



Fund Human Services to Build Strong Communities

KEEP THE COLA: Human Services Workforce Salary Adjustments NOW

The Human Services Council of New York (HSC) and Strong Nonprofits for a Better New York urge the State to reinstate the statutory human services workforce cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) in the FY 2020 State Budget. Governor Cuomo has deferred the statutory COLA for the last ten years, saving over half a billion dollars on the backs of human services employees.

Impact on Communities:

Human services providers are fundamental to New York State: the sector makes up 20% of New York’s workforce and delivers services to ~2.5 million people annually. And yet, despite the high skill and education levels of their employees, human services organizations struggle to pay them a livable wage.

Turnover in some human services subsectors is as high as 40%, while 33% of nonprofit providers indicate that finding qualified staff within tight budget constraints is a challenge. What’s more, 34% of providers note that retention of direct services staff is especially poor, which directly disrupts the quality of services they are able to provide to clients and communities.

Background on Workforce Investment: ~\$686.17M in deferred COLAs since 2008

FY	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Statutory COLA	5.60%	-2.10%	1.20%	3.60%	1.40%	2%	2%	0.20%	0.8%	1.50%	2.9%
Actual COLA	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2% (limited)	0.2%	0%	0%	TBD
\$ Savings (million)	\$171.00	--	\$44.25	\$150.40	\$71.20	\$106.30	--	--	\$4	\$19.90	\$118.32

In 2017, the State invested \$55 million in direct care workers (those contracted through OPWDD, OMH, or OASAS; foster care providers separately received direct care salary increases)—just a segment of the human services workforces. While this investment was an important first step, it left out many direct services providers, like those contracted through OCFS, OTDA, NYSOFA, etc.

It is time for the State to fulfill its responsibilities to all New Yorkers and fund the human services COLA across all human services contracting agencies and programs, to ensure living wages for this fundamental workforce.