



BRIEFING PAPER

Governor Paterson's Proposed State Budget Cuts Threaten to Harm Homeless New Yorkers

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Governor Paterson's proposed budget cuts for the current State fiscal year and for the 2009-2010 State budget would result in significant harm to homeless, at-risk, and low-income New Yorkers. Following is a summary of some of the most significant funding cuts in Governor Paterson's budget proposal:

Eviction Prevention

- **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. At least **6,000 more households** with eviction notices would lose their apartments in the next year (or some **24,000 households over the remaining four years** of these five-year contracts), and most would become homeless because their evictions will not have been prevented by one of the five NYC service providers. Each year, thousands more would lose out on one-time eviction-prevention grants to help them pay back rent and stay in their apartments.

Emergency Homeless Services

- **Currently \$230,000, proposed to be cut by 50% in current-year 2008-09 budget, proposed to be cut by 100% in 2009-2010 budget**
- Established by the State Legislature in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, this program supports agencies on the front lines **servicing homeless New Yorkers in crisis with food, eviction prevention, crisis advocacy and more**. The Governor's budget proposes to **zero out funding for these services** even as the economic crisis drives more people in desperate need to seek help.

SRO Support Services Program

- **Currently \$21.3 million, proposed cut of 25% (\$5.2 million) in 2009-2010 budget**
- This program provides support services for **more than 2,300 units of permanent supportive housing for homeless individuals living with mental illness and other disabilities**. Supportive housing programs would face cuts in operating subsidies sufficiently large (around \$2,200 per unit per year) that **many may be forced to close, leaving their tenants no alternative but to return to the more costly municipal shelter system**.

Homeless Housing Assistance Program

- **Currently \$36.5 million, proposed cut of 18% (\$6.5 million) in 2009-2010 budget**
- This program helps create permanent supportive housing and other residences for homeless families and individuals. Each year there are **\$60-\$70 million in fundable proposals** submitted to the State for supportive housing for homeless families and individuals, but **the annual appropriation only supports around 400 units per year**. The Governor proposes

eliminating an increase in funding which was provided in the current budget year to address the unmet need.

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.**

NYC Adult Homeless Shelters

- **Currently \$89.7 million, proposed cut of 11% (\$10 million) in 2009-2010 budget**
- The State share of the **cost of shelter for homeless single adults in 2009-2010 would be shifted to the City of New York**, which already makes access to shelter a daunting task even for those most unable to care for themselves. Nearly 29,000 different homeless single adults utilize the NYC municipal shelter system each year, and this proposed change effectively **reduces the State's financial support** toward sheltering homeless individuals in the midst of the most serious economic crisis since the Great Depression.

Homeless Advocacy Program

- **Currently \$200,000, proposed to be cut by 50% in current-year 2008-09 budget, proposed to be cut by 100% in 2009-2010 budget**
- This program **helps homeless individuals living with disabilities to obtain Federal disability benefits and permanent supportive housing**, which are more cost-effective than leaving these individuals in State- and City-funded shelters.

SSI State Supplement for Poor Seniors and People with Serious Disabilities

- **Proposed cut of 26% (\$85 million) in 2009-2010 budget**
- This program supplements meager disability benefits provided under the federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program. This proposal would leave some individuals with **as little as \$7 per month in supplemental State assistance** starting in June, and **largely wipe out** the benefit they are due from the federal Social Security COLA that takes effect in January. The State supplement has not been raised in 20 years, even though the recipients of this aid are extremely poor.

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