



New York State
Office of Children & Family Services

FY 2008-09 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Overview

- The FY 2008-09 Executive Budget recommendations represent difficult choices due to less favorable economic trends and revenue results, and the growing fears of economic tough times. The recent corporate write down over the past weeks suggests a worsening economy; thereby less state tax revenues.
- Budget decisions reflect commitments to the policy decisions described in the State of the State and the Year I Agency Accomplishment Report (copy attached).
- For children and families, Governor Eliot Spitzer has made a critical decision to maintain – **and enhance** – crucial programs that support children and families across the state even as he faces the challenge of a \$4.4 billion deficit in his second budget as New York’s governor.
- Recognizing that families need even more support as the economy worsens, the Governor has **increased** the Office of Children and Family Services 2008-09 Budget by \$178.3 million. This is a 5.02 percent increase over Gov. Spitzer’s 2007-08 Budget.
 - This investment will fund programs supporting vulnerable children and families, from pregnancy, through adolescence, to young adulthood.
 - This includes providing high-risk families with prenatal care, parenting, and child development classes.
 - When parents go back to work or to school, it means providing them with quality child care.
 - For families experiencing difficulties, the Governor’s budget funds services to children with mental health or substance or alcohol abuse problems.
 - If children must go into foster care, these programs will go with them to support their foster care providers and adoptive parents.
 - To encourage and support permanency for these children, the budget also includes subsidies for adoptive parents and extends health care to children through the age of 21.
 - Gov. Spitzer’s investment in children and families also includes maintaining critical funding to programs that protect children and that prevent child abuse and neglect.
 - For troubled children who might still end up in the state’s juvenile justice system despite these investments in protective and preventive programs, the Governor is reinvesting a portion of the savings from closing residential facilities into community-based alternative to incarceration programs that are closer to home.

Specific highlights are summarized below. Detailed budget documents, including appropriation bills and spending recommendations are available at www.budget.state.ny.us

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Child Welfare

- **Gov. Spitzer is increasing the State's General commitment for Child Welfare Services by \$153.7 million, to \$619.3 million.**
- This funding will provide unprecedented increases for uncapped, entitlement funding at a 65 percent State share for Child Protective Services, Preventive Services, Independent Living, Aftercare Services, and Adoption Services. Gross program costs for preventive services in 2008-09 will exceed \$1 billion.
- The budget also includes \$17 million for the first year cost of modernizing the outdated CONNECTIONS system, which manages local child welfare information.
- The Governor also would **extend Medicaid health coverage for foster children** up to the age of 21, from the current age limit of 18 years old.

Foster Care & Adoption

- Gov. Spitzer has budgeted a \$24 million **Cost of Living Allowance (COLA)** to foster care providers and foster and adoptive parents. He also has proposed extending the COLA for three more years.
- The foster care block grant is adjusted to reflect the implementation of improved eligibility decision making through access to the state's Wage Reporting System
- Additional resources are provided for CSE placements and adoption subsidies based upon updated caseload trends
- The Governor's budget includes funding for 610 slots in the new **Bridges to Health** program, the first of its kind in the nation. This innovative new program provides comprehensive health services and wrap-around services to the most vulnerable children in foster care. By the third year of the program, this administration will provide funding for 3,305 slots for a total of \$96 million annually.

Healthy Families

- Gov. Spitzer has proposed shifting funding of the Healthy Families Home Visiting Program from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) to the State's General Fund.
- He is recommending \$25.2 million in the program to renew 29 contracts providing services at 39 sites across the state, including 26 upstate and 13 in New York City. This appropriation includes 11 recently started contracts that will provide services in high-need areas of the state not currently served.
- Healthy Families Home Visiting Program provides expectant and new parents, identified as having high risk factors, with prenatal care and parenting, child development, and self-sufficiency guidance to prevent child abuse and improve health and social outcomes for children.

Child Care

- The Governor's budget includes a half-a-billion dollar appropriation to maintain childcare subsidies and quality improvement activities, including fingerprinting, oversight, monitoring, and inspections of all childcare providers.
- Critical program initiatives next year include:
 - Development, piloting , and evaluation of the child care **Quality Rating System (QRS)**

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- **Implementing Executive Order 12** allowing for childcare representation for the states family and group family day care providers
- **Improving child care operations** including contract and grant management, enforcement, and licensing
- The Child Care Block Grant of \$540 million, in conjunction with funds identified by local districts from the Flexible Fund for Family Services, will allow counties to maintain current program levels.
- Child Care funding also includes \$2.504 million to meet the special childcare needs of migrant workers and \$7.44 million to directly subsidize childcare for low-income students attending four-year programs at the City University of New York (CUNY) and the State University of New York (SUNY).

After School

- Gov. Spitzer is investing nearly \$28 million in the Advantage After School Program to continue funding approximately 26,000 students at 277 program sites across New York State.

Juvenile Justice

- The Executive Budget will include reductions related to selected facility downsizings and closures as a result of lower placements from the Family Courts. A portion of the savings will be **reinvested** into community-based alternatives to incarceration that better address the needs of troubled children.
- Program closures will be implemented over a 12-month period. **Youth and staff impacts will be minimal due to alternative staff options and efforts to place children closer to home.**
- Additional program initiatives include:
 - Expansion of the trauma-based Sanctuary program to additional program campus
 - Expanded training and assistance to reduce the use of restraint in critical incidents
 - Revisions to core staff training programs to improve staff skills
 - Expanded emphasis upon educational, mental health and aftercare services to meet the needs of the young men and women in the system
- Continued support of alternative to detention programs. The budget recommends \$14 million for FY 2008-09.
- The 2008-09 Budget directly reflects what county officials indicated were their highest priorities. After addressing those needs, difficult choices still had to be made.
 - Effective April 1, 2008, the State will end its participation in funding the costs associated with operating local detention facilities.
 - However, the state will continue its funding of community-based alternative to incarceration programs which are less costly and far more effective at reducing troubled children's involvement in the juvenile justice system.
 - This change is consistent with the State's ongoing transformation of the juvenile justice system, which makes a top priority of identifying children with problems before they get into trouble and, ultimately, prevents youth crime.

Youth Development and Community Based Services

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- The budget provides consistent year to year funding for the following valuable community and state grant programs:
 - Substance Abuse Co-Location program
 - Child Fatality Review Teams
 - Child Advocacy and Multidisciplinary teams
 - Runaway and Homeless Youth
 - William Hoyt Trust Fund
 - Amy Watkins Caseworker Education program
 - Kinship information and referral services
 - Child welfare quality and mandated reporter training
- Consolidation of youth development (YDDP) and special delinquency (SPPD) programs at current funding levels to provide communities with additional flexibility to meet local needs.
- Merger of OCFS Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program with Department of Health programs at existing funding levels to promote improved program integration and effective targeting.

Agency Mission

The Office of Children and Family Services' mission is to promote the well-being, safety, and permanency of New York's children and families by setting and enforcing policies, building partnerships, and funding and providing high-quality services. The agency is responsible for foster care; adoption; adoption assistance; child protective services, including operating the Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment; preventive services for children and families; services for pregnant adolescents; child care licensing and funding; and operating the state juvenile justice programs. The agency also is responsible for protective programs for vulnerable adults, including adult protective services and the Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped.

Commissioner

New York State Governor Eliot Spitzer named Gladys Carrión, Esq. commissioner of the New York State Office of Children and Family Services in January, 2007. Ms. Carrión previously served as Senior Vice President for Community Investment at United Way of New York City. Prior to that, she was Executive Director of Inwood House from 1999 to 2005. From 1995 to 1999, Ms. Carrión served as Executive Director of Family Dynamics, Inc and in 1994 she was a Program Officer at the Ford Foundation in the Community Development area. Ms. Carrión served as Commissioner of the New York City Community Development Agency from 1990 to 1993. From 1984 to 1988, she worked at the New York State Workers' Compensation Board in a variety of capacities including General Counsel, Supervising Law Judge and Senior Law Judge. Ms. Carrión also served as Acting Executive Director of ASPIRA from 1982 to 1983. She received her B.S. from Fordham University in 1973 and her J.D. from the New York University School of Law in 1976.

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