

The Department for Children, Youth and Families
Justification for a Contract Renewal Authorization with St. Catherine's Center for Children
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 agreement with St. Catherine's Center for Children for the provision of Clinical Prevention Services. The requested contract term is for January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024 for the amount of \$254,671. This is the second and final allowable renewal for this agreement. The total prevention contract amount for St. Catherine's Center for Children is \$668,403.

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.

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.

St. Catherine's Rural Albany County Connection (RACC) program will serve 25 at-risk families in rural Southern and Western Albany County. The RACC program will serve children and their families of any age but will have a focus on those youth ages 13 and above. The goals of the program are to reduce foster care risk, strengthen child and family functioning and connect families to community resources that promote long term independence and well-being.