

HUMAN SERVICES COUNCIL ISSUE BRIEF

**Dangerous Moves:  
How public  
funding cuts to  
human  
services  
hurt women  
and children**

**WHO CARES?**





## Human Services Council of New York

The Human Services Council (HSC) is the voice of the human services community. We represent thousands of not-for-profit organizations in New York, and we advocate for the needs of the human services sector as a whole. Human service providers can accomplish more for their clients when they work together to increase funding, master complex new regulations, and orchestrate joint technology. HSC provides the structure to make that happen.

Since 1991, we have helped bring together a diverse network of human services organizations to discuss ideas and take collective action on issues and concerns that impact the entire sector. Through advocacy, information, collaboration, and technical assistance, member organizations and their leaders are supported by the whole human services community in addressing their concerns about public policy, economic trends, and the regulatory environment.

For more about HSC, visit our

Website: [www.humanservicescouncil.org](http://www.humanservicescouncil.org) • Twitter: @hsc\_ny • Facebook: HSC.NY

## Who Cares? I Do. Campaign

HSC is spearheading the **Who Cares? I Do.** campaign to spread awareness of the impact funding cuts will have on New York's individuals, families, communities, and economy. Ultimately, our goal is to influence government decisions about the allocation of state and city resources and protect investments in human service programs.

The campaign is supported by individuals, organizations, businesses, policy makers, philanthropists, and many others who recognize how critical human services are to New York and all its communities — whether it's an after-school program, a senior center, a shelter for the homeless, a food pantry, assistance for domestic violence victims, a mental health clinic, a home for foster children, or a day care center. Our mission is to make government accountable to the needs of all New Yorkers by honoring the commitments made to our communities.

For more about the **Who Cares? I Do.** campaign, visit our

Website: [www.whocares-ido.org](http://www.whocares-ido.org) • Twitter: @WhoCares\_IDo • Facebook: Who Cares? I Do.

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# WHO CARES?



## Overview

Human services are valuable resources to both government and communities. They provide affordable support such as child care, youth programs, elder care, medical assistance, legal help, and career services. Annual budget cuts at the city, state, and federal levels greatly detract from the ability of human service organizations to support communities, and the people living in those communities lose access to critical affordable resources. During economic hard times, more people than ever rely on these services in their daily lives. And while human services help everyone, many services are especially important to women trying to balance their work and family lives. This report examines budget cuts that directly impact women in four service areas: child and elder care, homeless services, domestic violence assistance, and family health programs. In FY12, New York City cut funding for human services by \$120 million and New York State has cut over \$800 million in human services funding in the past two years. This year's proposed cuts at the city, state, and federal level further endanger women and the human services they rely on.

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## Women and Human Services

Human services organizations make it possible for many working individuals to live affordably and continue to work. By enabling people to find and keep jobs, human services act as an economic ladder, getting people out of poverty and into the middle class. How does this relate to women? 77 percent of New Yorkers living in poverty in

2009 were adult women or children, and two-thirds of the city's poor families were headed by women.<sup>1</sup> As wage gaps persist, women are continually paid less than men, despite having the same qualifications and working the same hours. They are also segregated into low-paying occupations (which includes the human services workforce).<sup>2</sup> The result is that

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accessible and affordable human services are crucial to working women's survival. Outside of the workplace, women are the primary informal caregivers in the United States, and thus greatly rely on child care, elder care, and family health services to help them meet both work and personal responsibilities. In addition, homeless shelters and domestic violence programs provide needed refuge for many women and their families in unstable circumstances. These are vital supports to women of all ages and backgrounds, and when cuts are made to human services, women are particularly hurt.

### U.S. Poverty Rates by Sex and Age

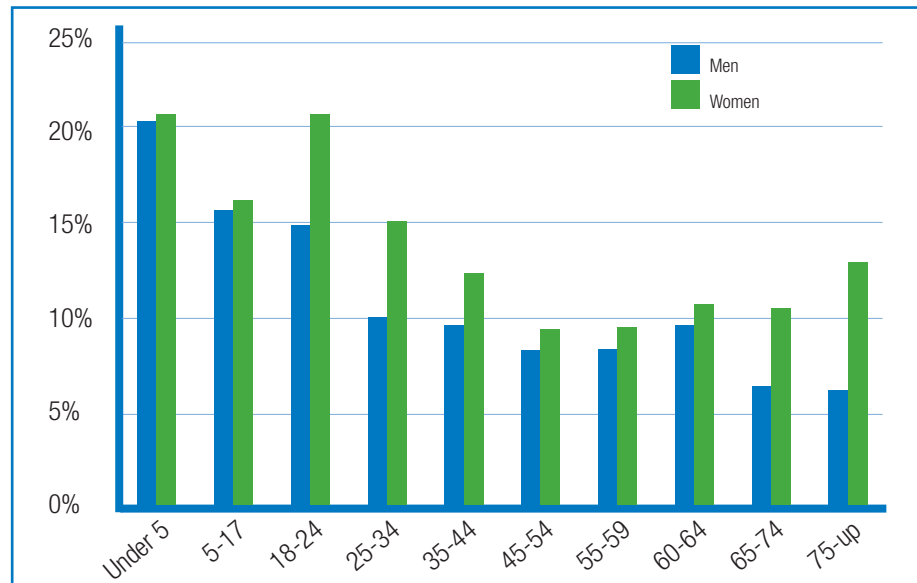


Chart: Center for American Progress, "The Straight Facts on Women in Poverty", 2008

### Why Do These Services Matter?

#### Child and Elder Care

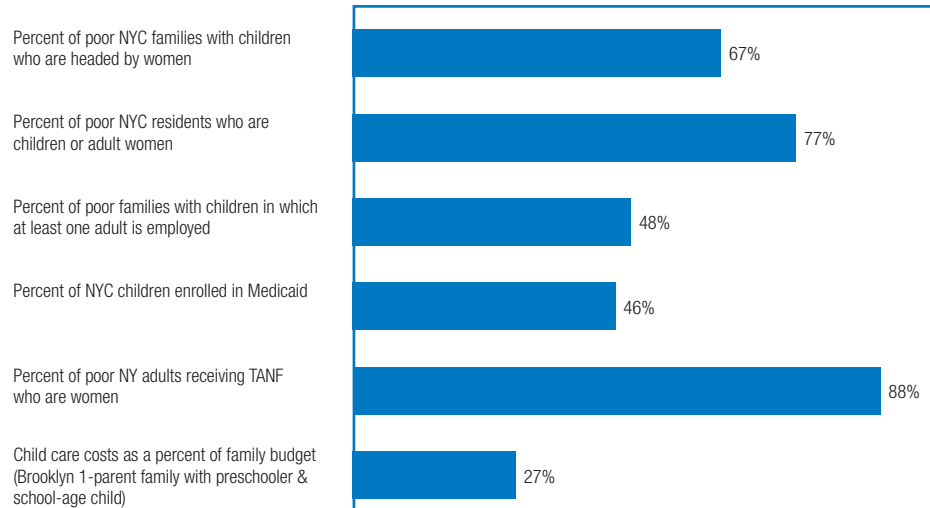
New York State is home to over 1.3 million working mothers with children under six, and **full-time child care can range from \$9,000 to \$13,650** annually.<sup>3</sup> In New York City, subsidized child care is funded by city, state, and federal dollars, but available to only **one in every four** children who are eligible. City and state subsidies for child care greatly reduce these costs for working families. More of this funding, not *less*, is required to meet the needs of New York City families.<sup>4</sup> The same is true for programs serving

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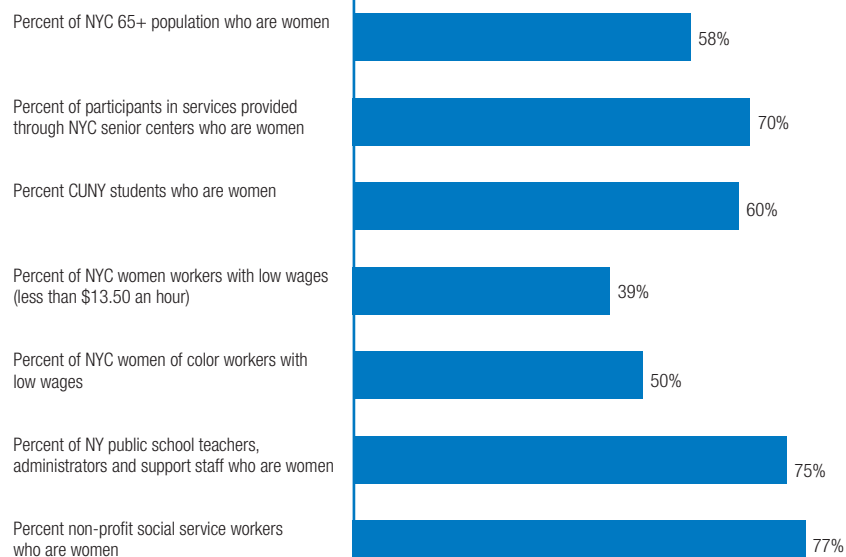


elderly relatives that would otherwise require women to act as full-time caretakers and are particularly important to women in old age. Women on average live longer than men and represent **70 percent** of those receiving services provided through New York City senior centers.<sup>5</sup> These family care services represent important work and life supports for women throughout all stages of their lives.

#### Families and Poverty



#### Women: Seniors, Students and Workers



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Sources: Current Population Survey; American Community Survey; administrative data; Council of Senior Centers and Services; and 2010 NYC Self-Sufficiency Standard.

Chart: New York Women's Foundation, "A Harder Struggle, Fewer Opportunities: The Impact of the Governor's Proposed Budget on Women, Children and Families," 2011

### Homelessness

Nationally, women comprise the majority of adults with families in homeless shelters.<sup>6</sup> Last year in New York City, there were **more than 14,810 homeless adults with families in addition to 2,520 homeless single women.**<sup>7</sup> Budget cuts to homeless services mean that shelters become overcrowded and poorly maintained, which discourages people from using them. With rental assistance programs disappearing as well, women and their families will be left with no place to go.

### Domestic Violence

Approximately one in four women will experience domestic violence during their lifetimes, and almost **one in five prenatal deaths** could be prevented with the elimination of domestic violence.<sup>8</sup> Non-residential domestic violence prevention programs can help women who need counseling support, while emergency shelter services can provide the refuge that could preserve a life.

**In 2006, in New York State there were over 50,000 reported cases of domestic violence** and 28 children killed as a result of domestic violence.<sup>9</sup> Cutting funding for domestic violence services will put more women and children's lives at risk.

### Family Health

In 2009, **women were 58 percent of New York Medicare beneficiaries and in 2008 were 55.9 percent of New York Medicaid beneficiaries.**<sup>10</sup> Women also constitute more than half of New York City's elderly population, making them increasingly reliant on long-term accessible and affordable medical care. Coverage for reproductive, pediatric, and disability care make Medicaid and Medicare especially important for women at all stages of life, and spending caps placed on these programs could jeopardize the health of women and their families.

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## The Impact of City, State, and Federal Budget Cuts

### ***New York City***

Mayor Bloomberg released his Preliminary Budget for FY13 with a proposed \$185 million cut to human services overall. After a \$45 million cut to human services in FY11, and \$120 million in FY12, if enacted, the Mayor's proposed budget would represent a total of \$350 million in cuts to human services over the last three years. More cuts mean less support for elderly, child care, health, homeless, and youth services for New York City residents, with a severe impact on women. From the elimination of day care centers to the underfunding of domestic violence programs, these cuts have serious consequences for the services women rely on. The FY13 Preliminary Budget would further increase the financial burden on women in their professional, personal, and family lives.

### **Cuts to Child and Elder Care Programs**

The number of children—from public assistance and non-public assistance families—receiving subsidized child care in New York City dropped from 116,000 in 2006 to 102,000 in 2010, a 12 percent reduction. In 2012, the Mayor proposed closing down even more child-care facilities, potentially eliminating 1,200 day care slots and jeopardizing the jobs of hundreds of day care center employees, many of whom were women. FY13 doesn't look much brighter, with \$6.4 million in City Council day care funding set to expire at the end of June.

In addition, the City's current FY12 budget eliminated funding for approximately 2,073 elementary school and 498 middle school slots in the Out of School Time (OST) after-school program that provides free academic and recreational activities for children while their parents are at work. The data show that students in after-school programs perform better academically than comparable students who are not in such programs, yet OST has seen a 60 percent reduction

in available slots since its inception in 2005. With an additional \$5.2 million in proposed cuts to OST in the Mayor's FY13 budget, next year even fewer children will be able to

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### **Cuts to Housing Transition Services**

The New York State FY12 budget withdrew \$65 million in state funding, losing \$27 million in federal matching dollars for Advantage, New York City's rental subsidy program for the homeless. After losing funding from New York State, the Mayor withdrew city funding, eliminating Advantage altogether. Though Advantage was not a perfect program, it served approximately 15,000 families, many of whom were single women and their children, providing

temporary rental assistance so they could exit the shelter system and afford homes of their own. Now, for the first time in 30 years, the city has no policy in place to help homeless New Yorkers transition from emergency shelters to permanent housing.<sup>11</sup> Since the program's elimination in April 2011, the length of time that homeless families stay in the city's shelter system has increased by almost two months. In February 2012 the city

stopped paying subsidies to the more than 8,000 Advantage participants who were enrolled in the program before it was eliminated, increasing the chance that many of these families will have to return to emergency shelters as well.<sup>12</sup>

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### **Cuts to Domestic Violence Prevention**

When the FY12 City Council Restorations expire in June 2012, the Domestic Violence and Empowerment (DOVE) initiative will lose \$2.5 million in funding for prevention and empowerment workshops, legal advocacy for domestic violence victims, and community-based organization trainings in domestic violence support in underserved parts of the city. With the health-

related costs of domestic violence at more than \$5.8 billion a year, the consequence of defunding prevention programs and shelters is both dangerous for women and costly for the city.

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### **Cuts to Family Health Services**

In June 2012, \$8.6 million in City Council Restoration funding will expire for health initiatives, including asthma control, HIV/AIDS support for faith-based communities and communities of color, rapid HIV testing, and infant mortality reduction. The Mayor's proposed FY13 budget slashes more than \$7 million from HIV/AIDS prevention and STD screening services as well as early intervention support programs for infants and young children with developmental delays. Cutting HIV/AIDS and asthma services affects all New Yorkers but is especially detrimental to low-income women of color. Recent studies have revealed that women constitute roughly one-quarter of new HIV infections in the United States, of which black women represent 66 percent despite constituting only 14 percent of the entire U.S. female population.<sup>13</sup> In 2009, the rate of new HIV infections among black women was 15 times as high as that of white women and over three times as high as that of Latina women.<sup>14</sup> Additionally, asthma rates are significantly higher in low-income communities of color.<sup>15</sup> Pulling support for these programs means that women, especially women of color, will be faced with even fewer resources to maintain their own health and that of their families.

### ***New York State***

In January 2012, Governor Cuomo released his Executive Budget and Reform Plan for FY13. Though the plan increases funding in education, it also proposes the elimination of funding for Settlement Houses and Supplemental Child Welfare, all without restoring cuts made to child care, domestic violence programs, or homeless services in the prior fiscal year. While the Governor's goal is to achieve a balanced budget, it is important that the state legislature work to ensure that the enacted budget includes key funding for human services that enable women to work and care for their families.

### **Cuts to Child and Elder Care Programs**

From FY11 to FY12, the state reduced the budgets of a number of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funded programs such as \$5.5 million from CUNY child care centers and \$7.5 million from SUNY child care centers, which enable mothers to attend school and have their children cared for on-site. Women comprise 60 percent of CUNY and 55 percent of SUNY students, and now must face threats to key child care services in addition to a series of annual tuition hikes, greatly increasing their financial burden. In addition, the state eliminated TANF funding for caretaker relatives this year, leaving women who care for family members without financial compensation. After-school child care services have also taken a hit in the past year, with \$4.7 million in total funds cut from

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the Advantage After-School program, which provides three hours of after-school activities for school-age children. These cuts have placed more of a burden on women caregivers, yet the Governor's FY13 Budget Plan offers no restorations for these essential programs.

### **Cuts and Freezes on Homeless Programs**

In 2011, \$1.9 million was cut from the TANF Supportive Housing for Families and Young Adults (SHFYA) program, which helps individuals obtain affordable housing to prevent them from entering the shelter system. More TANF dollars—\$801,000—were also cut from the Supplemental Homeless Intervention program (SHIP), which helps at-risk people avoid eviction and find secure permanent housing. These programs prevent individuals and families from becoming homeless, and severe budget cuts have put more people at risk. Now, the FY13 Executive Budget proposal eliminates funding for the Neighborhood Preservation Program and the Rural Preservation Program, both of which finance community-based nonprofit corporations to preserve and promote affordable housing. In addition, Governor Cuomo has now put a stop on \$15 million that was to be used for shelter supplements and other services to prevent eviction and address homelessness in New York City. With New York City homelessness at an all-time high, cuts to eviction prevention services, and no transitional housing program in place, the suspension of already allocated funding is particularly damaging to the thousands of women with families trying to avoid homelessness.

### **Cuts to Non-Residential Domestic Violence Services**

This year, funding for non-shelter domestic violence services was cut by more than half, a loss of \$939,000 in state funding, with a potential loss of all funding in FY13. Non-shelter services include counseling, legal advocacy, and case management, resources that enable women to permanently escape from physical abuse and avoid entering emergency shelters. Shelter placement costs New York City \$27,000 a year per family, and non-shelter services reduce the need for this placement. Since the recession began, there has been a 72 percent

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increase in the incidence of domestic violence in the Northeast, and domestic violence homicide rates have increased 24 percent in New York. In light of this increase, the elimination of services is especially dangerous, leaving many women without protection and increasing costs for government.

### **Cuts to Preventive Health Services**

In FY12, the TANF-funded Nurse-Family Partnership program (NFP), which provided in-home visits to low-income first-time mothers to improve pregnancy and child health outcomes, was completely eliminated. NFP has consistently improved family health in a number of areas, such as reducing childhood injuries and language delays, while increasing maternal employment by the child's fourth birthday.<sup>16</sup> The elimination of this program leaves thousands of women and their children without prenatal and postpartum nursing assistance each year. Although Governor Cuomo has not proposed additional cuts to this area in FY13, the cuts that have already been made undermine the health of mothers and their children, and it remains uncertain whether cost-saving efforts such as Medicaid redesign will further threaten key services in nursing and pregnancy care.

### ***Federal***

On February 13, 2012, President Obama released his FY13 Executive Budget Request to Congress. The President's budget request allocates \$76.4 billion for the Department of Health and Human Services, a \$3.5 billion dollar reduction from his FY12 proposal, but an overall increase from the actual FY12 program funding level. While the President's budget succeeds in shrinking the federal deficit and supporting job creation and education, it also slashes the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) by almost half, proposes \$56 billion in Medicaid and \$303 billion in Medicare cuts over the next 10 years, and fails to restore funding for human services programs that have been defunded annually. These reductions, combined with federal cuts of past years and those at the city and state levels, deprive women of critical health services.

### **Cuts to Child and Elder Care Programs**

The President's Budget Request attempts to reduce Medicare and Medicaid spending partly by restricting payments to nursing homes. In the past four years, several New York nursing homes have closed down, and the number of beds available to the elderly has been greatly reduced.<sup>17</sup> While managed care programs with adult-day services may take the place of closed nursing homes, these programs need adequate government funding to accommodate the increased demand.

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The President's proposal also freezes spending for the Older Americans Act (OAA), which has provided community and social services to the elderly since 1965. Furthermore, the proposed cut to the CSBG could threaten a variety of anti-poverty services, including meal programs for seniors.<sup>18</sup> The President's plan does request increases in funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant and Head Start/Early Head Start programs. If included in the final budget, these increases could help to offset some of the state- and city-level losses in funding for child and after-school care that will affect women and families. However, with less overall senior health, meal, and housing care, women—the majority of informal caretakers—will be forced to take on more financial and time responsibilities to ensure that their relatives are provided for.

### **Cuts to Housing Assistance**

Homeless assistance grants and health care programs would receive more funding under President Obama's FY13 Budget Request, adding resources to combat chronic homelessness. However, simultaneous cuts to low-income housing assistance programs put more families at risk of becoming homeless. The President's proposal includes a 6.9 percent reduction in Project-Based Rental Assistance funding, which pays landlords who provide a certain number of affordable apartments to low-income families. This is coupled with a five percent cut to the Community Development Fund, which funds a variety of housing and revitalization programs.<sup>19</sup> In addition, cuts to the Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity pulls support for enforcement of fair housing practices, leaving women, people with disabilities, and people of color with less protection from discrimination.

### **Cuts to Domestic Violence Services**

President Obama's Budget Request maintained funding for most domestic violence programs provided through the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). VAWA includes a number of initiatives to prevent domestic violence and provide legal assistance to victims. Every year, women fight to reauthorize this vital legislation, and yet the FY04 \$16.5 million cut made to Commerce, Justice, and Science grants that fund VAWA programs has not yet been fully restored.

### **Cuts to Medicare**

The \$303 billion cut over the next 10 years as outlined in the President's FY13 Budget Request has serious ramifications for women, children, and the elderly. While much of Medicaid and Medicare reform involves administrative adjustments, several changes will place more of a financial burden on patients; for example, increases in income-related

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premiums and the implementation of co-pays for home health services. Low-income women and their families who rely on these low-cost services will now have to take on more cost with no guarantee of more services.

## Conclusion

In the last two years, New York State alone has cut approximately \$800 million in funding for human services, and simultaneous city and federal budget cuts have only further exacerbated this withdrawal of support. The result of enacted and proposed budget cuts to child and elder care programs, homeless services, domestic violence support, and family health care is that women of all ages are left with fewer services and more financial and time management burdens. Caring for family members full time, struggling to find affordable housing, living with abuse, and risking the health of one's family should not be the daily reality for women. Human services support women and enable them to live, work, and care for their families. During economic downturns, it is particularly important for government to increase funds for these services; instead, many programs are being cut. The cumulative effect of annual divestment in the human services sector means that women are dealing with years of defunded resources, struggling each year with less support. Restorations are needed to bring back services that have been cut, and it is up to the city, state, and federal governments to prioritize investment in these services that rebuild the economy by keeping people in jobs and families out of poverty.

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- 1 The official definition of poverty in the United States is determined through the Census Bureau, which sets thresholds for family income based on family size and the age of family members. If a family's total income falls below the poverty threshold that applies to them, the family is considered in poverty. For example, in 2009 a family with two adults and two children below the age of 18 would be in poverty if their yearly income was below \$21,756 (US Census Bureau). However, in 2011 the Census Bureau released a new poverty line measurement that accounts for modern day expenses, revealing that many more Americans live in poverty than previously accounted for.  
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