

The Children's Agenda

Smart Choices. Bold Voices.

Summary Analysis of the Adopted 2019 Monroe County Budget



The adopted 2019 Monroe County budget includes:

- A shifting of 6 Dept. of Public Health clerical staff to respond to the collapse of Early Intervention (EI) Service Coordination programs in community agencies. A proposal to create a wait list for infants and toddlers referred for EI evaluation was withdrawn.
- An increase of \$1.8 M in County spending on child care subsidies.
- Addition of 30 case aide positions in Child Protective Services.
- A ten-cent reduction in the County's property tax rate and an increase in assessed valuation, leading to \$11.6 M more projected property tax revenue in 2019 over 2018.

In this report, we provide commendations for several allocations in Monroe County's 2019 Adopted Budget and priority recommendations for further action in 2019.

Priority Recommendations

1) EARLY INTERVENTION CRISIS: Hire or contract for at least 6 Service Coordinator positions to the County EI program.

- Monroe County must immediately hire at least 6 new Service Coordinators, or contract with Community agencies to do the same. Doing so will bring the County's Department of Public Health closer to the sustained staffing it needs to sufficiently address families' needs.
- We applaud County Executive Dinolfo's commitment to make EI the highest priority for County advocacy at the state level in 2019. We will join her. Specifically, New York State must -
 - Significantly raise reimbursement rates for Early Intervention and Preschool Special Education Services.
 - Increase reimbursement from private health insurance companies by changing

state law to prohibit them from denying coverage for EI services.

- Establish funding and reimbursement rate equity between the Early Intervention and Preschool Special Education systems.

2) LOWER PARENT FEES FOR CHILD CARE SUBSIDIES: While we applaud additional resources directed to Income Eligible Day Care, there are eligible families who do not utilize subsidies because they can't afford the high parent co-pays. Monroe County has the highest co-pay policy allowed – requiring families to contribute up to 35% of disposable income. To truly support employment, Monroe County should lower parent co-pay fees to 30% of disposable income and commit to lowering it further in the future.

3) LIMIT NEW PLACEMENTS: There is a projected 60% increase in family and residential placements from 2017 to 2019. Monroe County should strengthen its efforts to avoid out-of-home placements for foster care and for youth impacted by New York's new Raise the Age law.

4) BRING CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES (CPS) CASELOAD RATIOS DOWN TO 12:1 IN 2019. While the new case aides will help reduce CPS workloads, better recruitment and retention efforts are needed to bring the County CPS workers' caseloads down to the recommended 12:1 ratio.

Priority Commendations

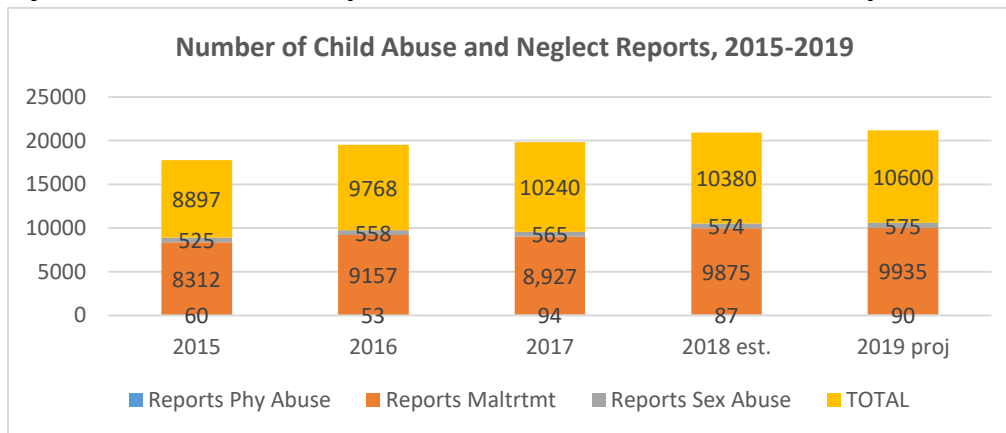
Child Protective Services staffing: We commend the investments in CPS staff, including 30 new case aide positions and an additional DHS leadership position to directly oversee CPS.

Prevention Investments: We commend the additional \$600,000 of support for preventive programs.

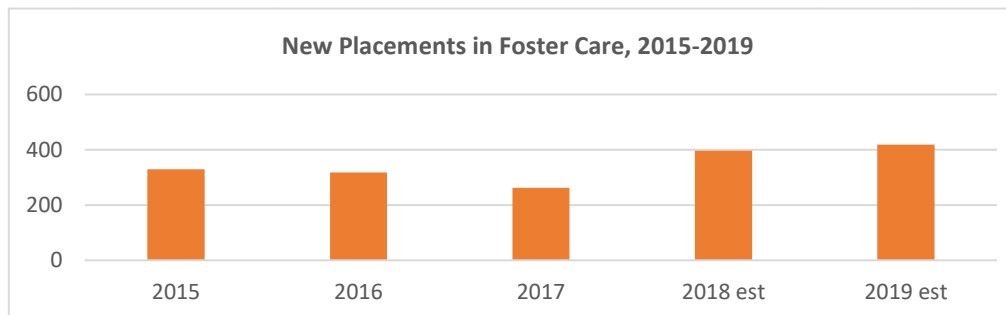
Child care subsidies: We applaud the County's reduced parent co-pay fees for the small, state-funded Facilitated Enrollment program which provides subsidies to parents with incomes up to 275% of the federal poverty level.

2019 Adopted County Budget Finding Highlights

For the 7th year in a row, CPS reports increase. In 2019, 10,600 reports are expected.



New foster care placements of children are on the rise, increasing 60% from 2017 to 2019.



The average no. of day care subsidies per month will decrease slightly, from 7491 to 7477.

