

The Department for Children, Youth and Families
Justification for a Contract Authorization with Together For Youth
for the Provision of Family Assessment Intervention Services.

The Department for Children, Youth and Families respectfully requests legislative authorization to enter into a contractual agreement with Together for Youth for the provision of Family Assessment Intervention. The requested contract term is for August 1, 2026 – December 31, 2027 for the amount of \$325,000. The total prevention contract amount for Together for Youth is \$1,174,870.

The Department, in collaboration with the Department of Probation, issued a Request for Proposals for Prevention Services—*RFP-2026-73- Family Assessment Intervention* with responses due May 7, 2026. Prevention programming focuses on either preventing children from entering foster care, detention or shortening their stay if placed in either. Children enter care either as a result of abuse, neglect and/or Juvenile Justice involvement.

The Department recognizes the importance and necessity for the development of effective collaborations to meet the complex needs of families and children within the shrinking fiscal resources. As such, the RFP issued promoted innovative, creative approaches to meet the needs of children and families and allowed much flexibility for agencies to propose how to most effectively do so. It does require a formal collaborative, whereas the prevention service has a reciprocal relationship with either a Youth Bureau funded, and/or community agency for the children and their families to have diverse, holistic programming of formalized and recreational/community-based services.

Together for Youth's Family Assessment Intervention Program, Stepping Stones, is a trauma-informed, intensive home and community-based Alternative to Detention program. Its goal is to divert alleged or adjudicated JD and/or JO Youth Part from Detention, provide services and support after Detention when alternative to detention is not viable, and prevent further interaction with the Family Court system. TFY has been providing Stepping Stones in New York Counties - Clinton, Dutchess, Erie, Franklin, Madison, Montgomery, Rensselaer, and Saratoga - for years.

The staff of Stepping Stones program are **Program Coordinator**: programmatically and fiscally responsible for the program, supervises the Family Specialists, and reports to the Director of Prevention; prepares all program reports, and represents the Agency as liaison with Albany County, Probation, and community agencies. **Family Specialist (FS) (2)**: reports to the Program Coordinator, and works with youth, families, and communities. The FS uses a trauma-informed, culturally competent, and strength-based approach when working with families; and works collaboratively with families, County representatives, and community providers to help divert youth from Detention.

This program will support up to twelve (12) families at one time.