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HIV charity faces steep budget cuts

Momentum Project, which provides hot meals for people with AIDS/HIV, has already laid off staff.

By [Barbara Benson](#)

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Shawn Thorne was the daytime sous chef at Windows on the World in 2001. He left a few months before the terrorist attacks to use his culinary skills to help New Yorkers living with AIDS/HIV. As director of food and site services for the 25-year-old Momentum Project, Mr. Thorne prepares what he calls “home cooking with an ethnic twist.” Run by VillageCare since 2008, Momentum has served about 1 million free meals to thousands of poor HIV-positive New Yorkers.

But Mr. Thorne, 40, may see his kitchen destroyed once again—this time by budget cuts. Last year, City Hall tried to halve funding for the Human Resource Administration's HIV nutrition program, which is serviced solely by Momentum. The City Council restored those cuts. This year, the administration wants to cut the program's entire \$982,000 in funding.

Without city funding—70% of Momentum's financing—it is “extremely likely” Momentum will close, a VillageCare spokesman said. The nonprofit already has laid off some staff and closed four meal sites. Now more than 30 jobs are at risk—including Mr. Thorne's.

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