



**TESTIMONY
of
FPWA**

**Joint Legislative Public Hearings On
Human Services**

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investments will address costly issues like turnover and infrastructure needs, allowing program dollars to be more impactful.

Workforce

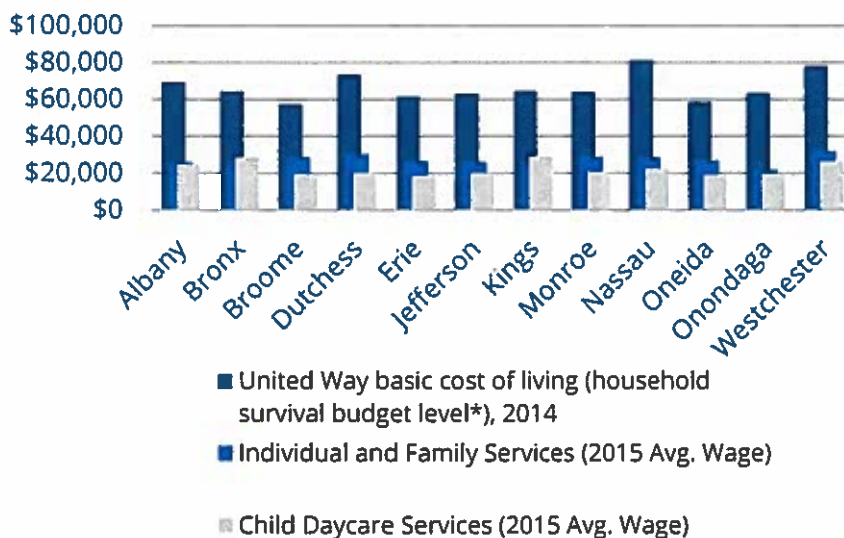
Human services workers across the State provide crucial services and critical interventions that ensure New Yorkers are safe, supported, and building toward a better future. From the childcare worker who allows parents to get to work on time, knowing their child is learning and growing, to the senior case manager assisting older adults to age safely and with dignity in their homes, human services workers are in every community and are vital to their functioning and well-being.

New York’s human service nonprofit sector employs more than 200,000 workers who build and maintain the well-being of New Yorkers every day. William Gettman, CEO of Northern Rivers Family in Albany, provided a nonprofit perspective on the role of the workforce stating, “Nonprofit organizations are a critical and important economic engine and a vital part of our economy. These nonprofits deliver the lion’s share of health care, mental health, child welfare, counseling and other services that immeasurably contribute to overall quality of life and civic involvement.”

Since 1990 the human service nonprofit sector employment has doubled. This has increased the number of individuals working in this sector from 166,000 to 332,000 in 2016. Human services job growth occurred primarily among nonprofit organizations working under public contracts.

Nonprofits account for nearly 20 percent of New York’s workforce.

Human services pay falls far short of meeting United Way’s basic cost of living household survival budget in every region across New York State



Although the workforce is growing, wages remain stagnant and below a living wage. The average annual pay for human services workers ranges from \$23,000 to \$25,000 upstate, about \$27,000 in the Hudson Valley and on Long Island, and \$29,600 in New York City. Such pay is only about 40 percent of the average for all workers and falls far short of the income needed to meet United Way’s survival family budget needs. This leads to a crisis of recruitment and retention, which deeply impacts

Infrastructure

The Nonprofit Infrastructure Capital Investment Program (NICIP) is a critical fund for nonprofits to address necessary building repairs, technology upgrades, and other capital needs not supported by current contracts. We thank the Governor and the Legislature for including \$120 million over the past three years in the budget for NICIP. The first \$100 million allocated will enable 237 nonprofit human services providers across the State to repair, reinforce, expand, and update their physical and technological infrastructure.

Unfortunately, the need for capital funding far exceeds the initial \$100 million appropriation and the \$20 million that was allocated in FY18. 635 organizations responded to the NICIP request for applications, totaling in \$300 million worth of projects. This demonstrates how significant this investment is to nonprofits, particularly in sustaining their capabilities to delivering effective services to all New Yorkers.

Supporting the infrastructure upgrades is paramount and this fund is extremely beneficial to nonprofits throughout the State. It has allowed for nonprofits to fix leaky roofs, replace/repair elevators, bring technology up to date, and even insert wheel chair ramps to make their buildings more accessible. We urge the State to increase the NICIP fund and implement a recurring investment of \$100 million. This reasonable investment is a crucial step in meeting the infrastructure needs of a sector that delivers nearly \$6.8 billion in essential services annually. Support for more funding will allow more nonprofits to apply for it, which means more support for local organizations to receive necessary infrastructure upgrades to their facilities.

To begin to address unmet need in our communities, FPWA also urges the state to make investments in the areas detailed below:

Child Care

Currently in New York State, too many working families who qualify for child care assistance are being turned away, and too many working parents are being forced to reduce work hours, or drop out of the workforce all together. Child care providers, like human services providers across the various subsectors, are also not able to recruit and retain qualified staff or meet the rising costs of providing quality care. These issues negatively impact women—and especially women of color—most significantly.

New York State needs a clear plan to provide equitable access to quality child care for all New York children and working families, and family-sustaining incomes for child care providers. FPWA supports the Empire State Campaign for Child Care, and we pledge our assistance in the development and implementation of that plan. As a first step, we urge the Governor to call up and implement the Child Care Task Force legislation passed in June of 2017.

FPWA urges the State to reject these cuts to critical child welfare programs, which support New York City children and families.

Housing

FPWA strongly supports a \$40 million investment in Housing Stability Support (HSS), a statewide rental supplement for public assistance-eligible families and individuals facing eviction, currently homeless, or facing loss of housing due to domestic violence or hazardous living conditions. By keeping hundreds of thousands of at-risk people in their homes, HSS will alleviate the unsustainable financial burden that shelters and other stopgap measures place on the taxpayers of New York State. In addition, keeping families in their homes is the best way to mitigate the extensive social costs of homelessness, and the negative impact it has on an individual's education, health and employment.

Aging

New York State is home to over 4 million people over the age of 60, or 20.6% of the total population, and this population is growing rapidly. Moreover, while today there are approximately 430,000 people aged 85 and older, this number is projected to nearly double by 2040. A longer life expectancy is a great achievement of modern medicine and reflective of many improvements in the quality of life, but it also comes with challenges that we must be prepared to address.

In particular, very limited incomes are a hard reality for many older adults—1 in 5 live below or just above the poverty level and 56.4% have rent expenses that are 30% or more of their income. And, the longer we live, the more we experience a wide variety of changes in our abilities. Of New Yorkers aged 75 and older, 13.6% have cognitive difficulties, 26.3% have difficulty living independently, and 33.4% have ambulatory difficulties.

As the older adult population grows, funding for services that enable them to age in their homes with dignity and social supports cannot stagnate. Community Services for the Elderly and NY Connects are critical to supporting older adults in their communities, rather than in expensive and potentially isolating nursing homes. FPWA asks that the state add \$24 million in new funding for Community Services for the Elderly. Expansion of this funding would eliminate waitlists for a variety of community based services that allow older adults to remain independent, including home delivered meals, case management, and transportation. We also request restoring \$13.7 million for NY Connects to connect older adults, professionals, and caregivers to information regarding long-term care supports and community resources. Finally, FPWA supports allocating \$10 million for a new Affordable Senior Housing with Services program. Affordable housing, when combined with supportive services, is a proven cost-effective way to reduce hospital and nursing home costs, while supporting aging in place.