

# New York State Citizen Review Panels 2010 Annual Report and Recommendations

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The New York State Citizen Review Panels are composed of citizen volunteers appointed by the Governor, the Speaker of the Assembly, and the President Pro Tem of the Senate to review the policies, procedures, and practices in child protective services and to submit yearly recommendations to the state.

This year, there is particular urgency to the Panels' recommendations, as the very infrastructure for vital community services is in jeopardy. Continued cuts will lead to negative consequences for children. Children can't wait for a better time; they need these services now.


The Panels urge implementation of their 2010 recommendations, which include:

### PREVENTION

- Restore uncapped 75% state/25% local share for primary prevention and intervention services which is critical to reducing harm to children, keeping children out of more costly care, and achieving better outcomes for families.
- Ensure secure funding streams for evidence-based primary prevention services, such as home visiting, which are known to reduce the incidence of child maltreatment.
- Expand the cap for Community Optional Preventive Services (COPS), which allows local districts much-needed flexibility to provide critical cross-systems services targeted to children who are not at immediate risk of foster care, with the goal of averting placement.

### FAMILY ASSESSMENT RESPONSE (FAR)

- Reauthorize and make permanent Family Assessment Response legislation and remove the exclusion for New York City.



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- Provide local districts of social services broad discretion in using funding to purchase necessary poverty-related services and supplies for families that meet their immediate needs.

### EDUCATION NEGLECT

- Eliminate educational neglect as a basis for child protective reports for children 13 and older, and increase schools' responsibility for identifying and reducing absenteeism.
- Develop and implement an alternative response to chronic absenteeism that is outside the child welfare system and meets the educational and service needs of students 13 and older who choose not to attend school.

### REINVESTMENTS

- Reinvest all savings from reductions in placements into the child welfare system to support Family Assessment Response, Kinship Guardianship Assistance, COPS, and primary prevention programs and services.
- Invest in training and technical assistance for the delivery of culturally competent services to help eliminate disparities for children of color in child welfare.