

**Department for Children, Youth and Families Backup Material for Contractual
Renewal Agreement with Cayuga Centers for the provision of
Functional Family Therapy (FFT)**

The Department for Children, Youth and Families respectfully requests legislative authorization to enter into a contractual agreement with Cayuga Centers for the provision of Functional Family Therapy (FFT). The requested contract term is for January 1, 2022 – December 31, 2022 for the amount of \$434,168. The contract has an option for two (2) additional one (1) year renewals. The total prevention contract amount for Cayuga Centers is \$1,013,115.

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.

The Functional Family Therapy (FFT) program is an evidence-based practice for youth displaying a range of problematic behaviors including “at-risk” behaviors such as excessive school absences, “acting out,” and incorrigibility; to more serious behaviors such as conduct disorder, violent acting-out and substance abuse. It is a structured, time-limited therapeutic intervention that requires full fidelity to the evidence-based model in

order to achieve success for youth and families. FFT is a three stage process that is completed within an average of 8-12 family therapy sessions over a three to four month period.

The goal of FFT is to prevent the need for placement or re-placement in foster care, to serve as an alternative to detention, and to expedite the reunification of youth transitioning from out of home care. Anticipated outcomes are improvement in school attendance and performance, improved family functioning, prevention of involvement or further involvement in the juvenile justice/child welfare systems; and prevention of the need for out-of-home placement or detention.

Albany County DCYF will be contracting with Cayuga Centers to provide FFT to 30 families annually who have a youth at risk of foster care placement due to either child welfare involvement or juvenile justice involvement.