

Advocates' Strength in Numbers, Persistence Deliver Recent Supplemental Wins

After months of work by Michigan's Children and so many other amazing advocates around the state, conversations with lawmakers over and over again about reinstating some critical programs – not partisan or pork -- that were vetoed and transferred out of the state budget last year, we are relieved to finally see a budget supplemental for FY20 taking into account the needs of the most vulnerable children, youth and families pass the House and Senate and now moves to the Governor for her signature. One of the supplemental budgets passed included funding for several of our priorities that you've been hearing us talk about, and you've likely heard from the amazing advocates in these networks talking about them as well

- \$250,000 for Adoption Family Support Network. You can listen to a recording from [Brooke VanProoyen](#) talking about the critical importance of this work.
- \$500,000 for Court Appointed Special Advocates program (CASA). You can hear how [Nicole Calver's](#) struggles were made easier by her CASA volunteer, and how [Patty Sabin](#) continued to believe that policymakers would do the right thing, even though it took a long time.
- \$800,000 for Runaway and Homeless Youth Prevention and Support programs. Take a look at two stories from [formerly homeless young people](#), as well as lots of other resources as we helped that network keep pushing for this investment.
- \$250,000 for the School Success Partnership Program, where student needs don't get in the way of their learning and success.

Our appreciation is nearly exclusively reserved for the individual advocates and organizations whose tireless outreach work with us finally secured this and other vital funding. Together, as unified advocates, we can take pride in knowing each of the direct constituent meetings, phone calls and visits – both in district and in Lansing – convinced legislators to take action to correct the shortcomings in previous supplemental budget proposals.

You may remember back in December, our opinion piece [via Bridge Magazine](#) that underlined the sense of urgency needed in reaching a supplemental agreement. While we're pleased to finally have one, they took way too long, resulting in staff layoffs and even program closures, as well as failing to meet the expectations of their own constituents. The unnecessary strain caused to these individuals, organizations and programs directly serving children, youth and families across Michigan seems to indicate more attention being paid to partisanship and infighting than the needs of the most vulnerable amongst us.

And the work goes on: Governor Whitmer failed to include funding for the four programs we've highlighted above in her [FY21 budget proposal](#) that is being discussed by the Legislature right now. So, as advocates and champions for Michigan children, youth and families, we've got to continue our tireless outreach work to ensure that these same programs, and more, are included at the end of this budget process.

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