

December 6, 2010

NEW SURVEY REVEALS THE IMPACT OF STATE BUDGET CRISIS: ILLINOISANS LOSING ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL HUMAN SERVICES

Illinois' children, seniors, people with disabilities, and those experiencing homelessness are suffering as human service organizations cut essential programs, reduce hours, and curtail levels of service in the face of the state's budget crisis. In a new survey that gauges the impact of the crisis on critical services in Illinois communities, more than half of responding Illinois' human service organizations report taking actions that reduce access to vital programs and services by reducing hours or levels of service. Four in ten responding organizations report expanded waiting lists for services, and more than a quarter report that they have closed programs due to budget cuts. These cuts and closings come at a time when the need for human services is increasing, further exacerbating the gap between the demand and supply for human services across the state.

Illinois Partners for Human Services is calling on Illinois elected officials to work on a comprehensive, sustainable approach that solves the state's financial crisis. There must be shared responsibility in finding a solution. Illinois' children, seniors, and other needy residents have already shouldered more than their fair share.

SURVEY OVERVIEW IN SOUTHERN COUNTIES:

44: Number of human service agencies that weighed in on the impact of state budget cuts and late payments

2,800: The median number of clients served last fiscal year by these organizations

\$2.8 million: The median annual operating budget of respondents' organizations

24 and 9: The median number of full-time and part-time workers currently employed by responding organizations

75% of responding organizations stated that their *programs and services* were directly negatively affected by the budget cuts and delayed payments, and **91%** of respondents indicated that their organization has been affected negatively in some way by the crisis.

The survey was sent to approximately 1,000 organizations, 282 of which responded statewide, over a several week time period in October and November 2010. The most common services provided by responding organizations were youth services (48%), followed by mental health (36%), violence prevention and intervention (29%), aging (28%), housing and homelessness (28%), child welfare (27%), and developmental disabilities (23%). Fifty-one percent of responding organizations provide services in Cook County, 24% in northern counties, 22% in north-central counties, 16% in southern counties, and 13% in south-central counties. The survey was conducted by [Illinois Partners for Human Service](#) and [Illinois Collaboration on Youth](#), and the [Social IMPACT Research Center at Heartland Alliance](#) assisted in analyzing and summarizing the survey data. Additional regional fact sheets are available at www.illinoispartners.org.

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EFFECTS OF THE CRISIS IN SOUTHERN COUNTIES:

In response to state budget cuts and delayed payments, 57% of responding organizations reduced their hours of operation or level of service, 34% of organizations grew their waiting lists, and 27% had to refer clients to other service providers with no guarantee that they'd be served. Another 36% of organizations closed programs outright, eliminating essential services and jobs in that community. These findings were remarkably similar across Illinois regardless of the region or size of the reporting organization.

The cumulative impact of these actions is a significant reduction in the availability of human services in all parts of the state. These reductions threaten not only the immediate health and well-being of Illinois residents, but also the foundational infrastructure for service delivery in our state.

STRATEGIES TO MITIGATE THE CRISIS IN SOUTHERN COUNTIES:

In order to mitigate state budget cuts and delayed payments, 57% of responding organizations tapped into cash reserves, and 52% tapped into additional lines of credit. For some organizations, these short-term solutions have stretched on for months at significant financial cost. For others, limited access to reserves and/or lines of credit restricted this as an option.

Forty-three percent of responding organizations sought additional funding sources, often requiring program staff to refocus efforts away from service provision. Combined with the 52% that laid off employees, these organizations are severely hampered by both direct cuts and service reductions as well as reallocating staff to non-service specific functions.

Among organizations that implemented layoffs, the average organization laid off 14% of its staff. Statewide, in comparison to larger organizations, smaller organizations laid off a larger percentage of their staff and were more likely to skip payroll, offer no raises, or have salary reductions. Larger organizations were more likely to tap lines of credit.

The uncertainty of the current environment, both for organizations as well as staff service providers, is adding additional strain to the already vulnerable human services infrastructure. A comprehensive, sustainable solution to the budget crisis is needed to put Illinois back on a path toward a sound financial future.

SOUTHERN COUNTIES Fact Sheet

Effects of budget cuts and delayed payments on services provided by providers serving southern counties

Number of respondents = 44	Percentage
Reduced hours or level of service	56.8%
Increased waiting list for services	34.1%
Referred clients to other service providers	27.3%
Closed programs	36.4%
No change to programs or services	25.0%
Other	6.8%
percentages do not add up to 100 because respondents could choose more than one answer	

Strategies used to mitigate the effects of the state's budget cuts and delayed payment schedule on the organization by providers serving southern counties

Number of respondents = 44	Percentage
Tapped into cash reserves	56.8%
Lines of credit	52.3%
Implement staff layoffs	52.3%
Increased private fundraising	43.2%
Other	13.6%
Implement furlough days	11.4%
Cut / reduce quality of service	9.1%
No new hiring / attrition	9.1%
Not been affected	9.1%
Stop raises / salary or benefit reduction	6.8%
Skipped payroll	2.3%
percentages do not add up to 100 because respondents could choose more than one answer	