

Basic talking points for revenue conversations with policymakers

Main messages:

- 1. Illinois is facing a massive budget shortfall, and cuts alone cannot solve our problem.**
 - 2. Now is the time for fiscal responsibility: increase Illinois' personal income tax rate to at least 5 percent to ensure important children's programs and services are adequately funded.**
 - 3. To keep families from falling deeper into poverty and to provide balance in our tax system, we also need to increase the Illinois Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).**
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Expanded messages:

We must increase Illinois' personal income tax rate to at least 5 percent, to maintain adequate funding for important children's services and fix our state's broken revenue system.

- a. Even before the economic downturn, our state's weak revenue system threatened the well-being of children by failing to support many important education, health and human services.*
- b. Without a significant revenue increase, **we would have to slash the majority of funding for many important services, or even eliminate them altogether.** The impact would be devastating for vulnerable families and communities in your district.*
- c. Cuts in vital programs are incredibly shortsighted. We must preserve investments in critical, prevention-oriented programs that help kids avoid problems today that are far more expensive tomorrow, fiscally and socially.*

Cuts alone cannot fill our multibillion-dollar budget shortfall. A balanced solution includes raising the personal income tax rate to at least 5 percent. The income tax is the best option for raising new revenues, as it's based on people's ability to pay – unlike other alternatives.

To keep families from falling deeper into poverty and provide balance in our tax system, we also need to increase the Illinois Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).

- a. The income tax increase, coupled with an increase in the EITC, will help ensure balance and stability in our tax system.*
- b. The EITC is a proven way to lift families out of poverty and keep them in the workforce.*