

**Contact:** Brian Lepacek  
6610 N Clark Street  
Chicago, IL 60626  
**Phone:** (773) 973-7900 x 226  
**Email:** [blepacek@anixter.org](mailto:blepacek@anixter.org)  
[www.anixter.org](http://www.anixter.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Illinois Department of Human Services Announces State budget cuts to community agencies like the Lester & Rosalie Anixter Center that will change the face of Social Services in the State of Illinois**

**Chicago, IL, June 16, 2009** – On June 12, 2009 the Lester & Rosalie Anixter Center as well as many other human service agencies across the state, were notified by the State of Illinois that funding for multiple human service programs is being completely eliminated or drastically reduced effective July 1, 2009. For the Lester & Rosalie Anixter Center (Anixter Center), the loss is over \$5 million in funding with the following impact:

- 5,250 children and their families will have their services cut from the closure of 17 Lekotek Centers which provide therapeutic play all around the state
- 196 people with disabilities working in packaging, imaging and janitorial services will lose their jobs and wages totaling \$1,896,248
- Employment and job coaching would be cut for 95 people with disabilities
- Training in community living and survival skills would be cut for 18 young adults
- In-home respite care would be cut from 85 families
- 51 people will lose their apartments because of cuts to supportive living services
- Substance abuse treatment services will be cut for 200 adults
- Domestic violence support services will be eliminated for 41 deaf people
- Mental health services will be cut for 28 people
- Over 25% of the staff at Anixter Center will be laid off: 97-100 employees

These are vital respite, housing and employment services for people with disabilities and their families. Allan I. Bergman, President & CEO of Anixter Center said, “The agency was also notified that additional budget cuts of 20 - 30% for all remaining programs are pending for the very near future, which if enacted, would result in the closure of additional programs of Anixter Center, and many other social service agencies throughout the state.”

On July 1<sup>st</sup>, if these budget cuts are not reversed, 1,700 individuals receiving services and supports from Anixter Center will have their services eliminated. This “doomsday” budget is devastating news to people receiving services, their families, and employees. Families have begun to contact their elected officials to make sure that they fully appreciate the impact that these budget cuts will have on the lives of the thousands of people supported by Anixter Center as well as the staff Anixter Center employs. In addition, the budget cuts will have a significant impact on tens of thousands of lives across the state.

The Illinois Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (IARF) upon receiving information on the state budget cuts surveyed their members regarding the impact of such a budget; 52 agencies responded statewide:

- 57,743 individuals will no longer receive services
- 8,177 employees will be laid off or have reduced hours

- 26 community agencies will close their doors

The Legislature may think they can impose budget cuts for a short term and reverse those cuts once enough public pressure is mounted against them. However, “community agencies like Anixter Center are not in a position to sustain programs for any period without funding, or to retain staff that work in programs where funding has been eliminated,” stated Allan I Bergman. Therefore, community agencies recognize that public pressure must be mounted now.

Please contact your State Senator and State Representative, urging them to consider the needs of people we support and the staff we employ. If you do not know who to call or email go to [www.capwiz.com/anixter](http://www.capwiz.com/anixter) and put in your zip code for a list of local legislators. For up to date information, please go to our website at [www.anixter.org](http://www.anixter.org). Please make your voice heard and put a face to the statistics.

For more than 90 years, the Lester and Rosalie Anixter Center has been to enhance the ability of individuals living with or at risk of disabilities to live, learn, work and play in the community. Anixter Center is a leading provider of high-quality vocational, residential and educational options, substance abuse prevention and treatment, and health care. Anixter Center is an advocate for the rights of people with disabilities to be full and equal members of the community. More than 5,500 individuals a year are served through 70 programs at 35 locations throughout the Chicago area.

**Note to reporters and editors: for more information about Anixter Center, please visit our media room at <http://www.anixter.org/mediaroom/index.htm>.**

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