

The ES2 Campaign is about families – like yours and mine. It is a statewide coalition of more than 200 social service providers, faith based groups, and concerned citizens coming together to say that NY can do better for our families.

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November, 2011 Newsletter

Hello all! Fall brings exciting new events for the ES2 Campaign. Thank you for your constant energy and support towards ensuring that New York does better for our families.

In the face of this crushing recession, we are met with drastic cuts to resources and services despite urgent public need. **Unfortunately, the state budget enacted in April 2011 significantly cut social services programs** including jobs programs, as well as education, healthcare, and other critical components of New York's fragile safety net, inflicting further disparity and hardships across the state.

On September 26, the ES2 Steering Committee met with key staff in the Governor's office, OTDA (Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance), and the legislative offices on **the next session's state budget**. We communicated ES2 priorities, including:


Childcare: Currently, a single parent is exempt from welfare work requirements until her child is 3 months old. After that, she must return to the workforce and somehow obtain adequate childcare. The constant cuts to childcare undermine the poor's ability to stay in the workforce and off of welfare.

*We proposed that the temporary exemption for work requirements be modified for welfare recipients with **children up to age one or two**. This would allow the localities to continue to provide child care subsidies to employed low-income parents not receiving welfare or to welfare recipients engaged in job training and education activities.*

Sanctions Reform: The ES2 Committee opposes Full Family Sanctions, which withhold critical cash assistance from very low-income households as punishment for "mistakes" often reversed at fair hearings. These inflexible policies help push a whopping **25% of recipient households deeper into poverty**, resulting in lost access to food, housing and other basic necessities. Many of these sanctions are due to ignored or overlooked disabilities.

*This bill passed the Social Services Committee last year but was not introduced in the Senate. The Governor's office introduced full family sanctions last year, which goes **the opposite way** by zeroing out the grant to children in the household. Once this makes it into the budget, it will be difficult to undo. We asked that the Governor's office **not re-introduce full family sanctions this year**, as it causes these families extreme hardships and is often caused by agency error.*

Access to Education and Training: Welfare recipients are required to participate in "Work Experience Programs" (WEP) or job search in order to continue receiving benefits. Homework,



four-year colleges and the pursuit of advanced degrees often are not qualified as a "work activity" by the welfare agencies, despite the fact that **higher education is most consistently linked with employment and upward mobility**. Denying this opportunity for welfare recipients will further inhibit self-sufficiency and growth.

We asked that NY State consider homework, four year colleges and the pursuit of advanced degrees as meeting welfare work requirements. We also asked that Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) be expanded for full-time and part time students, as 80% of TAP recipients stay in NYS and add to the economy.

Please click [this link](#) to view ES2's complete list of talking points.

The ES2 Steering Committee will continue our advocacy work on these priorities. We hope that you will be able to join us in Albany on **Wednesday, March 7, 2012** for our Legislative Education and Action Day (LEAD).