

Overview of Human Service Funding

Human services in Illinois are primarily overseen by three agencies: the Department of Human Services (DHS), the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), and the Department of Aging. Each of these agencies receives the bulk of its funding from the State of Illinois' General Revenue Fund. For Fiscal Year 2010, the Illinois General Assembly appropriated \$5.45 billion to be spent across DHS, DCFS and Aging. Due to the state's anticipated revenue shortfall of just over \$1 billion for FY2010, it is unlikely the full appropriated amounts for DHS, DCFS and Aging will actually be available in FY 2010. This would continue a pattern of human service cuts by the state.

In fact, after adjusting for inflation (using the Midwest CPI), since FY2003 Illinois has cut an average of \$385 million per year from its funding for human services. That means in total, DHS, Aging and DCFS programs have been cut by \$3.0 billion through FY2010. In addition, from FY 2002 through FY 2010, Illinois' population increased by 5.2%. To merely keep pace with the increasing population, Illinois would have had to increase human services funding, on average, by \$169 million per year, rather than cut it.

So, after accounting for both inflation and population growth, the state has cuts its funding for human services by a total of \$4.4 billion since FY2002.

Illinois has the fifth largest population and economy of any state, yet ranks in the bottom ten states in terms of General Fund spending as a percentage of GDP. The idea that Illinois is spending too much of its budget on human services is simply not supported by any data.

The effects of Illinois' systematic cuts to human services are being felt more heavily now than ever. Couple the annual cuts to the budget for essential human services with the current nationwide recession, and you get a perfect storm of increased demand for human services, and a state that is simply unable to provide a baseline level of human services to those most in need. Moreover, the impact of the cuts extends beyond those who need the services. Close to 75% of all Human Services in Illinois are delivered by private businesses. The cuts to human services funding, therefore, have resulted not only in people who desperately need these services (such as developmentally disabled adults, at-risk children, homebound seniors, or people dealing with mental health problems) not being able to receive them, but also in job losses for the individuals who contract with the state to provide the services in question.

- Yerik Kaslow, Research Associate