

The Children's Agenda

Brief Review of the Impact on Children & Youth in Governor Cuomo's Executive Budget FY 2015-16

Rochester Anti-Poverty Task Force

In the FY 2016 Executive Budget, Governor Cuomo proposes creation of the Rochester Anti-Poverty Task Force, a high-level commission formed to address the serious issues of poverty and inequity in the greater Rochester area.

- The child poverty rate in the city of Rochester is 50.1%, higher than any U.S. city of comparable size.
- Rochester is also ranked #1 for extreme poverty (residents living on incomes that fall below 50% of the federal poverty level).
- Rochester has the 5th highest overall poverty rate among the nation's top 75 metro areas, and the 2nd poorest among cities in comparably sized metro areas.¹

We are encouraged that the Governor has empowered this Task Force by appointing Commissioner-level State agency heads, along with a chair reporting directly to him. The make-up of this Task Force rightly leads to regional solutions that will cross jurisdictional boundaries and funding streams of government and private agencies in Monroe County, not just across State agencies. Most importantly, it will seek to identify opportunities for changes in policies and practices – not just our delivery system for programs and social services - that evidence shows are most successful in lifting the largest numbers of people out of poverty at once, reversing the growth of chronic, intergenerational poverty.

We strongly urge the Governor, the Task Force, our legislative delegation and Rochester leaders to initiate bold, game-changing actions to reduce poverty and inequality in Rochester.

[Research on anti-poverty strategies](#) shows that among the most effective approaches are raising the incomes of low-income working families through higher wages and cash transfers (such as the Earned Income Tax Credit and child care subsidies) that help families help themselves - as well as evidence-based *preventive* programs such as home visiting support for new parents. [Such programs have a dual impact](#) on both parents and children, disrupting the trajectory of intergenerational poverty.

Specifically, we call on the Governor and State legislators to include funding in the FY 2016 State budget for an excellent “shovel-ready” project as the first step of the Task Force:

- **Allocate \$5 M annually for 5 years to Monroe County to integrate and scale up evidence-based home visitation parent education programs**, including Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP), Building Healthy Children (BHC) and Parents as Teachers (PAT).

¹ “Benchmarking Rochester’s Poverty” 1/2015; p.2, <http://actrochester.org/sites/default/files/Poverty%20Report%20Update%202015-0108.pdf>

We also urge State legislators to implement the following revisions to the FY 2016 Executive Budget:

RECOMMENDATION 1: Expand access to high-quality early care and education.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Boost support and education for vulnerable new families.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Increase access to high-quality after school opportunities.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Enact provisions and allocate adequate resources to “Raise the Age” of criminal responsibility to 18.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Restore funding for Runaway & Homeless Youth services.

RECOMMENDATION 1

EXPAND ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

\$100 M, including an increase to Monroe County of at least \$4 M to serve at least an additional 250 children.

2. Amend NYCRR 415.6 to allow for reimbursement for payment on behalf of children who are temporarily absent from child care for a minimum of 6 absences in 6 months for subsidized children.

Despite strong initial investments and promises of future expanded access in last year’s FY 2015 State Budget, funding for early childhood education is essentially flat in this year’s Executive Budget.

Child care recommendations

1. Increase the child care allocation by

Child care subsidies allow parents to maintain steady employment and choose high-quality settings that prepare their children to enter school ready to succeed. The number of subsidized slots in Monroe County has been cut in half over the past 14 years, at a time when poverty has increased, and thousands of eligible families across the New York State cannot access the child care assistance they need.

Child care in Governor Cuomo’s proposed Executive Budget

- Child care subsidies: The FY 2016 Executive Budget recommends level funding of \$897 M for the Child Care Block Grant (CCBG).
- Professional development for child care providers: \$6.5 M is included in the FY 2016 Executive Budget to fulfill the State’s two-year funding commitment made to the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) for professional development and grants to improve the quality of child care. The Executive Budget also provides \$12.4 M in funding to Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA) for professional development and for grants to improve the quality of care.
- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP): \$250,000 in additional funds is proposed to help increase participation in CACFP, which provides federal funding for food in child care, adult care and after-school programs.

Universal Pre-K recommendations

- Add at least \$150 M to statewide, universal full-day Prekindergarten (Pre-K) program, to provide upfront funding for districts outside New York City, and fully support New York City's plan to reach universal access in the 2015-16 school year.
- Ensure all districts awarded full-day UPK grants receive funding upfront instead of retroactively. Correct the reimbursement structure of the new full-day UPK program by ensuring districts receive allocations upfront on a predictable payment schedule.
- Continue the current funding for UPK and Priority Pre-K programs, giving priority to high need districts and children as a step toward universal access.
- Provide technical assistance to high-need districts and require a consolidated plan from each school district.

The State currently spends over \$750 M on public Pre-K programs for four-year olds, serving over 116,000 students statewide, yet thousands of children are unserved every year. In fact:

- Sixty one percent (61%) of New York State's four-year-olds are still waiting for full-day Pre-K.
- In 2014-15, only 5% of four-year olds outside of New York City got a spot in full-day Pre-K.
- A large majority (78%) of children eligible for subsidized child care are still waiting for a slot as well.

Enrolling young children in high quality Pre-K produces gains not just for that child in terms of school success, [it also benefits the community](#) in terms of lowered demand for health care, social services and special education.

Last year's investment in full-day Pre-K was a good start, but we must expand access so that all four-year-olds can participate in high-quality programs across the State. In addition, we urge that the new Pre-K program for high-need three-year-olds be implemented in addition to and not as a substitute for four-year-old expansion.

Universal Pre-K in Governor Cuomo's proposed Executive Budget:

- \$25 M for new competitive Pre-K grants to expand half-day and full-day Pre-K programs to 3-year-old children in neediest districts.
- \$385 M for UPK to be distributed using the current UPK formula.
- An additional \$340 M is proposed, to fund the continuation of programs expanded via the 2014 expansion of full-day UPK programs targeted for high-need students (as was true last year, \$300 M is directed for NYC and \$40 M for rest of state).

QUALITYstarsNY recommendation

- Invest \$20 M in a quality rating and improvement system, such as QUALITYstarsNY, to support all early learning programs in meeting higher program standards and improving children's early learning experiences.

QUALITYstarsNY in Governor Cuomo's proposed Executive Budget: The Executive Budget includes \$3 M for implementation of a statewide system to assess and improve the quality of early education and care settings and to make those assessments available to parents and the general public.

RECOMMENDATION 2

BOOST SUPPORT AND EDUCATION FOR VULNERABLE NEW FAMILIES

Evidence-based home visiting programs have been [proven](#) to produce dramatic improvements in life outcomes for both mothers and children. Dollars invested in these programs pay off for taxpayers as well, with reduced demand for spending in the special education, criminal justice and welfare systems.

Home visitation recommendations

1. Invest \$5 M in the Nurse-Family Partnership program statewide.
2. Invest \$2 M in evidence-based and promising programs such as The Parent-Child Home Program, Inc. (PCHP) and Parents as Teachers (PAT).
3. Invest \$300,000 to enhance the Strengthening Black Families & Los Niños programs.

Home visitation in Governor Cuomo's proposed Executive Budget

- The Nurse-Family Partnership program is awarded \$3 M. This is the first time that funding for NFP has been proposed in the Executive Budget.
- Community Optional Preventive Services (COPS), which funds the Building Healthy Children (BHC) home visitation program in Monroe County, is level funded at \$12.12 M.
- The Healthy Families NY program is level funded at \$23.3 M.

RECOMMENDATION 3

INCREASE ACCESS TO QUALITY AFTER SCHOOL OPPORTUNITIES

Children who participate in high quality out-of-school-time programs are [more likely](#) to attend school, to perform well academically and to avoid risky behaviors.

After School recommendations

1. Allocate \$11 M in addition to the Governor's proposed \$17.26 M allocation for Advantage After School (for a total of \$28.26 M) and an additional \$5.9 M for ESD/SVP (Extended School Day/School Violence Prevention) for a total of \$30.2 M.
2. Work toward allocating at least \$178.5 M in new statewide funds annually to allow 110,000 students to access afterschool programs (with projected \$4 M increase for Rochester to serve 2,000 additional school-age children).

After School in Governor Cuomo's proposed Executive Budget:

- The Governor's proposed \$17.26 M allocation for the Advantage After School program is identical to his proposal for the FY 2015 budget. Last year the Legislature added \$500,000 to this amount.
- Proposed funding for the Extended School Day/Violence Prevention program is level with the FY2015 appropriation of \$24.3 M.

RECOMMENDATION 4

ENACT PROVISIONS AND ALLOCATE ADEQUATE RESOURCES TO “RAISE THE AGE” OF CRIMINAL RESPONSIBILITY TO 18

New York State is currently one of only 2 states in the nation that treats 16- and 17-year-olds as adults in the criminal justice system. Research shows that this practice actually decreases public safety, increases recidivism rates, and results in poorer life outcomes when compared to similar youth who are processed through the juvenile justice system. The approximately 800

inmates in local jails and state prisons who are under 18 years are twice as likely to be physically harmed by other inmates and staff, five times more likely to be sexually assaulted, and eight times more likely to commit suicide.

Raise the Age recommendations

1. Enact provisions that reflect [the recommendations of the Governor’s Commission on Youth, Public Safety and Justice](#).
2. In FY 2015-16 and beyond, commit to fully funding the recommendations of his Commission on Youth, Public Safety & Justice. Additional resources will be needed by the County Department of Human Services and community-based programs to prepare to effectively to handle this new youth population.

Raise the Age in Governor Cuomo’s proposed Executive Budget

- Funds are set aside to fund implementation of the recommendations of the Governor’s Commission on Youth, Public Safety and Justice. In January 2015 this Commission produced recommendations on raising the age at which children in New York can be treated as adults in the criminal justice system, which currently stands at 16.
- The FY 2016 Executive Budget proposes \$25 M for the Raise the Age initiative to increase Office of Children and Families (OCFS) bed capacity and \$110 M for facility acquisition and improvements.

RECOMMENDATION 5

RESTORE FUNDING FOR RUNAWAY AND HOMELESS YOUTH SERVICES

New York’s homeless youth population has increased every year since 1984, with the total number of runaway and homeless youth reaching almost 30,000 statewide in 2012.

Despite this marked increase in the number of

homeless young people sleeping on the streets or in shelters each night, funding in the New York State budget for programs that serve this [vulnerable population](#) has actually decreased by 60% since 2008.

Runaway and Homeless Youth recommendation

- 1) Reverse the recent decline in funding for programs serving this vulnerable youth population from the proposed \$2.36 M to \$4.7 M.

Runaway and Homeless Youth in Governor Cuomo’s proposed Executive Budget

- The Governor’s Budget provides level funding at \$2.36 M for the Runaway and Homeless Youth program statewide, and eliminates all funding for services for sexually exploited youth.

ADDITIONAL AREAS OF INTEREST IN THE FY 2016 EXECUTIVE BUDGET:

Pay for Success: The Governor proposes a \$16 M increase to expand the [Pay for Success](#) “Social Impact Bond” program appropriation authority, for a total of \$69 M. This will provide continued support for the project announced in December 2013 aimed at reducing recidivism among former inmates by training and employing approximately 2,000 formerly incarcerated individuals.

Two additional projects in the fields of juvenile justice (diversion alternatives to Probation Officers and Family Court Judges for placement and detention of high-risk youth) and health care (nurse home-visiting services to first-time expectant, low-income mothers in order to improve pregnancy outcomes, child health, development, and self-sufficiency) are being negotiated.

While payments under Pay for Success contracts will generally occur several years after services are delivered to allow time for outcomes to be measured, the appropriation authority is necessary to enter into the contracts.

Youth:

Youth Development Program: The proposed allocation of \$14.1 M is identical to the Governor’s Executive budget last year; in FY 2014-15 the Legislature added \$1.3 M for a total Enacted Budget appropriation of \$15.4 M.

Summer Youth Employment: The Governor’s proposed funding of \$30 M for the Summer Youth Employment program is an increase of \$2.5 M over the FY 2015 allocation. He also proposes increasing funding to \$20 M for the Urban Youth Jobs Program.

Education:

Preschool Special Education: A decrease in spending on the Preschool Special Education program reflects change in payment methods. New regional rates for Itinerant Preschool Special Education providers are established. **It is important that the new rates are sufficient to cover preparation, parent meetings, and an appropriate number of absences.**

School aid: The formula used to determine General Support for Public Schools (GSPS) provides for an increase of \$377 M (1.7%) for the FY 2016 budget.

In addition to the \$377 M increase, and an additional \$50 M in competitive performance grants, the Executive proposal includes \$636 M in undistributed funds for a total of \$1.063 billion (4.8%) for GSPS. The \$636 M increase is contingent upon the Legislature passing the proposed Education Opportunity Agenda which includes reforms and new proposals, particularly for teachers and charter schools.

\$50 M in competitive performance grants:

\$25 M – Competitive grants to create 3 year old Pre-K classrooms

\$5 M – Master teachers program

\$3 M – STEM programs

\$3 M – Develop and train teachers through Masters level coursework and supervised residency

\$3 M – 500 full scholarships for teachers pursuing Master degrees leading to careers in education who commit to teaching in New York State for 5 years.

\$3 M – Support for a quality rating and improvement system (QUALITYstarsNY) for early childhood education.

\$7.6 M – Nonpublic school aid increase (+ \$16.7 M in prior year payments for a total of \$116.4 M in non-public school aid).

Teacher evaluation, tenure and removal: The Executive Budget calls for changes in the teacher evaluation, tenure and removal systems. Under the Governor’s new plan, evaluations would be based solely on state test scores and observation, and scoring would be standardized across the state. Teacher tenure would be granted only when a teacher achieves five consecutive years of effective ratings. The system to remove ineffective teachers would be streamlined.

Teacher Excellence Fund: The Governor allocates \$20 M to reward high performance teachers who choose to stay in the classroom.

Charter schools: The Governor proposes lifting the cap on charter schools to allow 100 more schools (the current cap is 460), and eliminates regional caps in favor of a statewide limit. He also calls for “anti-creaming” measures to ensure that charter schools are serving high-need students, and adds new enrollment reporting requirements. Students in failing schools would be given preference in the charter school lottery.

Community Schools and Extended Learning Time: No new grants will be awarded in FY 2016, but funding is maintained for previous grantees.

Community college/community schools: The Governor proposes a \$2.5 M fund that will allow five community colleges to participate in a community schools initiative program that will bring healthcare to campus, assist students with transportation, provide additional resources for child/elder care, and augment existing academic and career development supports.

Additional items:

Nonprofit Infrastructure Capital Investment Program: The Governor creates a new \$50 M competitive fund to support capital projects that will improve the quality, efficiency, and accessibility of eligible nonprofit human services organizations that provide direct services to New Yorkers. Funding for the new program will come from the state’s roughly \$5 billion surplus from a series of financial settlements last year. The \$50 M initiative would not be a recurring program.

Office of Faith-Based Community Development Services: Governor Cuomo announced a new initiative designed to help faith-based organizations apply for grants from state agencies, and coordinate with other nonprofit groups to secure funding.

Mentoring Commission: The Governor proposes establishing the NY Mentoring Commission, headed by his mother, Matilda Cuomo. She will work with private sector and nonprofit partners to identify mentors to work with foster children, children in high-need communities and other children in need.

Mental hygiene: The Executive proposes decreasing the number of State-operated psychiatric center inpatient beds by 137 in FY 2016. The Governor plans to reexamine the closure of Western New York Children’s Psychiatric Center and the relocation of those beds to the Buffalo Psychiatric Center.

Increase in minimum wage: Under the Governor’s proposal, the minimum wage in New York outside NYC would be \$10.50/hour, and the minimum wage in NYC would be \$11.50/hour.

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Citizen's Committee for Children

Empire State Coalition

NYS Association of Counties

Children’s Defense Fund – NY