



6.9.09

**Has the Illinois legislature passed a budget for the upcoming year (FY10)?**

The legislature passed a series of budget bills that still face final action by the Governor, making **now** the time to act to ensure we secure a responsible revenue-and-spending plan that is good for all Illinoisans.

- Like many other states, Illinois faces an unprecedented budget shortfall due to the struggling economy and the state's "structural deficit" – the current revenue system's chronic inability to keep up with basic needs. This shortfall is so big, it cannot be closed through spending cuts alone; a balanced solution requires a revenue increase. However, the legislature failed to pass legislation that would generate the revenues needed to keep critical programs operating:
  - A bill to increase taxes moderately – as well as boost accountability measures – passed the Senate, but was never voted on in the House.
  - Another, separate bill to raise taxes moderately failed to pass the House.
- Bottom Line: No tax increase measure was sent to the Governor for consideration.
- The legislature *did* pass a series of budget bills that would essentially cut funding in half for many state priorities. Essential programs such as child care, preschool, senior services and drug treatment could be slashed or eliminated. It's critical to understand that this package of bills does **not** establish the final funding levels for specific programs or line items. These bills have not been signed by the Governor.

**Is this "doomsday" budget only supposed to cover the next six months of costs?**

**No.** The package of bills – and the inadequate funding it authorizes – is meant to be stretched over **12 months** worth of spending, according to both the Governor's administration and House Democratic Leaders.

**How can I find out about funding for a specific program?**

At this point (June 9), no one has information about the fate of specific programs. This is because the "doomsday" budget passed by the legislature only provides lump sums of money to agencies. Under this budget, agencies would be required to decide how those lump sums are allocated to specific programs, and that process has not taken place. At some point, agencies will release specific funding amounts for specific programs.

**So what now?**

Legislative leaders and the Governor continue to negotiate budget options. In addition, agency heads are prioritizing programs in their divisions and trying to determine how funding will be distributed. Real children and real families in communities throughout Illinois are going to bear the brunt of these decisions. That's why it's urgent that each of us reaches out to legislators and the media about the need to protect vital services for kids and families in a balanced way: through a modest tax increase that will produce desperately needed state revenues.

**How can I help ensure that crucial programs have adequate resources to serve Illinois residents who depend on them?**

Staying informed and engaged is an important first step. Please visit Voices' website at [www.voices4kids.org](http://www.voices4kids.org) or contact [Spanoor@voices4kids.org](mailto:Spanoor@voices4kids.org) for additional resources and help taking action on behalf of our children and families.