

Submitted



**FEDERATION OF PROTESTANT WELFARE AGENCIES**

**Statement Prepared for the February 3, 2014 Hearing of the**

**Assembly Ways and Means Committee  
&  
Senate Finance Committee**

**on the  
2014 – 2015 Executive Budget Proposal for Human Services**

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## **About FPWA**

The Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies (FPWA) has been working since 1922 to improve the lives and conditions of disadvantaged and low-income New Yorkers. We are unique in New York City in that we are a membership organization with a network of human service organizations and churches that operate over 1,200 programs throughout the New York City metro area. Together we serve over 1.5 million low-income New Yorkers of all ages, ethnicities and denominations each year. This gives us a comprehensive view of the complex social problems that face human service organizations today, and allows us to identify common ground among our members so that we can have a greater impact as we advocate for them.

FPWA believes that to be a city and state of equal opportunity for all New Yorkers, every individual and family must have equal access to quality education, health and income opportunities that would help ensure economic stability and upward mobility, and that for the most vulnerable of our city we must ensure that these fundamental supports are in place when people cannot provide them for themselves. We envision a New York where workers do not retire into poverty, families are adequately housed, no one is hungry, everyone is employed, children are well educated, healthcare is accessible to all, and neighborhoods are thriving.

We are advocating for a comprehensive agenda to lift all individuals, children, families and communities so that New York is a place where the social, economic and health of all of its residents are a priority. We know very well that government must play an essential role in ensuring that this goal is achieved with urgency to change the life trajectory of vulnerable people, their children, families and communities.

This written testimony will address the Governor's budget proposals in the areas of:

- Support for Human Services Organizations
- Child Welfare
- Early Childhood Education
- HIV & AIDS
- Income Security
- Workforce Development
- Youth Services

## **I. Support Human Services Organizations to Meet Vital Needs**

Non-profit agencies are already under-funded and cannot adequately serve all of the individuals and families currently seeking their assistance. In the last three years, the cuts to the human services sector by New York State and localities were approximately \$1 billion dollars. These cuts are directly related to the loss of nearly 27,000 jobs in the human services arena. To support human services organizations to meet vital needs, we urge the State to do the following:

In order to adequately support human services organizations so they can meet vital needs, we urge the State to do the following:

### **Include a 4% Human Services Cost-of-Living-Adjustment (COLA) increase in the 2014-15 final Budget**

The Nonprofit human services sector is seeking a 2% COLA in Fiscal Year 2015 through 2017. A 2% adjustment would cost **\$63 million** a year. Nonprofits have **NOT** received a COLA for **five** consecutive years, amounting to a nearly 10% reduction. This has saved the state approximately \$350 million. Unfortunately, the Governor did not include the 4% COLA increase in the Executive Budget and we urge the Legislature to fund this. A 2% COLA in the coming year and through FY17, is a fair and modest adjustment and is on par with the FY14 and FY15 increases given to the Civil Service Employees Union (CSEA).

We see the reinstatement of COLA as the first step in a deeper dialogue to take place around the adjustment of service rates and are ultimately seeking to work collaboratively on the development of a sound rate adjustment policy for the future. Additional steps are necessary to ensure the long term health of the sector, such as merger support, should be incorporated into the discussion as well.

### **Reinstate Discretionary Funding**

The allocation of legislative member Items to not-for-profit organizations is a low-cost way to extend the resources of the State fairly across districts to meet needs that would otherwise go unmet in these difficult economic times. These funds provide important assistance to sustain programs for seniors, youth, and for vulnerable and underserved individuals and families. Flexible discretionary funds also provide critical economic development support; for example non-profits have invested in capital projects and workforce development programs which bring economic activity to the community. We believe that the Legislative grant process can be reformed to address concerns regarding fraud and lack of transparency.

## **II. Child Welfare**

Although Governor Cuomo did not mention child welfare in his recent budget message, FPWA is hopeful that the Governor and State Legislature will announce plans for increased investment this year in the state's child welfare system.

More than 860,000 children in New York State live in poverty—that's about one in five children or 19.9%, and about half of those children live in extreme poverty. Poverty rates for children living in poverty exceed 40% in Buffalo, Elmira, Rochester, Syracuse and Utica. The link between child welfare involvement and poverty continue to be studied. While there are many factors that can lead a family to child welfare involvement, poverty is clearly a huge risk factor. The stressors and lack of options afforded to families living in poverty leave them at great risk for involvement with the child welfare system.

Despite the need, the State has reduced its share of funding for open-ended child welfare services over the last decade from 65% to 62% and decimated Preventive Services funding through the TANF Initiatives funding stream. Specifically, FPWA urges that the Governor restore the State share for child welfare services funding; restore TANF funding for Preventive Services and Caretaker Relative program, which was cut entirely by \$610,000 and \$101,000 respectively; invest in Kinship Guardianship (KinGap) and the Kinship Caregiver Program (KinCare); and restore the State match for adoption subsidy; and establish consistent statewide minimum foster boarding home rates.

### **State Legislative Priorities to Improve Outcomes for Youth Aging Out of Care**

Unfortunately, in New York, the outcomes for youth who age out of foster care are often bleak. FPWA believes that New York must do better by these youngsters. In 2013, in New York State, 20,563 children were in out of home foster care. 36% of those youth were 14 years old or older. 2,623 youth in care in New York State had a stated another planned living arrangement goal or to plan to live independently once they age out of care.

Of all the youth in care statewide, 62% were concentrated within New York City. In New York City, it is estimated that between 18-26% of foster care youth who age out become homeless and on any night, many former foster youth can be found sleeping on the streets, park benches, couch-surfing, or in shelters. The urgency of this problem is compounded by the fact that while the foster care census continues to decline in New York, the largest percent of children in foster care are over the age of twelve. Although youth may leave the foster care system when they turn 18 years old, an increasing number remain until they age out at 21.

Based on the research for our recent FPWA report, "Keeping Foster Youth off the Streets: Improving Housing Outcomes for Youth that Age Out of Care in New York City," FPWA makes the following recommendations to the Governor and the State Legislature. These recommendations will help improve housing outcomes for youth aging out of care and former youth in foster care:

#### **Expand supportive housing to meet the growing needs of an older foster care population**

Within supportive housing, options for youth aging out of care are still severely limited—only a small portion supportive housing units are set aside for youth under the age of 24. Supportive housing is a valuable resource to youth aging out of care, a population who often require added supports. These housing resources are increasingly scarce and hard to access for youth aging out of care and for former foster youth.

The Governor's proposed budget funds the Medicaid Redesign Team (MRT) Supportive Housing Fund at \$260 million over two years. The budget allocates \$100 million for SFY 2014-15 and \$160 million for SFY 2015-16. This marks a \$14 million increase from last year's funding level. This fund will continue to provide service funding, rent subsidies and capital dollars to create supportive housing for high-cost Medicaid recipients. Yet, it is unclear how this might benefit housing for youth aging out of care, as specific program recommendations for the allocation plan will be drafted and finalized in the next few months.

In addition, New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) NY/NY III funding is still maintained at last year's level of \$2,137,000, which does not provide for additional housing for youth aging out of care. Furthermore, there is a \$6.5 million appropriation to increase downstate scattered-site supported housing rates. This will support a \$550 annual increase to the stipends for Westchester, NYC and Long Island to bring the current rate from \$14,493 per unit, per year to \$15,043. While the increase is modest, it is the first increase seen in years, and it will help providers in high-cost housing markets continue to provide quality housing and services that help people with

mental illness remain stably housed, including possibly some former foster youth with mental health issues.

Importantly, FPWA believes that it is critical to increase the number of NY/NY III supportive housing units for all youth aging out of the foster care system and specifically for youth aging out of care that have children. The State should provide new capital funding to maintain and repair current NY-NY III facilities and use Medicaid savings in supportive housing development and services. In addition, we urge the creation of a new NY-NY IV agreement which will increase the supply of slots for supportive housing for homeless people including young adults aging out of care, especially pregnant and parenting teens.

#### **Increase State imposed maximum housing subsidies**

FPWA urges the Governor and Legislature to amend Social Services Law 409-a so as to increase the housing subsidy. The law set the maximum housing subsidy available to aging out youth at \$300 in the 1980's, and has never been raised. An increase could allow recipients to rent at a Fair Market Rate, leading to stability and independence, and hopefully a decreased dependence on state subsidies going forward.

#### **SUNY and CUNY should provide free tuition to young people who are in foster care or have been in foster care**

New Yorkers without either a GED or high school diploma earn 65% less in their lifetime than individuals with either certification. Youth aging out leave foster care with serious educational deficits. Only 6% of foster youth nationally go on to receive an associate's degree or higher, compared with 29% of the general population. To adequately support this population that must overcome so many obstacles to reach the arena of higher education, they must receive the maximum financial support. FPWA urges New York State to allow former foster youth to attend public colleges fully funded, like New Jersey provides.

FPWA supports Assemblymember William Scarborough's legislation (A04351) to create a New York State foster care higher education scholarship program. The scholarship program would provide students with funding for tuition and fees at SUNY, CUNY, or in-state private institutions or approved in-state vocational training programs, as well as living expenses such as room and board, books, supplies, and transportation. According to FPWA's initial draft estimate, approximately 1,500 current and former foster youth could benefit from the proposed Foster Care Higher Education Scholarship Program in its first year of operation, at a cost of approximately \$8.3 million to the State.

Another option is to implement a pilot version of the higher education scholarship program that targets a smaller group of foster care youth and has strong links to support services. S1370, introduced by Senator Montgomery, would create a New York State foster care higher education scholarship pilot program.

### **III. Early Childhood Education**

It has been well established that the experiences of children in their earliest years are critical in the development of their long-term cognitive and social skills. Deficits in the early years often result in negative life-long outcomes, including higher school dropout rates, poorer health outcomes, lower employment rates, and an increased likelihood of involvement with the criminal justice system. This is especially true for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, who are at increased risk for academic delays due to social and economic pressures placed upon their families. Disadvantaged children can start kindergarten as much as 18 months behind their peers. This achievement gap tends to widen over the course of an academic career and, without intervention, too often results in students dropping out of school.

Quality early childhood education programs have been shown to improve individual outcomes for children involved, resulting in societal improvements and fiscal savings both in the short and long term. Early education closes the achievement gap by half in addition to reducing placement in special education programs, increasing childhood health outcomes and, increasing the likelihood of graduation. Additionally, studies show that adults who participated in early childhood education programs as children are less likely to rely on public assistance or become incarcerated. These improved individual and societal outcomes result in a high return on investment for early childhood programs, estimated to be between 7-10%.

#### **Expansion of Universal Pre-Kindergarten**

FPWA applauds Governor Cuomo for his plan to increase funding for universal pre-kindergarten and afterschool programs. Though the Governor's plan is a good start to begin to meet the demand for these services, we know that the cost of universal, high-quality pre-kindergarten and afterschool exceeds the levels he proposed. Pre-k and afterschool programs serve as the building blocks for the development of our children and youth. We are pleased to see the Governor recognizes the importance of expanding the inventory of these programs to ensure even more children have access to these necessary supports.

FPWA supports Mayor Bill de Blasio's plan to provide free, high-quality, full-day Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) for every 4-year-old and an after school slot for every middle school student in New York City. In the current system, only 19,000 four year olds, 27% of eligible children, receive full-day pre-k. The new expanded UPK system will serve 73,000 eligible four-year-olds and will be financed through a marginal income tax on city residents who make more than \$500,000 per year. This tax is expected to raise approximately \$530 million in new revenue, \$340 million of which will be used for UPK expansion and the remaining \$190 million for provision of after-school programs for middle school students. According to estimates from the NYC Independent Budget Office, only 1.4% of the city's population would pay this tax. As this is a marginal tax rate, it only taxes income over \$500,000. A person earning \$500,001 and has no deductions, will only be taxed on \$1. *Business Insider* estimates that an individual with \$700,000 in income who claims an average number of exemptions and deductions would pay \$897 more if this tax were implemented<sup>1</sup>.

The Governor's commitment to expand universal Prekindergarten, combined with the dedicated funding stream proposed by Mayor de Blasio, will go a long way in finally making universal prekindergarten a reality for all the children of New York.

**Invest \$82 million in subsidized child care to restore the State's investment in early childhood education programs in order to stabilize the subsidized child care system in New York State**

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<sup>1</sup> Josh Barro. "Dear Rich New Yorkers: Here's What Bill de Blasio's Tax Plan Means for You," *Business Insider*, September 5, 2013. <http://read.bi/19m4xyP>

While we applaud the Executive Budget's proposal to increase funding for the Child Care Block Grant by \$21 million, we are urging that funding be increased to \$82 million. Since 2010-2011 spending on childcare in New York has declined by \$82 million. Child care subsidies need to be preserved for children's educational and social development and to support parents' ability to maintain their jobs. Hundreds of low-income families across the state have lost critically needed subsidies that serve as a linchpin in parents' ability to secure and maintain jobs. To compensate for budget cuts, districts throughout the state have limited income eligibility and have raised parent fees.

Although the official income eligibility level in New York City goes up to 275% of the federal poverty level, over 80% of families served in June 2012 had incomes below 135% of poverty, making the effective eligibility rate much lower than the official rate.

### **Invest in QUALITYstarsNY, New York's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)**

Research has shown that high quality early learning programs for low-income children serve to increase positive academic and social outcomes, including higher graduation rates, higher rates of college attendance, decreased need for special education services, and lower rates of incarceration and reliance on public assistance. One of the key pieces to improving the quality of early learning programs is the implementation of a quality rating system. Currently, New York State's tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System, QUALITYstarsNY, is underfunded and under-resourced, resulting in a system that cannot effectively improve quality programs on a large scale. FPWA urges the State to invest \$10 million in QUALITYStarsNY. This investment would serve to significantly expand the QUALITYstarsNY program, allowing for both quality improvement and funding and technical assistance to support programs in meeting higher quality standards.

### **Build a Coalition of Support**

An essential component of promoting early learning as a key to future economic prosperity is the formation of a coalition of business and civic leaders whose focus is to secure public and private support for increased investment in high quality early learning initiatives. These coalitions operate as both advocates and educators, using their social and political influence to increase support and awareness for early learning among colleagues and public officials. Examples of such coalitions exist on both city and states levels across the country and have proven themselves to be powerful allies in the promotion of the economic and social benefits of early childhood education.

### **Increase the Demand and Affordability of Quality Early Learning Programs**

FPWA urges New York State to propose methods to increase the demand and affordability of quality early learning programs. States like Maine and Louisiana have increased participation in quality early learning through the provision of tax credits for parents who choose high quality care for their child. As a result of these credits, parental demand for high quality programs has grown and the number of programs providing quality services has more than doubled.

#### **IV. HIV and AIDS**

##### **Generate Savings through Prevention of Homelessness**

FPWA appreciates that level funding for the HIV Welfare Work program is included in the budget. However, we are disappointed that the Governor did not include the 30% affordable housing protection for clients of HIV/AIDS Services Administration (HASA) who receive a rental subsidy as part of the SFY 2014-15 budget.

We urge the Governor and the Legislature to include language of legislation A.7782/S.3022 (Rodriguez/Hoylman) in the 30 Day Amendment of the Executive Budget for FY 2014-2015. The proposed legislation would correct discrepancies and discrimination within HASA's rental assistance program by aligning it with the long-term standard for affordable housing used by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Moreover, stable housing for people with HIV/AIDS, a population with complex health conditions which tend to be "high utilizers" of public health services, has been shown to reduce emergency room use by 35% and hospitalizations by 57%. The enactment of this legislation is estimated to generate millions of dollars in the long term.

#### **V. Income Security**

With 3 million New Yorkers, including 959,000 children, currently living in poverty, New York State is facing levels of poverty that are much higher than the rest of the country. Over the past decade, poverty rates have been rising in nearly every category, while economic inequality continues to grow and the middle class continues to shrink. In order to reverse this looming economic crisis, policies are needed that will address this growing economic inequity, provide supports for low-income New Yorkers, and allow for the rebuilding of the middle class.

##### **Strengthen Protections from Wrongful Sanctions and End Durational Sanctions**

FPWA supports the Governor's fair hearings chargeback proposal as a positive first step in addressing the erroneous over-sanctioning that is pervasive in the public assistance system. Though the chargeback will serve as an incentive for local social service districts to reconsider their sanctioning practices, we strongly encourage the state to take a stronger stance in protecting public assistance recipients from wrongful sanctions.

FPWA strongly supports A.2669/S.4830 (Wright/Savino), which allows for public assistance sanction reform through strengthening recipients' protections from wrongful sanctions and ending durational sanctions. Sanctions are financial penalties imposed on clients for not complying with work rules. Ample evidence exists to prove that many sanctions are imposed in error. In New York City alone, 77% of work related sanctions are reversed in fair hearings. In 2011, there were almost 58,000 hearings involving sanctions related to work activities for a total cost of approximately \$18 million dollars.

Sanctions have a high financial cost to both the individual and the larger community. When sanctions are enforced, the loss of income often results in the inability to pay for housing, food and other essential items. Sanctioned individuals are more likely to enter the shelter system, costing tax payers an average of \$36,000 per year per family. Additionally, sanctioned families are more likely to report negative health outcomes and an increased likelihood of involvement in the child welfare system, further increasing public costs.

The bill would require local districts to determine if a client lacks child care or transportation, or is exempt from work activities, or needs an accommodation for medical limitation *before* the district can begin the process of taking a negative case action against the client. Additionally, in cases when a



sanction is verified, the bill encourages local social service agencies to reengage public assistance recipients in work activities as soon as possible, instead of waiting until the end of the sanctioning process.

### **Protect Families Needing Childcare from Adverse Case Actions**

FPWA supports A.1894/S.5427 (Savino), a bill extending protections to applicants from adverse case actions resulting from child care related compliance issues when a parent is unable to find suitable and adequate childcare. Many parents applying for public assistance are not provided adequate information about childcare and instead are pressured to find the most immediately available care within a very short time frame, and under threat of application rejection. The current practice leads to several direct problems including, parents being pressured into care arrangements they do not feel safe or comfortable with and a disproportionate number of children whose families receive public assistance end up in informal unregulated care, rather than regulated, center based care. FPWA urges the state to ensure meaningful adherence to the federal parental choice requirements and protect applicants from adverse action as a result of child care-related compliance issues.

### **Strengthen New York State's Family Leave Law**

FPWA urges the Governor and Legislature to support A.1793/S.4742 (Nolan/Addabbo). NYS Family Leave Insurance (FLI) would provide 12 weeks of paid family leave for the birth or adoption of a child, or to care for a seriously ill, spouse, child or parent. This proposal has broad reaching impact but is particularly important for lower and middle income households that do not have the financial resources to use unpaid leave.

Currently, the federal Family and Medical Leave Act allows 12 weeks of unpaid job protected leave for employees in workplaces with 50 or more employers. However, the leave allowed in the federal program is unpaid and excludes many employees, including 50% of all workers and 80% of new mothers. This bill amends the NYS Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) program and workers compensation law to provide twelve weeks paid leave for the birth or adoption of a child, or to care for a seriously ill spouse, child or parent. It is paid for by a small payroll deduction increase. The FLI benefits levels are the same amount as TDI with the current maximum benefit at \$170 per week. By offering paid family leave, workers no longer have to risk financial disaster when taking a temporary leave from work to care for their family.

### **Restore funding for TANF-funded initiatives eliminated in the SFY 2011-2012 budget**

FPWA urges you to restore funding for all of the TANF programs eliminated or cut in 2011-2012 state budget. While there were partial restorations to these funding lines in the 2013-14FY budget the programs are not receiving the necessary funding to meet growing demand. The recession and slow economic recovery has caused many New Yorkers to lose their jobs, homes, and health insurance. The TANF programs are just the type of programs these families need; for example, job training and education, domestic violence services and homeless prevention. We urge you to support these services through the restoration of TANF funding for these critical programs.

## **VI. Workforce Development**

### **Create a New York State Transitional Jobs Program**

There are approximately 730,000 unemployed people in New York State. These troubling numbers show that more must be done to aid those who have been unemployed for grueling long periods of time and have fallen in need of public assistance. To combat the destructive economic malaise of high unemployment, FPWA recommends that New York State reinstate and seek to increase its own transitional jobs program modeled on the successes of its \$25 million Transitional Jobs (TJ) program that employed close to 3,000 participants across New York State during SFY 2009-2010.

Transitional jobs are a particular form of publicly subsidized employment which seeks to help those who are "hard to employ"—the long-term unemployed, TANF recipients, disconnected youth and people reentering from the criminal justice system—overcome employment barriers with paid, short-term employment. This program combines real work, skill development and supportive services. New York State's program was funded largely (\$20 million) through federal TANF Emergency Fund dollars. The state provided the remaining \$5 million. There are still some existing programs in New York doing this work, but they are relatively small-scale because of a lack of funding and therefore target rather small portions (such as those with recent criminal convictions) of the existing unemployed population. FPWA believes that New York State has an exciting opportunity to (re)create a transitional jobs program that would decrease rates of unemployment in the state.

Transitional jobs programs are a win-win for everybody involved. For the participants, transitional jobs provide financial security, opportunities of skill building and career development, and a sense of self-confidence and independence. Workers are more likely to find unsubsidized jobs after the subsidized period. For employers, the programs help them attain a group of productive workers at a low cost, to test out the workers and workforce levels. For the government, transitional job programs are able to produce considerable cost savings through moving people from government benefits to employment.

### **Create a Young Worker Earned Income Tax Credit**

FPWA also urges the State to create an Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) for working young adults between ages 18-24 who are established as an independent household and do not have children. This proposal is consistent with Governor Cuomo's Tax Commission's recommendation that the state enact enhanced tax credits for low-income individuals and is based on A2617/S5393 (Bronson/Parker) to create a Young Worker Earned Income Tax Credit (YA-EITC).

The tax credit would be equal to 1.3 times the amount of the federal EITC for childless workers (equal to State + Federal EITC that childless workers over age 25 currently receive). The current State EITC is a valuable support for working poor families. For childless workers age 25 and over, the combined maximum federal and state EITC is expected to provide up to nearly \$633 for Tax Year 2013. Yet, there are many young low-income workers between the ages of 18 and 24 who are not eligible for the EITC, because of their age and because they are not parents. While New York recently established a State-funded EITC for non-custodial parents who are up to date in their child support payments, the young adult working population without children remains excluded from eligibility for any federal or state EITC.

Accordingly, FPWA believes that the young worker EITC can help young people who are working in entry-level or low-wage jobs to stay in New York. The estimated State cost would be \$3.21 million and is based on the 22,000 eligible youth in Year One. To that end, FPWA is asking for language to be included in an Article VII budget bill with a new appropriation of \$3.14 million in the budget for this new tax credit.

## **Provide Unemployment Benefits for Part-Time Workers**

New York State has seen a rise in part-time employment, while it still faces high unemployment levels. As of November 2013, the number of weekly unemployment benefits claimants in New York State had increased by 2,033, due to layoffs in restaurants, construction and arts, entertainment and recreation. In addition, 105,000 unemployed residents are looking for part-work. There has been a big increase in part-time work between 2007 and 2012. As of 2012, there were 1.5 million part-time workers in New York State. There is an urgent need to increase the unemployment benefits for part-time workers.

New York State labor law reduces benefits by 25 percent for any day one works even one hour. As a result, the unemployed who take part-time work may find that their unemployment benefits get cut significantly. Thus, the current law is actually a disincentive to work. Since the new jobs created by the economy are disproportionately part-time and low-paying, it is necessary to allow people receiving unemployment benefits to seek out part-time employment and to maintain the quality of life provided by the full unemployment benefits at the same time.

According to a National Employment Law Project (NELP) study, the fiscal costs would be very modest to expand unemployment insurance eligibility to include part-time workers in New York State, based on the actual costs that were incurred after implementation in Maine, Colorado, and California. NELP concluded that overall claims should reasonably be expected to rise from 2 to 7 percent if part time eligibility is adopted, depending upon the nature of part time reforms. Benefit costs should rise by a lesser amount, in the range of 2 percent to 5 percent.

Therefore, using to NELP's general estimation and the recent costs of UI in New York State, it can be estimated that the increase in the number of overall claims for part-time workers would be between 12,169 and 42,592. The increase in the overall benefits to New York State would cost between \$65,806,000 and \$164,517,000 on top of \$3.3 billion currently paid for the unemployment benefits for the 608,466 beneficiaries.

## **Restore TANF funding for crucial workforce development programs and support funding for Adult Literacy Education (ALE)**

The Governor's 2014-15 Proposed Budget eliminates a total of \$14.681 million in TANF funding for various initiatives that were provided for by the Legislature in FY 2013-14. The State Legislature restored funding for some of the critical jobs programs in last year's final adopted budget. Once again, FPWA urges the Governor and State Legislature to provide \$102,000 funding for the BRIDGE Program, \$750,000 for the Career Pathways Program, and \$950,000 for the Wage Subsidy program. In addition, FPWA urges the Governor's office to disclose how it plans to use additional TANF Contingency Fund money that it is likely to earn in federal fiscal year 2014; require OTDA to publish an annual tabulation and analysis of actual expenditures by purpose; and require the local social services districts to submit reports of actual expenditures (with a greater level of detail than is currently required) on assistance and support services for TANF eligible populations including tabulations of actual expenditures made with their allocation of Flexible Fund for Family Services (FFFS) block grants.

In regard to adult literacy, FPWA was pleased that the Governor's proposed 2014-15 budget has \$5.3 million for Adult Literacy Education (ALE). Despite the vast need for adult education and training opportunities, fewer than 60,000 spaces in free or low-cost government-funded adult literacy/ESL classes are available—leaving over 97% of the need for adult education classes unmet. FPWA urges the Governor and State Legislature to include \$6.9 million in funding for ALE.

## **VII. Youth Services**

### **Strongly support \$28 million in funding for the Advantage Afterschool Program**

We are very pleased that the Governor has proposed additional funding for afterschool programs in the amount of \$720 over five years which will be available for the 2015-2016 school year. This funding increase is a wonderful beginning for the system, but we need to ensure even more resources are put into afterschool programs for our children and youth to begin to meet the demand as soon as possible.

The Executive Budget proposes to fund the Advantage Afterschool Program (AASP) at \$17.3 million for 2014-15 which is \$500,000 less than the allocation for 2013-2014. AASP provides quality youth development opportunities to school-age children and youth for three hours directly after school. These programs offer a broad range of educational, recreational and culturally age-appropriate activities that integrate school day experiences. More than 1,000,000 children across New York State do not have access to an after-school program but would participate if given the opportunity to do so. Investing in after-school programs can help school districts save money over the long-term because of increased student retention and decreased special education placements. Therefore we request the Governor and legislature increase funding for this program this legislative season to alleviate the unmet need for these critical services.

**Cost-Effectiveness:** After School programs can help save money over the long-term because of increased student retention and special education placements. As referenced in "Safe and Smart: Making After-School Hours Work for Kids," a publication developed by the U.S. Department of Education in 1998, preventing a youth from lifelong involvement in the criminal justice system saves \$1.3 million-\$1.5 million.

### **Strongly support a funding increase for the Summer Youth Employment Program**

FPWA is pleased that the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) has received an increase from the 2013-2014 level of \$25 million to the proposed \$27.5 million for SFY 2014-15, but we remain concerned that due to the rise in the minimum wage, fewer jobs will be available to youth than for the summer of 2013. SYEP provides youth between the ages of 14 and 21 with summer employment and educational experiences that build on their individual strengths and incorporate youth development principles. Employment opportunities such as those offered by SYEP are critical for youth. Of the nearly 900,000 young adults 16 to 24 years of age in New York City, almost 25 percent live below the federal poverty line, compared to 19 percent of all New Yorkers regardless of age. For the summer of 2013 in New York City, over 35,000 teens worked in the SYEP. In addition, over 135,388 youth applied for the program in 2013, making the demand for the program extremely high. New York State needs to invest in SYEP now more than ever. We urge the Legislature to provide an increase so that 100,000 jobs may be provided to the youth of New York City.

### **Support the Commission on Youth Public Safety and Justice**

Despite significant reductions in juvenile crime and incarceration, New York is one of only two states that continue to prosecute 16-17 year olds through the adult criminal justice system. FPWA strongly supports the Governor's establishing the Commission on Youth Public Safety and Justice to make recommendations on how best to raise the age of juvenile jurisdiction, improve outcomes for youth and promote community safety.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony.