

2019 SCAP Advocacy Agenda (approved by BOD 2/20/19)

Early Care and Education – access to quality child care and early education supports early brain development (85% of brain development occurs before age 5), greater school success/readiness, and is essential for New York's economy, providing care so parents can work.

State Advocacy:

Child Care – Support the Empire State Campaign for Child Care, in particular:

- Increase State funding to counties for child care subsidies and program operation to expand equitable access to quality child care.
 - Add \$51 million to restore child care subsidies to 2016 levels, adjusting for 4 years of inflation.
 - Add \$26 million to revise the copayment formula so no qualified family contributes more than 20% of its gross income exceeding the poverty level as the parent share. Schenectady Cty's is at 35% of income over poverty level, the highest in the state (along with 23 other counties).
- Increase State funding for the Child Care Facilitated Enrollment Projects to expand access to subsidies available to working families at higher income eligibility levels.
- Support continued funding for QUALITYstarsNY.

Universal Pre-k – community-based early education programs provide high quality services in a cost-efficient manner. High quality programming exists in Schenectady County and can be expanded with additional UPK resources directed to community providers above the state-mandated 10%.

- Prioritize the needs of at-risk children and open to all districts
- Increase the state-mandated 10% pass-through to community based providers in current UPK legislation.
- Create a consistent state-wide reimbursement per child for community providers.

<http://empirejustice.org>

<https://www.empirestatechildcare.org>

Federal Advocacy:

Homelessness – In Schenectady County, on any given night there are 274 people who are homeless, a rate of 17.7 per 10,000. Since last year, the number of homeless (sheltered and unsheltered) families and individuals have risen slightly and only veterans and unaccompanied youth has decreased. Fortunately New York is slowly and systematically trying to address this with an increase in the number of available supportive housing options for people in New York. Preventing homelessness reduces trauma in children and adults.

State Advocacy:

- SCAP supports increasing the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Shelter allowance to 50% of HUD Fair Market Rent and doubling the fuel allowance, which has not been increased in 29 years.
- Fully fund the current NYS Supportive Housing Program – This includes NYSSHP and STEPH which remain under funded.

Federal Advocacy:

Support the FY 2018 Senate bill to include \$2.612 billion for HUD's McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants. This exceeds the Administration request (which decreased funding for existing programs by \$130 million) and the House bill that asked for \$2.571 billion.

Note: federal funding through the McKinney-Vento funds direct HUD grants to SCAP and our local partners AND the City of Schenectady's CDBG/ESG/HOME grants (given to SCAP & other local agencies AND some City run services) and a number of pass-through NY State grants (STEPH, NYSSHP, ESSHI – all received by SCAP).

<https://endhomelessness.org>

<https://shnny.org>

Workforce Development – According to NYATEP “New York is facing a labor shortage....over a quarter of the current workforce is at or near retirement age. Outside of NYC, all local labor markets have lost between 1.2% - 8.7% of their workers. There are people available to work – they just lack the skills needed to take the jobs being created or to move out of low wage jobs.

In Schenectady County, over 30% of people have a high school diploma or less – that is almost 40,000 people who need advanced skills to be able to compete for today's jobs. The majority of job growth has been in low-wage, low-skill work. The median annual wages for New York's fastest growing occupations is around \$24,000; less than half of what it would take for a family of four to be able to make ends meet. “77% of the top fastest growing occupations – retail sales, food preparation, cleaners, low end healthcare occupations-- will likely be replaced with automation.” This will disrupt people with the lowest skills and causing even more income inequality and economic consequences for Schenectady County and NYS.

- Support NYATEP's recommended strategy that “our economic development strategy includes investing in, growing and retaining talent.....create intentional career pathways and support employee retraining and the \$175 million in workforce development proposed be used by regional and local workforce systems focus on low-skill New Yorkers to gain the skills they need for good jobs and grow their careers.
- Providers need flexibility to solve problems on the ground: like transportation and childcare subsidies to enable low-income, low-skill, working New Yorkers to take advantage of training or get to a job.
- \$3.5 million for Displaced Homemaker Programs. The DHP is a cost-effective, comprehensive program with a return on investment of \$14 for every \$1 spent.

<https://www.nyatep.org>

Community Services – According to the Talk Poverty Project by the Center for American Progress, NY ranks at the top nationally for income inequality. Jobs with low wages, housing and child care costs (top 10 in the Nation), health care costs, and the reduction in the social safety net are combining to make it harder.

SCAP supports the Talk Poverty Project, United Way's ALICE Initiative, Fiscal Policy Institute and Strong Nonprofits for a Better NY recommendations.

State Advocacy:

Raise the Minimum Wage – SCAP applauds efforts to date to raise the minimum wage, however,

- NYS must ensure contracts increase commensurate with the minimum wage AND ensures a reasonable parity to support skilled workers (ensuring less wage compression) and reflect the skill and education levels that they require.

Expansion of the Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative (ESPRI)– SCAP supports expansion of the 16 ESPRI communities to include Schenectady, the only Upstate City not included that is one of 10 Cities with the highest child poverty in NYS, at nearly 40% in the City of Schenectady. Schenectady should be included in an expansion of the initiative.

<https://talkpoverty.org>

<http://www.uwnys.org>

<http://fiscalpolicy.org>

Federal Advocacy

- **Federal Community Services Block Grant funds** – maintain FY2017 funding levels at \$715 million
 - Critical to ensure innovative solutions to poverty at the local level. The only dedicated federal funding stream for anti-poverty.
- **Federal Li-HEAP** - maintain FY 2017 levels of \$3.39 billion
 - NY receives over \$360 million in Li-HEAP funding
 - Funding supports energy conservation activities and ensure low income households can keep the power on through emergency utility payments

Medicaid and Health Care - 1 in every 3 residents receives some type of healthcare coverage through Medicaid, Child Health Plus, Affordable Care Act and other government initiatives.

Federal Advocacy:

- Efforts continue in Congress to reduce Medicaid spending and the Administration is allowing States to impose work requirements on Medicaid enrollees. While a majority of people receiving Medicaid do work, SCAP does not support adding work requirements.

State Advocacy:

- SCAP supports the Executive Budget proposal of \$74 billion in healthcare spending, a 4.5% increase.

<https://www.americanprogress.org/tag/budget-tax-and-infrastructure/view/>

<http://fiscalpolicy.org>

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Food Stamps) – over 21,000 Schenectady County residents receive Food Stamps. Roughly 1 in 6 Americans relies on some form of government-funded food assistance – food stamps, Meals on Wheels, Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), free and reduced school lunches and other programs. Close to two-thirds are children, elderly, or disabled. The Administration continues to call for cuts to Food Stamps in particular, arguing that private charities will pick up the slack.

The final Farm Bill did not cut benefits and preserved current funding. However, each year the Administration, and some members of Congress have proposed cuts to SNAP. SCAP does not support efforts to reduce SNAP benefits or add additional requirements to people who receive SNAP.

www.frac.org

Questions can be addressed to: Debra L. Schimpf, Chief Executive Officer @ dschimpfceo@scapny.org

In Schenectady County the poverty rate is 12% and in the City of Schenectady it is 21%. The Child Poverty Rate in Schenectady County is 19.6% and in the City of Schenectady it is 38.3%. Both the County and the City saw a 1% reduction in poverty.