



Office of Children and Family Services

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Local Commissioners Memorandum

Transmittal:	25-OCFS-LCM-08
To:	Municipal Youth Bureau Directors
Issuing Division/Office:	Division of Youth Development and Partnerships for Success
Date:	June 18, 2025
Subject:	Municipal Allocations for Youth Sports and Education Opportunity Funding for Program Year October 1, 2025 – September 30, 2026
Contact Person(s):	See section V.
Attachments:	Appendix A: <i>Municipal Youth Sports and Education Opportunity Funding Allocations, October 1, 2025 – September 30, 2026</i> <u>OCFS-5011, Universal Application for Youth Sports Funding</u>

I. Purpose

The purpose of this Local Commissioners Memorandum (LCM) is to advise municipal youth bureaus on the availability of Youth Sports and Education Opportunity Funding (YSEF) allocations for program year October 1, 2025 – September 30, 2026.

II. Program Implications

The New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) issues YSEF allocations to municipal youth bureaus. Each youth bureau must submit to OCFS one Resource Allocation Plan (RAP) for each program to be funded. Additional details on how to complete a RAP can be found in the Quality Youth Development System (QYDS) under “BYD and System Documents.”

YSEF awards are guided by the following principles:

- Sports are effective tools in effectuating positive youth development and family engagement.
- Sports improve the lives of young people by promoting positive social, emotional, health, and educational outcomes and have important life-long effects.
- Sports enable opportunities for young people to thrive through leadership roles.
- Coaching education greatly improves young people's sports experience and development outcomes.

Funded programs must provide a variety of sports for a broad range of youth in under-resourced communities. OCFS encourages a wide and flexible definition of sports that encompasses any organized activities with movement, including physical fitness activities such as yoga, hiking, dance, and active outdoor pursuits.

To ensure that funding is going to the intended population, municipal youth bureaus must distribute funds based on local need,¹ considering factors including, but not limited to, the following:

- Historically under-resourced communities.
- Marginalized communities or groups with higher barriers to participation in sports (e.g., youth with disabilities; Indigenous peoples; girls; transgender/gender non-binary youth; and youth who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or questioning).
- Federally and/or New York State-recognized tribes and tribal organizations.
- Communities with high rates of public housing and/or family homelessness.
- Opportunity Zones or neighborhoods/cities/areas deemed “low-income” via externally available tools like the New York State Council on Children and Families Kids’ Well-Being Indicators Clearinghouse.
- Neighborhoods that experience higher rates of crime and violence and have lower-performing schools.

Municipalities with detention facilities, residential runaway and homeless youth programs, and other congregate residential settings supporting disconnected youth are strongly encouraged to offer opportunities to youth in these settings using YSEF.

All funded programs must aim to foster the following:

- Educational connection and achievement – More youth attending and completing school with increased attainment, including collegiate placement success.
- Physical health and well-being – Increasing physical activity and positive relationships to one’s body.
- Mental health and well-being – Improving outcomes related to youth’s mental health, and social and emotional skills development and connectedness.
- Employment – Increasing qualifications and skills, such as collective problem-solving, teamwork, and dispute resolution, which help prepare youth for suitable employment.
- Community cohesion – Breaking down barriers to reduce discrimination, crime, and violence in communities and help young leaders emerge.

Requirement to Advertise

To provide equitable access to government funding, OCFS has developed a universal application form that must be used as part of the procurement process by municipal youth bureaus (see appended form OCFS-5011, *Universal Application for Youth Sports Funding*). In addition, the opportunity to apply for funding at the local level must be widely advertised, and adequate time frames for inquiries and application must be provided. Municipal youth bureaus must provide information and technical assistance to interested organizations on how to apply for available funding.

In instances where counties have multiyear contracts in place as of the effective date of this LCM, those counties may request a waiver from the advertising requirement in program year 2025-2026. Waiver requests must be submitted in writing to YouthBureau@ocfs.ny.gov and include the following information:

¹ Data sources to consult in assessing local need include, but are not limited to, the New York State Council on Children and Families Kids’ Well-Being Indicators Clearinghouse, <https://www.nyskwic.org/>; public data from the New York State Education Department, <https://data.nysed.gov/>; and youth arrest data from the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, <https://www.criminaljustice.ny.gov/crimnet/ojsa/juvenilearrests/index.htm>.

- A letter on municipal letterhead addressed to OCFS requesting a waiver from the advertisement requirement for YSEF in program year 2025-2026 due to pre-existing multiyear contracts.
- Documentation verifying the county has already executed contract(s) using 2025-2026 YSEF funds.

Eligibility and Funding

Municipal youth bureaus will contract with local organizations, municipalities, and/or local youth bureaus directly for up to \$50,000 per program. Contracted local entities should have an organizational focus on developing community-based sports programs for youth. Organizations that serve multiple areas through different programs may be funded above \$50,000. Municipal youth bureaus may also directly operate one or more programs with a budget of \$50,000 or less per program using YSEF funds. Funding may provide general operating dollars to give programs flexibility to efficiently allocate resources for quality programming.

Line-item budgets should focus on programming costs, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Coaches/instructors/direct service staff/mentors (including training/professional development necessary to support youth's ability to participate in sports).
- Purchase of equipment or uniforms.
- Educational programming costs.
- Facility/field space cost.
- Purchase of automated external defibrillators (AEDs) to support the requirements of Chapter 681 of the Laws of 2023, as amended by Chapter 9 of the Laws of 2024.

Programs eligible for funding must meet the criteria below:

- Provide physical recreation and/or sports activities for youth ages 6-17.
- Operate in New York State.
- Demonstrate basic competency in the areas of governance, monitoring and evaluation, partnership, and financial stewardship.
- Have a child protection policy in place that includes adherence to local city, agency, school district, and state child protection guidelines.
- Have the ability to collect registration data, including participant demographic information, as required by OCFS in a manner that allows for accurate reporting of anonymized aggregate data.

Organizations, expenditures, and activities not eligible for funding are the following:

- For-profit organizations or businesses.
- Private foundations, as defined in section 509(a) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code.
- Organizations that discriminate based on age, ethnicity/race, political affiliation, religion, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, physical or other disability, national origin, or any protected characteristic under local, state, and/or federal law.
- Research or project-planning activities.
- Elite or private sports camps, programs, or teams.
- Endowments, memorials, budget deficits, or fundraising activities.
- Religious organizations whose sports programs do not have a secular and community focus.
- Lobbying, political, or fraternal activities.
- Capital projects.

Touchstone Life Areas and Services, Opportunities and Supports (SOS) in QYDS

Municipal youth bureaus will be required to report demographics and outcomes through QYDS. The Life Area and SOS selections that will be required in QYDS for YSEF are as follows:

- Life Area: 2PEH Physical and Emotional Health
- SOS: 0232 Year-Round/Seasonal Activities
- Performance measures:
 - How Much: 0232A.1 – Number of youth participating (unduplicated)
 - How Well: 0232B.4 – Percent of youth completing the program
 - Better Off: 0232C.2 – Number and percent of youth who attain or improve on a skill and/or report an increase in knowledge/awareness

III. Allocation Methodology

Allocations are based on a minimum allocation of \$20,000 with the balance proportionately split based on each municipality's population of youth under the age of 18.

In rare instances, a municipal youth bureau may identify midyear that it has been allocated YSEF funds that it cannot spend or claim. When this occurs, counties are encouraged to contact OCFS as soon as possible. Sharing this information with OCFS may allow those unused funds to be reallocated to another municipal youth bureau with demonstrated fiscal need. When counties demonstrate fiscal need by accurately completing the RAP, they may become eligible to receive additional funds should the funds become available. OCFS may reallocate any unclaimed allocation to municipalities with demonstrated need after the close of the claiming period.

IV. Claiming

All claims must directly support the YSEF program. A maximum of 15% of the municipality's total YSEF allocation may be used to support administration/overhead costs for municipal youth bureaus. State share is available for 100% of eligible expenditures as included in the approved RAP. Additional details on how to complete a RAP and submit claims can be found in QYDS under "BYD and System Documents."

Claims for the program period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026, are due 3/31/2027.

Documentation that must be submitted by municipal youth bureaus to OCFS for a claim to be processed includes:

- County Implemented Programs
 - An original State Aid Voucher (AC-1171), with the program number assigned by QYDS, boxes 4 through 8 completed, and an original authorized signature.
 - Supporting backup documentation, which may include but is not limited to:
 - *Program Expenditure Report – Salaries* (OCFS-3126)
 - *Program Expenditure Report – Fringe Benefits* (OCFS-3127)
 - *Program Expenditure Report – Contracted Services & Stipends* (OCFS-3128)
 - *Program Expenditure Report – M&O and Facility Repairs* (OCFS-3129)
 - Additional documentation provided by the municipality (ex. payroll register), so long as the documentation provided includes all information required on the OCFS forms.
 - For claims covering more than one program, forms OCFS-3125 through OCFS-3129 are required for each program.