



BRIEFING PAPER

**From Bad to Worse:**

**Mayor Bloomberg's Proposed FY 2011 Cutbacks to Homeless Services**

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At a time of all-time record homelessness and double-digit unemployment in New York City, Mayor Bloomberg has proposed sharp cutbacks to vital services that help homeless and at-risk New Yorkers. Combined with enormous State budget reductions proposed by Governor Paterson, the Mayor's proposed cutbacks are the most severe in New York since modern homelessness began, and would lead to further increases in New York City's homeless population.

Mayor Bloomberg's FY 2011 Executive Budget proposes dramatic reductions in funding for the following vital services:

- Shelter and services for street homeless New Yorkers
- Homelessness prevention
- Mental health and medical services for homeless individuals
- Emergency shelter for homeless and runaway youth
- Support services for homeless people living with HIV/AIDS
- Employment and housing services for homeless families

As Coalition for the Homeless highlighted in our State of the Homeless 2010 report,<sup>1</sup> Governor Paterson has already proposed more than \$100 million in State budget cuts to emergency shelter and other core services. Combined with the Governor's threatened cuts, Mayor Bloomberg's proposed budget reductions would lead to significant increases in homelessness and sharply reduced services for some of the most vulnerable New Yorkers.

Following is a summary of the most significant cutbacks to homeless services in the Mayor's FY 2011 Executive Budget<sup>2</sup> proposal:

**1. Shelter and Services for Street Homeless New Yorkers**

- The Mayor's proposes eliminating \$970,000 in funding for 40 "safe haven" shelter beds and 50 "stabilization" beds, which are currently targeted to long-term unsheltered homeless people.
- In addition, the NYC Department of Homeless Services has already closed the Open Door, the city's largest drop-in center serving street homeless New Yorkers, resulting in an additional cutback of \$2.4 million. There are now only five drop-in centers citywide, compared to 11 centers in 2007.

**2. Homelessness Prevention**

- The Mayor proposes dramatic changes to the NYC Department of Homeless Services' Home Base programs, essentially shifting the programs away from prevention services and towards case management and re-housing services for homeless families residing in welfare hotels. This proposed reduction of \$7.6 million relies on Federal stimulus funds to make up for some cutbacks in City tax levy funds.

- The Mayor's Executive Budget fails to include \$250,000 in funding for the "Homelessness Prevention Fund," which provides rent arrears grants to help families and individuals at risk of eviction stay in their homes.<sup>3</sup>
- The budget also fails to include \$2.25 million in funding for anti-eviction legal services, which assist at-risk tenant households, and an additional \$1.5 million in civil legal services, which partly fund housing court cases.<sup>4</sup>
- The Mayor's budget also fails to include \$500,000 in funding for housing court information tables that assist tenants at risk of eviction.<sup>5</sup>

### **3. Mental Health and Medical Services for Homeless Individuals**

- The Mayor's Executive Budget proposes cutting \$1.7 million in funding for mental health and medical services for homeless adults in 12 shelters. City officials say this includes eliminating mental health services and staff at so-called "next step" shelters, which have a significant population of people living with mental illness who receive no other treatment. Psychiatric staff at these shelters also assist in the completion of supportive housing applications.
- The budget also proposes eliminating \$360,000 for contracted Medical Review Team services which review medical records of homeless adults, including individuals returning to shelter after hospitalization.

### **4. Emergency Shelter for At-Risk Homeless and Runaway Youth**

- The Mayor's Executive Budget fails to include \$5.42 million in funding for emergency shelter beds for at-risk homeless and runaway youth.<sup>6</sup> These shelters primarily assist lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth who have historically been threatened in or badly served by larger homeless youth shelter facilities.

### **5. Support Services for Homeless People Living with HIV/AIDS**

- The Mayor's budget proposes \$4.2 million in cutbacks to the NYC Human Resources Administration's HIV/AIDS Services Administration for case management services for homeless and formerly homeless individuals living with HIV/AIDS, representing a reduction of nearly 30 percent of the case management staff. These case managers provide access to housing assistance, health insurance, nutrition assistance, and other public benefits.
- The budget also fails to include \$1.9 million in funding for supportive housing case management services for homeless and formerly-homeless people living with HIV/AIDS.<sup>7</sup> This would amount to a cutback of funding nearly twice as large when the State match is included, and would affect more than 4,000 individuals living with HIV/AIDS.

### **6. Employment and Housing Services for Homeless Families**

- The Mayor's Executive Budget proposes cutting \$1.1 million from re-housing and employment services for homeless families (some of which will be taken up by Home Base Programs), and \$372,000 for employment specialists in 13 family shelters. The Mayor proposes these cutbacks at a time when he is also proposing restricting rent subsidies only to homeless families with employment income.

- The budget also proposes eliminating the “Furnish a Future” program, which provides furniture for families moving from shelter to housing, for a cut of \$859,000.

*For more information, please visit [www.coalitionforthehomeless.org](http://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org).*

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<sup>1</sup> Available at <http://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/pages/state-of-the-homeless-2010>. As of mid-May 2010, the Governor and State legislature had not yet reached agreement on the overdue State budget.

<sup>2</sup> Available at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/omb/html/home/home.shtml>.

<sup>3</sup> Funding for these services was added by the New York City Council and was included in the FY 2010 Adopted Budget. Mayor Bloomberg’s Executive Budget proposal does not include most City Council additions; thus, unless the City Council fully restores the funds in the final FY 2011 budget, all or part of the funding for these programs will be eliminated.

<sup>4</sup> See note above.

<sup>5</sup> See note above.

<sup>6</sup> See note above.

<sup>7</sup> See note above.