



Office of Children
and Family Services

LINKING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TO NEEDED RESOURCES



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2025 FAMILY STRENGTHENING AND SUPPORT TRAINING
INSTITUTE

JUNE 16, 2025

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PRESENTATION INTRODUCTION

Tina Calacone, Manager HEARS Family Line

**NYS Office of Children and Family Services
Division of Child Welfare and Community Services**

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LINKING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TO NEEDED RESOURCES



CarePortal

JUNE 16, 2025

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OCFS Partnership

Tenisha Hope
Program Manager
NYS Office of Children & Family Services

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WHY CAREPORTAL?

- One goal of the NYS Office of Children and Family Services is to move toward a system of child and family well-being.
- Family well-being occurs when all family members are safe, healthy and have chances for educational advancement and economic mobility.
- Our CarePortal partnership allows us to invest in concrete support to strengthen families.



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CAREPORTAL PRESENCE

- Several counties in New York State were already utilizing CarePortal prior to the pilot.
 - Albany
 - Greene
 - Monroe
 - Niagara
 - Schenectady
 - Rensselaer



Currently, there are 16 counties in New York State utilizing CarePortal.

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Background

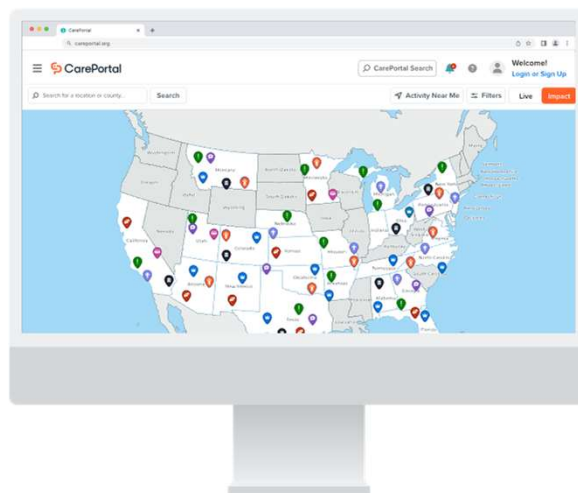
Steve Poissant
NY Area Director- CarePortal
steve.poissant@careportal.org



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WHERE WE'RE GOING

1. What is CarePortal?
2. Circles of Care
3. How it Works
4. Network Impact
5. Next Steps with Q&A



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WHAT IS CAREPORTAL?

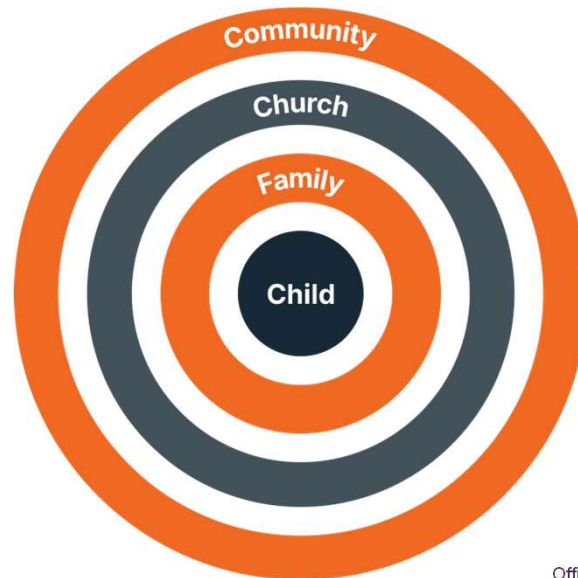
CarePortal is care-sharing
technology that drives action for
local children and families in crisis.



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CIRCLES OF CARE



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HOW IT WORKS

Step 1 - Uncovering Needs

A child or family in need requires help from a child-serving professional.



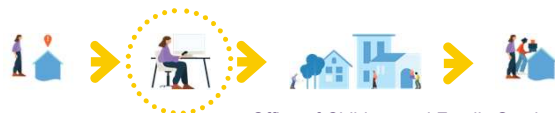
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HOW IT WORKS

Step 2 - Submitting Needs

The child-serving professional types their vetted needs into CarePortal.



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HOW IT WORKS

Step 3 - Sharing Needs

CarePortal alerts nearby faith-based organizations and community members to the family's needs.



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HOW IT WORKS

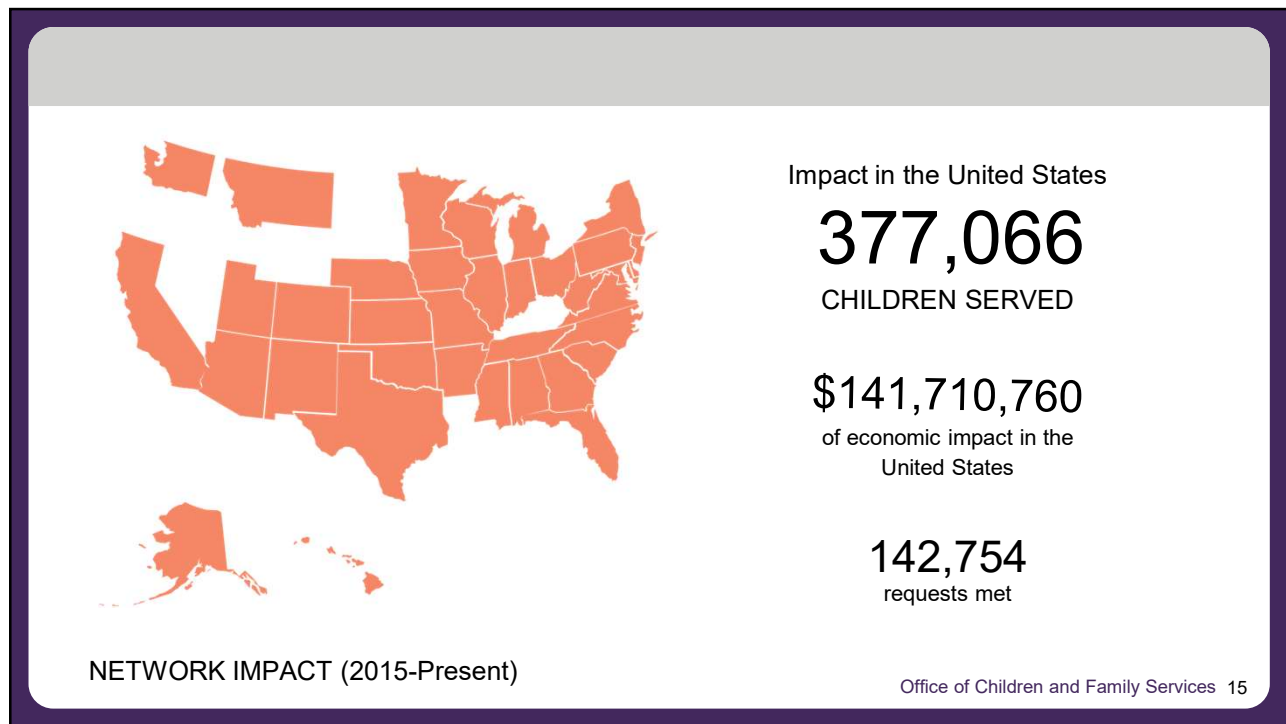
Step 4 - Meeting Needs

Response teams and community members partner to ensure that the child and family are helped.

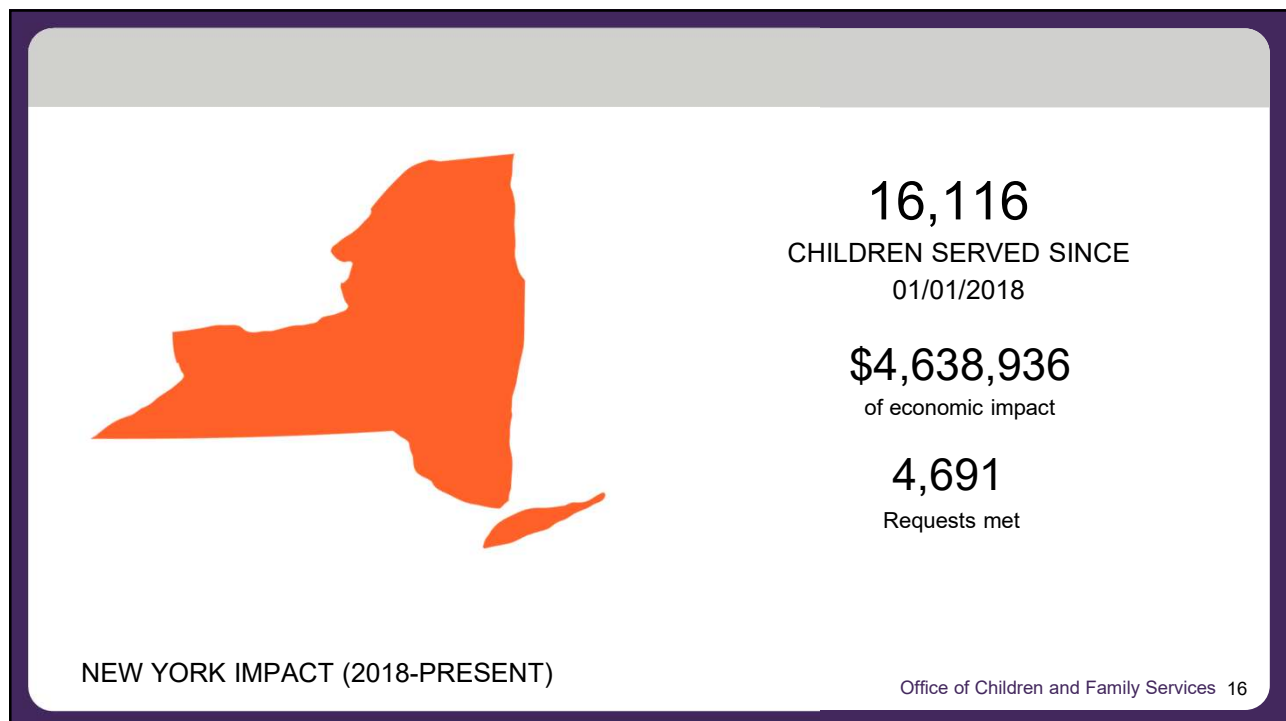


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2024 TOP 10 REQUESTED ITEMS

1. Custom Tangible	42,181
2. Custom Financial	15,739
3. Mattress	13,017
4. Bedding Sets	11,250
5. Clothing (Children)	9,568
6. Bed Frame	8,995
7. Diapers/Wipes	4,909
8. Rent Assistance	3,277
9. Supplies	3,167
10. Groceries/Dresser	3,100

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CAREPORTAL PRESENCE GROWS

Launched 2022-Present

- Cattaraugus
- Chautauqua
- Chemung
- Columbia
- Montgomery
- Orange
- Saratoga
- Warren
- Washington
- Wyoming

Pending 2025 Launches

- Allegany
- Erie
- Lewis
- Onondaga
- Ulster



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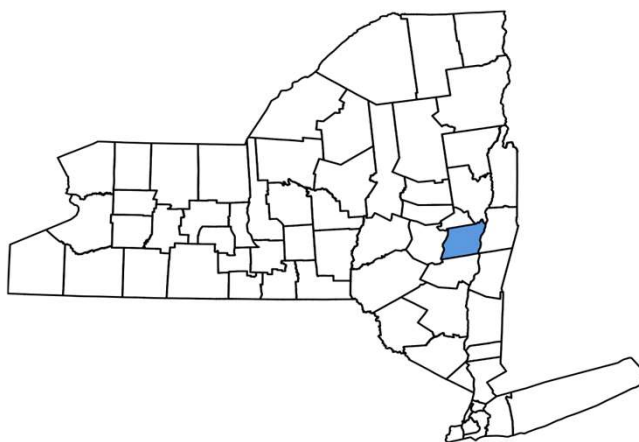
County Perspective

Tonisha Fields

Supervisor, Albany County Dept. for
Children, Youth and Families



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Albany NY Impact

1,750

CHILDREN SERVED SINCE
01/01/2018

\$738,331

of economic impact

703

Requests met

Albany Impact

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EXPECTATIONS

CarePortal Commits To

- Provide relevant training and professional support services for entering and managing requests.
- Ensure response teams are properly trained for engaging with families.
- Help simplify the process of finding and getting needed resources to families.
- Offer collaborative opportunities to build new partnerships in the communities you serve.



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EXPECTATIONS

You commit to:

- "Protect the trust" by proper vetting and request management.
- Protect confidentiality in public request descriptions.
- Be responsive to partnering churches.
- Advocate for and assist family-to-responder and responder-to-family communication for delivery of items.
- Pursue other resources as needed because responses are not guaranteed.



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LINKING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TO NEEDED RESOURCES

HEARS FAMILY LINE

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WHAT IS HEARS?

The Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) HEARS family line assists families and individuals by providing resources and referrals to a variety of services. Caring representatives guide callers to services including food, clothing, housing, medical and behavioral health care, parenting education and child care. Since its implementation on April 15, 2022, the HEARS line has answered over 7,000 calls from New Yorkers in need.

One of the goals of HEARS is to provide supports to a family to mitigate the need for child welfare intervention.

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WE CAN HELP FIND RESOURCES FOR...

- Housing
- Parenting/Pregnancy/Early Childhood
- Financial Assistance
- Mental Health
- Child Care
- Legal Help
- Food Assistance
- Elder Care
- Domestic Violence

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SOME OF THE AGENCIES WE REFER CALLERS TO INCLUDE:

- Healthy Families NY
- Local Departments of Social Services
- Bronxworks
- Early Intervention
- Catholic Charities
- Legal Aid Society
- Public Health Solutions
- Local Immigration Advocacy Groups
- Family Enrichment Centers

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AGENCIES HEARS STAFF HAVE MET/MEET WITH:

- Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence
- Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN)
- Westchester Medical Center Child Abuse Prevention Committee
- U.S. Administration for Children and Families' Children's Bureau
- Keeping Families Together
- Family Policy Advisors
- Citizens Review Panel
- OCFS Regional Office Directors
- NYC Administration for Children's Services

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WHAT HAPPENS WHEN SOMEONE CALLS HEARS?

Specialists at HEARS listen to callers' concerns to determine what their needs are and whom callers might already be working with or connected to.

Sometimes the specialist may be able to connect the caller directly with a resource through a warm transfer.

Often there are multiple and varied needs expressed in a call, so specialists let callers know that they will research some options, confirm their availability and compile a list of resources in the caller's area. The specialist will call back and/or email (typically within 24 to 48 hours) the list of resources to the caller that the caller can choose to utilize.

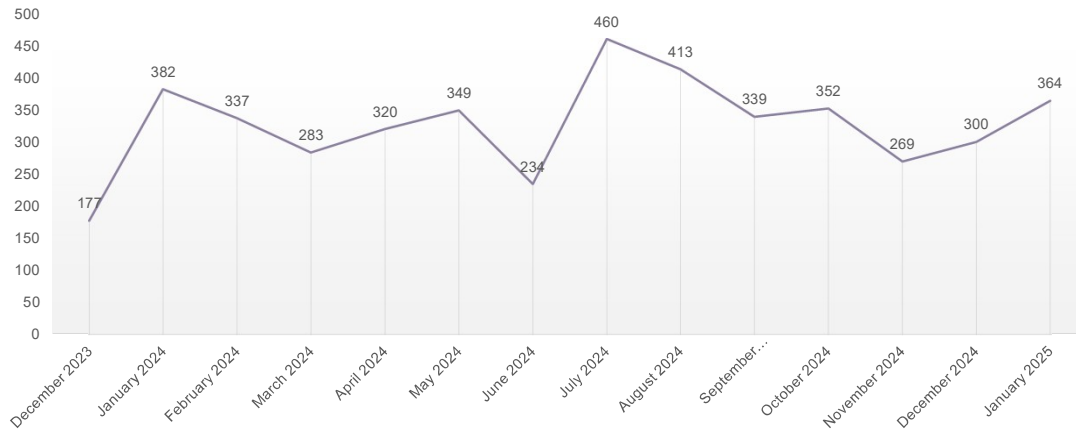
Occasionally we get emergency calls and, when we do, often we work with the regional offices and other OCFS program areas to link callers to assistance.

We do not provide any direct services or case management to callers.

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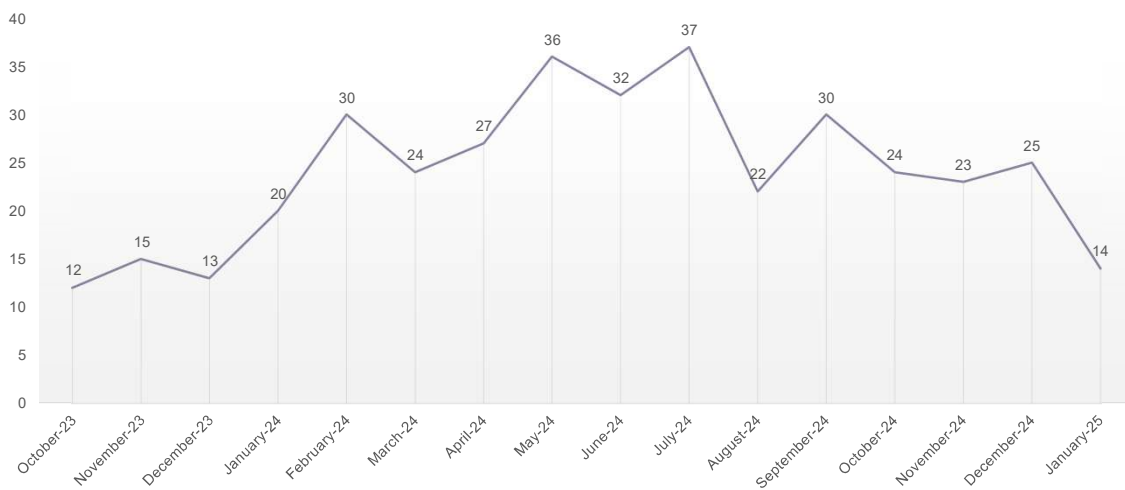
CALL VOLUME TRENDS



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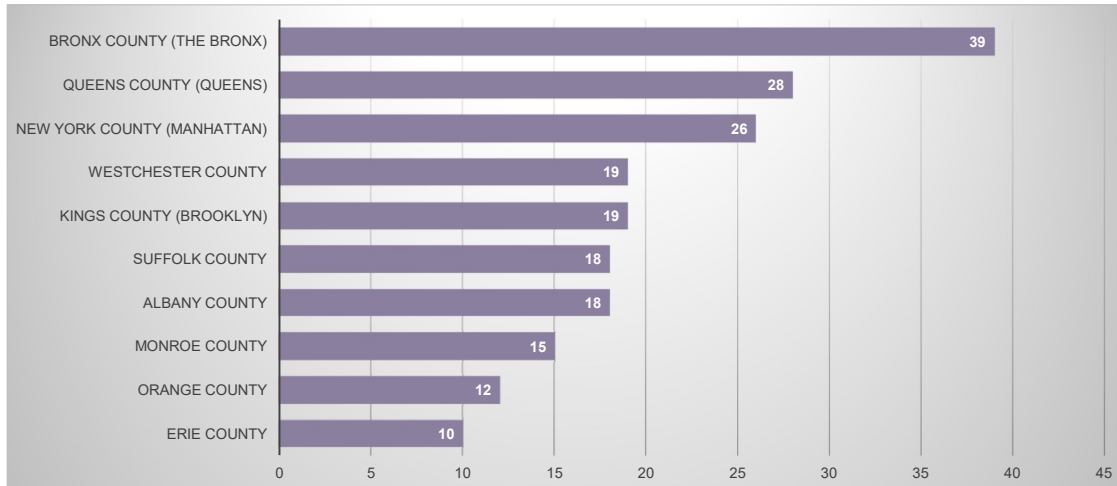
CALLS TRANSFERRED FROM THE SCR



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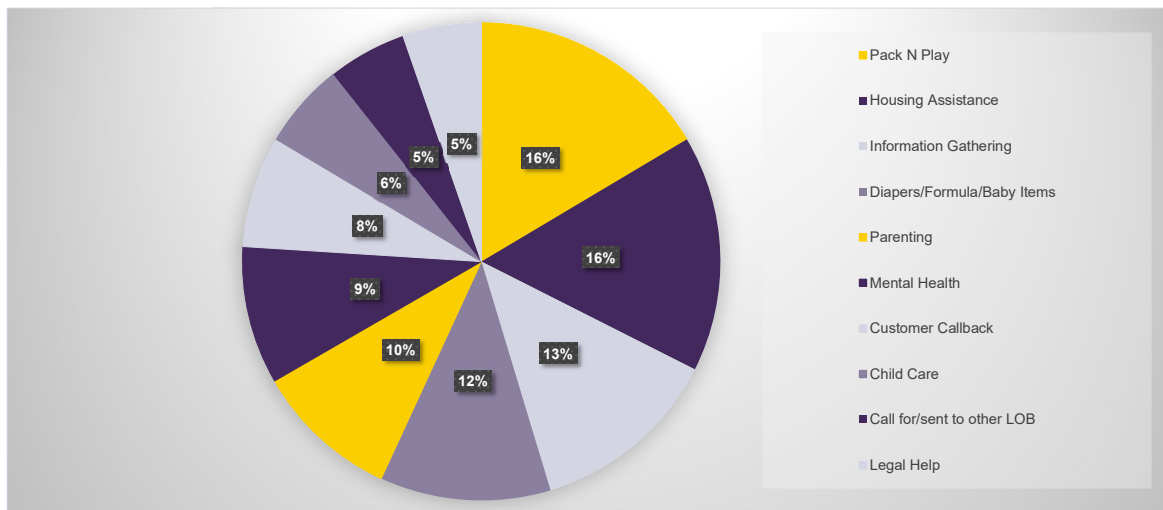
COUNTIES



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TOPICS

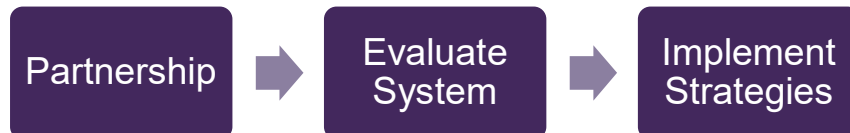


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FAMILY POLICY ADVISORS

Parents with lived experience

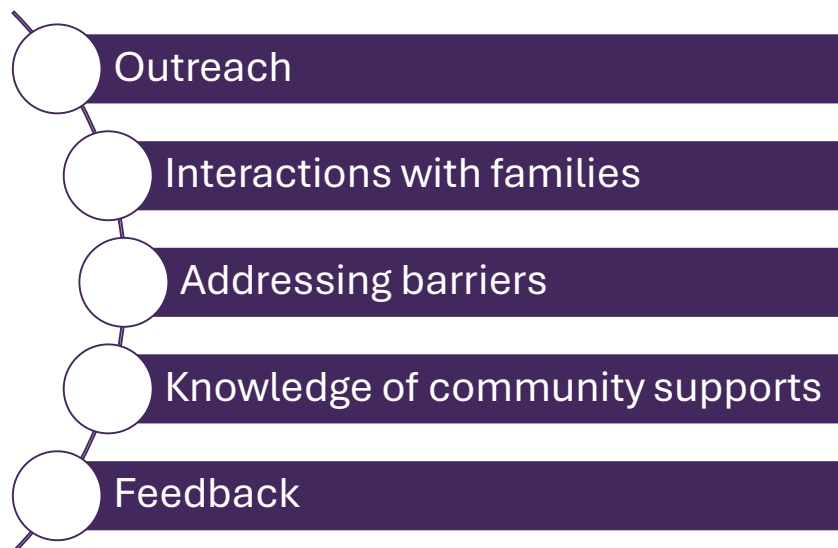


Paradigm shift

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HEARS FAMILY LINE AND FAMILY POLICY ADVISOR COLLABORATION



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FAMILY POLICY ADVISORS SUPPORT THE HEARS LINE

Supporting vs. Reporting Families

Concrete Support

Mandated
Reporters

Shift
Perception

Reduce
Stigma

Narrow
Front Door

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OCFS HEARS FAMILY LINE

1-888-55-HEARS (1-888-554-3277)

[HTTPS://OCFS.NY.GOV/PROGRAMS/CWCS/HEARS.PHP](https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/cwcs/hears.php)

PLEASE REACH OUT TO JERI GUIDRY OR TINA CALACONE WITH ANY
QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS:

JERI.GUIDRY@OCFS.NY.GOV CHRISTINA.CALACONE@OCFS.NY.GOV

THANK YOU!

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THE HEARTLINE

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A PEER WARMLINE . . .

- Provides immediate, confidential, time-limited support through deep listening, relatable recall, and resource connection before a crisis arises and/or escalates.
- Offers experience-based tele-support services by a responsively trained peer who “has been there.”
- Educates on the rights and resources of young adults and creates a safe space for the causes and concerns of youth to be meaningfully uplifted.
- Fosters a culture of self-agency which guides a young adult to problem-solve and design action steps for themselves.

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BENEFITS OF A WARMLINE

For Youth

- Timely connection. No wait list!
- Rebuilding trust. Shifting power dynamics of decision-making back to individuals.
- Real-time soundboard to address concerns and be heard.

For Families

- Crisis avoidance
- Breaking down peer isolation in homes & communities.
- Translating themes and opportunities in a way youth can absorb.
- Peer support resource for foster parents.

For Providers

- Increased referral engagement to community providers.
- Data collection that identifies gaps and trends.
- Drive down high cost of care/reduce "service detachment" of youth.
- Creates a foundation for meaningful peer support.

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THE HEARTLINE FRAMEWORK



LISTEN

Actively hear the caller and validate their feelings.



RELATE

Shared experiences rebuild trust and allow perspectives to shift.



CONNECT

Action step! Educate and empower through decision-making and follow-through.

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THE HEARTLINE

The WHO

- Young adults with current and/or prior involvement in the NYS child welfare system.
- Ages 14-21 residing in NYS.
- Seeking emotional and resource connection from a peer.

The WHAT

- All levels of child welfare placement.
- Emotional relatability through strategic listening by a relatable responder.
- Moving from grievances toward solutions.

The HOW

- Tuesday – Saturday 11 a.m.-7 p.m.
- Resource connections.
- Warm transfers.
- Deep data collection (caller & responder).

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RELATABLE TRAINING

- Crisis Awareness & Warm Transfers
- Ethics & Values
- Caller Safety
- Mental Health & Peer Recovery
- Emotional CPR
- Active Listening
- Strategic Sharing
- Secondary Trauma
- Suicide Prevention & Awareness
- Boundaries
- Telephone Etiquette
- Data & Documentation
- Supervision

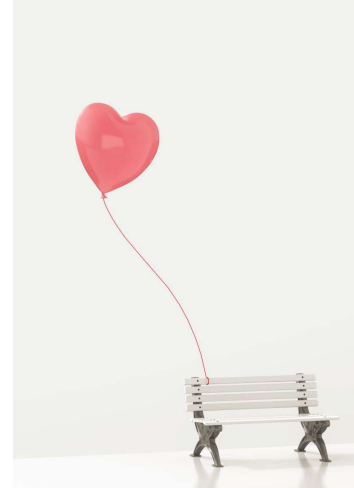


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LAUNCHING THE HEARTLINE

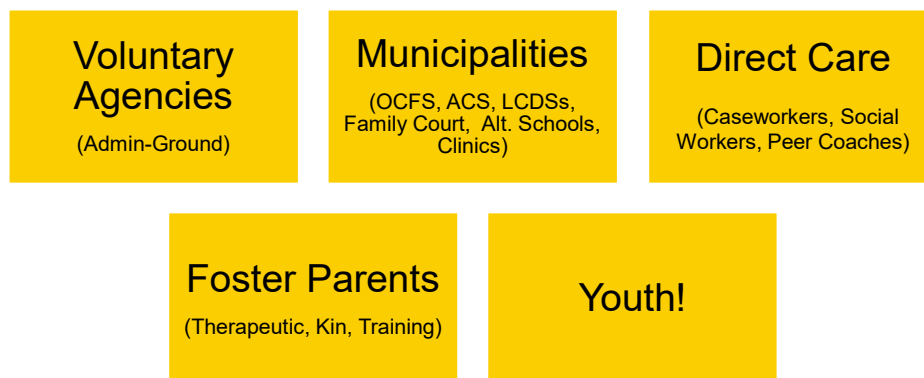
- **Marketing** - Identifying and creating program messaging that will span the state and inform ALL audiences.
- **Awareness** - Disseminating & educating on program information through a lens of knowledge equity that informs ALL audiences.
- **Access** - Identifying & addressing the gaps that exist to increase youth engagement with program/services in their home communities.



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INFORMATION STAKEHOLDERS



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RESOURCES AND CONNECTIONS PROVIDED

- Crisis & Emergency Services
- Support Groups
- Food Access
- Substance Abuse/Misuse/Addiction
- Housing/Shelter
- Legal Services
- Domestic Violence
- Education/GED
- Vocational/ Employment Readiness
- Young Parenting Services
- Therapy/Counseling/Grief
- LGBTQ+
- Medical
- Child Welfare Engagement



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WHO WILL CALL THE HEARTLINE

Young adults in need of
community-based
services

Young adults receiving
community-based
services

Young adults who have
chosen wellness without
connection to services

Young adults
experiencing challenges
while engaged in services

Family, caregiver, friends,
or peers of a young adult
impacted by the child
welfare system

Providers of a young
adult seeking information
on The Heartline

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STAY CONNECTED WITH US!

1-877-328-6423
www.Braveheartsmoveny.org
Info@Braveheartsmoveny.org



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