

# NYS Citizen Review Panels' Budget and Legislative Priorities 2017-2018

## Background

The New York State Citizen Review Panels are submitting their joint budget and legislative priorities for improving New York's child protective services. The recommendations are directed toward the government agencies and offices that impact child protective services, including the Governor's Office, the New York State Division of Budget, the State Legislature, and the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS).

The federal Children's Bureau released child welfare outcome data that showed New York's child welfare outcomes to be near the bottom nationwide, including: preventing recurrence of maltreatment to children after a first incident; preventing re-entry of children into foster care after discharge; protecting children from abuse and maltreatment while they are in foster care; and quickly finding permanent, stable families for children while they are in foster care.

Although the Children's Bureau recently announced that there are errors in this data and it will be recalculated, there is no question that our state can and must do better in achieving positive outcomes for children and families served by our child welfare system. To that end, the Panels offer the following recommendations to legislators to close the substantial gap between the vision for New York's child welfare system and its current poor performance on most outcome measures.

## Asks

### I. Reauthorize the child welfare financing structure that is due to sunset in June 2017.

The New York State Citizen Review Panels urge the State Legislature to reauthorize the child welfare financing structure and:

- **Support** the Executive's proposal to extend the child welfare financing structure. **Restore** the level of state reimbursement from 62% to 65% and allow all counties to use the restored 3% for primary prevention services.
- **Reject** the Executive's proposal to cut the Foster Care Block Grant by \$62 million.
- **Reject** the Executive's proposal to use the Foster Care Block Grant to pay for state subsidy share for the Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program (KinGAP) and establish an additional and separate funding stream for KinGAP, which provides an additional permanency option for children in foster care.

### II. Expand home visiting programs

The Panels strongly urge the Division of the Budget State Legislature to leverage local, state, and federal funding to increase the investment in home visiting programs by \$107 million. In addition, allow counties to use preventive services funding for Community Optional Preventive Services (COPS) programs, per the Panels' recommendation, to allow for leveraging local dollars for home visiting services.

### III. Improve outcomes for children of incarcerated parents

Support legislation that would establish a pilot program to move a number of incarcerated parents, including those with children in foster care and/or being cared for by relatives, to facilities closer to their children to sustain family connections and promote permanency, where possible and appropriate. [NYS Senate Bill -S1096]

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