

# eliminating racism empowering women

ywca press release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## YWCA Responds to Budget Address

Chicago, (March 12, 2010) – YWCA Metropolitan Chicago issued the following statement in response to Governor Quinn's budget address:

YWCA Metropolitan Chicago can appreciate the enormous task facing the governor during this unprecedented fiscal crisis, yet we are painfully aware that this plan will primarily harm women and their families, already vulnerable to economic instability in this recession. We believe a better plan that would adequately protect Illinois' essential services – not just education but health care, human services, public safety and more – is through comprehensive tax reform like House Bill 174, or one similar to it.

A one-percentage point tax increase falls far short of the comprehensive revenue necessary to both close our \$13 billion deficit and keep Illinois citizens on track. Rather, it is an invitation for our legislature to delay, yet again, doing what even Speaker Madigan acknowledged needs to be done, minutes after the governor addressed the Assembly.

The 138,000 women and girls YWCA Metropolitan Chicago serves will feel these damaging cuts and delayed payments to education, human services, and public safety acutely. If our Democratic and Republican leaders fail once more to support a responsible budget with adequate revenue, YWCA Metropolitan Chicago will no longer be able to perform the following:

- Answer more than **3,500 rape crisis hotline** calls annually
- Provide over **17,000 hours of crisis** counseling, legal and medical advocacy, and violence prevention education to survivors of sexual assault and youth.
- Engage **over 50,000 children and teens in anti-violence education.**
- Make over **450 home visits** to teen parents, as in the last six months.

- Train approximately **2,339 child care providers**, in this fiscal year so far.
- Provide child care assistance services to approximately **6,000 families** per month.
- Process more than **7,000 payments** to child care providers every month
- Provide more than **250,000 meals** to children in child care every 6 months

Every reduction in funding that is not supported by additional revenue carries a cost to women and their families. The human services sector not only provides community support to a predominantly female population, but it also employs a largely female workforce. These reductions will force organizations like YWCA Metropolitan Chicago reduce services *and* reduce staff by at least 20 percent, thus adding to Illinois' already bulging unemployment rolls. To ignore these harsh facts and do nothing is to engage in the worst of political gamesmanship.

The right course of action is clear. Rather than eliminate jobs just as our economy begins to rebound, and destroy vital services when they're needed more than ever, leaders in both chambers need to reform our state's broken revenue structure and fix this broken budget. As 48 other states have done in the past year, Illinois will need to raise revenue in order to meet the challenges of the recession.

We stand with over 200 organizations across this state, rejecting the usual politics in Springfield that have given us decades of structural deficits and the chronic under-funding of our work.

To repeat this cycle of inaction is irresponsible. Women in every district across this state will suffer. We demand our leaders to act responsibly and create a comprehensive solution to save jobs, pay the bills, fund vital services and build a better Illinois.

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**About the YWCA:** *Our mission to eliminate racism and empower women is actualized through a large breadth of programs and services. Regardless of race or economic status, the YWCA provides women with the support and tools they need to transform their lives, be confident in their choices and raise healthy families. Our four core programmatic areas include: economic empowerment services, sexual violence and support services, early childhood services, and the center for racial justice and activism. With more than 150 employees working at 10 locations throughout metropolitan Chicago, we serve over 138,000 women, children and families annually through these programs. And while our services are broad and varied, they are linked by a common thread—our dedication to promoting racial justice and personal empowerment across everything we do.*