



Testimony Presented to  
Fiscal Committees of the New York State Legislature  
Hearing on Human Services  
The FY 2017-2018 Executive Budget  
Wednesday, February 8, 2017  
Albany, New York

Community Voices for Youth & Families  
72 Harbor Homes  
Port Washington, NY 11050  
(516) 659-7936  
[info@cv4yf.org](mailto:info@cv4yf.org)  
[www.cv4yf.org](http://www.cv4yf.org)

On behalf of the members of Community Voices for Youth & Families, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding aspects of the 2017-18 Executive Budget related to human services.

Community Voices for Youth & Families (CV4YF) is a network of people and organizations who understand that an investment in youth and family services brings long-term benefits to our communities. CV4YF advocates for social change through increased community awareness, civic engagement, and investments to ensure that the children, youth, and families on Long Island are supported.

Our member agencies provide an array of programming to support youth and families such as:

- Promoting educational achievement;
- Promoting civic, family, and community engagement;
- Providing family support services;
- Preventing juvenile delinquency, child abuse, and neglect;
- Promoting physical & emotional wellness;
- Averting family crises;
- Assisting youth in need of crisis intervention or respite services.

### *LIYouth by Community Voices*

Community Voices for Youth & Families recommends an investment of \$1.5 million to support community-based organizations on Long Island providing structured youth and family activities that promote social and emotional development, encourage healthy activities, increase self-esteem, support positive behaviors, and increase academic success.

Structured and supportive youth programs have been proven to provide youth and families with opportunities to stay connected, prevent involvement in unhealthy or unsafe activities, such as substance abuse and crime, and increase employment and academic achievement. A new investment of \$1.5 million targeted to programs on Long Island will help offset reductions in youth program funding at the state and local levels.

### *Raise the Age*

CV4YF supports policies to raise the age of criminal responsibility. As community-based organizations that provide supports to youth on Long Island, we recognize that children under the age of 18 lack the brain development necessary for proper decision-making. These adolescents should

not treated as adults under the law.

### **Advantage After School Program (AASP) Restoration**

CV4YF supports a restoration of \$5 million to the Advantage After School Program. The 2017-18 Executive Budget provides \$17,255,300, which does not reflect the \$5 million increase approved last year. We are concerned that the reduction in funding will suspend a new round of support facilitated by the Office of Children and Family Services. AASP supports youth development opportunities for school-aged youth for three hours after school.

### **Youth Development Program Restoration**

Youth Development Program provides funding to youth bureaus and community-based organizations to support programs that improve life skills, academic/career readiness, healthy living, substance-abuse prevention, violence prevention, and support to those reentering the community after being impacted by the juvenile justice system. CV4YF supports a restoration of \$1.69 million that was not included in the 2017-18 Executive Budget.

Once again, on behalf of Community Voices for Youth & Families, we appreciate the opportunity to submit our recommendations for the 2017-18 Executive Budget as it pertains to human service programs.