

# RAISE the AGE | NY

## **The Raise the Age Coalition Applauds the Governor's Plan to Close 4 Juvenile Facilities**

### ***Next Steps Should Include Targeted Community Reinvestment to Support Alternatives to Incarceration***

### ***FY2022 State Budget Must Restore Cuts to Community-Based Services That Support Vulnerable Youth and Prevent Contact with the Youth Justice System***

#### *Decarcerate Youth and Reinvest in Local Programs*

Members of the Raise the Age NY Coalition applaud the Governor's proposal to move swiftly to close four juvenile placement facilities and reduce the State's investment in youth incarceration. Institutional settings can pose significant risk to young people's well-being, and have been shown to neither reduce future contact with the system or promote community safety. Moreover, juvenile placement facilities are the site for extreme racial disproportionality. During 2019, almost 75% of children admitted to Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) custody were Black or Latinx, while they represent only 40% of New York's children. Closing facilities is a crucial step for youth justice reform and racial equity in New York.

The savings associated with closing these four youth facilities – estimated at over \$21 million in operational and \$14 million in capital costs – should be reinvested in targeted communities that are driving use of state placements. A partnership with stakeholders in these communities including impacted youth and families, service providers, child welfare and mental health system administrators, attorneys, judges and probation, should drive local solutions supported with these dollars.

#### *Invest in Youth State-Wide*

We are encouraged to see that the Governor's budget continues to set-aside \$250 million for Raise the Age implementation, but we are concerned by cuts to other programs that support youth by preventing contact with the legal system, and serving young people who become court-involved. The proposed consolidation of Community Optional Preventive Services (COPS) and Supervision and Treatment Services for Juveniles Program (STSJP) would result in a 20% reduction in funds available to communities state-wide. Coupled with 5% cuts in State funding for costs associated with placement and detention, the State is increasing the burdens on local communities to pay for the juvenile justice system at a time of extreme economic stress. We urge the Governor and the Legislature to work together to restore these funds in the final budget.