

The Children's Agenda

Review of the Impact on Children & Youth in the 2016-17 NY State Executive Budget

This is The Children's Agenda's 6th annual review of the New York State Executive Budget and its impact on our community's children and youth. We affirm the progress made over the past year in bringing together Rochester-area residents and leaders to confront the crisis of child poverty. The Governor and State leadership's support, along with that of Assembly Majority Leader Joe Morelle and the United Way of Greater Rochester, has been critical to these endeavors. The Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative (RMAPI), ROC the Future and other collaborative efforts have been successful in focusing attention on "what's needed most and works best" for children and youth in Monroe County.

Collective action is necessary to reverse troubling trends:

- **Child poverty:** The U.S. Census reported in December 2015 that Rochester's child poverty rate has increased from 50.5% to 52.5%.ⁱ
- **Trauma:** A survey of Monroe County high school students revealed that 70% have experienced trauma and 16% have experienced 4 or more traumatic events, leaving them at high risk for violence, substance abuse, and adult health problems.ⁱⁱ
- **Child abuse and neglect:** The Monroe County Department of Human Services (DHS) projects that there will be 8,925 reports of child abuse and neglect in 2016 – an increase of 20% since 2008 – at a time of high vacancy rates among DHS child protective services staff.ⁱⁱⁱ
- **Lost opportunities:** 14,000 school-age children in Rochester do not have access to after-school programs that can prevent school failure, criminal activity and teen pregnancy.^{iv}

Many solutions aimed at reversing these trends (though not all) require resources, and we look to New York State and the federal government to help our community take the next step by expanding **proven strategies** that will lift families and children out of poverty. The State has already done so through dollars directed toward RMAPI and the \$500M Upstate Revitalization Initiative award, and more are needed. **In this review we point to opportunities in the 2016-17 State Budget to further invest in a brighter future for our kids.**

The Children's Agenda recommends the following revisions to the FY17 Executive Budget:

RECOMMENDATION 1: Invest an additional \$190M for child care subsidies in the 2016-17 Budget.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Allocate \$2M annually for 5 years to Monroe County to expand evidence-based home visiting programs, with a required 2-to-1 match of public/private funds (\$1 of private funding for every \$2 of public funding). In addition, allocate \$5M to expand NFP in other areas of the state.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Pass Paid Family Leave Insurance legislation that uses the Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) system to support all workers during times of family crises.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Expand access to quality out-of-school time care by increasing funding for the Advantage After-School Program to \$62.9M.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Pass Raise the Age legislation with sufficient funding to provide for appropriate facilities, programs and services for 16- and 17-year old youth being moved out of the adult criminal justice system.

Early Childhood Education

RECOMMENDATION:

INVEST AN ADDITIONAL \$190M FOR CHILD CARE SUBSIDIES.

The 2014 re-authorization of the federal Child Care Development Block Grant Act included new health and safety provisions that will require a significant investment to implement. These provisions are important to the safety and quality of child care settings, but their implementation must not be funded at the expense of needed expansion of child care subsidies to reach the thousands of unserved eligible families in New York.

This is a great concern for families in Monroe County, where the number of child care subsidies has been cut in half since 2001. High quality child care should be available to all families, regardless of income. The new health and safety provisions should not be funded via a reduction in child care subsidies.

In addition to more inspections and expanded training and background checks for care providers, the mandatory program modifications required by the CCDBG Act in order for New York to continue receiving federal child care funds include: a 12-month eligibility criteria, a graduated phase-out of assistance, and an emphasis on serving homeless families, among others. If New York is to implement these changes without a loss of subsidy slots, an investment of an additional \$100M will be required.

Early Childhood Education in Governor Cuomo's proposed Executive Budget:

- Funding for child care subsidies in the 2016-17 Executive Budget is level with last year. \$10M is allocated to help cover the costs of implementation of new federal health and safety regulations.
- Governor Cuomo proposes new funding of \$22M for 3-year-old PreK programs; there are no additional investments for 4-year-old PreK. Currently over 80,000 four year olds in New York State lack access to half or full day PreK.
- QUALITYstarsNY program: \$5M is proposed to expand the QUALITYstarsNY rating system to enable parents to identify and choose high quality programs for their children. This is \$2M more than FY2016 when it was first included in the Executive Budget.
- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP): \$250,000 for competitive grants to non-profit organizations to increase participation in CACFP.
- Governor Cuomo proposes several changes to the Early Intervention program addressing insurance company payments, eligibility determinations, and the administrative components of provider rates. The administration predicts these changes will produce \$5M in savings in FY2017, growing to \$20M in FY2018. Additional savings will accrue to counties.

Early Childhood Education recommendations:

- 1) **Add a \$190M investment in child care in order to implement new federally mandated health and safety regulations for child care providers and keep working families from losing access to affordable child care.**
- 2) **New York State should invest at least \$150M to expand high quality PreK opportunities for high-need three and four-year-olds in both schools and community settings.**
- 3) **Maintain the Governor's \$5M proposed allocation for the QUALITYstarsNY program.**
- 4) **For the State's Early Intervention program for young children with disabilities or developmental delays: a) Increase/restore reimbursement rates by at least 5%; b) require health insurance companies to contribute to the cost of Early Intervention (EI), and c) reject proposed changes to the evaluation process so that young children can receive high-quality services from qualified professionals.**

Parent Support and Education

RECOMMENDATION:

ALLOCATE \$2M ANNUALLY FOR 5 YEARS TO MONROE COUNTY TO EXPAND EVIDENCE-BASED HOME VISITING PROGRAMS, WITH A REQUIRED 2-TO-1 MATCH OF PUBLIC/PRIVATE FUNDS (\$1 OF PRIVATE FUNDING FOR EVERY \$2 OF PUBLIC FUNDING).

Parenting support and education programs are a proven cost-effective investment of public and private dollars, leading to improved outcomes for both parents and children, and saving future expenditures on special education, mental health care, juvenile justice and public assistance.^v Significantly for Monroe County, where child abuse and neglect reports are rising at an alarming rate and Child Protective Services staffing is inadequate, these programs have been proven to reduce rates of child abuse and neglect.

Monroe County is home to three evidence-based home visitation programs, Nurse-Family Partnership (one of the largest NFP programs in the nation), Parents as Teachers, and Building Healthy Children, that should be expanded to serve every eligible family.

Home visitation in Governor Cuomo’s proposed Executive Budget:

- Governor Cuomo proposes \$3 M for Nurse-Family Partnership and \$23.3M for Healthy Families NY. There is no allocation for Parents as Teachers.

Home visitation recommendations:

- 1) **Allocate \$2M annually for 5 years to Monroe County to expand evidence-based home visiting programs, with a required 2-to-1 match of public/private funds (\$1 of private funding for every \$2 of public funding).**
- 2) **Allocate \$5M to expand Nurse-Family Partnership in other areas of the state.**

Paid Family Leave Insurance

RECOMMENDATION:

PASS PAID FAMILY LEAVE INSURANCE LEGISLATION THAT USES THE TEMPORARY DISABILITY INSURANCE (TDI) SYSTEM TO SUPPORT ALL WORKERS DURING TIMES OF FAMILY CRISES.

Paid Family Leave Insurance allows workers to be with their families during times of crisis or major events such as birth or adoption of a child, a serious illness of a family member, or military deployment. Despite the federal family leave law, across the country just 12 percent of the private workforce has access to paid family leave at work.

The experience of states with paid family leave (New Jersey, Rhode Island, California) show that it does not have a negative impact on business, and in fact results in higher retention rates and lower costs related to turnover, recruitment and training.^{vi vii viii} Using the Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) system creates a low-cost mechanism to fund paid family leave, and

allows the employer to use the salary of a worker on leave to pay for temporary workers or overtime to cover the worker’s job responsibilities. Currently, TDI allows women to take some paid time off during pregnancy and after childbirth, but fathers and non-biological mothers can’t take the leave, and it cannot be used to care for a seriously ill family member. The benefits are small, capped at \$170 per week for the last 25 years.

Paid family leave in Governor Cuomo’s proposed Executive Budget:

The Governor’s proposal contains three out of five essential components for paid family leave - job protection for up to 12 weeks of leave for all private sector workers. It lacks adequate wage replacement for low income workers on leave and it doesn’t include revisions to our inadequate TDI system.

Paid Family Leave Insurance (PFLI) recommendations:

PFLI legislation must contain five essential components:

- **12 weeks of leave to care for a new child or seriously ill family member;**
- **Job protection throughout the leave;**
- **Coverage for all private sector workers, no matter the size of the business;**
- **A wage replacement rate of 2/3 of a worker’s average weekly wage, which will ensure that low wage workers are not prohibited from taking the leave.**
- **Modernizing the Temporary Disability Insurance program covering a worker's own illness or off the job disability, which has been frozen at the 1989 level of \$170/week.**

After School Programs

RECOMMENDATION:

INCREASE ACCESS TO QUALITY OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME OPPORTUNITIES BY FUNDING THE ADVANTAGE AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM AT \$69.2M.

A December 2015 report authored by The Children’s Agenda^x found that:

- *14,076 children who could benefit from high-quality after-school care in Rochester are not currently accessing it.*
- *Research shows that participation in quality after-school and summer learning programs can result in higher academic achievement and improved social competencies.*

Despite the demonstrated value of out-of-school time opportunities for children, New York’s Advantage After School Program has suffered from little to no expansion since 2008.

After School in Governor Cuomo’s proposed Executive Budget:

- The Governor’s proposed \$17.26M allocation for the Advantage After School program is identical to his proposal for the FY2016 budget. Last year the Legislature added \$2M to this amount.
- Proposed funding for the Extended School Day/Violence Prevention program is level with the FY2016 appropriation of \$24.3M.

After School recommendations:

Increase Advantage After School funding to \$69.2M (add \$49.9M and restore \$2M from last year), in order to:

- **Serve 20,000 more school-age children, which would return us to 2007-08 levels.**
 - **Align per-student funding with national best practice (\$1,500 per student).**
 - **Provide summer programming for those 20,000 participants.**
 - **Ensure quality by leveraging statewide knowledge, resources, and supports through technical assistance.**
 - **Implement evidence-based improvements to data collection and evaluation to improve program quality and provide state-level data on afterschool and summer programming.**
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Raise the Age

RECOMMENDATION:

PASS RAISE THE AGE POLICY WITH SUFFICIENT FUNDING TO PROVIDE FOR APPROPRIATE FACILITIES, PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR 16- AND 17-YEAR-OLD YOUTH MOVED OUT OF THE ADULT CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM.

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. A comprehensive Raise the Age policy would promote effective interventions and diversion programs that hold youth accountable for their actions while also ensuring pathways to productive citizenship.

Raise the Age will benefit our communities as well as our youth. A study comparing New York youth to young people in New Jersey – where 16- and 17-year olds are treated as juveniles instead of adults - found that among youth who committed similar crimes, the New York youth were more likely to recidivate. New York youth had higher re-arrest

rates, higher re-incarceration rates, and a shorter time period to re-arrest than their New Jersey peers.^x The approximately 800 inmates in New York's local jails and state prisons who are under 18 years of age 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.^{xi}

Raise the Age in Governor Cuomo's proposed Executive Budget:

The FY2017 Executive Budget includes recommendations from the Governor's 2014 Commission on Youth, Public Safety and Justice to make changes to New York's criminal justice system that will bring it in line with 48 other states. The Commission recommended raising the age of juvenile jurisdiction to 18, and raising the minimum age of juvenile jurisdiction from age 7 to 12. Governor Cuomo proposes these changes along with others, plus an initial investment of approximately \$10M for services and expenses related to raising the age, as well as funding for related capital projects.

Raise the Age recommendations:

- 1. Pass Raise the Age policy with sufficient funding to provide for appropriate facilities, programs and services for 16- and 17-year- old youth moved out of the adult criminal justice system.**
- 2. Enact provisions to raise the age of criminal responsibility to 18 and to initiate meaningful reforms such as diversion, alternatives to placement, record sealing, parental notice, and age-appropriate court processing.**
- 3. In FY2017 and beyond, commit to fully funding the change in policy and practices. Additional resources will be needed on an ongoing basis by the County Department of Human Services and community-based programs to effectively to serve this new youth population and increase public safety.**

ADDITIONAL FY2017 EXECUTIVE BUDGET PROPOSALS - COMMENDATIONS

Runaway and homeless youth: The Governor's Budget maintains funding levels from FY2016 for a total of \$4.48M for Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) services. **After many years of flat-funding, we commend the Governor for prioritizing the needs of New York's vulnerable youth.**

Increase in minimum wage: Under the Governor's proposal, the minimum wage in New York would increase to \$15 per hour in New York City by 2018 and by 2021 in the rest of the state. **We commend the Governor for supporting this proven anti-poverty strategy that will result in much-needed income for Monroe County's low-income working families struggling to meet their children's basic needs.**^{xii}

Career and Technical Education: The New York State Board of Regents approved a Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathway to high school graduation with a Regents diploma in 2014. This allows students to graduate job-ready by taking an approved industry standard certification exam to replace one Regents exam to meet graduation requirements. In the FY2017 Executive Budget, Governor Cuomo allocates \$1 million to implement changes and expansion to the CTE pathway. **The RMAPI has identified increased access to and participation in CTE as a critical youth development and workforce development strategy, and we commend the Governor for supporting it.**

Summer Youth Employment: The Governor’s proposed funding of \$31M for the Summer Youth Employment program is an increase of \$1M over the FY2015 Enacted Budget allocation.

Medicaid Funding for Children’s Behavioral Health Services: The Governor proposes \$7.5M in funding for six new Medicaid services for children: crisis intervention, community psychiatric supports and treatment, psychosocial rehabilitation services, family peer support services, youth peer training and support services, and services from other licensed practitioners. The State will be submitting a State Plan Amendment to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services seeking approval for this change.

Community Schools Aid (new): \$100M is proposed to support conversion of underperforming schools to community schools. \$75M is set aside for districts with schools that have been identified as “struggling” or “persistently struggling”. \$25M is set aside for districts with schools identified as “high need”. Funds can be used for purposes such as hiring a community school coordinator or for before- and after-school programs. **Community schools and neighborhood-based services are a priority of the Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative, based on feedback from community residents who want neighborhood-based wraparound services, more resources, and more jobs in their local community.**

ADDITIONAL AREAS OF INTEREST IN THE FY2017 EXECUTIVE BUDGET:

Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative: The Governor proposes an allocation of \$25M to fight poverty in the ten upstate cities with the highest poverty rates (Albany, Binghamton, Buffalo, Elmira, Jamestown, Oneonta, Oswego, Syracuse, Troy, Utica). Modeled on the Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty initiative, this effort will provide \$500,000 in planning and implementation grants along with access to a \$20M grant pool to match private sector contributions.

Youth Development Program: The proposed allocation of \$14.1M is identical to the Governor’s Executive budget last year; in FY2015 the Legislature added \$1.3 M for a total Enacted Budget appropriation of \$15.4M.

School-Community Partnership Competitive Grant Program: As was true in FY2016, existing funding is maintained but no new funding is provided for additional grants.

Extended Learning Time: No funding for Extended Learning Time is included in the FY2017 Executive Budget.

Healthy Schools and Child Care: The Executive Budget allocates \$250,000 for Farm to School grants to improve the supply of healthy, local produce to public school children. This is a \$100,000 reduction from FY2016 funding.

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Citizen Action of NY/NY Paid Family Leave Insurance Campaign

New York Academy of Medicine – DASH-NY

Children's Defense Fund – NY

Empire State Coalition

NYS Association of Counties

Empire Justice Center

ENDNOTES

ⁱ “Rochester’s Poverty Rates Continue to Rise”, Rochester Area Community Foundation,

<http://www.racf.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/2015%20Press%20Releases/Rochester's-Poverty-Rising-120315.pdf>

ⁱⁱ “2014-15 Monroe County Youth Risk Behavior Survey”, <https://www2.monroecounty.gov/files/health/DataReports/2014-2015%20MC%20YRBS%20.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ “Review of the Proposed 2016 Monroe County Budget”, <http://thechildrensagenda.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/2016-County-budget-Exec-Summ-FINAL-2.pdf>

^{iv} “Out of School Time Opportunities in Rochester”,

<http://www.racf.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/News/Publications/Out-of-School-Time-Full-Report-Dec2015.pdf>

^v U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, <http://homvee.acf.hhs.gov/>

^{vi} “The Economic Benefits of Paid Parental Leave”, NYT, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/01/upshot/the-economic-benefits-of-paid-parental-leave.html?_r=0

^{vii} “Scientific proof that paid parental leave is good for everyone”, <http://www.businessinsider.com/scientific-proof-paid-parental-leave-is-good-for-everyone>

^{viii} “Leaves that Pay”, Center for Economic and Policy Research, <https://cepr.net/documents/publications/paid-family-leave-1-2011.pdf>

^{ix} “Out of School Time Opportunities in Rochester”, <http://thechildrensagenda.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Out-of-School-Time-Full-Rpt-4.pdf>

^x “Get the Facts”, <http://raisetheagency.com/get-the-facts> and <http://raisetheagency.com/newitem/raise-age-campaign-responds-raise-age-budget-language>

^{xi} 2015 Opportunity Agenda, <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/2015-opportunity-agenda-ensuring-justice-perception-and-reality-0>

^{xii} “Increasing the Minimum Wage to \$10.10 Will Make Low-Wage Workers and Their Families Better Off”, Economic Policy Institute, <http://www.epi.org/blog/increasing-minimum-wage-10-10-raise-wages/>