

Strong Nonprofits for a Better New York

Talking points – Media



Who We Are

- **[Your organization] is a member of the Strong Nonprofits for a Better New York Campaign (formerly Restore Opportunity Now).**
- **We are one of more than 350 nonprofit human services providers from across the State that have come together to call on the State to make key investments to strengthen the human services sector.**
- **While we know this is a difficult budget year, given the deficit and uncertainty at the federal level, it is more important than ever that we make sure our nonprofits are strong.**
- **In times of challenge and uncertainty, nonprofits are our communities' first line of defense.**

Background

- New York State is at its best when all New Yorkers are able to live up to their potential and contribute their diverse gifts and talents to our communities.
- New York State relies on nonprofits to build and support well-being so that New Yorkers have what they need at every stage of life to do well socially, emotionally, financially, and physically.
- This includes delivering services in early childhood that establish a solid foundation for health and development, providing the safe places and social resources that teenagers need to thrive, making sure that adults have access to good jobs and affordable homes, and ensuring that older adults are able to remain connected to their communities.
- Nonprofit human services providers are integral to the strength of our communities, in achieving equity, and in building the economy.
- New York State contracts with nonprofit organizations to provide a broad range of services that build and support our residents' well-being because our sector deeply understands the issues affecting our communities, and has experience in coming up with solutions that work.
- Doing this work effectively requires careful planning and adequate financial resources. However, recent funding cuts and outdated contracting policies and processes are undermining the sector's ability to meet current community needs and plan for future needs.
- **Increased investments and systems changes are needed to ensure nonprofits can continue to effectively serve our communities.**
 - That is why we are advocating for the following systems changes and investments:
worker salaries and the Nonprofit Infrastructure Capital Investment Program.

Workforce (wage adjustments and minimum wage)

- New York’s human services nonprofits sector employs 200,000 workers who build and maintain the wellbeing of New Yorkers every day. These skilled professionals provide the services and leadership required for communities to benefit from programs and services like Universal Pre-Kindergarten, mental health care, employment training, and intergenerational community centers.
- With low wages and diminishing benefits, frontline workers are increasingly seeking services themselves. In many instances, it has resulted in low morale and high staff turnover, further exacerbating the challenges social services providers face.
- The human services workforce is 81% women, and 46% people of color—fair wages are a real equity issue within the State’s control.
- For the most part, these should not be minimum wage jobs—two thirds of this workforce has some level of college education to allow them to carry out these high skill jobs.
- Raising the minimum wage and expanding overtime eligibility were the right things to do for workers, but when the government outsources work to human services organizations; it must ensure that those organizations can meet the new mandates without compromising their financial and operational integrity.
- Nonprofits cannot continue to subsidize the State, and are looking at how to close programs or lay off staff to make up for the gap in funding caused by an unfunded minimum wage increase.
- The State must provide funding for the human services workers under contract with the State. Without this funding, nonprofits will have to make tough decisions about their workforce and the programs they can offer to the community.
- We estimate that funding the minimum wage on direct contracts would cost \$23 million for the coming year.
- In addition to the minimum wage, the State must take action to ensure that nonprofits can provide competitive salaries, from entry level workers to certified professional positions.
- We ask that the State provide salary adjustments for those not covered by the FY18 increases for direct care workers at an equivalent 3.25% per year for 2 years, which we estimate would cost \$65 million this year.
- The State claimed \$540 million in “savings” from deferred cost of living adjustments for this workforce over the last eight years. State savings should not come at the expense of this critical workforce.
- A statutory COLA should be strengthened to ensure all human services workers are included, ensuring it can’t be removed from budget.

Nonprofit Infrastructure Capital Investment Program (NICIP)

- Over the last three years, the Governor and the Legislature made an unprecedented investment in nonprofit infrastructure, allocating \$120 million to the Nonprofit Infrastructure Capital Investment Program.
- The first \$100 million allocated to the Nonprofit Infrastructure Capital Investment Program (NICIP) will enable 237 nonprofit human services providers across the State to repair, reinforce, expand, and update their physical and technological infrastructure.
- The need for capital funding far exceeds the initial \$120 million appropriation, however. More than 600 organizations responded to the NICIP request for applications.
- We urge the State to increase the NICIP fund and implement a recurring investment of \$100 million.
- This reasonable investment is an important step in meeting the infrastructure needs of a sector that delivers nearly \$6.8 billion in essential services annually.