



**FAMILY SERVICE TORONTO**  
For People. For Change.

To: Frank DiGiorgio, Chair, and other members of the Budget Committee

Good afternoon, my name is Laurel Rothman and I am the Director of Social Reform at Family Service Toronto and the National Coordinator Campaign 2000: End Child and Family Poverty in Canada.

As a proud United Way agency, FST has been assisting families and individuals through counselling, community development, advocacy and public education programs for 99 years. Our services are accessible to all who live or work in Toronto, with a high priority to those who face social, economic and other barriers. We have 13 locations across the city, and served 35,000 people last year in 20 languages. Our work informs our comments today.

FST recognizes that City Council, like other orders of government, the private sector and individual families, faces difficult and important financial decisions. We also recognize the immense value of investment in city programs and services to reduce poverty, create jobs, stimulate the local economy and provide opportunities while meeting the basic needs of Toronto residents whatever their race, ability, gender or sexual orientation, health status, age or income. There are many areas I could touch on to emphasize the need for investment, but in the interests of time, I will focus on the need for investment in the Community Partnership Investment Program, housing and homelessness supports and child care subsidies and early learning supports required by families.

CPIP provides support to Torontonians across the city in large part through programs delivered by not for profit agencies. The program is an investment in the city that has a big pay off – every dollar invested in CPIP by the city brings back 10 times this amount from other stakeholders (including provincial and federal governments, business and individual donations, participant fees, earned income and Foundation contributions). Our work in the TaylorMassey/Crescent Town neighbourhood with youth in entrepreneurship is a good illustration of that.

The city is growing and need is growing – in order to continue to do effective work that is responsive to the city's changing needs, CPIP should not be flatlined this year. To respond to growing need, population growth and inflation, CPIP should be increased by a total of 1.8 million.

For the majority of the people we work with at FST, poverty and/or family violence are part of their lives. Access to safe, affordable housing is often a luxury many of our clients simply

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cannot attain due to life circumstance and the insufficient supply of affordable housing. Too many people in Toronto end up in the shelter system, a last resort that is inadequately resourced to deal with the need that exists in the city. We realize the need for provincial funding in this area, particularly since the cancellation of the Community Start up and Maintenance Benefit and the province's failure to renew CHPI funding to municipalities and we are calling on them to renew CHPI funding to municipalities and invest in affordable housing.

The city must also do its role and the budget should allocate a \$4.3million increase to the Housing Stabilization Fund to reduce homelessness. The lack of affordable housing forces many families into market rental units that they can barely afford. Investment in the tenant defence fund to assist tenants who face above guideline increases to their rent is needed this year – we urge you to restore \$100,000 cut from this fund in 2011 immediately.

The final area where action is needed is in the area of child care and early learning.

### **Child Care**

My understanding is that in September, City Council approved adding **536 new fee subsidy spaces** to the budget for consideration in the budget process. These much needed spaces would help families pay for child care - and reduce the 18,000 wait list.

We are concerned that the budget does not actually include any new subsidy spaces. The recent notice from the Province that the City will get \$20 million more for child care next year should allow the City to both cover the deficit and expand new spaces over time.

I urge you to ensure that the additional 536 fee subsidies are in the 2014 budget.

### **After School Recreation and Care Program (ARC)**

The ARC program is a program developed by Recreation and Children's Services to provide affordable, quality, after-school programming for children 5 to 10 years. There are currently 32 sites. Council asked staff to include in the budget sufficient funds to expand to another 16 sites, with about 500 new spaces.

My understanding is that the additional funds for ARC are not in the budget; I urge you to ensure that the additional funds for expansion of ARC are in the 2014 budget. As we expand the all-day kindergarten, it is more critical than ever that school age children have programs after school.

Presented by  
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