

New York State Assembly Committee on Social Services
Public Hearing – Impact of 2009-2010 State Budget
Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance
Programs and Services, December 15, 2009

Testimony – Carole Coppens, Executive Director, YWCA Binghamton and Broome County

I am here this morning to speak on behalf of 6 YWCA's in the Northeast Regional Council YWCA who currently have contracts with OTDA for SRO Support Services. The YWCA's are:

1. Rochester & Monroe County: Jean Carroll, Executive Director
175 N. Clinton Ave., Rochester, NY 14604
2. Northeastern New York: Rowie Taylor, Executive Director
44 Washington Ave., Schenectady, NY 12305
3. Syracuse & Onondaga County: Joan Durant, Executive Director
120 E. Washington St., Syracuse, NY 13202
4. Greater Capital Region: Sherry Rounds, Executive Director
21 First Street, Troy, NY 12180
5. White Plains & Central Westchester: Maria Imperial, Executive Director
515 North Street, White Plains, NY 10605
6. Binghamton & Broome County: Carole Coppens, Executive Director
80 Hawley St., Binghamton, NY 13901

The total annual contract amount for these 6 YWCA's is \$1,012,000.

A 12.5% reduction would mean the loss of 7 full time staff, case managers and security.

We all use the SRO Support Services funds to care for homeless women with severe mental illness coupled with chemical dependency and alcohol addiction. Many are victims of domestic violence.

Through the services provided by the SRO funds, women learn new life skills, find and retain employment, leave public assistance and become productive citizens.

Of equal or perhaps even more importance is that the SRO Support Services Funding provides cash match for federal grants, specifically HUD McKinney-Vinto Homeless Assistance Funding. There are no other sources for the cash match. The impact here is significant and could potentially mean having to close programs that operate with HUD contracts.

The YWCA Brooklyn should have been awarded 218 units of SRO funding last January. Due to budget cuts, they did not receive the funding. The 218 units are fully leased with no services available for the residents. The Brooklyn YWCA had planned to hire 5 case managers.

We understand the level of the budget crisis the State is in and are not here today to ask for money. We support the same request that other witnesses such as Ms. Berlin, Mr. Houghton and Ms. Ramos

mentioned in their testimony, which is for the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance be given flexibility to manage the reduction to its budgets.

Thank you for allowing me to participate as a witness at this public hearing on behalf of the YWCA's listed above. And many thanks to your continued commitment to all the most vulnerable citizens of New York State.