



2024-2025 NY State Budget and Legislative Action Agenda

YouthNPower is an intergenerational collaboration determined to reimagine the child welfare system – *to transform care for young people and families in crisis* – by building knowledge and power with youth most impacted while working within a broader community of young people, advocates and organizers through collective research, action, and direct economic support. YouthNPower brings together a range of expertise, including lived experience in the child welfare system, policy advocacy, research, storytelling and organizing.

Bold action is required if our system of care for youth and families in crisis were to be truly transformed. We call for urgent attention to the following critical domains for policy-making and collective action that recognize the need for concrete support and resources across young people’s lives as they navigate their emerging adulthood after foster care.

Child Welfare

- Updating the **child welfare housing stipend** for youth and parents to track with cost of living increases and serve as a meaningful support for housing stability.
- Passing legislation establishing **Family Miranda Rights** (A.1980/S.901) and **ending Anonymous Child Protective Services (CPS) reporting** (A.2479/S.902) to narrow the front-door into the child welfare system.
- Increasing the statewide **Fostering Youth Success Alliance investment in education** supports to \$10M.
- Ending **child support enforcement against parents** during family separation (S.7054 (Hoylman-Sigal)/A.4027 (Kim)), a bill that would direct counties away from automatically referring parents of children who enter foster care to child support collections.
- Passing the Safe Landings Act, which would grant the Family Court jurisdiction over motions to **enforce its orders made on behalf of children while they are in foster care** and before their twenty-first birthday, after such children have left care. Specifically, these amendments apply to youth ages eighteen (18) to twenty-one (21) who have been discharged from foster care, and youth who have aged-out of foster care at age twenty-one (21), who **await stable housing and/or receipt of other services necessary for their transition** to independence due to the failure of the social service agencies overseeing their care to timely comply with Family Court orders.

Youth Justice

- Creating a State-Wide \$50 Million **Youth Justice Innovation Fund** and support Raise the Age implementation in the State Budget to support more young people and create true community safety
- Passing the [Youth Justice & Opportunities Act](#) (S.3426/A.4238) to serve more emerging adults who are court-involved within communities and to decarcerate all youth and young adults
- Passing the **Right2RemainSilent Youth Interrogation bill** (S.1066/A.9823) to ensure that all children and adolescents speak with an attorney before being questioned by police during a custodial interrogation

Runaway and Homeless Youth

- Increasing the statewide **Runaway and Homeless Youth program investment by \$5.57M**. This funding would be designated for enhancing mental health services and providing LGBTQIA+ affirming resources statewide. These resources are indispensable for addressing the unique challenges faced by RHY and ensuring they have access to the support systems they urgently need.

Housing

- Establishing the **Housing Assistance Voucher Program (HAVP) to expand housing supports** to thousands more New Yorkers. HAVP would allocate \$250 million in the state budget to create a flexible, statewide housing voucher to subsidize rental costs for the lowest-income New Yorkers, both for those currently experiencing homelessness and for those at risk of eviction.
- Expanding access to **existing housing voucher programs to all New Yorkers regardless of immigration status**
- Funding for the **Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP)** to address evictions and homelessness

Cash Support

- Creating a **new cash subsidy for youth aged 21 and above** from both the Office of Children and Family Services Runaway & Homeless Youth Programs and Child Welfare systems. This subsidy would complement existing vouchers and programs, recognizing the critical need for ongoing housing support for vulnerable youth. It is imperative to ensure parity for youth in both CW and RHY systems by making this subsidy universally accessible.
- **Increasing pilot programs for direct cash transfer/guaranteed income serving system-impacted youth state-wide.** These programs have demonstrated efficacy in providing financial stability and empowering youth to make informed decisions about their futures.

Health Care

- Increase **access to health care among young people under 18 with the Youth Access to Health Care Act (A6761)** - This legislation would permit young people under the age of 18 who are capable of making decisions about their care to consent to their own health care. This is a big need for young people in foster care and the runaway and homeless youth systems.

We also support emerging and longer-term legislative and budget proposals, as well as statewide community-building and organizing work, to address:

- Increasing workforce development and employment opportunities for marginalized young people, including those with history in the child welfare system;
- Improving access to depathologizing and culturally responsive wellness opportunities for young people, including mental health support;
- Investment in marginalized and over-surveilled communities, including supporting the Child and Family Wellbeing Fund, to reduce and ultimately end contact with and reliance on child protective services (CPS) and shrink the impact of the system; and
- Creating robust opportunities for youth with child welfare and other system experience to participate in and influence policy making.

Learn more about YouthNPower: Transforming Care at www.YouthNPower.org.

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