

Nazareth Housing

An Important Advocacy Announcement from Homeless Services United

Putting People First:

Prevent Homelessness & Save NYC Homeless Services Funding

Homeless Services United, its members and allies urge New York State elected officials to make whole the state contribution to NYC shelters and rental assistance programs during this time of unprecedented growth in homelessness. We must avail ourselves to all possible avenues and resources to address the crisis of homelessness in New York.

The Governor's FY12 Budget proposes to reduce the cap on the State share for adult homeless shelters in New York City by **19% from \$84.7 million to \$69 million** for the operation of shelters starting on April 1, 2011. The cut in funding for single adults would alter a decades-old understanding in which the City and the State share responsibility for creating a safety-net for this extremely vulnerable population.

Additionally the budget proposes to eliminate the State's **\$35 million** share of the **Advantage housing subsidy program** for homeless New Yorkers living in shelter. Without these funds, the city eliminates its \$69 million commitment to the Advantage program. These actions combined would eliminate \$192 million in City State and Federal funding for homeless housing subsidies, leaving homeless individuals and families with virtually no viable path to permanent housing.

If enacted, these combined budgets cuts of \$51 million will provoke a crisis of increased homelessness. It is estimated that within a year, the cuts will lead to roughly 45,000 more homeless single homeless people and further projected that the shelter census will rise by about 4,000 families.

The impact of these cuts will be

- **longer lengths of stay in shelter;**
- **increased recidivism rates; and**
- **loss of a key incentive, subsidized housing, for homeless adults to find employment.**

The cost of maintaining these families and individuals in the shelter system will quickly outpace any short term savings from the state budget. With the economy so weak for low income individuals, a plan that throws the working poor out of their homes, out of their jobs, and out on their own is ill advised.

By court ruling, the city must provide an easily accessible front door into shelter for those who present in need, and these cuts would eliminate one of the few exits out the back door to becoming stably housed. These cuts are especially deep to homeless people and programs by reducing funding for critical services for homeless adults while simultaneously eliminating one of the major pathways out of shelter for families and adults.

The crisis would be almost immediate as the current shelter system is barely equipped to deal with recent dramatic increase in homelessness. New York City data confirms that there are currently more than 38,000 men women and children in the City's homeless shelter system.

- **9,700 families with more than 15,000 children**
- **8,894 single adults-- a spike of 22% since January 2010**

The Advantage subsidy program, while needing improvement, has offered families and singles a lifeline, with access to permanent housing, an incentive for employment and an opportunity to accumulate savings so that they can become self-sufficient.

In 2010, more than 8,000 households signed Advantage leases to leave shelter for permanent housing. There are currently over 15,000 households living in the community who receive the Advantage subsidy. If the Governor's plan becomes law, approximately 15,000 working poor households will suddenly find themselves unable to afford their rent and many will return to the shelter system or, worse, to the streets. **At a cost to the City and State of \$32,000 per year per family additional shelter facilities will need to be built in neighborhoods across the City to handle the increased demand for shelter.**

While the Governor projects that cutting the Advantage program will result in a savings for the State of \$35 million, the City estimates the **impact to be closer to \$192 million over CFY 2011 and 2012 with the loss of State and accompanying federal funds.**

We remind our State and New York City leaders that tens of thousands of our fellow New Yorkers lives and futures are at stake behind the budget cuts.

Please spread the word! To find out how you can help, send an email to:

info@nazarethhousingnyc.org