



Helping Vulnerable Families Gets Harder for Healthy Families NY

Restore funding for Healthy Families New York 15% to \$26.8 million.

In fiscal year 2007-08, New York State's budget included \$25.2 million for Healthy Families New York (HFNY) Home Visiting. In 2008-09, the financial crisis led to an 8% cut for HFNY to \$23.3 million. Funding has been held at \$23.3 million for six years. Adjusting for inflation, "flat funding" means funds have effectively been reduced by 15% since FY 2007-2008.

In July 2013, HFNY sites were asked to complete an online survey regarding the impact of funding reductions on their services. The results of that survey provided the information below.

LOSS OF CRITICAL SERVICES (79% of respondents) — As a result of funding changes, some programs have reduced the areas where they provide services. In addition, many programs can no longer:

- ▶ Provide outreach to ensure fathers' involvement.
- ▶ Engage families through community outreach.
- ▶ Conduct family support groups that augment home visits.
- ▶ Provide support—such as training—to expand staff skills.
- ▶ Organize group activities that create personal supports.

DECREASE IN LENGTH OF STAY IN PROGRAM (58% of respondents) — Families are involved for shorter lengths of time. Positive outcomes are directly related to length and level of participation.

CUTBACKS IN SUPPLIES FOR FAMILIES (60% of respondents) — Families go without critical supplies crucial to maintaining healthy, safe environments. Many programs no longer provide:

- ▶ Infant care kits (including essential supplies such as thermometers, nail clippers).
- ▶ Transportation vouchers.
- ▶ Diapers, clothing, cribs, safety kits, toothbrushes.
- ▶ Books and educational toys.

NEGATIVE IMPACT ON STAFF (95% of respondents) — Cutbacks have led to reductions in staff resulting in turnover of remaining staff because of increased stress level (due to caseload size) and reduced wages. This means less consistency for families. Staff retention directly impacts family retention. In addition, fewer training opportunities now exist which compromises quality.

Survey conducted by Prevent Child Abuse New York, July 2013. Just over half of all HFNY sites, and two-thirds of those that were fully operational in 2007, responded.

“We no longer are able to provide HFNY services to the entire county.”

“We used to have fathering support groups and met with fathers about their special needs.”

“We struggle to continue activities that we know are important to keep our families engaged.”

“Our families have missed out on socialization opportunities we used to provide to assist them with being less isolated.”

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