

## **Department for Children, Youth and Families**

### **Backup Material for Authorization to submit a Proposal for available funding through the Office of Children and Family Services for Co-location/Collaboration of Peer Recovery Specialist, Parent Advocate, and/or Behavioral Health Worker and Child Protective Services**

The Department respectfully requests Legislative authorization to submit a proposal for grant funding from the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS). There is availability of federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) and Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2016 (CARA) fund in State Fiscal Year 2024-2025. The purpose of this funding is to help states improve their response to families and infants affected by substance Use disorders (both alcohol and drugs). OCFS has provided district with the allocation amount for the next three years (attachment A). Albany County identified allocation is \$90,000 for 2024-2025, which will be added to the County 2025 Budget.

OCFS issued a Local Commissioners Memorandum (LCM) on October 8, 2024, to inform local social services districts about the availability of funds for child protective services (CPS) and partnerships with behavioral health consultant, public health nurse, early childhood specialist, peer recovery specialist, and/or parent advocate to work alongside CPS staff. The funds may be used to hire or contract for per diem behavioral health consultant, public health nurse, early childhood specialist, peer recovery specialist, and/or parent advocate to support the work of CPS staff. Please note due to the expedited timeframe in which the Department needed to submit the grant application the Department did not have sufficient time to request Legislative authorization for such grant application prior to submission.

The Department for Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) recognizes the needs and challenges that often trouble children and families that interface in both the Child Welfare system as well as the Substance abuse system. The structure of DCYF as an agency that focuses on integrated services, and strengthening and supporting families is in alignment with this initiative. The opportunity to implement strategies to improve the response to families and infants affected by substance use disorders. In New York State the prevalence of parental alcohol/drug misuse is substantial; 16% of indicated reports had a substantial allegation of parent drug/alcohol misuse.

The Department recognizes the enormous benefit of utilizing a peer recovery specialist or parent advocate with lived experience to work alongside the CPS caseworkers can enhance our ability to engage with families affected by substance use disorder and support the parent's recovery process. Further, DCYF works collaboratively with the Albany County Family Treatment Court and the addition of a peer recovery specialist or parent advocate could aide additional support to families involved in treatment court. If a peer recovery specialist or parent advocate cannot be recruited to fill the position, DCYF would like to use the funds to hire a behavioral health consultant to assess the families we serve and provide intervention as it relates to substance use disorder and would welcome the opportunity to participate in this initiative.