

# **Nassau County Youth Board Assessment: Implications of Reduced Funding of the Nassau County Youth Board and Options for the Future**

**May, 2011**

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**Rauch Foundation**

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# Nassau County Youth Board Assessment: Implications of Reduced Funding of the Nassau County Youth Board and Options for the Future

May, 2011

## SUMMARY

This report offers a blueprint for Nassau County to strategically realize significant cost savings over time while maintaining the critical infrastructure which supports the cost-effective delivery of vital youth and family services.

## Background

In January 2011, in the midst of a major financial crisis facing Nassau County, the Rauch Foundation engaged the Center for Governmental Research (CGR) to conduct an assessment of the impacts the crisis and resulting proposed cuts in youth services would have on the County Youth Board's ability to fulfill its current functions in supporting a wide range of youth services, and to offer viable recommendations for how to provide needed youth services in a cost-effective manner in a time of fiscal crisis and uncertainty. Operating on a parallel supporting track, the Long Island Funders Exchange (LIFE) entered into an agreement with the County to provide bridge funding to help retain Youth Board positions on a full-time basis to provide time for the Rauch/CGR study to be conducted.

CGR approached the assessment with the intention of answering the following key questions:

1. What would be the impact of the proposed cuts on Nassau County's ability to provide and support youth services in the County?
2. What are the core functions that need to be preserved, even if some or all of the proposed cuts go through?
3. If the County implements its proposed consolidated Department of Human Services with a shared services unit, what functions could

be integrated in this new model, or in some other new way, and what functions and services must be retained independently by the Youth Board?

4. How can essential core Youth Board functions and youth services be retained, provided and supported in the most cost effective manner in the future?
5. How can the County best allocate limited resources in the context of a dynamic and challenging fiscal environment?

## Key Conclusions

The study draws the following conclusions, as outlined in more detail in Chapter III of the full report:

1. The Youth Board has significant impact in shaping a strong youth and family services system in Nassau County, and provides key services that must be retained by the County in order to:
  - a. Do the research and identify the trends that will protect the County's interests, determine priorities and enable the County to maintain cutting-edge youth services;
  - b. Leverage funds (\$2.6 million in the past 5 years) that support important new community initiatives;
  - c. Save the County money (an estimated \$12.8 million in out-of-home juvenile placement and detention cost savings in 2010 alone).
2. Youth Board funding plays a critical role in supporting community-based agencies that provide a variety of existing core services to youth and families throughout the County, and its funds help agencies to leverage other sources of funds to make additional services possible.
3. In response to the County's fiscal issues, Nassau County can reduce Youth Board annual staffing expenses by a projected 46% - from \$1.17 million to \$628,000 - over the next 12 to 18 months. Partly as a result of documented opportunities to streamline aspects of the work that the Youth Board is currently doing, a three-phase transition plan is proposed that would reduce the Youth Board from its current 13 positions to 6 by mid-2012, while still retaining needed core staff functions.
4. Several current Youth Bureau positions could be transferred to the proposed shared services unit of the new Department of Human Services over the transition period, and some may be eliminated over

time through attrition and as efficiencies result from the new unit. The shared services unit is likely to result in additional reductions in positions and costs across Human Services departments once it is fully implemented.

5. Alternate funding sources will be needed and are suggested to help further reduce County tax dollars spent on youth services in the future.
6. There is a need for better communication on all levels concerning decisions affecting the Youth Board and the overall youth services system.
7. The volunteer Youth Board's policy-making Board could be making more of a contribution if currently-vacant positions were filled and the lines of communication with the County Administration were opened.

## Key Recommendations

1. Given fiscal challenges, we propose the County strategically transition to a scaled-back core Youth Board staffing model through a Three-Phase process to be completed in 2012.
  - a. **Phase I: Retain current Youth Board staff through 2011, or until the new consolidated Department of Human Services and its shared services unit are in place.** Several of the contracted employee positions slated for lay-offs at the end of May provide unique functions which ultimately save the County valuable dollars. To eliminate these positions would be to undermine the investments the County has put in place around important initiatives already underway. Further, the critical expertise and years of experience within these positions are the best resource to inform and design the reduced Youth Board structure and components of the shared services unit to ensure key functions do not fall through the cracks during the transition. To ensure Youth Board staffing is intact for the rest of 2011, the County must secure and allocate an estimated \$394,000.
  - b. **Phases II and III: Transition up to 7 positions to the Department of Human Services and its shared services unit in 2012.** Once the new unit is functioning, 7 of the Youth Board positions would transition to the shared services unit, expected to be implemented by around the middle of 2012. This will result in a reduction in Youth Board positions from

the current 13 to 6.<sup>1</sup> Additional staff reductions may be possible as efficiencies are identified in the shared services unit.

The following table summarizes the Three-Phase transition process, including anticipated costs and associated savings. A complete description of the positions to transfer is outlined in Chapter III.

**TABLE 1**

<b>Cost Projections of Three-Phase Transition to Core Youth Board Staffing Model</b>					
	<b>Youth Board Dept.</b>	<b>Shared Services Unit</b>	<b>Total Staff Costs</b>	<b>Current Dept. Staff Revenue</b>	<b>Remaining Gap for YB Staff Only</b>
<b>Phase 1: Current Youth Board Staffing</b> (13 positions/11.83 FTE)	\$1,171,908	\$0	\$1,171,908	\$777,694	<b>\$394,214</b>
<b>Phase 2: Four positions transfer to Shared Services unit</b> (YB 9 positions/7.83 FTE; Shared Services 4 positions/ 4 FTE)	\$824,462	\$308,675	\$1,133,136	\$427,694	<b>\$396,768</b>
<b>Phase 3: Three additional positions transfer to Shared Services; data/research position becomes full-time</b> (YB 6 positions/6 FTE; Shared Services 7 positions/6.6 FTE)	\$628,451	\$552,608	\$1,181,058	\$427,694	<b>\$200,757</b>
<b>Option 3*: Reduction of two program monitor positions in shared services unit</b> (YB 6 positions/6 FTE; Shared Services 5 positions/4.6 FTE)	\$628,451	\$359,030	\$987,481	\$427,694	<b>\$200,757</b>
Notes: Does not include the two grant-funded positions of YAPP and F.R.I.E.N.D.S. Coordinators. Employee benefit costs included for contract staff only as part of department budget. County employee benefit costs not included in department budget. Department revenue includes 2011 adopted County Budget amount for personnel services of \$391,164 (includes YDDP/RHYA admin); plus SDPP admin of \$36,530 (reflects 25% reduction for 2011). 2011 revenue includes \$350,000 County committed funds to contract staff line plus \$69,000 from LIFE; YB staff costs include FCA 10% admin fee for remaining contract staff.					

2. Proposed changes in Youth Board (and/or new shared services) functions and operations

a. Change current Youth Board workload by:

- Implementing multi-year contract agreements;
- Shifting to quarterly or bi-monthly program vouchering;
- Reducing the frequency of onsite monitoring visits.

b. Consider the possibility of shifting some contract/ monitoring functions to the United Way, or another outside organization with a comparable monitoring function, for efficiencies of

<sup>1</sup> Does not include the two grant-funded positions of YAPP and F.R.I.E.N.D.S.

scale, in lieu of, or in conjunction with, shifting functions to the shared services unit.

3. Resulting adjustments in staff assignments
  - a. Less time may be needed for program monitoring/ management functions.
  - b. More time may be needed to expedite claims and manage fiscal concerns which currently result in delayed payments to frustrated nonprofits and delays in state payments to the County (\$900,000 owed to the County as of March 2011).
  - c. Expand the part-time planning/data analyst position to full-time under the shared services unit, with a broad focus on cross-systems human service opportunities.
  - d. The Youth Board should strengthen its internal funding allocation process, and more aggressively seek applications from new agencies with the ability and experience to offer new approaches in new areas of the county.
4. Identify and secure alternative sources of funding support
  - a. Nassau County should commit to using red light camera revenues to supplement County and state funds for Youth Board and youth-serving programs.
  - b. Additional new sources of revenues are recommended to reduce the burden on taxpayers, as well as to provide resources to support needed new program initiatives.
  - c. Create a full-time grant development position in the shared services unit to garner additional resources across human service departments.
  - d. The Youth Board needs to make its case more clearly in the future concerning the leveraging role it plays in using County dollars to make possible opportunities that would be less possible without the County's investment.
5. Reinforce and strengthen the role of the policy-making Board of the Youth Board
  - a. 6 current vacancies should be filled and 8 expired terms renewed or replaced.

- b. The Board should spearhead efforts to improve communication throughout the County concerning youth services issues and responding effectively to youth and family needs.

## Acknowledgements

CGR gratefully acknowledges the leadership, patience and support of the Rauch Foundation and the Long Island Funders Exchange (LIFE), a collaboration of individual, private and corporate philanthropic entities who combined to make this study possible, and helped provide a context within which it may find an audience to help shape change in Nassau County. We are especially grateful for the financial support of the Rauch Foundation for underwriting the study, and also appreciate the leadership of the Long Island Funders Exchange in providing bridge funding for the Youth Board, and intervention with the County Administration, to help secure sufficient time for this study to be completed before any final decisions are made about the future of Youth Board employees and various youth service agencies.

We could not have completed this study without the long hours, patience, information-gathering support, insights and unfailing good will of the staff of the Youth Board. Even in the midst of the uncertainty and personal and collective chaos in which they have been working for the past many weeks, they were generous with their time and thoughtful comments, both in person and at long distance. We know from experience that it is not easy to have your operations under scrutiny from outsiders, and openness and candor do not always result in such situations. In this case, the opposite was the case, as staff were consistently candid and cooperative in their interactions with us, whatever the consequences. We appreciate their professionalism and graciousness under difficult circumstances throughout the study.

We also had the good fortune to be able to interview more than 40 individuals during the study, and they were without exception cooperative and helpful in our discussions. We especially appreciate the representatives of the County Administration who met with us in the middle of the financial crisis they were dealing with, and the many representatives of community-based non-profit agencies who also shared their wisdom during times of great uncertainty for their operations. This study could not have been completed without the cooperation of all of those who shared their observations with us, often in times of great professional turmoil surrounding them and their organizations.

### Staff Team

As the director of this project, it has been my personal and professional pleasure to work with Jaime Saunders, who is simply the best, and demonstrated that in so many ways during all phases of this project. Also thanks to Hannah Griese who provided invaluable assistance in developing charts and tables that appear throughout the report. And special thanks to Kent Gardner for his guidance and insights, especially in the early stages of the project.

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# I. STUDY BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

In developing the Nassau County budget for the 2011 fiscal year, the County Executive initially projected a \$343 million budget deficit.<sup>2</sup> As part of its initial gap-closing measures, the County Administration proposed budget reductions across County government, including an initial \$912,000 reduction to the Nassau County Youth Board announced in September 2010. The original proposed budget cuts to the Youth Board were directed to its contracted staff line, and would have eliminated 11 contracted Youth Board staff and key functions they provided, while leaving the funding for community-based youth service programs intact. In response to department and community concerns expressed about the potential impact the reduced funding would have on the Youth Board's ability to maintain critical services, the County restored \$350,000 of the initially-eliminated funds at the end of December to support a reduced level of contracted Youth Board staff, albeit at reduced hours, for varying lengths of time during 2011.

In January 2011, the Rauch Foundation engaged the Center for Governmental Research (CGR)<sup>3</sup> to conduct an assessment of the impacts the proposed cuts would have on the Youth Board's ability to fulfill its current functions in supporting youth services in the County, and to offer viable recommendations to the County for how to provide needed youth services in a cost-effective manner in the future, in a time of fiscal crisis and uncertainty. Operating on a parallel supporting track, the Long Island Funders Exchange (LIFE) entered into an agreement with the County to provide bridge funding to retain the scaled-back Youth Board positions on a full-time basis for a three-month period through March, to provide time for the Rauch/CGR study to be conducted. In April 2011, the County Administration agreed to postpone implementing any of the proposed reductions of Youth Board contract employees until at least the end of May, following the release of this CGR report.

Since this study was commissioned, the potential implications of the County budget crisis for youth service funding became even more precarious. The Nassau Interim Finance Authority (NIFA) took over

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<sup>2</sup>Summary of Fiscal 2011 Adopted Budget, County Executive Office, October 30, 2010. Nassau County Office of the Comptroller: Comptroller's Comments on The Proposed Nassau County 2011 Budget and Multi-Year Financial Plan, October 6, 2010; and Nassau County Interim Finance Authority, "Preliminary Staff Review of the Proposed Multi-Year Financial Plan Fiscal 2011-2014," September, 28, 2010.

<sup>3</sup> The Center for Governmental Research (CGR) is an independent, nonpartisan, research organization. More information can be found at [www.cgr.org](http://www.cgr.org).

overall responsibility for County finances, and a second round of funding cuts was proposed. From the youth services perspective, this next round of proposed cuts threatened significant reductions in funding for youth service agencies funded through the Youth Board—agencies and programs that had escaped the initial round of proposed budget cuts. Those proposed cuts are currently pending, but have not yet been imposed.

The fiscal crisis facing Nassau County creates an environment in which careful planning and thoughtful future-oriented decision-making tend to take a back seat to the need to find immediate cost savings. Other important elements adding to the complexity of the context and crisis environment include a proposed consolidated County Department of Human Services, state-level policy changes with anticipated reductions in state aid, pending Red Light Camera legislation with possible implications for the financial support of youth services, and challenges to the County's practice of contracting employees to carry out County functions. Each of these elements is described more fully below, as this chapter focuses on providing an overview of the complex context within which proposed cuts in Youth Board staffing and functions, and in contracted youth services, are being proposed.

Fortunately, the County has created some additional space and time within which to consider this report, and its implications and recommendations, before definitive decisions and actions are finalized regarding proposed youth service reductions.

## Focus of the Study

This study provides a third-party assessment of the Nassau County Youth Board and its historic and future role in the community, within the context of proposed reductions in budget and staffing and the potential integration of the Youth Board into a proposed consolidated Nassau County Department of Human Services.

The study is designed to provide a high-level assessment of the probable impact proposed budget cuts would have on the services provided by and through the County Youth Board. CGR approached the assessment with the intention of answering the following key questions:

1. What would be the impact of the proposed cuts on Nassau County's ability to provide and support youth and family development services in the County?
2. What are the core functions that need to be preserved, even if some or all of the proposed cuts go through?

3. If the County implements its proposed consolidated Department of Human Services, what functions could be integrated in this new model, or in some other new way, and what functions and services must be retained independently by the Youth Board?
4. How can essential core Youth Board functions and youth services be retained, provided and supported in the most cost-effective manner in the future?
5. How can the County best allocate limited resources in the context of a dynamic and challenging fiscal environment?

The study did not attempt to address the overall quality of the services provided, though whenever possible, this component was incorporated in the assessment. Further, the study was not intended to provide an assessment of the performance of individual staff members nor contract agencies, but rather focuses on the functions the Youth Board provides and the role it plays in the County and throughout New York State.

## Methodology

CGR used the following three-component process to understand the Youth Board's past and current role in the community and to identify and assess various options and strategies in which potential changes may be implemented going forward. These components were interrelated and occurred along simultaneous parallel tracks.

### **Component 1: Interviews with Key Stakeholders**

CGR engaged a broad range of stakeholder perspectives in confidential interviews to inform the study, including:

- All Youth Board staff;
- Chair of the volunteer advisory and policy-setting board of the Youth Board;
- Focus Groups with contract agencies;
- County Administration staff;
- Former leadership of the Youth Board;
- Private community funders of youth services;
- Commissioners and leadership of the proposed consolidated Department of Human Services;
- New York State Office of Children and Family Services;
- New York State Association of Youth Bureaus;

- Youth Board community service partners including: United Way, Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), the County Office of Probation, and the Nassau Youth Services Agency Coalition.

### **Component 2: Data Collection and Analysis**

Data were provided and analyzed regarding current and prior staffing levels, department budgets over time, program applications, trends in funding allocations, and Youth Board contract management and program-related materials. Various background materials concerning draft legislation, draft proposals, memoranda of understanding, planning documents and operating procedures were also reviewed as part of the process.

### **Component 3: Synthesis of Findings and Recommendations**

The above components were synthesized into the findings, implications and recommendations presented in this report.

As emphasized above, this study was conducted in a crisis environment. Nearly every day brought new rumors, demands, requests and suggested changes within the County as a whole, and specifically within the Youth Board and youth service agencies. The constantly-changing context, personal stress, and shifting demands on County and Youth Board staff, who were crucial to our efforts in providing key data elements for this project, made the data collection process at times frustrating, time-consuming and challenging. While these challenges were for the most part understandable, and staff were accommodating and supportive, we were unable to obtain some requested information, and some of what was obtained was not always internally consistent. We note such situations where appropriate and relevant at points throughout the report, along with the implications of such gaps or inconsistencies.

But such problems notwithstanding, we were able to access the bulk of the information we needed to draw key conclusions, and in the few instances in which gaps or inconsistent data were a concern for our analyses, we note that and usually use the concern to help shape a suggestion or specific recommendation to correct the problem in the future. The noted problems with selected data do not in any way diminish our comfort in standing behind our analyses, conclusions and recommendations with confidence that they reflect the reality presented throughout the report.

## Nassau County Youth Board Overview

New York State law requires that Youth Boards be created in municipalities with a total population of 20,000 or more.<sup>4</sup> Youth Boards were created with “the purpose of planning, coordinating and supplementing the activities of public, private, and religious agencies devoted to the welfare and protection of youth.”<sup>5</sup> In this regard, Youth Boards are charged with providing services for all youth in the community. In 2010, New York State had 107 Youth Boards across the state.

Nassau County established its Youth Board in 1965 and is currently in its 46<sup>th</sup> year of service to the community. The Youth Board is the main conduit for New York State funding for youth development services for local community-based organizations. In 2010, Nassau’s Youth Board received almost \$1.6 million in state aid and, coupled with County funding, the department allocated more than \$6.5 million in funds to over 40 programs in the community.<sup>6</sup> The Youth Board estimates through its contract agencies it serves over 37,000 unduplicated youth each year,<sup>7</sup> with over 26,000 additional youth contacts through hot lines and special events.

In addition to funding, Youth Board staff members play integral roles in building community collaborations to address identified needs of the County’s youth. Youth Board staff provide technical assistance to communities and community agencies, compile and analyze data to strategically direct resources toward emerging community needs, monitor contracts and programs to assess program impact and ensure they operate in conformance with stated goals and community needs, help initiate needed new services, and often seek outside grant funding to launch or supplement community initiatives such as gang prevention, juvenile justice reform and reductions in teen pregnancy.

The Youth Board Department is overseen by an appointed volunteer policy-making Board consisting of 20 community members. The Board is a required entity for the receipt and allocation of state aid funding through the New York State Office of Children and Family Services. At the start of 2011, the Youth Board staff was comprised of 15 positions with a full-time-equivalent (FTE) of 13.8, including the Executive Director, 3 civil service staff and 11 staff who were contracted through the nonprofit

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<sup>4</sup> New York Executive Law, Article 19-A § 420

<sup>5</sup> Association of New York State Youth Bureaus.

<sup>6</sup> Figures do not include approximately 10 programs receiving about a half million dollars in Special Delinquency Prevention Program and 21<sup>st</sup> Century funding.

<sup>7</sup> Based on 2009 youth served data provided by the Youth Board.

Family and Children's Association (FCA) to work at the Nassau County Youth Board. Most of the contract staff employees have been threatened with elimination of their positions later this year, pending the results of this study, the potential application of resources from the current local Red Light Camera law, and the generation of possible new revenues via proposed new Red Light Camera legislation (see discussion below).

A more detailed outline of the specific functions, services and structure of the Youth Board is provided in Chapter II of the report.

## Nassau County Youth

In 2009, Nassau County had an estimated 351,700 youth, ages 0 through 19, who called the county home. The youth population made up 26% of the total estimated county population, representing a one point decline in proportion of the total county population since 2000. Since 2000, the population of 0- to 9-year-olds declined by 13%, and the numbers of those 10-14 changed very little, while the 15-19 population increased by 19%.

**TABLE 2**

<b>Nassau County Youth Population, 2000 to 2009</b>			
	<b>2000</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>% Change</b>
Under 5	86,628	74,649	-14%
5 to 9	96,192	84,463	-12%
10 to 14	93,441	94,077	1%
15 to 19	82,662	98,495	19%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>358,923</b>	<b>351,684</b>	<b>-2%</b>
<b>% Total County Pop.</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>26%</b>	

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau*

*Note: 2009 figures are population estimates.*

## County Budget Deficit and Funding Reductions to the Youth Board

Over the past two Nassau County Administrations, as part of efforts to close major County budget gaps, more than 10 positions have been eliminated from the Youth Board budget since 2008, including vacancies. In September of 2010, the Mangano Administration, faced with a large deficit, presented its 2011 budget which included a 14% budget reduction to the Youth Board, targeting the \$912,000 contract line and 11 contract employees, while keeping contract agencies held harmless from the cuts.

In December 2010, the Administration committed to the restoration of \$350,000 of the \$912,000 to the Youth Board contract employee budget line. Three positions were eliminated, and other adjustments were made to maximize available revenues. These changes left the Youth Board with 13

total positions, not counting two additional positions (Youth/Adult Participation Program and FRIENDS coordinators), both of which are covered under different budget lines.

To maintain as much staff as possible within the \$350,000 contract employee budget line, Youth Board leadership proposed to further reduce remaining contract employee staff to varying combinations of three and four days per week for between six and 12 months during the year. In December 2010, the Long Island Funders Exchange agreed to provide over \$69,000 in gap funding to keep key upper management and program and fiscal support staff at full capacity (five days a week) through March 31.

While the County Administration asserted the 2011 budget was balanced going into the new year, a New York State review outlined a \$175 million gap which allowed for the Nassau Interim Finance Authority (NIFA) to institute a control period starting on January 26, 2011. NIFA requested a plan from the County Administration that would reduce the gap.

In partial response, during the first quarter of 2011, the Administration proposed cuts to youth-serving agencies of up to \$1.7 million, representing about a 25% reduction for programs which had initially been held harmless from 2011 reductions. These proposed cuts would have reduced the youth services program budget from about \$6.6 million to about \$4.9 million.

In mid-April, the Long Island Funders Exchange collaborative requested the County Administration to place a stay on its intention to reduce Youth Board staff until the outcomes of this assessment and of the pending Red Light Camera State Legislation (described below) were known. The County Administration agreed to a one-month delay to the contracted staff slated for layoffs by issuing an extension of employment to May 31, 2011. The proposed agency cuts have also been put on hold temporarily, pending outcomes of this study and of the Red Light Camera legislation.

In an effort to further reduce the workforce, the County has offered an early retirement incentive county-wide. Depending on the number of staff that accept the incentive, the County is expected to announce total County-wide layoffs in early July 2011.

During this constant state of flux within the County, with frequent rumors and proposals floated and removed from consideration almost as soon as they become public, working conditions and morale have not surprisingly fluctuated widely from week to week. It should be noted that during this uncertain period, CGR's observation is that Youth Board staff have remained focused and professional in carrying out their assignments, regardless of the chaos swirling around them.

## Contract Staffing Arrangement

Beginning in the mid-1970s, Nassau County engaged the Family and Children's Association, Inc. (FCA)<sup>8</sup>, a nonprofit community service organization, to serve as a fiscal agent for staff working at various departments within the County. The County would hire, house, and provide work assignments for the contracted staff members, while FCA would provide the human resources support including the payment of associated wages and benefits. FCA receives approximately a 10% administrative fee for overseeing such functions for contract employees for the County.

As part of the negotiations over the 2011 County budget between NIFA, the County Administration, and the CSEA union, the status of approximately 240 contract employees throughout the County has been in jeopardy, as the union has contested their employment, insisting that no union or Civil Service employees on the County payroll should be laid off as long as any contract employees retained their positions. Thus any proposed staff reductions within the Youth Board have focused exclusively to date on the contract employees.

At the beginning of 2011, the Youth Board consisted of 11 FCA contracted staff, plus the Executive Director, and 3 Civil Service/County staff. The 11 FCA staff in Youth Board positions include: the 3 upper management positions of the department, 2 Program Manager positions, 1 part-time Planning/Data Analyst, 1 part-time Fiscal Management Director, 1 Contract Specialist, 1 Account Assist I (claims auditor), and Y.A.P.P. and Y.A.P.P./ FRIENDS program coordinators. It should be noted that of the 11 contracted staff, 8 are included in the contracted line slated for budget reduction as discussed earlier in the report. The positions of Fiscal Management Director, Y.A.P.P. Program Manager and Y.A.P.P./ F.R.I.E.N.D.S Program Manager are covered through other grants, funding streams or program contracts outside of this contracted employee line and are not slated for reduction at this time.

## 2011 Proposed Consolidated Department of Human Services

As part of its operational plans for 2011, the Mangano Administration is proposing the creation of a consolidated Department of Human Services. This new department would consolidate the following four County departments under a newly-established Commissioner of Human Services: the Youth Board, Department of Senior Citizen Affairs, Office of the

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<sup>8</sup> At the time of the original engagement FCA was Family Service Association (FSA).

Physically Challenged, and the Department of Mental Health, Chemical Dependency and Developmental Disabilities Services. Each department or office would retain its own identity within the overall new Human Services Department, with the 20-member volunteer Youth Board continuing, with staff serving in a newly-named Office of Youth Services headed by an Executive Director appointed by the County Executive.

County Executive Mangano is expected to submit proposed legislation to the County Legislature for the creation of the new Department in May or June 2011, although formal organization of the Department may not occur until later in the year. Under this new Department, the County is likely to create a Shared Services Unit that would provide back office support and common functions for each of the departments. Such functions may include fiscal services, administrative support, and contract monitoring. Following trends across the state, the assumption is the shared services unit would allow for both improved efficiencies and cost savings.

As of the writing of this report, specific start-up plans or plans of what specific services or staffing would be shared in the proposed Department of Human Services had not been formulated.

In addition, the County Legislature approved legislation in June 2010 to create a county-wide shared services department. This shared service department is separate from the one described above that is designed to specifically support the four consolidated human service departments. The county-wide shared service department is expected to provide fiscal, IT, and human resource support as needed to various departments in the County. How this department would be staffed, and how it would relate to the Human Services shared service unit, have not yet been determined.

## Red Light Camera Fund

Youth services, with the exception of the portion of funding requirements through the NYS Office of Children and Family Services, are considered a non-mandated service. As a non-mandated service, with only a relatively small portion of revenue from State sources, the Youth Board receives a majority of its funding as County dollars. This has made the Youth Board budget appear less restrictive and makes it a viable target during times of fiscal stress in the County.

To address the fluctuations and ongoing threat to non-mandated funding reductions, the Youth Board and its network of youth development programs in the County have advocated for a dedicated funding stream for county youth services, including the funds required by executive law to “draw down” state aid. The Nassau Youth Services Agency Coalition, made up of more than 30 providers receiving County funds through the Youth Board, advocated with New York State and the County for the

establishment of a Red Light Camera initiative in the County. As part of the negotiations, it was agreed that the net revenue from the cameras, after operating and capital expenses, would be directed to contracted youth services in the County.

In response, the County Legislature enacted Local Law #12-2009 on June 18, 2009 that authorized the Red Light Camera program which established a special revenue fund from the Red Light Camera revenue to be reserved for contracts approved by the Nassau County Legislature between contract agencies and not only the Youth Board, but also the Department of Senior Citizen Affairs, Department of Veterans Services, and the Department of Mental Health, Chemical Dependency and Developmental Disabilities Services.

As of January 2011, 50 Red Light Cameras were in place. The County 2011 adopted budget projects \$38.3 million in revenue generated through fines and an additional \$23.4 million in revenue from the state Red Light Camera initiative to support the implementation of the camera program. The 2011 budget projected \$61,626,000 in total revenues and expenditures for the year. It is not clear what level of NET revenues have been generated to date, over and above expenditures associated with implementation of the initiative; what is clear is that to date, no disbursements have been made from the Red Light Camera fund for the intended purposes, i.e., the County Administration has not allocated any funding from the Red Light Cameras Initiative to the designated departments or contracted agencies.

However, at the end of March 2011, County Administration requested the Youth Services Coalition once again to advocate for approval from the State to increase the number of authorized red light cameras in the County by an additional 50 cameras in order to generate additional revenue to counter the currently-proposed program cuts.

On March 2, 2011, the New York State Senate passed legislation, sponsored by Senator Charles Fuschillo (Bill No. S2580), to amend the 2009 Vehicle and Traffic Law by doubling the number of authorized red light cameras in Nassau to 100, resulting in \$17.3 million projected revenue. On April 12, 2011, State Assemblymember Earlene Hooper introduced legislation (Bill No. A07107) to the Committee on Transportation to also amend the 2009 law by increasing the number of red light cameras to 100. The proposed assembly bill would also establish a separate Nassau County Youth Services Fund with the New York State Comptroller's Office where 25% of collected fine revenues must be deposited for specific use of youth services in Nassau County. The funds would be distributed to Nassau County youth services contract agencies as authorized by the County Executive. Although uncertain at this point, it may also be that some of the funds could be used for partial support of

Youth Board contract staff used to support and monitor the agencies receiving the dedicated youth service funds. Public statements have been made by the County Administration to the effect that if this legislation is enacted, funds would be used to ensure restoration of any program funding cuts that have been tentatively proposed, and to help support continuation of Youth Board staff positions now slated to be eliminated later this year. The Committee on Transportation is expected to vote on this legislation in early May 2011.

## **New York State 2011 Budget Reductions Impact the County Youth Board**

In addition to the County-level budget reductions, the entire pool of state-level funding for the Youth Board was in jeopardy during the most recent budget season. Governor Cuomo's 2011-12 Executive Budget Proposal released on February 1<sup>st</sup> included a provision which would have created a new competitive block grant called the Primary Prevention Incentive Program (PIIP). This program would have replaced funding currently allocated through the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) for Youth Development by local Youth Boards and would have required no county match to access funds.

Ultimately, both the State Senate and State Assembly rejected the PIPP model, leaving the funding in place for youth development services and Youth Boards, but at greatly reduced levels. The approved state budget for the 2011-12 fiscal year includes a 50% reduction to the OCFS Youth Development funding streams that support Youth Boards across the state, as shown in Table 3 below. The direct impact these state aid reductions will have at the county level was still being determined while this report was being finalized, but it is reasonable to assume Nassau County will experience some reduction in the \$1.6 million of state aid it currently receives for youth services. The Youth Development and Delinquency Prevention (YDDP) and Special Delinquency Prevention Program (SDPP) funding amounts are formula-driven based on population, while the Runaway / Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) funds are based on documented needs for homeless youth in a county.

TABLE 3

<b>NYS 2011-12 Statewide Reductions for Youth Development (in millions)</b>			
<b>Funding Stream</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>% Change</b>
Youth Development and Delinquency Prevention (YDDP) / Special Delinquency Prevention Program (SDPP)	\$28.20	\$14.12	-50%
Runaway / Homeless Youth Act (RHYA)	\$4.70	\$2.36	-50%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$32.90</b>	<b>\$16.48</b>	<b>-50%</b>

## State Policy Shifts Impact the County

At the same time as funds for youth development services are being reduced in the current state budget, New York State continues to move in a direction that requires more documented outcomes for its investments and encourages community-based initiatives to reduce juvenile placements. These shifts are discussed below.

### *Emphasis on Outcome-Based Measures*

New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) is requiring all Youth Boards to implement a newly developed software called QYDS (Quality Youth Development System). The goal of this new system is to provide a consistent framework to track outcome data across the State. Previously, local Youth Boards have maintained their own separate systems of contract management with varying, and often limited, outcome tracking measures.

The QYDS system is anticipated to provide a structured and uniform way for the state to understand how state aid funds are being used and to determine if the investment is providing what OCFS determines is a sufficient return. The increased expectation for documented outcomes attempts to systematize data collection and eliminate the practice of funding underperforming agencies.

The Nassau County Youth Board implemented QYDS in 2010 and is running the software in tandem with its own Access-based Contract Management System. The Youth Board anticipates making a full transition to the QYDS system over time. However, QYDS as currently designed does not capture all of the measures the Youth Board is tracking with its own system. The QYDS system is still being implemented across the state with county-based training expected to continue into 2012.

The impact of the new system is yet to be determined, but it confirms the State's shifting policies toward documented outcomes and contract management with a strong evaluation component. This shift may have implications for the expectations of County Youth Board contract management processes and required staffing levels to satisfy the new requirements. It is also reasonable to assume that as the County fully implements the new QYDS system, staff time and training will need to be devoted to the process during the transition period.

## ***New York State Juvenile Justice Reform: Policy and Funding***

The 2011-12 State budget included several key reforms of the state's juvenile justice system. The budget redirects some funding from local detention operations to community-based programs, following evidence-based research that has found that alternatives to detention are an effective way to meet the needs of troubled youth and ultimately result in fewer costly placements and reduced rates of recidivism. The 2011-12 budget also reduces the state juvenile facilities system by more than 30 percent and provides funds for enhanced services for juveniles that remain in OCFS facilities.<sup>9</sup>

A key change for the County is the State budget elimination of the 49 percent State reimbursement for juveniles placed in local secure and non-secure detentions. The State authorized instead a new Capped Detention Program which provides counties with up to 50% reimbursement for youth deemed "high risk" by a Risk Assessment Instrument approved by OCFS. Counties would still have the option to detain low and mid-risk youth, but they now would be responsible to cover the full costs of those placements. However, the State will provide up to 62 percent reimbursement for the costs associated with local alternatives to detention.<sup>10</sup>

This overarching change in funding is designed to encourage local municipalities to invest in effective programs that reduce placements through preventative measures and/or alternatives to incarceration. The estimated cost per youth placed in a State facility is \$210,000 per year – of which the county's previous share was 51%.<sup>11</sup> As the proposed Capped Detention Program goes into effect, counties will have an even greater vested interest in identifying and supporting community-based alternatives

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<sup>9</sup> New York State Division of Budget, 2011-2012 Enacted Budget, (<http://www.budget.state.ny.us/>)

<sup>10</sup> New York State Senate, 2011-12 Budget Summary, (<http://www.nysenate.gov>)

<sup>11</sup> Vera Institute of Justice, "Charting a New Course: A Blueprint for Transforming Juvenile Justice in New York State," A Report for Governor Paterson's Task Force on Transforming Juvenile Justice, December 2009.

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that have proven outcomes in reducing placements to ultimately save County dollars. This is an area of reform in which the Nassau Youth Board has historically played a key leadership role including its participation in the NYS Juvenile Justice Dialogue – a six-county collaboration convened by Fight Crime Invest in Kids, New York and the New York State Council on Children and Families.

### ***2010 Census Will Impact County Allocation***

It should also be noted that the OCFS funding to municipalities is formula-based funding which is calculated based on the 0 to 21 youth population of the County. Currently, OCFS relies on the 2000 Census figures as part of its formula. As of the writing of this report, the 2010 Census data breakdowns by age group were not available and the impact on the County's state funding allocation is unknown.

With all of these environmental contexts in mind that will help shape future decisions about the Youth Board, we now turn in Chapter II to a more detailed description and discussion of the role and functions of the Youth Board: past, current and projected.

## II. OVERVIEW OF YOUTH BOARD FUNCTIONS AND SERVICES

### Overview of Youth Board Budget

The Nassau County Youth Board had a total 2011 operating budget of about \$7.6 million, after subtracting the full initial proposed cuts of about \$912,000 from contract employees. However, the equivalent of at least \$350,000 of additional contract employee funding needs to be added to that figure, since although it was not included in the adopted County budget, it has been authorized for funding for selected contract employee positions during the early months of the year. In addition, each of the annual total expenditure and contractual services totals below should be expanded by about \$400,000 per year, to reflect SDPP state aid funds which are not reflected in Youth Board budgeted funds and program expenditures.

TABLE 4

<b>Nassau County Youth Board Expenditures Summary</b>					
	<b>2009 Adopted</b>	<b>2009 Actual</b>	<b>2010 Adopted</b>	<b>2010 Actual</b>	<b>2011 Adopted</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>					
Civil Service Salaries, Wages & Fees	\$519,295	\$361,634	\$375,747	\$337,801	\$391,164
General Expenses	\$10,136	\$738	\$8,515	\$1,318	\$4,612
Contractual Services	\$7,988,196	\$7,789,655	\$7,699,544	\$7,543,795	\$6,609,223
Interdepartmental Charges	\$548,412	\$503,199	\$565,637	\$549,676	\$623,021
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$9,066,039</b>	<b>\$8,655,226</b>	<b>\$8,649,443</b>	<b>\$8,432,590</b>	<b>\$7,628,020</b>
<i>Source: Nassau County Youth Board</i>					
<i>Notes: SDPP funds are not included in the totals. Interfund charges include direct costs of copying, printing, supplies, etc. Contractual Services total includes both contracted agency awards and contracted staff costs. Totals do not include benefit expenses for County/Civil Service staff in any year (approx. \$194,000) recorded separately in county budget total benefit expense line.</i>					

The Contractual Services line includes both the awards to the contracted agencies and the costs of the contracted staff, including benefits. In 2010, the contracted staff portion was \$912,000 which was similar to earlier

years, before being zeroed out of the 2011 adopted budget.<sup>12</sup> The contracted agency award portion is provided in a detailed listing for each agency in Table 9 on page 34.

## Department Revenue

The Youth Board receives \$1.6 million in State Aid from the Office of Children and Family Services through three primary funding streams: Youth Development and Delinquency Prevention (YDDP); Special Delinquency Prevention Programs (SDPP); and Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHYA). Each OCFS funding stream is for a targeted purpose and includes a set of criteria as outlined below. In all cases, the County must expend the funds and voucher NYS for reimbursement within a specific time frame.

In addition to the State Aid listed below, which requires local matches, the Youth Board also received \$405,972 in SDPP funding in 2010 (100% state funds, with no required local match) and has a position which is funded 100% through a 21<sup>st</sup> Century grant with the Hempstead School District. Prior to the \$350,000 restoration in the proposed department reductions for 2011, the County budgeted nearly \$6.3 million for Youth Board revenue, including its portion of the required State Aid match discussed below.

**TABLE 5**

<b>2011 Nassau Youth Board Funding by Source</b>	
<b>Source</b>	<b>Amount</b>
YDDP	\$778,165
RHYA	\$422,610
<b>Sub-Total State Aid</b>	<b>\$1,200,775</b>
County Match Contribution	\$6,352,245
<b>TOTAL Department Budget</b>	<b>\$7,628,020</b>

*Source: Nassau Youth Board budget documents*

*Note: Figures do not include \$405,972 in SDPP funds or \$75,000 from 21st Century.*

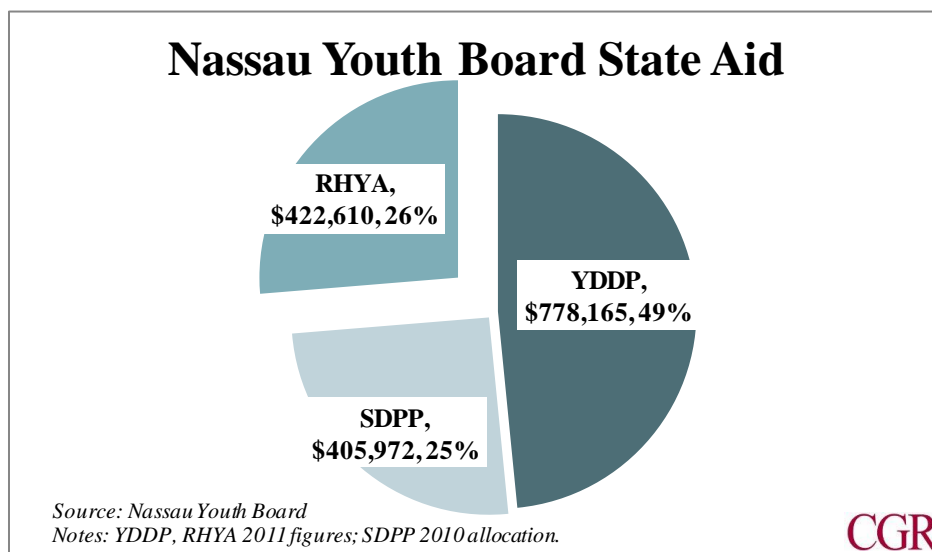
<sup>12</sup> CGR attempted to provide a breakout of contracted staff expenses and agency awards for earlier years, both adopted and actual, but received inconsistent data from the Youth Board.

## Youth Board Funding Streams

Municipalities with a population over 20,000 are required by law to establish a Youth Board to provide youth development and recreational services to all children, regardless of need. New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) supports these services through the three primary state aid funding streams specified above. In order to receive State Aid, the County must adhere to OCFS minimum requirements including allocating a portion of County funds in matched funds (except for SDPP funding), adhering to program monitoring guidelines, and detailing and updating a Children and Family Services Plan.

In 2011, the Nassau County Youth Board received \$1.6 million in state aid as follows:

**GRAPH 1**



As noted in Chapter I, the 2011-12 State Budget included a 50% reduction in these funding streams compared to the statewide allocations for 2010-11. While this report was being finalized, the Nassau County Youth Board received notification that its 2011 State Aid allocation was being reduced by 25%. These cuts will impact the current year of agency awards as well as the amount of funds available to offset Youth Board administrative staff costs.

## ***Youth Development and Delinquency Prevention (YDDP)***

YDDP funding is the main funding source for youth initiatives for youth development activities in the County. YDDP is considered to be very flexible funding in that it allows each local municipality to direct the funding in ways that best meet identified community needs. Nassau County's 2011 allocation of YDDP was \$778,165. The YDDP funds require a minimum of a \$2 County match in funding for every YDDP dollar. In 2011, Nassau County has exceeded that minimal requirement, providing at least a 6:1 County-to-state match for YDDP funding. OCFS views state aid as the start of youth development funding with the expectation that counties will contribute over and above the minimum required match as appropriate to meet the needs of the community.

YDDP funding provides a fixed dollar amount to be applied to administrative expenses. Nassau currently applies the YDDP administrative allocation to offset 49% of the Executive Director's salary. The remaining YDDP funds go to support contract agencies throughout the community.

## ***Special Delinquency Prevention Programs (SDPP)***

SDPP is designed to target services to higher-needs youth in the County. The funding may be targeted to support programs working with juvenile delinquency prevention or alternatives to detention. Nassau County's 2010 allocation of SDPP was \$405,972.<sup>13</sup> These funds were used to help fund nine separate programs in the County. This funding stream is 100% state aid and does not require a local match. SDPP allows for up to 13% of the funds to be directed to support the administration and staffing of the grant. As of the end of December 2010, the Youth Board applies the 13% to cover the part-time contracted Fiscal Management Director/Account Assistant IV position.

## ***Runaway & Homeless Youth Act (RHYA)***

RHYA is aid to local municipalities which provides 60% state aid reimbursement to shelters and programs for runaway and homeless youth. The County's allocation of Runaway and Homeless Youth funds for 2011 was \$422,610. The RHYA funding requires a 40% County match and that at least half of the 40% match be local tax dollars; the balance can either be additional tax dollars or some from other local cash supports.

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<sup>13</sup> 2011 allocation amount not provided.

Currently, with a combination of OCFS funds and the County match, nearly \$898,000 is directed toward RHYA programs. RHYA funding also reimburses 27% of the RHYA Youth Coordinator salary and benefit expenditures.

## Youth Board Staffing Over Time

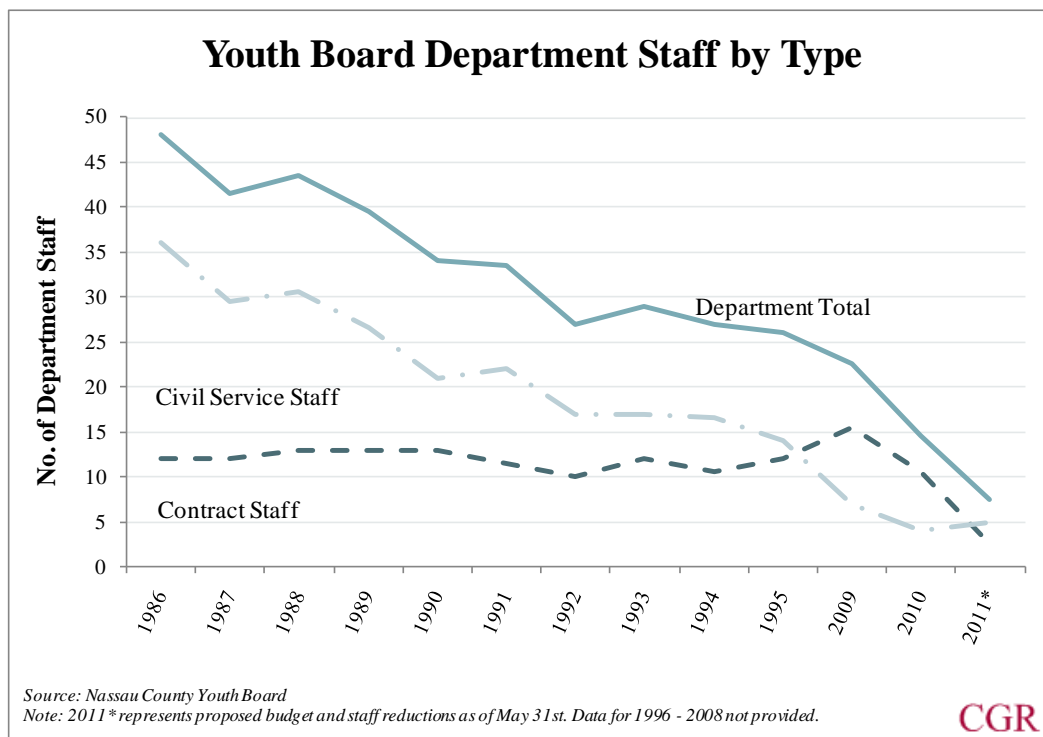
Over the decades the Youth Board staff has been significantly reduced in size—declining by 70% from its 48 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions in 1986 to 13.8 FTE positions in 2011.<sup>14</sup> As indicated earlier, the future of many of those 13.8 FTE positions, affecting 15 different employees, is currently pending. As discussed in Chapter I, the Youth Board’s workforce is comprised of a combination of County employees and primarily employees who are contracted from a private non-profit organization. Beginning in the mid-1970s, Nassau County engaged the Family and Children’s Association, Inc. (FCA) to support non-County staff in various departments within the County. The contracted staff are employees of FCA, which provides human resource support for the contracted staff, while the County hires, houses, and provides work assignments for the contracted staff members who reside in County offices. This practice of contracting staff was implemented for a variety of reasons, one of which was the belief that the use of contracted staff allowed a means to fill positions requiring specialized skills where either civil service titles previously did not exist, or where the skills needed involved specialization that may not be sufficiently tapped by existing civil service tests, such as, for example, in Juvenile Justice or Youth Advocacy.

The number of contracted employees working in the Youth Board has remained fairly steady over the years. Conversely, as the department was reduced in size, the number of civil service employees declined dramatically in recent years. As shown in Graph 2, beginning in 1995 the number of contracted employees in the Youth Board surpassed the number of civil service employees.

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<sup>14</sup> Part-time positions in 1986 counted as .5 FTE though the position may have worked fewer than the 17.5 hours considered part-time.

Graph 2



## Current Youth Board Staff

The current Youth Board has 11 contracted staff positions, including its top three senior management positions other than the Executive Director, who is a County employee. The contracted top three senior management staff of the Youth Board include the Director of Office of Program and Contract Management (36 years), Administrator, Juvenile Justice Programs (21 years), and the Director of Development, Training and Legislative Advocacy (26 years). These three contract employees are highly respected throughout the community and by the State for their experience, expertise, leadership and often ground-breaking work in developing and enhancing numerous new initiatives across the County over the years.

The 11 contracted staff positions represent 9.8 FTEs or 71% of the total 13.8 FTEs of the Youth Board workforce. Table 6 below presents the staff titles and associated funding sources, and identifies the 8 positions proposed for elimination (0 shown in the last column of the table).

TABLE 6

Current Nassau Youth Board Staffing and Proposed 2011 Reductions						
# of Positions	Title	2011 FTE	FT/PT	FCA/ County Staff	Funding Source	Remaining FTE after Proposed Reduction
1	Executive Director	1	FT	County	49% YDDP; County	1
2	Director, Program & Contract Management	1	FT	FCA	County	0
3	Director, Development, Training, and Legislative Advocacy	1	FT	FCA	County	0
4	Administrator, Juvenile Justice Programs	1	FT	FCA	County	0
5	Planning / Data Analyst	0.23	PT	FCA	County	0
6	Fiscal Management Director/Acct Assist IV	0.6	PT	FCA	County/SDPP Grant	0.6
7	Contract Specialist	1	FT	FCA	County	0
8	Account Assist I	1	FT	County	County	1
9	Administrative Assistant	1	FT	FCA	County	0
10	Program Manager	1	FT	FCA	County	0
11	Program Manager	1	FT	FCA	County	0
12	Youth Board Runaway Youth Coordinator	1	FT	County	27% RHYA; County	1
13	Youth Board Treatment Service Coordinator	1	FT	County	County	1
14	YAPP Program Manager	1	FT	FCA	County	1
15	Y.A.P.P. Program Manager (F.R.I.E.N.D.S.)	1	FT	FCA	100% 21st Century Grant	1
<b>TOTAL FTE</b>		<b>13.83</b>				<b>6.6</b>
<b>Total Positions</b>		<b>15</b>				<b>7</b>

Source: Nassau County Youth Board

Note: Counted as full-time equivalents (FTEs) based on 35 work week.

As shown in the table, if the initial proposed staff cuts were to be fully implemented after May of 2011, the only positions remaining would be the four County positions—Executive Director, Runaway/Homeless Youth Coordinator, Treatment Service Coordinator (senior contract management position) and the Accountant Assistant I (claims auditor)—plus the part-time Fiscal Management Director, the YAPP Program Manager (actually covered under the contract program budget line) and the FRIENDS Manager, fully funded through 21<sup>st</sup> Century grant funds through a school district.

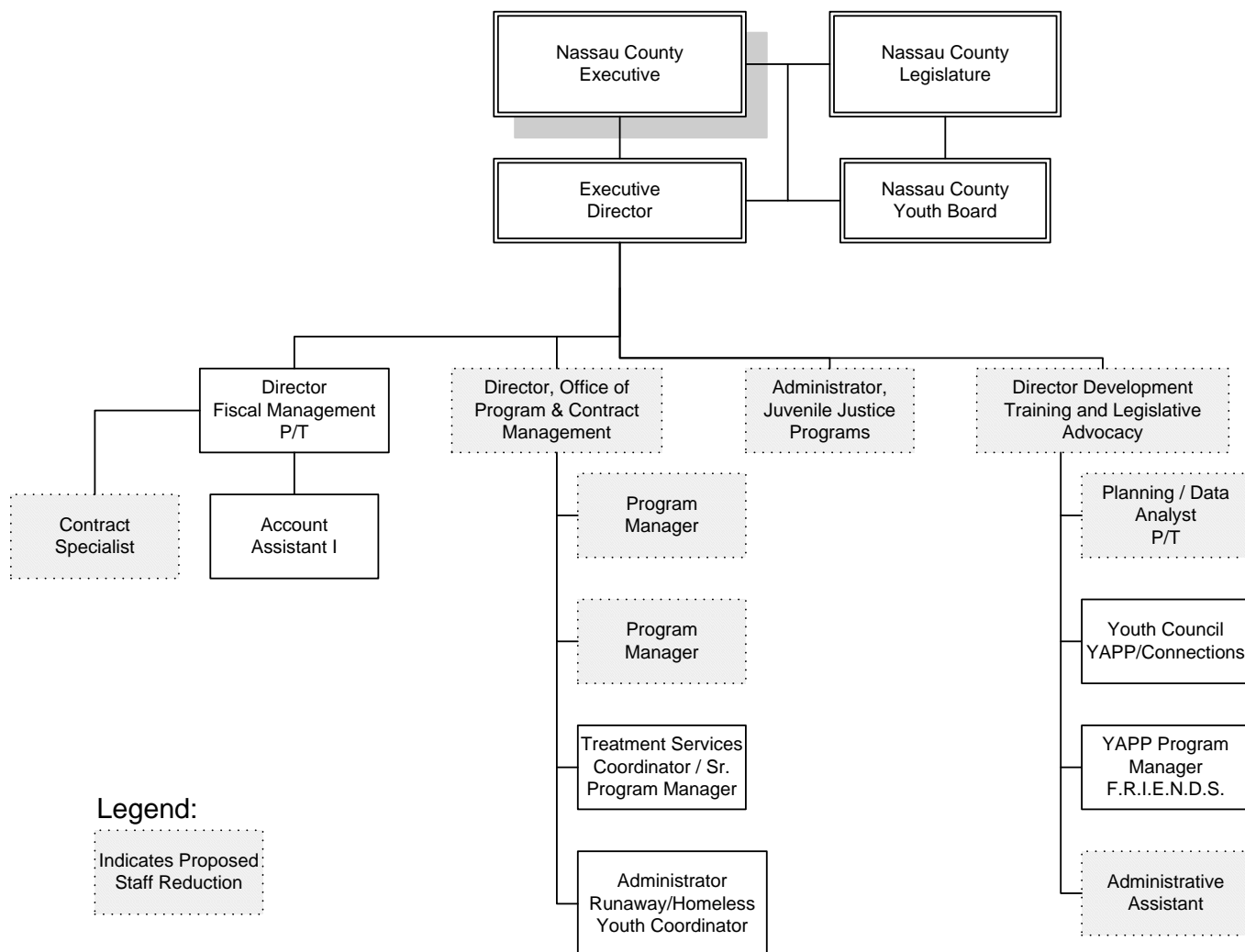
The bulk of the core infrastructure of the Youth Board support services—the three top management positions who play pivotal leadership roles in the community around their spheres of influence; two contract management personnel; the Contract Specialist responsible for ensuring that the contracts are developed, processed, and monitored for fiscal accountability and for processing monthly agency claims for payment; the part-time data analyst/planner responsible for assessing needs and conducting needed research; and an administrative assistant—would all be eliminated unless the County were to rescind its initial proposed contract employee reductions.

The following organizational chart (Graph 3) presents the current 15 positions with shading to indicate the 8 positions currently proposed for elimination as of May 31<sup>st</sup> as outlined in Table 6 above. This organizational chart was developed by CGR to depict the proposed budget reductions as part of the 15-person department. The chart does not include vacant positions.

GRAPH 3

# Nassau County Youth Board

2011 Proposed Cuts and Remaining Staff



## Staff Expenditures

The current Youth Board workforce (at least as constituted through May) has a total annualized cost, including associated benefits, of just under \$1.4 million. Nearly \$192,000 of these staff expenses are covered through state aid or grant funding, with the balance covered through County funds.<sup>15</sup>

**TABLE 7**

Youth Board Total Staff Expenditures					
Title	FTE	Positions	Wages	Fringe (benefits)	Total Employee Cost
<b>County Staff</b>	4	4	<b>\$323,454</b>	<b>\$194,072</b>	<b>\$517,526</b>
<b>Contract / FCA Staff</b>	9.83	11	<b>\$627,308</b>	<b>\$250,923</b>	<b>\$878,231</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13.83</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>\$950,762</b>	<b>\$444,996</b>	<b>\$1,395,758</b>

Source: Nassau County Youth Board

Note: Fringe rates provided by the Youth Board: 40% FCA fringe benefit rate and 60% fringe rate for County employees. Benefit costs for county staff not included in department budget as these costs are captured in County budget total benefit obligation expenditures. FCA 10% administrative fee not included in contract staff figures above.

## Youth Board Leadership

New York State requires the establishment of a policy-making Youth Board in order for municipalities to receive and disburse state aid through the Office of Children and Family Services. Nassau County local law 10-1965 and local law 3-1968 established the volunteer board and its structure. The Board consists of 20 members who are appointed by the County Executive with confirmation from the County Legislature to serve three-year terms. Currently, eight board members are up for reappointment and approval by the Legislature, and there are six vacancies.

The Board provides oversight of the operations of the department and makes funding allocation recommendations to the County Legislature. The Youth Board staff provides reports of community need based on analysis of community data in order for the Board to make strategic investments with its recommended allocations. The Board's funding review committee receives summaries of staff findings from program monitoring visits, and

<sup>15</sup> State Aid applied to 49% Executive Director salary; 27% of wages and benefits of Runaway Youth Coordinator; 100% of F.R.I.E.N.D.S. Program Manager wage and benefits; Fiscal Manager wage and benefits covered by 13% administrative costs of SDPP.

each year the Board is requested to visit a specific number of agencies in order to have a better understanding of the services being provided.

## Using Data to Identify Community Needs & Strategically Direct Funding Allocations

The Youth Board is required by NYSOCFS to create a Youth Services Needs Assessment that provides a rational approach to identifying program priority areas and defined outcome objectives. This assessment must be completed every three years as part of the County's Comprehensive Plan for Youth and Family Services (Comprehensive Plan) with updates on the plan's progress provided annually.

The Youth Board's research and planning function has historically collected and analyzed a variety of data to help the Youth Board identify its priority areas, inform its funding decisions, identify emerging trends, and develop proactive responses to community needs. The collected data and subsequent reports are provided to other County departments, contracted agencies and the general public to document need, inform planning, and assist in external grant applications.

The Youth Board's planning and research activities include the following:

- Geographic Information System (GIS) tools to integrate youth data into visual maps;
- Census data analysis to recognize changing demographics;
- Collection and processing of various local and state data into user-friendly information to inform overall planning (e.g., youth offense data, education statistics, TANF cases, children in foster care, rates of child abuse and neglect);
- Community Profile reports that provide localized snapshots of needs and trends for communities within the County. Data are collected and reported at the census tract and zip code level in order to recognize the variations in need and assets among communities within the County.<sup>16</sup>

The Youth Board collects and translates this community information in a manner that would not otherwise be readily available to the department or community agencies. For example, the Youth Board may incorporate

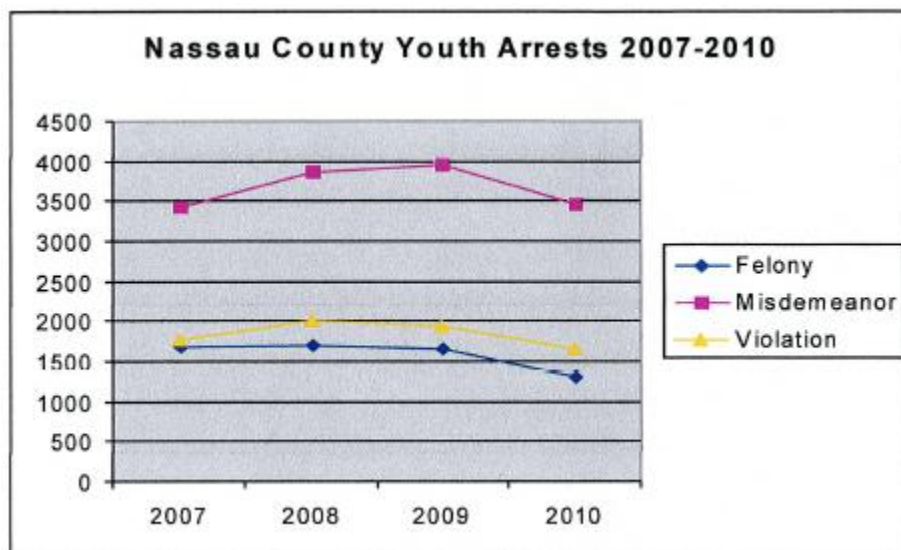
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<sup>16</sup> Separate community profiles can be accessed on the Youth Board website: [http://www.nassaucountyny.gov/agencies/YouthBoard/profs\\_map.html](http://www.nassaucountyny.gov/agencies/YouthBoard/profs_map.html)

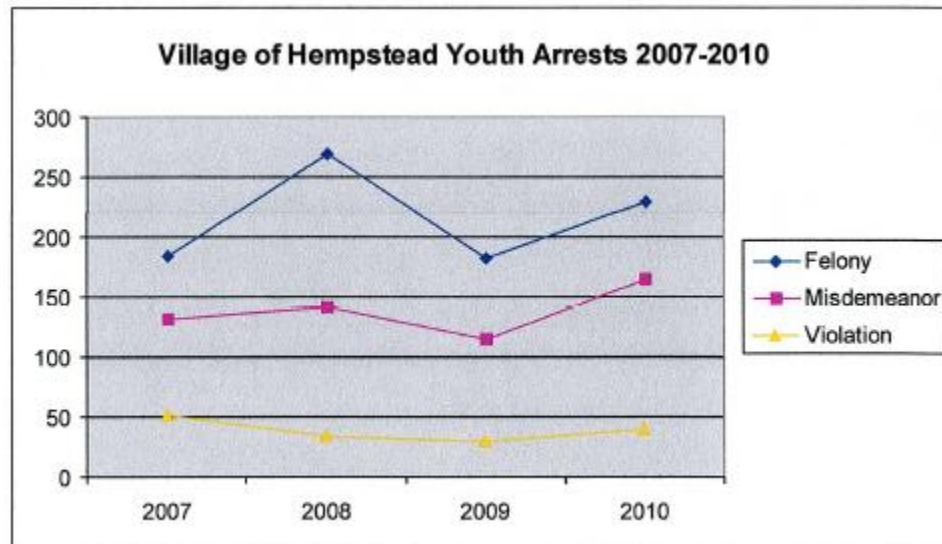
public health data and overlay it with demographic and social economic measures for each community to look for possible trends. The Youth Board also tracks measures related to its selected initiatives such as rates of teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

A flagship initiative of the Youth Board is the collaborative work and grant-funded efforts around juvenile justice. To inform its strategy, Youth Board staff collects local youth crime data at the zip code level from the Nassau County Police Department, Nassau County Juvenile Aid Bureau, and 14 village and city police departments within the County. The compilation of local data is a unique means for identifying changes and challenges within specific communities. The two charts below were provided by the Youth Board as examples of how the Youth Board goes beyond county-level data to determine what is happening within local communities. Graph 4 presents county-wide youth arrest data which shows an increase from 2007 and then a decline to earlier levels by 2010. When these data are presented for the Village of Hempstead, as shown in Graph 5, the trend is different and informs a different strategy.

**Graph 4**



Graph 5



In the mid-1980s the Youth Board's research and analysis identified growing rates of HIV/AIDS among young people at a time when these diseases were just becoming known in the community. The Youth Board facilitated collaborations with agency providers and successfully applied for and received one of the first New York State grants for targeted youth outreach and prevention.

In recent years, however, the Youth Board's research has identified growing rates of heroin use among young people in the County. The Youth Board notified its agencies of this emerging trend and is talking with agencies about how to prepare to address this developing need within their programs. Another example of how the Youth Board uses data to inform planning includes a review of data which demonstrated an increase in drop-out rates and a possible link to limited English speakers in a particular community. This notion prompted Youth Board staff to work with its community-based agencies to develop programs to explore and address this identified need.

Over the years, the Youth Board's planning and research staff has been significantly reduced, dropping from seven staff in 1988 to the current one part-time contracted staff member at 8 hours a week. *This reduction and the current limited availability of this function raise serious questions about the Youth Board's ability going forward to play the type of aggressive research, planning and needs assessment role that has characterized, shaped and helped make possible the Youth Board's community leadership role in the past.*

## Contract Agency Funding

One of the primary functions of the Youth Board is the allocation and monitoring of public funds to community-based agencies that provide youth development services. The Youth Board contract management and program staff, in partnership with the volunteer policy-making Youth Board, are responsible for funding allocations and ensuring compliance with funding requirements. The fiscal staff of the department manages the desk auditing components of the contracts, including processing contracts and agreements and reviewing voucher documentation before authorizing payment by the County's comptroller's office.

For the 2011 contract year, the Youth Board initially allocated \$6.5 million in funding to 40 community programs.<sup>17</sup> As described earlier in the report, the initial funding is currently under review and the agencies are facing various possible levels of cuts. As of this writing, a final list of 2011 program allocations has not been confirmed.

While funding reductions are typically difficult to manage under the best of circumstances, changes in funding allocations well into the second quarter of program operations is especially challenging. By this time most Youth Board-funded programs have staffed and operated their programs based on approved contracts for the 2011 calendar year. While the County has the authority to make reductions mid-year, the practical implications of the funding fluctuations place pressure on nonprofits to sustain programs and services to youth without knowing if the services will ultimately receive the required funding. The situation has been further complicated by delays in early payments which have the effect of making often-small community-based organizations subsidize County services by fronting staff payrolls and operating costs for longer periods of time.

In addition to the funding delays experienced by the agencies, the County is also behind in vouchering for its own reimbursement from OCFS, a function that used to be carried out by the Claims Auditor position that was eliminated in December 2010. As of the end of March 2011, the Youth Board had submitted vouchers to the State for only the first quarter of expenditures from 2010. In previous years, with a greater number of fiscal staff, the average turnaround time was 20 to 25 business days to voucher the State for reimbursement for funds the County had paid out to its contract agencies. Because of this lag in vouchering, as of the end of March, the County had approximately \$900,000 of unclaimed funds waiting at OCFS to reimburse the County for funds it had already

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<sup>17</sup> Figures do not include approximately 10 programs receiving about a half million dollars in SDPP and 21<sup>st</sup> Century funding, for which no County matches are required.

allocated. Fiscal staff also report a backlog of approximately 100 program vouchers waiting for processing at this time.

## ***Funding Allocation Process***

The volunteer policy-making Board of the Youth Board consists of community members who act as a formal check and balance for awarding public funding within the community. The Board includes a Funding Review Committee which meets monthly to oversee the fund allocation process.

The Board as a whole reviews community profiles and other reports on specific community issues that are provided by the research and program staff. Based on this information, the Board discusses community trends, identifies needs and confirms its main funding priority areas. As a result, the Board may change its priority areas or funding requirements. For example, in response to a documented increase in gang activity, in 2003 the Board instituted a policy mandating all contract agencies integrate violence and gang prevention into their service offerings and reflect this change in their applications.

To support the Board allocation decisions, the Youth Board program managers provide the initial review of agency applications, including a review of the program's past performance. The program managers generate a summary report on each program which is then presented to the Funding Review Committee for consideration in early fall. Each year a selected number of contract agencies and their board members meet directly with the Funding Review Committee to discuss their application and plans for the coming year. Members of the Board are also encouraged to visit several agencies during the funding cycle.

It is important to note that neither the Board nor its Funding Review Committee have been engaged by County officials to help determine the likely impact of any program cuts and, if program funding reductions must ultimately be made, how and where they should most cost-effectively occur.

## ***Becoming and Remaining a Youth Board-Funded Agency***

The Youth Board requires its contracted agencies to complete an annual application (typically a renewal application) that is due in July. The Youth Board does not typically conduct an open Request for Proposal (RFP) process, but rather focuses its resources on the identified list of providers it has traditionally worked with, based on satisfactory performance. An RFP process, however, is used to administer new funding initiatives (ie., youth violence and gang intervention in 2008).

Many of the contracted agencies have been receiving funding since the Youth Board began or have been receiving funding for decades. As a result, there is little fluctuation over time in the agencies that receive County funding (see recent historical patterns later in this chapter). Youth Board staff contend that their contracted agencies are responsive to changing community needs and work closely with the Youth Board to adjust programming as needed. Non-contracted agencies can submit an application, though the staff has received only a few new applications in recent years. Since 2009, the Youth Board has funded two new programs. With the potential decline in program funding, the prospect of adding additional programs appears limited without new approaches or new sources of funding.

The Youth Board has stopped funding a limited number of programs for poor performance. The Youth Board's preferred approach is to direct efforts to developing the capacity of its current providers to improve compliance through ongoing technical assistance and training. In some instances the Youth Board consolidated programs and still provide the service, but through fewer contracted agencies. Since 2006, the Youth Board has stopped funding ten programs. The Youth Board's stated policy for discontinuing program funds includes a review and engagement process with the agency's board of directors and Executive Director, the Youth Board Executive Director and program management team, the Youth Board's Funding Review Committee, members of the County Administration and the legislator representing the district in which the program is located.

## ***Funding by Program Type***

The Youth Board has several priority funding areas which are articulated in the County Comprehensive Plan and its Policy/Program Guidelines document. Each County-funded program must fit within at least one of these defined priority areas as part of its funding application.

The priority funding areas are:

- Youth, Family and Community Violence/Youth Gang Prevention and Intervention
- Juvenile Justice
- Teenage Pregnancy/HIV/AIDS/STIs
- Youth/Adult Participation Project
- Runaway and Homeless Youth
- Leisure Time
- Education

- Employment
- Substance Abuse
- Community Outreach
- Family Life
- Limited English Speaking
- Training
- Volunteers
- Board Development, Staff Development, Fundraising

In addition to these County funding priorities, programs are grouped by the New York State OCFS into uniform program categories by service type. The majority of program funding in Nassau falls under the “Skills for Living & Youth Guidance” category, which includes such services as after-school programming; mentoring; leadership training; community service; employment; individual, group and family counseling; and outreach, information and referral services.

Nassau’s youth development programs, within the OCFS categories, are presented in the following table:

**TABLE 8**

<b>2010 Nassau County Youth Board Programs and Services, By Type</b>	
<b>NYSOCFS Service Category</b>	<b># of Agencies</b>
Runaway / Homeless Youth	2
Juvenile Justice	5
Teen Pregnancy/HIV/AIDS/STI Reduction	4
Skills for Living & Youth Guidance	33
Violence Prevention/Intervention/Conflict Resolution	13
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>57</b>

*Source: Nassau County Youth Board*

Notes: A program can be listed under multiple categories, making the total greater than the number of funded programs in 2010. After-school programming included in Skills for Living and Youth Guidance.

### **Contracted Program Funding, 2006 – 2011**

The following table (Table 9) presents the funding awards to each program over the last six years. This table does not include about 10 programs funded by SDPP or 21<sup>st</sup> Century funding. Total program funding from the main Youth Board, including County and YDDP and RHYA funding, was \$7.15 million in 2006 and in 2011, before the proposed and pending reductions, was slated to be \$6.5 million.

The table is shaded to indicate when program funding ended or was beginning for the first time. It should be noted that program funding may have stopped as a result of a particular initiative ending or programs being consolidated, and does not necessarily indicate poor performance. Further, the County-managed YAPP program is included in the contracted awards.

What is not reflected in Table 9 is the total value of these community programs in regard to the additional external funding (non-County and non-OCFS dollars) the agencies are able to garner in order to support services to Nassau County's youth and families. The total value of these programs well exceeds the \$6.5 million of County and OCFS funds, but we do not know by how much. While the Youth Board application process requests information regarding the other funding sources used to support the programs, this information is currently not tracked in a form that can more definitively answer this question. This capability should be developed in the future.

Examples of program services receiving County funding include:

- Individual, group and family counseling
- 24-hour crisis intervention hotline
- 24-hour crisis intervention for runaway/homeless youth
- Teen parenting counseling and high school completion support
- Youth Leadership Training
- Job placement services
- Gang prevention and intervention services
- Transitional housing for homeless youth ages 17-21
- Juvenile justice
- Youth employment
- Family support
- Alternative education
- One-to-One mentoring programs
- Homework assistance
- Weekend drop-in center
- Health workshops
- After-school groups
- Legal representation for youth and their parents
- Safe house for victims of domestic violence

- Therapeutic and advocacy services for victims and witnesses to domestic violence
- Bilingual/bi-cultural services
- Outreach and support services
- Summer recreation opportunities

**TABLE 9: NASSAU YOUTH BOARD AGENCY CONTRACTS: 2006 to 2011**  
(YDDP/RHYA/County Funds ONLY; Does NOT include SDPP Funds)

AGENCY	Allocated 2006	Allocated 2007	Allocated 2008	Allocated 2009	Allocated 2010	Allocated 2011 (As of 9/21/10)
Advisory Council for the Youth of Mineola	\$199,500	\$199,500	\$290,558	\$274,500	\$255,000	\$269,000
Advisory Council-GIPP (combined-2008)	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
After School All Stars	\$22,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
BiasHelp, Inc	\$37,500	\$60,000	\$63,510	\$60,000	\$45,000	\$60,000
Big Brothers /Big Sisters of Long Island	\$46,000	\$46,000	\$48,691	\$46,000	\$40,000	\$46,000
Circulo de la Hispanidad	\$174,810	\$174,810	\$185,036	\$174,810	\$170,000	\$174,810
City of Glen Cove Youth Bureau	\$73,079	\$73,079	\$77,354	\$73,079	\$70,886	\$73,079
Community Parent Center	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$22,000	\$24,500
Community Wellness Council	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$26,463	\$25,000	\$15,000	\$20,000
Concerned Citizens for Roslyn Youth	\$151,467	\$151,467	\$160,328	\$151,467	\$143,894	\$151,467
COPAY-(Started YR 2004)	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$31,755	\$30,000	\$20,000	\$27,500
EAC-Mediation Alternative Project	\$49,969	\$49,969	\$52,892	\$49,969	\$48,000	\$49,969
EOC, Inc	\$175,000	\$175,000	\$185,238	\$175,000	\$145,000	\$160,000
FCA/Nassau Haven	\$403,423	\$403,423	\$427,023	\$403,423	\$403,423	\$403,423
FCA/PACT (Parents and Children Together)	\$269,540	\$269,540	\$285,308	\$269,540	\$279,288	\$289,288
FCA/Walkabout for Young men & women	\$368,546	\$368,546	\$390,106	\$368,546	\$368,546	\$368,546
FCA/YAPP	\$119,523	\$119,523	\$146,523	\$151,523	\$126,523	\$0
FCA/Collaboration Admin	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Five Towns Community center	\$328,821	\$328,821	\$348,057	\$403,821	\$400,000	\$403,821
Five Towns Community Center	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$79,388	\$0	\$0	\$0
Floral Park Youth Council	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$16,000	\$15,000	\$10,000	\$15,000
Freeport Pride, Inc.	\$256,590	\$256,590	\$256,590	\$356,590	\$350,000	\$356,590
Freeport Pride, Inc.	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Gateway Youth Outreach	\$268,218	\$268,218	\$305,079	\$338,218	\$335,000	\$338,218
Gateway Youth outreach-Collaboration	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Gateway Youth Outreach-Gang intervention	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$52,925	\$0	\$0	\$0
Glen Head/North Shore Youth Council	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Hempstead Hispanic Civic Association	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$54,975	\$50,000	\$45,000	\$50,000
H.E.V.N., Inc.	\$0	\$60,000	\$63,510	\$60,000	\$0	\$0
Hicksville Teen-Age Council	\$161,712	\$161,712	\$171,712	\$161,712	\$158,000	\$161,712
Hispanic Brotherhood of Rockville Centre	\$90,086	\$90,086	\$95,356	\$90,086	\$85,000	\$90,086
Hispanic Counseling center	\$168,010	\$168,010	\$178,839	\$168,010	\$165,000	\$168,010
I Support Roosevelt Committee	\$226,206	\$246,206	\$246,206	\$0	\$0	\$0
La Fuerza Unida de Glen Cove	\$138,006	\$138,006	\$146,079	\$138,006	\$133,865	\$138,006
Littig House community center	\$145,568	\$145,568	\$169,961	\$160,568	\$157,356	\$160,568
Littig House Community center	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Long Beach Latinos CA	\$20,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Long Beach Martin Luther King center	\$209,630	\$209,630	\$221,893	\$209,630	\$175,000	\$209,630
Long Beach REACH	\$263,496	\$263,496	\$280,959	\$298,496	\$290,000	\$298,496
Long Beach REACH Westbury/New Cassel	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$174,074	\$170,000	\$174,074
Long Island Advocacy	\$70,193	\$70,193	\$74,299	\$70,193	\$65,000	\$70,193
Long Island Crisis Center- RHY	\$125,794	\$125,794	\$133,153	\$125,794	\$125,794	\$125,794
Long Island Crisis center M. Earth Hotline	\$132,219	\$132,219	\$139,954	\$192,219	\$192,219	\$192,219
Long Island Crisis center	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$63,510	\$0	\$0	\$0
L I Hispanic Pastoral Assoc	\$24,000	\$0	\$24,000	\$24,000	\$0	\$0
Manhasset/Great Neck E.O.C.	\$101,429	\$101,429	\$107,363	\$101,429	\$90,000	\$101,429
Memorial Youth Outreach	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$123,103	\$240,000	\$246,206
Nassau County Coalition Against Domestic	\$59,314	\$59,314	\$59,314	\$59,314	\$30,000	\$59,314
North Shore Boys and Girls Club	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$35,000	\$22,000	\$35,000
North Shore Child & Family Guidance	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$0	\$0
Operation Get Ahead, Inc.	\$134,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Project Challenge of Long Island, New York	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$0	\$0
STRONG, Youth Inc.	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$225,000	\$225,000	\$220,000	\$225,000
STRONG, Youth Inc. Gang intervention	\$0	\$100,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Tempo Youth Services	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$25,000	\$32,500
Tempo Group, Inc-Mephram	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Time Out Club of Hempstead, Inc.	\$182,000	\$182,000	\$182,000	\$182,000	\$160,000	\$182,000
Uniondale Community Council	\$243,744	\$243,744	\$168,744	\$168,744	\$150,000	\$168,744
Uniondale Community Council	\$100,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Westbury Community Impr.	\$174,074	\$174,074	\$174,074	\$0	\$0	\$0
YES Community counseling center	\$215,508	\$215,508	\$215,508	\$265,508	\$260,197	\$265,508
YES Community Counseling center	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Yours, Ours, Mine Community Center	\$238,649	\$238,649	\$238,649	\$0	\$0	\$0
Youth & Family Counseling of OB/EN	\$72,000	\$72,000	\$72,000	\$72,000	\$68,400	\$72,000
<b>TOTAL \$</b>	<b>\$7,154,624</b>	<b>\$7,057,124</b>	<b>\$7,285,882</b>	<b>\$6,651,372</b>	<b>\$6,275,391</b>	<b>\$6,457,700</b>
<b>TOTAL Awards Given</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>40</b>

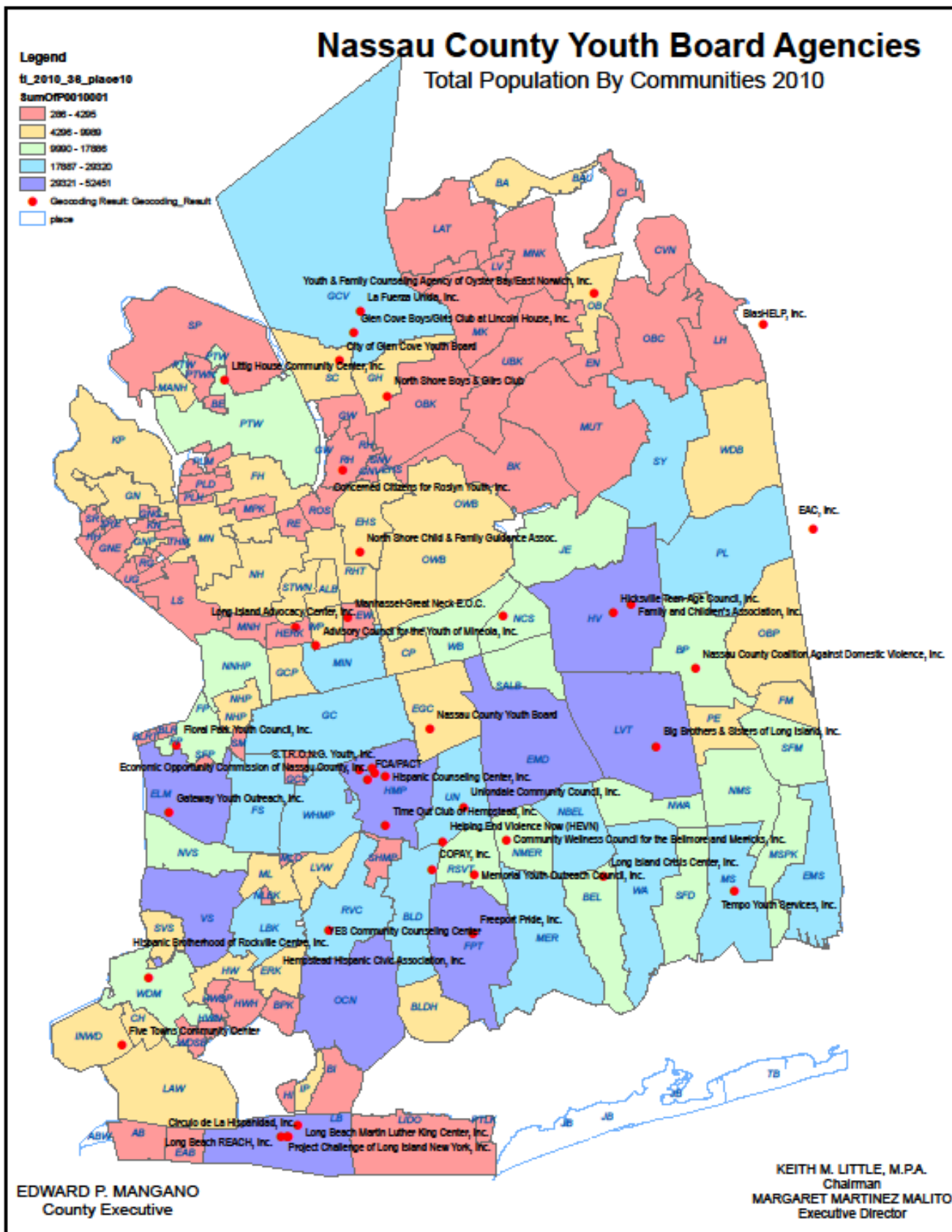
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## Location of Youth Board Agencies

The map on the following page (Graph 6), created by the Youth Board, presents the locations of its programs in 2010 overlaid by the total population within the respective communities. At this scale, the map is difficult to read, but is provided to show the general locations of the Youth Board programs.

(Note: The map reflects 2010 total population and does not reflect youth population totals as presented earlier in Table 2. Also, the programs shown outside of the County are the corporate addresses for programs that are provided within the County.)

The Youth Board data analyst position generates several maps of this nature to act as a guide in departmental planning efforts, including by race/ethnicity, age, and youth crime or health statistics.

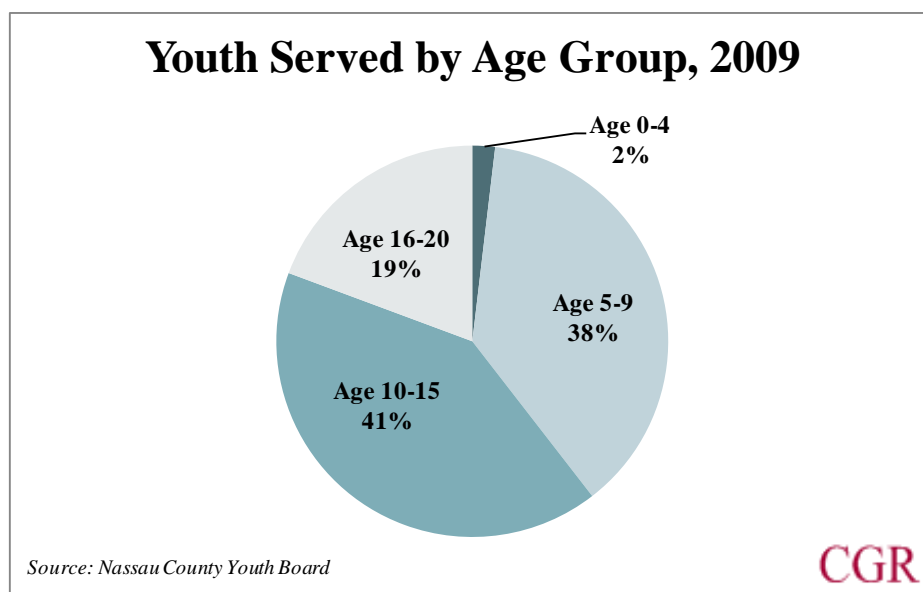


## Number of Youth Served

Youth Board contracted agencies served 37,086 unduplicated youth during 2009.<sup>18</sup> The number of youth served varies depending on the type and level of funding provided. For example, several agencies received County funds and also received 21<sup>st</sup> Century state funding which allowed the providers to expand their services. Once funding ended, the programs were unable to sustain the same level of expanded service.

The Youth Board requires its contracted agencies to submit participation data which is then logged into its contract management system. The department has the capability to produce reports of the number of youth served over time, by age, sex, race/ethnicity, and by type of service. However, due to limited staff capacity only 2009 data were available in time to be included in this report. The greatest number of youth served in 2009 were between the ages of 10 to 15 (41%), followed by the 5- to 9-year-old age group (38%), as shown in Graph 7.<sup>19</sup>

**GRAPH 7**



<sup>18</sup> Nassau County Youth Board contract management system report. Latest year aggregated data are available.

<sup>19</sup> Based on data provided by Youth Board staff. Total youth served by age group totals 34,492, less than the total youth served for the year, as several programs are unable to capture youth ages on a consistent basis (i.e., street outreach, hotline calls, etc.).

## Monitoring Process

The monitoring process acts as a safeguard for the County to ensure public dollars are being utilized in the way they were intended. The Youth Board includes six staff members who are charged in some part with the monitoring of recipient contract agencies: two County civil service staff – the Youth Board Treatment Service Coordinator and Youth Board Runaway/Youth Coordinator; two contract employee Program Managers; and two of the three senior management staff - Director, Program & Contract Management and Administrator, Juvenile Justice Programs - who spend a portion of their time conducting contract agency monitoring functions.

Youth Board staff conducts onsite visits for each of about 50 programs three times or more a year, for an estimated 150 or more site visits annually. These programs include SDPP-funded programs not included in Table 9, which only includes programs which receive County dollars as matches for YDDP and RHYA funds. Staff will increase the number of monitoring visits when an agency is new to the Youth Board or when additional technical assistance is needed to bring the program up to required standards. OCFS requires, at minimum, that every funded program is monitored once every three years. This minimal level of monitoring is intended for strict funding compliance. However, OCFS encourages more frequent monitoring when possible to allow for technical assistance, assessing community needs, and coordination among local providers.

Monitoring efforts range from unannounced visits to verify a program is open and operating as expected, to full-day onsite documentation reviews of attendance logs and program activities and materials. In addition to such onsite monitoring, program and fiscal staff provide “desk audits” to ensure the documentation submitted by the programs aligns with their approved funding allocation and documented objectives. Program staff will also review agency materials such as agency board meeting minutes as an indicator of fiscal management and appropriate oversight.

Most of the current monitoring and compliance measures are output-based, meaning they capture information such as the number of youth served and number of hours a service was provided. The Youth Board, consistent with changing requirements by OCFS, is continuing to push contract agencies to also track outcome-based measures to demonstrate the value and impact their programs are having with youth. This effort should ideally receive increased emphasis going forward.

Some programs lend themselves more easily to these types of outcome measures, such as employment programs whereby the outcome may be the number of youth who obtained a job and retained it for a set period of

time. Other programs, such as after-school or recreation, have a more difficult time quantifying the impact beyond providing a critical service of a safe and engaging place for youth to be involved off the streets.

The Youth Board acknowledges its community agencies represent a range of programmatic quality and organizational capacity. Youth Board staff provides technical assistance and training with a concentrated effort to increase provider organizational capacity for effective programming, organizational management, funding diversification, and leadership.

## **Summary of Additional Youth Board Functions**

The Youth Board provides several functions in addition to its fund allocation and contract management roles. Summaries of several key functions are described below.

### ***Community Collaborations***

Youth Board staff are members and often leaders or conveners of nearly 40 collaborations and community task groups or sub-committees throughout the County. The staff participation on these various community groups reinforces the County's role as a convener and coordinator of community efforts by identifying and creating linkages to better align resources and avoid duplication. These connections also support the collaborative grant application process as discussed below.

Youth Board staff members currently serve as chair of the Long Island Safe and Supportive Schools and Communities Consortium. This bi-county consortium, initially begun by OCFS to help coordinate the activities of the Youth Bureaus in Nassau and Suffolk counties, has grown to include universities, local police departments, BOCES, district attorney representation, and other community stakeholders.

In addition, the Youth Board's Administrator of Juvenile Justice Programs is the co-coordinator with County Probation in supporting the local incarnation of the national Reclaiming Futures Initiative which works across systems and providers as a key example of a community collaborative that is driving community action and improved community outcomes (see below).

### ***Facilitator for External Grant Funding***

#### ***Grant Writing for Large Collaborative Projects***

The Youth Board's Director of Development, Training and Advocacy plays a vital role in facilitating grant-writing collaborations that bring together a range of stakeholders to jointly apply for state, federal and

private funding. Partnerships have included community-based agencies, school districts, Nassau BOCES, County Police, District Attorney's Office, and others to create needed programs for youth. The Youth Board actively identifies and develops program concepts for each application. The Youth Board's role can vary from lead coordinator to one member of a full team for the application process.

As a municipality, the Youth Board often is excluded from directly receiving external funding and will work with its partners to identify a lead nonprofit agency to formally accept the grant.

### **2009 - 2010 Secured Funding: \$890,000**

The Youth Board has actively administered the successful applications which secured over \$890,000 in outside funding for multi-year projects within the County from 2009 to 2010.

Youth Board staff are currently providing key leadership with County Probation and other partners to apply for \$750,000 in funding (\$150,000 per year) from New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services to implement an initiative to provide community alternatives with youth who have committed a low-risk offense and would have otherwise required costly Juvenile Detention Housing.

A list of recently-awarded grants are summarized below:

- **\$253,000 (multi-year)** – NYS Office of Children and Family Services grant allocated through the County's Department of Social Services to support a collaboration between Youth Board, Probation and Freeport Pride to provide community alternatives to juvenile justice placement for adjudicated youth.
- **\$193,000 (multi-year)** – NYS Health Department-funded consortium to provide staff development, peer education, outreach and support services to disconnected youth populations. Consortium consists of community agencies, educational institutions and government. Long Island Crisis Center is the lead agency.
- **\$20,000** - Reclaiming Futures Grant to provide mentoring in the juvenile treatment court. Implemented as a collaboration between Youth Board, the Court and Big Brothers/Sisters...
- **\$75,000 (per year for 5 years)** - NYS Education Department 21<sup>st</sup> Century funding to provide community-service learning in collaboration with five community agencies and the Hempstead School District.

- **\$50,000** - National Reclaiming Futures Initiative to provide capacity building/staff development focused on evidence-based models and curriculum with a number of Youth Board contract agencies.

### **2004 to 2008 Secured Funding: \$1.72 Million**

In addition to the above grants, in the five years from 2004 to 2008, the Youth Board actively facilitated an additional \$1.72 million in public and private funding for youth and family development services in the County, as described below. These funds do not include the additional grant funding that has been secured directly by community agencies where Youth Board staff provided technical assistance during the application process, but did not administer the overall application.

- **\$300,000** - U.S. Health and Human Services grant to support a multi-year Street Outreach Initiative implemented through Long Island Crisis Center and coordinated with County supported violence and gang prevention efforts and the Nassau County Police Department's Anti-Gang Initiative.
- **\$340,000** - New York State Department of Health to support Act for Youth, a community development initiative facilitated by Youth Board staff in tandem with other County departments and community agencies to: promote youth supports and opportunities, implement youth leadership and community service learning and provider training. This figure includes \$40,000 which was leveraged through the Roslyn Savings and Hagedorn Foundations to support this initiative.
- **\$221,995** - Federal Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention to support violence and gang prevention efforts through two community agencies and public education made available through the Nassau County Police Department.
- **\$500,000 (3-year period)** - New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services – Juvenile Accountability Block Grant to work with Probation, Family Court and a local community agency to provide crisis intervention, counseling and support for Court-involved youth.
- **\$14,000** - Long Island Community Foundation to support a community-based Peer Education Program focused on violence and Gang Prevention.
- **\$342,370** - New York State Office of Children and Family Services to support a community-based consortium of agencies to work in tandem with Youth Board, DSS, the Courts and

residential facilities to provide services to 200% TANF-eligible youth “at-risk” of or exiting OCFS or juvenile justice placements.

### ***Monthly Funding Compendium***

Each month the Youth Board prepares and distributes a listing of open public and private funding opportunities to over 100 community organizations and interested individuals. In addition, the monthly compendium provides information on training events, technical assistance opportunities and demographic data. Information is currently not tracked to document the impact of this tool, but agencies do acknowledge using the compendium as a resource to apply for external funding opportunities they otherwise would not have pursued.

## ***Trainings and Technical Assistance***

Youth Board staff provides several types of trainings throughout the year. In 2010, Youth Board staff provided 22 separate trainings including topics of youth development, youth violence and gangs, juvenile justice reforms, juvenile treatment court, and self-esteem training.

In addition to the group trainings, workshops and symposiums, Youth Board staff provides onsite technical assistance to contract agencies as part of its monitoring process. This includes recommendations ranging from improvements to the delivery of a particular service to assistance with building the agency’s organizational capacity by encouraging staff training, developing leadership succession plans and promoting funding diversification.

## ***Direct Service Programs of the Youth Board***

The Youth Board is currently administering two direct service initiatives: Youth/Adult Participation Project (YAPP) and F.R.I.E.N.D.S., both described below. Both of these initiatives are flagship programs for the Youth Board and help demonstrate for other providers how to engage the voices of youth into an organizational structure. These programs also allow the Youth Board to fulfill the County’s Consolidated Plan requirements to engage youth in decision-making and leadership roles to inform its efforts.

### ***Youth/Adult Participation Project (YAPP)***

The YAPP initiative was started by the County in 1979 as a community service-learning model to bring youth from different communities together to foster leadership, identify an area of mutual concern, and develop solution recommendations. The program engages high school students from school districts throughout the County. Participating youth set the program agenda each year by selecting a focus area.

For 2011, the youth selected cyberspace bullying and have developed an information video and experiential curriculum to facilitate peer-led workshops in school and community settings. YAPP participants facilitated peer-led educational workshops, presented the keynote address at the Regional Teen Safety Coalition with an audience of over 300 educational, health and human service providers, and designed and produced a video on bullying with an accompanying educational curriculum.

YAPP youth also coordinate the County Executive's Youth Council to learn about the legislative process by identifying, researching and presenting a selected topic and recommendations to the County. The 2011 topic focused on the need to display the nutritional value of cafeteria food in 10 school districts. Previous topics included youth employee rights, community reinvestment strategies, and legislation and policies to foster parental engagement.

In 2011, YAPP has included 43 participants from 21 communities across the County. Nine of the participants are new to the project this year, 27 have participated for two or more years and 7 are members of the County Executive Youth Council.

YAPP is 100% funded through the County on the contract agency line, and is staffed by one full-time program manager. The program manager is a contracted employee of FCA, though the position expenses are included as a contracted youth service and are not included in the contracted staffing budget line that would otherwise be part of the potential contract employee reductions.

### ***F.R.I.E.N.D.S Initiative***

Building on the success of the YAPP model, the Hempstead Public School District requested the County to implement a community service-learning project directly in the Hempstead ABGS Middle School as part of their 21<sup>st</sup> Century Initiative. The F.R.I.E.N.D.S. (Fostering Recreational Intellectual Education Needed for youth Development Skills) Initiative works with 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade students to identify, plan for, implement and evaluate a community service-learning activity. This year the youth are producing an anti-gang video. Past projects include a school garden, a Fall Community Festival, and participation in a regional Every Child Matters Campaign.

The F.R.I.E.N.D.S. Program Manager is a contracted employee with FCA and is 100% funded through this grant and is not included in the proposed Youth Board staffing reductions. The program is in its third year of 5 years of funding, which is slated to expire in 2013. Future funding options are currently being explored including the possible integration of the program into a credit-bearing course.

F.R.I.E.N.D.S. works with 20 students each year and in 2011 includes 5 new students and 15 returning. Documented outcomes for participating youth, reported by the program, include:

- Increase from 30% to 50% of students on the Honor Roll or Principal's list after the first quarter;
- 55% of students have shown improvement in Math scores and 55% have shown improvement in English scores;
- 75% of current students improved their attendance from the previous year;
- 70% of parents/guardians have participated in at least one parent event during the year.

### **Referral Calls**

Each year Youth Board staff responds to approximately 200 information and referral calls from youth, families, academic institutions and human service providers. The Runaway/Homeless Youth Coordinator especially works with agencies and other municipalities for youth placement coordination.

### **Conduit for Youth Services for Other Municipalities in the County: \$582,000**

The Youth Board serves as the conduit for all municipal YDDP applications and annual reports for the New York State OCFS. This requires Youth Board staff to develop and monitor the allocation of \$582,040 in funding for 18 municipalities offering recreation programming, youth services and the two local youth bureaus of Glen Cove and Oyster Bay (Table 10). In 2009, these municipalities report serving nearly 90,000 youth.

This is an annual activity and requires additional staff time for providing technical assistance to the municipalities during the application process and in determining the allocation amounts based on OCFS guidelines. The Youth Board does not receive or process funds for the other municipalities, but is responsible for facilitating the application and allocation process on behalf of OCFS.

TABLE 10

2011 FUND ALLOCATION TO OTHER MUNICIPALITIES				
Municipality	Recreation	Youth Service	Youth Bureau	TOTAL
Bayville	\$1,388	\$1,249	\$0	\$2,637
City of Glen Cove	\$4,915	\$4,423	\$23,099	\$32,437
City of Long Beach	\$5,600	\$5,040	\$0	\$10,640
Floral Park	\$3,249	\$0	\$0	\$3,249
Freeport	\$9,942	\$0	\$0	\$9,942
Garden City	\$5,009	\$4,508	\$0	\$9,517
Hempstead	\$14,624	\$13,161	\$0	\$27,785
Island Park	\$926	\$834	\$0	\$1,760
Lynbrook	\$3,733	\$3,359	\$0	\$7,092
Malveme	\$1,745	\$1,571	\$0	\$3,316
Mineola	\$3,341	\$3,007	\$0	\$6,348
New Hyde Park	\$1,793	\$1,613	\$0	\$3,406
Rockville Centre	\$5,207	\$4,687	\$0	\$9,894
Valley Stream	\$7,340	\$0	\$0	\$7,340
Westbury	\$2,753	\$0	\$0	\$2,753
Town of Hempstead	\$112,285	\$119,535	\$0	\$231,820
Town of North Hempstead	\$35,996	\$34,870	\$0	\$70,866
Town of Oyster Bay	\$56,101	\$50,487	\$34,650	\$141,238
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$275,947</b>	<b>\$248,344</b>	<b>\$57,749</b>	<b>\$582,040</b>

Source: Nassau County Youth Board

## Documented Outcomes of Youth Board Initiatives and Programs

In addition to the YAPP and F.R.I.E.N.D.S. outcomes noted above, the Youth Board plays a leading role in facilitating community-wide initiatives to address identified needs. Examples of such initiatives, including outcomes, are described below.

### *Reclaiming Futures: Reducing Juvenile Placements*

Reclaiming Futures is a national initiative that is being implemented in 29 sites in the United States, *with Nassau County the only site in New York State*. The Youth Board's Administrator of Juvenile Justice Programs is the designated Community Fellow and is heavily engaged in the community-wide initiative which focuses on systems change and producing better outcomes for substance-abusing juvenile offenders.

The Reclaiming Futures grant dedicates \$115,000 to training in Evidenced Based Practices for Youth Development Agencies and Probation Officers. Youth Board staff actively participate in organizing trainings for County Probation Officers and youth-serving agencies in Strengthening Families and Moral Reconciliation Training (MRT) approaches to help youth make ethical and responsible decisions on their own.

For the years 2003 through 2009, the County's average annual number of juveniles placed at the recommendation of the Probation Pre-Placement review committee was 128. Since Reclaiming Futures efforts were launched, the number of placements declined to 67 in 2010.<sup>20</sup> With an estimated cost per placement of \$210,000 per year, and assuming 61 fewer placements last year, Youth Board-led efforts represent an estimated \$12.8 million in reduced placement costs in 2010.<sup>21</sup>

### ***Alternatives to Placement / Diversion Model***

The Youth Board, in partnership with the Department of Social Services and the Nassau County Probation Department, has developed a community-based alternative to placement, or diversion model, which has evolved since its original state grant in the 1990s. The current program is funded through New York State's OCFS and works with adjudicated youth who are under Probation supervision.

Instead of being placed in a residential OCFS facility, the youth are provided counseling, case management, support services and supervision through a team approach which includes the community-based agency Freeport Pride and County Probation. While the average rate of recidivism of youth in OCFS facilities is 85%, the reported rate of recidivism for the adjudicated youth in this program has consistently been less than 10%.<sup>22</sup>

### ***Youth Employment***

In 2010 the Youth Board supported 9 agencies that provided employment services to 775 youth. The programs provided workshops in resume writing, interviewing skills, how to dress properly, job readiness and other skills development. In addition, agencies hired young people in their own programs, including summer programs which include additional training in how to work with children and manage multiple job responsibilities. Agencies also provide pre and post tests to evaluate employability skills and document job placement and follow-up.

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<sup>20</sup> Figures provided by the Nassau County Probation Department, Family Division.

<sup>21</sup> Based on annual placement cost estimates and would be subject to actual placement duration, location of placements, and services received.

<sup>22</sup> Average for 2008 to 2010.

Outcomes from three of the programs' 2010 year-end reports are listed below.

- One agency served 28 teens between the ages of 14 – 18. Of the participants, 11 found paid employment and 7 acquired volunteer positions.
- Another program had 65 youth placed in employment, surpassing its target goal of 40. This agency has instituted a tracking system to follow-up with the youth at 30- and 90-day intervals to encourage and support employment retention.
- A summer youth employment program provided a minimum of 10 hours of employability skills training to the 36 youth who applied for work, building skills for its program and increasing the employability of the youth for future job opportunities.

### ***Sharing and Caring Initiative***

This initiative began in 1986 in the City of Long Beach as part of the statewide Office of Children and Family Services Teen Pregnancy Initiative. Subsequently, the program expanded to a countywide initiative and is currently funded as a Youth Board contracted agency service provided by Long Beach Reach.

The initiative is designed to assist pregnant and parenting adolescents from the designated high-needs communities throughout Nassau County. The program provides intensive case management, parent education, supportive counseling and a separate alternative education program designed to help these youth attain a NYS High School Diploma.

In 2010, 48 youth began the program, of which 33 had not been enrolled in a traditional school setting for over an 18-month period. Outcomes for the 2010 program include:

- 40 youth were re-enrolled into the Sharing and Caring Alternative School program;
- Less than 25% experienced repeat pregnancies in the last 12 months;
- 85% - 90% during the first nine months advanced a full grade level;
- 100% successfully passed their required exams for graduation;

- 48 obtained the services and supports necessary to move toward self-sufficiency through comprehensive case management, access to benefits (Medicaid, WIC), job training, counseling, parent education and lessons of independent living skills.

## Community Agencies Perspective of Youth Board Services

Based on a series of interviews and focus groups with providers, several consistent messages and themes emerged that demonstrate the various roles the Youth Board plays from the community agency perspective. The comments are paraphrased below and are in no particular order of importance:

- The Youth Board serves as our voice at the County, State, and Federal levels.
- The Youth Board plays a critical role in looking at the entire picture of youth services, while we are looking at our emergency issue of the day. *No one else plays that role in the community to think strategically about how to prepare for what is coming next and what we need to be thinking about to prepare for the change in needs to serve our young people.*
- The Youth Board is in a unique position to bring people to the table to work collaboratively to apply for outside funding where we otherwise would be competing against each other and, more than likely, canceling each other out in the application process.
- Youth Board staff and the providers are the structure for youth services—*with the County Youth Board as the center hub to connect the providers, the County, State, and Federal governments.*
- Provides flexible funding that allows us to keep our doors open and go out and seek additional program funding.
- The funding from the County is flexible enough for us to respond to changing needs in our communities.
- Monitoring by Youth Board staff is used to improve our programs. They provide technical assistance not provided elsewhere.
- Delays in receiving approved Youth Board funding has a negative impact on our agency's ability to manage our programs and pay our staff.

- *Being a Youth Board-supported agency is like having a “Good Housekeeping seal of approval” that helps us secure outside funding.*
- The community profile data provided by the Youth Board helps us make our case when seeking outside funding support.

## III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MOVING FORWARD

In response to a financial crisis affecting Nassau County, a number of funding reductions have been proposed by the County Administration that would affect the functions and levels of staffing of the Nassau County Youth Board, and that would reduce resources available for about 40 contract services and programs offered through the Youth Board to the County's children and young people and their families. For various reasons, these proposed cuts have yet to be implemented, having been put on hold by the Administration at least until the end of May.

This short-term respite in making final decisions about the future of staff, functions and services provides a window within which to rationally assess current realities and future opportunities and probabilities. The financial environment has created a context of uncertainty, chaos and a crisis mentality in which many proposals have unfortunately, yet understandably, been put forth to help reduce an immediate budget gap but without sufficient consideration for their long-term consequences.

### Crisis Leading to Opportunity

But with the support of the Rauch Foundation, and other funders represented by the Long Island Funders Exchange (LIFE), and with the willingness of the County Administration to put a hold on final decisions until at least the end of May, this assessment—of the Youth Board, its functions, and the likely impact proposed cuts would have on youth services in the County—provides an opportunity to take a deep breath, and reflect thoughtfully on realities and likely consequences before final decisions are made. The crisis, in short, has created a time of stress and uncertainty for all involved with the delivery and oversight of youth services in Nassau County, but at the same time has also presented a time of opportunity—an opportunity to take a fresh look at how youth services are offered and supported, and to determine what is needed to strengthen those services and to offer them in the most cost-effective manner in future years.

The remainder of this concluding chapter of our report summarizes the implications drawn from our analyses of the existing Youth Board and the youth services system, and offers the conclusions and related assumptions as background support for recommendations that are designed to provide the County with a blueprint for the cost-effective delivery and support of youth services going forward.

## CONCLUSIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Based on the analyses presented in the first two chapters of this report, CGR offers the following overall conclusions and implications of the findings. We think of these conclusions as the basis for, or equivalent to, the assumptions that underlie and help shape the recommendations which follow in the last section of this chapter.

- 1. The Youth Board provides critical infrastructure support that undergirds and strengthens a strong youth and family services system in Nassau County.** Indeed it has helped create many aspects of that system. To significantly weaken that infrastructure would be to significantly weaken the overall youth services network and the contract agencies/programs and services it offers youth throughout Nassau County.
- 2. Youth Board funding plays a critical role in supporting community-based agencies that provide a variety of services to youth and families throughout the County, and its funds help to leverage other sources of funds to make various services possible.** The flexibility of much of the Youth Board's funding, both through its State funds and County funds funneled through the Youth Board, helps fund essential agency and program operating costs that other funders may be less likely to support. Youth Board funding was often described as the key funding foundation making other sources of funding support possible.

County support has been historically generous in underwriting the costs of youth services throughout the community, and has helped leverage millions of dollars in additional revenues from various sources. However, having said that, Youth Board records are not sufficiently precise in documenting the exact leveraging/ multiplier effect of those County dollars, and more precise accounting of such impacts will need to be implemented to justify future funding from various sources, as recommended below.

- 3. The Youth Board has actively applied for and secured about \$2.6 million in outside grant funding in the last five years, as well as helping save more than \$12 million in out-of-home placement and detention costs in the past year.** These figures do not include the additional funding secured directly by contract agencies for opportunities identified and supported by the Youth Board through its monthly funding compendium and grant-writing support.
- 4. Several of the contracted employee positions slated for potential layoffs provide unique functions and benefits to the County beyond the management of funding allocations to contract**

**agencies.** Collaborations initiated and facilitated by key Youth Board staff have identified, or been developed in response to, unmet needs; developed strategies, programs and practices to address those needs (often at little or no costs to the County); and have helped put in place alternative and preventative services that have saved the County significant expenditures of funds in such areas as out-of-home placements and detention costs (estimates of as much as \$12.8 million in savings in 2010 alone). These core staff functions are instrumental in ensuring the most cost-effective allocation of program dollars throughout the community, and in ensuring the greatest program impact on youth in the future.

- 5. A number of specific functions currently performed by the Youth Board must be preserved in some form, to support and strengthen the overall youth service delivery system, and to protect the County government's interests.** The Youth Board, by policy and practice over the years, has consciously chosen not to be in the direct service-provision business, preferring to contract out services to primarily nonprofit human service agencies, but rather has focused on the provision of a wide range of support services designed to strengthen and enhance the impact of the service delivery system, individually and collectively, to the greater benefit of the community. Among the core functions that are critical to these service-enhancement and County-protection roles are the following:
- a. The ability to get contracts out to agencies and to process claims against the contracts (timeliness needs to be improved in the future);
  - b. Monitor compliance with contracts to ensure that goals are met and that taxpayer dollars are allocated wisely, in concert with community needs;
  - c. Monitoring of changing community needs and developing new responses as needed to address those needs;
  - d. Developing the three-year Child and Family Services plan and providing annual updates to the County Consolidated Plan process;
  - e. Providing systematic analysis of community data to feed into the Consolidated Plan process, to inform community needs discussions, and to assess the impact of programs and new community initiatives (an area that needs greater attention in the future);

- f. Leadership and coordination of numerous community collaborative efforts needed to supplement the work of individual contract agencies by developing more collaborative, systemic responses to community issues and needs;
- g. Community leadership around juvenile justice, youth violence, gang intervention, runaway/homeless youth, drug prevention and other community-wide issues that need concentrated cross-systems attention;
- h. Identification of funding opportunities, and provision of grant-writing, training and technical assistance to agencies for the strengthening of the entire community's delivery of services to its youth and families;
- i. Understanding and communicating policy changes at the federal and state levels which impact the provision of local youth and family development services.

**6. Accordingly, there are core staff functions that need to remain within the Youth Board, and that should not be eliminated through staffing reductions.** To eliminate such critical functions would be to undermine the rational decision-making process for effectively allocating County and State resources to best meet community needs, and would reduce the County's ability to respond cost-effectively to changing needs in the community.

The elimination of certain core functions within the Youth Board staff, and the critical expertise and years of experience that accompanies those functions and positions, would ultimately:

- Result in lost opportunities for the County to develop effective new initiatives;
- Remove and undermine core leadership around important initiatives already underway in the County;
- Cost the County, its young people and its youth service network significant amounts of money in terms of lost grant opportunities, missed opportunities to tap other new sources of funding to supplement County dollars, and reduced leadership and experience in developing creative community-based alternatives needed to take advantage of new State initiatives to reduce the use of costly detention and placement for youth at risk in the County.

The specific functions and positions for retention are recommended in the final section of this chapter.

- 7. Nonetheless, several functions currently provided by Youth Board staff could ultimately be shared more cost-effectively as part of the proposed new shared services unit within the County’s soon-to-be-proposed consolidated Department of Human Services.** The specific functions and positions that could lend themselves to sharing are discussed in the recommendations section at the end of the chapter. These functions and positions remain critical to successfully carrying out the role and mission of the Youth Board in supporting the overall youth services system, but need not necessarily be located specifically within the Youth Board office to function effectively on the Board’s behalf. However, as discussed in more detail below, how these functions are integrated within the shared services unit, and the timing and transition plan for such integration, will be critical to the successful shifting of these responsibilities.
- 8. There are opportunities to streamline some aspects of the workload of the Youth Board that will ultimately require less staff time in the future, while other functions may require more time, although perhaps at less cost on a shared-services basis.** CGR believes that staff reductions and savings are possible through reductions in workload in some areas, and greater efficiencies through sharing of services. CGR has identified work process improvement opportunities and functions that can be carried out more efficiently and economically, while at the same time identifying other critical functions that are currently receiving insufficient time and attention. The specifics of such opportunities for “right-sizing” functions are outlined in the recommendations that follow in the concluding section of this report.
- 9. The systems currently in place and supported by the Youth Board put the County in a strong position to address new State-level policy changes regarding youth development that ultimately could save the County valuable dollars in the future.** As suggested above, the Youth Board is uniquely equipped to facilitate community efforts to take advantage of State initiatives and incentives designed to stimulate increased use of community-based preventive alternatives, leading to reductions in costly out-of-home placements.
- 10. New cost-effective ways and alternative funding sources are needed to ensure the sustainability of the network of vital youth programs throughout the community, mostly provided by non-profit community-based agencies.** The County should continue to play a significant role in providing direct funding support for the youth services system, and should also continue to work with others to

actively identify external funding opportunities to complement, and even replace, County tax dollars in the future. Additionally, it is in the County's interest to continue to support agencies through the grant-writing process by both the provision of data documenting community need, to support a more competitive and informed application, and one-on-one assistance in completing external grant applications. Specific recommendations are offered below for ways of helping to ensure that sustainability in the future.

- 11. There is a need for increased and more effective sharing of information and better communications at several levels concerning decisions made affecting the Youth Board and the overall youth services system.** Different people within and apparently speaking for the County Administration have made different and often conflicting pronouncements at different times related to the future of Youth Board staff and contract agencies; the volunteer policy-making Board of the Youth Board has not been consulted on decisions affecting staff and programs over which the Board has oversight responsibilities, and announcements have been conveyed on Youth Board letterhead without the Board's approval or even awareness; the Youth Board staff have not always been consulted about matters on which their experience and knowledge could have been informative, or informed about decisions in a timely fashion; youth service agencies have been told different things at different times by different people about their futures; and even information within the Youth Board has not always been consistent or consistently shared across units. Much of what the Youth Board does within the community is relatively invisible and undervalued by many key decision-makers in the County.
- 12. In recent months, the Youth Board volunteer policy-making Board has rarely been used as an effective buffer to the County Administration.** The Youth Board is charged with allocating funding based on need and performance data. This process should help insulate County leadership (Administration and Legislature) from claims of partisanship or backlash when poor-performing programs are defunded or a shift in funding allocations is implemented based on identified community need. Yet as suggested above, rarely in recent times has the Administration made use of the Board's accumulated wisdom, experience and analytic capabilities.
- 13. Contract agency monitoring and oversight is carried out by many agencies within and outside County government.** Many youth-serving contract agencies and programs are monitored by more than one funding agency, often with separate forms to fill out and monitoring requirements to be met. At least 15 United Way-funded and monitored programs are also funded, and monitored, by the Youth

Board. Similarly, at least 9 Youth Board contract agencies are also funded and monitored by one or more of the other County agencies about to be consolidated under the proposed Department of Human Services. Opportunities should be available for more cost-effective monitoring efficiencies in the future, with fewer burdens resulting for service providers as well.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Building on the conclusions and core assumptions above, CGR offers the following recommendations for the consideration of Nassau County officials and the funders represented by the Long Island Funders Exchange. The initial set of recommendations outlines a detailed 3-phase staff transition plan through 2012 to ultimately result in a core Youth Board staff of 6 positions (not including the two separately-funded YAPP/F.R.I.E.N.D.S positions) and a transfer of 7 positions over the next year to the proposed County Human Services shared services unit (some positions of which could, in some cases, potentially be eliminated over time through increased shared services efficiencies). Following the transition plan, the remaining recommendations involve identified improvement opportunities for Youth Board and/or shared services functions and operations going forward, as well as opportunities to secure additional resources to supplement County youth services dollars in the future.

### 1. Recommended Three-Phase Transition to Core Scaled-Back Youth Board Staffing Model

#### *Phase 1: Retain Current Staffing for 2011*

- a. **CGR recommends that all current Youth Board staff remain in place as is for the remainder of this year (2011), or until the new consolidated Department of Human Services and its shared services unit are fully in place, with an orderly transition plan having been implemented.** Once that proposed new Department and unit are fully in place, subsequent ongoing staffing plans are recommended below to take effect in 2012 (Phases 2 and 3). Since this would represent additional funds not currently allocated or included in the 2011 County budget, we recommend that during this interim period bridge funding for these positions be covered by Red Light Camera funds accumulated to date since that program's inception, supplemented as needed by additional bridge funding from the Long Island Funders Exchange (see recommendation 1.e).

Ideally all current positions would continue at their current levels as of early June. Thus most of the positions would be funded full-time during this proposed transition period throughout 2011. If that is not feasible because of funding constraints, at least the following previously-proposed funding arrangements should be agreed to during the duration of the transition period:

- Maintenance of the four full-time County employee positions, including the Executive Director;
- The following three contract employee positions at four days per week: Administrator of Juvenile Justice Programs, Director of Development, Training and Legislative Advocacy, and Contract Specialist;
- The following three contract employees at three days per week: Director of Program and Contract Management and the two Program Manager positions;
- The two positions of Planning/Data Analyst and Fiscal Management Director would both continue with their current funding arrangements on part-time bases;
- The two YAPP and F.R.I.E.N.D.S. program manager positions would remain full-time as separately-funded positions;
- An Administrative Assistant contract employee position, funded separately as a full-time position.

If the Consolidated Human Services Department and shared service unit are not subsequently implemented, CGR recommends the County identify the necessary funds to retain the positions at full-time, or less optimally, at the reduced schedules as outlined above.

***Phase 2: Transfer 4 Positions Following Launch of Consolidated Human Service Department and Shared Services Unit (estimated January 2012)***

- b.** Following the development and initial launch of the shared services unit within the proposed Department of Human Services, we **recommend that the following 9 positions remain at that time with the Youth Board (plus the YAPP and F.R.I.E.N.D.S. positions on separate funding lines) and be funded full-time (unless otherwise noted below):**
- 1) Executive Director (required)
  - 2) Director of Development, Training and Legislative Advocacy

- 3) Administrator of Juvenile Justice Programs
- 4) Runaway/Homeless Youth Coordinator (required)
- 5) Fiscal Management Director (part-time, with subsequent transition to the shared services unit in Phase 3, as discussed below)
- 6) Director of Program and Contract Management
- 7) Planning/Data Analyst (currently part-time, expected ultimately to transfer to the shared services unit in Phase 3)
- 8) Treatment Service Coordinator (could transfer to shared services unit, while leaving a program manager position with the Youth Board, as discussed below)
- 9) One Administrative Assistant position
- 10) The two YAPP and F.R.I.E.N.D.S. Program Coordinator positions. The YAPP position is considered a contract program on the funded program line, and the latter is funded through a school district, so we are assuming those positions will continue to function as part of the Youth Board office, as long as separate funding remains available for these initiatives.

Thus we are recommending an initial post-Human Services consolidation 9-person Youth Board staff (plus YAPP and F.R.I.E.N.D.S.), two of which would be part-time positions. Four positions would be shifted to the shared services unit. The two positions of Account Assistant I (claims auditor) and Contract Specialist are recommended to transition to the new shared service unit as soon as it starts as part of the critical mass necessary to develop a successful shared service fiscal support function. We propose that the two Program Manager positions would also transfer to the new shared service unit at its launch in order to help populate the unit's program monitoring function.

However, we recognize that the Human Services Commissioner would need some discretion in staffing the new shared services unit. We assume the unit will be assembled by pulling from the current monitoring and program staff from each of the consolidated Human Services departments. At the initial launch of the new shared service unit, we recommend two Youth Board program monitors transfer, and for modeling purposes suggest the two Program Manager contract employee positions. However, the Treatment Service Coordinator also serves this function and could instead be selected to transfer based on the needs of the unit. Either way, we recommend one of these three program monitor positions remain with the Youth Board in Phase 2 to accommodate current

work load, along with the Runaway/Homeless Youth Coordinator which provides a monitoring function in addition to other grant-funded and homeless/runaway youth service-specific duties.

The above four positions recommended to be shifted from the Youth Board to the shared service unit should be part of the core around which the shared services unit is built, so that they will be able to take their expertise, and maintain their connections to youth services to that unit, while also being exposed to other types of services as they become cross-trained. The cross-training from other departments can also be helpful in bringing other types of experiences to bear on the work they would continue to do with youth agencies. Over time, and with recommended changes in policies and practices anticipated to reduce the monitoring workload, combined with retaining the monitoring function through other existing Youth Board staff (see further discussions below), the County may be in a position to further reduce shared services staffing levels over time.

*In short, we are recommending several core positions shift to the shared service unit at its initial launch, leaving the County to direct its limited staffing dollars in the future to the more unique positions and functions of the Youth Board which support the overall County-wide coordination, collaboration and program development that have demonstrated on-going fiscal returns for the County's investment, in addition to providing vital supports to the County's youth and families.*

- c. The Commissioner of the consolidated Human Services Department, once in place, the Youth Board Executive Director, and the head of the County's Human Relations department should work out arrangements concerning which of the Youth Board's contract employee positions should remain contract employees and which could shift if necessary into County/Civil Service positions.** If the bargaining union continues to insist that contract employee positions should be eliminated or converted to County/Civil Service positions, we recommend that at least the Director of Development, Training and Advocacy position and the Administrator of Juvenile Justice Programs positions be enabled to remain as exempt contract positions. We believe these positions are sufficiently distinctive and non-duplicative in their job descriptions and requirements, and in their unique levels of expertise, that they are not likely to be similar to any existing Civil Service positions, or to be adequately tested for by existing tests. Other positions may also be sufficiently distinct to qualify for such exemptions and should be considered, but our understanding of the various positions suggests

that these two stand out as clearly non-generic in their tasks and required expertise.

***Phase 3: Transfer Additional 3 Positions Once Shared Services Unit is Operational For at Least 6 Months (estimated July 2012)***

- d. After the consolidated County Human Services Department has been operational for a period of time (we would estimate about six months), and additional efficiencies have been identified, **we recommend three additional positions for possible transfer from the Youth Board to the shared service unit, leaving a total of six full-time Youth Board positions (plus YAPP and F.R.I.E.N.D.S positions).** With the new shared service structure fully in place, and the new reduced Youth Board structure having been tested, we recommend that three of the original Youth Board positions, including the two part-time positions, transition to the shared services unit.

Assuming they are consistent with designated shared services positions, and at a mutually agreed-upon timeline to be determined by the Youth Board Executive Director and the Commissioner of the new Human Services Department (we estimate mid-2012), we recommend that the following three positions be transferred to the new shared services unit:

- Treatment Service Coordinator (with program monitoring responsibilities);<sup>23</sup>
- Fiscal Management Director (currently part-time); and
- Planning/Data Analyst (currently part-time).

We believe that these separate functions are sufficiently generic in scope that they can, with appropriate cross-training, cover similar responsibilities beyond just those of the Youth Board, although we assume that the current incumbents in those positions would continue to retain primary responsibilities for their current Youth Board assignments, at least in the early stages of the new shared services unit.

These changes would leave a core of six permanent full-time Youth Board employees (including two of the current County employees and

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<sup>23</sup> As noted previously, we have elected to initially transfer the two Program Monitor positions, followed in Phase 3 by the Treatment Service Coordinator, though the County may wish to transfer a different combination of the contract management/monitoring staff, or reduce the level of staffing, once the shared service unit's needs are identified and the implementation plan is developed.

four of the contract employees), plus the two staff of YAPP and F.R.I.E.N.D.S. as their program funding allows, for a total of eight positions in the department (see subsequent Table 11).

Phase 3 could be implemented under one of two options: one would keep all current positions within the County, either as Youth Board or shared services staff, or alternatively as efficiencies are identified, there could be a reduction of up to 2 positions as noted in discussions below and by the \* in the summary Table 11 on the following pages. Other reductions in positions could potentially occur subsequently through attrition and as opportunities become more apparent through cross-training and other efficiencies over time. We anticipate that the shared services unit is likely to result in additional reductions in positions and costs across Human Services departments once it is fully implemented.

Over time, as discussed further below, the full complement of staff in the County Human Services shared services unit should allow for additional back-up support for Youth Board functions where currently it does not exist sufficiently to keep up with work load during absences (i.e., processing claims). Further, working in a larger County unit may also provide advancement opportunities not previously available in a smaller department. It should also be noted that under the new consolidated Human Services Department, the Youth Board Executive Director and Youth Board as an entity would continue, as would the volunteer policy-making Board (see below for further discussion).

Given the reality of reduced staffing, the Youth Board will need to modify some of its current workload, particularly its program monitoring function. Program monitoring under this model will rely on the Director of Program and Contract Management, Runaway/Homeless Youth Coordinator, and a limited portion of the time of the Administrator of Juvenile Justice Programs (assumed at current level). The balance of the monitoring would be assumed by the shared services unit which is expected to combine monitoring tasks across the four consolidated Human Services departments, and include up to two or three of the previous Youth Board Program Managers/Treatment Services Coordinator positions. The shared services unit will require cross-training of the particular requirements of each department's funding sources and compliance regulations.

We believe the above existing Youth Board staffing will allow for the Youth Board to fulfill its monitoring obligations, with the support of the shared services unit, while ensuring the continued safeguarding of County resources, especially by reducing the monitoring workload, as described later in this section, by adjusting current Youth Board policies and practices.

We anticipate that the Director of Program and Contract Management position would continue to provide an in-house presence for this important program management, monitoring and accountability function to supplement additional program management staff within the proposed shared services unit. We also anticipate that the person in this position may change through attrition when the current incumbent retires, but that the position should be filled and not eliminated at that point. Further, the fiscal “back room” functions of contract processing and desk auditing of program claims will be absorbed by the shared service unit.

It will be important under this shared service model for the Youth Board to develop a close working relationship with the shared service unit that will be providing functions previously supplied in-house. Of critical importance is the establishment of a formal feedback loop between the Youth Board and the shared service unit regarding fiscal audits of program vouchers, contract processing questions, and any monitoring that is conducted by shared service staff. The Youth Board retains the responsibility to ensure County allocations are directed to compliant agencies that are meeting set standards and criteria. Therefore, it makes sense for the Youth Board to be actively engaged in developing tools and systems which allow for the communication of key information between departments.

An example of such a system may be the institution of quarterly meetings with key Youth Board staff and staff in the shared services unit who engage with Youth Board contract agencies, in order to formally review any findings or discuss emerging issues (of course we would expect more frequent informal communications would occur to address immediate needs). Another process tool may be to engage the shared service staff in developing the program summary reports which are provided to the volunteer Youth Board each year when determining annual funding allocations. Further, monitoring reports which are developed by shared service staff should be forwarded to Youth Board staff to ensure communication and awareness of activities in the field.

The proposed ultimate configuration of six permanent positions within the Youth Board (plus the two YAPP/F.R.I.E.N.D.S positions) would represent a reduction of seven employees (representing 5.8 FTEs) from the current 13 non-YAPP/F.R.I.E.N.D.S Youth Board positions. However, all core functions would be continued, and supplemented as needed via the shared services unit. This model assumes the shared service unit would provide administrative support to the Youth Board as needed throughout the year and would provide fiscal support for the development of the annual County budget process.

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## ***Summary of Recommended Three-Phase Staff Transition and Associated Cost Projections***

A summary of the above proposed three-phase staff transition plan and associated estimated costs are presented in Tables 11 and 12 below. Table 11 presents the three phases which retain all current 15 positions, with several transferring to the shared services unit at different times over a six-month period. Phases 2 and 3 also include sub-options (noted with an \*) to identify positions which could potentially be eliminated entirely (i.e., no longer included under either the Youth Board or shared services unit), if enough efficiencies and reductions in workload allow for reduced staffing. The resulting proposed reduced staffing totals under the sub-options are highlighted in grey at the bottom of the table. Additional reductions in total shared services staffing could potentially occur in the future through attrition if other efficiencies become possible over time.

It should be noted that the staffing in Table 11 does not include the Accounting and Assistant and Claims Auditor functions, which were eliminated at the end of December 2010.

TABLE 11

<b>CGR Recommended Three-Phase Transition to Core Youth Board Staffing Model</b>					
<b>Title</b>	<b>Phase 1: Keep Current YB Staffing Thru 2011 Transition</b>	<b>Phase 2: Initial Consolidated Dept. Staffing (expected January 2012)</b>		<b>Phase 3: Staffing for YB and Consolidated Dept. Following Realized Efficiencies</b>	
<b>Position / Title</b>	<b>Positions</b>	<b>Youth Board Positions</b>	<b>Shared Service Positions</b>	<b>Youth Board Positions</b>	<b>Shared Service Positions</b>
Executive Director	1	1	0	1	0
Director, Program & Contract Management	1	1	0	1	0
Director, Development, Training, and Legislative Advocacy	1	1	0	1	0
Administrator, Juvenile Justice Programs	1	1	0	1	0
Planning / Data Analyst	1	1	0	0	1
Fiscal Management Director/Acct Assist IV	1	1	0	0	1
Contract Specialist	1	0	1	0	1
Account Assist I	1	0	1	0	1
Administrative Assistant	1	1	0	1	0
Program Manager	1	0	1	0	1
Program Manager	1	0	1 *	0	1 *
Youth Board Runaway Youth Coordinator	1	1	0	1	0
Youth Board Treatment Service Coordinator	1	1	0	0	1 *
YAPP Program Manager	1	1	0	1	0
Y.A.P.P. Program Manager (F.R.I.E.N.D.S.)	1	1	0	1	0
<b>TOTAL POSITIONS</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>TOTAL FTE</b>	<b>13.83</b>	<b>9.83</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6.6</b>
<b>TOTAL POSITIONS * (w/ reductions)</b>		<b>11</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5 *</b>
<b>TOTAL FTE * (w/ reductions)</b>		<b>9.83</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4.6 *</b>
<i>Notes: * indicates viable position for reduction assuming workload is sufficiently absorbed by Shared Services Unit with staff from other departments. All models retain part-time Fiscal Management position (.63 FTE). In Phase 3 Planning/Data Analyst position becomes full-time (increase of .77 FTE).</i>					

Table 12 presents the estimated expenses for each of the three phases, plus a reduced staffing option (3\*). We estimate the total Youth Board total staff costs as follows: \$1.17 million for 2011; \$824,462 for 2012 (assuming the launch of the shared services unit); and \$628,451 for the remaining six core Youth Board positions. These figures reflect current wages for all staff, the benefit expenses for contracted staff, the 10% administrative fee for FCA, and does not include the separately-funded expenses of the two YAPP/F.R.I.E.N.D.S positions.

To offset these expenses, we applied estimated revenues that are designated for staffing costs, using 2011 figures, as follows: \$391,164 County adopted budget for the personnel services line (includes State Aid YDDP and RHYA administrative revenue); \$36,530 in SDPP State Aid administrative funds not included in County personnel line and incorporating the recent 25% reduction to the 2011 allocation. The 2011 applied revenue also includes the \$350,000 committed funds to the contract staff line that is not reflected in the 2011 budget and \$69,000 of support from the Long Island Funders Exchange.

Based on these assumptions, this transition plan provides a 46% reduction in Youth Board staffing costs by Phase 3 (from \$1.17 million to about \$628,000). After estimated existing revenues are applied, funding for the Youth Board staff in each phase has a projected budget gap ranging from \$394,214 for the current year in Phase 1 to \$200,757 in Phase 3—gaps which would need to be made up from additional County dollars or, as suggested below in Recommendation #1.e, from other sources. It should be noted, these are baseline projections based on data provided by the Youth Board. Official figures should be provided and confirmed by the County budget office and the Youth Board fiscal staff to confirm actual outstanding funding gaps which incorporate increases in costs year-to-year and new State Aid reductions as identified.

TABLE 12

Cost Projections of Three-Phase Transition to Core Youth Board Staffing Model					
	Youth Board Dept.	Shared Services Unit	Total Staff Costs	Current Dept. Staff Revenue	Remaining Gap for YB Staff Only
<b>Phase 1: Current Youth Board Staffing</b> (13 positions/11.83 FTE)	\$1,171,908	\$0	\$1,171,908	\$777,694	<b>\$394,214</b>
<b>Phase 2: Four positions transfer to Shared Services unit</b> (YB 9 positions/7.83 FTE; Shared Services 4 positions/ 4 FTE)	\$824,462	\$308,675	\$1,133,136	\$427,694	<b>\$396,768</b>
<b>Phase 3: Three additional positions transfer to Shared Services; data/research position becomes full-time</b> (YB 6 positions/6 FTE; Shared Services 7 positions/6.6 FTE)	\$628,451	\$552,608	\$1,181,058	\$427,694	<b>\$200,757</b>
<b>Option 3*: Reduction of two program monitor positions in shared services unit</b> (YB 6 positions/6 FTE; Shared Services 5 positions/4.6 FTE)	\$628,451	\$359,030	\$987,481	\$427,694	<b>\$200,757</b>
Notes: Does not include the two grant-funded positions of YAPP and F.R.I.E.N.D.S. Coordinators. Employee benefit costs included for contract staff only as part of department budget. County employee benefit costs not included in department budget. Department revenue includes 2011 adopted County Budget amount for personnel services of \$391,164 (includes YDDP/RHYA admin); plus SDPP admin of \$36,530 (reflects 25% reduction for 2011). 2011 revenue includes \$350,000 County committed funds to contract staff line plus \$69,000 from LIFE; YB staff costs include FCA 10% admin fee for remaining contract staff.					

- e. **To offset the gaps in funding for each of the three phases, the County should continue its funding at at least the 2011 Youth Board staff budgeted level, including the 2011 \$350,000 supplemental post-budget allocation.** Any gaps in funding that may remain after County funds are applied should ideally be covered by Red Light Camera funds and/or Long Island Funders Exchange (LIFE) support. As outlined in Table 12, we project an additional \$394,000, beyond the \$350,000 previously committed by the County and \$69,000 by LIFE, is still needed to support full staffing from June through the end of 2011. Subsequent years would require lower levels of supplemental funding support to cover Youth Board costs.

Shared services costs in each of these phases would be shared across the individual departments in the Human Services consolidated department, including application of any relevant state aid to help offset the staffing costs. *The total shared service unit costs are expected to be substantially lower than the costs of providing similar services separately through each department, due to the anticipated efficiencies resulting from integrating the staff functions.*

## 2. Recommended Changes in Youth Board (and/or Shared Services) Functions and Operations

### *Reducing Current Workload.*

- a. **Making staff reductions, including those recommended in this report, are not possible without reducing the current workload of the Youth Board (and/or positions shifted to the shared services unit).** County Administration, in partnership with its Youth Board staff and policy-making Board, should work to identify opportunities to reduce the current workload, through changes in policy and expectations, in order to achieve the cost savings intended from proposed staff reductions. Simply reducing staff while maintaining the current workload is unrealistic and unsustainable. CGR has identified the following potential areas for policy and practice modifications and/or exploration for additional efficiencies:

- 1) Implement multi-year contract agreements.**

CGR recommends the Youth Board enact two- or three-year contracts with its agencies, wherever possible, to reduce unnecessary work load and to allow the community agencies to better plan for and focus on the delivery of service. The expectations of the agencies would not change in that each applicant would still be required to describe the intended outcomes of the service with a detailed implementation plan and budget. However, the frequency of the application process would be reduced. The Youth Board would still be able to understand what is happening at the agency level through onsite monitoring, regular vouchering, and the quarterly report process.

Current policy of the Youth Board requires contract agencies to submit annual renewal applications. This requires Youth Board staff time to update, disseminate, and assist agencies in completing the application forms. Once the contract has been submitted, the fiscal staff engage in an 11-step process to take each of the approximately 50 contracts through desk auditing, seek the required approvals, and submit the contract for execution. As described earlier in the report, the portfolio of Youth Board contracted agencies is fairly consistent, having changed relatively little over the years. Further, the monitoring and regular claim process provides for regular communication with the contract agencies (combined Youth Board staff and shared services staff).

Similar to the current contract language, the two- or three-year contract cycle would include necessary caveats that award amounts remain subject to performance reviews, quarterly reports, and approvals of the County, and are subject to change during the course of the agreement.

**2) Shift to quarterly, or bi-monthly, program vouchering.**

Contracted agencies submit monthly vouchers for payment to the Youth Board. This requires the submission of documented expenses, completed Youth Board forms and, often, multiple follow-up calls and clarification between Youth Board staff and the agencies. The Youth Board staff also coordinate internally between the program staff who work with the agencies and the fiscal staff who are reviewing documentation, in order to verify if the items requested for reimbursement are aligned and reasonable with program goals.

Each agency can submit monthly claims and up to 3 supplemental claims throughout the year for a total of 15 annually. Fiscal staff report that an average claim takes 1 to 3 business days to complete, with a few poorly submitted claims requiring longer processing time. The following table demonstrates that, based on current practice, the Youth Board could spend an estimated 5,250 staff hours per year processing claims.

**TABLE 13**

<b>Estimated Staff Time for Processing Claims</b>	
# of Programs	50
# of Claims, per program, per year	15
Total # of Claims processed, per year	750
Average # of Claims, per month	63
Estimated time to process each claim (hours)	7
Estimated staff hours spent, per year	5,250
Estimated staff hours spent, per month	438

*Source: Calculated by CGR based on staff interviews*

*Notes: Program total includes 10 SDPP funded-programs not included in Table 8. Programs can submit 1 claim a month, plus 3 supplemental claims during the year. Estimated hours to process claim based on interviews average claim ranges from 1 to 3 business days. CGR used low range (1 day) based on 35 hour work week or 7 hours per claim.*

CGR recommends the Youth Board consider spreading out the claim workload by requesting agencies to submit on alternating months for 6 claims per year, plus up to 2 supplemental. The agencies would still receive the same contracted amounts for

the year, but in larger lump sums fewer times during the year. One option to even out the work load would be to work with agencies to assign alternating months for claiming, for an estimated 25 program vouchers per month, plus allow for up to 2 supplemental claims to be submitted as needed throughout the year. The County, presumably through the shared service unit, would then process larger claims and paperwork, but for fewer concentrated times during the year. The County is advised to work especially closely with its smaller and mid-sized agencies to determine the level of fiscal stress caused by elongating the reimbursement cycle in order to develop reasonable solutions. Any proposed revisions in the process should build in flexibility to allow for accommodating exceptions that may be needed to meet special agency circumstances.

As noted earlier, it is critical for the operations of the non-profit contracted agencies for County reimbursements to be processed in a timely manner. Elongating the reimbursement cycle by another month is not an option, unless the reimbursements are consistent enough to allow the providers to plan their cash flow. The current fiscal staff are unable to keep up with the workload which has negatively impacted the operations of the agencies, which suggests modifications in policy are in order.

### **3) Reduce the frequency of onsite monitoring visits.**

The Youth Board's current policy is to monitor its contract agencies a minimum of three times during the year. While this frequency has afforded a beneficial relationship between the County and its contracted agencies, it is well above the requirements of OCFS of one visit every three years, leaving room for a slight reduction to once or twice a year without compromising state funding.

Based on the current level, and a 35-hour work week, we estimate Youth Board staff spends 600 staff hours monitoring programs each year. This equals to nearly 50 hours of monitoring work load in the field per month or 17 weeks total during the year. These estimates do not include office work to support and document findings. Further, these estimates may be conservative as they are based on four visits per year, when several staff indicated they monitor programs in a range of 3 to 8 times per year and often in teams of two monitors per visit.

TABLE 14

<b>Estimated Staff Time for Onsite Monitoring, per Year</b>	
No. of contract programs	50
Average number of visits per year	4
Total number of monitoring visits per year	200
Average time per visit (hours)	3
Total Staff Hours Monitoring, per year	600
Total Staff Hours Monitoring, per month	50
<b>Total Staff Time Spent in Weeks, per year</b>	<b>17</b>

*Source: Calculated by CGR based on data provided by the Youth Board*

*Notes: Calculated as full-time position equals 35 hours a week. Time spent on monitoring visits varies, CGR estimates 3 hours as a reasonable average.*

In addition to onsite monitoring duties, the program managers are responsible for assisting their assigned agencies through the annual application process, making referrals, collecting and reviewing quarterly reports, and reviewing monthly claim vouchers before submitting them to the fiscal staff. Each program manager also regularly attends and participates in various meetings of local coalitions and task groups.

Youth Board and shared services staff, given new staffing realities, should reassess these monitoring expectations while working out a reasonable plan when the new shared services unit is operational and can absorb some of the routine monitoring functions. The Youth Board program staff will still be responsible for the comprehensive monitoring of its agencies, though these more thorough reviews may occur less frequently.

Many of the contracted agencies have been with the County for decades and are well aware of their performance expectations, which we can reasonably assume would not change despite a reduced monitoring schedule. Monitoring should continue, albeit less frequently, but still unannounced so programs will need to maintain peak performance at all times.

Many of the agencies continue to be monitored by other funding entities in the community as well. Further, the agencies themselves interact with one another and are a strong resource to notify staff if any issues become apparent. These opportunities for collaboration should provide the County and the Youth Board with assurances that their funding will continue to be used properly, while allowing for a system to identify instances where direct follow-up action may be required.

- b. **As an alternative approach to the consolidation of the contract management/monitoring function within the shared services unit, consideration should be given to the possibility of lodging some or all of that function within units of the United Way, or another outside organization, that currently provide similar services related to their funded programs. By consolidating these functions within an existing unit, even greater efficiencies and cost savings may be possible.** For example, based on data provided by the United Way, it appears that at least 15 of their funded programs that they currently monitor are identical to programs currently funded and monitored by the Youth Board. Yet both the Youth Board and United Way provide separate staff to monitor those programs, separate reporting forms are used, separate data may be tracked by the different organizations, and the contract agencies must devote time to both review processes, with little unique value added by each, compared to time that could be saved if the function were to be consolidated in the future. It may be that this is a function that could be purchased by the County from the United Way with a memorandum of understanding between the organizations, at less overall costs, and with reduced burdens to the contract agencies in the future. This would seem to be an opportunity at least worth exploring as the new shared services unit is conceptualized and operationalized.

### 3. Recommended Adjustments in Staff Assignments

- a. **The amounts of time that need to be devoted to Youth Board-related tasks, and therefore the allocation of staff functions, may change under the shared services configuration. For example, less time and staff may ultimately be needed for program monitoring/management functions.** With overlap of the same contract agencies currently being monitored by more than one of the departments/offices making up the new consolidated Human Services Department, and/or the United Way, it is likely that efficiencies can be created within the shared services unit and/or other monitoring agencies such as the United Way, that would enable one person to monitor a single contract program agency, rather than two or three that may now serve that same agency.

Moreover, as noted above, the Youth Board currently averages three or more monitoring field visits per contract program, which far exceeds the state requirements. Without compromising the important monitoring/ accountability role that should continue, and in fact while hopefully strengthening its focus on monitoring and tracking outcomes and program impact in the future, it seems likely that fewer people may be needed to carry out this critical role in the future, under

consistent guidelines established for such monitoring (including, hopefully, consistent reporting guidelines to minimize unnecessary duplication of paperwork) under the new shared services office. Thus over time, the numbers of positions devoted to this task may be able to be reduced across departments, as careful cross-training occurs.

- b. At the same time as reductions may be possible concerning the program monitoring/management function, more time may be needed to expedite claims and manage the fiscal concerns related to the youth services network.** Delays in this function currently have frustrated nonprofit providers, while also resulting in delays in State payments to the County of about \$900,000 owed as of March 2011. On the other hand, greater efficiencies in this area may be possible with consolidated staff, along with such things as the possible reduction in workload as outlined above.
- c. Similarly, the Planning/Data Analyst position, currently limited to an 8-hours-per-week paid position, needs to be expanded, to a full-time position under the shared services unit, with a broad focus on cross-systems human services opportunities.** Presumably there are some research tasks that can be shared across the offices making up the new consolidated Human Services Department, and together they should add up to at least one full-time position carrying out data analysis and mapping tasks, community needs assessment, and tracking and analysis of program data and county-wide outcomes on a longitudinal basis. This expanded function would allow for more strategic use of County funds, and would also provide a competitive advantage when seeking outside funding for County and community efforts. If more time is needed to meet the needs of all departments, additional staff could be considered in the future.
- d. We recommend that the Youth Board focus more attention in the future on strengthening its internal funding allocation process.** The Youth Board should find ways to more actively recruit new agencies and seek applications from agencies not previously funded, especially those with the ability and experience to offer new approaches in new areas of the County. Recently, relatively few new programs have been added to the funding mix in any given year, and relatively few have been defunded. The Youth Board has occasionally issued RFPs around new initiatives, but rarely has used such an approach to seek new ideas for the provision of traditional funding.

More extensive use of the program review process and of proposed expanded use of data and research, and perhaps increased use of universities and business community experts (see below), should be encouraged to challenge traditional funding patterns and to encourage

agencies and programs to challenge themselves to seek out expanded use of best practices and evidence-based programs where appropriate.

Part of the Youth Board's historic value to the community has been its objective approach to funding allocations and to being willing to reallocate funds as needed to address changing needs in the community. That still happens, but apparently less so now as Youth Board positions have been cut, as data analysis has become more of a scarcity, and as political considerations at the Administration and Legislature levels have often increasingly trumped objective and professional judgments by Youth Board staff and volunteer Youth Board members. Taking steps to move back closer to that earlier direction (as with the proposed expansion of a full-time research position under the shared services unit) would further enhance the role of the Youth Board, and help ensure that decisions are being made as much as possible based on assessment of needs, outcomes, performance, and the overall good of the community.

## 4. Identify and Secure Alternative Sources of Funding Support

- a. **The County should commit to using Red Light Camera revenues to supplement County and State funds to cover Youth Board funding for youth service programs.** Such funds should be used immediately to cover all of the cuts that have been proposed, but that remain pending, for the roughly 40 programs currently relying on Youth Board funds to carry out their 2011 mission for youth and families, as well as to cover 2011 gaps in contract employee funding, to the extent possible and needed. Within the restrictions of the existing and proposed legislation pending in Albany, there would appear to be sufficient revenues already available, or projected over the next year, to be able to cover all proposed program budget shortfalls, as well as Youth Board contract staff positions outlined above, while perhaps also being able to underwrite other portions of the County commitments to agencies not threatened by the proposed cuts. In other words, the County could further reduce its taxpayer contributions to the programs by allocating more of the Red Light Camera resources to these programs, rather than only the amounts needed to cover the proposed reductions.
- b. **Future new sources of revenues should be identified and committed to support youth service programs in the future, both to reduce the burden on taxpayers for existing programs, but perhaps even more important, to provide revenues and other resources to support new program initiatives that need to be developed to address emerging and changing needs in the**

**community.** In addition to Red Light Camera designated funding, foundations, the business community and the higher education community should build on existing commitments to become greater resources in support of targeted youth service programming and development in the future. New initiatives to tackle community-wide issues that go beyond the ability of individual funded programs to address are especially likely to need future support, beyond what the County can be expected to provide in this economic environment. Foundations through the Long Island Funders Exchange (LIFE) have already begun to expand their role in support of the Youth Board, and have suggested a willingness to consider playing significant roles with regard to ongoing youth service support in the future. Their willingness to enter into discussions with the County concerning ways their role could be most beneficial in creating positive impacts on young people in the future could become a model for ways in which to involve the business and higher education communities in more extensive roles in the future.

Youth Board, County Administration and LIFE officials should also begin to play more aggressive leadership roles in approaching leaders in the business community and in higher education colleges and universities to challenge them to become more actively involved in supporting youth services throughout the county, in various ways such as funding support, advisory roles concerning the types of youth service programming that would be beneficial from the perspectives of future employment and academic success, increasing offers of internships, provision of mentoring resources, involvement with the Youth Board and/or nonprofit youth agency boards, provision of research and data analysis support, and so on.

- c. **As part of the shared services unit, we recommend the creation of a full-time grant development position to garner additional resources across the human service departments.** Across the different departments making up the new Human Services Department, there should be more than enough opportunities to justify creation of a full-time position, which should more than pay for itself within a year through the generation of multiple grants cutting across the different human services functions, some of which are likely to create opportunities for cross-systems collaboration.

It is likely that significant portions of the costs of this position initially would come from funding sources represented by the different offices and functions making up the new Department, and future grant opportunities are likely to more than pay for the costs of the position going forward, particularly if portions of the grants can be allocated to the Department for legitimate overhead purposes. Alternatively, the County could expand its current Grants Office by adding this position

with agreement that the primary focus area will be identifying resources for the Human Service Department. However, we believe that a designated position within the Human Services shared services unit would have a higher potential payoff in creating cross-systems human service collaborations of significance to the County. This grant development position would be designed to complement the continuing Director of Development, Training and Legislative Advocacy position in the Youth Board and the County's grants office.

- d. **The Youth Board needs to make its case more clearly in the future concerning the leveraging role it plays in using County dollars to make possible opportunities that would be less possible without the County's investment.** That challenge becomes even more significant as additional sources of revenues are sought to reduce the need for County dollars, while at the same time expanding youth service opportunities in the future.

Partial information about the value of the Youth Board/County investments in youth services was available during this study, but it needs to be organized more effectively and systematically by the Youth Board in the future in order to assure funders of the value of their investments. This means not only being able to show the multiplier effect of investments in generating or supporting other funding sources for the program agencies, but also linking such investments to the ability to demonstrate that the funds are spent in programs that can demonstrate high performance and improved outcomes and impact among those the programs serve.

## 5. Reinforce and Strengthen the Role of the Policy-Making Board of the Youth Board

- a. **The role of the volunteer policy-making Board of the Youth Board should be reinvigorated and its importance reinforced by the County. The six vacancies on the Board should be filled, and the eight expired terms should be renewed or replaced.** The County Administration and Legislature should routinely seek out the views, insights and specific recommendations of the Board before making decisions about matters affecting youth and youth-serving agencies. This has rarely happened during the recent crisis situation facing the County. This report provides an opportunity to begin to re-engage the Board to get their input as decisions are made about policies and practices, staffing, and funding allocations in the future. The Board has made overtures to the County, which have been only occasionally acknowledged and acted on recently. It needs to continue to aggressively push its agenda and continue to offer objective perspectives and decision-making to help inform County decisions on

matters, and to help make County officials aware of consequences, pro and con, of taking various positions—before the decisions have been made or announced.

- b. The policy-making Youth Board should spearhead efforts to improve communications throughout the community concerning youth service issues and responding effectively to youth and family needs.** Its voice, appropriately and effectively used, can be a greater force for meeting the needs of the County’s young people and their families than it has been at times in the past, and especially in recent months. With a strengthened membership, and through expanded use of technology-driven messages, the Board has the potential to call greater attention going forward to the needs of youth and how those needs can best be addressed.

As noted above, the Board has the opportunity to use this report to claim a spot at the table as decisions are made about the future of youth services, and to help play a leadership role, along with the Long Island Funders Exchange and the Nassau Youth Services Agency Coalition, to ensure that wise future-oriented decisions are made going forward. Also, there is an opportunity for the Youth Board to develop its websites to become more effective vehicles to target messages to the larger community as well as to various targeted audiences such as business leaders, the higher education community, the faith community, program agencies, and political leaders. The role and insights of the Board will be especially critical during the transition period to a new consolidated Human Services Department, new shared services operations, decisions about future funding mechanisms to support youth services, and how allocations of funds best meet community needs in the future.

## Final Conclusions

The Youth Board has significant impact in shaping what appears to be a strong youth and family services system in Nassau County. CGR concludes that it continues to have impact, despite reductions in some of its resources over the years. It has generally good structures in place—both in the community and internal documented processes, including moving gradually in the direction of measuring outcomes in a more structured and coordinated way. We did not find the organization to be overstaffed, and in fact are reluctant to propose further reductions in staffing levels. On the other hand, the likely creation over the next few months of a consolidated Human Services Department, and the proposed shared services unit within that Department, creates opportunities to provide needed services in more efficient ways with reduced overall staffing. And the reality is that Nassau County needs to find ways of doing more with fewer tax dollars.

Thus, given those fiscal realities, we have proposed shifts in staffing that retain the most critical functions and roles unique to the Youth Board, and that will enable it to continue its important collaborative role throughout the County, while ensuring that other core functions will continue to be provided in a coordinated, consistent fashion through the shared services unit. We believe that the proposals offered above provide the Youth Board and the County with a measured, balanced approach that both offers taxpayer relief and savings, while at the same time retaining the core Youth Board infrastructure and service linkages needed to support, strengthen and enhance the County's youth service system in the future.