



Andrew M. Cuomo  
Governor

STATE OF NEW YORK  
**OFFICE OF INDIGENT LEGAL SERVICES**

80 S SWAN STREET, SUITE 1147  
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12210  
Tel: (518) 486-2028 Fax: (518) 474-5050  
E-Mail: [info@ils.ny.gov](mailto:info@ils.ny.gov)  
<http://www.ils.ny.gov>

William J. Leahy  
Director

Patricia J. Warth  
Counsel

**Improving the Quality of Mandated Representation Throughout the State of New York**

**INDIGENT LEGAL SERVICES BOARD MEETING**

September 25, 2020

Held at 230 Park Avenue, New York City

Link for Virtual Participation: [Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](#)

**AGENDA**

- I. Approval of Minutes of June 5, 2020 Meeting
- II. Allocation of FY 2020-21 Aid to Localities Appropriation (**vote**) (memo attached)
- III. ILS Budget Request for FY 2021-22 (**vote**) (memo attached)
- IV. Eighth Annual Report of the Board (**vote**) (attached)
- V. The impact of the state fiscal crisis upon our reform progress
- VI. Status of the Raise the Age Task Force report
- VII. Next meeting of the Board **December 4, 2020**

To: Indigent Legal Services Board

From: Bill Leahy

Re: Allocation of ILS FY 2020-21 Aid to Localities Appropriation (\$254.8 million)

Date: September 21, 2020

-----

At each of its previous September meetings, the Board has allocated the entirety of the ILS Aid to Localities appropriation for the current fiscal year. The purpose of this annual action is to enable the Office to (1) develop grants and distributions as authorized by the Board; (2) describe to providers, county and state officials the precise purposes for which the appropriated funds will be spent; (3) fulfill its obligations to implement the terms of the *Hurrell-Harring* settlement and the Statewide Expansion of *Hurrell-Harring* reforms; and (4) promote improvements in the quality of mandated representation in both Family Court and Criminal court.

At the outset, it should be noted that our FY 2020-21 Aid to Localities appropriation consists of the following five distinct categories:

1. Statutory Distribution to NYC: \$40,000,000
2. Quality Enhancement Distributions: \$30,210,880
3. Competitive Grants: \$10,789,120
4. HH Implementation in 5 Counties: \$23,810,000
5. Statewide Expansion of HH Reforms: \$150,000,000

Total Aid to Localities Appropriation = \$254,810,000.

In keeping with our annual practice and for the reasons stated above, I propose that the ILS FY 2020-21 Aid to Localities appropriation be allocated for the following purposes:

1. **Statutory Distribution (total: \$40,000,000).** The annual statutory distribution of \$40,000,000 to New York City, as mandated by State Finance Law § 98-b(3)(b). This statutory payment will be made to New York City in March of 2021.
2. **Quality Enhancement Distributions (total: \$30,210,880).** Quality enhancement distributions totaling \$30,210,880 under Executive Law § 832(3)(f) and § 833(7)(c), under which all counties and New York City will be enabled to receive no less state funding (a total of \$70,210,924) than they received in 2010. Of the \$30,210,880 total, the funds would be distributed as follows:

- **Distribution # 9.** \$7,361,326 represents the third year of a three-year distribution (“Distribution # 9”), which amount is identical to the amount allocated to upstate counties for the three-year distribution authorized by the Board at its September, 2015 meeting (“Distribution #6”).
- **Distribution # 10.** \$7,361,326 represents the second year of a new three-year distribution (“Distribution # 10”), which amount is identical to the amount allocated to upstate counties for the three-year distribution authorized by the Board at its September, 2016 meeting (“Distribution # 7”).
- **Distribution # 11.** \$15,488,228 represents the first year of a three-year distribution (“Distribution # 11”), which represents the continuation of the amount allocated to upstate counties and New York City for the three-year distribution authorized by the Board at its September, 2017 meeting (“Distribution #8”).

### 3. **Competitive Grants (total: \$10,789,120).**

- **Regional Immigration Resource Centers (RIAC) (\$3,194,510).** Grants in the amount of \$3,231,273 to finance the third year of a three-year program to continue or begin operations and increase funding of six Regional Immigration Assistance Centers in strategic locations within New York State.<sup>1</sup> This is the Second RIAC, as the Board has previously allocated three years of funding for the initial RIAC grant (FY 2011-12; FY 2012-13; FY 2013-14) in an amount of \$2,789,076 per year (\$8,367,228 over three years).
- **Quality Enhancement and Caseload Reduction (\$7,594,610).** Grants in the amount of \$7,594,610 that will finance the first and second years (\$3,797,305 each year) of a three year program to enhance quality and reduce caseloads in counties outside New York City (\$11,391,915 over three years). The Board has previously allocated three years of funding for the initial Quality Enhancement and Caseload Reduction grant (FY 2012-13; FY 2013-14; FY 2014-15), and for the second such grant (FY 2015-16; FY 2016-17; and FY 2017-18).<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> The Board previously allocated funds totaling \$6,617,040 for the first and second years of these grants (\$3,308,520 each allocated in FY 2018-19 and FY 2019-20). After a competitive process, grants in the amount of \$3,270,516 per year (a three year total of \$9,811,550) were awarded. The \$3,194,510 for year three brings the total to the \$9,811,550 awarded.

<sup>2</sup> For the second Quality Enhancement and Caseload Reduction grants, the Board allocated \$4,178,658 per year, for a three year total of \$12,535,974. Of this, grants in the amount of \$3,797,305 per year

- **Upstate Parental Representation Grant.** In December 2019, ILS awarded an Upstate Parental Representation grant to Westchester County to create the first Model Parental Representation Office outside of New York City. The Board had approved \$870,139 per year (\$2,610,417 over three years) for this grant in the FY 2014-15; FY 2015-16; FY 2016-17 budget allocations. It is our intention in the coming year to issue an RFP for another three-year Upstate Parental Representation Grant to create a second Model Parental Representation Office outside of New York City. (See attached memo, “**Improving Parental Representation in a Time of Fiscal Crisis**”). At the September 2018 and 2019 meetings, the Board approved funding in the amount of \$870,139 for each of the first two years of this grant. We intend to request the Board’s approval at the September 2021 meeting for funding the third year of \$870,139 for a total of \$2,610,417 for this grant (via FY 2018-19, FY 2019-20, FY 2021-22 budget allocations).

#### 4. Implementation of *Hurrell-Harring* (HH) Settlement Order (total: \$23,810,000)

- **Quality Improvement Funding (\$2,000,000).** \$2,000,000 represents the fourth year of a five-year contract to implement the plan developed by ILS to improve the quality of indigent defense in the five *Hurrell-Harring* settlement counties (Onondaga, Ontario, Schuyler, Suffolk and Washington).
- **Counsel at First Appearance (\$2,000,000).** \$2,000,000 represents the first year of a second contract to implement the written plan developed by ILS to provide each eligible criminal defendant in the five *Hurrell-Harring* settlement counties (Onondaga, Ontario, Schuyler, Suffolk and Washington) with counsel at his or her first appearance.<sup>3</sup>
- **Counsel at First Appearance Grant Program (\$800,000).** \$800,000 represents the amount appropriated for the second year of a three-year contract to ensure that the four Settlement Counties participating in ILS’s first three-year Counsel at First Appearance Grant program (Onondaga, Ontario, Schuyler and Suffolk) will continue to receive the same level of funding as was provided under that program.

---

(\$11,391,915 three year total) were awarded. The proposed allocation is to continue the programs implemented with the second Quality Enhancement and Caseload Reduction grants.

<sup>3</sup> The term of the second Hurrell-Harring Counsel at First Appearance contract is yet to be determined by the Division of Budget but should be at least a three year term (January 2021 – December 2023).

- **Caseload Relief (\$19,010,000).** \$19,010,000 represents the amount appropriated for the first year of a second three-year contract to provide caseload relief for indigent legal service providers in the five *Hurrell-Harring* settlement counties. The \$19,010,000 figure was derived from the Caseload Standards determination submitted by ILS in December of 2016 for the five Settlement counties.

**5. Statewide Expansion of *Hurrell-Harring* (HH) Reforms (total: \$150,000,000)**

- **Implementation of December 1, 2017 plans (\$150,000,000).** \$150,000,000 represents the third year appropriation of the five year period for implementing the plans submitted by the Office on December 1, 2017 to extend the *Hurrell-Harring* reforms statewide (counsel at arraignment, quality improvement and caseload relief). The appropriation authorizes the transfer of funds to state operations for purposes such as establishing regional support centers and hiring data specialists.

**OFFICE OF INDIGENT LEGAL SERVICES: FY 2021-22 BUDGET PROPOSAL**

	<u>Amount Requested</u>	<u>Increase over FY 2020-21</u>
<b><u>State Operations</u></b>		
<b>FY 2020-21 Funding: \$6,463,000 (\$6.46 million)</b>		
Office Staff	\$6.638 million*	\$175,000
<b>Total State Operations</b>	<b>\$6.638 million</b>	<b>\$175,000</b>
<b><u>Aid to Localities</u></b>		
<b>FY 2020-21 Funding: \$254,810,000 (\$254.8 million)</b>		
Current grant/distribution programs	\$81 million	\$0
Current HH programs	\$23.8 million	\$0
Statewide HH expansion	\$200 million**	\$50 million
Parental Representation Aid	\$5 million	\$5 million
<b>Total Aid to Localities</b>	<b>\$309.8 million</b>	<b>\$55 million</b>
<b><u>Total ILS FY 2020-21 Request</u></b>	<b><u>\$316.438 million</u></b>	<b><u>\$55.175 million</u></b>

\*Includes funding for: (a) staff positions which have been funded in previous budget years *except* for the Assistant Executive Assistant position; (b) two requested new positions of Family Court Research Specialist and Assistant IT Manager; and (c) full annualization costs of new FY 2020-21 and FY 2021-22 positions, including the 2% salary raises that were awarded in 2019 and have been deferred because of the coronavirus-related budget crisis. It does not include the two (2) ILS Data Officer positions, as they are to be funded via a budget transfer of approximately \$217,000 from Aid to Localities to State Operations. (See below).

\*\*\$200 million would be the 4<sup>th</sup> year of the 5 year phase-in of Statewide HH Expansion (\$50 million/yr., \$250 million over 5 years). The \$200 million would include funding for a Regional Support Center in the 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District, which DOB had approved before the Covid-related hiring freeze, and two ILS Data Officers.



Andrew M. Cuomo  
Governor

STATE OF NEW YORK  
**OFFICE OF INDIGENT LEGAL SERVICES**

80 S SWAN STREET, SUITE 1147  
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12210  
Tel: (518) 486-2028 Fax: (518) 474-5050  
E-Mail: [info@ils.ny.gov](mailto:info@ils.ny.gov)  
<http://www.ils.ny.gov>

William J. Leahy  
Director

Patricia J. Warth  
Counsel

**Improving the Quality of Mandated Representation Throughout the State of New York**

To: Indigent Legal Services Board

From: Bill Leahy

Re: Improving Parental Representation in a Time of Fiscal Crisis

Date: September 21, 2020

We currently face two realities, as the coronavirus pandemic has created a very serious fiscal crisis in New York and the nation. The first reality is that the State has extremely limited fiscal ability to sustain existing programs, much less fund new initiatives, however worthy. The second reality is that legally mandated parental representation in New York is seriously in need of comprehensive and expensive reform, as conclusively demonstrated by the Commission on Parental Legal Representation's Interim Report to Chief Judge DiFiore in February, 2019.

Neither of these realities may be ignored. We must move forward with parental representation reform energetically, creatively and persistently, while recognizing the grim fiscal atmosphere in which we operate. Our approach has been to proceed on multiple fronts, pushing reform where it is achievable and affordable. Thus, we are:

- Working with Legal Services of Hudson Valley and Westchester County to assure the success of our first Upstate Model Family Representation Office.
- Preparing an RFP for a second Upstate Model Family Representation Office, using previously appropriated funds.
- Requesting, for FY 2021-22, an Aid to Localities appropriation of \$5 million for the improvement of parental representation, and a modest State Operations appropriation to hire a dedicated Family Court Research Specialist.
- Negotiating with the State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) to gain access to federal funds for the improvement of parental representation in Child Welfare cases.
- Finalizing, for the Board's consideration at its December 2020 meeting, Eligibility Standards for Family Court that will assure timely access to counsel for parents, as recommended by the Commission on Parental Legal Representation.
- Presenting Family Court Workload/Caseload Standards to the Board, contingent upon the provision of state funding sufficient to permit compliance with the new Standards.
- Coordinating with logistical partners to provide, free of charge, the Families Matter CLE programming online for the family defense community. The first in the series will be *Interrupting Bias; Creating Curiosity for Stronger Family Defense Practice*, presented by Pooja Kothari, Esq., founder of [Boundless Awareness, LLC](http://BoundlessAwareness.com).

## Fiscal Year 2021-22 ILS Staff Positions

### Previously Funded ILS Staff Positions

The final enacted FY 2020-21 budget included funding for these positions, which ILS has not yet filled:

- Assistant Grants Manager 1
- Assistant Grants Manager 2
- Grants Administrator 2
- Assistant Executive Assistant

The Grants Unit positions continue to be critical to ILS's continued efforts to grow and professionalize the Grants Unit to better address the pressing workload generated by ten distributions, the competitive grants, the *Hurrell-Harring* Settlement implementation, and the *Hurrell-Harring* Statewide Expansion implementation. The current hiring freeze caused by the coronavirus-related budget crisis has not allowed us to fill these positions as soon as we had intended, but we will do so when permitted.

At this time, ILS does not intend to fill the Assistant Executive Assistant position having determined a more pressing need for the two requested additional positions below.

### Requested Additional Positions

We request these two additional ILS staff positions:

#### **#1. Family Court Research Specialist (projected annual salary range: \$50k-\$60k)**

As part of last year's budget request, and with the approval of this Board, ILS requested funding to hire a six-person Parental Representation Unit (composed of two attorney positions, a Senior Researcher, a Research Specialist, an Analyst, and a Student Assistant). This year, our request for a single position – a Family Court Research Specialist – is a more modest request but one that still recognizes the importance of improving the quality of mandated Parental Representation. This Research Specialist position would be supervised by Melissa Mackey, Director of Research, in consultation with Angela Burton, Director of Quality Improvement, Parental Representation. This additional research position would work with providers on collecting and analyzing parental representation data and to conduct much needed qualitative and quantitative research about the quality of parental representation. This research capacity will also be instrumental with implementation of the ILS standards for determining financial eligibility for assignment of counsel in Family Court matters as well as monitoring caseloads toward implementation of caseload standards.

#### **#2. Assistant Manager of Information Services (projected annual salary range: \$60-\$70K)**

At present, the technology needs of the Office are handled solely by one person, the Manager of Information Services. While this arrangement worked in the early years when the Office was small, it is no longer feasible for one person, however talented, to handle all of responsibilities



attendant to an expanding Office with many new, complicated technology needs. The extensive and highly-specialized duties of the Manager of Information Services include the following:

- Acting as Office liaison with ITS and other external agencies and vendors on IT-related matters
- Implementing technical plans for network enhancement
- Installing appropriate equipment in the Office
- Enhancing and upgrading systems to collect and report data
- Enhancing information systems and managing and upgrading the Office's website and other internet communication

These responsibilities are in addition to meeting the day-to-day technology needs of the entire Office and the constant need for arranging remote access meetings with indigent legal service providers and county officials.

The coronavirus crisis highlighted the importance of this position. With almost no advance notice, the Office had to pivot from working on location (including travelling to meet with providers and local officials) to working from home and conducting meetings remotely. This not only required remote access set-up in the homes of all ILS staff, but also access the technology and training needed to conduct virtual meetings. While Peter Avery, our Manager of Information Services, rose to this challenge, it became clear that having only one person responsible for these essential tasks places ILS in a potentially precarious position.

The Assistant Manager of Information Services would not only assist the Manager of Information Services to ensure that the immediate technology needs of the Office are met but would also satisfy a longer term concern of the Office – providing the necessary training and development of expertise to ensure continuity in the delivery of technology services, in the event the Manager of Information Services is unable to do so.

## **ILS Statewide Appellate Center**

### **Introduction**

An ILS Statewide Appellate Center, based in Albany, would provide an economical and powerful way to advance the quality of appellate and post-conviction public criminal defense representation statewide, as well as providing effective litigation support to defenders statewide.

Mandated appellate representation in criminal defense is terribly fragmented in New York. In New York City, four well-established institutional providers collectively offer excellent appellate and post-conviction representation to most criminal defendants in the five boroughs, including collateral litigation. Nassau, Suffolk, and Westchester counties have Legal Aid Societies with appellate units; strong appeals units exist at institutional offices in major cities in the Fourth Department—Buffalo, Rochester, and Syracuse; and several public defenders have a single appellate attorney. Finally, multiple counties in the Third Department contract with the Rural Law Center of New York for appellate representation.

Aside from these resources, appellate representation is provided by 18-B counsel with varying levels of experience and resources. Even the larger appellate units outside New York City generally do not engage in post-conviction litigation, which often offers the most promising avenue for relief. Several offices have a significant appeals backlogs which may impede aggressive action on current cases. While statewide funding may address some of these issues, a Statewide Appellate Center could provide the most potent means of navigating our challenging appellate landscape and balancing the scales of appellate justice.

### **Litigation**

A statewide appellate center could significantly advance the quality of appellate and post-conviction representation in multiple ways. It could, for example:

- (1) Upon request, provide consultation to appellate attorneys handling direct appeals, including as to issue selection, legal analysis, brief review, moot courting, and motions for leave to appeal to the Court of Appeals. Such consultation may be extensive in complex cases, such as those involving lengthy pretrial and trial transcripts, severe sentences, and complicated facts and legal issues.
- (2) Upon request, provide consultation regarding post-conviction applications and special litigation, including:
  - Applications pursuant to CPL 460.50 for bail pending appeal;
  - Motions pursuant to CPL 440.10 to set aside a judgment of conviction;
  - Motions pursuant to CPL 440.20 to set aside an illegal sentence;
  - Motions pursuant to CPL 440.47 for resentencing under the Domestic Violence Survivors Justice Act (DVSJA);
  - Appeals under the Sex Offender Registration Act;
  - Appeals concerning civil commitment under Mental Hygiene Law Article 10;
  - Litigation regarding housing compliant with the Sexual Assault Reform Act;

- Parole advocacy, including CPLR Article 78 proceedings; and
  - Writs of habeas corpus pursuant to CPLR Article 70.
- (3) Provide litigation support to defense counsel statewide, including regarding:
- Motions to dismiss defective accusatory instruments;
  - Motions to controvert search warrants;
  - Discovery and bail review;
  - Legal research and analysis;
  - Motions in limine;
  - Sentencing mitigation reports; and
  - Advocacy for alternate sentencing under Penal Law § 60.12.
- (4) Greatly expand resources available on the ILS appellate website.
- (5) Establish a program to ensure that prison client visits and legal calls occur where warranted.
- (6) Provide a regular regimen of free, online CLEs and non-CLE webinars on appellate topics.

## **Staff**

The Appellate Center would be staffed by six experienced full-time attorneys, a paralegal or administrative assistant, and a part-time investigator and part-time social worker. Contract attorneys could be utilized as an alternative to some of the staff attorney manpower; and qualified pro bono attorneys at local firms and law student interns could provide further assistance. One of the full-time attorneys would be designated as the office supervisor and would report to the ILS Director of Quality Enhancement for Appellate and Post-Conviction Representation, who would oversee the Center.

## **Value**

The value and impact of a Statewide Appellate Center on the quality of criminal justice would be profound. By offering the services described above, the Appellate Center could help ensure that appellate representation meets ILS Standards and could help prevent and overturn wrongful convictions. The staff attorneys could collaborate with each other; share research and analysis; and create a brief and motion bank indexed by subject matter, which could be available both internally and to defense counsel statewide.

In addition, the Appellate Center could serve the interests of justice by creating greater parity between the prosecution and defense. For 25 years, prosecutors statewide have enjoyed significant litigation, appellate, and training support from the New York Prosecutors Training Institute, a nonprofit which receives \$3 to \$4 million in state funding, has a staff of nine attorneys and a dozen non-attorneys, and offers a range of services. NYPTI serves as a back-up center for 39 counties with 10 or less assistant district attorneys, including by second-chairing at trial, preparing motions, offering advice and consultation, and providing appellate representation. In addition, NYPTI offers comprehensive training programs and podcasts; a case management system used by 55 counties; a new Digital Evidence Management System designed to help prosecutors comply with new

discovery laws; and a robust website. (The above information is based primarily on 2019 Budget Hearing Testimony from NYPTI and 2020 Budget Hearing Testimony from the District Attorneys Association of the State of New York.) This robust, state funded appellate support for local prosecutions finds no parallel in the arena of publicly funded criminal defense. The scales of appellate justice are sorely out of balance.

## **Timeliness**

New York laws have changed in many ways that intensify the compelling rationale for a Statewide Appellate Center sooner rather than later. These changes include:

- Over the last decade, forensic practices, in matters involving cell phones, DNA analysis, and many other areas, have become far more complex and require greater expertise and specialization by appellate and post-conviction counsel.
- Over the last several years, the impact of draconian immigration laws on non-citizen criminal defendants has greatly increased the importance of effective post-conviction litigation.
- In May 2019, the Domestic Violence Survivors Justice Act was enacted, and effective advocacy for alternate prospective sentencing and resentencing requires extensive training and resources, which many providers lack.
- Effective November 2019, County Law § 722 was amended to provide a right to counsel for CPL Article 440 motions where counsel has been assigned to the appeal; but 18-B attorneys lack the training and expertise to fully effectuate this important amendment.
- Effective January 2020, criminal justice reforms encompassed a unique expedited appellate review process of certain discovery orders; and trainings have failed to delve into this new mechanism.
- Starting in March 2020, the coronavirus pandemic has dramatized the importance of appellate counsel who are trained and poised to use a wide variety of legal mechanisms for criminal defense clients, such as state writs of habeas corpus and clemency applications, in situations transcending the current health crisis.
- Triggered largely by the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis in May 2020, there has been a cultural, legal, and political shift in attitudes nationwide in recognizing racial inequities and police misconduct and resulting unjust arrests, convictions, and sentences. Outstanding, aggressive advocacy will be needed to fully capitalize on this new sensibility and resulting New York law reforms, and to achieve more just outcomes in trial and appellate courts on behalf of clients who have suffered discrimination or other abuses in the criminal justice process.



Andrew M. Cuomo  
Governor

STATE OF NEW YORK  
**OFFICE OF INDIGENT LEGAL SERVICES**

80 S SWAN STREET, SUITE 1147  
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12210  
Tel: (518) 486-2028 Fax: (518) 474-5050  
E-Mail: [info@ils.ny.gov](mailto:info@ils.ny.gov)  
<http://www.ils.ny.gov>

William J. Leahy  
Director

Patricia J. Warth  
Counsel

**Improving the Quality of Mandated Representation Throughout the State of New York**

To: Indigent Legal Services Board  
From: Bill Leahy  
Re: FY 2021-2022 Budget Request  
Date: September 21, 2020

Patricia and I are pleased to submit to you a budget request for FY 2021-22 in the amount of \$316.4 million, consisting of \$309.8 million in Aid to Localities and \$6.6 million in State Operations. This request marks an increase of \$55.1 million over the current year appropriation of \$261.26 million (\$254.8 million in Aid to Localities plus \$6.46 in State Operations).

Please see the specific components of this request in the attached **Office of Indigent Legal Services: FY 2021-22 Budget Proposal**. As indicated therein, with respect to State Operations, we seek to add two additional staff positions and to fully annualize the costs of new positions filled during the current fiscal year. An overview of ILS staffing and the new positions for which we are seeking funding is described in the attached **FY 2021-22 ILS Staff Positions**.

Our request for Aid to Localities funding is in the amount of \$309.4 million, an increase of \$55 million. Fifty million dollars would finance the fourth year of the five-year statewide reform implementation pursuant to Executive Law § 832(4). In accordance with the Statewide Implementation Plans that we submitted December 1, 2017, this includes a transfer of \$217,000 in funds to State Operations for the hiring of two Data Officers. It also includes the transfer of \$1.1 million in funds to State Operations for the creation of our first Regional Support Center (RSC) in the 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District (Western NY). This transfer was approved by the Division of Budget prior to the coronavirus crisis and the State hiring freeze. Once we are able, ILS will begin the hiring process for this RSC. As indicated in our September 2019 letter to the Board, we continue to review and where appropriate amend the details of our vision for additional Centers. Accordingly, we have amended our plans to include the creation of a Statewide Appellate Center. (See Cynthia Feathers' memorandum, **ILS Statewide Appellate Center**). For additional Regional Support Centers, we will continue to explore the geographic areas of greatest immediate need, and to evolve our plans to suit current conditions and to maximize the efficiency with which each Center will operate.

The additional \$5 million we have requested would enable us to offer counties and providers a grants program specifically tailored to elevate the quality of parental representation, particularly in upstate New York. (See memorandum **Improving Parental Representation in a Time of Fiscal Crisis**). With the Upstate Quality Enhancement and Caseload Reduction grants, ILS has demonstrated that even a modest amount of funding can be effectively used to promote meaningful reform, and ILS intends to capitalize on that experience with this requested \$5 million appropriation.

Our Aid to Localities request also includes continuation of current funding levels for grants and distributions to the counties (\$81 million), for HH settlement implementation in the five counties (\$23.8 million), and for expansion of the HH reforms statewide (\$150 million).