Wyoming County Department of Social Services
2020 FY Budget Narrative

Financial Overview:

The FY 2020 budget request is anticipated to be slightly less than the approved 2019 budget.

Admin levy – projected $99,956 increase
Program levy – projected $208,518 increase
Total levy – projected $308,474 increase

Some areas of the budget were lowered because the money budgeted for 2019 was not all used.

Programs:

Line item 6140 - Safety Net will increase to $675,000 (+$5,000)
Line item 6101 – Medical Assistance will increase to $25,000 (+$10,000)
Line item 6119 – Child Care (COH) will increase to $400,000 (+$193,518)

Administration:

Line item 6010.4.40201 Association Memberships will increase to $4950 (+$50.00)
Line item 6010.4.40401 Training/education- increase to $3000 (+$500)
Line item 6010.4.40404 Employee Expenses will increase to $1500 (+$500)
Line item 6010.4.40607 Post office box rent will increase to $200 (+$6)
Line item 6010.4.40803 Building supplies will increase to $1000 (+$200)
Line item 6010.4.40807 Snow removal will increase to $14,000 (+$3000)
Line item 6010.4.40917 ACS – increase to $$8295.43 (+$123)
Line item 6010.4.40944 IT – increase to $105,263.44 (+$7776)
Line item 6010.4.41111 Computers will increase to $53,613 (+$52,613)
Line item 6010.4.41401 Maintenance Agreement – increase to $10,000 (+$1000)
Line item 6010.4.42201 Transportation for visits – increase to $4000 (+$1000)
Line item 6010.4.42213 Misc. Fees will increase to $16,200 (+$1200)
Line item 6010.4.43005 Fraud Investigator – increase to $103,808.23 (+$27,993)
Line item – 6010.4.43014 County Attorneys – increase to $119,823.30 (+$2225) and $73,751.97 (+$1770)
Budget Narrative 2020 by KRB

All the above increases are based on past trending and current projected expenditures. All other budgeted line items are the same as 2019 approved budget. The majority of our budget increases are with the collaborative contracts we have with other county agencies. These include Information Technology, Sheriff’s Fraud Investigator, the 2nd Assistant County attorney and the part time attorney.

**Program Updates:**

The Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) is 100% federally reimbursed. The Federal and DSS SNAP Admin cost is 50%. Thus far Wyoming County SNAP caseloads decreased by about 50-55 cases per month in 2019 as compared to the same months in 2018. We currently have 1374 SNAP cases through the month of May.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) limits an able-bodied adult without dependents (ABAWD) to three months of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits in a 36-month period unless the individual is working or participating in certain employment and training activities. Federal statute authorizes the ABAWD requirements to be waived in states or areas within a state which are determined to meet or exceed certain unemployment rates. New York State does not meet the requirements for a statewide ABAWD waiver for calendar year 2019.

USDA is also proposing a new rule entitled “Revision of Categorical Eligibility in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). This may affect several million people and their eligibility for SNAP benefits.

The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) is a 100% federally funded program and covers 100% of admin costs up to the allocation amount. In FY 2019 we kept these funds in-house and had two of our clerical staff perform the HEAP eligibility determination functions. This proved successful and we will most likely continue this process in the future.

The number of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cases are hard to predict due to the current State and Federal economic picture. In 2018 the average number of cases per month was 74. So far in 2019 we have an average of 68 cases per month. However, we only have statistics through May. Most likely TA demands will continue to go down based on economic indicators. However, Safety Net numbers have increased. TA numbers do tend to decline in warmer weather months as there are more seasonal jobs for recipients. TANF funding assists families versus single people and parents try to obtain employment when they can and stay off TANF.

TANF dollars will continue to pay 100% of the costs for recipients of Family Assistance and Emergency Assistance for Families (EAF). We have seen an increase in the levy for the TANF program, specifically in EAF child care institution and EAF juvenile delinquent institution. Reimbursements for TANF remain unchanged.
The State increased the local share of Safety Net (SN) assistance from 50% to 71% to reduce the State share to 29%. Safety Net cases for each month in 2019 are the same or slightly higher than 2018 numbers. SN cases are single adult cases. We seem to have more SN cases than TANF. It is difficult to accurately project the total in SN expenditures, because it varies year-to-year and we only have data through May for FY 2019. Thus far, the average number for 2019 is 90 cases per month. Since SN also includes the cost of paying for burials we increased our expenditures slightly for 2020.

We budgeted less for day care in 2020 because we have used less thus far this year than last year at this time. We predict we will continue to need less money for daycare in 2020.

Wyoming County is a mandatory Medicaid Managed Care county. Current managed care providers include Fidelis Care, United Health Care, Blue Cross Blue Shield and Your Care Health plan. Current managed long-term care (MLTC) providers include Fidelis Care, Icircle, VNA Homecare Options (Nascentia Health) and Elderwood Health Plan. Each vendor offers and provides quality, affordable health care coverage to children and adults. DSS will continue to maintain an additional workload as we assist our customers in moving them over to a managed care plan.

Medical Assistance will increase because the state will be offering services under Community First Choice Options (CFCO) to those under Medicaid. Services such as a ramp for a disabled person, modifications to a vehicle to make it handicapped accessible, or modifications to a home to make it more handicapped accessible.

The State has been working on a phased-in takeover of the local government administration of the Medicaid program, financed initially by capping local Medicaid administration spending at the calendar (CY) 2011 levels. This process by the State has been slower than expected. The Department of Health’s timeline for completion of the takeover of Medicaid Administration has been expanded. It was initially thought that the take-over of the Medicaid Administration would result in a loss of local control and flexibility of Medicaid eligibility and would ultimately have a significant effect on our staffing. As of this date, the state takeover has not happened. Although some of our local numbers have decreased slightly, the harder cases are being referred back to the County for completion. The state does not have adequate staff to take on all the cases across the state, as previously planned. We currently have 2,015 Medicaid cases.

The Department of Health (DOH) has not given counties the weekly shares information for 2020 so we calculated our Medicaid budget based on last year’s weekly share of $99,764.00 per week. The Medicaid budget may need to be adjusted when the new weekly shares are provided to us. Medicaid costs take up the largest portion of our budget.

The foster care block grant allocation for FY 2018-19 is $1,066,364. This is a decrease of $48,333. In the previous FY of 2018-19 the allocation was reduced by $68,000. While the allocation was reduced less for 2020, the cost for foster care, regular, therapeutic and residential (institutional) rates continue to increase annually. Residential placements
make up the bulk of the payments under this allocation, and tuition payments continue to drive up this budget line. Last year at this time we had 13 youth in residential placements. We have reduced this to 9 youth, with two of these children potentially moving to a pre-adoptive home in the very near future so we should see some savings in the coming year.

Our regular and therapeutic foster care placement numbers are lower than last year during the same time frame. We currently have 31 youth in foster care. There are 9 youth residing in residential foster care placements. We have 21 children residing in therapeutic foster care (TFC) homes and 1 child in a regular foster home. We continue to offer preventive services to families in an effort to keep youth out of foster care and from returning to foster care. We also seek out relative resources for youth in the event they need to be removed from their home. The Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA), which the Federal government is mandating, will spur county agencies across the state to offer more services to families and youth to prevent them from coming into foster care.

The Detention Allocation and the STSJP Allocation have been split. The Detention Allocation remains at $43,713 and the STSJP Allocation remains at $40,000. The allocations are currently used to help fund the Intensive PINS Coordinator position at the Wyoming County Youth Bureau; the Hillside Children’s Center customized preventive services contracts and the New Directions Community Based Treatment (CBT) programs. In 2020 we plan to bring the funding used towards the Intensive PINS Coordinator back in house. We have a Caseworker who works exclusively with PINS youth so we will use the funding to supplement her salary. We will continue to use the remaining money to fund the other two listed programs through Hillside and New Directions.

Detention bills are always 3 years delayed and we never know what the daily rate will be until we receive the bill. Therefore, it’s hard to predict a cost. We know we will most likely be billed for the placement of 2 youth from 2016. We estimated how much it may cost to pay this bill. We dropped the cost a little based on the previous daily rate we were billed.

Any shortfall of detention prevention funding poses a significant shortfall in providing services to our PINS and JD population, as well as, our ability to contract for customized services with Hillside Children’s Services and New Directions CBT program. The use of these funds has been essential in our attempt to reduce the number of foster care placements, which ultimately saves the County money. We made good use of this funding in 2019 thus far and hope to continue to work towards keeping youth at home in 2020.

The costs of students who are placed in residential schools by the Committee on Special Education (CSE) remain the same. These costs are as follows; the State share is 18.4%, the school share is 38.4% and the local DSS share remains the same at 43.2%. This went into effect April 1, 2011. For students placed at the School for the Blind the costs are as follows: 46.06% State share and 53.94% is local DSS share. There is a youth currently placed in a specialized facility in Pennsylvania and we will be responsible to pay for this
youth’s maintenance fee in the amount of $570.00 per day. This youth was placed at the PA. facility last year, without our knowledge, and we only recently received a bill for the 2018-19 school year. This will need to be added to our budget for 2019-20 and falls under Child Care.

With each new child adopted, our adoption subsidy payments increase. There are currently 14 youth available for adoption. 9 youth are placed in pre-adoptive homes, and the remaining youth are in the process of being matched with potential adoptive parents. Foster care payments are paid from the Foster Care Block Grant up to the cap, anything above the cap is local levy. The adoption subsidy is paid under a different funding source and does not affect the Foster Care Block Grant cap.

The Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) continues to be an important program for youth, ages 14-20. The family must be a recipient of Family Assistance through DSS to qualify for the program. Community Action manages the SYEP. The SYEP allocation increased from $93,122 to $93,358 for the 2019-20 employment year. There was $9,336 allotted for DSS transfer to the FFFS, leaving an available allocation of $84,022 for the program.

“Raise the Age” (RTA) will began October 1, 2018 for 16 -year old youth. This means a 16- year old youth will not be placed in the prison system but will instead, come through a Youth Court designed specifically for RTA youth. Thus far we have not had any 16 year - old youth who have been deemed “raise the age”. RTA for 17-year old youth will start on October 1, 2019. The State has approved legislation for Raise the Age and there is money available at 100% re-imbursement as - long - as a county writes a proposed plan and requests funding. We finally received approval for our RTA plan in April of 2019. Collaborative efforts are already in place between OCA, the District Attorney, law enforcement, probation, schools and DSS to make sure these youths are provided the services that will be required. Several meetings were held to discuss the various services and we feel we are ready, should a youth need to be placed under RTA.

This agency contracts residential domestic violence services with ACCORD and Chances and Changes. We contract with RESTORE Sexual Assault Services for non-residential domestic violence services for the residents of Wyoming County through the Wyoming County Domestic Violence Project. This project works in collaboration with the District Attorney’s Office and the Family Court. Each year the funding streams go down and become more complicated to request. New York Public Welfare Association (NYPWA) and this agency are in opposition to any proposal that eliminates funding for non-residential domestic violence services. RESTORE Sexual Assault Services can apply for Federal Family Violence Prevention & Services Act (FFVPSA) grant funding. DSS can no longer apply for the FFVSP funding because we don’t provide the direct services.

Earlier this year new regulations were passed down to counties stating we can no longer request a DV victim to pay for any portion of their stay in a DV shelter. This puts more hardship on counties. In addition, we can’t mandate DV victims to apply for Temporary Assistance (TA), which would help pay for their stay in a shelter, yet we are required to
continue to pay the per diem rate to a shelter as established by the Office of Children and Family Services.

The elderly are a vulnerable population and the State continues to take steps to increase awareness. The Adult Services unit is critical in assisting this population. The Justice Center “Hot line” is in use for adult protective and vulnerable adult cases. The Justice Center has the potential to create an additional burden to an already busy adult services unit and each year the Title XX Block grant goes down, which provides funding for the aging population. As the population ages and greater independence is provided to mental health clients, the need for representative assistance services has increased. Our caseloads for adult protective and vulnerable adults have increased substantially over the past 5 years. This increase in services is absorbed by the Adult Services unit.

Title XX Block Grant
- Adult protective/DV - $28,692 a decrease of $1,192
- All other XX services - $12,205 an increase of $1,798.

Based on the collective bargaining agreement CSEA staff are entitled to request of their employer for cash payment, 2 benefit days per year if they desire. We no longer offer CSEA employees the option to tender additional vacation days. Schedule S and D buy-backs, for 5 to 10 - day blocks are at the discretion of and approval by the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors.

**Threats:**

**UNFUNDED MANDATES**

**Medicaid Administration:** The eventual State takeover of Medicaid Administration will have a direct impact on the direct and indirect staffing in the Medicaid unit and the service that the residents of Wyoming County now receive. The Medicaid Admin cap is projected to remain in place through 2019 and its future is not clear. There is still a need for County support to the Medicaid program. With no funding, this will pose a financial hardship on DSS and the County.

**Staffing:** We have had several employees retire or seek alternative employment over the past year. The five-year projection continues to show a potential 10% to 15% loss of our senior staff to retirement. This equates to a lot of lost experience. Senior Management has been having discussions on succession management to try and spur ideas on how best to continue to support the remaining staff. There are a few staff members who will retire over the next couple of years who have 30+ years of experience. It will be difficult to move others into those positions who only have a few years of experience on the job. Restrictions with the civil service rules and the collective bargaining agreement make it very difficult to fill these positions appropriately and timely. Some have put off retiring due to the lack of an affordable healthcare plan.

**Vehicles:** We continue to update the County Vehicle Projection Plan. We currently have 11 cars in the DSS fleet. Sometimes this number is adequate and other times it’s not. It depends on what is going on with our cases.
Two vehicles were budgeted for and purchased in 2018 to replace the 2 highest mileage cars. We did not receive the vehicles until early 2019. It is necessary to continue our cycle of purchasing new vehicles because as the vehicles increase their mileage, they need more repair and become a financial burden. The fleet is utilized by DSS staff and other County agencies for case management services and trainings. It is more cost effective to have a fleet of vehicles than reimburse staff for mileage. We continue to look at the cost of tires (i.e. winter tires), oil changes and routine maintenance as these costs from the County Highway keep going up. We have extended our oil changes from 3000 miles to 4000 miles to reduce costs.

**Foster Care:** It’s difficult to predict how many children may need foster care placement in any given year. With the frequent incidence of opioid use, we never know when a foster placement is needed. We try to reduce the number of foster care placements by placing children with relatives instead of placement in foster care. This is a hard area to control based on Family Court involvement with abuse and neglect cases and the PINS and Juvenile Delinquent cases.

We contract with Hillside Children’s Center to provide customized preventive services and Community Based Treatment services in an attempt to keep foster care placements low. These services provide an additional support network and training for the foster parents with the anticipation that the youth will return home sooner, thus reducing the cost of foster care. Admissions of sibling groups into foster care or a residential foster care placement has a significant impact on foster care funding.

**Housing:** Affordable and available housing is still a problem in Wyoming County for our homeless population as well as those applying for assistance. Housing and homelessness have been at the forefront in discussions at the state level. It is unclear what the future has in store for this housing program. Any shortfall in this program has a direct impact on DSS. The housing of sex offenders continues to be an issue. DSS has a responsibility to place paroled sex offenders, originally from Wyoming County back into the community. With a shortage of affordable housing and the reluctance of society to accept them back into the community it poses a significant problem for us to meet their needs. We continue to pay an average of $62.50 a day, to $1500.00 to $1875.00 a month rent in local and out-of-county motels to house the homeless. DSS currently collaborates with the Homeless Alliance of Western New York (HAWNY) Continuum of Care to assist the GOW (Genesee, Orleans, Wyoming) region with the homelessness problem. Ongoing research continues to be conducted in finding available housing options for our homeless population. The state is looking for ideas from counties on how best to serve this population.

**Juvenile Justice:** Several juvenile justice facilities have closed over the past 3-5 years. The state wants these young juvenile offenders to be offered services in the community to keep them out of the juvenile justice facilities. There is no additional funding attached to these services. With the closure of many of these facilities and the limited space left in the few facilities still open, both non-secure and secure, it is getting harder to find a
detention placement when one is needed. Raise the Age (RTA) has helped a little with placements as some of the bigger counties have built and/or renovated facilities to accommodate RTA youth. This in turn has made openings available for youth who are not RTA. The cost for detention is several hundred dollars per day. This puts a strain on our budget because we never know how many youth will need detention or for how long they may need to be placed.

Probation and DSS have been in discussion on the need for detention services. The preventive services that can be offered to offending youth in Wyoming County are limited. We have seen no additional funds, besides the STSJP funds, to help provide these services that will keep the youth in the community. A Caseworker has been hired to work specifically with Raise the Age youth and perhaps this role will make an impact on juvenile justice, as a whole.

**Detention:** There are currently two youth in OCFS Limited-Secured Detention. The State is currently two years behind on billing. We have not been billed yet, but from past indications the financial responsibility will be a huge impact on our budget. We will benefit from a lowering of the OCFS chargeback rates for detention placements. The current uncapped per-diem rates for secure detention and limited secure detention have not been released yet.

**ADA:** To abide with the American Disabilities Act (ADA) we currently contract with Interpretek-Communications Services, Inc., Rochester, NY to provide sign language interpreter services for current clients that require this service. Our cost for interpreter services has increased.

**Translation Services:** We have recently contracted with a private individual to provide translation services for clients with Limited English proficiency. This is an additional cost that will be necessary when translation services are needed.

**Information Technology:** DSS currently has 11 scanners. 3 large scanners and 8 small scanners that are used daily to maintain our files. The scanners we have are the original scanners and are no longer supported by the State. A plan has been developed to budget the replacement of the scanners as they age out and become in-operable.

DSS currently has and maintains, through the Information Technology (IT) unit, 92 personal computers. These computers are used daily for the day-to-day functions of the agency and are dependent on state servers and programs, as well as, county programs and services. This equipment is more than 12 years old and the state is no longer providing support for purchase or maintenance of computers and servers. The state is telling us we will soon need to purchase new computers as our current computers will not be compatible with upgraded programs. The cost to replace all of these computers will be substantial.
County Collaboration:

We contract with one Information Technology (IT) employee at Social Services. There is IT department support, if needed, down at the government center. We lose our IT employee for several days each year for election matters and personal time. The IT department head gives us 5% to reimburse for the salary of this person when he is gone, helping the Board of Elections. For 202 the IT department gave our IT staff person an 11% raise in pay. The computer support the IT employee provides allows staff to complete their work in a timely manner, stay on top of updates and work more efficiently. $105,263.44 (salary and fringe)

We have a contract with one Deputy Sheriff Fraud Investigator. This position assists the DSS Director of Programs and Fraud Investigator with the handling of FEDS, EVR and general referral complaints. He also provides security assistance and investigation assistance to DSS. $103,808.23 (salary and fringe)

We also contract with one Deputy Sheriff for Security Officer. This position makes a minimum of two visits to DSS daily and assists DSS with security concerns and communication between other county agencies. His presence allows the public to see him acts as a deterrent for security issues to occur. $65,518 (salary and fringe up to 66% reimbursement)

The Sheriff’s Department continues to bill DSS for serving subpoenas and mileage. There is an average of 25 to 30 subpoenas served monthly.

The Highway Department continues to provide and bill for services to DSS for snow removal, fuel and vehicle maintenance. The rates for snow removal and vehicle maintenance go up annually. We were hit hard with a bill in the first quarter of 2019 so we have added to our annual cost.

We contract with two Assistant County Attorneys. One performs DSS functions 100% of the time which includes Family Offense and Child Support and the other attorney works part time for child protective/child welfare cases. The County Attorney’s Office will budget for the legal secretary. DSS will budget the current funding for our 1st Assistant County Attorney (1.0fte) at $119,823.30. DSS will budget the 2nd Assistant County Attorney (1.0fte) at $73,751.97. WCDSS will budget $10,000 for a part time attorney when there are conflicts of interest on cases with the two full time attorneys. DSS will budget for the Assistant County Attorney’s to attend 1 day of the NYPWA Winter or Summer Conference to get her CLE’s (1 night in hotel). The remaining funding for conferences will need to be provided by the County Attorney’s Office or the attorney.

We will no longer be paying Probation for a PINS position in 2020. We plan to bring this money back to our coffers and use the money towards a Caseworker that we hired specifically to work with PINS youth. This means DSS will now be the lead agency for PINS diversion. PINS referrals will be made to the Probation department. Information will be forwarded to DSS and the assigned DSS staff will open the case preventively,
work with the families and enter information into Connections, the state computer system.

DSS currently supplements the salary of the PINS position with the Youth Bureau for Intensive PINS case management. In 202 we have decided not to do this. The current Intensive Caseworker has moved onto a different position at the Youth Bureau so it’s a good time to pull this money back to DSS.

The Office for the Aging currently assists DSS with HEAP applications. The contract with OFA will drop to $8,000. OFA did not process as many HEAP applications in 2019 as in previous years. Although we have maintained this funding to the Office for the Aging, DSS funding for HEAP administrative costs continue to go down. HEAP funding is 100% federal funding, up to the allocation.

Better coordination is needed between Building and Grounds that create contracts or provide services that affect DSS budget lines (i.e. cleaning, lawn mowing). Perhaps 2020 will be better as far as contracts being written for ongoing maintenance and repairs. DSS has shown a significant savings by ordering and storing our own cleaning supplies and paper products.

We are charged $225 per person for employee physicals or return to work clearances through Workplace Health at the Wyoming County Community Hospital (WCCH). We are also charged a $10.00 form fee (Return to Work Form), when an employee is cleared to come back to work. When a drug test is ordered through WCCHS it is a $60.00 charge per urine test and when an alcohol test is ordered it is $30.00 per test. These are increases from previous billings and continue to impact this budget.

DSS is required to provide eligibility determinations that include nursing and social assessments. DSS is responsible for all Type 1 personal care services. All Type 2 personal care services and Consumer Directed Personal Services will be handled by the State. To fulfill our obligations, DSS contracts with the Wyoming County Health Department to provide social assessments for personal care services. We have hired a Per-diem Registered Nurse to provide our nursing assessments for personal care services. All client information is connected to the UAS-NY computer system for personal care service record keeping. Social assessments will be billed at $125.00 for re-certification assessments and $200.00 for each new assessment. The Director of Children and Family Services maintains the administrative functions of the Personal Care program.

**Program Changes:**

No program changes

**Job Creations:**

No program changes.
Job Vacancies:

1 Sr Account Clerk
1 Community Services Aid Per-diem
1 Caseworker (Posted)
2 Program Specialist Trainees (waiting for results of the test)
1 Caseworker Per-diem
1 OTDA JOBS staff (Department of Labor)

Organization: (see organization chart)

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Respectfully submitted by:

Kimberley R. Barber, MSW
Commissioner