



The Voice of the Human Services Community

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HUNDREDS FIGHT GOVERNOR'S VETOES THAT HURT NEW YORK'S SOCIAL SERVICES

NEW YORK – Today, hundreds of New Yorkers gathered on the steps of City Hall to let Gov. David Paterson and other elected officials know that much of the discretionary funding he vetoed is still needed to serve New York's most vulnerable. Organizations including the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies, Council of Senior Centers and Services, Food Bank for New York City, and University Settlement, as well as families that depend on these critical services, spoke at the rally and emphasized the importance of restoring the vetoes that have many of these not-for-profits on the chopping block.

“The State needs to make good on their promises of funding. The Governor's vetoes cut funding not only to current and future programs, but take away funding that was already allocated to not-for-profits,” said Michael Stoller, Executive Director of the Human Services Council. “The vetoes cut funding to programs that are by no means pork, such as care for the elderly and programs for youth, and if these vetoes are not rescinded, programs will close and not-for-profits will not be reimbursed for services they already provided based on promised funding.”

Not-for-profit workers have been holding their breath over whether their organizations and jobs will receive the funding that was promised. Lucia Riviuccio, LCSW Director of STEPS to End Family Violence, a Manhattan-based abuse prevention organization says, “Without this funding, our ability to serve over 4,000 victims each month is sharply curtailed. Life-saving services such as crisis counseling, safety planning, and legal advocacy are critical to victims of domestic violence and prevent greater future cost for shelter, medical services, public assistance, legal services, and workplace productivity. Every \$1 spent on domestic violence services saves \$10 in future medical, employment, mental health, shelter, and safety-related expenses.”

These vetoes cut funding for human services of all kinds, including senior services, afterschool programs, domestic violence, college access programs, mental health services, youth services, and more. The State Office for the Aging alone receives \$10 million in discretionary grants. Carole Vahey, a senior citizen receiving transportation services said, “I am so very thankful for the transportation that my senior center provides. It allows me to get to my doctor, the senior center, and my supermarket. Without it I would not have food in my home or socialize with my friends.”

In addition to service loss, these vetoes have an impact on jobs in the not-for-profit sector. “Jobs provided by social assistance not-for-profits are absolutely critical to the economic viability of many neighborhoods throughout New York City,” said James Parrott, Chief Economist of the Fiscal Policy Institute.

The State legislature is expected to come back into session this week to continue working on the budget, which is already fifteen weeks past due. Representatives of the rally are planning a week of State actions and public events to give thousands of New Yorkers a platform to be heard during budget negotiations.

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About the Human Services Council of New York City

Human Services Council (HSC) of NYC operates as the intermediary between member organizations and government agencies to confront issues that affect the entire human services sector. HSC's powerful advocacy, contract reform, information referral, access to technology standardization and disaster preparedness and response services strengthen its members' ability to operate more efficiently while ensuring the continuity of the services they provide to their communities and the individuals within them. For more information on the Human Services Council, please visit www.humanservicescouncil.org.