



Testimony of

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Before the
New York City Council
Finance Committee

Regarding the New York City
Preliminary Plan Budget Proposals for FY12

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My name is Louise Feld and I am the Policy Associate for Education, Food and Economic Security at Citizens' Committee for Children of New York (CCC). CCC is a 67-year-old, privately supported, independent, multi-issue child advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring New York City's children are healthy, housed, educated and safe. I would like to thank Chairman Recchia, Chairman Vann and Chairman Fidler, and the members of the Committees for Finance, Community Development and Youth Services, for holding this hearing on the City's Preliminary Budget for City Fiscal Year 2012 (CFY12).

While we appreciate the negative impact that the State's proposed cost shifts would have on the City's budget, we believe that it is unacceptable for the City's children to continue to bear a disproportionate burden of balancing the budget, particularly in light of the City's improved revenue forecast for CFY12 (an additional \$1.1 billion projected for CFY12).

Before discussing the details of the Preliminary Budget for CFY12, it is important to remember that this Financial Plan represents the 10th round of budget cuts. New York City's children have already lost thousands of slots in child care centers, after school programs, school-based dental clinics, mental health programs, and the Summer Youth Employment Program. In addition, the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) has repeatedly been held to a higher budget cutting standard than any of the uniform services, despite being the City's emergency responder for children.

Turning specifically to youth services, the CFY12 Preliminary Plan proposes significant cuts to a number of vital youth programs. Reducing funding for youth services is shortsighted, as investments in youth programs result in long-term benefits for children and communities. Youth services, such as those that provide summer job opportunities, after-school engagement and youth development, play a critical role in children's emotional and social growth, and in family and community efforts to keep children learning and safe. In addition, participation in youth services has been a proven method to prevent children from coming into contact with the juvenile justice system.

We urge the City Council to negotiate a budget with the Mayor that restores the following core youth services:

Summer Youth Employment (SYEP) –

SYEP provides young people, ages 14 to 24, with an opportunity to gain invaluable work experience through participation in a 7-week job skills and employment program. SYEP benefits not just youth, but also their families and neighborhoods, because SYEP participants use their earnings to supplement their families' incomes and to make purchases in local stores. Further, SYEP participants are often placed in community day camps, thereby providing more staff, and ultimately more summer camp slots, for younger children.

CCC urges the Council to oppose the serious budget cuts that SYEP faces, which will severely hamper the program's ability to serve the many New York City teenagers seeking productive summer employment. The CFY12 Preliminary Plan proposes a \$3.2 million cut to SYEP, which will result in the elimination of 2140 SYEP job slots. To make matters worse, Governor Cuomo's Executive Budget proposes cutting an additional \$15.5 million in state funds for SYEP, which, if his proposal were to be adopted, would lead to the loss of 6,000 additional summer jobs.

The importance of maintaining as many SYEP slots as possible is highlighted by DYCD data from the past two years, which show that New York City has simultaneously lost SYEP slots

while the number of SYEP applicants has increased. For example, for the summer of 2009, 139,597 youth applied for SYEP, but only 52,255 were employed through the SYEP program. While there was a significant shortage of jobs, federal stimulus funding provided much-needed support that summer. For the summer of 2010, 143,169 youth applied for SYEP, but due to reductions in state and federal funds, SYEP could only serve 35,725 youth.¹ The growing number of SYEP applicants demonstrates a clear need for summer youth employment, yet the continuing budget cuts to SYEP have already resulted in an unfortunate scarcity of opportunities for positive youth engagement and job skills training. Further cuts should be opposed.

Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY)

DYCD offers a wide range of services to runaway and homeless youth, who are some of the most vulnerable children in our city. DYCD contracts with community-based organizations to provide drop-in centers in each borough, where youth and their families can mediate and de-escalate conflicts; city-wide street outreach programs that reach at-risk teenagers in areas where they congregate; crisis shelter beds for emergency stays; and longer-term (up to 18 months) transitional independent living programs for youth ages 16 to 24 who have nowhere to live. These services present critical opportunities for professionals to make connections with, and ultimately provide services to, extremely high-risk runaway and homeless youth, many of whom have been abused, sexually exploited, and/or in contact with the juvenile justice or criminal justice systems. CCC is grateful to the City Council, and Council Member Fidler in particular, for their long-standing commitment to the City's Runaway and Homeless Youth.

CCC asks the Council to oppose the cuts to RHY programs included in the Mayor's Preliminary Plan, which will affect the afore-mentioned array of DYCD's RHY services. The Mayor's proposed \$330,000 cut will negatively impact five drop-in centers,² and eliminate City funds for the street outreach programs, which are essential to reaching and providing information to those youth already on the streets. Shelter beds – potentially life-saving resources for runaway and homeless youth – are also set to suffer serious cutbacks. The Mayor's Preliminary Plan once again fails to fund the \$5.99 million that the City Council repeatedly restores to the budget for shelter beds. CCC urges the Mayor to acknowledge the importance of these shelter beds and baseline this funding, but alternatively urges the City Council to once again restore these beds should their funding not be included in the Executive Budget.

CCC is also concerned because Governor Cuomo's Executive Budget proposed to get rid of all state funds for RHY shelter beds by eliminating the current funding stream for RHY services, and instead requiring RHY programs to compete for funding from a competitive block grant that provides money only to preventive service programs. If the Governor's budget is adopted as proposed, 37 out of New York City's 108 transitional shelter beds will be lost, because shelter beds are not considered a preventive service, and therefore will be excluded from this funding source. Given the importance of each of these programs to the most at-risk youth in New York City, RHY services must be preserved in the City's budget.

¹ See New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (2010). *Summer Youth Employment Program: 2010 Annual Summary*. Retrieved from http://www.nyc.gov/html/dycd/downloads/pdf/SYEP_2010_Annual_Summary.pdf.

² The DYCD website lists only 8 drop-in centers in New York City.

Out-of-School Time Services (OST)

In CFY10, 73,186 New York City students participated in after-school programming through Out-of-School Time (OST), the largest after-school initiative in the nation.³ New York City's almost 500 OST programs include a mix of academic supports, sports, and recreation, and keep elementary, middle and high school students engaged in a wide array of enriching and positive activities during after-school, holiday and summer hours. Many working families rely on OST programs to provide safe and supportive environments to children after school and on days when parents must go to work even though school is not in session.

CCC urges the Council to oppose cuts to the OST program, which, if the Mayor's Preliminary Plan for CFY12 is adopted, would suffer a total loss of \$15.5 million in City funds (\$6.05 million from the Mayor's proposed cut to OST Option I, \$5.95 million from the failure to fund the FY11 City Council restoration for OST Option I, and \$3.05 million from the failure to fund the FY11 City Council restoration for OST Option II). The Mayor's \$6.05 million proposed reduction would decrease OST holiday availability from 20 days to only 14 days for OST Option I. The lack of OST programming on school holidays will create difficulties for working parents, who will be forced to take days off from work to care for their children, whether or not they can afford to do so.

Further, it should be noted that OST slots will be in even greater demand because the Mayor is also planning to eliminate almost 17,000 child care subsidies for children of working parents, 59% of whom are school-aged children. The Administration for Children's Services has stated that these school-age children will have priority for OST slots. Not only does CCC oppose this unconscionable reduction to child care subsidies, but we also worry that other children will lose their access to OST because of the increased demand created by ACS.

Beacons

Beacon Centers are nationally recognized youth development programs that, through collaborations between schools and community-based organizations, provide a broad range of support services to youth and their families. Funding for New York City's Beacons (originally \$400,000 per Beacon, although many receive less) has remained relatively flat since the program's inception in 1991, even though Beacons have faced not just inflationary costs in those twenty years, but also increased service targets. CCC asks that you oppose the Mayor's Preliminary Plan's proposed \$2.63 million – or 10% – reduction to 66 Beacon Centers, as this cut would further undermine the already tenuous funding circumstances under which Beacons are forced to operate. Notably, in CFY12 Beacons will also no longer have the \$4.1 million in one-year City Council Restoration funds from CFY11, for a total loss of over \$6.7 million if the Mayor's Preliminary Plan is adopted. We therefore urge you to oppose the cuts to Beacons.

Council Youth Initiatives

Finally, CCC commends the City Council for its historic support of local youth programs that provide youth with a broad array of neighborhood-based supports. We urge the Council to continue its steadfast support of Council youth initiatives and oppose the proposed cuts to: YMCA After School Program, Teens Take the City, Council After School Adventure (CASA), Dropout Prevention Initiative, Institute for Student Achievement, Sports and Arts in Schools

³ Preliminary Fiscal Year 2011 Mayor's Management Report, Department of Youth and Community Development, at 49-52. Retrieved from http://www.nyc.gov/html/ops/html/mmr/mmr_sub.shtml.

Foundation, NY Junior Tennis League, Neighborhood Youth Alliance and Street Outreach, the After Three Program, and other Councilmember discretionary programs.

In sum, we urge the Mayor and the City Council to protect investments in youth development and employment programming, and programs targeted to runaway youth. These investments are cost-effective, produce good outcomes for children and youth, and ensure that the City can avoid the fiscal burden of more costly interventions in the short and long term.

Finding the revenue needed to restore these detrimental cuts will require a balanced approach. CCC suggests that all revenue producing options must be on the table, including but not limited to, sin taxes, income taxes, and pension reform.

We understand that the City deficit is so significant that some budget reductions will be made. As you work with the Mayor and fellow Council members on the budget, we urge you to be strategic and deliberate. Funding for cost-effective programs and services that prevent child abuse, keep children safe, ensure children are housed, fed and clothed, and healthy, and funding that goes directly to classrooms must be preserved. It is critical that the actions the City Council takes with the Mayor protect the city's ability to ensure that our children remain healthy, housed, educated and safe.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Attached is a chart detailing the full \$161.5 million cuts to children's services, as well as the elimination of 17,000 child care subsidies and the Advantage Program.



**Fiscal Year 2012 Preliminary Budget for New York City
Proposes \$161.5 Million in Net Reductions to
Human Services for Children and Families and the
Loss of Over 16,000 Child Care Subsidies**

On February 17, 2011 Mayor Bloomberg issued his Preliminary Budget for City Fiscal Year 2012. While CCC was pleased to see that the City's revenue has been increasing and the Mayor was able to offset the anticipated loss of state funds for mandated services, the Preliminary Budget reduces funding for critical services for children by \$161.5 million, including 2,900 preventive service slots, homemaking services, school based mental health centers and after school programs. In addition, the City is planning to eliminate over 16,000 child care subsidies for low-income working families.

Below please find the list of Preliminary Budget Human Services proposals that would impact children:

CHILD CARE

Program	Proposed Expenditure Increase FY'12	Proposed Expenditure Decrease FY'12	Failure to Fund Council Restoration
Restoration of 72 child care center classrooms			(\$11.26 million)
Restoration of child care centers slated for closure			(\$6.68 million)
Increase in child care co-payments		(\$13.0 million)	
Sub-Total	\$0	(\$13.0 million)	(\$17.94 million)

*In addition, due to a structural budget deficit, ACS is planning to eliminate 16,462 child care subsidies, which would require \$91 million annually to restore.

CHILD WELFARE

Program	Proposed Expenditure Increase FY'12	Proposed Expenditure Decrease FY'12	Failure to Fund Council Restoration
2900 Preventive Service slots			(\$11.7 million)
202 Child Protective Staff positions			(\$5.9 million)
Child welfare staff			(\$1.9 million)
CONNECT Domestic Violence program			(\$270,000)
Child Advocacy Centers			(\$500,000)
Homemaking services		(\$5.1 million)	
Child and Family Specialists		(\$1.0 million)	
Administrative and support function layoffs (118 staff)		(\$2.8 million)	
Staff reductions in the Division of Child Protection through attrition (80 supervisors and managers)		(\$2.7 million)	
Sub-Total	\$0	(\$11.6 million)	(\$20.27 million)

CHILDREN'S HEALTH SERVICES

Program	Proposed Expenditure Increase FY'12	Proposed Expenditure Decrease FY'12	Failure to Fund Council Restoration
Asthma Control Initiative			(\$500,000)
Child Health Clinics			(\$5.0 million)
Family Planning Initiative			(\$325,000)
2 School-Based Health Centers		(\$182,000)	
CEO: Expand Access to Healthy Foods	\$182,000		
HHC Unrestricted City Subsidy		(\$7.14 million)	
Infant Mortality Reduction Program			(\$3.0 million)
Obesity Prevention Programs			(\$1.27 million)
NYU Mobile Dental Vans/Dental Clinic			(\$268,000)
Primary Care Capacity Initiative			(\$669,000)
Sub-Total	\$182,000	(\$7.3 million)	(\$11.03 million)

HOUSING AND HOMELESS SERVICES

Program	Proposed Expenditure Increase FY'12	Proposed Expenditure Decrease FY'12	Failure to Fund Council Restoration
Shared Rooms for Families with Children		(\$1.67 million)	
Reducing Advantage Broker's Fees		(\$1.58 million)	
New Family Intake Center (maintenance and security costs)	\$2.44 million		
Furnish a Future Contract (DHS)			(\$400,000)
Citywide Task Force on Housing Court (HPD)			(\$500,000)
Partial restoration of Community Consultants (HPD)			(\$415,000)
Restore the Housing Preservation Initiative (HPD)			(\$1.5 million)
Partial restoration of Anti-Eviction Legal Services			(\$2.0 million)
Citywide Homeless Prevention Fund			(\$250,000)
Sub-Total	\$2.44 million	(\$3.25 million)	(\$5.07 million)

***In addition, the City is planning to eliminate the Work Advantage Program, which is the only subsidy available to help families transition out of the shelter system.**

LEGAL SERVICES

<u>Program</u>	Proposed Expenditure Increase FY'12	Proposed Expenditure Decrease FY'12	Failure to Fund Council Restoration
Citywide City Legal Services			(\$1.5 million)
Partial restoration for Legal Information for Families Today (LIFT)			(\$485,000)
Legal Services for the Working Poor			(\$1.05 million)
Legal Services NYC- Keeping Families Together			(\$300,000)
MFY Legal Services			(\$100,000)
SSI-UI Legal Advocacy Program			(\$1.3 million)
Legal Services to Prevent Evictions			(\$2.3 million)
Sub-Total	\$0	\$0	(\$7.04 million)

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Program	Proposed Expenditure Increase FY'12	Proposed Expenditure Decrease FY'12	Failure to Fund Council Restoration
Autism Awareness Initiative			(\$1.25 million)
Mental Health Treatment for Children Under Five			(\$1.25 million)
Mental Hygiene Contracted Services including MR/DD clinics		(\$4.86 million)	
Suicide Prevention Hotline			(\$247,150)
Mental health, substance abuse and mental retardation/developmental disability services (HHC)			(\$800,000)
Mental health contracts (non HHC)			(\$450,000)
Sub-Total	\$0	(\$4.86 million)	(\$3.99 million)

PARKS AND RECREATION

Program	Proposed Expenditure Increase FY'12	Proposed Expenditure Decrease FY'12	Failure to Fund Council Restoration
Playground Associates			(\$1.0 million)
Funding to keep all city pools open for the last 2 weeks of the pool season			(\$891,000)
Close 4 Pools and Shorten Outdoor Pool Season			(\$546,000)
Sub-Total	\$0	\$0	(\$2.44 million)

SOCIAL SERVICES

Program	Proposed Expenditure Increase FY'11	Proposed Expenditure Decrease FY'11	Failure to Fund Council Restoration
Teen Relationship Abuse Prevention Program (Teen RAPP)			(\$2.5 million)
Food Stamps at Farmer's Markets			(\$420,000)
Food Pantries			(\$1.9 million)
Sub-Total	\$0	\$0	(\$4.82 million)

YOUTH SERVICES

Program	Proposed Expenditure Increase FY'12	Proposed Expenditure Decrease FY'12	Failure to Fund Council Restoration
Out of School Time Reduction- Option I (33 programs)			(\$5.95 million)
OST Option I- Reduction in School Holiday Availability (from 20 to 14)		(\$6.05 million)	
Reduce Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) by 2,140 summer jobs		(\$3.2 million)	
Shelter Beds for At-Risk Homeless Youth			(\$5.99 million)
Runaway Homeless Youth Services (5 drop in centers and elimination of City funds for street outreach)		(\$330,000)	
City Council Beacon Restoration			(\$4.1 million)
Reduce Beacon Contracts by 10%		(\$2.63 million)	
New York Junior Tennis League			(\$800,000)
Cultural After School Adventure (CASA)			(\$4.08 million)
City Council Member Discretionary Funds			(\$7.7 million)
Street Outreach/Neighborhood Youth Alliance			(\$1.0 million)
The After-Three Program			(\$3.8 million)
YMCA After School Program			(\$500,000)
Sports and Arts in the School Foundation			(\$1.2 million)
OST Option II			(\$3.05 million)
NYCHA Cornerstone Program Reductions in holidays (20 to 14) and 632 slots		(\$1.1 million)	
Sub-Total	\$0	(\$13.31 million)	(\$38.17 million)

TOTAL

PROGRAM	Proposed Expenditure Increase FY'12	Proposed Expenditure Decrease FY'12	Failure to Fund Council Restoration
ALL HUMAN SERVICES FOR CHILDREN	\$2.62 million	(\$53.32 million)	(\$110.77 million)