

Budget Advocacy: Understanding the Process

On January 19th, Governor Paterson released his *Executive Budget*. This document represents what he believes is the best strategy for achieving his policy goals by directing government spending and prescribing revenues. This year is a particularly difficult challenge because revenues to New York State have declined dramatically due to the recession (see other articles in this edition).

To become familiar with the Governor's budget, visit the Division of Budget website at: <http://publications.budget.state.ny.us/eBudget1011/ExecutiveBudget.html>
There you will find an extensive section containing all the documents for the 2010-2011 *Executive Budget*.

The focus now turns to the Legislature. The fiscal committees of each house started joint hearings on various components of the *Executive Budget* on January 25th. At these hearings members of the public can testify about the impact on programs, propose ways to mitigate the damage caused by cuts or discuss what they support in the *Executive Budget*. The hearings run through February 10th. A hearing calendar can be found at: <http://www.nysenate.gov/press-release/schedule-joint-legislative-public-hearings-2010-2011-executive-budget-proposal>. Hearings can also be viewed online at: http://www.livestream.com/nysenate_joint_budget.

Once the joint budget hearings are complete, each house usually produces a budget reflecting their priorities. Negotiations then begin to develop a final budget that can be passed by both houses and sent to the Governor for his signature. The budget deadline is April 1st. The New York City Bar Association and the Brennan Center for Justice have released a [Legislative Roadmap](#), a chart to help New Yorkers navigate the new process by which a bill moves through the Legislature under new rules passed in July 2009.

Continue to check the SCAA website at: www.scaany.org for budget details. We will post new documents as we process the various parts of the budget. Also, check with statewide organizations representing your profession, interests or community. See a list of New York Children's Action Network partners, with links to many children's advocacy organizations [here](#).

Act now by explaining to government officials how the proposed budget would impact your program and the services you provide to families and children. Write to:

Honorable David A. Paterson
Governor
Executive Chamber
The Capitol
Albany, New York 12224

John Sampson
Senate Democratic Leader
NYS Senate
The Capitol
Albany, New York 12225
Sheldon Silver

Speaker
NYS Assembly
The Capitol
Albany, New York 12226

You can continue to follow the budget process through the SCAA website and future editions of this newsletter.