

ILLINOIS FY 2008 BUDGET OUR COMMISSIONED REPORT ON THE FINAL STATE BUDGET

(Feb. 12, 2008) Chicago Foundation for Women believes that a government's budget is best measured by how fairly it treats those who are often left out of the executive and legislative power struggle over funding priorities—women and girls. Budgets are public documents that should not escape public scrutiny. They are also moral documents that tell us who and what matters to the government officials we elect.

Read the full
report at
www.cfw.org
(PDF file)

On Jan. 10, 2008, after months of gridlock, the Illinois General Assembly unanimously approved the final Fiscal Year 2008 budget. Again this year Chicago Foundation for Women asked Voices for Illinois Children to analyze the final Fiscal Year 2008 Illinois Budget item by item to see how women and girls fare when it comes to allocating state funds.

Due to the state's budget crisis, economic security programs fared poorly. Most programs at least received level funding and several faced cuts. One highlight is the funding increase for Monetary Award Program (MAP) grants for Illinois college students in financial need.

Anti-violence programs had ups and downs as well. We applaud the Governor and General Assembly for increasing funds for domestic violence and rape prevention programs. However it is disappointing to see flat funding for sexual assault services, Grants for Violence Prevention Programs and the Illinois Family Violence Coordinating Council. Finally, we are saddened that Operation Cease Fire funding was zeroed out, despite being one of Chicago's most successful gang prevention and intervention programs.

Barriers to accessing health services were addressed in the continued expansion of low-cost health care. We again thank the Governor and General Assembly for expanding All Kids and Family Care, which both provide a medical safety net for uninsured and underinsured children and their families. We also laud the large investment in breast and cervical cancer screenings as well as funding increases for maternal and child health services and the Family Planning and Contraceptive Program. We are not happy to see flat funding for Parents Too Soon, a program that helps new and expectant teen parents, and a continued acceptance of federal Title V abstinence-only education dollars that cost Illinois \$2.5 million in matching funds this year. The Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States evaluated Illinois' abstinence-only funding in 2006 – [read their report \(PDF\)](#).

Chicago Foundation for Women endorses Voices for Illinois Children's recommendation that policymakers must adopt a fair and sustainable revenue plan, given the stagnate economy and Illinois' continued budget woes. Without an improved system for supporting essential services, women and girls in Illinois will continue to face poverty, violence and health problems.

LOOKING AHEAD: A CALL TO ACTION FOR 2009

As Governor Blagojevich prepares his 2009 budget address, Chicago Foundation for Women urges him to put women's and girls' needs first because investing in women has a ripple effect that reaches families and entire communities. In the coming year, the Foundation urges support of:

- Establishing the Commission on Poverty Eradication (HB 4369)—which would propose a new advocacy agenda to cut extreme poverty in half by 2015.
- An increase to Illinois' Earned Income Tax Credit (SB 12), which currently offers a maximum of \$220 to low-income families—the lowest of any state offering a credit.
- The Healthy Families Act—a proposal for all Illinois employers to provide paid sick days, which would allow workers to take time off for an illness or to care for a sick family member.
- An increase to Temporary Assistance to Needy Families grants (HB 949)—especially important to women and girls because the majority of households under the poverty line are headed by single women.
- Comprehensive sex education for all Illinois students—we urge funding for medically accurate and age-appropriate comprehensive sexual health education for all Illinois students. We also ask Illinois to reject federal abstinence-only Title V funding. Recent reports confirm that abstinence-only curricula not only shortchange students on information, they also fail to make young people delay sexual activity or avoid teen pregnancy, and Illinois should not give inaccurate and harmful programs a piece of its ever-shrinking pie.
- Continued expansion of Family Care and Kid Care—which provide health coverage to uninsured and underinsured children and their families.

For more information on Chicago Foundation for Women's budget analyses or any of the specific issues addressed, please contact Cassandra West, director of communications, at (312) 577-2825 or cwest@cfw.org.