



***THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
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****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

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**COUNCIL MEMBERS, ADVOCATES, AND CLIENTS
DEMAND BUDGET RESTORATIONS FOR SOCIAL SERVICES**

Council Member Annabel Palma, Chair of the City Council's General Welfare Committee, along with her colleagues in the City Council, advocates, and clients, rallied on the steps of City Hall today to demand restoration of millions of dollars for social services programs slashed in Mayor Bloomberg's \$70 billion proposed budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2014.

"This past year, the City Council won major victories in the ongoing debate with the Mayor over social services, restoring nearly \$60 million to stabilize the child care system and thwarting the implementation of a policy that would have denied shelter to thousands of homeless men and women," said Council Member Palma, whose General Welfare Committee provides oversight of the Administration for Children's Services, the Human Resources Administration, and the Department for the Homeless. "Yet again, it is up to the Council to take a stand for the City's most vulnerable population."

"Although the local and national economy are on the rebound, thousands of New Yorkers continue to rely on publicly-funded child care, housing programs, and food pantries to help provide job security and as bridges up and out of poverty. We hope the Mayor will continue to see the value of human services in our communities and the role they play in growing a strong economy," said Michael Stoller, Executive Director of the Human Services Council.

Administration for Children's Services (ACS)

In October 2012, ACS rolled out an ambitious publicly funded early childhood education system known EarlyLearn NYC. Last year, under the Mayor's FY13 budget proposal, thousands of families stood to lose child care services because of the shift to this new system. Ultimately, the Council, aided by the efforts of various organizations, providers, and families, dampened the shock to the system by negotiating an increase to the baseline funding for EarlyLearn NYC and by restoring over \$58 million for discretionary seats and vouchers. With the Council's restorations, providers throughout the five boroughs, including the Jewish Child Care Association, could continue to serve nearly 4,500 children and low-income families could continue to access nearly 4,500 vouchers for child care.

In his proposed budget, the Mayor failed to baseline the \$58 million for discretionary seats and vouchers, again jeopardizing the stability of the child care system. These cuts, combined with the dramatic cuts to Out-of-School-Time, a program run by the city's Department of Youth and Community Development, would have a devastating impact on many working families.

"As someone who began her career in education, I am deeply concerned with the proposed cuts to child care and after school systems," Council Member Julissa Ferreras said. "For years, I served as the Beacon director for P.S. 19, and I can attest to how essential these programs are to the thousands of children and parents who rely on them on a daily basis. Not only does the budget fail to maintain the one year of funding restored by the City Council in 2012, it proposes additional cuts to both child care and after school systems. The education of our children is too important to allow this to happen."

"Citizens' Committee for Children is deeply dismayed that the Mayor's final Preliminary Budget includes \$217.9 million in cuts to services to children and families—which is on top of 11 previous rounds of budget cuts," said Stephanie Gendell, Associate Executive Director of Policy and Public Affairs at Citizens' Committee for Children. "We are especially troubled that the budget fails to restore any of the over \$120 million the City Council restored last year so over 47,000 children would not lose child care or after-school."

"Affordable, culturally-sensitive, high-quality childcare is a long-term, high return investment," said Sandy Katz, Director of Early Childhood Programs for the Jewish Child Care Association. "If the City slashes JCCA's funding, 1000 children will be at risk of losing the safe, enriching, educational childcare they need to succeed, some of the parents may be forced to quit their jobs to take care of their children, and 140 providers may also lose their livelihoods."

Department of Homeless Services (DHS)

The city homeless shelter population is at a record high. This January, more than 50,000 people slept each night in city shelters, an increase of 19% from last year. The Mayor's proposed budget adds \$69.5 million for increased capacity for a total DHS budget of \$955 million.

During his term in office, the Mayor has proposed a number of measures to divert people from shelters in an effort to achieve cost savings. In 2011, the Mayor unveiled a policy that would have allowed the City to deny emergency shelter to thousands of homeless men and women each year by imposing new bureaucratic burdens on homeless adults seeking shelter. The Council won a major legal victory last month when a state appeals court ruled that the City did not properly adopt this policy. Consequently, the policy has not gone into effect.

In his proposed budget, the Mayor offers another diversionary measure for single adults. Under this proposal, single adults who do not utilize their assigned shelter for more than 30 days would need restart the intake process, at which point DHS staff would seek to divert them to other housing. DHS expects to save \$4 million in the next fiscal year through a reduction in care days.

“The increase in homeless services expenditures under Mayor Bloomberg has been exponential, rising 77% during his tenure,” said Patrick Markee, Senior Policy Analyst at Coalition for the Homeless. “But it is simply wrongheaded to attempt to save money by making it harder for homeless adults, many of them living with mental illness, to secure shelter. However, the City could save money and reduce the homeless population in the right way by adopting the City Council’s proposals to provide permanent housing assistance to the record number of homeless children and adults.”

Human Resources Administration (HRA)

Annual funding for food assistance programs plateaued at around \$13 million years ago in the pre-recession days. Yet poverty and food costs continue to increase in the city. Inexplicably, the Mayor proposes decreasing the budget for food assistance programs.

“There is no good justification for reduced food assistance funding when so many people in New York City are still struggling to make ends meet,” Council Member Stephen Levin said. “I will continue to work with Council Member Palma and the rest of the City Council to restore support for New Yorkers in need.”

The Mayor has also failed to baseline over \$5 million in funding to the HIV/AIDS Services Administration (HASA) for supportive housing contracts and case management, thereby placing 4,500 people with HIV/AIDS at risk of losing the specialized care they need to overcome a history of homelessness, substance use, or mental health issues.

“It is necessary that social workers and case managers support clients where they live, and not just at HRA’s HASA headquarters,” said Council Member Gale Brewer.

“Supportive housing saves lives,” added Ted Houghton, Executive Director of the Supportive Housing Network of New York. “These proposed budget cuts to essential case management in nonprofit-run HASA-supportive housing are the definition of penny-wise and pound foolish – thousands of very fragile tenants living with HIV/AIDS will be at high risk of becoming homeless again, making them sicker and more dependent on the costliest systems for basic shelter and healthcare. If these cuts go through, more than 200 case managers who do heroic work helping the most vulnerable among us will lose their jobs. We strongly oppose these short-sighted cuts proposed by the Mayor and urge the Council to once again fully fund these vital positions.”

Finally, the Mayor plans to continue to pay 50% of broker fees for all benefit recipients, including HASA clients, after years of paying 100% of the fee. HRA estimates that this policy has saved over \$26 million since implementation two years ago.

“All anyone has to do is talk to clients to find out that this policy has a negative effect on people seeking affordable housing, particularly when there is a question as to the scrupulousness of various brokers,” said Council Member Brewer.