



BRIEFING PAPER
**Cutbacks to Homelessness Prevention Programs in
New York State and City Budgets**

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At a time of worsening economic recession, growing job losses, and rising homelessness, New York State and City budgets are making sharp cutbacks to proven homelessness prevention programs. Although record numbers of newly homeless families have entered New York City shelters in recent months, both Governor Paterson and Mayor Bloomberg have proposed – and in some cases, already enacted – significant cutbacks in programs designed to help at-risk families stay in their homes.

Governor Paterson's proposed cuts for the 2009-2010 State budget target some of the most effective homelessness prevention programs in New York. At the same time, Mayor Bloomberg has enacted significant cuts in homelessness prevention programs in the current fiscal year, and is considering additional cuts in the coming year.

Following is a summary of the most significant cutbacks to homelessness prevention programs in both State and City budgets.

State Budget Cutbacks

Proposed Reductions in the FY 2009-2010 Budget

Homelessness Prevention Program

- Currently \$5 million, proposed cut of 100% in 2009-2010 budget
- This program funds eviction prevention services for poor families and helps them secure a State housing benefit to prevent them losing their homes. Five New York City nonprofit agencies are contracted to provide these vital services. They assist more than 6,000 families each year (or more than 24,000 households over the remaining four years of their five-year contracts), and most would become homeless because their evictions will not have been prevented by accessing the housing benefit. Each year, thousands more would lose out on one-time eviction-prevention grants to help them pay back rent and stay in their apartments.

Homelessness Intervention Program

- Currently \$4 million, cut by 8% in current-year 2008-09 budget, proposed to be cut by 26% in 2009-2010 budget
- This program provides aftercare services to help formerly homeless families and individuals remain housed and not return to shelter. The Governor's budget proposal would eliminate services for one-fourth of the caseload.

City Budget Cutbacks

Current Fiscal Year Reductions (Enacted in the FY 2009 Budget):

Homelessness Prevention Fund

- Cut back \$250,000 (50% cut)
- This program provides emergency grants to help low-income tenants pay rent arrears and remain in their homes. As a result of the cut, the program will serve at least 250 fewer at-risk families.

Anti-Eviction Legal Services and SRO Legal Services

- Cut back \$1.5 million (25% cut)

DHS Homelessness Prevention Legal Services

- Cut back \$1.5 million (full cut)

Civil Legal Services (includes representing low-income tenants in housing court)

- Cut back \$2.3 million (50% cut)
- These programs provide legal representation in housing court for low-income tenants facing eviction. Most tenants assisted by these legal services programs remain in their homes.

Proposed Reductions for Next Fiscal Year (Proposed for the FY 2010 Budget):

Reduce City Funds for Home Base Program

- Cut back \$5.1 million
- This proposal will reduce City funds for this prevention program. The Mayor's budget plan notes that City will seek other funds, but fails to specify which funding sources.

Homelessness Prevention Fund

Anti-Eviction Legal Services and SRO Legal Services

DHS Homelessness Prevention Legal Services

Civil Legal Services (includes representing low-income tenants in housing court)

Housing Court Information Services

- These programs are not included in the Mayor's FY 2010 budget plan – they were added to the FY 2009 budget by the New York City Council, and in the current fiscal environment are at risk of further reductions or of elimination.

For more information, please visit www.coalitionforthehomeless.org.