



Quality Services. Adequate Funding. Measurable Results.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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MOLINE AREA NONPROFIT HUMAN SERVICE PROVIDERS ORGANIZE FOR UNIFIED VOICE IN SPRINGFIELD

(Moline, IL) The ARC, Arrowhead, Bethany for Children & Families, the Child Abuse Council, Churches United, Skip-a-Long Child Development Services, Transitions Mental Health Services, and the United Way of the Quad-Cities Area, along with area mayors and concerned citizens, are meeting as part of a new statewide campaign to raise awareness that Illinois' structure for providing high priority human services – and the community jobs that deliver those services – has been compromised by the current state budget crisis. ***The meeting is on March 19 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at First Lutheran Church, 1230 5th Ave., Moline, IL.***

The campaign, organized by Illinois Partners for Human Service, comes at time when nonprofit organizations – the primary providers of human services in Illinois – are being forced to seek loans to keep their doors open because state payments for services run anywhere from six to 18 months late. Moreover, providers are under increasing pressure to provide the same level of service with fewer funds. And the state's budget gap continues to widen.

As many as 2 million residents, or approximately 16 percent of people in Illinois, depend on the state funding for basic services such as child care, after-school programs for teens, skills training or help finding jobs, counseling for victims of sexual or domestic abuse, assistance for the mentally ill and developmentally disabled, and in-home care for the elderly. **The picture for Rock Island County is equally grim if the following cuts occur:**

- ✓ 25% cut to childcare funding translates into 165 fewer children receiving affordable childcare, the closing of 30 classrooms, and the elimination of 30 staff positions, as well as 60 families not served in the At Risk Pre-School program—resulting in parents quitting their jobs, living on TANF, or leaving children at home, unattended, while they go to work;
- ✓ 25% cut in funding to at-risk, overburdened, new parent families could result in the elimination of a family support worker and reduction in service by 40 families, cutting it from 95 to 55—leaving those in greatest need extremely vulnerable;
- ✓ 50% cut in funding for pregnant/parenting will result in the elimination of two staff positions and 75% less teens being served. Given that in 2006 the cost to Rock Island County resulting from births to teens was estimated at \$7,250,000, to what degree will those costs escalate with only minimal services in place?

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- ✓ 100% elimination of funding for after-school programming will result in children, who are at the greatest risk for involvement in risky behaviors, having no opportunity for structured activities and guidance during the unsupervised hours after school, before parents return from work.

David VanLandegen, Director of Rock Island County Adult Court Services, states that, "Budget cuts to Illinois' human service providers will have a destructive impact on every segment of the community-- first, employees who have lost their jobs; second, those families/individuals who benefitted from the services previously provided; and perhaps, most tragically, the average citizen who may become a victim of a crime occurring as a result of disparity and lack of basic needs."

To further exacerbate the problem, the Center on Budget and Tax Accountability estimates that between 2003 and 2010, human services were under-funded by \$4.4 billion after both inflation and growth in demand are taken into account. Currently, approximately 400,000 Illinoisans are employed statewide in the human services sector providing an \$8 return to communities for every \$1 invested in human services. With five billion dollars in cuts, a loss of 25,000 jobs could occur. Furthermore, Bob Glaves, Chair of the Board of Directors for the Donors Forum, states clearly that "Our communities cannot afford the real costs of not having a strong human services system."

"Human services have been cut to the bone. Payments are not keeping pace with inflation; the costs of borrowing due to late payments must be paid by the organization; our contracts are adjusted at will without our input – all these factors are seriously impacting the quality of services provided and, indeed, our entire human service system. The public and legislators need to know that people, including very vulnerable children, are in jeopardy and that the state is abandoning citizens in need," said Nancy Ronquillo, Chairperson for Illinois Partners for Human Service, and CEO and President for Children + Family Aid, a major social service provider.

Perhaps, Jack Kaplan, Director of Public Policy and Advocacy for the United Way of Metropolitan Chicago and United Way of Illinois, has best assessed the severity of Illinois' current financial situation by saying, "Our non-profit community is just a breath away from drowning. To survive, agencies have already maxed out their lines of credit, borrowed from reserve funds and cut staff or salaries to the bone. What many fail to realize is that the state budget impacts all of us. Those seeing job training, families with kids in child care centers, children with developmental disabilities, students in after-school programs and seniors receiving nursing care are all on the state's chopping block. With no safety net in place to help when those critical services disappear, we are all in the cross-hairs."

Illinois Partners for Human Service was established in 2008 and is a growing statewide network of over 400 organizations that advocate for high quality, responsible, and sustainable approaches to providing human service in Illinois.

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