



Press Release – January 30, 2017
Contact: Lindsay Perry
lperry@unhny.org
212-967-0322 x311
Cell: 203-382-4052
Kevin Douglas
kdouglas@unhny.org
917-484-9321

Statement of Susan Stamler Executive Director of United Neighborhood Houses On Governor Cuomo’s FY 2018 Executive Budget Proposal

As New Yorkers assess what the new federal administration means for them and their loved ones, one thing remains clear: we will need the Governor and the NYS Legislature to stand up for all New Yorkers. It is critical that as forcefully as our state rejects xenophobia, intolerance, and discrimination, it also continues to invest in programs that allow individuals and families to succeed. Therefore, we look at the Governor’s FY 2018 Executive Budget proposal with a mix of encouragement and disappointment.

Among the positive aspects of Governor Cuomo’s budget are policy proposals to Raise the Age of criminal responsibility, which would help juveniles in the justice system receive more age appropriate interventions; the Dream Act, which would assist college-bound youth to access critical financial aid regardless of their immigration status; and a package of reforms to our voting system which will make voting easier for all New Yorkers. These forward-looking reforms will ensure that New York continues to build a fair and inclusive state, and we applaud the Governor for prioritizing them in his FY 2018 Executive Budget. In addition, we appreciate of his proposed investments in the Summer Youth Employment Program, afterschool programs for youth in high-need areas, and Community Schools.

We are disappointed that in several other key areas the Governor’s budget proposals fall short and we encourage him to take the following actions within his 21-day amendment period:

- **Eliminate Title XX Social Services Block Grant proposal which will hurt older adults.** This proposal will eliminate local discretion over how Title XX dollars are spent, instead directing all local service entities to spend the funds on child care. In New York City Title XX dollars are already committed to supporting neighborhood senior centers. If Governor Cuomo does not retract this proposal, New York City’s Department for the Aging will lose \$17 million in funding, resulting in the closure of 65 neighborhood senior centers—30% of the citywide total. UNH strongly urges the Governor to eliminate this proposal in order to keep older adults engaged, safe and healthy.

- **Invest in Adult Literacy Education to help immigrants learn English.** At a time when New York’s immigrants and refugees are under attack, it is essential that the Governor act on his pledge to support this community. We laud the Governor’s proposals to expand legal services, but we know the long term success and integration of immigrants is directly related to their ability to speak English. Without English skills, immigrants struggle to find and retain family-sustaining employment, often turning to under-the-table, and sometimes exploitative, jobs. Already, nearly one and half million NYC immigrants lack basic English proficiency, and yet Governor Cuomo’s budget eliminates \$1 million from Adult Literacy Education (ALE). *UNH recommends the Governor instead expand ALE from \$6.3 million to \$17.2 million, which would allow nearly 10,000 additional New Yorkers to access adult literacy classes.*
- **Support the Nonprofit Sector—essential partners in supporting New Yorkers.** New York’s nonprofit human service organizations are on the front lines in defending and supporting all of the communities the Governor says he wants to help succeed. From delivering high-quality early childhood education, after-school programs, and youth employment programs, to offering behavioral health, substance abuse, and homelessness prevention services, to supporting older adults, building affordable housing, and running violence-prevention programs, nonprofits help New Yorkers reach their full potential. Yet, years of underfunding, late payments and onerous regulations threaten the stability of the sector, in turn, endangering their ability to be there for New Yorkers when they are needed most. *UNH recommends the Governor:*
 - *Invest \$100 million in new funding for the Nonprofit Infrastructure Capital Improvement Program*
 - *Plan funding increases in all human services contracts to reflect scheduled increases in the minimum wage*
 - *Implement an across-the-board 15% indirect cost on human service contracts to support core operations*

UNH looks forward to working with Governor Cuomo and members of the State Legislature to create a budget that works for all New Yorkers.

###