

**The Department for Children, Youth and Families**  
**Justification for a Contract Renewal Authorization with Cornell Cooperative Extension**  
**for the Provision of Juvenile Justice Prevention Services**

The Department for Children, Youth and Families respectfully requests legislative authorization to enter into a contractual agreement with Cornell Cooperative Extension for the provision of Juvenile Justice Prevention Services. The requested contract term is for January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023 for the amount of \$117,135. This is the second and final allowable renewal for this agreement. The total prevention contract amount for Cornell Cooperative Extension is \$117,135.

The Department, in collaboration with the Department of Probation, issued a Request for Proposals for Prevention Services—*RFP-2021-068-- PREVENTION SERVICES* on May 13, 2021 with responses due June 25, 2021. 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 in order 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. It also requires that all children in the family that are five (5) years and older, must be engaged in at least one consistent recreational or community support activity. The parent/guardians must also be engaged with a community support activity. The idea is that these supports will remain in place for the family when the formal services have ended.

Youth enter the Juvenile Justice system either due to criminal behavior (Juvenile Delinquency) or due to truant, incorrigible, and/or disruptive behaviors beyond parental control (Person in Need of Supervision). Albany County believes that structured services alone are not sufficient and there is a necessary need to expand services to include youth engagement to determine what interests the youth and to be able to connect them through community services, employment and skill training, and recreational connections. Albany County sought a continuum of Juvenile Justice preventive services designed as an alternative to detention and foster care to reduce the utilization of detention services, increase delinquency prevention and decrease youth arrests. This will ultimately prevent youth from entering foster care, expedite permanency for youth in foster care, and reduce recidivism.

Cornell Cooperative Extension proposed to provide Juvenile Justice Services programming through the Strengthening Families, Career Exploration and Urban Four H service models.

Strengthening Families is an evidence-based program and utilizes a parent, youth and family skills-building curriculum designed to strengthen parenting skills, build family strengths, and prevent teen substance abuse and other behavior problems. The target population for this service are parents and their youth, ages 4-10, who are involved in the Juvenile Drug Court or with ACDCYF services and are at risk of detention and foster care placement. Groups are held up to 4 times per year for 10-20 families.

The Urban 4H Program will be conducted in such topic areas as forensics, gardening, environmental education, animal science, food preparation and healthy eating, and career exploration. Youth, who are participating in the Albany County Juvenile Drug Court Program, Probation or DCYF services, who are at risk of detention and foster care placement and their families, can be referred for participation in this program.

Career Exploration is a group for teens and interested caregivers collaborating to explore career paths and participate in activities that enhance employment and life skills including job readiness and financial literacy education.