



Submitted Testimony
Of
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Association of New York State Youth
Bureaus
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Before
The Joint Legislative Budget Hearing on Human Services
Liz Krueger, Chair, Senate Finance Committee
and
Helene Weinstein, Chair, Assembly Ways and Means
Committee

Testimony before the Joint Legislative Hearing on the Human Services Budget

On behalf of the network of youth bureaus that guide and provide a wide array of youth development services to over 1.3 million youth, the Association of New York State Youth Bureaus (ANYSYB) offers recommendations regarding the 2021-22 proposed *Executive Budget*. These recommendations have been developed in response to the Executive Budget proposal and any questions about these positions can be directed to Jackie Negri, Executive Director of the Association at nysyouthbureaus@gmail.com

Summary of Budget Priorities:

Youth Development Program:

Oppose 5% Cut, Add \$1.5m Reappropriation to Keep Level, Oppose Claim Change

The 2021-22 Executive Budget imposes a 5% reduction for the Youth Development Program, from \$14.12 million to \$13.4 million. This will have a direct impact on important services, supports and opportunities provided to over 1.3 million youth statewide through county, city, town and village youth bureaus and their sub-contract youth serving organizations such as Boys & Girls Clubs, Big Brother Big Sister, etc. **ANYSYB respectfully requests the Legislature to restore the 5% cut and add an additional \$1.5m as allocated in the 2020-21 budget to ensure that this program is truly level funded, remaining the same amount as calendar year 2020.**

Changes to the Claiming Process: Executive Budget Proposes YDP and RHY to require claims to be submitted within 3 months of expenditure instead of 12 months. **This causes an undo burden for Youth Bureaus and youth serving community-based organizations; ANYSYB opposes this stringent claiming process.**

Youth Leadership Network Program \$250,000 Add (level from last year)

ANYSYB ask the Legislature to add \$250,000 for the Association's activities for a statewide Youth Leadership Forum, Youth Professional Networking Learning Exchange, Data Collection/Best Practice Sharing and Strengthening Regional Youth Networks/Building Capacity.

Runaway and Homeless Youth – Oppose 5% Cut, Add \$500,000 to Keep Level

This program is already struggling for sustainability; sending homeless youth back into the streets during COVID-19 is unconscionable. **ANYSYB respectfully request the Legislature to restore the 5% cut and add an additional \$1.5 million as allocated in the 2020-21 budget to ensure that this program is truly level funded, remaining the same amount as calendar year 2020.**

Community Optional Preventive Services (COPS)/Supervision and Treatment Services for Juvenile Program

The FY 2022 Executive Budget eliminates the COPS program and instead appropriates \$16.4 million for the Supervision and Treatment services for Juveniles Program, consolidating COPS and STSJP with a 20% funding cut. **ANYSYB asks for restoration of this funding cut to last year's level.**

NYS Youth Council

The FY 2022 Executive Budget includes \$200,000 for the continuation of the New York State Youth Council. ANYSYB receives a grant through OCFS to assist in the administration of this Council which has proven positive for New York's youth serving members. ANYSYB requests support for this initiative in the final enacted budget.

Budget Testimony:

Thank you for continuing to support the transition of the Youth Development Program from the old the YDDP and SDPP funding streams into a single Youth Development Program. As you will recall, the funding for the old programs had dropped from \$39 million in 2008, to past years at \$14.1 million. The YDP program is working so **ANYSYB supports the elimination of the sunset clause.**

The SFY 2021-22 proposes a 5% cut to the Youth Development Program, from 14.1 million to \$13.4 million which is quite disturbing considering the impact COVID-19 has had on the youth and families we serve, primarily those in impoverished communities who are Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC). In addition, the Legislature has steadfastly added \$1.5 million to maintain the program at \$15.6. **This year we urge that the Legislature include the \$1.5 restoration, and restore the 5% cut which is disproportionate to children, youth and family services and supports.**

We request that the Legislature address the 5% cut in the Runaway and Homeless Youth program and the \$500,000 legislative add as the need for increased programming and services for these vulnerable youth served by the RHYA programs has increased since the onset of the pandemic. Runaway and homeless youth often fall between the cracks of the child welfare system and the adult homeless systems. Runaway and homeless youth shelters provide for the basic needs of thousands of homeless youth throughout New York each year. **We urge the Legislature to restore the 5% cut and add the \$500,000 to maintain the RHYA program in calendar year 2021 at last year's level of \$5million (\$4.5 million base and \$500,000 legislative add)** to address youth homelessness as a priority in the final *Executive Budget*.

Demand for positive youth development services is at an all-time high as the State successfully implements Raise the Age, faces the ongoing challenges of COVID-19, combats the opioid and heroin crisis and continuously reforms the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. The Youth Development Program directly contributes to support these and other initiatives for New York's youth and families.

Youth Bureaus across the state report that the youth they serve are experiencing growing challenges as communities continue to be plagued by poverty, homelessness, gangs and food insecurity. The 1.3 million children and families we serve represent the following:

- **More than 2 out of 5 Children**, approximately 4.6 million, live in low-income families.
- **More than 3 million New Yorkers** rely on nutrition assistance programs all year long.
- According to Mental Health America, 2021 report, youth mental health is worsening. **9.7% of youth in the U.S. have severe major depression**, compared to 9.2% in last year's dataset. This rate was highest among youth who identify as more than one race, at 12.4%.
- **Nearly 21% of New York's children** and youth, ages birth-17 years, are living below poverty level.
- According to the CDC, by 12th grade, **about two-thirds of students** have tried alcohol.
- About **half of 9th through 12th grade students** reported ever having used marijuana.
- About **4 in 10 9th through 12th grade students** reported having tried

cigarettes.

- Among 12th graders, **close to 2 in 10 reported using prescription medicine without a prescription.**

The end product of a strong youth development system is to offer skills to combat poverty and that build our state's citizenry including but not limited to: increasing academic achievement and high school graduation rates, providing job and career readiness training, providing life skills for healthy living and physical activity, offering gang prevention, combating substance use/ opioid/heroin use and assisting juvenile violators from entering or re-entering the delinquency system. The Youth Development Program was established to achieve these goals, allowing counties the opportunity to fund an array of community-based non-profit agencies and local youth bureaus based on comprehensive planning in local communities.

Positive youth development programs have proven success in addressing social divisions, including gender, ethnic, and cultural differences. These programs and services support New York's youth and families, many from marginalized populations, with needed services that address food insecurity, mental health and social justice issues.

The programs and services provided and funded by county youth bureaus from the Youth Development Program funding stream and provided by town, city and village youth bureaus and community-based youth serving organizations impacted by the proposed 5% cut include, but are not limited to:

- Supports for Homeless Youth including Outreach/ Engagement, Case Management to Find Appropriate Housing and Other Supports
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Training Programs and Services
- Mentoring and Student Volunteer Opportunities
- Food Insecurity Programs and Healthy Meals
- Family Engagement and Parenting Education
- Anti-Violence Initiatives to Prevent Youth Involvement in Gangs and Domestic Violence
- Substance Use/Opioid/Heroin Prevention Strategies
- Afterschool Prevention Programs
- Career Readiness and Summer Jobs

Youth Leadership Network

Lastly, we raise the issue of needing a strong youth leadership network in NYS. The Youth Leadership Network will empower youth in communities across the state by creating opportunities for youth and youth serving professionals to participate, lead and succeed through essential training and services that will help build and sustain a healthy youth network. Investing in our youth means investing in the future of New York State. The Association of NYS Youth Bureaus provides opportunities for technical assistance, training, data exchange, and sharing of best practices for youth and youth serving professionals. We respectfully **ask the Legislature to continue \$250,000** in funding for ANYSYB which offers the opportunity to offer these supports, services and opportunities, similar to calendar year 2020-21.

Thank you for your consideration of these important requests.

