

Review of the Proposed 2013-14 City of Rochester Budget



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KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Children's Agenda works to understand what children need and advocates for what works best to meet those needs. Our analyses of public budgets, like all of our work, seeks to promote programs and policies that are:

- evidence-based and effective,
- preventive, getting to the root of the problem, rather than emphasizing remediation,
- integrated and coordinated into a system of support and care, and
- supportive of a continuum of care, from prenatal to young adulthood.

In this analysis of the proposed 2013-14 City budget, The Children's Agenda finds that the Mayor proposes a budget for the City of Rochester that spares children and youth any negative impact. Despite needing to close a projected budget gap of \$42.7 million, the budget includes new investments in after-school programming and youth employment strategies. These are positive steps toward halting a decade-long decline in overall funding for City programs that directly touch the lives of Rochester's children. Additionally, we note in this analysis the City's investment in capital expenditures important for children and youth including play apparatus, parks and ball fields, and Dept. of Recreation and Youth Services (DRYS) facilities.

Yet the gap between what our City's children need and what is available to them is daunting, and the numbing statistics have become too familiar. Rochester has the unwelcome distinction of having the 7th highest child poverty rate and the lowest high school graduation rate for black males in the nation, with reading and math test scores among the lowest in New York State. The racial and economic inequality existing in our community was highlighted by the recent "Facing Race-Embracing Equity" initiative.

Mayor Richards has emphasized the fact that the City's finances, largely dependent on the local property tax, are unsustainable. Many factors outside of his control have led to a recurring gap between the City's revenues and the costs of its responsibilities.

Long-term growth trends in the portion of City budget devoted to public safety, which focuses on reacting to problems, continue. We know how to lessen the need for public spending on special education, teen pregnancy, and juvenile justice - there are many evidence-based preventive programs that could be put in place that will both save money in the long run and change the trajectory of the lives of many of our community's youth.

The Mayor has a prominent sphere of influence, and we call on him and our City leadership to do all that is possible to brighten the bleak future faced by children who are born into this community and face many significant challenges through no choice of their own.

We urge Mayor Richards and our City leadership, including City Council, to use their positions and influence to increase the urgency for and effectiveness of initiatives impacting children, and to focus our community's resources on creating more rapid, lasting change. There is no higher priority.

Commendations

The Mayor demonstrates the City's commitment to children and youth by including the following in his proposed budget:

1. A \$125,100 investment in after-school programs at Edgerton Community Center and School #17. This is critically important: we know from a 2011 TCA study that only 11% of Rochester's children were served by quality after-school programs, and 260 children are now served by programs whose federal funding expires at the end of the 2012-13 school year. While commendable, the City's investment will not fully replace those lost federal dollars and slots.
2. Allocations to ensure that DRYS programs and the libraries are largely spared any negative impact from this year's difficult budget situation.
3. Capital expenditures to replace or maintain equipment and facilities that are vital to the health and well-being of Rochester's children and families. Safe and accessible play and recreational spaces are crucial to providing opportunities for physical activity, and for social and emotional development as well. Examples include \$70,000 for Genesee Valley Park pool deck, \$134,000 for the Carter Street ball field, and \$585,000 for play apparatus.
4. DRYS programs at School #17, which will become a community school, and School #46, which will be an extended learning site, are two examples of planned collaboration between the City and the Rochester City School District (RCSD). Another is the placement of Pathways to Peace staff in several RCSD high schools 3 mornings a week to address conflicts that have emerged. In July the Center for Governmental Research will release its study, commissioned by the City, about RCSD/DRYS coordination. The successful partnering of these two governmental entities, particularly as RCSD moves more deeply into extended learning time initiatives, is a hopeful sign.

Key Recommendations

The Children's Agenda's key findings and recommendations fall under two broad categories: those for long-term, transformational strategies to benefit children and youth, and those regarding the proposed 2013-14 City budget. Given the Mayor's proposed allocations for after-school and youth employment programs, as well as his recent, laudable public endorsement of President Obama's Early Learning Initiative, we urge the Mayor and City leadership to further demonstrate their commitment to children and youth in the following ways:

Key Recommendations for the Transformational Change Needed by Rochester's Children

1. Sharpened Advocacy at State and Federal Levels: As a community, we are dependent on external resources like federal and state funding to meet the critical needs of our residents, particularly the 55% of children who live in poverty. With an increasing portion of the City budget devoted to public safety costs, leaving fewer dollars for other City services, it is vital that we seek out opportunities to bring resources into the city.

The Mayor and City Council should focus the City's lobbying efforts in Albany and D.C. with our local delegation on identifying sources of funding for:

- child care subsidies and early childhood education;
- high-quality youth development, youth employment, violence prevention and juvenile justice programming;
- promotion of healthy weight strategies; and
- any other possible opportunities to address Rochester's poverty and to mitigate its impact on our children and youth.

The recent news that Monroe County will lose \$725,000 in child care subsidy funding from New York State, resulting in another 150 low-income children losing access to quality child care, is an example of the critical need for the Mayor and City Council to work more closely with our state and federal delegation to obtain every possible dollar for our community and our children. TCA is a willing partner to advocate alongside the Mayor and City leadership in these efforts.

2. Optimizing Impact Across Local Units of Government: The Mayor and the City should deepen their active involvement in an emerging community conversation around a Youth Master Plan, as well as in Roc the Future's focus on school readiness, attendance, and extended learning opportunities. Such planning can overcome the natural boundary lines that exist between levels of government, increasing coordination of services and programs for children and youth, and result in decreases in duplication and increases in quality. The Mayor has taken an important first step by funding a study of coordination between DRYS and RCSD to be released this summer. We urge City leadership to deepen these partnerships with a commitment to high-quality, evidence-based programming, in order to make the best use of available resources.

3. Refinance Preventive Children's Services: Creative strategies to refinance children's services are needed to mitigate the impact of variations in public budgets. The Mayor's background in business and finance lends itself to leadership in this arena, and we urge him to develop these instruments along with partners in the private sector and from other levels of government. Social impact bonds (or pay-for-success contracts), for example, generate new dollars for strategies that benefit youth by using private money invested up-front in preventive programs, with returns accruing to investors when public funds are freed up from cost savings in remediation programs. New York State has budgeted \$30 million for a "Pay for Success" program, and Rochester should look closely at the opportunity this presents to bring in badly needed funding to bring already existing preventive programs to scale.

4. Children's Impact Statements: Next year's proposed City budget and each one thereafter should include a "Children's Impact Statement." Similar to an environmental impact statement for a public works project, this statement would assess the impact (positive, negative, or neutral) and quantify the net effect of City budget allocations on children's health, education and success. Decisions reflected in

a public budget have multiple consequences, and the City must be transparent about how its actions affect the most vulnerable members of our community, our children.

Key Recommendations for the 2013-14 City Budget

- 1. We recommend that the City undertake a thorough assessment of professional development opportunities made available to DRYS staff to ensure that they have access to up-to-date, relevant training on youth needs, effective engagement and mentoring, and how they can best support the social, physical, and academic well-being of the teens they serve.** The current DRYS staff is smaller and made up of fewer full-time permanent positions than in the past. Administrators have been asked to take on larger areas of responsibility, and the workers who interact with youth are more likely to be part-time and seasonal. We know that the shift from full-time to part-time staff who "float" among the Rec centers decreases the likelihood that youth and Rec staff will develop the deep relationships and quality, positive interactions that research shows can change life outcomes for youth. These changes make high-quality staff training and development crucial. The needs of Rochester's youth are evident; let's make sure the staff who interact with them daily are equipped to meet those needs.
- 2. We recommend that the Pathways to Peace program undergo a rigorous evaluation and planning process to ensure that their street outreach and education programs are as effective as possible.** We note the Mayor's new support for the expansion of Pathways to Peace staff and believe that if an evaluation demonstrates their effectiveness, even more City funds should support this important program. Given the growth in allocations for City public safety functions, particularly as compared to the long-term decline in the DRYS budget, it is clear that the City must identify and employ the most promising evidence-based **prevention** strategies to keep our youth out of the criminal justice system.
- 3. The City should examine the way its two Rec on the Move mobile units are currently used to evaluate whether its initial goals for the program are being met.** Rec on the Move was initially started, and then expanded, to provide recreational opportunities in areas of the city that lack safe spaces to play, and to encourage children in those neighborhoods to connect with a nearby Recreation Center. Staff should assess how to balance the many demands for the service (i.e., having the vans at public festivals and events) with the importance of parking them in vacant lots in neighborhoods where there are lots of children and few safe areas or occasions for them to play. In addition, the methods used to track attendance should be looked at closely. It is vital to monitor where the mobile units are most heavily used to enable schedulers to make plans for the best use of this valuable resource.

OVERVIEW OF THE BUDGET

- The total 2013-14 proposed budget for the City of Rochester is \$481,695,300. This total is 2% less than the 2012-13 amended budget, and 1% more than 2012-13 estimated expenditures.
- The property tax levy for City taxpayers remains stable. Because of a state-mandated shifting of the tax burden, homeowners will see their tax bill increase by an average of \$23.80 per year, and business owners will see their tax bill decrease by an average of \$236.37.
- The City's workforce grows slightly, with an addition of 17 positions and a reduction of 6 positions, leaving a net gain of 11 positions.
- A projected \$42.7 million budget gap was closed by: adjusting pension amortization and capital spending, savings in healthcare expenses, fee increases, a lease buyout, a transfer within City funds, and general reductions.

Rochester City School District (RCSD)

The City of Rochester collects property taxes on behalf of the school district and distributes those collected taxes to RCSD. These Maintenance of Effort dollars are paid entirely by the tax collection and are flat funded at \$119.1 million per year. We are not analyzing the expenditure of these dollars here, but merely noting the transaction.

IMPACT OF BUDGET CHANGES ON DEPARTMENTS THAT SERVE CHILDREN

While the City funds services in many of its departments that touch the lives of Rochester's children, this analysis includes an overview of budgetary and programmatic changes in the following City departments: Recreation and Youth Services, Library, and Police Department. We also include a brief look at capital expenditures.

Note on budget terminology used in expenditure charts:

- "ACTUAL" = The most accurate account of expenditures, totaled after the fiscal year has ended.
- "ESTIMATED" = The amount of annual expenditures predicted by department or program staff at the end of the third quarter of a fiscal year.
- "BUDGET" or "APPROVED" = The amount of annual expenditures included in the budget approved by City Council in June for the fiscal year beginning on July 1.
- "AMENDED" = The amount of annual expenditures for a department or program approved by City Council after the fiscal year begins, often resulting from grant funds that arrive mid-year.
- "PROPOSED" = The amount of annual expenditures for a program or department that is included in the Mayor's proposed budget, before City Council approval.

The Department of Recreation and Youth Services

The Department of Recreation and Youth Services (DRYS) provides recreation, youth development activities, teen pregnancy prevention programming, Summer Food Service, violence prevention and youth employment services to Rochester's children and youth.

The total DRYS budget increases 5% compared to 2012-13 expenditure estimates (\$10.58 M → \$11.115 M). The biggest budgetary changes within the department are primarily shifts in dollars, not new resources. For example, two-thirds of the Bureau of Employment Opportunities' 14% growth can be attributed to \$110,000 in CDBG funds that are appearing in the DRYS budget for the first time, but which have supported the same activities from the CDBG budget in the past.

New in 2013-14 is a collaboration among all 3 bureaus of DRYS to design a program aimed at supporting young black males in their pursuit of academic and employment success. This program is in development and will be launched in October 2013.

Dept. of Recreation and Youth Services Expenditures:

	2009-10 Actual	2010-11 Actual	2011-12 Actual	2012-13 Estimated	2013-14 Proposed	% change 2012-13→ 2013-14
Office of the Commissioner	\$1.007M	\$446K	\$393,600	\$462,500	\$476,400	+ 3%
Recreation	\$8.64M	\$7.42M	\$7.872M	\$7.384M	\$8.046M	+ 9%
Youth Services	\$3.36M	\$1.85M	\$1.315M	\$1.577M	\$1.265M	- 20%*
Employment Opportunities	N/A	\$1.545M	\$1.423M	\$1.162M	\$1.328M	+ 14%**
DRYS Total	\$13.01M	\$11.26M	\$11.01M	\$10.585M	\$11.115M	+ 5%

* One-third of this decrease is due to shift of County Youth Bureau funding to Bureau of Recreation

** This \$166,000 increase can be attributed to a \$110,000 shift in CDBG \$\$ for Summer for Opportunity and \$64,200 for 2 new positions at Pathways to Peace

Office of the Commissioner

The budget of the Office of the Commissioner includes \$5,700 for new part-time Youth Worker for workforce development.

Bureau of Recreation

In addition to managing and operating the Rochester Public Market, the Bureau of Recreation provides leisure activities, physical recreation opportunities, and youth development programming. For the 2013-14 year, the department has maintained service hours at recreation centers and has expanded some after-school services.

The Bureau of Recreation's allocation increases 9%, in part due to a shift of County Youth Bureau funds (\$91,600) from the Bureau of Youth Services.

Highlights include:

- \$91,000 for a new after-school program at Edgerton Community Center that will serve both the growing immigrant population and neighborhood students.
- \$34,100 for a new after-school program at School #17 to support its plans to become a community school.
- Use of existing staff to support a collaboration with School #46, a RCSD extended learning site.
- Annual Monroe County Youth Bureau funding shifts from the Bureau of Youth Services to Recreation. These dollars will be used by DRYS staff to provide youth programming that has been contracted out to CBOS in the past.
- Expiration of federal 21st Century funding for the Rochester After School Academy (RASA) in June 2013, eliminating after-school services for 260 children.
- \$10,500 for an increase in summer hours for 2 Youth Intervention Aides, whose responsibilities mirror those of Pathways to Peace staff in the Bureau of Youth Employment.

Recreation Center attendance	2010-11 Actual	2011-12 Actual	2012-13 Estimated	2013-14 Proposed	% change 2012-13→2013-14
Registrations	22,665	22,449	16,940	18,900	+ 12%
Attendance	568,002	614,222	607,000	619,000	+ 2%

We continue to be concerned about the increased use of part-time staff rather than full-time permanent staff at Recreation Centers. It is particularly troubling that part-time staff are being moved from site to site depending on need, because this prevents them from developing solid relationships with youth. Rigorous studies conclude that supportive relationships with mentoring adults can improve a child's educational and life outcomes. For many of Rochester's teens, staff at Rec centers offer them the chance to receive caring guidance from an adult who knows them well. This is made much more difficult when staff are not present consistently at the same sites.

Recreation on the Move

Recreation on the Move, begun in 2010-11, continues in the proposed 2013-14 budget. Two mobile units, one funded by the Greater Rochester Health Foundation, are stocked with recreation equipment, tables, and chairs and allow City Recreation staff to connect with communities that are underserved or are overly represented by disengaged youth and families.

The two mobile units are an innovative approach to engaging children and families and encouraging physical activity. It is unclear, though, that the program is fully realizing its original intention of reaching underserved areas of the city and connecting children in those neighborhoods with a nearby Recreation Center.

In addition, the methods used to track attendance should be looked at closely. It is vital to monitor where the mobile units are most heavily used to enable schedulers to make plans for the best use of this valuable resource.

Recreation on the Move	2010-11 Actual	2011-12 Actual	2012-13 Estimated	2013-14 Proposed	% change 2012-13 →2013-14
Attendance	1,695	5,445	5,000	6,000	+ 20%

Bureau of Youth Services

The Bureau of Youth Services is now largely comprised of the Summer Food Service Program and DRYS' adolescent pregnancy prevention programs. Other components include the Pillar of Hope program (providing role models to City students), parent-child training, the City Youth Art Squad, and the COMET data management system.

The proposed allocation for the Bureau of Youth Services is down 20%, due in part to a reduction in federal funding for the Summer Food Service program (\$20,600) and a shift of County Youth Bureau funding to Bureau of Recreation (\$91,600).

Summer Food Service Program

We commend the City and other Summer Food sponsors for implementing the recommendations of the CGR study of underutilization of summer meal sites. There is currently a multi-faceted marketing and promotion campaign in place, and changes have been made to make it easier for parents and older youth to find a summer food site near them.

Summer Food Service	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	% change 2012-13

Program	Actual	Actual	Estimated	Proposed	→2013-14
Breakfast Sites	46	37	29	34	+ 17%
Breakfasts Served	40,275	39,178	34,725	41,600	+ 20%
Lunch Sites	56	73	37	43	+ 16%
Lunches Served	66,119	65,737	57,577	69,000	+ 20%

Bureau of Employment Opportunities

The Bureau of Employment Opportunities includes the Pathways to Peace program, the Summer of Opportunity program (SOOP), and PRIME (Providing Real Incentives to Maintain Employment).

The proposed allocation for the Bureau of Employment Opportunities increases 14% (\$166,000), which can largely be attributed to a \$110,000 shift of CDBG funds on-budget for Summer of Opportunity and an increased allocation to fund new Pathways to Peace staff. The proposed budget adds \$64,200 for a new full-time and a new part-time position at Pathways to Peace.

Pathways to Peace staff provide violence prevention and intervention services to adolescents in Rochester. Their scope of responsibilities include conflict mediation, violence prevention education, collaboration with community partners and law enforcement, and referring youth to needed services. Pathways staff are present in the streets, in schools and Rec centers, and in the homes of youth.

	2010-11 Actual	2011-12 Actual	2012-13 Estimated	2013-14 Proposed	% change 2012-13 → 2013-14
Pathways to Peace					
Referrals to Program	140	90	168	250	+ 49%
Conflicts Mediated	90	85	168	250	+ 49%
Youth Linked to Services	105	43	196	150	- 24%

PRIME is a youth employment strategy that was created locally in 2008 to assist residents aged 18+ who have significant barriers to employment.

	2010-11 Actual	2011-12 Actual	2012-13 Estimated	2013 - 14 Proposed	% change 2012-13 → 2013-14

PRIME Applicants	620	787	630	600	- 5%
PRIME Participants	231	209	200	200	0%
PRIME Participants Placed	125	130	75	75	0%

The **Summer of Opportunity Program** (SOOP) is an employment and training program aimed at youth aged 14-20 who are still in high school.

SOOP	2010-11 Actual	2011-12 Actual	2012-3 Estimated	2013-2014 Proposed	% change 2012-13→ 2013-14
Applicants	2,533	2,960	2960	3,300	+ 12%
Number of Youth Placed	333	385	429	400	- 7%

The Department of the Public Library

The Public Library Department includes the downtown Central Library, which is principally funded by Monroe County, and community, or "branch" libraries, which are supported by the City. The Center for Governmental Research (CGR) recently completed a study of community libraries commissioned by the City, and changes based on its recommendations are included in the 2013-14 budget.

Libraries provide many important services and resources to our community. Their central function of maintaining materials for circulation is vital to both adult and child literacy. They also provide a gathering place for residents of all ages, space for classes and meetings, access to the Internet and important information and equipment, and staff that can assist younger patrons with school projects, job hunting, and career exploration.

Programs directly targeting children and youth include:

The **Safe to be Smart** program, which features library-centered activities for youth during after-school hours. The program began in 2001 and has a dedicated staff that currently serves youth at Arnett, Central, Lincoln, Maplewood, Sully at the Ryan Center, and Wheatley branches. Youth workers assist teenagers by showing them how to use the library resources and providing them with interesting programs and a safe place to call their own.

The **Toy Library**, housed at the Lincoln branch, maintains and circulates toys and educational materials to families, teachers, and child care providers.

Literacy aides in branch libraries are teens from the neighborhood who work with young children who visit the Lincoln, Wheatley and Maplewood libraries, particularly those whose parents are attending GED classes there. Funding from the City School District will allow six libraries to hire two literacy aides each this summer.

A targeted effort on the part of children's librarians at the Central Library to reach out to homeschoolers and downtown day care providers.

We note the introduction of a new initiative in 2012-13 which has an evidence base behind it:

Raising a Reader is implemented in partnership with Head Start. Approximately 50 families receive a weekly bag of materials to borrow, and at the end of the program year the families receive a bag of materials to keep. Head Start staff do home visits to explore how to best use the materials with parents and children.

Public library	2009-10 Actual	2010-11 Actual	2011-12 Actual	2012-13 Estimated	2013-14 Proposed	% change 2012-13 → 2013-14
Central Library	\$7,943,512	\$7,818,930	\$7,286,678	\$7,141,900	\$7,426,500	+ 4%
Community libraries	\$3,121,464	\$3,383,900	\$3,416,559	\$3,483,900	\$3,617,800	+ 4%
Total	\$11,064,976	\$11,202,830	\$10,703,237	\$10,625,800	\$11,044,300	+ 4%

Recent budget constraints have resulted in more reliance on part-time staff in the libraries. Similar to our recommendations about Rec Center staffing, we note that research indicates that the relationships that can be built between youth and librarians, particularly trained children and teen librarians, are potentially very influential. There are more opportunities for both critical expertise and for relationship building when full-time staff are employed. We recommend that this be kept in mind for long-term planning in the Library branches.

Rochester Police Department

The Rochester Police Department's (RPD) officers have daily contact with Rochester's youth, and departmental policies and programs can impact youth directly. In addition, the RPD has several initiatives specifically designed to serve Rochester's younger residents, including:

- The "Restorative Justice" project under the Juvenile Accountability Block Grant, which creates opportunities for youth who have committed non-violent crimes to meet with the victim(s) in a "circle" with a trained facilitator. In addition, a Restorative Justice pilot program was developed for the SW quadrant of the city, in collaboration with the M.K. Gandhi Institute.
- The Police Activities League (PAL) and youth outreach activities create opportunities for positive interactions between youth and police officers through sports, reading, the Safe Child ID program, attendance at community events, meetings with families and youth, charity drives, and other strategies.
- The "Youth Services Unit" is made up of School Resource Officers, who are police officers placed in City schools at the request of RCSD.

The following are "Key Performance Indicators" reported in the budget, included here for informational purposes

ROCHESTER POLICE DEPT.	2009-10 Actual	2010-11 Actual	2011-12 Actual	2012-13 Estimated	2013-14 Proposed
Youth Felony Arrests (under 18)	N/A	383	331	279	275
Total Youth Arrests (under 18)	N/A	1,793	1,508	1,271	1,220
Juvenile Felony Arrests (under 16)	N/A	190	179	152	175
Total Juvenile Arrests	N/A	622	546	423	465
% Juveniles Diverted	N/A	30.5%	28.8%	30.2%	29%
Juvenile Warrants Served	410	281	297	275	275
Students picked up under truancy	844	1,345	394	100	200
Physical child abuse investigations conducted	N/A	41	29	34	40
Sexual child abuse investigations conducted	N/A	203	220	280	240
F.A.C.I.T. responses	5,079	4,648	2,827	3,000	4,800

Capital Expenditures

The City contributes to the safety and well-being of young residents through allocations contained in the Capital budget. Some of these are direct outlays of dollars, and others are financed with funds that are borrowed. Examples of these are:

- Play Apparatus (\$585,000)
- Carter Street Ball Field (\$134,000)
- General Rehab for DRYS facility repair, maintenance and replacement (\$325,000)
- Genesee Valley Park Pool Deck (\$70,000)
- DRYS small equipment (\$31,000)

Additional Items to Note

- Commitment to safer neighborhoods through the demolition program in the Dept. of Neighborhood and Business Development.
- Also contributing to safer neighborhoods is the City's commitment to maintenance of vacant lots by mowing them 7-8 times per year (Dept. of Environmental Services).
- Citizens Budgeting Initiative in Undistributed (\$200,000) to address neighborhood violence and crime.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Monroe County, the Rochester City School District, and the City of Rochester all receive federal and New York State funds to provide essential programs and services to children. We ask decision-makers at all levels of government to join forces to strengthen their efforts to improve the well-being of kids in Rochester. This would improve planning, communicating, and coordination among government entities, and ideally would involve private partners as well.

The many ways in which the public sector supports families and children often creates "silos" - programs that are delivered without full regard to the effect of other programs and intervention efforts that may also be impacting on the individual child or family. For example:

- **Monroe County** receives and administers funds directed toward income support: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), child care (Child Care Block Grant), child safety and reduction of child abuse, health care (Medicaid), and nutritional assistance (Food Stamps).
- **RCSD**, with the primary responsibility for educational services for Rochester's children, receives and administers funds directed, among other purposes, to children with special needs and to nutritional support (school breakfast and lunch).
- **The City of Rochester** provides services vital to child safety and well-being, with funds for Fire and Police, Libraries, Recreation, Youth Services and Youth Employment programs from federal and state governments.

METHODOLOGY

To conduct this analysis, The Children's Agenda analyzed data and narrative from the 2003-04 through 2013-14 budgets.

The 2013-14 proposed City of Rochester Budget was released on May 17, 2013. City Council held hearings with City departments on June 4 and June 11. A public forum regarding the proposed budget was held June 12 and City Council is scheduled to vote on June 18, 2013.

For this report, The Children's Agenda has reviewed decisions regarding services and programs for children and youth in the Proposed City of Rochester 2013-14 Budget. The Children's Agenda has:

- Conducted an analysis of accounts, with regard to all expenditures to determine projected funding levels for the coming year.
- Calculated the change in expenditures over time.
- Identified increases and decreases in funding proposed in the 2013-14 budget.
- Compared these identified increases and decreases over time
- Compared changes in expenditures on children over time to expenditures on other spending categories over time.
- Read and reviewed the budget narrative.
- Conducted interviews and asked questions of staff and administration.

BACKGROUND

We offer this report to help the community understand, achieve, and support informed decisions regarding effective services and programs for children and youth.

The Children's Agenda improves the health, education and success of our community's children and youth, especially the most vulnerable, through advocacy for evidence-based solutions and policy change at the local, state and federal levels. The Children's Agenda was organized in 2004 to provide the community with research-based advocacy around children's issues. The Children's Agenda's founders believed it vital that The Children's Agenda analyze public expenditures on services for children to promote effective decision-making. The Children's Agenda first analyzed the proposed Monroe County budget in 2002; we have continued that effort to the present. In November 2007, The Children's Agenda's Board approved and added an analysis of the proposed City of Rochester budget to our strategic plan. We conducted our first analysis of spending for services for children and youth by the City of Rochester in June 2008. This report is our sixth analysis of the City of Rochester's spending on children.