

THE STATE OF THE SF BUDGET

A Backwards Look at SF Funding Trends for Poverty Programs

In the face of the great recession, during a time when San Franciscans are facing economic crisis, the city has severely reduced cornerstone poverty abatement programs. This paper attempts to summarize those reductions and the impact they have had on vulnerable San Franciscans. In taking a hard look at these numbers, it becomes clear that the poorest San Franciscans have borne the brunt of fiscal shortfalls – the very same people who were already struggling with the burden of poverty.

Seniors

There are approximately 160,000 seniors and over 90,000 adults with disabilities living in our city, and that number is expected to rise dramatically in the coming period. Of those, 45,000 people receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI), including elderly and disabled. With such a limited income many are forced to decide between medication, food, rent and other vital needs.

These are some of the reduction SF Elders were forced to shoulder in recent past:

- ⌘ \$3.2 million was cut from In Home Support Services
- ⌘ Loss of an average of \$30 from disability checks
- ⌘ Elimination of Adult Day Health
- ⌘ Loss of Medi-Cal “optional” benefits such as vision, dental, podiatry, services,
- ⌘ Increase in co-pays, limit of doctor visits to 10 per year,

Emergency Homeless Services

While housing is the primary solution to homelessness, there continues to be an overwhelming need for emergency homeless services. The combined SFHA waitlist is over 32,000 households long. Over the course of 2011, 12,000 different people utilized homeless shelters. Thousands more are estimated to be living on the streets, in substandard housing, doubled up and in vehicles. Since the recession hit, the wait list for family shelter has almost tripled.

- ⌘ Since 2004, 1/3 of our shelter beds have been lost. It often takes weeks for an individual to secure a bed, and family waits are typically six months long.
- ⌘ Resource Centers provide emergency and survival services for destitute San Franciscans and save the city funding. For example, it costs 1/5 the price to de-escalate someone before they are in psychiatric crisis at a center, as opposed to a \$150. Over half of the resource center capacity has been lost city-wide since 2004, with five resource centers closing.

Housing

There is a huge income/rent disparity in San Francisco, with average rents exceeding minimum wages, and a large portion of jobs in the service industry paying just that. In addition, housing is the primary solution to homelessness, and San Francisco has demonstrated a strong commitment to permanent affordable housing. Some of the housing is supportive housing, for those

individuals or families who require on-site support services to maintain their housing. This type of housing is known to save \$.50 to \$.70 on the \$1 in other public costs for every unit it provides.

⌘ In the last two years, supportive housing funding in SF has been cut by over \$1,000,000.

Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment

When there is an inadequate substance abuse and mental health system, the costs to the city skyrocket. For every \$1 invested in substance abuse treatment, the city save \$7 in other social costs.

⌘ Since budget year 2007/08, mental health, substance abuse and health funded homeless services have been cut by a staggering \$32,785,963.

Primary Health Care

While San Francisco has attempted to have universal health care through Healthy San Francisco, there are large portions of the city that do not have access.

⌘ For the past four years, city funded health care programs have had their budgets reduced by a whopping \$31,521,472.

AIDS/HIV

San Francisco's world-renowned health care model for people with HIV/AIDS is fraying at the edges. Over the last decade, our Ryan White CARE award has been reduced by 50% while the number of people with HIV/AIDS has doubled.

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⌘ Over the past four years, general fun allocations to AIDS/HIV programs have been reduced by \$1,791,549.

Immigrants

It is estimated that SF has 41,546 undocumented immigrants. Undocumented immigrants face serious barriers critical to survival. They lack health insurance, access to income and/or living wages, access to benefits such as General Assistance, Food Stamps, SSI, long-term shelter, housing, affordable childcare, and free legal services –including immigration assistance.

Families with Children

Thanks to the hard work that created the Children's Fund and Baseline, funding for children, youth and family services has been better protected than many other services in the city. But even with a minimum amount of funding required by the Children's Amendment, the Children's Fund has decreased by \$2.2 million in the last 4 years, reducing the funding available for afterschool program, childcare, and youth jobs.