

Comparison of the Executive Budget and Single House Bills with Schuyler Center Policy Priorities

In January, the Schuyler Center shared a *First Look* at Governor Cuomo's Executive Budget proposal. This is our *Next Look*, which provides an overview of how the Assembly and Senate budget proposals compare with the Governor's priorities on several important issues. Schuyler Center staff will spend the coming days gaining a deeper understanding of the proposed budget initiatives and advocating for a final budget that advances priorities that improve the health and well-being of vulnerable New Yorkers, especially families and children living in poverty.

Public health, health coverage, access and care

Community Water Fluoridation Fund: The **Executive Budget** included a \$5 million appropriation for installation or upgrading of water fluoridation equipment. This funding expands the program begun last year to strengthen the fluoridation infrastructure in New York.

Assembly Response: The Assembly includes the \$5 million in funding for water fluoridation equipment.

Senate Response: The Senate includes the \$5 million in funding for water fluoridation equipment.

Schuyler Center leads a statewide Oral Health Leadership Team which recommended this proposal that aims to strengthen oral health by preventing dental disease. Community water fluoridation is the single most cost-effective way to improve oral health, especially for children in poverty. We applaud the Governor and the Legislature for including this provision in the budget to improve oral health in New York's communities.

Adult Home Residents: The **Executive Budget** included \$38 million to support the transition of adult home residents with mental illness into community-based settings.

Assembly Response: The Assembly includes \$38 million to support the transition of adult home residents into community-based settings.

Senate Response: The Senate includes \$38 million to support the transition of adult home residents into community-based settings.

The pace of residents moving to community-based settings has begun to accelerate over the last year. Schuyler Center applauds the State for providing resources for adult home residents with mental illness to transition to community-based settings.

Adult Homes — Enhancing the Quality of Adult Living: The **Executive Budget** maintains funding for the Enhancing the Quality of Adult Living (EQUAL) program at \$6.5 million. EQUAL provides valuable services to residents in adult homes in the form of clothing allowances, air conditioning in residents' rooms, and computers for resident use.

Assembly Response: The Assembly includes \$6.5 million for EQUAL. It also includes language that would authorize the use of EQUAL funds for expenses incurred at any time during the fiscal year for which the funds were appropriated.

Senate Response: The Senate includes \$6.5 million for EQUAL. It also includes language that would authorize the use of EQUAL funds for expenses incurred at any time during the fiscal year for which the funds were appropriated.

Schuyler Center applauds the Governor and the Legislature for recognizing the importance of this funding for the quality of life in adult homes and continuing to ensure that residents have a strong voice in how funds are expended.

Health Care Facility Transformation and Support for Community-Based Providers: The **Executive Budget** proposed \$200 million for health care facilities to support capital and non-capital projects, including mergers, acquisitions and restructuring activities in furtherance of transformation.

Assembly Response: The Assembly has allocated \$200 million for Health Facility Transformation and creates a new pool of \$25 million designated for community-based providers.

Senate Response: The Senate has allocated \$200 million for health care facility transformation, with 25% to be designated to community-based providers.

The State has provided billions of dollars in recent years to support health system transformation. The vast majority of this funding has gone to hospitals, which is incongruous with the State's articulated goals of strengthening primary care and community-based services. Community-based providers, like community health centers and community-based mental health clinics, are essential to ensuring care and services are as accessible as possible to the people who need them most. They have a long history of meeting people's needs and serving people not traditionally reached by institutional health care settings. The Schuyler Center applauds the Legislature for recognizing the need to support community-based providers in this year's budget.

Children's Mental Health Services: The **Executive Budget** failed to include an investment in children's behavioral health care that is robust enough to enable this under-resourced system to smoothly transition to managed care and implement Health Homes for children. A portion (\$20 million all funds) of the funds dedicated to support the overall transition of behavioral health services to Medicaid managed care is designated for readying the children's system. Funds are needed to strengthen the system so that it can meet the behavioral health needs of children and families across the state—building data capacity, developing the workforce, expanding the existing provider network, and supporting activities associated with system redesign. Following a planning process aimed at better meeting the needs of children with significant behavioral health care issues, the Executive Budget assumed funding for six new Medicaid services for children: crisis intervention, community psychiatric supports and treatment, psychosocial rehabilitation services, family peer support services, youth peer training and support services, and services from other licensed practitioners. The State will be submitting a State Plan Amendment to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services seeking approval for this change.

Assembly Response: The Assembly did not amend the Governor's proposal, and did not include additional funds directed at resourcing the children's behavioral health care system.

Senate Response: The Senate did not include additional funds directed at resourcing the children’s behavioral health care system. The Senate reprograms \$10.2 million in funding to Children’s Health Home readiness, including information technology costs.

An investment of \$30 million is needed for children’s behavioral health capacity building and start-up to support workforce development, training, and expanding the existing network. In addition, adequate funding for rates for behavioral health services, including home and community based services are essential. An investment of \$350,000 for design of a data collection plan and data analysis initiative connected to the Conference of Local Mental Hygiene Directors’ data warehouse would lay the groundwork for the data necessary for measurement and improvement. Providers and advocates for children alike urge the Governor and the Legislature to focus attention and investment on the children, families and communities who need a strong child-serving behavioral health system. The children’s behavioral health care system suffers from a history of underinvestment and a lack of integration with primary care. Children’s behavioral health care providers are preparing for a transition to managed care and developing the infrastructure necessary for Children’s Health Homes. These endeavors require attention and pre-investment that is at least commensurate with the State’s investment in the adult-serving system.

Assistance with Health Coverage: The **Executive Budget** included \$2.5 million for Community Health Advocates (CHA) funded through the operation of the Marketplace. This is short of the \$4 million necessary to keep this important program operating at current levels.

Assembly Response: The Assembly adds \$500,000 in their one-house budget bill for the CHA program for a total of \$3 million.

Senate Response: The Senate did not add any additional funding for the CHA program.

CHA programs help New Yorkers get and use health insurance. These essential programs provide assistance to New Yorkers as they enroll in and begin to use health insurance, thereby ensuring that insurance coverage translates into use of medical care, including preventive services. The Schuyler Center urges the State to fully fund the CHA program at \$4 million.

Essential Coverage for Immigrant Residents: The Governor did not include funding to provide Essential Plan (EP) coverage for New Yorkers who are ineligible for federal EP funding because of their immigration status. While these individuals are eligible for Medicaid, they cannot access federally-funded EP or Marketplace plans if their income is above the Medicaid level.

Assembly Response: The Assembly includes \$10.3 million to cover the costs of enrolling this population into EP coverage.

Senate Response: The Senate does not include funding to cover this population.

We urge policymakers to allocate \$10.3 million for Essential Plan coverage for the roughly 5,500 New Yorkers who are ineligible for federal EP funding because of their immigration status.

Early Intervention: The **Executive Budget** once again proposed several changes to the Early Intervention program, which provides therapeutic and support services to children under the age of three who have disabilities or developmental delays. The budget briefing book identified State savings of \$5 million in the budget year, growing to \$20 million in 2018, as well as county savings. The proposed changes would address insurance company payment for services, eligibility determinations, and the administrative component of provider rates.

Assembly Response: Rejects the Governor's proposal.

Senate Response: Rejects the Governor's proposal.

Family economic security and support

Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting: The **Executive Budget** reduced funding for the Nurse-Family Partnership home visitation program to \$3 million and maintained flat funding for the Healthy Families New York home visiting program at \$23,288,200. No funding was included for Parents as Teachers or the Parent-Child Home Program.

Assembly Response: The Assembly maintains flat funding for Healthy Families New York at \$23,288,200 and restores \$1 million to Nurse-Family Partnership for a total of \$4 million. The Assembly does not add funding for Parents as Teachers or Parent-Child Home Program. As part of the Assembly's expanded Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative, home visiting services would be an allowable expense for addressing poverty in communities.

Senate Response: The Senate maintains flat funding for Healthy Families New York at \$23,288,200 and restores \$1 million to Nurse-Family Partnership for a total of \$4 million. The Senate does not add funding for Parents as Teachers or Parent-Child Home Program.

Maternal, infant and early childhood home visiting is available to a small number of parents with young children in a few areas around the state. A significantly higher investment is needed if New York aims to serve all communities with families in need and endeavor to ensure the best health and social outcomes for mothers, infants and families. Additional information about home visiting programs in New York State can be found here <http://www.scaany.org/policy-areas/maternal-infant-and-early-childhood/>.

Paid Family Leave Insurance: The Governor highlighted the importance of Paid Family Leave during his State of the State address, and the **Executive Budget** included proposed legislation to implement a Paid Family Leave (PFL) program. The 12-week benefit would be available to workers to bond with a new child, care for a family member, or to address issues related to a spouse, child or parent's active military duty. The Governor proposed to fund PFL through an employee-paid withholding, and set wage replacement to start at 35% of a worker's weekly salary (up to 35% of the statewide average) in 2018 and increase to 50% of a worker's weekly salary (up to 50% of the statewide average) in 2021. Responding to concerns raised by advocacy groups (including the Schuyler Center), that this low rate of wage replacement would prevent some low-income workers from being able to take advantage of the leave, the Governor amended his proposal in the thirty-day amendments such that the replacement benefit would begin at 50% of the worker's weekly salary in 2018 (up to 50% of the statewide average), and rise to 67% of a person's salary in 2021 (up to a cap of 67% of the statewide average).

Assembly Response: The Assembly modifies the Executive Budget proposal in a number of ways. The most significant modification is that the wage-replacement rate begins at 67% of a worker's weekly wage on January 1, 2017 with a cap of 50% of the average state weekly wage. The cap rises to 67% of the statewide average weekly wage in 2020. The Assembly also increases the weekly benefit for disabled workers (often referred to as Temporary Disability Insurance, or TDI) by the same amount so there is parity between workers taking leave for their own disability and those taking leave to care for a loved one.

Senate Response: The Senate resolution articulates support for a paid family leave program, suggesting that it will modify the Executive proposal to address the needs of businesses, including, but not limited to, consideration of how the benefit might impact the temporary disability insurance market, how long an

employee should be employed before being eligible for family leave, what is an appropriate phase-in time, and whether the benefit as proposed is sustainable, and funded in a manner that will ensure no state budgetary impact.

Schuyler Center will continue to work with our partners in the statewide Paid Family Leave Coalition to ensure that in the course of final budget negotiations, the benefit is robust enough to allow lower-income families to take advantage of it.

Earned Income Tax Credit: The **Executive Budget** did not include an increase in the State Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). It permanently extended the noncustodial EITC, which allows noncustodial parents who are up to date on child support to benefit from a modified (lower) EITC.

Assembly Response: The Assembly accepts the Governor’s proposal to make the noncustodial EITC permanent. It also proposes an increase in the EITC from 30% to 35% of the federal EITC.

Senate Response: The Senate accepts the Governor’s proposal to make the noncustodial EITC permanent.

Schuyler Center applauds the policymakers’ support of the noncustodial EITC. Schuyler Center urges the Governor and Legislature to consider increasing the State EITC to at least 40% of the federal benefit as part of a multi-pronged strategy to “make work pay,” including a higher minimum wage, paid family leave, and subsidized child care. The EITC is one of the best ways encourage and reward work, and research shows that children of EITC recipients are healthier and do better in school.

Minimum Wage: The **Executive Budget** proposed phasing-in a minimum wage hike to \$15 per hour by 2018 in New York City, and by 2021 in the rest of the state. The budget did not contain funds to cover the wage increase for health and human services workers employed by non-profit organizations largely funded by State and county contracts. This omission has raised widespread concern that should it be enacted, these organizations will be forced to cut services that are essential to the health and well-being of many vulnerable New Yorkers to cover labor costs that would be associated with the wage increase.

Assembly Response: The Assembly adds \$200 million in their one-house budget bill to support supplemental payments to state and county-funded non-profits to cover increased labor costs due to the minimum wage hike.

Senate Response: The Senate indicates that it will consider raising the minimum wage based on an “objective economic analysis” that considers the recently phased-in general minimum wage hike, plus the more recent increases to the tipped minimum wage and fast food minimum wage. Other factors to be considered include the impact of a wage hike on job creation and on the state’s spending levels, total employee compensation, reimbursement rates for health care and human services workers, the impact on farms and small businesses, the benefit levels for the state and federal earned income tax credit, among other factors.

The Schuyler Center urges the Governor and Legislature to raise the minimum wage and include funding in this budget year and a plan for future years to cover the cost of wage increases in the health and human services sectors, ensure that people in need can receive the services they need, and safeguard the State’s non-profit health and human services sector.

Social Services Resource Tests: The **Assembly bill** includes a proposal to change the amount of resources that a person or family can have and still maintain eligibility for public assistance. It would increase the amount of savings, including savings for college and retirement, and vehicle value allowed. The proposal also would prohibit local social service districts from taking liens or deeds on properties owned by public assistance recipients.

In order for individuals and families to begin to move off of public assistance, a mechanism for the development and retention of assets is necessary. This proposal would allow families to begin to save in a way that should help them in a transition from public assistance.

Community Schools: The Governor proposed \$100 million for community schools in high need districts. The funding could be used for activities including hiring a community school coordinator, before- and after-school programs, summer learning activities, and referrals/connections to medical, dental, and other social services.

Assembly Response: The Assembly includes \$200 million in support for community schools and adds an additional \$10 million to fund professional development for community schools staff.

Senate Response: The Senate maintains the Governor's \$100 million in funding for community schools.

Schuyler Center supports robust investment in quality community schools programs, which have been proven to yield positive educational, health and social services outcomes for vulnerable families and children.

Child Care Subsidies: Under the **Executive Budget**, child care was essentially flat funded, with \$10 million added to support child care provider inspections as required under the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act. However, this new support does not meet the estimated \$190 million necessary to comply with the requirements associated with implementing the CCDBG.

Assembly Response: The Assembly adds \$75 million for child care in its one house bill. The funds are designated to be used for expanding access to subsidized child care, but are to be directed to maintaining existing slots if the State is not granted a federal waiver for the new CCDBG requirements.

Senate Response: The Senate expresses "concern over the unfunded mandate to the State and childcare providers" that was effectively created by the new eligibility requirements contained in the CCDBG Act of 2014. It indicates that it will continue to analyze options and explore funding possibilities to avoid imposing new costs on child care providers. The Senate also voices support for the creation of additional subsidy slots for New York families.

With fewer than a quarter of eligible New York families being granted child care subsidies, it is critical that the State make a substantial investment in child care. Schuyler Center applauds the Assembly for allocating substantial funds to child care. It remains critical that New York increase its investment in and commitment to child care.

Pre-Kindergarten: The Governor proposed \$22 million in new funding for pre-kindergarten only for three-year-olds, significantly lower than the amount needed to make pre-kindergarten universal.

Assembly Response: The Assembly includes \$22 million in funding for pre-kindergarten for the Priority Pre-K program, which can be used for four-year-olds.

Senate Response: The Senate does not include new funding for pre-kindergarten.

Child Care and Pre-Kindergarten Quality: The Governor’s budget proposal included \$2 million in new funding for QualityStarsNY, New York’s quality rating and improvement system for early childhood education. As part of his Pre-K proposal, the Governor proposed that any pre-kindergarten program receiving State funds and needing quality support must participate in QualityStarsNY, as a condition of continued receipt of State funds.

Assembly Response: The Assembly repurposes the \$2 million proposed by the Governor for QualityStarsNY to general quality improvement, not specifically QualityStarsNY.

Senate Response: The Senate accepts the \$2 million proposed by the Governor for QualityStarsNY.

Research has shown that high-quality early learning programs have long-lasting positive effects on children’s futures. It is simply irresponsible to ignore the need to improve quality for our youngest New Yorkers in child care.

Creation of an Empire State Pre-Kindergarten Grant Board: The Governor proposed creation of a new Empire State Pre-Kindergarten Grant Board, composed of three unpaid gubernatorial appointees and staffed by the Office of Children and Family Services. Any person with a connection to a school or pre-kindergarten program would be ineligible to participate on the Grant Board. Per the language in the Executive Budget, the Grant Board would, in the future, have approval authority over grant awards for pre-kindergarten programs.

Assembly Response: The Assembly rejects the Empire State Pre-Kindergarten Grant Board in their proposal.

Senate Response: The Senate rejects the Empire State Pre-Kindergarten Grant Board in their proposal.

Afterschool Programs: The **Executive Budget** reduced funding for Advantage After School by \$2 million, as compared to last year’s final budget, to \$17,255,300. Last year the Legislature added the additional \$2 million in funding.

Assembly Response: The Assembly increases funding for the Advantage After School program to \$24,255,300.

Senate Response: The Senate maintains the Executive Budget’s funding of \$17,255,300 for Advantage After School.

High-quality afterschool programs have been shown to help close the gap for low-income children and families. The Assembly’s proposed increase in Advantage After School is a positive step toward ensuring that such opportunities exist for more children.

Child welfare and juvenile justice

Child Welfare

Preventive, Protective, Independent Living, Adoption, and Aftercare Services: The **Executive Budget** appropriated \$635 million for open-ended preventive, protective, independent living, adoption, and aftercare services, reducing the State share to 62%. The budget also included flat funding of \$12 million for the Community Optional Preventive Services (COPS) program, continuing to limit that funding to programs that were funded when the program was cut in 2008.

Assembly Response: The Assembly maintains \$635 million in funding for preventive, protective, independent living, adoption and aftercare services, and reduces the State share of that funding to 62%. The Assembly maintains flat funding for primary prevention through the COPS program at \$12 million.

Senate Response: The Senate maintains \$635 million in funding for preventive, protective, independent living, adoption and aftercare services, and reduces the State share of that funding to 62%. The Senate maintains flat funding for primary prevention through the COPS program at \$12 million.

Localities use open-ended preventive funding to prevent the need for foster care placements and to ensure permanency for children and youth in care. A more strategic approach would make services available further upstream, before there is a documented risk of entry into foster care. Schuyler Center urges the State to re-assume the 65% State share, setting aside the 3% restoration to be used for community-based primary prevention that prevents child abuse and neglect, and strengthens families.

Prevention and Post-Adoption Services: The **Executive Budget** briefing book proposed to invest \$5 million in adoption assistance savings that are derived from a higher federal share of adoption assistance, into post-adoption services and prevention services to prevent children from entering foster care. However, language for the appropriation was vague and failed to mention post-adoption services specifically.

Assembly Response: The Assembly bill maintains the Governor's proposed \$5 million for post-permanency services, and appropriately clarifies language so that the funding is directed specifically to those services.

Senate Response: The Senate maintains \$5 million for post-permanency services, but does not clarify the appropriation language to indicate the purpose of the funds.

Post-adoption and post-permanency services provide critical supports to families, helping to ensure that children continue to receive necessary services after they have left the foster care system. This funding is an important step in ensuring that services are available to all families who need them. We will continue to work with our partners to ensure that the clarifying language included in the Assembly one-house budget becomes part of the final budget.

Kinship Caregiver Services: The **Executive Budget** maintained flat funding for kinship caregiver services at \$338,750. The budget also maintained flat funding for the statewide kinship navigator information and referral network at \$220,500.

Assembly Response: The Assembly maintains funding for kinship caregiver services at \$338,750, and adds \$1.9 million in additional funding for non-profits providing support services to caretaker relatives of minor children. The Assembly adds \$100,000 to the statewide kinship navigator information and referral network for a total of \$320,500.

Senate Response: The Senate maintains flat funding for kinship caregiver services at \$338,750. The Senate maintains flat funding for the statewide kinship navigator information and referral network at \$220,500.

Kinship caregiver programs offer important support and services to people who care for relatives' minor children outside of the formal foster care program. Programs provide information about family members' rights, support to meet children's education and health care needs, and assistance with obtaining benefits. An increase in this funding would help to ensure that the tens of thousands of grandparents and relatives who care for related children outside of the foster care system have access to supports and services that make that care financially possible.

Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program (KinGAP): The **Executive Budget** continued funding KinGAP within the Foster Care Block Grant, as was done in previous budgets.

Assembly Response: The Assembly continues funding KinGAP within the Foster Care Block Grant.

Senate Response: The Senate continues funding KinGAP within the Foster Care Block Grant.

KinGAP provides relatives in certified foster care settings a permanency option when both adoption and family reunification are ruled out. Many of these families require financial assistance to continue caring for a foster child in their household; with KinGAP, kinship families can exit the foster care system and continue to receive financial support. KinGAP is an important way to promote permanency for children and youth and should be funded as such—separate, uncapped, and outside of the Foster Care Block Grant, with no reduction to the Foster Care Block Grant. Schuyler Center will continue to work with the Legislature to ensure that this funding is moved outside the Foster Care Block Grant.

Foster Care and Higher Education: The **Executive Budget** included \$1.5 million in funding for the Foster Youth College Success Initiative to support youth in foster care to pursue higher education. Funding for this initiative was added by the Legislature last year. It is encouraging to see that the Governor has continued funding for this important program.

Assembly Response: The Assembly maintains the Governor’s funding and adds \$1.5 million for a total of \$3 million in support of the Foster Youth College Success Initiative. The additional funding will allow a new cohort of eligible students to benefit from the program designed to help former foster youth complete college.

Senate Response: The Assembly maintains the Governor’s funding in support of the Foster Youth College Success Initiative.

The Schuyler Center is a member of the steering committee of the Fostering Success Youth Alliance, which is working to provide a realistic path to higher education for the State’s youth in care. Schuyler Center applauds the Assembly’s proposal to increase funding for this initiative, which would enable the program to support more youth in foster care in pursuing higher education.

Safe Harbor: The **Executive Budget** did not include funding for Safe Harbor, a program to support vulnerable, sexually exploited youth. Last year the Legislature restored \$3 million to support Safe Harbor.

Assembly Response: The Assembly includes \$3 million for services and expenses associated with sexually exploited children and youth.

Senate Response: The Senate includes \$3 million for services and expenses associated with sexually exploited children and youth.

Safe Harbor provides critical funding to services for sexually exploited children and youth. This funding is essential in order to continue those programs and services.

Juvenile Justice: The **Executive Budget** included legislation to raise the age of juvenile jurisdiction through a phased-in plan that would incrementally raise the age to 18 by January 2019, and the lower age of juvenile jurisdiction from 7 to 12 by 2018. The budget also provided funding for costs associated with raising the age, including \$110 million in capital funding for new and existing buildings and approximately

\$10 million in a reappropriation for local assistance. Funding for the program was also included in the five-year proposed financial plan to correspond with the phasing-in of Raise the Age.

Assembly Response: The Assembly maintains funding for Raise the Age, and makes modifications to the bill language, which include: narrowing the list of juvenile offenses for 16- and 17-year-olds, expanding youthful offender eligibility to youth under age 21 and providing opportunities for the sealing of certain convictions.

Senate Response: The Senate maintains funding for Raise the Age, but rejects legislation that would enact a phased-in plan to raise the age of juvenile jurisdiction.

New York is one of only two states in the nation that continues to automatically try all 16- and 17-year-olds as adults. The Schuyler Center is a member of a statewide coalition recommending that New York create a juvenile justice system that provides opportunities for youth and advances public safety by raising the jurisdictional age. We look forward to working with the Legislature on passing legislation to comprehensively raise the age.

Other

Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative: The **Executive Budget** included a proposal to invest \$25 million in a new program, modeled after the Rochester Anti-Poverty Task Force. The program would provide \$500,000 in planning and implementation grants for each of ten cities which, according to the Governor's press statement, were selected based on the concentration of poverty. The cities would also be eligible for funding for infrastructure projects through a \$20 million grant pool. To be awarded these additional funds, the grantees must produce matching funds. The ten designated cities are: Syracuse, Binghamton, Oneonta, Buffalo, Utica, Elmira, Jamestown, Oswego, Troy, and Albany.

Assembly Response: The Assembly modifies the Governor's proposal by increasing the amount available for anti-poverty initiatives to \$62.5 million and designating funds to be used for programs like home visiting, job training, mentorship, and programs to address chronic homelessness and housing insecurity. Under the Assembly plan, awards would be made to a non-profit organization and eligible locations would include Albany, Amityville, Binghamton, Brentwood, Buffalo, Elmira, Freeport, Hempstead, Jamestown, City of New York, Oneonta, Oswego, Rochester, Syracuse, Troy, Uniondale, Utica, Watertown, and Wyandanch, with the award to New York City designated to be \$25 million.

Senate Response: The Senate maintains the Governor's proposed funding, but modifies the bill to add Newburgh, Niagara Falls, Poughkeepsie, Rochester and Schenectady as eligible cities, make distribution of funds to the eligible cities on a per capita basis, and require the mayor of each eligible city to convene a coordinating council on poverty.

Schuyler Center looks forward to working with the Legislature to ensure passage of a meaningful, comprehensive, and appropriately funded initiative focused on strengthening families to substantially reduce poverty in the State without delay.