



**FEDERATION OF PROTESTANT WELFARE AGENCIES**

**Statement Prepared for the February 5, 2013 Hearing**

**of the**

**Assembly Ways And Means Committee**

**and**

**Senate Finance Committee**

**on the**

**2013 - 14 Executive Budget Proposal for Human Services**

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## **About FPWA**

FPWA is 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. Our work with member agencies and church-based human service programs puts us in direct contact with every level of the social service system. 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.

Though we understand the challenges faced by the state in these continuing difficult economic times, these are also the times when people continue to be without jobs and incomes, and must turn to essential human services to feed and clothe their families, pay for heat, medicine and other social service needs.

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

- 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. A survey conducted by the Human Services Council found that 80% of the non-profit organizations surveyed had major reductions in private funding and nearly two-thirds had seen decreases in their public funding. In the last three years, New York State has cut about \$800 million in funding for essential human services and about 27,000 human services sector jobs have been lost due to service cuts. Further reductions to these essential services would be devastating to both community-based organizations and the clients who depend upon these programs. In addition, the long-term costs of such cuts -- particularly those impacting infrastructure such as child care centers and senior centers -- would be much greater than the short-term savings produced in the fiscal year.

To support human services organizations to meet vital needs, we urge the State to do the following:

### **Do not further defer the Human Services Cost-of-Living-Adjustments (COLAs)**

FPWA is very concerned about the Executive Budget proposal to further defer the Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs) which would go a long way to help workers at not-for-profit organizations make ends meet given the rising cost of living these past years. These workers have had to take on additional workloads because of the increased demand for services and layoffs of co-workers due to multiple years of city and state budget cuts. The Governor's budget states that COLAs should be linked to actual cost growth or performance outcomes. The state clearly can link COLAs to the Consumer Price Index which increased 3.2% from 2010 to 2011 and 2.1% from 2011 to 2012. Furthermore, COLAs should be focused on just that -- cost of living increases. Performance outcomes are already dealt with through the state's contracting or RFP process. The COLA is needed to support the workers and their families, many of whom are low-wage or middle class workers doing essential work.

## **Reinstate Discretionary Funding**

Legislative Member Items to not-for-profit organizations are low-cost avenues 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 social services for vulnerable and underserved residents and struggling 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. The Legislative grant process can be reformed to address concerns regarding fraud and lack of transparency.

## **II. Child Welfare**

### **Restore funding to reimburse the full 65% State share for open-ended child welfare services funding stream.**

The Governor's 2013-14 Executive Budget maintains funding for these services at the FY 2012-13 level (\$637.073 million) and continues State reimbursement at 62%. FPWA urges the Governor and the Legislature to restore the State match for open-ended child welfare services to 65%.

Last year, the adopted budget rejected the permanent extension of the 62% state match and extended the authorization of the open-ended reimbursement structure until June 30, 2017. However, the budget did not restore funding for the State match for open-ended child welfare services to 65%. Instead, the adopted budget set funding at 62%.

Overtime, this state match funding has been gradually reduced from 65% to approximately 61% (the 62% rate enacted in 2010 was once again reduced as part of the 1.1% across the board FMAP cut on state reimbursement for local assistance claims). The most recent two cuts alone have translated into a \$7 million state cut to New York City's preventive service system.

Up until the Great Recession, the state had increased its financial commitment to in-home and community preventive services, which are provided by FPWA member agencies,

which resulted in the reduction of foster care placements and enabled many more children to remain safely at home. In 2002, there were almost 30,000 NYC children in foster care; today there are only 13,000. At present, New York City provides preventive services to nearly 25,000 families.

Unfortunately, the most recent state funding cuts have threatened to undermine progress at a time when many families are undergoing stress due to economic difficulties which tend to lead to increased numbers of child protective reports. In simple terms, preventive services are community-based services that support families by tailoring their services to the families' individualized needs, and by assessing safety and reducing risk through home visits and casework contacts.

It is essential that New York State maximize its match to local districts for the total cost of providing protective, preventive, aftercare, post-adoption, and independent living services (after applying federal funds).

The reduction in the match has further strained over-burdened counties. The 65/35 match, encourages counties to invest in high-quality services that strengthen families, improve child safety, decrease the use of costly foster care, and will save the state money in the long run.

As New York begins to rebuild, it is more important than ever that the cost-effective services that keep children safe and out of more costly foster care remain supported by state government. To that end, FPWA urges the Legislature to restore the State match for open-ended child welfare services to 65%.

**We urge the state to create a dedicated funding source for subsidized kinship guardianship as an alternate permanency option for youth in foster care.**

The Governor's 2013-14 Executive Budget proposes a \$1.044 million increase to \$437.046 million for the Foster Care Block Grant over FY 2012-13 which includes the Subsidized Kinship Guardian Program (KinGap). The FY 2012-2013 adopted budget provided funding for the KinGap program out of the Foster Care Block Grant on a one-year pilot basis.

A dedicated funding source is now needed. Even with medical, educational, and housing assistance, independent living for youth who age out is extremely difficult given the absence of family support. Subsidized kinship guardianship allows children in long-term care, for whom reunification with their parents or adoption is not possible, to exit the child welfare system into secure living situations.

Adoption does not work for every family, and this is an important alternative for youth who might otherwise age out and relatives who are willing to provide stable care, but who are uncomfortable with legally dissolving the ties between parent and child. Furthermore, although kinship guardians would receive assistance payments, subsidized kinship guardianship would likely generate savings given that the closing of corresponding foster care cases would eliminate some administrative costs.<sup>1</sup> Most importantly, kinship guardianship would provide foster youth with the chance to build a strong, supportive relationship with an adult caregiver.

#### **Increase monies for the Kinship Caregiver Program (KinCare).**

The Governor's 2013-14 Executive Budget maintains funding for Kinship Care programs at the FY 2012-13 level (\$338,750). Last year, the adopted budget maintained the same funding level for the Kinship Caregiver Program (KinCare) at \$338,750 in general funds and an added \$51,000 in TANF. In general, this program has largely been flat funded since FY 2011-12 levels.

This statewide network of programs is used to support kinship placements by promoting household stability and permanency through services for kinship caregivers and their kin. FPWA calls on New York State to increase monies for the kinship caregiver program (KinCare) that has been repeatedly flat funded.

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<sup>1</sup> Jacobs, et al, *supra* note 10.

### **Restore funding for TANF Preventive Services and Caretaker Relative program.**

FPWA calls upon the Legislature and the Governor to restore substantially more funding for the TANF Preventive Services and Caretaker Relative programs. The Caretaker Relative program aids caretaker relatives who provide full-time care for children with whom they are related and the Preventive Services program focuses on the delivery of foster care prevention services.

The Caretaker program's \$250,000 in TANF funding was eliminated from the Fiscal Year 2012 budget. The Preventive Services program was funded at \$6 million in Fiscal Year 2011 and was cut by \$5.39 million in Fiscal Year 2012. However, in May 2012, the Legislature restored funding for a number of TANF initiatives, including \$51,000 for Caretaker Relative and \$610,000 for Preventive Services.

The unprecedented nature of the recession and the weak recovery has heightened hardships felt by many low-income women, their families, and youth – thus emphasizing the need for these vital services.

### **Establish consistent statewide minimum foster boarding home rates for all social services districts.**

FPWA advocates that the NYS Office of Children and Families Services (OCFS) establish consistent statewide minimum board rates for all social services districts, commensurate with actual costs. Actual costs of care far exceed current board rates, and foster parents alone are forced to subsidize the cost of caring for foster children, who are the collective responsibility of the whole community.

A 2007 report by the group Children's Rights estimated that New York should increase its daily stipend by 43 percent for families caring for children aged two and younger; 39 percent for those caring for kids aged 9 to 16; and 32 percent for families of those 16 and older. A \$15-per-day increase for all foster parents would cost the government about \$65 million annually. FPWA urges the state to raise foster parent stipends (foster boarding home rates) to help agencies attract and retain stronger foster homes.

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

**Cost-Effectiveness:** There is substantial evidence that high quality early childhood education has great benefit to individual families and society at large. A 2004 report by Legal Momentum and the MIT Workplace Center, "Early Childhood Education for All: A Wise Investment," found that every dollar invested in early childhood programs saves taxpayers \$13 in future costs. A few benefits of making high quality programs available to all children include: reduced costs for remedial education, increased school performance, and a foundation that sets young students on the path to earning higher income levels as adults.

A 2010 study done by America's Edge, a business leader sponsored organization, "Strengthening New York's Businesses by Investing in Early Care and Education" found that every \$1 spent in local early childhood programs generates \$1.86 in additional spending locally.

Along with our partners in Winning Beginning New York, FPWA believes New York State should strengthen its commitment to providing quality child care and early education programs to low-income families by investing in quality early care and education programs. During these difficult economic times, subsidized early childhood education programs are even more vital in helping families to find and maintain employment.

#### **Invest in the subsidized child care system in New York State.**

Invest \$92 million in subsidized child care to restore funding back to 2010-11 levels. The Executive budget maintains flat funding for child care subsidies. This neither reflects need for care nor increases in the cost of doing business. Since 2010-11 spending on childcare in New York has declined by \$92 million. Child care subsidies need to be preserved for children's educational and social development and to support parents' ability to maintain their jobs. 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.



In New York City, from 2010-12 parent fees jumped from 10% to 17% of the adjusted family income and tripled the minimum copayment from \$5 per week to \$15 per week. Families with the lowest and most marginal incomes have been the hardest hit. FPWA member agencies have reported that their programs have lost children whose parents can no longer afford the fee. 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.

An additional cost-saving option is to provide a temporary waiver from welfare work requirements for single parents of infants and toddlers (A.8101/S.5586; S.5335) (from the 2012-13 session). This would free up childcare and administrative funding to allow the state to stabilize the funding levels for the subsidized child care system until the economy recovers. This will enable low-income parents to keep the jobs that they have, and allow parents of young children who are receiving welfare the option to provide child care for their own infants and children in their homes. Parents receiving public assistance who are working outside of the home or participate in an education or training program will be also provided child care.

Child care subsidies need to be preserved for children's educational and social development and to support parents' ability to maintain their jobs. This past fiscal year, hundreds of low-income families lost critically needed subsidies that serve as a major component in parents' ability to secure and maintain jobs. These deep reductions further erode the capacity and quality of New York State's early care and education infrastructure. Moreover, thousands of children throughout the state will be at risk of losing vital care and educational services and their parents, many of whom are in tenuous work situations, will be at risk of losing their jobs.

**Increase flexibility for districts utilizing Universal Pre-Kindergarten funding to better meet community needs.**

FPWA applauds the Governor's \$25 million investment in his full day universal pre-kindergarten initiative that targets high need communities. This investment in full-day Pre-

K is a significant next step in expanding access to high-quality early education, from birth through school age. The Governor's plan has a strong emphasis on quality, with a commitment to qualified teachers, effective teaching and a quality learning environment.

Although the Governor's initiative presents a down payment toward full day universal pre-kindergarten through a targeted approach, FPWA calls for its expansion statewide to fully obtain the benefits of full-day early education that have been expressed by parents, educators, and localities. The bottom line is that full-day universal pre-kindergarten is more educationally effective in preparing children to succeed in school and be reading on grade level by third grade.

Along with the Governor's initiative, a significant additional immediate step toward expanding full day universal pre-kindergarten that would have no cost would be for the state to provide school districts greater flexibility to spend UPK funds on related needs, such as full day pre-kindergarten options that better fit the schedules of working parents and transportation. Districts will have the ability to implement and expand UPK in ways that best meet the unique needs of the children and families they serve.

**Cap child care co-payments at 10% of gross family income and eliminate co-pays for families living under the federal poverty level.**

FPWA supports A.1978 (Titus), which caps the co-payment at 10% of the gross family income and eliminates co-payments for households with incomes below the federal poverty line. The legislation also addresses county-by-county disparities in child care co-pays and creates a statewide co-payment system that is affordable and equitable.

**Invest in the Qualitystars NY, New York's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS).**

FPWA believes the State should invest in QualityStars NY by providing financial supports and incentives for providers who implement quality improvements under the program. An investment would allow Quality Stars to build on the success of the community field test. In addition to evaluation and certification, programmatic and facility improvements require a significant commitment of time and resources on the part of child care programs, and financial support is crucial to helping programs sustain advancements in quality.

## **IV. HIV & AIDS**

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

FPWA urges the Governor and the Legislature to enact a 30% rent cap affordable housing protection for clients of the HIV/AIDS Services Administration (HASA) who receive a rental subsidy as part of the SFY 2013-14 budget. This legislation (A.6275/S.7725) introduced by Assemblywoman Glick and former Senator Duane 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, 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**

### **Restore funding for TANF-funded initiatives eliminated in the SFY 2011-12 budget.**

FPWA urges the Governor and legislature to restore funding for all of the TANF programs eliminated or cut over the last several years. FPWA urges you to restore funding for all of the TANF programs currently slated for complete elimination. This Great Recession has caused many New Yorkers to lose their jobs, homes, and health insurance. The TANF programs that are slated to be zeroed out 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 programs through the restoration of TANF funding for these critical programs.

### **Access to Assistance Campaign Bills**

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

FPWA strongly supports welfare sanction reform (A.2669-Wright/S. Savino). The bills strengthen recipients' protections from wrongful financial sanctions and ends durational sanctions. Pervasive erroneous case sanctioning practice keeps eligible, very low-income households from receiving critical cash assistance. The bill would help remedy this problem.

The devastation suffered by families who lose partial or full income cannot be minimized. A July 2010 report cites a study of six cities (Baltimore, Little Rock, Boston, Los Angeles, Minneapolis and Washington, DC) on the impact of sanctions on children whose caregivers were seeking emergency room care for them. The study found that compared to children whose families also are receiving welfare but were in non-sanctioned households, 30% had a greater risk of being previously hospitalized, a 50% greater risk of food insecurity, and a 90% greater chance of hospital admittance after a visit to the emergency room.<sup>2</sup>

Sanctions sink households more deeply into poverty and make it even more difficult to provide food, housing and other basic necessities. With more than 25 percent of the public assistance caseload currently being sanctioned, reform of the sanctioning rules needs to be made. The bias of the current policy and practice presumes recipients' guilt of willful non-compliance with program rules. Current policy is implemented with minimal acknowledgement of wide-spread agency administrative error, inadequate assessments for determining "employability," and inflexible and onerous reporting requirements.

FPWA supports (A.2669-Wright/S. Savino) to address the pervasive case sanctioning practice that keeps eligible very low-income households from receiving critical cash assistance. The bill ends durational sanctions and strengthens recipients' protections from wrongful sanctions.

## **Disabilities Screening and Evaluation**

Many cash assistance applicants and recipients have disabilities that are never identified by the agency. These disabilities can prevent applicants from making it through the onerous application process without assistance (filling out the application, providing documentation, reporting to numerous appointments). In addition, because the disabilities

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<sup>2</sup> Tim Casey, Legal Momentum, "The Sanctions Epidemic in the Temporary Assistance to Need Families Program," August 2010. Available at: <http://www.legalmomentum.org/assets/pdfs/sanction-epidemic-in-tanf.pdf>.

are often not identified, they are not factored into the determination as to whether the applicant or recipient is able to participate in work requirements.

FPWA urges that the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance be required to implement a screening and evaluation process and provide instructions for local departments of social services to screen cash assistance applicants and recipients for health problems, physical and mental health disabilities, and learning disabilities. By doing so, districts will have the information needed to exempt or accommodate cash assistance applicants and recipients in work activities and other program requirements.

**Protect families needing childcare to fulfill public assistance application and/or work requirements.**

FPWA calls on the Governor and Legislature to support A.1894 (Gibson). This bill extends protections to applicants for public assistance 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.

## **VI. Workforce Development**

### **Restore TANF funding that has been completely eliminated for crucial workforce development programs.**

The Governor's 2013-14 Executive Budget eliminates a total of \$14.681 million in TANF funding for various initiatives that were provided for by the Legislature in FY 2012-13. In prior years, the state used surplus TANF funds to fund employment and training programs that help thousands of New Yorkers each year to prepare for and secure good jobs. While these programs had been cut in recent years, the State Legislature restored funding for some of the critical jobs programs in last year's final adopted budget, such as Career Pathways, Wage Subsidy and BRIDGE.

We urge a more comprehensive long-term strategy be used in this year's budget, consistent with Governor Cuomo's priority focus on job creation. State government needs to support families in maintaining jobs, regaining employment, and enhancing their educational attainment.

It's a serious concern that the Governor has eliminated funding for employment and training programs that help thousands of New Yorkers to prepare for and secure good jobs. FPWA believes increased efficiency can be achieved with existing TANF funding that may make available monies that can be reallocated for TANF job initiatives.

To that end, we urge the Governor and the Legislature to restore to last year's budget level funding that was completely eliminated for the following vital job programs:

- **Career Pathways - \$750,000**  
Career Pathways links basic education to occupational training, and when combined with integrated support services, enables participants to advance over time to higher-wage jobs in targeted industry sectors.
- **Wage Subsidy - \$950,000**  
Wage Subsidy programs allow community-based organizations to place people in subsidized jobs for a period of three to six months.
- **BRIDGE - \$102,000**

The Bridge Program, which operates in conjunction with the State University of New York's (SUNY) University Center for Academic and Workforce Development, provides 31 local social services districts with employment preparation services specifically designed to provide Family Assistance (FA) and other TANF eligible families with the skills and supports necessary to obtain employment.

Given that the state receives an annual TANF block grant of \$2.4 billion from the federal government and can use the excess to fund supportive employment services, it is unclear why the Governor's budget directs none of this additional federal aid to TANF Jobs Initiatives that help needy families.

FPWA believes the Governor's cuts to these TANF job initiatives reflect three things :

1) the loss of Emergency Contingency Fund awards made available through the 2009 Recovery Act; 2) the use of federal TANF funds to pay all of Family Assistance benefit costs in the current and upcoming state fiscal year; and 3) the priority given to the Flexible Fund for Family Services (FFFS) and child care subsidies in the use of TANF 'Surplus' funds.

The Legislature should ask the Governor's office how it plans to use additional TANF Contingency Fund money that it is likely to earn in federal fiscal year 2013.

Furthermore, the Legislature should require OTDA to publish an annual tabulation and analysis of actual expenditures by purpose of a) TANF block grant funds; b) TANF Emergency Contingency Funds; c) TANF Contingency Funds; and d) state and local 'Maintenance of Effort' resources.

Additionally, the Legislature should 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

## **Continue and Expand the New York Youth Works Program**

FPWA supports and urges the continued expansion of the New York Youth Works Program launched on January 23, 2012 by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo. New York Youth Works is a statewide program created to combat high unemployment rates among inner city youth in communities across New York. The program supports job training and employment for eligible youths from ages 16 to 24.

Last year, as a part of this program, the state designated \$62 million to support job training programs, including \$8 million for youth job readiness training and stipends, \$25 million for youth summer jobs, and \$29 million for other job training and supportive services. In addition to this, \$25 million in tax credits is available to certified businesses who participate in the program and hire youth.

During an economic recession, it becomes especially vital to sustain and expand programs that will reach a growing number of low-income, unemployed, and underemployed youth in diverse communities. Amongst the various groups in the labor market, youth are disproportionately at a higher risk for facing unemployment and underemployment, especially Black and Latino youths.

With additional funding and expansion, FPWA believes that New York Youth Works could potentially serve a more substantial amount of youths in other areas, and coordinate programs and policies that meet their diverse needs.

## **Support \$5.3 million in funding for Adult Literacy Education (ALE).**

FPWA is pleased that Governor Cuomo's State FY 2013-14 budget continues the inclusion of \$5.3 million in funding for ALE. Last session, adult literacy competitive grants were funded at \$4.3 million plus and additional \$1 million over the school year.

ALE funding enables hundreds of organizations to support workforce development through Basic Education, GED and ESOL classes. Over 1.5 million NYC residents 16 years of age or older are out of school and do not have a high school diploma; more than 20 percent of



New York State's population is foreign-born (twice the national average); and more than one million New Yorkers are not yet proficient in English.

Despite the vast need for adult education and training opportunities, especially during these difficult times, fewer than 60,000 spaces in free or low-cost government-funded adult literacy/ESL classes are available—leaving over 97 percent of the need for adult education classes unmet.

### **Create a New Green Jobs Corps Program.**

In the midst of simultaneous economic, environmental, and energy issues facing our State, FPWA is asking for new state money to create a new Green Jobs initiative modeled after the original 2009-10 program.

The first Green Jobs Corps program was funded with federal stimulus money which ran out in the 2011-12 budget. This program utilized a consortium model to provide training and subsidized employment in the green sector. The goal of this program was to coordinate sustainable economic development strategies with policies aimed at permanently lifting families out of poverty through education and training opportunities and job creation.

Low-income communities are hit hardest by both financial hardship and environmental hazards. Families in these areas often face a double burden of limited educational and employment opportunities. Communities of color and low-income communities are also disproportionately likely to live and work in toxic environments. Therefore, FPWA believes that now is the ideal moment to create a new Green Jobs initiative that achieves economic, social, and environmental justice goals for families in poverty.

### **Create a Young Worker Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) (A.5399-Bronson).**

FPWA urges the State to create an EITC for working young adults between ages 17-24, who are established as an independent household and do not have children that is 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). Specifically, FPWA is asking for language to be included in an Article VII budget bill with a new appropriation in the budget for this new tax credit.

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 provides up to approximately \$594 for Tax Year 2010. Yet, there are many young low-income workers between the ages of 16 and 24 who are not eligible for the EITC, simply because of their age and that they are not parents. While New York recently established a State-funded EITC for non-custodial parents who are current 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.

## **VII. Youth Services**

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

FPWA is pleased that \$25 million has been allocated for the program for SFY 2013-14 but is concerned that with the increase in the minimum wage, fewer jobs will be available to youth.. 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 2012 in New York City, over 29,300 teens worked in the SYEP which was 1,328 fewer jobs from the previous summer. In addition, over 132,000 youth applied for the program in 2012, 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.

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

**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.

The Executive Budget proposes to fund the Advantage Afterschool Program at \$17.3 million for 2013-14 which is a \$5.3 million reduction from 2010-11 levels and a \$400,000 reduction from 2011-12. 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.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony.

