

The Department for Children, Youth and Families
Justification for a Contract Authorization with Behavioral Health Services North, Inc.
for the Provision of Residential Foster Care

In accordance with the mandates articulated in Social Services Law 371 and 383, local districts are required to provide and pay for foster care services for youth in need of such services. The Department for Children, Youth and Families respectfully requests legislative authorization to enter into a contractual agreement with Behavioral Health Services North, Inc. for the provision of residential foster care services. The requested contract term is for January 1, 2025 – December 31, 2026. When children are placed in foster care with a particular provider, Albany County will pay no more than the Maximum State Aid Rate (MSAR) as mandated by New York State. If children are placed out of state, Albany County will pay no more than the Approved agency rate by the corresponding state.

The primary objective of Foster care is to reconcile children with the biological parents. However, if the parents are unable or unwilling to care for the child, or if the child is an orphan, then the first choice of adoptive parents is a relative known as kinship care. Most kinship care is done informally, without the involvement of a court or public organization. If no related family member is willing or able to adopt, the next preference is for the child to be adopted by foster parents or by someone else involved in the child's life.

If these options are not viable, the plan for the minor may be to enter other planned permanent living arrangements. This option allows the child to stay in custody of the state and the child can stay placed in a foster home, with a relative or a long-term care facility, such as a residential child care community or, for children with development disabilities, physical disabilities or mental disabilities, a treatment center.