



# CDF-NEW YORK'S 2018-19 STATE LEGISLATIVE AND BUDGET PRIORITIES

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CDF-NEW YORK'S BUDGET AND POLICY PRIORITIES aim to optimize prior investments in New York's children and take bold new steps toward ensuring a fair and successful passage to adulthood.

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## RAISE THE AGE IMPLEMENTATION

In 2017 Governor Cuomo signed legislation to raise the age of criminal responsibility in New York. Prior to the passage of this critical legislation, New York and North Carolina were the only two states to arrest and prosecute all 16 and 17 year olds as adults, regardless of the severity of the offense. CDF-NY is a lead member of the Raise the Age—New York campaign which successfully advocated for comprehensive legislation to raise the age of criminal responsibility and continues to ensure appropriate implementation of the law.

Successful implementation of the new law is critical to ensuring young people fully benefit from the legislative change. We support the inclusion of \$100M for raise the age in the Governor's Proposed Budget however we seek assurance that all counties and the city of New York will have access to all funding necessary. For raise the age to be successfully implemented all counties and New York City must be able to fully support the entire justice continuum including but not limited to funding for community-based alternatives, probation, court resources, youth facilities with comprehensive services and programming, training for all stakeholders within the system, and re-entry services.

## CLOSE TO HOME

Close to Home allows youth placed outside of their home as the result of juvenile delinquency proceedings to remain in small home-like environments in and near New York City. Close to Home providers utilize evidence based models, work collaboratively with youth and their families, engage youth in pro-social community activities, and

youth earn education credits attending Department of Education schools. All of these factors foster success for young people and are a drastic departure from the manner in which youth were treated prior to Close to Home. We support reauthorization of Close to Home however we are greatly concerned at the proposed elimination of state funding for the program. New York City currently receives up to \$41.4M to operate a network of evidence based residences and aftercare supports for youth in the juvenile justice system. Continued support for Close to Home is critical for youth currently served by New York City's juvenile justice system as well as 16 and 17 year olds soon to enter the system as the result of the implementation of raise the age legislation. We urge the Governor and legislature to reauthorize Close to Home and continue to fully fund this critical program.

## PROTECT CHILDREN'S HEALTH

**Adequately fund the health insurance navigator program** Health insurance navigators provide local, in-person assistance for consumers and small businesses enrolling in health insurance. Navigators help more than 300,000 New Yorkers sign-up for coverage in Medicaid, Child Health Plus, the Essential Plan, and other marketplace coverage. Many of these consumers are disproportionately people of color and are more likely to enroll in coverage with the help of an in-person assistor. Navigator agencies have not had a cost of living increase in over 5 years. The program is currently funded at \$27.2M. ***New York State should increase the total funding to \$32M annually to ensure that navigators can continue providing this service.*** Having health insurance helps increase access to primary care and avoid costly hospitalizations.

### **Restore \$4M in funding for school-based health centers (SBHCs)**

The FY2018 budget cut public health grant funding for school-based health centers by 20%. Rather than reducing grant funding for all SBHCs, subsequent administrative action allocated these cuts to 16 SBHC sponsors, reducing grant funding for those sponsors by 25% to 70%. SBHCs provide primary care, dental, mental health, and reproductive health services in medically underserved neighborhoods. Services are provided on-site in schools to every student regardless of whether the students have health insurance. SBHCs prevent unnecessary hospitalizations, reduce emergency room visits, improve school attendance, and avoid lost workdays for parents. Studies show SBHCs improve child health outcomes and save the state money.

### **Support the following budget items to improve the health and well-being of children and their families:**

- Allocate \$83M to expand Child Health Plus coverage to all New Yorkers up to age 29 earning incomes up to 400% of the federal poverty level, regardless of immigration status.
- Support funding for the Governor's First 1000 Days of Medicaid initiative, which strategically targets funding for child health initiatives during the first three years of life.
- Support the enhanced mental health support grants for community schools.
- Increase early intervention reimbursement rates by at least 5% this year, restoring a small portion of the 25% cut in total early intervention funding since 2010. Early intervention services help children with developmental delays or disabilities catch up with their peers and save money by reducing the need for expensive special education services.
- Reject budget proposals to increase administrative burdens for early intervention providers in the referral, screening, evaluation, and reimbursement processes.

### **PRIORITIZE SCHOOL CLIMATE REFORM**

CDF-NY urges passage of the Judge Judith S. Kaye Safe and Supportive Schools bill (S.3036/A.3873), legislation aimed at promoting positive school climates and reducing racial discipline disparities throughout New York State. The bill

would significantly limit suspensions for students in kindergarten through third grade, cap most long-term suspensions at 20 days, and promote positive school discipline approaches such as restorative practices as alternatives to school suspensions. Educators need support to implement effective discipline tools that both hold students accountable and prioritize classroom engagement, and this bill would help New York grow healthy and inclusive school communities where meaningful learning can thrive.

### **INCREASE CHILD NUTRITION**

CDF-NY supports the "No Student Goes Hungry" program created to eliminate lunch shaming, improve communication about meal balances with families, and increase the amount schools are reimbursed for discounted or free meals. CDF-NY also supports the provision of "Breakfast After the Bell" which provides students who attend high-poverty schools with breakfast in the classroom. New York City has successfully implemented free meals to all 1.1M public school students. CDF-NY urges the legislature to follow this example and provide free school meals to all students in the state.

### **EDUCATION SUPPORT FOR IMMIGRANTS**

Education is the pathway to a successful adulthood for all children. CDF-NY supports the New York State DREAM Act which repeals the citizenship requirement and focuses on the state residency requirement for most New York state general awards, academic performance awards and loans for all students pursuing a higher education in the state.

### **INCREASE INCOME SUPPORT**

The Empire State Child Credit is an important income support for families with children, however in excluding children under the age of 4 years old, New York is limiting support for the very families that need it most. CDF-NY supports expanding the Empire State Child Credit to include children under the age of 4 years.

### **CHILD WELFARE**

The Executive Budget proposes to cap the child welfare services/preventive services funding stream for New York City. We urge the Legislature to reject the proposed cap on preventative funding for New York City to help ensure that youth can continue to receive preventative services to keep them from ever entering the child welfare and juvenile justice system.