

The Department for Children, Youth and Families
Justification for a Contract Renewal Authorization with Cayuga Centers
for the Provision of Clinical Prevention Services with Community and
Recreational Supports

The Department for Children, Youth and Families respectfully requests legislative authorization to enter into a contractual renewal agreement with Cayuga Centers for the provision of Clinical Prevention Services with Community and Recreational Supports. The requested contract term is for January 1, 2026 – December 31, 2026 for the amount of \$301,621. The total prevention contract amount for Cayuga Centers is \$487,482. The Department desires to exercise its first of two (2) options under the contract, to renew the agreement.

The Department, in collaboration with the Department of Probation, issued a Request for Proposals for Prevention Services—*RFP-2024-085-- PREVENTION SERVICES* on July 4, 2024 with responses due August 2, 2024. 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.

Many families and their children have been impacted by complex trauma, suffer from mental health issues, substance abuse issues and domestic violence. These children are either at significant risk of foster care placement or have been placed in foster care. It is necessary for Albany County to have creative and strategic programming that intervenes with the family immediately, assists the children and works with the foster care system inclusive of Family Court and Child Protective Services to expedite permanency and increase family functioning.

Clinical Prevention Services with Community and Recreational Supports include: assessment, diagnostic testing, case and specialized therapies provided by a person who has received a Master of Social Work degree, Master of Mental Health Counseling degree or is a licensed Psychologist. Assessment and clinical services include family and individual interviews, contact with collateral agencies, schools, extended family and natural supports and diligent communication with Albany County staff. The therapist meets with the family/family members a minimum of once per week, for a minimum of 1 hour, and are available to the family during any crisis situation. Clinical Services occur in a variety of locations, but the family need dictates this. Clinical services occur in the family residence at least twice per month. All professionals schedule appointments at the convenience of the family.

The Family Support Program (FSP) intervention serves families with children ages 0 to 18 years old. The most common age range is typically between 10 and 17 years old. In some cases, (at the discretion of Albany County), FSP could potentially serve youth up to 21 years old and their

families. The child or children may be at imminent risk of removal from the home (or are returning home) and often have a history of trauma in their lives. This may include but is not limited to witnessing domestic violence, removal from home, death of a family member, living in poverty, bullying from school, sexual abuse, physical abuse, neglect, divorce or separation, or living with a family member with a chronic illness or disability.

Cayuga Centers proposed Clinical Services through their Intensive Family Support Program (IFSP) that target at risk families with children. The IFSP Social Worker will meet with the family 2-3 times per week in the home for the first 2-3 months of the case, decreasing in intensity, based on the needs and progress of the family. Cayuga Centers utilizes both the Home Builders model as well as the Trauma Systems Therapy (TST) model as the basis for their service delivery. The Home Builders model first created and utilized in Tacoma, Washington in 1978 is a strength-based approach which utilizes family crisis as an opportunity for change. TST is a research-based model developed by New York University (NYU) and focuses on addressing untreated trauma. This program will support up to twenty (20) families at a time.