

Home Visiting Proposed Budget Cuts

In response to the state's current fiscal crisis, the Governor's Executive Budget proposed cuts to a number of programs including a 25% cut to Healthy Families NY (HFNY) and the elimination of state funding for Community Optional Preventative Services (COPS). SCAA firmly opposes these cuts to vital home visiting programs. Approximately 500 families already lost services when the HFNY program was reduced 8% in budget cuts made in August.

Budget cuts to HFNY and COPS would have a devastating impact on the children and families of New York. These programs have been proven to prevent and reduce child abuse and neglect as well as improve economic and educational outcomes for the families being served. Since child abuse and neglect generally increase during economic downturns, now is not the time to even consider cutting preventive home visiting programs.

Funding these programs makes clear fiscal sense. Investing in prevention dramatically decreases future costs in more expensive programs such as foster care, child welfare, juvenile justice and remedial education.

HFNY is based on the national Healthy Families America model. It is an evidence-based, community-based prevention program that targets parents with an infant less than three months of age and expectant parents who are considered to be at high-risk for child abuse and neglect. HFNY operates 39 sites in high-need communities throughout the state.

COPS provides crucial funding for child welfare and other child-serving programs. It also partially funds several Nurse-Family Partnership sites around the state as well as some Healthy Family NY sites and other promising home visiting programs. SCAA maintains that the program's title "Community *Optional* Preventive Services" is inaccurate, because many of the services funded with COPS money are certainly not "optional."

While COPS funding is important to communities, there are distinctions among the programs that these funds support. While many are evidence-based and proven to be effective, others do not have data regarding their outcomes and are not recognized as either evidence-based or promising practices. Since advocates recognize that the state budget crisis requires some reductions in a variety of programs, SCAA recommends that COPS funding be reduced from \$34 million to \$20 million. The remaining funding should be used to fund programs that have demonstrated measurable, positive results for children.

The Legislature is now considering the Executive Budget so this is a good time to contact your legislators about home visiting programs. The state budget is due on April 1st. SCAA has a summary of COPS and information on what to tell your

legislators about the program [here](#). Links to determine who represents you and how to contact them are [here](#).

For more information regarding home visiting programs and the potential budget cuts, contact:

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