

**Submitted Testimony
Of
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Association of New York State Youth Bureaus**

February 5, 2013

**Before
The Joint Legislative Budget Hearing on Human Services
NYS Legislative Office Building**

**John A. DeFrancisco, Chairman, Senate Finance
Committee**

and

**Herman D. Farrell, Jr., Chairman, Assembly Ways and
Means Committee**



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Testimony before the Joint Legislative Hearing on the Human
Services Budget

Chairmen Farrell and DeFrancisco, on behalf of the network of youth bureaus that guide and provide a wide array of youth development services, the Association of New York State Youth Bureaus (ANYSYBs) offers recommendations regarding the 2013-14 *Executive Budget*. I am Jackie Negri, Executive Director of the Association.

Currently, the association represents 107 youth bureaus, sponsored by counties, cities, towns, villages statewide. This network of youth bureaus is critical to the youth development system and has survived repeated funding cuts to provide quality youth development, prevention and interventions services. More than 1.5 million youth statewide benefit from the services and program of the youth bureau network and our goal is sustain those services and programs despite proposals that may weaken the youth development infrastructure.

The end product of a strong youth development system is to offer skills that build our state's citizenry, including: supporting timely High school graduation, providing career and job readiness training, teaching civic responsibility and diverting juvenile violators from entering or re-entering the delinquency system. To achieve these goals, a youth bureau system must be maintained to continue to provide direct services and also fund an array of community-based, non-profit agencies. Funding supports the following programs and services:

- Afterschool prevention programs
- Out-of-school job readiness and summer jobs

- Healthy eating and obesity prevention
- Mentoring programs
- Programs to prevent youth involvement in gangs and substance use; and
- Supports for runaway and homeless youth as well as pregnant and parenting teams

ANYSYB RECOMMENDATIONS

Restore \$1.28 million to YDDP/SDPP to maintain 2012-13 levels and restore \$214,456 for Runaway and Homeless Youth to maintain 2012-2013 levels.

As you are aware the YDDP, SDPP and RHYA funding streams have been cut every year since 2008, declining from almost \$39 million to \$14.1 million in the 2012-13 state fiscal year. This year, because of the timing of allocations, even if the funding streams are combined as proposed in the *Executive Budget*, an addition of \$1.28 million is needed to truly maintain the funding for the two programs at last year's levels. For RHYA, an addition of \$214,456 is needed to maintain last year's levels. We ask for your assistance in making that restoration.

Make Amendments to Governor's Youth Development Program Proposal

In addition to the Association's request for a funding restoration, we urge the legislature to negotiate amendments to the Governor's proposal, intended to streamline state administration of the Youth Bureau system, but which could eliminate the presence of youth bureaus that maintain the vital youth development services in your communities despite drastic funding cuts. The Association proposes that you consider the following amendments:

- Specify the eligibility criteria for the designated local government entity which can receive the combined YDDP/SDPP Funding; and
- Authorize a role for municipals in the development of regulations for the distribution formula and outcome measurement requirements, in conjunction with the Commissioner.
- Assure that the RHYA program is unaffected by the consolidation language and any distribution formula changes as proposed or suggested in the Governor's proposed Youth Development Program.

We believe these amendments will protect youth access to widespread youth development programs that meet outcome measures. **We seek to maintain the Youth Bureau presence in guiding and distributing whatever funding is available in the community.**

Add \$150,000 for new Outcome Measurements and Reporting Requirements.

With relation to adding the reporting of outcome measures as outlined in the Governor's proposal, the Association has already taken a lead in piloting Results Scorecard, a trademarked software system that tracks youth results and program impact (see sample data collected below). The following counties are currently utilizing this measurement system or are involved in a pilot program (Orange, Erie, Herkimer, Broome, Washington, Madison, Ontario, Saratoga, Schenectady). We urge the Legislature not to impose an unfunded mandate and to authorize funding for training and software licenses necessary to meet this new requirement. Our budget request for this support is:

- Fund the new reporting requirements and outcome measurement reporting that is specified in the Governor’s proposed Youth Development Program~ \$150,000.00



ANYSYB Out of School Time Programs

Program Performance

Name	Year To Date
ANYSYB OST: Out of School Time Common Performance Measures	
ANYSYB OST: How much:: # of youth participating in program	1,951
ANYSYB OST: How well:: % of staff with youth development training	37.5%
ANYSYB OST: How well:: % of youth satisfied with the program	94.0%
ANYSYB OST: How Well:: % of PQA scales scoring a 3.0 or higher	85.3%
ANYSYB OST: Better off:: # of youth with improvement in positive youth development outcomes	1,443

Add \$250,000 for Go Healthy Challenge for SYEP and Summer Recreation Programs.

Lastly, we urge you to support the expansion of funding to address the growing crisis of childhood obesity. Especially in minority communities, the obesity prevention efforts are not gaining significant successes. We believe that by adding a nutrition and exercise component to existing youth opportunity programs, we can reach youth individually and develop independent knowledge of healthy eating, food selection and educate on the value of regular exercise at the correct stage of youth development. Our outcome monitoring would allow us to track simple health measures such as body mass index and weight over the course of a summer youth employment program or an afterschool program. A weekly session

can be added to existing programs to allow youth to make a healthy lunch, snack or breakfast for themselves and talk about nutrition and food choices as well as report on their personal exercise goals. A health and wellness initiative must include food shopping awareness, food preparation training and the value-added of regular exercise.

Launched in 2006 by Rachael Ray, “Yum-o!” is a nonprofit organization that empowers kids and their families to develop healthy relationships with food by teaching cooking, feeding hungry kids and funding cooking education. In combination with the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, “Yum-O!” supports the “Go Healthy Challenge” and that is the type of curriculum the Association hopes you will consider funding in this year’s budget.

- Add \$250,000.00 to the budget so that the Office of Children and Families (OCFS) and Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) can put forth a cross-systems initiative and provide contract supplements that support a “Go Healthy Challenge” curriculum to be incorporated into selected Summer Youth Employment and summer recreation programs during the summer of 2013.

Thank you for your consideration of these recommendations. Your assistance and commitment to youth development and youth bureaus has allowed for a strong, viable system that is available to all youth, statewide. If further information is needed, please contact me directly at jackie@nycap.rr.com or 518-526-8518.

