

**Association of New York State
Youth Bureaus**

The Cornerstone of New York's Youth Development



Submitted Testimony

Of

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Before

The Joint Legislative Budget Hearing on Human Services

NYS Legislative Office Building

Catharine Young, Chairman, Senate Finance Committee

and

**Herman D. Farrell, Jr., Chairman, 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 both directly and through contracts with community based organizations, the Association of New York State Youth Bureaus (ANYSYBs) offers recommendations regarding the 2016-17 *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 (jackie@nycap.rr.com).

Summary of Budget Priorities:

Add a total of \$30 million to the **Youth Development Program** – to be used as follows:

1. Restore \$1.285 million to the **Youth Development Program** to maintain level spending during calendar year 2016. We appreciate the State Legislature's commitment to annually restoring this funding and urge the Executive to baseline the funding.
2. Add \$28.3 million to the **Youth Development Program** to support additional community based services such as, afterschool and summer services, mentoring, career readiness training, runaway and homeless youth support services, domestic, peer and sexual violence, juvenile justice prevention and a wide variety of out-of-school time positive youth development services.
 - In addition to supporting the \$4.484 in the Executive's budget proposal for the **Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA)**

program ANYSYB requests an additional \$5.5 million, including \$100,000 to plan and assess the data capacity and identify a strategy for a coordinated statewide count of homeless youth to be funded in 2017. This is total request of \$10 million which is needed for transitional and crisis beds and supportive/wrap around services.

- Support the \$1 million add proposed by the Executive for the Summer Youth Employment Program, for a total of \$31 million statewide for youth jobs this summer.
- Add funds for new **Advantage After-school Program** grants - add \$69.2 million to the Advantage Afterschool Program to restore \$19.3 million in funding from fiscal year 2015-2016 and increase funding by \$49.9 million for fiscal year 2016- 2017.
- Support the proposed **Raise the Age** phase-in to raise the age of juvenile jurisdiction, with emphasis on diversion for youth at-risk of PINs placement so that families can avoid interaction with the Family Court System.

Youth Development Program

Thank you for continuing to support the transition of the Youth Development Program from the previous combined YDDP and SDPP funding streams into a single Youth Development Program. Despite the reduction in funding from \$39 million in 2008, this program remains popular with communities statewide, including NYC. Now that the funds flow directly to the county and must be distributed according to local planning, community based organizations are urging the funding be increased from the proposed \$14.1 million to meet new demands.

The Executive Budget again proposes only \$14.1 million for the Youth Development Program, the Legislature has steadfastly added \$1.285 million to maintain the program at \$15.3 million since 2009.

This year we ask that you add a total of \$30 million (the traditional restoration of \$1.285 million and an additional \$28.3 million). The additional funding is critical to ensure that each county is doing as much community-based out-of-school time activities like, increasing graduation rates, providing job and career readiness training, providing life skills for healthy living and physical activity, offering gang prevention & substance use prevention, combatting domestic, peer and sexual violence and assisting juvenile violators from entering or re-entering the delinquency system. These services must be available in every county for every youth in need.

The end product of a strong youth development system is to offer skills to combat poverty and that build our state's citizenry including: 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 & substance use prevention 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. In New York State, over 22.9% of children/youth ages birth-17 are living below poverty (Kids' Well-Being Indicators Clearinghouse, Council on Children and Families). These children directly benefit from community services funded by the Youth Development Program and would not otherwise be able to receive such

academic assistance, career readiness opportunities and/or prevention services without this funding.

Increased funding for the Youth Development Program allows for intentional efforts of youth, families, community based organizations, local government agencies and schools to provide opportunities for youth to enhance their life skills and academic/career readiness abilities, while staying safe during out-of-school time hours. Positive youth development programs have proven success in addressing social divisions, including gender, ethnic, and cultural differences. Youth Bureaus and the community based organizations that receive Youth Development Program funding (such as Big Brother/Big Sisters, Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCAs, child welfare and behavioral health providers, etc.) offer after school prevention programs with proven measurements for positive outcomes. Investing on the front end allows for long term saving – in dollars and common sense.

Because of this philosophy and also because New York State's Youth Development Program funding is distributed statewide to counties based upon youth population, we target this funding stream to expand out of school time programs and services that support local decision-making that can target and be tailored for specific community needs. In this way, county grants can be applied to anti-poverty efforts or community school efforts, or to address community afterschool shortages; all priorities identified through community partnerships and planning. According to NYS OCFS, over 1.5 million youth received programs and services through the Youth Development Program funding.

Programs and services provided and funded by county youth bureaus from the Youth Development Program funding stream include but are not limited to:

- Afterschool prevention programs
- Career Readiness and summer jobs
- Supports for homeless youth including outreach/engagement, case management to find appropriate housing and other supports
- Anti-poverty efforts
- Mentoring programs
- Healthy eating and obesity prevention
- Family engagement and parenting education
- Anti-violence initiatives to prevent youth involvement in gangs, substance use, and domestic violence

Runaway and Homeless Youth Act

We urge the Legislature to build upon the Executive's recommendation to baseline last year's Runaway and Homeless Youth Act funding and add another \$5.5 million to ensure the specific support for unaccompanied minors or the runaway and homeless youth population is sufficient for the growing population. We urge the Legislature to address the need for increased programming and services for these vulnerable youth, as served by the RHYA programs. Runaway and homeless youth shelters provide for the basic needs of thousands of homeless youth throughout New York each year. There are currently 950 beds in RHY programs to serve an estimated 59,791 homeless youth (according to the 2012 OCFS RHY Annual Report). When RHY shelter is not available, youth are referred to the adult homeless shelters; not a developmentally appropriate setting for vulnerable youth.

In addition to the requests aforementioned ANYSYB also requests support for:

Advantage Afterschool

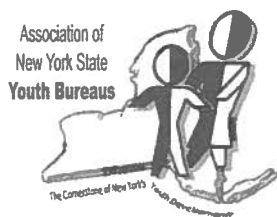
Appropriate \$69.2 million to the Advantage Afterschool Program to restore \$19.3 million in funding from fiscal year 2015-2016 and increase funding by \$49.9 million for fiscal year 2016- 2017.

Summer Youth Employment

The Governor's budget increases funding for this program from \$30 million to \$31 million. ANYSYB strongly supports this program and this increase in funding.

Raise the Age

The Governor's budget includes language to raise the age of juvenile jurisdiction from 16 to 18 years of age as recommended by the Governor's Commission on Youth, Public Safety and Justice. ANYSYB supports raising the age of juvenile jurisdiction and thinks such detailed phase-in is a smart way to ensure that such instrumental change to our juvenile justice system is implemented correctly.



Thank you for your consideration of these important youth development requests. For further information, please contact

Jackie Negri, Executive Director, Association of NYS Youth Bureaus at
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