

Executive Summary

Following the 2016 election, FPWA member agencies expressed grave concern about the impact of federal fiscal policies on New York City's social services budget and sector. Our members — many of whom have been fighting poverty on the frontlines for more than a century — rely on federal funding to provide care for older adults, the youth, people living with mental illness, and persons with physical disabilities. They're also stamping out hunger, offering safety and services for survivors of domestic violence, building skills and breaking down barriers for individuals locked out of the workforce, and working to integrate the justice-involved into their communities.

In response, we created the [FPWA Federal Funds Tracker](#) to foster greater awareness of and engagement in the federal budget process through **data, storytelling, and action**.

These declines are in part a result of post-Recession austerity. More recently, the Tax Cut and Jobs Act (TCJA) for the powerful few and profitable corporations is being used by the bill's proponents to [justify deeper cuts](#)ⁱ to critical programs.

In 2017, an unacceptable 43 million Americans (12.3 percent of the population) lived in poverty, including 12.8 million children. In New York City, 1.5 million live in poverty (18 percent of the population), including more than 440,000 children under 18 years of age (25 percent). Beyond the official but outdated poverty measure, [nearly half](#)ⁱⁱ of New York City residents cannot afford a basic standard of living.

In one of the world's richest nations, poverty and inequality are a result of policy choices. Indeed, according to a recent report from the [U.N. Human Rights Council](#)ⁱⁱⁱ, "the US leads the developed world in income and wealth inequality, and (in reference to the TCJA and relentless efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act) it is now moving full steam ahead to make itself even more unequal."

Federal disinvestment and misplaced priorities matter to all New Yorkers. The City's historic commitment to caring for people who are struggling to afford meet basic needs means that it is often left to fill the gaps when the federal government abdicates its responsibility. In other words, the money that NYC spends on social services in the absence of sufficient federal support could be spent on other matters that are equally important, such as maintaining mass transit systems, supporting the City's cultural institutions, protecting the environment, and helping pay for police and fire departments.

By shining a light on the impact that disinvestments have had on NYC's social services budget, **we hope to foster greater engagement in the federal budget process from all New Yorkers.**