

State Leaders Are Failing Women By Failing to Pass a Responsible Budget

Introduction

In May 2015, shortly before the Illinois budget impasse began, the Institute for Women's Policy Research ranked Illinois the 2nd best state in the Midwest for women to live.¹ The report gave Illinois high marks for the percentage of college-educated women and women business owners.²

The once bright prospects for Illinois women are dimming as the state has entered its sixth month without a comprehensive budget. State leaders have abandoned investments that provide opportunities to get a good education and a good job, promote health and safety, allow children to grow and succeed, provide support for those caring for children, seniors, and those with disabilities, and foster thriving communities.

Women are disproportionately harmed by the failure of leaders to make passing a budget - one that chooses revenue over cuts to vital services - our state's number one priority. This is due to the fact that women make far less than men for the very same work and caregiving responsibilities are far more likely to fall on their shoulders.

Continued delay in enacting a budget creates immediate and lasting consequences for women. There are also serious consequences for women over the medium and long-term if lawmakers fail to raise sustainable revenues. If unpaid bills continue to pile up, services such as breast and cervical cancer screenings, energy assistance, and K-12 education could also be at risk in the not too distant future.

The analysis below shows a number of ways state policymakers are currently failing women.

Denying Women Opportunities to Go to College and Work

Denying Opportunities to Go to College

When women get education or training beyond high school, they expand their earnings and their opportunities. A two-year degree means a 38 percent increase in pay on average and a four-year degree, 78 percent.³

54% of undergraduate students at Illinois public colleges and universities are women.⁴ Illinois public colleges and universities have not received any state funding since July. The lack of state funding has caused faculty and staff layoffs⁵ and tuition increases.^{6 7} College officials around the state have reported that the lack of state support is forcing them to exhaust their schools' financial reserves.⁸

The state also stopped funding college tuition assistance through MAP grants for up to 130,000 students.⁹ 62% of MAP grant recipients last year were female.¹⁰ Universities are warning students that they may have to pay back MAP grants that are currently being used to pay their tuition.^{11 12 13}

Denying Access to Affordable Child Care for Those Who Work

78% of families using the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) are female-headed single-parent households.¹⁴ Due to rules instituted by the Rauner Administration in July, families' co-pays for childcare have jumped as much as 20%. And despite the Rauner Administration's decision to restore eligibility in November to most families denied under its July rule, an estimated 10,000 children who would have been eligible under the pre-July guidelines remain ineligible.¹⁵

Cutting Jobs Held by Women

Nearly seven in ten workers who are employed in Illinois' non-profit sector are women.¹⁶ Many work for organizations that receive state funding.

An October survey by the United Way of 500 organizations that receive state funding found that 22 percent of these organizations have been forced to lay off staff.¹⁷

Failing to Support Female Caregivers

An estimated 66% of unpaid caregivers are female. One-third take care of two or more people.¹⁸

Without a doubt, cuts to services for children, seniors, and those with disabilities will fall upon the shoulders of unpaid or undercompensated female caregivers.

Robbing Women Seniors of Independence and Dignity

Increasing Hunger

60% of seniors experiencing food insecurity – meaning they, at times, don't have enough to eat and may not know where their next meal will come from - are female.¹⁹

No state funding is being provided to the Meals on Wheels Program, placing at risk more than 6.5 million meals delivered five days a week to homebound seniors each year.²⁰ The Meals on Wheels Programs in Alton²¹ and Springfield²² are among those that have been forced to cut the number of meals provided to seniors.²³

Defunding Support Services for Senior Women

Illinois' seniors have a poverty rate of 8.5 percent. For senior women, the poverty rate is much higher, 13.8 percent.²⁴

Nonprofits that serve seniors have been forced to rely on extended lines of credit and are spending down cash reserves, resulting in reduced capacity to provide senior support services including housekeeping assistance, friendly visiting, home repair, housing, respite, senior centers, telephone reassurance, transportation, and an information and referral network.²⁵

Endangering Women's Safety

Defunding Sexual Assault Services

1 in 5 women in the United States has been raped in their lifetime.²⁶

Illinois is not providing any state funding for sexual assault services and prevention. Rape crisis centers are facing layoffs of 30-40%, which would result in turning away 3,400 victims of sexual violence who need advocacy and counseling. Closures are pending due to lack of funds for rent, phone, utilities, and other essential costs. Another 3,700 or more victims who need crisis intervention and information after a sexual assault will not receive this critical care.²⁷

Increasing Poverty and Homelessness Among Women

Women are Paid Less and Experience Higher Rates of Poverty and Homelessness

At all education levels, earnings for Illinois women are much lower than for men.²⁸ So it comes as no surprise that 55% of Illinoisans living in poverty are women.²⁹

Families with young children are among the fastest growing groups in the United States affected by homelessness. A typical sheltered homeless family is comprised of a mother in her late twenties with two children.³⁰ Many families who do have housing are on the brink of losing it. Nearly a quarter of families in Illinois pay more than 50% of their income on rent.³¹

90% of Homeless Services Organizations Have or Will Be Forced to Reduced Services

According to a survey released in September 2015, 90% of homeless service providers in Illinois have already or will be forced to reduce intake of new clients, decrease or eliminate services, layoff/furlough staff, eliminate programs, or close their sites, making it harder for individuals and families who are homeless to access emergency shelter and transitional housing.³²

Defunding Affordable Housing

The HOME Investment Partnerships Program is not being funded, meaning contractors building new affordable housing in Illinois and working on emergency repairs in mostly rural counties are not being paid.³³

Conclusion

The loss of critical state services is shifting a greater burden onto the shoulders of women. State policymakers are failing women across the state by failing to pass a year-long, fully-funded budget that chooses revenue over cuts to services women rely on. State leaders are:

- denying women opportunities to go to college and work,
- failing to support female caregivers,
- robbing women seniors of independence and dignity,
- endangering women's safety,
- and increasing poverty and homelessness among women.

When women are denied opportunity and independence, our families, our communities, our economy, and our entire state suffer. **The right choice for women is the right choice for Illinois, to choose revenue.**

The [Responsible Budget Coalition \(RBC\)](#) is a large and diverse coalition of approximately 200 organizations concerned about state budget and tax issues. It includes organizations that serve children, families, veterans, seniors and people with disabilities; education groups concerned about early learning, K-12 and higher education; labor unions; faith-based and civic organizations; and many others.

The individual organizations that belong to the RBC represent a diverse range of interests but are united by these three common principles:

- Adequate revenue to support state priorities and make smart investments
- No more cuts to vital programs and services
- Fairness in raising revenue

- ¹ <http://statusofwomendata.org/>
- ² <http://statusofwomendata.org/explore-the-data/state-data/illinois>
- ³ <http://womenemployed.org/educational-success>
- ⁴ Illinois Board of Higher Education. <http://www.ibhe.org/IBHEDatabook/ChapterI/Table%20I-2.aspx>
- ⁵ <http://www.sj-r.com/article/20150818/NEWS/150819523>
- ⁶ http://thesouthern.com/news/local/education/siu-board-approves-percent-tuition-hike/article_7ecf9b91-c472-50ea-b915-c38f139ee1e9.html (Note: the tuition increase was made in anticipation of budget cuts)
- ⁷ http://herald-review.com/news/local/education/cuts-tuition-increasing-as-richland-deal-with-budget-concerns/article_900ef639-c265-52d1-99bc-3a624b37b6ed.html
- ⁸ <http://wuis.org/post/education-desk-colleges-are-running-out-money#stream/0>
- ⁹ p 11 <http://www.voices4kids.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Lack-of-Budget-Dismantling-Critical-State-Services-Final.pdf>
- ¹⁰ Response to Inquiry from Women Employed to the Illinois Student Assistance Commission. August 2015.
- ¹¹ <http://www.wjbc.com/2015/11/16/isu-college-democrats-urge-lawmakers-to-pass-a-budget-save-map-grants/>
- ¹² <http://www.dailyillini.com/article/2015/11/thousands-to-be-affected-by-map-grant-cut>
- ¹³ http://northernstar.info/opinion/legislators-rauner-must-compromise/article_1843ddc6-9722-11e5-8f15-cfc839973a3e.html
- ¹⁴ Fiscal Policy Center estimate based on data from the [FY 2014 Illinois Child Care Report](#) and American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates on Families with Related Children Below 185% of Federal Poverty Level (2011-2013).
- ¹⁵ <http://www.seiuhcilin.org/2015/11/17/as-gov-rauner-deal-is-codified-at-jcar-meeting-major-threats-to-child-care-remain/>
- ¹⁶ <http://buildingstrongeril.com/statewide-profile/social-impact-employees/>
- ¹⁷ <http://www.rrstar.com/article/20151031/OPINION/151039892>
- ¹⁸ <https://www.caregiver.org/selected-caregiver-statistics>
- ¹⁹ p 26 <http://www.mowaa.org/document.doc?id=193>
- ²⁰ p 6 <http://www.voices4kids.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Lack-of-Budget-Dismantling-Critical-State-Services-Final.pdf>
- ²¹ <http://thetelegraph.com/news/73487/frerichs-calls-for-budget-talks>
- ²² <http://wics.com/sports/senior-services-to-cut-food-programs-due-to-lack-of-state-budget>
- ²³ p 9 <http://www.voices4kids.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Lack-of-Budget-Dismantling-Critical-State-Services-Final.pdf>
- ²⁴ <http://www.progressillinois.com/quick-hits/content/2013/06/07/half-america-s-seniors-have-dangerously-low-incomes-new-report-shows>
- ²⁵ p 7 <http://www.voices4kids.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Lack-of-Budget-Dismantling-Critical-State-Services-Final.pdf>

²⁶ <http://www.ncadv.org/learn/statistics>

²⁷ <http://www.voices4kids.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Lack-of-Budget-Dismantling-Critical-State-Services-Final.pdf>

²⁸ p 10 http://www.ilpovertyreport.org/sites/default/files/uploads/Illinois_33percent_PovertyReport_FINAL.pdf

²⁹ p 8 http://www.ilpovertyreport.org/sites/default/files/uploads/Illinois_33percent_PovertyReport_FINAL.pdf

³⁰ p 1 <http://www.familyhomelessness.org/media/327.pdf>

³¹ http://www.ilpovertyreport.org/sites/default/files/uploads/PR15_Report_FINAL.pdf

³² http://housingactionil.org/downloads/State_Budget_Homeless_Service_Provider_Report.pdf

³³ p 9 <http://www.voices4kids.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Lack-of-Budget-Dismantling-Critical-State-Services-Final.pdf>