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Groundbreaking new report reveals disproportionate economic burden placed on low-income women & children in governor Cuomo's proposed budget

The New York Women's Foundation & Fiscal Policy Institute deliver gender analysis of proposed budget; already vulnerable low-income women of all ages, particularly in NYC, are placed at even greater risk of poverty; unable to meet childcare, shelter, food and healthcare needs

(March 23, 2011) New York, NY – The New York Women's Foundation today released a groundbreaking new report, *A Harder Struggle, Fewer Opportunities: The Impact of the Governor's Proposed Budget on Women, Children & Families*, in partnership with the Fiscal Policy Institute. The report reveals that low-income women across racial lines – already vulnerable to the continuing effects of the economic recession – bear a disproportionate burden of cuts in Governor Cuomo's proposed budget and are placed at even greater risk of poverty, and other factors that contribute to long-term economic stagnation.

The report points out the persistently high rate of poverty in New York City. For example, seventy seven percent of New Yorkers living in poverty in 2009 were adult women or children, and two thirds of New York City's poor families were headed by women. Since 2009, an estimated 100,000 more persons fell into "deep poverty" in New York City. Many of the proposed budget cuts disproportionately affect single mother heads of households and women holding lower-paid jobs in the nonprofit social services sector. These cuts, which at best provide only temporary budget relief, could exacerbate poverty by destabilizing those already struggling and reducing opportunities to move out of poverty.

"Women from all across New York State are put at risk with this budget, which threatens their ability to care for themselves and their children in a way that contributes to the overall economic growth of the state," said Ana L. Oliveira, President & CEO of The New York Women's Foundation. "Our budget is a direct reflection of our values – and putting women at greater risk of intractable poverty and its consequences does not reflect the values I believe the Governor holds."

For example, tens of millions of dollars in support for transitional jobs programs, career pathways and wage subsidies is slated for total elimination in the upcoming 2011-2012 budget year. Funding for the new Transitional Jobs program alone

allowed 35 local social services districts in New York State to operate subsidized employment programs that resulted in over 4,000 new jobs created in both the private and public sectors.

"For many New Yorkers, the economic reality is one of protracted unemployment and recession-heightened need," said James Parrott, Deputy Director and Chief Economist of the Fiscal Policy Institute (FPI). "Unfortunately, the governor's budget relies too heavily on cuts, undercutting the tepid recovery as well as the well-being and economic prospects for many of New York's women, children and families." FPI prepared the report for The New York Women's Foundation.

Furthermore, funding for domestic violence non-residential services would be completely eliminated in the proposed executive state budget. Funding was already reduced from \$3 million to \$1.449 million in the current budget. According to the National Network to End Domestic Violence, eighty five percent of New York State service providers reported a rise in demand for services in 2010. This funding has been used by thirteen organizations in NYC to provide life-saving legal, linguistic and social services to thousands of domestic violence victims each month.

Cecilia Gaston is Executive Director of the Violence Intervention Program, Inc. and she said, "We have a domestic violence survivor mother with three children at our Casa Sandra program. She is losing her Advantage rent assistance; she has been sanctioned 6 times in error; her oldest daughter has attempted suicide; the second daughter is being assessed for traumatic brain injury as a result of the violence, and the youngest son is acting out in school. This family will not make it without assistance.

Without the rent revenue to assist this family, and hundreds more like them, our agencies cannot keep the doors open."

For all parents, but especially single-mother heads of households, lack of access to affordable child care can stifle efforts to achieve or maintain economic security. Child care often represents the largest part of a family's expenses. In the coming budget year, New York will lose \$48 million in federal child care funding through ARRA, which may result in the elimination of full-time year-round care for over 6,000 children. To compound the crisis, Governor Cuomo proposes to eliminate \$7 million in TANF funding for child care demonstration projects that provide subsidies to working families as well as child care funding to support low-income students enrolled in a two-year college program at SUNY and CUNY.

Moreover, after adjusting for inflation, child care funding has decreased by over 30 percent since 2003. In NYC, subsidized child care is only available to one in every four children who are eligible. It is clear that child care subsidies have not increased to keep up with the need.

Nancy Biberman, President of WHEDco (The Women’s Housing & Economic Development Corporation) said, “As a Bronx-based organization in the nation’s poorest Congressional District, we are acutely aware of how low-income women will suffer disproportionately from the proposed cuts. We know that safe and affordable childcare is the single biggest factor that enables low-income women to access education, job training and jobs. Budget cuts at the state level mean that thousands of South Bronx families will lose much-needed childcare services and after-school programs. Such programs are critical to ensuring that children are ready and prepared to succeed in school. The cuts also mean that families will have less disposable income to spend on their everyday needs, like food and shelter.”

The New York Women’s Foundation® (NYWF) was established in 1987 as a public philanthropy to be a voice for women and a force for change. We are a cross-cultural alliance of women catalyzing partnerships and leveraging human and financial capital to achieve sustained economic security and justice for women and girls. With fierce determination, we mobilize hearts, minds and resources to create an equitable and just future for women, families and communities in New York City.

To review the full report, “A Harder Struggle, Fewer Opportunities: The Impact of the Governor’s Proposed Budget on Women, Children & Families” please click here: [2011 Gender Budget Analysis](#)

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