

24



70 West 36th Street, Fifth Floor, New York, NY 10018
Tel: 212-967-0322 Fax: 212-967-0792
www.unhny.org

**Testimony of United Neighborhood Houses
Before the Joint Legislative Fiscal Committees of the
New York State Legislature**

**Human Services Budget Hearing for the
Fiscal Year 2013-2014 New York State Budget**

**Honorable John A. DeFrancisco, Chair, Senate Finance Committee
Honorable Herman D. Farrell, Jr, Chair, Assembly Ways & Means Committee**

**Honorable Simcha Felder, Chair, Senate Committee on Children & Families
Honorable Donna Lupardo, Chair Assembly Committee on Children & Families**

**Honorable Malcolm Smith, Chair, Senate Committee on Social Services
Honorable Michele Titus, Chair, Assembly Committee on Social Services**

**Honorable Eric Adams, Chair, Senate Committee on Aging
Honorable Joan Millman, Chair, Assembly Committee on Aging**

**Honorable Greg Ball, Chair, Senate Committee on Veterans, Homeland Security and Military
Affairs**

Honorable Michael Benedetto, Chair, Assembly Committee on Veterans Affairs

Presented by Annetta Secharran, Director of Policy & Advocacy

Good afternoon. My name is Annetta Secharran and I am here on behalf of United Neighborhood Houses, New York City's federation of settlement houses and community centers. United Neighborhood Houses (UNH) is the membership organization of New York City settlement houses and community centers. Rooted in the history and values of the settlement house movement, UNH promotes and strengthens the neighborhood-based, multi-service approach to improving the lives of New Yorkers in need and the communities in which they live. UNH's membership comprises one of the largest human service systems in New York City, with

38 agencies working at more than 400 sites to provide high quality services and activities to half million New Yorkers each year. UNH supports its members through policy development, advocacy and capacity-building activities.

Settlement House Initiative

New York City's settlement houses serve over 500,000 New Yorkers each year and are experts in braiding together funding from disparate sources to provide seamless services to their communities.

The Settlement House Initiative is a key part of that equation. For instance, one settlement house was able to employ a volunteer director working with low-income children and older adults, English language learners and mentally ill women in homeless shelters. The funding has also been used to provide training and job placement services for the unemployed, counseling for high school students on the college application and financial aid process, music instruction for youth in after-school programs and treatment and counseling for sexually abused children under the age of five.

Although New York State increased its commitment to the Settlement House initiative by \$500,000 in 2012-1023, many settlement houses across New York City actually saw a 47% decline in their awards due to the fact that prior year State surpluses had been exhausted. Settlement House funding, while limited in scale, offers tremendous returns. Settlement Houses have used the funding to leverage other resources and meet unique needs in their communities.

UNH urges the legislature to restore \$2 million for the Settlement House Initiative.

Child Care and After-School

In New York City, we are facing the loss of 47,000 slots in child care and after-school programs. If this cut goes through, tens of thousands of children will lose out on educational opportunities and their parents will be left in an impossible situation where they are forced to choose between their jobs and caring for their children.

New York City is not alone. Counties throughout New York State are reducing child care subsidies, making stricter eligibility requirements and closing after-school programs. When these cuts go through, working families suffer the most. The parents who have difficult but low-wage jobs are left out in the cold.

Governor Cuomo's budget proposal contains two programs that we believe will lead to long-term improvements in early education and after-school- Full Day Universal Pre-Kindergarten and Extended Learning Time. These proposals recognize the critical importance of early education and after-school as a part of a sound basic education. However, at the same time, the

capacity of child care and after-school programs is likely to decrease and more children will likely end up on waiting lists due to proposed budget reductions at both the State and City level. We must take action to preserve and expand child care and after-school for New York's children.

In order to achieve this goal UNH urges New York State to:

- Bring child care subsidies to the 2009-2010 level by restoring \$92 million. This will help prevent counties and New York City from needing to make additional drastic cuts to child care and early education programs.
- Restore YDDP/SDDP to the FY 2011-2012 level of \$28.2 million. YDDP is the main State support for New York City's Out-of-School-Time (OST) program- New York State's largest system of publicly supported after-school. The Governor's budget did not include \$1.3 million that the Legislature added last year. This funding is crucial for keeping after-school programs and other key programs for school age youth running throughout the State.

Summer Youth Employment Program

For over 40 years the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) has provided the critical first job for thousands of teens in New York. Designed to expose youth to the world of work and encourage the consideration of related educational opportunities, SYEP is a highly efficient and proven model popular with youth, administrators and the community worksites that benefit from having youth participants. Owing both to the fact that youth employment has long been studied nationally, as well as through the anecdotal observations of our member agencies that run SYEP in their communities, we know that youth employment provides a key opportunity for the development of essential work and life skills.

While UNH is pleased that the Governor's FY 2013-2014 Executive Budget maintains last year's \$25 million investment in SYEP, the proposed increase in the State minimum wage to \$8.75/hr. requires an additional investment of \$10 million to ensure roughly the same number of youth around the state as last year are able to secure a summer job through the program. Because SYEP is a highly efficient program with approximately 85% of total funding going directly to participant wages, the program is also highly susceptible to wage changes. While we strongly support and encourage the increased minimum wage, which actually represents welcome progress for the millions of low-wage workers across the state, we want to be certain that the value of the state's investment in Summer Youth Employment Program is not diminished. Without an adjustment to the state SYEP investment we project that an increase to \$8.75/hr. will result in 4,000 fewer youth in NYC, and many fewer throughout the state, being able to obtain a job in the program this coming summer.

Even in the instance that the state minimum is not increased, SYEP would still benefit from an additional investment. Relative to the summers of 2008 and 2009, City, State and Federal

investment in the program has dropped sharply, leading to over 100,000 youth being turned away from the program each summer in NYC for the past three years. In 2012 NYC was only able to employ 29,300 youth out of the over 132,000 that applied- the fewest youth served in the program in over a decade. Absent a minimum wage hike, the additional \$10 million investment would help reverse the trend of decreased jobs for youth, providing an estimated additional 3,600 jobs in NYC in 2013. This expansion would also lead to a significant increase in the number of youth employed through SYEP in other regions of the state, which cumulatively receive ~45% of the total state allocation.

Housing and Homelessness Prevention

We are grateful that the Executive Budget proposes investing in affordable housing through programs such as the new House NY program which aims to create 143,000 affordable homes over five years. We also hope the State will focus on ensuring that low-income New Yorkers can stay in their current homes. Solutions to End Homeless Programs (STEHP) which funds homelessness prevention services for families and individuals at risk of eviction or foreclosure is at risk of a significant budget cut this year.

STEHP is part of the Homeless Housing Prevention Services Program block grant which is cut by \$1.6 million in the Executive Budget. UNH urges New York State to restore this funding.

Services for Older Adults

UNH is pleased to see that the NY State Office for the Aging was level funded in most program areas. However, the FY13-14 budget does not include a legislative addition of \$809,850 in the Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly Program or \$325,150 for the Community Services for the Elderly Program. These two legislative additions provided funding to counties, including New York City, that would have experienced a decrease in funding as a result of a census-based formulaic calculation in the two programs. It is essential to restore and make permanent this funding so life-sustaining programs like home care and accessible transportation can continue to operate without disruption.

UNH also supports the redirection of the Enhanced Social Adult Day funding to the New York State Social Adult Day Association for training and technical assistance. The shift is timely as there is a significant proliferation of social adult day programming within in New York City, and very few standardized training resources to support the growth.

Another much needed safeguard in the long term care arena is the creation of a managed long term care ombudsman program. UNH strongly supports such an initiative, as many of the participants they serve in social programs are experiencing confusion and disruption in services as they are transitioned into managed long term care plans. An oversight program designed to respond to the need of long term care consumers is to the benefit of the system as a whole. UNH is eager to see details of such a program.

The Governor proposed to eliminate the law that allows a spouse to exclude his/her income in determining Medicaid eligibility for his/her community-dwelling disabled partner. The existing Spousal Refusal provision prevents the well spouse from becoming impoverished. Elimination of spousal refusal encourages separation and divorce amongst couples, as couples would be faced with the choice: marriage or Medicaid? Further, given that spousal refusal would still exist for partners of spouses in an institutional setting, elimination of spousal refusal in the community promotes the use of institutional care over community based care. UNH urges the Senate and Assembly to oppose the Governor's proposal to eliminate the spousal refusal provision.

Thank you for your work on behalf of human services in New York State and for the opportunity to testify. We look forward to continuing to work with you throughout this budget process.

Submitted Testimony

Of

Jacqueline A. Negri, Executive Director

Association of New York State Youth Bureaus

February 5, 2013

Before

The Joint Legislative Budget Hearing on Human Services

NYS Legislative Office Building

**John A. DeFrancisco, Chairman, Senate Finance
Committee**

and

**Herman D. Farrell, Jr., Chairman, Assembly Ways and
Means Committee**



Jackie Negri, Executive Director, ANYSYB

jackie@nycap.rr.com / 518-526-8518

**Testimony before the Joint Legislative Hearing on the Human
Services Budget**

February 5, 2012

Chairmen Farrell and DeFrancisco, on behalf of the statewide network of youth bureaus that guide and provide a wide array of youth development services, the Association of New York State Youth Bureaus (ANYSYBs) offers recommendations regarding the 2013-14 *Executive Budget*. I am Jackie Negri, Executive Director of the Association.

Currently, the association represents 107 youth bureaus, sponsored by counties, cities, towns and villages statewide. This network of youth bureaus is critical to the youth development system and has survived repeated funding cuts to provide quality youth development, prevention and intervention services. More than 1.5 million youth statewide benefit from the services and programs of the youth bureau network and our goal is sustain those services and programs despite proposals that may weaken the youth development infrastructure.

The end product of a strong youth development system is to offer skills that build our state's citizenry, including: supporting timely high school graduation, providing career and job readiness training, teaching civic responsibility and diverting juvenile violators from entering or re-entering the delinquency system. To achieve these goals, a youth bureau system must be maintained to continue to provide direct services and also fund an array of community-based, non-profit agencies.

Funding supports the following programs and services:

- Afterschool prevention programs
- Out-of-school job readiness and summer jobs
- Healthy eating and obesity prevention
- Mentoring programs
- Programs to prevent youth involvement in gangs and substance use; and
- Supports for runaway and homeless youth as well as pregnant and parenting teams

ANYSYB RECOMMENDATIONS

1). Restore \$1.28 million to YDDP/SDPP to maintain 2012-13 levels and restore \$214,456 for Runaway and Homeless Youth to maintain 2012-2013 levels.

As you are aware the YDDP, SDPP and RHYA funding streams have been cut every year since 2008, declining from almost \$39 million to \$14.1 million in the 2012-13 state fiscal year. This year, because of the timing of allocations, even if the funding streams are combined as proposed in the *Executive Budget*, an addition of \$1.28 million is needed to truly maintain the funding for the two programs at last year's levels. For RHYA, an addition of \$214,456 is needed to maintain last year's levels. We ask for your assistance in making that restoration.

2). Make Amendments to the Governor's Youth Development Program Proposal

In addition to the Association's request for a funding restoration, we urge the legislature to negotiate amendments to the Governor's proposal, intended to streamline state administration of the Youth Bureau system, but which could eliminate the presence of youth bureaus that maintain the vital youth development services in your

communities despite drastic funding cuts. The Association proposes that you consider the following amendments:

- Specify the eligibility criteria for the designated local government entity which can receive the combined YDDP/SDPP funding;
- Authorize a role for municipals in the development of regulations for the distribution formula and outcome measurement requirements, in conjunction with the Commissioner; and
- Assure that the RHYA program is unaffected by the consolidation language and any distribution formula changes as proposed or suggested in the Governor's proposed Youth Development Program.

We believe these amendments will protect youth access to widespread youth development programs that meet outcome measures. **We seek to maintain the Youth Bureau presence in guiding and distributing whatever funding is available in the community.**

3). Add \$150,000 for new Outcome Measurements and Reporting Requirements as outlined in the Governor's Proposed Youth Development Program.

With relation to adding the reporting of outcome measures as outlined in the Governor's proposal, the Association has already taken a lead in piloting Results Scorecard, a trademarked software system that tracks youth results and program impact (see sample data collected below). The following counties are currently utilizing this measurement system or are involved in a pilot program: Orange, Erie, Herkimer, Broome, Washington, Madison, Ontario, Saratoga, and Schenectady. We urge the Legislature not to impose an unfunded mandate and to authorize funding for training and software licenses necessary to support this new requirement.

Our budget request for this support is:

- Fund the new reporting requirements and outcome measurement reporting that is specified in the Governor’s proposed Youth Development Program~ \$150,000.00

Results Scorecard

Scoreboard



ANYSYB Out of School Time Programs

Program Performance

Name	Year To Date
ANYSYB OST: Out of School Time Common Performance Measures	
ANYSYB OST: How much:: # of youth participating in program	1,951
ANYSYB OST: How well:: % of staff with youth development training	37.5%
ANYSYB OST: How well:: % of youth satisfied with the program	94.0%
ANYSYB OST: How Well:: % of PQA scales scoring a 3.0 or higher	85.3%
ANYSYB OST: Better off:: # of youth with improvement in positive youth development outcomes	1,443

4). Add \$250,000 for Go Healthy Challenge for SYEP and Summer Recreation Programs.

Lastly, we urge you to support the expansion of funding to address the growing crisis of childhood obesity. Especially in minority communities, the obesity prevention efforts are not gaining significant successes. We believe that by adding a nutrition and exercise component to existing youth opportunity programs, we can reach youth individually and develop independent knowledge of healthy eating, food selection and educate on the value of regular exercise at the correct stage of youth development. Our outcome

monitoring would allow us to track simple health measures such as body mass index and weight over the course of a summer youth employment program or an afterschool program. A weekly session can be added to existing programs to allow youth to learn how to make a healthy lunch, snack or breakfast; talk about nutrition and food choices and report on their personal exercise goals. A health and wellness initiative must include food shopping awareness, food preparation training and the value-added of regular exercise.

Launched in 2006 by Rachael Ray, “Yum-o!” is a nonprofit organization that empowers kids and their families to develop healthy relationships with food by teaching cooking, feeding hungry kids and funding cooking education. In combination with the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, “Yum-O!” supports the “Go Healthy Challenge” and that is the type of curriculum the Association hopes you will consider funding in this year’s budget.

- Add \$250,000.00 to the budget so that the Office of Children and Families (OCFS) and Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) can put forth a cross-systems initiative and provide contract supplements that support a “Go Healthy Challenge” curriculum to be incorporated into selected Summer Youth Employment and summer recreation programs during the summer of 2013.

Thank you for your consideration of these recommendations. Your assistance and commitment to youth development and youth bureaus has allowed for a strong, viable system that is available to all youth, statewide. If further information is needed, please contact me directly at jackie@nycap.rr.com or 518-526-8518.