

State of Our State: Failure to Invest in Families and Communities Is Weakening Illinois

Responsible budgeting isn't just about balancing revenues and expenditures. It's fundamentally about making sure all families in Illinois – all of them – can live in a state that offers opportunity and makes the public investments needed to secure a prosperous future.

By using families and communities as leverage for a non-budget agenda and failing to enact a budget that includes the resources needed to preserve thriving communities and to support families, policymakers have lost sight of the common good. The result is a weakening Illinois.

Policymakers' failure to choose revenue and enact a fully funded state budget has weakened Illinois families, communities, and economy. With no state budget in place more than halfway into the fiscal year, essential activities have stopped, and the state is once again racking up billions of dollars in unpaid bills that will haunt Illinois for years to come. Nonprofits that provide vital services like those for children with epilepsy and home-care for veterans are laying off staff and closing their doors.

Without action, the harm to our communities and our economy will continue to grow, and the foundation for opportunity and broad-based prosperity for generations of Illinoisans will continue to crumble.

The damage is widespread across our state. Students are dropping out of college because they have been cut off of tuition assistance that makes college affordable — denying Illinois future economic gains from having a better educated, higher earning workforce.

More families are becoming homeless as they are turned away from those who used to help people in need.

Retired people who worked hard all their lives are losing home-delivered meals and services that help them keep their independence.

Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder and their families are being denied a range of services that previously made Illinois a beacon.

More than 15,000 fewer women will receive potentially life-saving breast and cervical cancer screenings this year.

It is time for our elected leaders to put everything else aside and carry out their most basic responsibility: enact a budget that meets the needs of families and communities and invests in the economic future of Illinois.

The following page provides examples of how inaction in Springfield is undermining Illinoisans' future.

Harm to Working Families and the Economy

- The state is not funding MAP tuition grants for [130,000 college students](#), forcing many to drop out.
- Colleges and universities have been forced to raise tuition and cut faculty and staff.
- [10,000 children](#) are not eligible for childcare and co-pays have risen as high as 20%.
- 419 state construction projects [remain on hold](#).
- The 138-year-old State Museum is [closed](#) to the public at the direction of the Governor.
- Public transportation for working families, seniors, and those with disabilities has been [eliminated](#) on certain days in some Central Illinois counties.
- [90% of homeless services providers](#) have or will be forced to cut clients, services, or staff.
- [Over 100,000 immigrants](#), including those hoping to become U.S. citizens, can't get vital services.
- No state funding is flowing for adult education services and job training services.
- No funding is being provided for home visiting programs that offer support and coaching to 6,000 pregnant women, young parents, and children birth through age 3.

Harm to Communities and Public Safety

- The state is not funding training for [57,000 law enforcement officers](#).
- Nearly 15,000 youth lost access to high-quality, comprehensive after-school services (Teen REACH) at 122 sites around the state.
- Redeploy Illinois, which saves the state millions by diverting youth from incarceration in the Department of Juvenile Justice, [is shut down in 23 counties](#).
- The state stopped funding grants for psychiatrists, forcing providers to [turn away](#) new patients with serious mental illness who do not have health insurance.
- Substance abuse programs have been shuttered and treatment for [70,000 Illinoisans](#) are at risk.

Harm to Seniors and those with Disabilities

- [84,500 seniors](#) will lose Meals on Wheels and/or Home and Community Based Services by February.
- Senior protective services are [not being funded](#).
- Centers for Independent Living around the state are not being funded, resulting in cuts to trainings for personal assistants and referral services for those with disabilities. Some, like the [Northwestern Illinois Center for Independent Living](#), had to suspend services and lay off staff.

Harm to Children

- TAP (The Autism Program) is not being funded for nearly 1,800 families; TAP facilities around the state [have closed or reduced capacity](#).
- The state is failing to fund services for [130,000 people](#) living with epilepsy, including children, in the greater Chicagoland area; and the [Springfield facility closed](#).
- The Sudden Infant Death Program no longer provides free training for parents, health providers, and law enforcement outside the Chicagoland area and can [no longer provide](#) no-cost safe cribs to families.

Harm to Women and Public Health

- [Nearly half of county health departments](#) have reduced capacity, including more than one-third that have laid off staff and one-sixth that have reduced hours.
- No state funding is going to breast and cervical cancer screenings, meaning an estimated [15,000](#) fewer women might not get these potentially life-saving services.
- Those with HIV/AIDS [no longer receive](#) prescription assistance that allows them to afford vital medication.

A Deeper Look

Lutheran Social Services of Illinois Forced to Make Devastating Cuts Across the State

On January 22nd, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) [announced](#) the closure of 30 programs, and the elimination of 750 positions, or 43 percent of LSSI's total employees. As a result of these closures, approximately 4,700 seniors, veterans, youth, and families will lose access to LSSI's in-home care, respite, senior protective services, mental health, substance abuse, youth shelters, and re-entry services. The state owed LSSI over \$6 million for services.

College System Deteriorating

Colleges can no longer make up for the state's failure to choose revenue. According to a [December survey](#), nearly half of all Illinois colleges surveyed will not be crediting MAP Grants this spring semester, including 80% of all community colleges surveyed.

The lack of state funding has caused faculty and staff cuts, including the elimination of [118 positions at EIU](#) and [50 faculty positions](#) at WIU. Chicago State University - which mostly serves non-traditional students of color - may be [forced to close its doors](#) or institute major cuts to staff and academic programming by March. Tuition was increased at SIU and Richland Community College as described below.

Local Impact

Below are just a few examples of how families and local communities are suffering.

Northern Illinois

250 Meals on Wheels slots eliminated in Rockford; Waiting List Swells to over 400 seniors

Lifescape Community Services in Rockford has been forced to eliminate over 250 Meals on Wheels clients through attrition, while the waiting list has swelled to 400 seniors. Budget cuts also mean Lifescape staff have reduced capacity to provide a range services including transportation, options counseling, and service coordination, which allow seniors to remain in their homes and out of expensive nursing homes.

Triage Center Hours Drastically Reduced at Rosecrance Health Network

In 2012 Rosecrance opened a triage center with committed state funding and a capital grant for individuals in psychiatric emergency for nine county areas. Due to Rosecrance receiving zero funding from the state since July 1, 2015, on November 1, 2015 triage access hours were cut from 24 hours/7 days per week to only Sun-Sat 12-noon. The County Chairman sent a letter of endorsement along with Chief of Police and Swedish American Hospital VP citing all of the reasons why 24 hour Triage is needed. This is a huge loss for the community and a step back from the investment in a cost-effective and preventative intervention to stabilize and serve people in crisis.

Central Illinois

Richland Community College Forced to Raise Tuition as 201 of Their Students Lose MAP Grants

Illinois is not providing any funding for colleges and universities, nor MAP tuition grants for 130,000 students around the state. Richland Community College (RCC) in Decatur is one of the colleges that has been forced to raise tuition for the Spring 2016 semester. Meanwhile, 201 low-income students at RCC lost their MAP grant funding at the same time tuition was raised.

“The Governor and lawmakers are making college unaffordable for working families in Decatur and across the state by failing to choose revenue. It will hurt Illinois’ economy and could hamstring families for the rest of their lives.”

-Donnie Lewis, ICCB SAC Legislative Committee Chairman & Student Trustee of Richland Community College

14 Veterans in Decatur Lost Supportive Services

14 veterans have lost supportive housing services including counseling, transportation, and medical and dental services at Lutheran Child and Family Services in Decatur.

“As a result of failure by the Governor and lawmakers to choose revenue, programs to serve veterans which are needed and well deserved are going unfunded and ending. After serving our county, many veterans find themselves homeless, experiencing mental health and a range of other difficulties. Not providing them with the services they earned is unconscionable.”

- Dave Roth, Lutheran Child and Family Services

Sexual Assault Services Cut

The rape crisis center in Charleston (SACIS) has cut all staff hours by 25%. The rape crisis center in Danville (VCRC) has had to lay off one staff person and cannot fill a second vacant position.

Southern Illinois

Public Health Emergency Response Network is Being Dismantled

Over [75% of the counties](#) south of I-70 have reduced staff or cut hours or programs, which is harming the public health emergency response network.

“Illinois’ public health emergency response network is being dismantled by the Governor and lawmakers’ failure to choose revenue and put a budget first. When the next flood comes or the next disease outbreak, we won’t have the strong public health system that we need to protect families. Fewer public health workers, especially nurses, threatens our communities and when the emergency hits, it’s too late.”

Miriam Link-Mullison, Administrator, Jackson County Health Department

1,000 SIU Students Forced to Drop Out

[1,000 MAP students at SIU](#) could not return for the Spring semester. Tuition was [increased 5% last fall semester](#) based on the Governor’s proposed higher education cuts.

100 families Risk Losing Home Services

100 families access home visiting programs a year through Shawnee Health Service. These voluntary, research-based services have a proven track record of improving health outcomes for vulnerable moms and babies and increasing children's school readiness. For the past seven months, no state funding has been provided, putting the families served and the community, at risk.

The [Responsible Budget Coalition](#) (RBC) is a large and diverse coalition of more than 200 organizations concerned about state budget and tax issues. It includes organizations that serve children, families, veterans, seniors and people with disabilities; education groups concerned about early learning, K-12 and higher education; labor unions; faith-based and civic organizations; immigrant and refugee families; and many others.

The RBC is a non-partisan, trusted source of information on state budget and tax policy and a leader in the fight to pass a budget that chooses revenue over cuts to vital services.

The individual organizations that belong to the RBC represent a diverse range of interests but are united by these three common principles:

- Adequate revenue to support state priorities and make smart investments
- No more cuts to vital programs and services
- Fairness in raising revenue