

**Human Services Budget Hearing
February 12, 2025**

**Testimony by Frank Williams, President
Association of New York State Youth Bureaus and Executive Director, City of White
Plains Youth Bureau**

Good afternoon, Chairwoman Krueger, Chairman Pretlow and Chairs of the Children & Families Committee, Senator Brisport and Assemblymember Hevesi. My name is Frank Williams, and I am the President of the Association of New York State Youth Bureaus (ANYSYB) as well as the Executive Director of the City of White Plains Youth Bureau in Westchester County.

Founded in 1971, the Association's members represent municipal (county) and local (city, town, & village) youth bureaus and youth boards, and not-for-profit youth service organizations throughout New York State. The Association, through its diverse membership, serves over 1.3 million youth and families across all of NYS. The mission of the Association is to promote the physical, emotional, and social well-being of youth and families in New York State through a unified, statewide network of youth service programs and professionals. ANYSYB and its members strive to promote positive youth development through integrated planning and coordinate services, training and programs for youth and families, most of whom are high-risk, aged 0-24.

As you know, our youth are our future and we want to ensure that they have the tools and resources they need to be prepared to be successful in school, outside of school, careers, and their personal lives. We must ensure that our youth stay out of harm's way and that their social-emotional, mental, and physical needs are met so that they can live healthy, safe, and happy lives.

That is why I am here today to say the Association and all our members were extremely pleased to see that the FY 2026 Executive Budget proposal makes real investments in our youth and positive youth development. Governor Hochul's proposal to launch "Get Offline, Get Outside" is the very base of what we do as a system of municipal and local Youth Bureaus. Youth today face so many challenges and pressures, and as a state we must provide safe opportunities that will lift our youth.

New York State has had a long-standing program, the Youth Development Program, or YDP, which provides funding to municipal youth bureaus, which is distributed based on community need to local youth bureaus and community-based organizations (such as My Brother's Keeper, Big Brother/Big Sister, Boys & Girls Clubs) to provide opportunities for positive youth development. For the first time in over a decade, the Executive has proposed increasing funding for the Youth Development Program and includes another \$7.5 million

for YDP. **The Association supports the increase for the Youth Development Program and respectfully requests that the legislature include their annual \$1.5 reappropriation to YDP to maintain current calendar year program funding. We also ask that the Legislature match the increase from the Executive to support youth development programming across New York state.**

In addition, the law that legalized mobile sports betting in New York State authorized the creation of a Statewide Youth Sports and Education Program to offer the opportunity to engage in sports. This program improves the lives of young people by promoting positive social, emotional, health, and educational outcomes for important life-long effects and enables opportunities for young people to thrive through skill building and leadership roles. While initially funded at \$5 million, **the Executive Budget proposes an additional \$7.5 million for the Youth Sports and Education Program. We support this program and this increase and request the requirements of this program continue to be flexible and inclusive of all sporting activities, which allow local youth bureaus in cities, towns, and villages the opportunity to participate in the program and youth serving community-based organizations.** In addition, we support the inclusion of **additional funding for youth sports) as provided by the Legislature over the last couple of years (\$10 million in SFY 25 that offers the same flexibility for healthy activities, sports, and education.**

Lastly, I would be remiss if I did not **thank the Legislature for your longstanding support for the Association's Youth Leadership Network. The Legislature has included \$225,000 annually since 2019 for the Association to implement this Network** that provides needed support and services to youth and youth development professionals statewide through evidence-based training and engagement. Just last week, we had over 200 youth in Albany who engaged in sessions such as communication and skill building, suicide and substance use prevention, employability skills and listening sessions, once again creating future leaders in New York State. As such, we ask the Legislature to again include \$225,000 in the final budget for the Association of NYS Youth Bureaus.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.