



Office of Children and Family Services

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL COMMITTEES' JOINT BUDGET HEARING

**SFY 2026-27 Executive Budget
Human Services**

**Dr. DaMia Harris-Madden, MBA, M.S.
Commissioner**

Thursday, February 5, 2026

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL COMMITTEES' JOINT BUDGET HEARING
State Fiscal Year 2026-27 Executive Budget – Human Services
Thursday, February 5, 2025, 9:30 AM
New York State Office of Children and Family Services
Dr. DaMia Harris-Madden, MBA, M.S., Commissioner

Good morning, Chair Krueger and Chair Pretlow, Children and Families Committee Chairs Hevesi and Brisport, and distinguished Members of the Senate and Assembly. I am Dr. DaMia Harris-Madden, Commissioner of the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS). I am grateful for the privilege of presenting Governor Hochul's State Fiscal Year 2026-27 Executive Budget for OCFS before this honorable body.

OCFS, its programs and the people we serve – from twinkle to wrinkle – the youngest to the most elderly of our communities and the state's neediest families – have been subjected to constant threats by the federal government over the last year. We continue to weather these ongoing threats and thankfully, Governor Hochul, who remains unwavering in her commitment to make New York stronger, safer and more affordable, has worked alongside government leaders to protect vital programs.

The Governor's Executive Budget recommends more than \$7.2 billion for OCFS to support the continuum of resources needed to deliver a well-coordinated system, built on dignity, respect, transparency, responsiveness, inclusivity, and protection. With our 3,500+ hard working staff and our local government and non-profit partners, OCFS will continue to provide access to high quality services and supports that range from childcare, child welfare, adult services, after-school, positive youth development, Native American Affairs, juvenile justice, programs for blind New Yorkers, and the hundreds of volunteers within the hosted AmeriCorps programs.

Governor Hochul's aim to make New York more affordable has been record setting. I am excited that this year's Executive Budget takes a bold leap – not step – forward toward achieving universal Childcare. If enacted, this budget will be the nation's largest commitment to the provision of Childcare assistance.

Governor Hochul has directed more than \$8B in funding for Childcare since taking office. In total, the Budget provides \$4.5 Billion for Childcare and pre-kindergarten programs. Within the OCFS budget, there is a 40 percent increase in funds for the Childcare Assistance Program (CCAP), which includes \$2.4 Billion for base CCAP allocations for the upcoming federal fiscal year 2027, an increase of \$600 million year-to-year. To help meet the needs that some counties have expressed, the Budget provides an additional \$155 million to fully reimburse counties outside of New York City for Childcare claims that exceed their initial funding allocation in the current federal fiscal year. The Budget also makes \$475 million in additional CCAP funding available to New York City, subject to a 50 percent local match, to help address needs in the current or upcoming federal fiscal year and provide Childcare assistance to more families.

I am immensely proud of the accomplishments thus far:

- The average number of children receiving a subsidy has more than doubled in four years, to 170K served statewide.
- New York has increased eligibility for subsidy by raising income eligibility to 85% of State Median Income (\$114K for family of four), a drastic increase from its previous level of 200% Federal Poverty Level (\$55K for a family of four).
- New York has capped family contributions at 1%. Families previously contended with co-pays ranging from 10 to 30 percent of their income above the poverty line. Governor Hochul's wise decision to cap family contribution to one percent resulted in most families receiving childcare assistance paying no more than \$15 per week for Childcare and providing significant financial relief.
- Governor Hochul increased reimbursement rates for providers by nearly 50%, helping providers retain staff and enhance health, safety, quality and staffing requirements for high quality Childcare.
- This year alone, we have achieved a measurable, sustained expansion of New York's licensed childcare supply, reversed pandemic-era declines and strengthened the care infrastructure necessary to support working families statewide with a net increase of 805 childcare providers and 34,441 additional licensed childcare slots.
- \$150 million in capital funding to expand the number of childcare seats has been made available across the state. So far, \$50 million has been awarded to 45 sites across the state that will support creation of an estimated 5,500 new childcare seats, and many more will be added with the remaining \$100 million allocated.

To continue building towards universality, this year's Budget affords new pilot programs. Dutchess, Monroe and Broome counties will each receive \$20 million from the State and will contribute 10 percent of local funds to develop new contracted care options for year-round and full-day care to children aged zero to three, irrespective of income. The Executive Budget also provides \$73 million to partner with New York City to launch a contracted-care childcare program for two-year-olds (NYC 2-Care).

Additional investments to the system will include the creation of a new Office of Childcare and Early Education that will drive implementation of high-quality, universal childcare in New York State. The Office will promote quality even as access grows, serving as a centralized body for the implementation of universal childcare.

The Governor's vision for quality early education is evidenced by her investment in Pre-K funding. Funding for four-year-olds and three-year-olds has grown by \$685M under Governor Hochul's leadership, from \$945M to \$1.63B. The Governor's estimated \$561 million increase in universal pre-kindergarten aid in this year's Education Budget, which

is expected to primarily benefit counties outside of New York City, will expand opportunities for four-year-old children to experience a full-day pre-k program by the 2028-29 school year.

Also included with the budget is legislation to modernize outdated rules and expand access for private adoptive placements. New York's current timeframe limitations are out of sync with other states, creating barriers for families. This legislation increases the allowable time an adoptive parent is authorized to cover certain expenses for the birth mother and allows for payments beyond these time frames if a court determines circumstances require payment for a longer period.

This year's Executive Budget once again includes a Temporary Inflationary Increase (TII) for human services providers. The 1.7 percent TII will deliver millions to the families and voluntary foster care agencies and adoptive parents.

I am grateful that the budget includes legislation that would authorize OCFS and locally operated secure detention facilities to use body scanner technology to screen individuals for dangerous contraband. OCFS' Division of Juvenile Justice and Opportunities for Youth (DJJOY) have seen alarming increases in incidents involving dangerous contraband, despite the comprehensive contraband detection and screening methods currently in place. This authority will allow OCFS to better protect the health and safety of the youth in our care, our staff, and visitors to our facilities.

This budget allows OCFS to continue support to our adult protective services, Domestic Violence Services, along with interventions for trafficked, missing, runaway and homeless youth. This budget also supports our aims to narrow the front door to child welfare involvement through the Family Opportunity Centers, Family Resource Centers, and Healthy Families NY, which have served thousands. Additionally, the budget supports the Care Portal, expanded HEARS line, which handled 4,038 calls last year and the Human Services Call Center, which maintains a volume of 1,000 calls per month.

The ecosystem of OCFS is tremendous, with far too many divisions and successes to enumerate; yet the executive budget affords the agency the resources to make resources accessible to a vast number of New Yorkers. The Governor has made her message clear: "your family, your future, my fight" and we at OCFS stand ready to implement the oversight and direct services, including the supports necessary to deliver on this vision.

As a proud new yorker, I thank the Governor and our partners in the Legislature. Thank you for allowing me to speak directly to you today. I welcome your questions and comments.