

## **FAQ on #15andFunding**

### **Who is the #15andFunding Campaign?**

We are a statewide coalition of nonprofit human services providers and care workers funded through Medicaid led by the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies, Fiscal Policy Institute and the Human Services Council.

### **What does the #15andFunding Campaign advocate for?**

We are supporting Governor Cuomo's initiative to raise the minimum wage to \$15 per hour for all workers in New York State. We are calling on him to ensure the inclusion of human services workers in any minimum wage increase. Additionally, we are calling on the Governor to fully fund this increase by amending payment rates to non-profits, local governments, and Medicaid to reflect the increase. The funding must include and account for the "spillover effect" to ensure a financially stable sector and a strong workforce.

### **Why should we support the #15andFunding Campaign?**

We need to ensure a government funded \$15 per hour wage for human services workers and care workers funded through Medicaid. Our sector provides essential functions for society from foster care to substance abuse professionals to elder caregivers to daycare workers. We are in every aspect of people's lives, however, for many years, our low wage workers have suffered from tight household budgets – making tough jobs even tougher. We want to be included in the minimum wage increase, but since unlike private sector workplaces, nonprofits cannot raise the price of their services to meet this need. An unfunded mandate to increase wages would curtail services, increase caseloads, and possibly force some nonprofits to close their doors.

### **What if my organization doesn't receive funding from State government contracts?**

The Fight for 15 campaign to increase the minimum wage started with a focus on fast food workers, but has since gained traction among other low-wage workers. People cannot afford to live on the current minimum wage, which totals \$18,200 per year for full time hours, so we need an increase to support the economic security of our low-wage families in New York State. For example, a household with one adult and one child living in Buffalo requires \$51,696 in annual income to meet their basic needs. The same family living in the New York City metro area needs up to \$78,476. It is important that human services providers, regardless of funding from government contracts, support #15andFunding because it serves our mission of addressing economic inequality. We acknowledge that organizations that do not get State government funding will be greatly impacted by the increase, which is why funding is a central piece of our campaign. By supporting the campaign, we are supporting income equality for our workforce who is predominantly women and people of color.

### **What is the cost to the State of a \$15 per hour minimum wage increase for direct State human services contracts?**

Raising the wage floor in the State-funded human services sector would cost \$60-\$75 million in the first year and approximately \$250-\$300 million yearly when fully phased in over the next six years, according to estimates developed by the Fiscal Policy Institute. These estimates assume some spillover wage increases for workers above and below the minimum wage to avoid an undue compression of an organization's overall wage scale.

**What is the methodology for the cost estimate?**

Data was gathered from the State Comptroller's website. The State contracts out roughly \$1.5 billion annually to nonprofit organizations throughout New York State to provide a range of human services (specified here as not including home health care or developmental disability services).

**What is not included in this cost estimate?**

This estimate does not encompass other programs where funding levels might need to be adjusted to reflect a phased-in minimum wage increase. It also does not include funds from the State to local municipalities and counties, Medicare rates, and some human services areas like developmental disabilities and mental health.

**Are there other advocacy efforts related to #15andFunding Campaign?**

Yes. The #15andFunding is part of the broader minimum wage movement – Fight for \$15 campaign - and the many coalitions and campaigns pushing around the country to increase the minimum wage. For example, several agencies serving people with developmental disabilities across New York State recently commissioned a minimum wage issue paper titled "Supporting People with Developmental Disabilities: The Impact of Low Wages and the Minimum Wage Debate on the Direct Support Professionals Workforce" to assist their membership with advocacy efforts for improved wages for their workforce (<http://www.nysarc.org/index.php?CID=261>).

**What can we do to take part in the #15andFunding Campaign?**

**JOIN-** If your organization has not yet signed on to the Campaign, do so by clicking [here](#) or reaching out to Mallory Nugent ([mnugent@fpwa.org](mailto:mnugent@fpwa.org)).

**SHARE-**Coalition members will be taking part in social media campaigns like the meme storytelling and #15andFunding twitter rallies to share how a \$15 minimum wage increase will impact their workers, clients, and organizations. For more information and to take part in these campaigns contact Marisa Semensohn ([semensohnm@humanservicescouncil.org](mailto:semensohnm@humanservicescouncil.org)).

**EMAIL-**Email the Governor to let him know that we support the minimum wage increase, and need human services workers to be included and funded. Personalize and submit an email to Governor Cuomo by clicking [here](#).