

## **JOINT STATEMENT ON THE 2012-13 CITY BUDGET**

For too many years the New York City budget has been unfair and unequal.

For middle-class, working and low-income New Yorkers – the 99 percent – we've seen destructive cuts to essential services and the safety net.

For the top 1 percent and for favored big businesses, we've seen continued special treatment, special deals and special subsidies.

This year, with Mayor Bloomberg on his way out of office, new candidates for Mayor on the scene and our City galvanized by the core messages of the Occupy Wall Street movement, we won't accept a destructive and divisive City budget.

It's time for our City budget to reflect the real needs of all New Yorkers – for good primary education, for affordable higher education, for a strong safety net for New Yorkers who are poor, homeless or living with disabilities, for real job creation that supports small businesses and neighborhood economies, for libraries and senior services and accessible arts and cultural institutions.

And we have real revenue options to expand resources for essential government services in ways that are fair and effective:

- Closing tax loopholes for hedge fund & private equity profits;
- Eliminating unearned subsidies for big banks and profitable big businesses;
- Trimming City contracts with big banks;
- Demanding responsibility for city and county fees lost during the mortgage securitization scandals;
- Enforcing tax laws for real estate investors.

Taking these reasonable, fair-share steps would raise over \$500 million for this year's City budget and show New Yorkers that the "shared sacrifice" politicians talk about might actually be real.

We pledge to work together to advocate with Mayor Bloomberg, Council Speaker Quinn and all members of the Council, citywide and borough-wide elected officials, civic and community leaders, labor, faith, student and Occupy Wall Street activists for a budget that reflects the values and needs of our entire City.

We won't accept a City budget that only works for the top 1% – we demand a budget that works for all of us.

#### LIST OF SIGNERS:

Strong Economy For All Coalition \* United New York \* New York Communities for Change \* MoveOn.org \* Coalition for the Homeless \* Human Services Council \* Coalition for Educational Justice \* Alliance for Quality Education \* Community Voices Heard \* VOCAL-NY \* Make The Road New York \* 99%NY \* Hunger Action Network of New York State \* Greater New York Labor-Religion Coalition \* Riverside Language Program \* The Fortune Society \* CWA Local 1180 \* Neighbors Together \* Housing Works \* Citizen Action New York \* UAW Region 9A \* Center for Working Families

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## BACKGROUND

### **Higher Education - PSC-CUNY**

Over 92,000 students now attend CUNY's six community colleges. Currently 48% of CUNY community college students come from households earning less than \$20,000 per year.

Three years of underfunding have led to bigger classes, fewer full-time faculty with time to mentor individual students, and longer waits for library, counseling, computer labs and other services that students' need to succeed.

Last year Mayor Bloomberg proposed another round of severe cuts, but luckily the City Council restored \$20.9 million, leaving the city's community college contribution flat at \$257.3 million.

Meanwhile tuition and fees went up three times between fall 2010 and fall 2011 to \$3,800 – 22% more than the \$2,963 average community college tuition nationally. When tuition goes up, more students fill the gaps in financial aid with paid work, unfortunately reducing the time they have for study.

For more information contact: "Kate Pfordresher" <kpfordresher@psccmail.org>

### **Education K-12- CEJ/AQE**

Mayor Bloomberg's budget must address the continued educational inequities that deprive our children of an education that prepares them for college and careers.

As a result of devastating budget cuts over the past few years, our children in grades K-12 have lost after-school programs, art and music classes, essential tutoring services for struggling students, social workers and guidance counselors, books and technology, and so much more.

If that wasn't enough, we lost 2,600 teachers and over 700 school aides, parent coordinators and other vital workers, and the supports they provide for our children.

Our schools are hurting, class size is larger than ever, children are sharing textbooks, and summer and afterschool programs are much reduced.

Our schools can't afford more cuts, when only 25% of all NYC students, and only 13% of Black and Latino students, are graduating ready for college.

We need the restoration of these funds and these services and a change in the direction of school reform that relies on successful research-based reforms to dramatically improve the college-readiness of our students.

For more information contact: "Zakiyah Ansari" <schoolzin18@aol.com>

### **Homeless Services – Coalition for the Homeless**

Despite the Mayor's misguided efforts to cut off access to the shelter system for thousands of desperate single adults, the homeless population in New York City remains at record levels, with over 41,000 men, women, and children sleeping in the municipal shelter system each night. This appalling number is a direct result of the Bloomberg administration's failure to provide real, permanent housing solutions to homeless families.

By returning to the proven policy of targeting existing federal housing resources -- like public housing and Section 8 vouchers -- to homeless individuals and families, Mayor Bloomberg and the City Council can save taxpayers millions in shelter costs while giving thousands of people a fresh start in the affordable homes they need and deserve.

Additionally, the City budget must restore and enhance valuable programs aimed at preventing homelessness in the first place, such as the Homelessness Prevention Fund. This is a money and life-saving investment in the long-term and should be financed with the revenue-building options outlined here.

For more information contact: "Giselle Routhier" <GRouthier@cfthomeless.org> ,

### **Human Services – Human Services Council**

While the Mayor's proposed budget may not cut funds for human services too severely this time around, it also will not repair the damage created by the significant divestment of nearly \$350 million in City funding from this sector over the last few years. We need to re-invest in programs that are proven to be effective and help get people to become and remain employed.

We hope there is a real recognition during the budget negotiation process of the role human services play in removing barriers to work. Human services help people get and keep jobs; they stabilize families by securing food, healthcare, housing, afterschool, child and elder care, and more. These services also promote work readiness through literacy programs, employment and training services, resume and job search assistance and other career preparation approaches.

HSC has created an interactive map showing the impact of the cuts enacted last year to some programs and services in New York City and how they are affecting neighborhoods citywide. The cuts that are demonstrated on the map are not all the cuts that have been implemented across the City. Some cuts were not severe enough to force a program or service center closure and some cuts have yet to be realized on the ground. For example there are 56 childcare centers that will be losing a total of 10,000 slots, but those centers have not been made public to date. As more cuts are made public we will update the map.

<http://www.whocares-ido.org/budgetCuts.html>

Brooklyn and the Bronx were hit the hardest in the FY2012 budget. Some other standouts are the Advantage subsidy cuts across the City. A total of 15, 000 people have been displaced from permanent housing and forced back into the shelter system. Family Literacy programs were totally eliminated forcing closures at sites around the City.

All boroughs saw reductions in Summer Youth Employment slots, which is a disservice to our young people. This is especially troubling when New Yorkers ages 16-24 are seeing the highest unemployment rates in the City. The Bronx is seeing the highest youth unemployment rate at 12.6%.

For more information contact: "Sesso, Allison" <sessoa@humanservicescouncil.org>

### **Public Housing – Community Voices Heard**

New York City Housing Authority provides affordable housing for over 600,000 New York City residents. This is the largest and last bastion of affordable housing for low-income New Yorkers. Public Housing has been woefully underfunded at the federal, state and city levels.

Currently Public Housing residents have to wait for over 3 years to get basic repairs in their apartments. NYCHA recently released a five-year capital plan that contains a \$500 million backlog in repairs. NYCHA has allocated a meager \$31 million dollars to address this backlog over the next 5 years. Last year Mayor Bloomberg reduced city capital funding by 12% while at the federal level NYCHA's annual operating budget was slashed by 20%.

Mayor Bloomberg needs to step up and address the needs of over 600,000 of his low-income constituents by restoring the reductions in the capital budget and increasing funding to address the backlog of repairs.

For more information contact: "Chris Keeley (CVH)" <chris@cvhaction.org>

### **Welfare/Public Assistance – Community Voices Heard**

The Transitional Jobs program of the Park Opportunity Program and the expansion of Transitional Jobs into the Department of Sanitation has been a positive development but these programs need to be expanded. The Transit Workers Union is interested in having Transitional Jobs in transit instead of the Work Experience Program at the MTA and the city's Human Resource Administration has agreed to consider this. This is a good step and the Mayor should back this opportunity with funding.

Other programs are less effective. City officials pour \$200 million dollars down the drain through the Back to Work and WeCARE “job search” programs, which only benefit a few thousand people. Over 17,000 people continue to be forced to work without a paycheck, when we could be funding Transitional Jobs, real alternatives that provide a real paycheck, real training and real support for finding permanent employment.

About 30% of people receiving Public Assistance are allowed by law to obtain education and training, but Mayor Bloomberg and his staff have refused to exercise that option. City policy should encourage access to appropriate higher education and training instead of forcing thousands of people to choose between receiving food stamps and Medicaid or going to school.

For more information contact: "Chris Keeley (CVH)" <chris@cvhaction.org>

### **HIV/AIDS Services – VOCAL-NY**

More than 110,000 New York City residents were diagnosed and living with HIV/AIDS as of 2010, and almost as many city residents have passed away since the beginning of the epidemic. HIV/AIDS has always been driven by social and economic inequalities, and it is increasingly concentrated in low-income communities of color throughout the five boroughs.

Despite pledging to make fighting HIV/AIDS a priority for his administration, Mayor Bloomberg has repeatedly tried to dismantle the safety net for poor New Yorkers living with HIV/AIDS. This year’s budget fails to restore more than \$10 million Bloomberg eliminated in the current year budget, including deep cuts to HIV/AIDS supportive housing, rental assistance, food and nutrition, and prevention programs.

For more information contact: “Jaron Benjamin” <jaron@vocal-ny.org>

### **Adult Literacy Programs – Make The Road New York**

Since 2010, the City’s commitment to providing young adults, new New Yorkers and City residents with limited literacy skills access to adult literacy instruction and support has fallen by 75%, leaving just over \$2.8 million invested in DYCD’s Adult Literacy programs in FY2011

During this economic downturn, literacy programs across the City have seen increased demand for their services. New Yorkers want to improve their skills to keep their jobs, find better paying ones, and remain competitive in a tight labor market. In addition to improving one’s employment prospects, increased literacy levels also help adults better manage their health and become active participants in their children’s education.

Mayor Bloomberg's recent State of the City highlighted education reform and investment as the path forward for New York City, expressed the goal of employing more New Yorkers through Workforce 1 Centers, and promised to help immigrants obtain the licenses and certifications they need to find work in the city.

By choosing to invest in adult literacy services, New York would strengthen our workforce, and begin to realize these three goals simultaneously.

For more information contact: "Julie Quinton" <julie.quinton@maketheroadny.org>

### **Revenues – New York Communities for Change**

For more than a decade, working-class New York families have suffered at the hands of Mayor Bloomberg's 1% budgets. Instead of finding ways to raise revenue to support the city by taxing loophole-exploiting corporate billionaires, the mayor has consistently reduced funding for education, childcare, and housing, leaving the social safety net in shreds and the city's most vulnerable falling through the cracks while padding the pockets of the city's wealthiest.

This is not the only option: There are alternatives that the city can -- and must -- enact to raise revenues rather than cut services. This year, the City Council and its leadership have the opportunity to stand up for the millions of New Yorkers who have been devastated by year after year of budget cuts. Now is the time for leading council members to restore the cuts that have been unnecessarily inflicted on working-class families after the past 1% budgets.

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