these additional slots are necessary to meet the demand for preventive services. These services are an essential part of the City's efforts to strengthen and support families in caring for their children and help keep children safely at home when possible. Preventive service agencies provide invaluable assistance to families at risk of entering the child welfare system, and we urge the Mayor to baseline this funding for 2008-09.

### **Invest in a cost-of-living adjustment for child welfare providers in preventive and aftercare/independent living programs**

Adequate compensation for providers is vital to supporting the quality of services provided to children and families in the child welfare system. Caseworkers in these programs do a tremendous job of keeping children safe and helping at-risk families, even as they face complicated cases and overwhelming administrative obligations. In recognition of their hard work and the significant role they play in protecting families, FPWA urges the City to invest in regular COLAs, as received by DC37 employees. This would also assist the child welfare community in facing the same recruitment and retention challenges experienced by the public and private sectors.

For More Information, contact:

Vani Sankarapandian – Senior Policy Analyst for Early Childhood Education and Child Welfare  
Phone: 212.801.1376      Email: vanis@fpwa.org



## Early Childhood Education

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### **Support community-based child care programs with the funding and resources they need to provide high-quality early care programming for New York City's youngest**

The New York City subsidized child care system has undergone a number of changes in the past few years, including the transfer of school-age care to DYCD, an expansion of Universal Pre-Kindergarten for four-year-olds, and most recently, the unveiling of the new ACS “Pay-for-Children Enrolled” Initiative. At the same time, the system continues to experience difficulties, including barriers to access, limited resources that leave providers struggling to make ends meet, and a shortage of care for children under age three.

FPWA encourages the City to use this time of change as an opportunity to develop a comprehensive vision of early care and education that brings together child care, UPK, and Head Start. In order to create a seamless system that truly meets the needs of children and families, the City must work with providers and advocates to address a number of key issues, including but not limited to:

- Identifying the essential components of a quality early learning experience – such as family and social work supports, highly qualified (and properly compensated) teachers, and facilities and instructional materials that promote child development,
- Ensuring that community-based programs have the funding and technical assistance needed to sustain quality programs, and
- Increasing access for parents by identifying and reducing barriers to enrollment and improving outreach.

### **Create a sustainable funding structure to support ongoing facilities expansion and upkeep in publicly-funded child care centers and family child care homes**

New York City's early care professionals work hard to develop high-quality educational programming for children in subsidized care. However, the physical learning environments created in our child care programs also play an important role in promoting child development. Child care providers need a reliable funding stream and extensive technical assistance that will allow them to make the structural repairs and improvements necessary to creating safe, nurturing learning areas and play spaces for children. For example, in order for child care centers to take on the care of infants and toddlers, facilities modifications—including reconfiguring classroom space and installing age-appropriate equipment—are just as important as staff training and program development. We urge the Mayor and the City Council to establish a funding structure for child care centers and family child care homes that will provide a steady stream of funding for expansion and maintenance, as well as the technical assistance providers need to use this money effectively.

### **Ensure that savings gained from changes to the child care system return to the system as reinvestments**

No Additional Cost: The Mayor's preliminary budget for FY 2008-2009 included \$2 million in savings as a result of the new “Pay-for-Children Enrolled” Initiative, which will modify the City's payment policy to reimburse contract child care providers based on enrollment. The preliminary budget also proposed reinvesting another \$2 million saved from this initiative in technical assistance to help providers increase enrollment. We urge the City to ensure that the total savings amount, as well as any future savings generated from this initiative or other changes to child care, is reinvested in strengthening the City's overall child care system. This money could help the City address important



areas of need in child care, including the need for additional child care slots (particularly those serving infants and toddlers) and capacity-building for providers.

**Invest in quality early care and education for infants and toddlers**

New York City is currently experiencing a shortage of subsidized care for infants and toddlers. This lack of available care is a major roadblock to work for parents with children under age three and has serious implications for the financial stability of low-income families. FPWA urges the Mayor and the City Council to invest in the creation of additional slots that would allow publicly-funded child care centers to serve more infants and toddlers.

**Invest in family child care networks and the important services they offer**

Family child care networks are under contract with the City to recruit providers, offer support services such as training and technical assistance, and make referrals for families in need of care. To provide these services, networks receive a per-child/per-week fee of \$17.06, which is currently paid by family child care providers. This places great financial strain on providers and may discourage them from participating in networks. We urge the Mayor and the Council to support networks and providers by funding the full network fee.

For More Information, contact:

Vani Sankarapandian – Senior Policy Analyst for Early Childhood Education and Child Welfare  
Phone: 212.801.1376  
Email: vanis@fpwa.org



## **Elderly Welfare**

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### **Restore and baseline \$4.5 million and add \$1 million for Raw Food Costs for Senior Meals**

This allocation allows for an increase in raw food and infrastructure costs for the Department for the Aging's (DFTA's) congregate and home delivered meals programs. In FY08, \$4.55 million was allocated to provide a \$.35 increase per meal. Wait lists and a growing older adult population results in an approximately 2% client increase annually. An enhancement of \$1 million covers this year's increase and ensures older adults are not left hungry and waiting for a meal.

### **Restore and baseline \$3.124 million for transportation operating costs**

This allocation provides critical funding for rising operating costs for approximately 425 vans and other vehicles that are used by senior centers and other senior programs.

### **Restore and baseline \$3.733 million for Space/Equipment costs at senior centers**

This funding helps offset rising rental fees at senior centers and provides funding for necessary equipment at senior centers throughout the City.

### **Restore and baseline \$2.67 million for the Geriatric Mental Health Initiative**

Funds will be used to enhance the capacity and strengthen the infrastructure of existing mental health services delivered in nontraditional settings. Funding will help to serve the growing number of seniors in New York City as the number of those aged 65 and older suffering from a mental illness are projected to rise from 180,000 to 300,000 by 2030.

### **Restore \$533,000 to the Borough President Department for the Aging Discretionary Funding**

Borough President funds support a broad range of vital services for low-income seniors including meals, transportation, case management, rent at senior centers and other core services. The funding is designed to ensure the elderly receive the services they require to remain in their homes and communities.

### **Restore \$5.5 million in City Council Discretionary Funding**

City Council Discretionary funding is primarily used to support operations and vital programs at senior centers.

### **Restore and baseline \$1 million in funding for Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORC) Supportive Service Programs (SSPs)**

NORC Supportive Service programs provide seniors living in NORCs with a broad and varied range of health and human services, including medical care, counseling, psychiatric care, home management, financial management, meal delivery and transportation services. In addition, the programs provide support in emergency situations, and in many instances, have saved lives. A total of 46,000 seniors are currently served through New York City's NORC programs. With seniors living longer, more funding will need to be appropriated for additional services.

### **Restore \$1.35 million and add \$180,000 in funding for the New York City Healthy Aging Initiative**

This program allows senior centers to address the health and wellness needs of the older adult population by providing exercise, health screenings, nutrition education and chronic disease management. In FY08 the healthy aging initiative received \$1,350,000. By allocating an additional \$180,000, each of the 51 Council Districts will be fully funded at \$30,000 per program.



**Support the Senior Citizen Right to Counsel Bill (Intro 648)**

No Additional Cost: The Senior Citizen Right to Counsel Bill would establish a right to counsel for all low income seniors, 62 years of age and older, who are facing evictions from their homes. The New York City Housing Court is very difficult to navigate without the help of a lawyer. Studies have shown tenants who have legal representation are much more likely to retain their homes after an eviction petition has been filed if they are represented by an attorney.

For more information, contact:

Kathy Fitzgibbons – Senior Policy Analyst for Elderly Welfare and Youth Services

Phone: 212.801.1341

Email: [kfitzgibbons@fpwa.com](mailto:kfitzgibbons@fpwa.com)



## HIV and AIDS

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### **Enhance funding for the Communities of Color HIV and AIDS Initiative.**

FPWA fully supports the New York City Communities of Color HIV/AIDS Coalition's (NYCCOCHAC) request of \$1.664 million (\$2.6 million in total with state match) from the City Council to provide funding for HIV prevention, education, outreach, advocacy and support services to raise awareness and help lower the rate of HIV infection in communities of color. Through an RFP process, this fund will be distributed to up to 50 groups citywide to enhance the capacity of existing services and to develop new program initiatives.

Additionally, FPWA calls upon the Mayor and to City Council to support AIDS service and community-based organizations to develop multi-year project that is designed to decrease mortality and morbidity in communities of color where there are high HIV incidents such as North/Central Brooklyn, Central and East Harlem, and the South Bronx.

### **Continue to invest in HIV prevention and health literacy education initiative that focuses on the older adult population.**

The 2005 epidemiology report from the NYC DOHMH shows that 30% (29,193) of persons living with HIV and AIDS in NYC in 2005 were age 50 or above, compared to 21% in 2001. A recent historic study – Research on Older Adults with HIV (ROAH) – conducted by the AIDS Community Research Initiative of America (ACRIA), demonstrates the disheartening fact that this population has been and continues to be largely ignored and marginalized.

Social stigma and assumptions regarding the elderly, sex, and substance abuse, as well as confusion about HIV symptoms and age-related illness, are factors contributing to a steady increase in new HIV diagnoses among people age 50 or above in the past five years. Moreover, as advanced medical treatments and medication allow people to live longer and healthier lives, their numbers will continue to grow. Mainstreaming the needs of the older adult population, regardless of their HIV status, is the first step toward focused primary and secondary HIV prevention.

In FY 2007-2008, the City Council appropriated \$640,000 to address issues related to HIV and AIDS in the context of aging. FPWA urges the City Council to continue supporting the collaborative effort between aging and HIV and AIDS service providers in developing a replicable model that may also benefit older adults in other cities in the country.

For More Information, contact:

Esther W. Y. Lok – Assistant Director of Policy, Advocacy and Research & Senior Policy Analyst for HIV and AIDS

Phone: 212.801.1312

Email: [esther@fpwa.org](mailto:esther@fpwa.org)



## Income Security

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### **Restore and increase to \$16.8 million in total funding for the Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP) – HRA**

This funding is used for the direct purchase of food and for capacity expansion efforts for over 500 EFAP food pantries and soup kitchens throughout NYC. In addition, funds are used to assist in the automation of Food Stamp enrollment at food pantries, soup kitchens and other appropriate locations. According to a study released on October 18, 2007 by the Food Bank of NYC, the City receives a little more than half the amount of emergency food annually from the federal government that it did three years ago. The shortfall is occurring as the number of families relying on food pantries in the City has risen to 1.3 million – a 24% increase from approximately 1 million in 2004. The Food Bank's warehouse is currently filled with only 3 million pounds of food, when it is normally filled with 7-8 million pounds.

### **Add \$15.9 million in funding for the Job Training Participant (JTP) program to create 1,500 new positions for Welfare Recipients – HRA**

As a transitional jobs model, JTP positions provide welfare recipients with a paid job combined with regular education, training and skills development. Transitional jobs are much better in promoting career advancement than the Work Experience Program (WEP), which places welfare recipients in unpaid workfare assignments. Rather than receiving a welfare check, participants receive a real paycheck. JTP participants spend four days a week at an assigned worksite and one day a week at vocational training, education, employment skills counseling, or job search.

FPWA recommends that the City increase investments in JTP to expand the program into other City agencies. The Paid Transitional Jobs Expansion Initiative would link recipients to career pathways available within the following City agencies: Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC), Nursing/Allied Health; Department of Education (DOE), Education Assistant/Teacher; and Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS), Clerical/Administrative Assistant. These three targeted agencies have the greatest projected demand for workers in these areas.

### **Create a Wage Supplement Program – HRA**

This program would provide cash payments on top of earnings from wages to raise the overall income of participants closer to standards needed for self-sufficiency. Wage supplement programs that have been implemented in other areas have seen success, particularly in increasing incomes, employment, and earnings of participants by as much as 10-15% above that of traditional TANF participants. In addition, research has shown that participants who received wage supplements in combination with employment, education, and training services aimed at career advancement experienced larger economic gains in the long-run. Therefore, participants in New York City should be directly linked to ITA vouchers and services offered at Workforce 1 Career Centers. To maximize the program's impact, individuals must also be linked to work supports, including child care, Food Stamps, and the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).

Wage supplements could be offered specifically to families diverted from or recently leaving public assistance to strengthen their ability to achieve long-term economic security. In providing an additional financial benefit, wage supplements provide a strong reward and incentive to work. FPWA urges the City to consider establishing a wage supplement program for working families living near the Federal Poverty Level (\$17,600 annual income for a family of three in 2008).



**Enact the Ready Access to Assistance Act (REAACT) – HRA**

No Additional Cost: FPWA strongly supports the Ready Access to Assistance Act (REAACT), which would grant advocates access to public benefit offices in New York City so they can help applicants navigate a complex and often uninviting system.

For More Information, contact:

Bich Ha Pham – Director of Policy, Advocacy and Research

Phone: 212.801.1311

Email: [bhpham@fpwa.org](mailto:bhpham@fpwa.org)

Jill Poklemba – Senior Policy Analyst for Income Security and Workforce Development

Phone: 212.801.1393

Email: [jpoklemba@fpwa.org](mailto:jpoklemba@fpwa.org)



## Youth Services

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### **Restore \$3.15 million for the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP)**

SYEP provides meaningful employment for over 42,000 youth in New York City. The Mayor's proposed reduction of \$3.15 million would result in the loss of 2,100 jobs for our city's young people. A record high 94,000 applications were submitted last year, which represents a 30 percent increase from 2006. Demand for SYEP is expected to be just as significant this summer. SYEP allows young people the opportunity to gain valuable work skills. Some examples of jobs filled by youth include staff positions at summer day care and camp programs. The wages youth earn are generally used to pay for clothes, school supplies and other essential expenses.

### **Restore \$2.6 million in Out-of-School Time (OST) funds**

The reduction of funding was based on a projection that some OST providers would not meet contracted attendance targets and as a penalty, would not receive the final 10 percent of their contract amounts. However, if more providers meet their targets than anticipated, the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) will need these funds to pay agencies their remaining funds.

### **Restore \$6.3 million for Beacon programs**

This includes a restoration of the Mayor's proposed reduction of \$2.3 million for afterschool drop-in services and community events, as well as an enhancement of \$4 million initially made by the City Council in 'FY06. There are currently 80 Beacon programs, serving over 180,000 children and adults every year. Beacons provide communities with safe havens during non-school hours where thousands of children, parents, and other residents gather daily for stimulating learning activities, support and recreation.

### **Restore \$11.25 million for the Immigrant Opportunities Initiative (IOI)**

These programs serve immigrant youth, their families and their communities. At least 130 community organizations located in the 5 boroughs rely on this funding to help immigrant adults and youth achieve education, employment and other goals. Specific services provided through IOI include ESOL programs and immigrant and worker legal services.

### **Build OST Capacity**

We support building the City's OST system to enrich the lives of young people and better meet the needs of working families. In particular, there is a need for programming for middle and high school aged youth and other underserved populations. Afterschool programs are a necessary support that parents count on to keep their kids safe and supervised while they are at work.

### **Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA)**

Workers throughout the human services sector have not received a COLA from the city since 2005, while the youth services employees have never received an adjustment. This has severely eroded the value of direct service worker salaries. We advocate for consistent COLAs that will allow the salaries of direct service workers to keep pace with inflation and improve the recruitment and retention of youth workers.

### **Immigrant Youth Initiative**

There is a great need for services specifically targeted to improve the well-being of immigrant youth and ensure their healthy development. The immigrant youth initiative would include



recommendations for linguistically and culturally appropriate services as well as adding a family-focused case management component to the current array of services.

For more information, contact:

Kathy Fitzgibbons – Senior Policy Analyst for Elderly Welfare and Youth Services

Phone: 212.801.1341

Email: [kfitzgibbons@fpwa.com](mailto:kfitzgibbons@fpwa.com)



## **Workforce Development – Adult**

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### **Invest in Contextualized Adult Literacy Programs – SBS/DYCD/CUNY**

Contextualized adult literacy, ESL and GED-preparation programs blend basic literacy with vocation-specific training, often through the use of technology and collaborative teaching methods. These programs offer a more innovative approach than traditional adult literacy programs and accelerate participants' progress on their career path. Employer-developed curricula are ideal, as they teach students specific job skills demanded by industries that offer the greatest opportunity for career advancement. Graduates possess improved literacy skills and hard skills valued by employers in these high-demand industries. FPWA urges the City to create a new funding stream specifically for Contextualized Adult Literacy programs.

### **Increase to \$20 million in total investment for Adult Literacy Services – DYCD**

This program provides funding to community-based organizations for basic literacy, English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL), and GED classes, along with support services. Despite a modest increase in City funding in FY 08, the demand for adult literacy services, particularly ESOL, far exceeds enrollment capacity. According to the Center for an Urban Future, there are more than 1.5 million City residents with limited literacy skills, and a quarter of all adults in the City have inadequate English skills. Yet, the Mayor's Office of Adult Education reports that only 70,000 were enrolled in adult literacy programs during the year ending June 30, 2006. FPWA recommends increasing the investment for Adult Literacy Services operated by community-based organizations.

### **Maintain funding baselined in FY08 and expand funding for the Mayor's Commission on Construction Opportunity (MCCO) and City "Greening" Projects – SBS/HRA**

The MCCO pre-apprenticeship and training programs for economically disadvantaged individuals provide general skills and workforce readiness training to prepare workers for jobs in the construction industry. The City should strengthen its partnership with STRIVE and other community-based organizations to ensure that MCCO builds upon its goal to fill construction apprenticeship slots with a greater proportion of women, minorities, and low-income individuals. FPWA urges the City to increase funding for FY 09 to expand access to GED preparedness, pre-apprenticeships, work readiness training, and unionized jobs in the construction industry.

As part of PlaNYC and efforts to retrofit City buildings to be "greener" and more efficient, the City should make efforts to train low-income individuals and welfare recipients for these construction and modification projects. Economic forecasters have predicted high demand for green labor construction workers in the coming years. Therefore, it is essential that the HRA partner with SBS and other City agencies to ensure that these jobs are offered as a means for individuals in poverty to receive valuable training leading to a career path in this newly emerging high-growth industry.



## Workforce Development – Youth

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### **Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO): Maintain \$9.4 million at a minimum and increase investment in Young Adult Internship Program (YAIP) – DYCD**

YAIP provides paid internships for 1,400 disconnected youth between ages 16-24. Youth receive intensive short-term training in preparation for their internship. Then, youth participate in a career-focused internship with a goal of enrollment in school or full-time employment upon completion. Youth also receive education advisement, job development, and aftercare services. This program is essential to link disconnected youth who are not currently working or in school to opportunities that will improve their learning and employment outcomes. However, in its first year of operation, YAIP providers have had to turn away many eligible youth because of limited capacity. FPWA urges the City and CEO to increase funding for FY 09, which will allow the program to increase enrollment and expand into areas where there are still unmet needs.

### **Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO): Maintain \$3.5 million at a minimum and increase investment in CUNY Prep – CUNY**

This program is a joint initiative of the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD), the Department of Education (DOE), and CUNY designed to help out-of-school youth ages 16 to 18 to obtain a high school degree or GED and enter post-secondary education. Students participate in a college-focused curriculum that provides a holistic, hands-on approach to learning. After completing their GED, students receive advisement through the College Access Unit within CUNY Prep and are directly linked to courses as part of the CUNY College Now program. FPWA urges the City to increase funding for FY 09. This additional funding would allow the program to: 1) expand capacity and increase enrollment (currently waiting lists exceed 150 youth for each cycle), 2) build curricula for students at lower reading levels, and 3) accelerate learning through the use of technology. In addition, increased funding will build upon the College Now 2 and the College Access Retention and Success (“CARS”) programs that help improve retention rates for students so that they can complete their college degree.

For More Information, contact:

Jill Poklemba – Senior Policy Analyst for Income Security and Workforce Development  
Phone: 212.801.1393  
Email: [jpoklemba@fpwa.org](mailto:jpoklemba@fpwa.org)