



Making It Real

How to Talk About the Impact of Federal Budget Cuts on the People of Your State

Elected officials and the public are not likely to care about proposals to cut federal spending unless they understand how the cuts affect people and communities – and whenever possible, how their own state is affected. It is not enough to say that the budget for child care or a nutrition program has been reduced by a certain dollar amount, or that it is not growing enough to compensate for inflation. Wherever possible, we must show how many children will lose child care or nutrition aid, or be added to waiting lists. In some cases, it is not possible to be that specific. Congress often forces states or localities to live within a reduced budget, but does not direct precisely how the cuts should be implemented. In that case, advocates should at least place the reductions in context – for example, by saying how many now receive the service or noting how many fewer receive the service currently than are eligible.

Another way to persuade people that proposed cuts are wrong is to show that the targeted services are effective. If there is data to show that graduates of post-secondary education get better jobs, or that child care helps families both by fostering child development and by improving job stability, those findings make the case that such programs should be expanded – or at least protected from cuts. Service providers are often in a good position to describe the good that their programs do. Their participation as advocates for the services they provide – and also as advocates for the clients they serve – can add greatly to the effectiveness of any campaign to prevent cuts.

The following sources of state (and sometimes local) data can make it easier for advocates to show the potential impact in their own state. Sometimes it is not possible to do a complete analysis of the effects of cuts in the President's budget in the first few days. But that is when the press is most interested in the story. Advocates can use these sources to describe the likely consequences of cuts in human terms.

Many members of the Coalition on Human Needs prepare analyses of the impact of specific program cuts by state within about a week of the release of the President's budget (February 6). To be sure to receive alerts about the latest information available, as well as updates about Congressional activity and advocacy opportunities, please sign up to receive emails from CHN. You can do that easily on the website: www.chn.org. Or for more information about how your organization can work in coalition with others to prevent cuts and provide opportunity for all, please contact Deborah Weinstein, Coalition on Human Needs, at dweinstein@chn.org.

I. State Data and Analyses Covering Multiple Issues

How Budget Cuts Will Affect Your State, Coalition on Human Needs, January 2006. These are state fact sheets describing the effects of cuts in the FY 2006 reconciliation bill, affecting Medicaid, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), student loans, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and child support enforcement. These cuts have just been enacted. They can provide a starting place as you comment on any proposed cuts for FY 2007 (such as: “Our state is already faced with cuts that are expected to reduce services/raise the cost of medical care for x children. This new cut will hurt them even more.”).

<http://www.chn.org/issues/opportunityforall/statefactsheets.html>

American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau. The most current data available from this survey is from 2004, and includes state, county, metropolitan area, and Congressional district data for general demographics, income, poverty, education levels, use of government benefits, housing, employment, etc.

<http://www.census.gov/acs/www>

The President's Fiscal Year 2006 Budget (Last year's submission – the new one will be for FY 2007, which starts on October 1, 2006). Includes links to tables with federal dollars received by 50 states plus territories for many programs, such as Medicaid, National School Lunch Program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, WIC, Title I Education Aid, etc. at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/fy2006/bis.html>. Each state's share of federal funding for each program is listed, with complete figures for FY 2004 and estimates for FYs 2005 and 2006.

The Fiscal Survey of States, National Governors Association and National Association of State Budget Officers, December 2005. Includes 50 state tables showing the state budget and revenue picture, such as strategies used to reduce or eliminate budget gaps for FY 2005 (Table A-5), or states that enacted TANF benefit increases (Table A-4). Report available at <http://www.nasbo.org/Publications/fiscalsurvey/fsfall2005.pdf>.

2003 State Expenditure Report, National Association of State Budget Officers, 2004. Includes spending categories and trends by state, with detail on such programs as education, TANF, Medicaid, and transportation.

<http://www.nasbo.org/Publications/PDFs/2003ExpendReport.pdf>

National Priorities Project. NPP will produce an analysis by state of the President's FY 2007 budget proposal, available on their website. Website includes a database of federal spending and human needs, with data for state, county, and other subdivisions about hunger, housing, demographics, military expenditures, health, income and poverty, and other topics through 2004. There are also “Quick Reports” with data about hunger and poverty for each state. In addition, the website provides an automatic

calculator that allows viewers to compare policy “tradeoffs” – for instance, how many people in their state could receive health care, or Head Start, for that state's share of certain military expenditures. <http://www.nationalpriorities.org>.

Pulling Apart, A State-by-State Analysis of Income Trends, Jared Bernstein, Elizabeth McNichol and Karen Lyons, January 2006, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Economic Policy Institute. Long-term trends of gap between rich and poor. <http://www.cbpp.org/1-26-06sfp.pdf>

State by State Data on Human Needs. Coalition on Human Needs. Compendium of state data on poverty, health, child welfare, labor, employment, state budget, disability, and education from many sources. <http://www.chn.org/issues/statistics/state.html>.

State Income and Poverty Data. Coalition on Human Needs, August 2005. Includes data for each state from the U.S. Census Bureau from 2004, including overall poverty and levels of health insurance. <http://www.chn.org/dia/organizations/chn/issues/statistics/povertyday.html>

II. Medicaid

Federal Medicaid Funding (estimated) by State/Territory: Table 8-16 from the President's FY 2006 budget submission (released in 2005), at http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/fy2006/sheets/8_16.xls
Until the updated version from the President's new budget is made available, this provides estimates of the Federal Medicaid funding to each state, and the percentage that amount is of total federal Medicaid spending.

Health Coverage in America, 2004 Data Update, The Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured. Includes state tables. <http://www.kff.org/uninsured/7415.cfm>

Medicaid Benefits: Online Database, The Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured. Descriptions of medical services provided by state, including co-payments and limits on services, in 2003-2004. <http://www.kff.org/medicaid/benefits/index.jsp>

State Medicaid Cuts: The Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured, “The Continuing Medicaid Budget Challenge: State Medicaid Spending Growth and Cost Containment in Fiscal Years 2004 and 2005.” Kaiser Family Foundation, at <http://www.kff.org/medicaid/7190.cfm>

State Information: Families USA. Includes information about state health initiatives http://www.familiesusa.org/site/PageServer?pagename=States_States1

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. A wealth of timely analysis of Medicaid and other federal health policy proposals, sometimes with state breakdowns. <http://www.cbpp.org>

III. Child Care

Child Care Assistance Policies 2005: States Fail to Make Up Lost Ground, Families Continue to Lack Critical Supports, Karen Schulman, Helen Blank, National Women's Law Center, September 2005. Includes state tables for income eligibility, numbers on waiting lists, co-payments, and state reimbursement rates. Found at http://www.nwlc.org/pdf/ChildCareSubsidyReport_September2005.pdf.

Child Care Assistance in 2004: States Have Fewer Funds for Child Care, by Hannah Matthews and Danielle Ewen, Center for Law and Social Policy, December 1, 2005. <http://www.clasp.org/publications.php?id=3#0>

President's FY 2006 Budget, Analytical Perspectives, Current Services Estimates. Table 24-4, on page 393 includes beneficiary projections through FY 2010. For the Child Care and Development Fund (federal child care funding), they projected a loss of 300,000 child care placements from FY 2004 through FY 2010. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/fy2006/pdf/spec.pdf>

2 Percent Federal Funding Cut Would Slash Head Start Enrollment in Fiscal Year 2006, National Head Start Association, October 27, 2005. State-by-state impact of FY 2006 budget proposal. <http://www.nhsa.org/download/research/oct272005.pdf>

IV. Earned Income Tax Credit

EIC Participation for Tax Year 2003, by State, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. This table indicates both the number of tax filers who received the EITC by state and the total dollars those credits were worth in 2003. It also includes preliminary data for 2004. http://www.cbpp.org/eic2006/EIC_Participation.pdf.

V. Housing and Homelessness

Out of Reach 2005, by Danilo Pelletiere, Keith Wardrip, and Sheila Crowley, National Low Income Housing Coalition. Shows the full-time hourly wage required in every state (also some counties and municipalities) to afford a two-bedroom apartment at the fair market value. An affordable rent is defined as not exceeding 30 percent of the household's income. <http://www.nlihc.org/oor2005/>

Hunger and Homelessness Survey: A Status Report on Hunger and Homelessness in America's Cities, U.S. Conference of Mayors, December 2005. Annual survey. <http://www.usmayors.org/uscm/hungersurvey/2005/HH2005FINAL.pdf>

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Excellent analyses of federal housing proposals, including rental vouchers. See housing pages at <http://www.cbpp.org>

VI. Nutrition Programs

Household Food Security in the United States, 2004, by Mark Nord, Margaret Andrew, Steve Carlson, Economic Research Services, USDA, October 2005. For state data, see Appendix D. <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/err11/>

State of the States 2005, A Profile of Food and Nutrition Programs Across the Nation, Food Research and Action Center, February 2005, http://www.frac.org/State_Of_States/2005/Report.pdf.

Provides state-by-state data about participation in food stamps, child nutrition and emergency food programs. In addition to state participation data for these programs, the publication includes links to other sources of nutrition data with state specifics.

Food Stamp Access in Urban America: A City-By-City Snapshot, Food Research and Action Center, September 2005. Data for selected cities from 2000-2003. <http://www.frac.org/pdf/cities2005.pdf>

School Breakfast Scorecard: 2005, Food Research and Action Center, December 2005. Evaluates level of participation in school breakfast programs by state. http://www.frac.org/pdf/2005_SBP.pdf

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