Child & Family Wellbeing Fund - A.63-A (Hevesi)/S.6431 (Brisport)

The Child and Family Wellbeing Fund redefines what "child welfare" means in New York by investing state dollars in local trusted community-based organizations that provide families with basic necessities, material supports and mutual aid, maternal health, activities for children, and peer support groups. These formal and informal social structures serve as protective factors, proven to reduce child protective services (CPS) involvement and improve child and family wellbeing.

The Fund would support children's growth and development by investing $30 million through a 5-year pilot in 10 communities that have been historically disenfranchised and targeted for government intervention through CPS. The Fund would be an innovative approach to resourcing communities to support healthy children and families.

Everyday surroundings like safe play spaces and greenery, convenient access to critical family resources, and a vibrant social fabric offer significant health and cognitive **advantages** to children *even if their own family is struggling*. Yet decades of redlining and racist disinvestment have resulted in vastly inequitable neighborhood conditions. We saw that indelibly in the pandemic, and we are seeing it now in the threats to New Yorkers from aggressive immigration enforcement and cuts to social services. The Child and Family Wellbeing Fund is a chance to **make a corrective shift** to ensure that all New York children live in neighborhoods set up to support their wellbeing.

The Child & Family Wellbeing Fund Would:

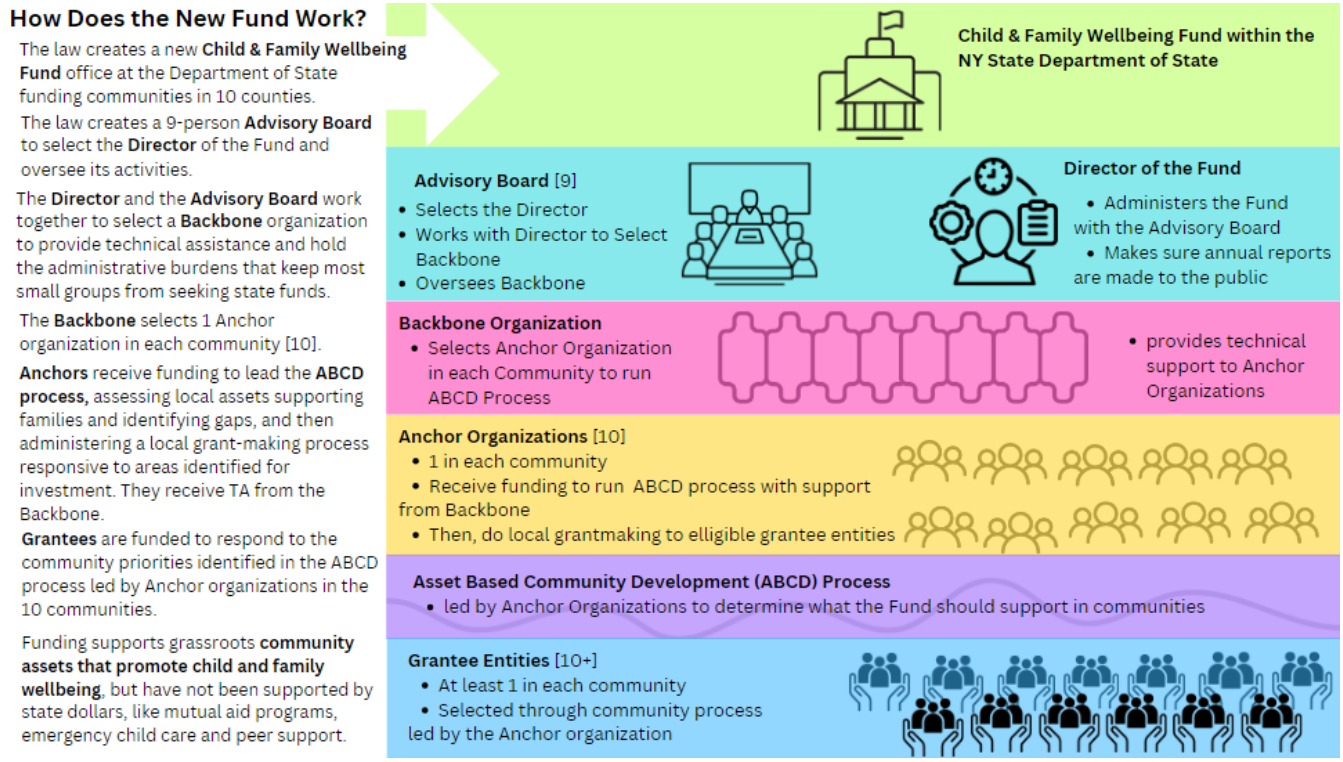
- Fortify the local nonprofit infrastructure by investing in small groups that are often locked out of government funding. *Only groups that are recommended by community members would be funded.*
- Resource trusted organizations. *This fund is only open to groups with no ties to CPS.*
- Center community expertise in resource decisions. *Advisory board includes parents and young people impacted by CPS.*
- Intentionally invest in the social fabric. *It uses the Asset-Based Community Development model to build social capital and collective action.*
- Build long-term community capacity. *Technical assistance to support growth is written in.*
- Reduce the likelihood of family involvement in CPS. *Invests in projects and resources known to reduce family stress and vulnerability to CPS involvement.*
- Bring joy. *It supports family activities, community gatherings, and neighborly care.*

Redefining Child Welfare: Promoting Child & Family Wellbeing

New York State's "**family policy guidelines**" prioritize government support for families that promote **"safe, nurturing environments which support the healthy growth of all family members."** However, the current framework of CPS investigates and prosecutes families for "neglect"—including allegations related to parental inability to provide basic necessities. Nationally, almost half of the families that are separated (47%) had trouble paying for basic necessities. In New York, over 95% of reports to the state child abuse and neglect hotline include suspicions of "neglect or deprivation of necessities." Parents with

low incomes are disproportionately reported to CPS for experiencing domestic violence or struggling with substance use, despite these issues impacting families in all socioeconomic statuses. Many families who live in communities that have been disenfranchised and targeted by CPS are in survival mode, with limited trusted options for support. In fact, many state-funded resources available in communities are staffed by mandated reporters whose presence can make families uncomfortable due to the implicit threat of child welfare involvement.

The Fund's Structure



To learn more about the Child and Family Wellbeing Fund, please visit https://scaany.org/what-is-the-Achild-and-family-wellbeing-fund/

Sign-on to our FY 2028 Executive Budget letter!

Join us for our campaign launch! Friday, Oct. 23 at 1pm on Zoom