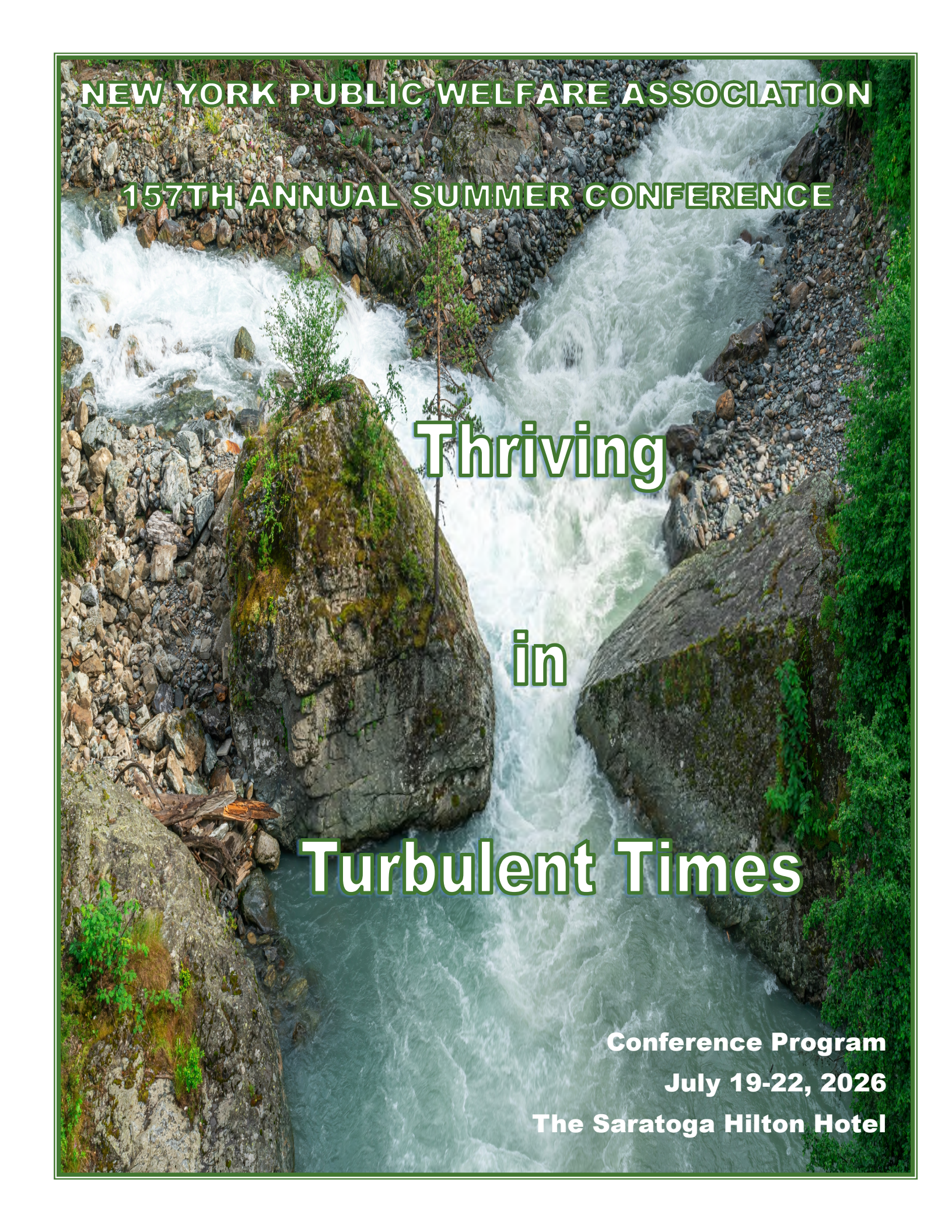




NEW YORK PUBLIC WELFARE ASSOCIATION

157TH ANNUAL SUMMER CONFERENCE

Thriving

in

Turbulent Times

Conference Program

July 19-22, 2026

The Saratoga Hilton Hotel

Table Of Contents

Agenda at-a Glance.....	3-6
Hotel Map.....	7
Conference Agenda.....	8-31
Attorneys CLE Information.....	32
Local District Commissioners.....	33
2026 NYPWA Board & Staff.....	34
2026 Sponsors/Exhibitors/Advertisers.....	35-36

WWW.NYPWA.ORG

NYPWA Conference Mobile App

Sponsored by

Deloitte

NYPWA Conference Technology

Sponsored by

FindHelp & Checkr

Agenda at-a Glance

Sunday, July 19:

3:00 pm - 6:00 pm	Exhibitor Setup.....	City Center Gallery
4:30 pm - 6:00 pm	Registration.....	Hotel Lobby

Monday, July 20:

7:30 am - 8:30 am	Breakfast.....	Saratoga 2
8:00 am - 5:00 pm	Registration.....	Hotel Lobby
9:00 am - 5:00 pm	Exhibit Area Open.....	City Center Gallery
9:00 am - 5:00 pm	All-Day Refresher Break • Sponsored by Curam by Merative	City Center Gallery

9:00 am - 10:30 am Concurrent Sessions

	<i>NYPWA Board of Directors' Meeting</i>	Phila
	Are We Trustworthy? An Overview of Trusts and Trust Case Law from the Mundane to the Wild.....	City Center Meeting Room 1
	<i>Staff Development Association Meeting (Restricted to LDSS)</i>	City Center Meeting Room C
	Not Another Medicaid Roundtable.....	Broadway 1/2
	Navigating Barriers, Maximizing Resources, and Building Paths to a “Thriving Community”.....	Broadway 3
	OCFS Division of Child Care Services: What’s New & What's Next (Vendors Are Prohibited).....	Broadway 4
	<i>TA Directors Meeting (Restricted to LDSS)</i>	Travers/Alabama
	A Local Collaboration on Food Security.....	Highrock
	Centering Women in Fatherhood Engagement: Perspectives from Women in Fatherhood Programs.....	Saratoga 1
	Administrative Data: More on Leveraging to Assess Practice and Improve Outcomes.....	Saratoga 3
10:30 am	Coffee Break • Sponsored by TipCo Automated Systems	City Center Gallery
11:00 am - 12:30 pm	Opening Address & Keynote • Sponsored by Binti	City Center Meeting Room 2
11:30 am - 1:15 pm	Lunch.....	Saratoga 2/3

1:30 pm - 5:00 pm

State & Local Commissioners' Dialogue — Coffee Break •

Sponsored by **Argyle (Restricted to Commissioners)**.....City Center Meeting Room C

1:30 pm - 3:00 pm Concurrent Sessions

	“You Better Think Twice” Social Media and the LDSS.....	City Center Meeting Room 1
	OTDA Public Benefits Survey: 2025 Results and Discussion.....	City Center Meeting Room 2
	Motivational Interviewing as Best Case Practice: Training, Coaching, Fidelity Monitoring, and What Data Tells Us About Thriving in Turbulent Times.....	Broadway 1/2
	The Power of One™: Turning Everyday Moments into Lasting Impact.....	Broadway 3
	Site to Service: Planning, Budget, and Overseeing Homeless Shelters.....	Broadway 4
	<i>Effective Child Support Administration</i> <i>(Restricted to LDSS & Vendors Are Prohibited)</i>	Travers/Alabama
	Unlocking Access: Cross-System Strategies to Secure ID’s for Youth Care.....	Highrock

Agenda at-a Glance

More Work, Less Stuff-Can AI Fill the Gap?

(Restricted to LDSS & Vendors Are Prohibited).....Saratoga 1

3:00 pm Coffee Break • Sponsored by **Equifax**.....City Center Gallery

3:30 pm - 5:00 pm Concurrent Sessions

Let's Be Reasonable.....City Center Meeting Room 1

Steady in the Storm: Practical Resilience Skills

for Human Services Team.....City Center Meeting Room 2

OCFS Pilot Success of Care-Sharing Technology.....Broadway 1/2

Investigating Incidents Implicating Individuals of Indecent Infractions

Impacting Institutional IntegrityBroadway 3

Hot Topics for State & Local Fiscal Administrators.....Broadway 4

Deputy Commissioners' Leadership Network Meeting (Restricted to LDSS).....Travers/Alabama

Solving The Administrative Puzzle Together within Family & Children Services.....High Rock

Working with 'Hard to House' Clients.....Saratoga 1

Medicaid Community Long Term Care Update.....Saratoga 2

Supporting Quality Family Time.....Saratoga 3

5:00 pm - 6:00pm Commissioners' Reception.....Private

5:00 pm - 6:00pm Networking Reception • Sponsored by **The Saratoga Hilton Hotel**

Live Music by **Made in the Shade**.....City Center Gallery

6:00 pm Dinner on Your Own

Tuesday, July 21:

7:30 am - 8:30 am Breakfast.....Saratoga 3

8:00 am - 5:00 pm Registration.....Hotel Lobby

9:00 am - 5:00 pm Exhibit Area Open.....City Center Gallery

9:00 am - 5:00 pm All-Day Refresher Break • Sponsored by **Deloitte**.....City Center Gallery

9:00 am - 10:30 am Concurrent Sessions

2026 Nuts and Bolts of Administrative Hearings before the

Bureau of Special Hearings.....City Center Meeting Room 1

From Bangor to Chenango: A View of Homelessness in the North

and the Power to Change it, Part I.....City Center Meeting Room C

Building a Coaching Culture: Developing Leaders at Every Level.....Broadway 1/2

Bridging the Gap: Collaborative Strategies to Recognize and Mitigate

Sex Trafficking Risks and Transform Systems for Youth In Care.....Broadway 3

Getting Better Every Day In Foster Care, CPS, & Preventive.....Broadway 4

Strengthening Systems to Stabilize Claims and Operations.....Travers/Alabama

Identifying Potential Fraud as an Eligibility Worker.....Highrock

H.R. 1 Overview and Delinking Medicaid from Temporary Assistance.....Saratoga 1/2

10:30 am Coffee Break • Sponsored by **EY**.....City Center Gallery

10:45 am - 12:15 pm Child Welfare Caselaw Review, Part I.....City Center Meeting Room 1

11:00 am - 12:15 pm Concurrent Sessions

From Bangor to Chenango: A View of Homelessness in the North

and the Power to Change it, Part II.....City Center Meeting Room C

Agenda at-a Glance

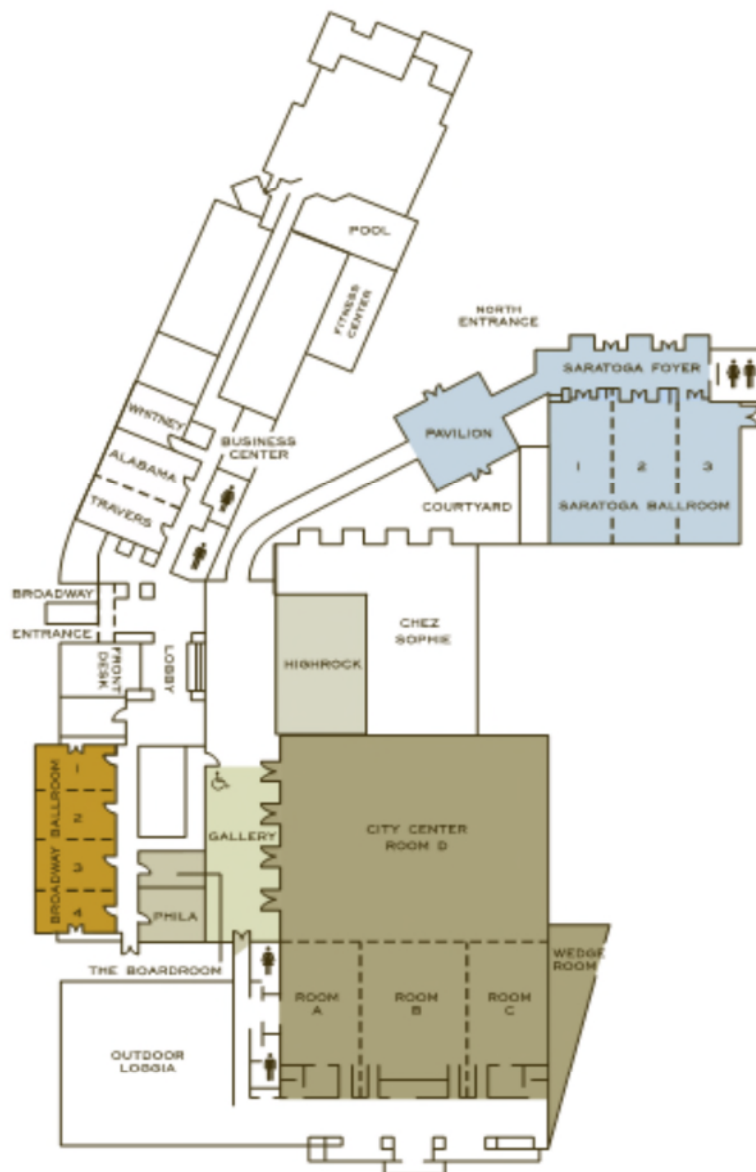
	Hoarding: Dutchess Counties MDT Approach.....	Broadway 1/2
	Presence Under Pressure: Practical Regulation Skills for Human Services Work.....	Broadway 3
	Embodied Elevation: Strategic Guidance for Leaders.....	Broadway 4
	Understanding Wendy’s Wonderful Kids and the Child-Focused Recruitment Model.....	Travers/Alabama
	New York State Housing Access Voucher Program.....	Highrock
	Medicaid Eligibility Updates.....	Saratoga 1/2
	Child Welfare Systems-CONNECTIONS, The Companion, and the Future.....	Saratoga 3
11:30 am - 1:15 pm	Lunch.....	Saratoga 2/3
1:30 pm - 3:00 pm	Concurrent Sessions	
	Child Welfare Caselaw Review, Part II.....	City Center Meeting Room 1
	Temporary Assistance, SNAP, & Employment Roundtable (Attendance is Limited to State & Local DSS).....	City Center Meeting Room C
	Child Support Program Updates, Part I.....	Broadway 1/2
	From Mental Health Awareness to Culture of Care Action: Cultivating a Stigma-Free Workplace.....	Broadway 3
	Local Child Care Coalition: A Model for Bringing Stakeholders to the Table to Address Childcare Issues.....	Broadway 4
	Healthy Families New York: Supporting Families and Local District Goals.....	Travers/Alabama
	Everything You Need to Know about Non-Residential DV Services (Vendors Are Prohibited).....	Highrock
	Medicaid Eligibility Client Management System Update.....	Saratoga 1
	DSS Fiscal Administrators Roundtable Discussion (Restricted to LDSS).....	Saratoga 2
3:00 pm	Coffee Break • Sponsored by eXemplar Analytics Corp.....	City Center Gallery
3:30 pm - 5:00 pm	Concurrent Sessions	
	Authentication of Evidence: Photographs, Videos and Reversals Oh My!.....	City Center Meeting Room 1
	Universal SNAP Caseload in a Larger District.....	City Center Meeting Room C
	Child Support Program Updates, Part II.....	Broadway 1/2
	“The Meatball Mindset: How to Roll with Life, Lead with Heart, and Thrive Under Pressure”.....	Broadway 3
	Home Enabling Supports (HES).....	Broadway 4
	Recognizing Lethality in Domestic Violence Cases: Lessons from the NYS Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team for Social Service Professionals.....	Travers/Alabama
	The Child and Family Services Review and Program Improvement Plan.....	Highrock
	Integrated Eligibility System Program Update (Vendors Are Prohibited).....	Saratoga 1/2
	Emergency Shelter Site Consideration and Development—Engaging the Policy Solutions for Caring for New York’s Children and Youth with Complex Needs.....	Saratoga 3
5:00 pm	Dinner on Your Own	

Agenda at-a Glance

Wednesday, July 22:

7:30 am - 8:30 am	Commissioners' Breakfast — <i>(Restricted to Commissioners)</i>	Saratoga 1
8:30 am - 11:30 am	Commissioners' Meeting & Policy Discussion <i>(Restricted to Commissioners)</i> Coffee Break • Sponsored by Synaptein Solutions Inc.	Saratoga 1
7:30 am - 8:30 am	Breakfast.....	Saratoga 3
8:00 am - 11:00 am	Registration.....	Hotel Lobby
9:00 am - 11:00 am	Meeting with State Agency Counsel.....	Broadway 1/2
9:00 am - 10:30 am	Local DSS Fiscal Policy Dialogue <i>(Restricted to LDSS)</i>	Broadway 3/4
	State & Local Child Support Dialogue <i>(Restricted to OTDA & LDSS)</i>	Travers/Alabama
	Director of Services Meeting <i>(Restricted to LDSS)</i>	Highrock
9:00 am - 12:00 pm	SNAP Policy & Operations Workshop <i>(Restricted to State & LDSS)</i>	Saratoga 2/3
10:30 am - 12:00 pm	The Art of the Ask.....	Highrock

Saratoga Hilton Hotel Map



Welcome & Keynote Address ■ Monday, July 20 11:00 AM—12:30 PM ■ City Center Meeting Room 2

Presiding:

Leonard Townes, NYPWA President and Commissioner of Westchester County DSS

Phil Barrett, Chairman, Saratoga County Board of Supervisors

DaMia Harris-Madden, Commissioner, Office of Children and Family Services

Barbara Guinn, Commissioner, Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

Keynote Speaker

Shadrack Boakye



Shadrack Boakye was born in Liberia, Africa in the early 1990s, during a crippling civil war that took the lives of over 200,000 citizens. Shadrack and his mother were among the few survivors to escape the war-stricken country to the United States. Despite the hardships he endured entering a new country, including learning how to read, he has since proudly overcome adversities that many immigrants face. His drive and passion for the arts presented him with opportunities to channel his creative strength, and he is now an accomplished speech and debate champion, public speaker, screenwriter, playwright, director, performer, and the President of *Ladder Moon Studios*. For 16 years, his company has traveled to and performed original works at venues on Long Island, New York City, and other major cities. Throughout that time, he earned multiple national awards; in 2010, he was honored with becoming the youngest male awarded the Black History Month Distinguished Service Award. In 2018, Shadrack's original work received a New York Emmy Award for best story. He received a signed boxing glove accompanied by a personal letter from the heavyweight boxing icon Muhammad Ali and won two gold medals in the NAACP-ACT-SO playwright.

Shadrack has written and directed three films and acted for television in roles on *Spike Lee's You Gotta Have It*, *FBI New Amsterdam*, Tom Holland's *The Crowded Room* and more. When not performing or writing, Shadrack is an official Motivational Speaker for Scholastic, Inc. His audiences include educators, school district administrators, and secondary school students. Shadrack is dedicated to empowering students through learning and has served as a panelist on NBC's Education Nation with Anne Curry discussing necessary actions to ensure every student receives a world-class education. Scholastic has published a book about his story called "Unstoppable" for System 44 students nationwide. Shadrack Boakye has proven that any and everything is possible with faith and persistence. He aims to touch the world with his gift.

Sunday, July 19 & Monday, July 20

Sunday, July 19:

3:00pm—6:00pm

Exhibit Setup and Registration—City Center Gallery

4:30pm—6:00pm

Conference Registration—Hotel Lobby

Dinner on Your Own

Monday, July 20:

7:30am—8:30am

Breakfast—Saratoga 2

8:00am—5:00pm

Conference Registration—Hotel Lobby

9:00am—5:00pm

Exhibit Area Open—City Center Gallery

• All-Day Refresher • Sponsored By
Curam by Merative

9:00am—10:30am

Concurrent Sessions

Phila

NYPWA Board of Directors Meeting

City Center Meeting Room 1

***Are We Trustworthy? An Overview of Trusts and Trust Case Law from the Mundane to the Wild
(1.5 CLEs, 90 minutes)***

Presenters will provide an overview of Revocable, Irrevocable, Third Party, Supplemental Needs and Pooled Trusts. Presenters will also review Medicaid and benefits related trust case law. Finally, presenters will detail local case studies where some egregious trustee behavior was encountered.

Presenters:

Morgan R. Thurston, Esq., Chief Welfare Attorney, Onondaga County DSS/ES

Casey E. Jordan, Esq., Asst. Welfare Attorney, Onondaga County DSS/ES

Moderator:

Mark E. Maves, Esq., Counsel to NYPWA

City Center Meeting Room C

Staff Development Association Meeting

(Restricted to LDSS—ONLY)

Chairperson:

Salvatore Patella, President, SDANYS & Staff Development Coordinator, Orange County DSS

Monday, July 20

Broadway 1/2

Not Another Medicaid Roundtable!

(Restricted to LDSS—ONLY)

Join the conversation for an open, honest look at what's happening on the front lines and in the back office. Share challenges, successes, and practical ideas in a supportive, peer-focused space. Bring your questions and experiences, and walk away with fresh insights you can put to use back home!

Presenter:

Jim Sluder, Division Administrator - Medicaid Services, Suffolk County DSS

Moderator:

Kira Pospesel, Commissioner, Greene County DSS

Broadway 3

Navigating Barriers, Maximizing Resources, and Building Paths to a "Thriving Community."

In early 2023, Delaware County DSS, Delaware Opportunities (Community Agency), SUNY Delhi, and Delaware County Behavioral Health began collaboration on a long-term project with an overarching vision of recreating a localized version of the NYPWA Conference. The idea to develop such a partnership was established by two friends (Keith and Abby) during their twice-weekly "adult basketball" league and was moved into existence with the strong support and involvement of a visionary Executive Director (Shelly). What began as a pipe dream to provide frontline/middle management staff with a NYPWA-like Conference experience has evolved into a full-blown alliance focused on staff development, innovative idea development, maximizing resources, and providing our community with the most human-centered and accessible array of services possible.

Presenters:

Keith Weaver, Commissioner, Delaware County DSS

Shelly Bartow, Delaware Opportunities

Abigail Brannen-Wilson, SUNY Delhi

Moderator:

Erin Hume-Cocks, Staff Development Coordinator, Delaware County DSS

Broadway 4

OCFS Division of Child Care Services: What's New & What's Next

(Vendors Are Prohibited)

This session will provide overviews and updates from OCFS's Division of Child Care Services. Topics will include federal updates, system development, the enacted budget and implementation, and more.

Presenters:

Merideth Infantino, Director of Child Care Assistance and Enrollment Services, NYS OCFS

Nora Yates, Deputy Commissioner, NYS OCFS

Moderator:

Lise Reynolds, Acting Commissioner, Steuben County DSS

Travers/Alabama

TA Directors Meeting

(Restricted to LDSS—ONLY)

Directors will share any useful strategies they learned about or that they have already implemented locally.

Facilitator:

Jennifer A. Robinson, Executive Deputy Commissioner, Onondaga County DSS/ES

Highrock

A Local Collaboration on Food Security

In addressing food insecurity, Dutchess County created a Food Security Council and conducted a comprehensive assessment. Utilizing the final report as a springboard, the Dutchess County Food Security Council is working collaboratively to design its mission and address identified challenges. The report and

Monday, July 20

current efforts, including how it helped respond to the federal funding shut down last fall, will be discussed in this presentation, providing an opportunity to discuss how this approach could be implemented in other jurisdictions.

Presenters:

Theresa Giovanniello, Deputy Commissioner, Dutchess County DCFS

Eoin Wrafter, Commissioner, Dutchess County Planning and Development

Moderator:

Sarah Easterly, Executive Deputy Commissioner, Onondaga County DSS/ES

Saratoga 1

Centering Women in Fatherhood Engagement: Perspectives from Women in Fatherhood Programs

As fatherhood engagement efforts continue to grow across New York State, it is increasingly clear that women play an essential role in designing father-inclusive programming and engaging fathers with intention. This session will feature a live panel discussion with women working in fatherhood programs, who will share their experiences supporting and engaging fathers, as well as the challenges they have navigated in this work. As leaders, facilitators, and advocates, women bring invaluable insight, empathy, and innovation to fatherhood programming.

The conversation will highlight the critical role women play as allies and leaders in fatherhood engagement, and will explore key topics including:

- The opportunities and challenges women face in engaging fathers

- How female leadership can strengthen fatherhood programs

- Why this work requires all of us—not just fathers or men

Presenters:

Allyson Walker-Basden, Deputy Director, Department of Youth and Community Development Fatherhood Initiative

Tamara Rivers (LMSW), Director, Buffalo Regional, NYS OCFS

Romarie McCue, Director, Long Island Fatherhood Initiative Program at The Retreat

Michelle Dowe, Deputy Commissioner, Schenectady County DSS

Tuesday Paige McDonald, Executive Director, The Blue Resource Table, Inc.

Karen Sessions, SOGIE Officer, Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility (DEIA), NYS OCFS

Asia Priest, Co-Executive Director, Community Fathers Inc.

Dr. Lena Green, Executive Director, Hope Center

Tara Linh-Leaman, Chief, Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility (DEIA), NYS OCFS

Troy Grant, LMSW, Statewide Fatherhood Engagement Family Policy Advisor, NYS OCFS

Scott Leach, Director of Fatherhood Engagement, NYC ACS

Moderator:

Tracy L. Connelly-Hart, Deputy Commissioner, Dutchess County DCFS

Saratoga 3

Administrative Data: More on Leveraging to Assess Practice and Improve Outcomes

Building on last year's session, OCFS and OTDA will provide an update on standardized reports available to districts and what questions those reports can answer about child welfare, SNAP, and public assistance recipients. In addition, this year, the presentation will include basics on longitudinal analysis and how OCFS and OTDA are going beyond caseload counts and characteristics to use administrative data for program evaluation.

Presenters:

Dr. Rebecca Colman, Director, Office of Research, Evaluation and Performance Analytics (OREPA), NYS OCFS

Jon Zafra, Unit Lead, Data Warehouse Reporting and Analytics (OREPA), NYS OCFS

Britany Orlebeke, Director, Bureau of Data Management and Analysis (BDMA), NYS OTDA

Moderator:

Ben Dennis, Commissioner, Wyoming County DSS

Monday, July 20

10:30AM

• Coffee Break • Sponsored By—**TipCo Automated Systems**

11:00am—12:30pm

City Center Meeting Room 2

Opening Address & Keynote • Sponsored By—**Binti**

11:30am—1:15pm

Saratoga 2/3

Lunch

1:30pm—5:00pm

City Center Meeting Room C

State & Local Commissioners' Dialogue

(Restricted to Commissioners—ONLY)

Commissioners from OTDA, OCFS, and their executive deputies, are invited to discuss current issues facing social services with local DSS commissioners. The session will begin with topics from local commissioners, followed by time for state commissioners to raise additional issues.

Facilitator:

Leonard Townes, NYPWA President

• Coffee Break • Sponsored By—**Argyle**

1:30pm—3:00pm

Concurrent Sessions

City Center Meeting Room 1

"You Better Think Twice" Social Media and the LDSS

(1.5 CLEs, 90 minutes)

This program will review the legal issues related to the use of social media by an LDSS, as well as by LDSS employees. Included will be a discussion of the legal tension between confidentiality and freedom of speech.

Presenter:

Mark E. Maves, Esq., Counsel to NYPWA

Moderator:

Anne E. Oh, Esq., Attorney, Suffolk County DSS

City Center Meeting Room 2

OTDA Public Benefits Survey: 2025 Results and Discussion

What are New Yorkers saying about their experience applying for and maintaining SNAP, PA and SSI benefits? During this session, OTDA staff will present and facilitate a discussion of the results of nearly 10,000 responses to the online OTDA Public Benefits Survey received in 2025, a tenfold increase from 2024. While many respondents rate their experience positively, New Yorkers have a lot of useful feedback for OTDA and districts about the administrative burdens and access barriers they experience. This year's

Monday, July 20

presentation will focus on the results and analysis of open-ended responses. The Public Benefits Survey is now accessible throughout the year, and more than 1,000 people per month are providing their feedback.

Presenter:

Renée Overdyke, Ph.D. Program Research Specialist, NYS OTDA

Moderator:

Demetra Alberti, Deputy Commissioner, Schoharie County DSS

Broadway 1/2

Motivational Interviewing as Best Case Practice: Training, Coaching, Fidelity Monitoring, and What Data Tells Us About Thriving in Turbulent Times

OCFS and YRI will discuss with participants how Motivational Interviewing can support best-case practice. In addition, we will review how OCFS and YRI support LDSS through training, coaching, fidelity monitoring and data collection to support the implementation and sustainability of motivational interviewing.

Presenters:

Patricia Mantey, Associate Commissioner, NYS OCFS

Dr. Kristen Kirkland, Research Scientist, NYS OCFS

Scott Corbett, Associate Director, NYS OCFS

Monica Schroeder, Senior Project Manager, YRI

Erica Thompson, Director of Research and Policy, YRI

Michael Rolleston, Training Supervisor, YRI

Tammy Breen, Director of Services, Warren County DSS

Janet Pratt, Case B Supervisor, Preventive Services, Warren County DSS

Moderator:

Marlene Reynolds, Training & Professional Development Coordinator, Schuyler County DSS

Broadway 3

The Power of One™: Turning Everyday Moments into Lasting Impact

What if one conversation, idea, or action could change how learning happens at work? This interactive session introduces the Power of One™ Framework, a practical approach to turning everyday moments into real behavior change. Grounded in brain science and real-world application, attendees will leave with simple, actionable ways to embed learning into the flow of work.

Presenter:

Ginine M. Capozzi, Talent Development Consultant, KnowledgeForce Consulting LLC

Moderator:

Shelly Snyder, Director of Staff Development & Training, Steuben County DSS

Broadway 4

Site to Service: Planning, Budgeting, and Overseeing Homeless Shelters

Suffolk County has over 60 shelters operated by 14 providers, serving more than 500 families and 650 single adults and adult families. The presentation, titled “Site to Service – Planning, Budgeting, and Overseeing Homeless Shelters,” outlines a structured process that spans from identifying community need to sustaining ongoing operations. Data and statistics guide decisions on the appropriate size, location, and type of shelter required to effectively meet demand. Thoughtful site selection ensures accessibility, safety, and compliance with local and state regulations, while partnering with experienced service providers supports strong program delivery. Budgeting plays a critical role, encompassing start-up costs, staffing, operational expenses, and the development of sustainable service rates. Close coordination between program and finance teams is essential,

Monday, July 20

as is building a working understanding of the Shelter Management System (SMS). The panel will also walk through the many steps involved with inspections, certification, and continuous monitoring to maintain quality and effectiveness after opening.

Presenters:

Vincent Rothaar, Division Administrator – Housing, Suffolk County DSS

Jennifer Cicero, Principal Accountant – Finance, Suffolk County DSS

Moderator:

Kenneth Knappe, Deputy Commissioner Finance, Suffolk County DSS

Travers/Alabama

Effective Child Support Administration

(Restricted to LDSS—ONLY—Vendors are Prohibited)

This session is designed specifically for Child Support Coordinators and is restricted to LDSS staff who oversee the Child Support program. Please join your colleagues in addressing what is happening in your district and other regions. This session is an opportunity for meaningful dialogue on the issues that matter the most to you concerning the local administration of Child Support Services.

Facilitators:

Maria Restivo, Child Support Enforcement, Coordinator, Ulster County DSS

A. Michelle Henry-Walker, FA Coordinator-Child Support Services, Monroe County DSS

Highrock

Unlocking Access: Cross-System Strategies to Secure ID's for Youth in Care

Youth in foster care often face significant barriers to obtaining identification, limiting their ability to access employment, housing, education, and other critical opportunities. This session will explore the gap between policy and practice, highlighting common challenges such as navigating DMV requirements and accessing necessary documentation, including birth certificates. Presenters will share practical tools developed to support caseworkers, as well as lessons learned from cross-system partnerships and mobile DMV pilot efforts. Participants will leave with actionable strategies to improve access to identification in their own counties. This session will include a brief overview of the issue, followed by a panel discussion with state and community partners, and an opportunity for participant engagement and discussion.

Presenters:

Cheyenne Gallagher, Children and Family Specialist, NYS OCFS;

Valery Steele, LMHC-D, Community Services Director, Vanderheyden

Chelsea Perkins, Youth Engagement Specialist, PDP

Moderator:

Marisa Alber, Deputy Commissioner, Saratoga County DSS

Saratoga 1

More Work, Less Staff -- Can AI Fill The Gap?

(Restricted to LDSS—ONLY—Vendors are Prohibited)

In response to persistent staffing challenges, the Onondaga County Department of Social Services – Economic Security (DSS-ES) partnered with TipCo AI Solutions to strengthen operations and improve overall efficiency. Over the past 12 to 18 months, DSS-ES has implemented a suite of AI tools, including Eva Phone, Eva Rights and Responsibilities (R&R), Eva Interview, and Eva Companion, across several program areas. These tools have enabled DSS-ES to more effectively triage incoming calls and resolve routine client inquiries, allowing staff to focus on higher-acuity, complex cases. Automation of the Rights and Responsibilities process has further reduced administrative burden, while AI-driven client engagement tools collect essential information on behalf of staff, saving valuable time. In addition, Eva Companion now serves as an internal resource, helping staff quickly access department policies and program rules. This presentation will highlight both the promising early results of these AI applications and the practical realities of

Monday, July 20

implementation. It will explore not only the opportunities that make this technology exciting, but also its limitations, challenges, and the organizational resources required to deploy it successfully

Presenters:

Cory Lewis, Director of Systems & Records, Onondaga County DSS/ES

Jennifer Robinson, Deputy Commissioner & Director of Temporary Assistance, Onondaga County DSS/ES

Sarah Merrick, Commissioner, Onondaga County DSS/ES

Moderator:

Edward Roberts, Program Administrator-Employment & Training, Westchester County DSS

3:00PM

• Coffee Break • Sponsored By—**Equifax**

3:30pm—5:00pm

Concurrent Sessions

City Center Meeting Room 1

Let's Be Reasonable

(1.5 CLEs, 90 minutes)

Discussion of case law and practice regarding reasonable efforts and diligent efforts in light of the recent COA decision in Matter of K.Y.Z. (W.Z.) (2025 Slip Op 05781)

Presenters:

Lauren Creighton, Esq., Director Of Child Welfare Legal Unit, Erie County Law Dept.

Haley Eimstad, Esq., Director Of Child Welfare Legal Unit, Erie County Law Dept.

Patricia L. Woehrlen, Esq., Deputy County Attorney, Children's Services Unit; Monroe County Law Dept.

Moderator:

Nora Carnes, Esq., Attorney, Cattaraugus County DSS

City Center Meeting Room 2

Steady in the Storm: Practical Resilience Skills for Human Services Teams

Human services professionals work in environments where the emotional demands are high. Lewis County adapted the Resilience Alliance model developed by the ACS–NYU Children's Trauma Institute to fit the realities of a small rural DSS organization, using a single facilitator and an emphasis on the social ecology of the workplace. The aim was to reduce burnout and strengthen teamwork. This workshop will share how the program was implemented and highlight those practical skills that helped staff regulate stress, communicate effectively, and support one another in the midst of demanding work.

Presenter:

Lee Vance, PsyD, ACC, LM Wellness Coaching and Consulting, LLC

Moderator:

Deanna Edick; Director of Services, Lewis County DSS

Broadway 1/2

OCFS Pilot Success of Care-Sharing Technology

CarePortal is a technology platform that connects children and families with resources in their local communities. Since 2022, the New York State Office of Children and Family Services has partnered with CarePortal to pilot implementation in a series of local districts. The OCFS partnership has allowed for caseworkers to access a network of community providers willing to donate requested tangible items to meet the needs of vulnerable children and families. This presentation will contain an overview of the pilot's success

Monday, July 20

in New York State, what ignited the NYS partnership, and serve as an opportunity for peer-to-peer sharing on best strategies for county implementation.

Presenters:

Candi Griffin-Jenkins, Director, Child Welfare Community Services NYS OCFS
Tenisha Hope: Program Manager, Child Welfare Community Services, NYS OCFS
Steve Poissant: CarePortal, New York's Area Director, CarePortal

Moderator:

Concetta Hmura, Director of Social Services, Saratoga County DSS

Broadway 3

Investigating Incidents Implicating Individuals of Indecent Infractions Impacting Institutional Integrity

Employers have numerous policies employees must follow to ensure efficient and effective operations, production standards, and a discrimination-free workplace. This presentation focuses on policy development, workplace investigations, and corrective action. Collaboration with the county Personnel or HR Department, labor unions, and unemployment insurance will also be explored.

Presenter:

Matthew Caldwell, Chenango County Personnel Officer

Moderator:

Jillian Dillon, Staff Development Coordinator, Yates County DSS

Broadway 4

Hot Topics for State & Local Fiscal Administrators

Join local fiscal administrators and state staff from OCFS & OTDA in a discussion of fiscal issues directly affecting social services districts.

Presenters:

Justin Gross, Assistant Chief Accountant, NYS OTDA
Shonna Clinton, Chief Budgeting Analyst, NYS OCFS

Moderator:

Kim Shoemaker, Accounting Supervisor, Schoharie County DSS

Travers/Alabama

Deputy Commissioners' Leadership Network Meeting

(Restricted to LDSS—ONLY)

Deputy Commissioners and other upper-level administrators will address issues that could arise during the conference, local experiences, new challenges, and other topics of interest.

Facilitated by Steering Committee:

Theresa Giovanniello, Deputy Commissioners, Dutchess County DCFS
Randy Scott, Deputy Commissioner, Westchester County DSS
Cynthia Stumer, DBH, Deputy Commissioner, Orleans County DSS
Denise Read, Deputy Commissioner, Monroe County DHS
Michelle Dowe, Deputy Commissioner, Schenectady County DSS

Highrock

Solving The Administrative Puzzle Together Within Family & Children Services

This interactive facilitated discussion will look to address operational barriers preventing the cultivation of an environment that empowers staff to perform at their highest potential. Social service agencies manage thousands of cases under strict regulatory mandates and laws. Siloed systems, layered requirements, and staffing pressures create administrative friction that diverts frontline workers from direct client engagement. As we search for solutions, knowing there may not always be the perfect answer, it's our shared commitment

Monday, July 20

and determination that keep us striving for meaningful steps toward a brighter future for both the staff and families served.

Presenter:

Brian Calo, Assistant Division Administrator, Suffolk County DSS

Moderator:

Tara Wilkosz, Director of Services, Livingston County DSS

Saratoga 1

Working with 'Hard to House' Clients

Present strategies and best practices utilized in Ulster County across a network of county agencies and providers to increase the success for difficult-to-house clients, particularly those with mental health, SUD, and other issues to transition to appropriate permanent housing.

Presenters:

Laura Nordstrom, Director of Housing & Homelessness, Ulster County DSS

Jodi Davidoff, Adult Protective Services Case Manager, Ulster County DSS;

Jake Carter, Senior Case Manager, Ulster County Mental Health

Lisa McDonald, Assistant Director Program Services, RUPCO Inc.

Kimberly Roe, Grade B Supervisor-Child Protective Services INV/FAR, Ulster County DSS

Kimberly Rowe Grade B Supervisor Children's Protective Services, Ulster County DSS

Charlene Boswell, Case Supervisor Grade B, Preventive Services, Ulster County DSS

Moderator:

Lori Baker, Director of Eligibility/Income Maintenance, Saratoga County DSS

Saratoga 2

Medicaid Community Long Term Care Update

DOH will present any upcoming changes in the long-term care arena, including implementation of the CDPAP and statewide FI.

Presenters:

Deb McClure, Director, Bureau of Medicaid Long Term Care Policy, NYS DOH

Thomas J. Rees, Deputy Director, Bureau of Medicaid Long Term Care Policy, NYS DOH

Moderator:

Jim Sluder, Division Administrator - Medicaid Services, Suffolk County DSS

Saratoga 3

Supporting Quality Family Time

Children thrive when they maintain meaningful, supportive relationships with their families. OCFS, through a training partnership with PDP and YRI, has developed a comprehensive training to redefine visitation as Quality Family Time. This training will emphasize trauma-informed, strength-based approaches to ensure safe, engaging, and developmentally appropriate interactions between parents and children. OCFS will share the emphasis of this approach and YRI will explain the training and the schedule.

Presenters:

Jason DeSantis, Associate Commissioner, NYS OCFS

John Thompson, Principal Education Specialist, PDP

Mandy Richardson-Irvin, Director of Child Welfare Training, YRI

Moderator:

Leelani Voigtland, Director of Services, Sullivan County DSS

Monday, July 20

5:00pm—6:00pm

LDSS Commissioners' Private Reception

5:00pm—6:00pm

City Center Gallery

Networking Reception • Sponsored by *Saratoga Hilton Hotel*

Music by: *Made in the Shade*

6:00pm

Dinner on Your Own

Tuesday, July 21

Tuesday, July 21:

7:30am—8:30am

Breakfast—Saratoga 3

8:00am—5:00pm

Conference Registration—Hotel Lobby

9:00am—5:00pm

Exhibit Area Open—City Center Gallery

• All-Day Refresher • Sponsored By
Deloitte

9:00am—10:30am

Concurrent Sessions

City Center Meeting Room 1

2026 Nuts and Bolts of Administrative Hearings before the Bureau of Special Hearings (1.5 CLEs, 90 minutes)

The Bureau of Special Hearings will present on the procedural and substantive law applicable in Child Abuse and Maltreatment Hearings under Social Services Law Sections 422 and 424-a. The discussion will focus on the conduct of administrative hearings including the applicable hearing procedural regulations. It will also address process such as opening statements, exchange and submission of evidence, calling of witnesses, and closing statements. Lastly, it will address the analytical framework and substantive caselaw applicable on abuse and maltreatment.

Presenters:

Steven M. Connolly, Esq., Director & Chief ALJ, Bureau of Special Hearings NYS OCFS

Vincent Arcarese, Esq., Hearing Officer, NYS OCFS

Moderator:

Lorelei B. Miller, Esq., Staff Attorney, Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe DSS

City Center Meeting Room C

From Bangor to Chenango: A View of Homelessness in the North and the Power to Change It, Part I

This is part one of a two-part workshop that will bring impacts and perspectives on homelessness to the audience through a showing of Rogan O'Donnell's documentary inhuMaine (78 min). This will be followed by a panel discussion in part two with members of Chenango County's Homeless Coalition. We will share our journey from crisis to progress, hotels to shelter programs, and discuss the research and strategies used for successful collaboration to stand up needed resources in our communities.

Presenters:

Daniel Auwarter, Commissioner, Chenango County DSS

Rogan O'Donnell, MS, Documentarisan, inhuMaine, Common Ground Friends

Jeff Chesebro, Director of Operations, Catholic Charities of Chenango

Sarah Watson, Assistant Director, NYS OTDA

Milica Milic-Kovacevic, Ph.D., Medical Anthropologist

Dustin Smietana, Undersheriff, Chenango County Sherriff's Office

Moderator:

Michael McMahon, Commissioner, Rensselaer County DSS

Broadway 1/2

Building a Coaching Culture: Developing Leaders at Every Level

What does it really take to shift culture in a public service organization? As public service agencies navigate growing complexity, rising workforce demands, and increasing expectations for equitable, high-quality service, traditional strategies are no longer enough. This session offers a behind-the-scenes look at how the

Tuesday, July 21

Westchester County Department of Social Services is intentionally building a coaching culture to strengthen supervision, support equity, and develop leaders at all levels. By creating an internal coaching program and embedding coaching into leadership development, quality supervision, and everyday interactions, we are working to build a more reflective, engaged workforce and a sustainable pipeline of leaders who are better equipped to serve the community. We'll share practical strategies and honest lessons learned, including what's working, what we're still figuring out, and how you can begin applying these approaches in your own organization.

Presenters:

Nina Herman-Schlissel, Program Coordinator (Staff Development + Training), Westchester County DSS
Giannina Frino, Staff Development Specialist, Westchester County DSS
Rochelle Glasgow, Staff Development Specialist, Westchester County DSS

Moderator:

Jacquelyn Jones, Director of Organizational Development, Schenectady County DSS

Broadway 3

Bridging the Gap: Collaborative Strategies to Recognize and Mitigate Sex Trafficking Risks and Transform Systems for Youth in Care

This presentation examines the critical intersections among Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), foster care placement instability, and the increased vulnerability of youth in care to sex trafficking. Attendees will strengthen their ability to identify early risk factors and consider collaborative, interprofessional strategies to intervene before exploitation occurs. The session concludes with a call for system-level transformation and legislative reform and urges professionals to move beyond traditional silos to strengthen protective responses and reduce exploitation among youth in care.

Presenters:

Elissa D. Giffords, DSW LCSW, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology & Anthropology, Farmingdale State College

Moderator:

Marlene Reynolds, Training and Professional Development Coordinator, Schuyler County DSS

Broadway 4

Getting Better Every day in Foster Care, CPS & Preventive

Our Presentation will highlight how our Children Services team moved from overwhelming caseloads, siloed work, and children lingering in care to steady, measurable improvement through practical, sustainable strategies. Strong collaboration with our legal team, community partners, schools, hospitals, and housing programs has led to faster permanency, improved safety, and better use of community-based services. We will also share how creating a specialized substance use/positive tox CPS unit, supported by the Better for Families Court Improvement Project, has accelerated permanency and strengthened safety for children. We hope attendees will walk away with ideas they can take home, adapt, and use to get a little better every day.

Presenters:

Leelani Voigtland, Director of Services, Sullivan County DSS
Cassidy Posemato, CPS Supervisor for Substance Use/ Pos Tox Team, Sullivan County DSS
Jackie Mootz, Social Services Intervention and Outreach Coordinator, Sullivan County DSS

Moderator:

Sabrina Jaar Marzouka, Commissioner, Dutchess County DCFS

Travers/Alabama

Strengthening Systems to Stabilize Claims and Operations

This presentation will illustrate how enhancing operational workflows from Program to Fiscal can support stability in claims and financial processes during this time of system transition and increased visibility. We will emphasize timing, accountability, and system design as key drivers for ensuring accurate and defensible (justifiable) claims.

Presenters:

Olha Fizer, Supervisor of Fiscal Operations, Westchester County DSS

Michelle Bethencourt-Garcia, Child Welfare Manager II, Westchester County DSS

Moderator:

Elizabeth Provenzano, Fiscal Director, Ulster County DSS

Highrock

Identifying Potential Fraud as an Eligibility Worker

The eligibility interview is the front line in combating potential fraud during the eligibility process. OTDA-AQI-PI presents strategies to identify those who may misrepresent themselves during the eligibility process.

Presenters:

Rebecca Lynch, Director of Program Integrity, AQI-PI, NYS OTDA

Rebecca Schoonmaker, Management Specialist 3, AQI-PI, NYS OTDA

Moderator:

Jessica Cady, Supervisor of Special Investigations Unit, Dutchess County DCFS

Saratoga 1/2

H.R. 1 Overview and Delinking Medicaid from Temporary Assistance

In this session, members of the New York State Department of Health's Division of Eligibility and Marketplace Integration (DEMI) will provide updates in the following: Updates on H.R.1 related changes including changes in rules related to who is eligible for federal financial participation in Medicaid, Community Engagement and six-month renewals for Medicaid and changes in retroactive eligibility. In addition, will provide an overview of issues related to delinking with Temporary Assistance.

Presenters:

Gabrielle Armenia, Director, Division of Eligibility and Marketplace Integration, NYS DOH

Kathleen Johnson, Deputy Director, Division of Eligibility and Marketplace Integration, NYS DOH

Moderator:

Kira Pospesel, Commissioner, Greene County DSS

10:30AM

• Coffee Break • Sponsored By—**EY**

10:45am—12:15pm

City Center Meeting Room 1

Child Welfare Caselaw Review, Parts I

(1.5 CLEs, 90 minutes)

A review of the reported child welfare cases from January 1, 2026 to June 30, 2026. Part 1 will primarily focus on abuse and neglect cases.

Presenters:

Mark E. Maves, Esq., Counsel to NYPWA

Jennifer Sadaka, Esq., Senior Team Leader/ Legal Trainer, NYC ACS

Vineet Chawla, Esq., Family Court Legal Services, NYC ACS

Moderator:

Thomas J. Keegan II, Esq., Attorney, Tompkins County DSS

Tuesday, July 21

11:00am—12:15pm

Concurrent Sessions

City Center Meeting Room C

From Bangor to Chenango: A View of Homelessness in the North and the Power to Change It, Part II

This is part two of a two-part workshop that will bring impacts and perspectives on homelessness to the audience through a showing of Rogan O'Donnell's documentary inhuMaine (78 min). Followed by a panel discussion in part 2 with members of Chenango County's Homeless Coalition. We will share our journey from crisis to progress, hotels to shelter programs, and discuss the research and strategies used for successful collaboration to stand up needed resources in our communities.

Presenters:

Daniel Auwarter, Commissioner, Chenango County DSS

Rogan O'Donnell, MS, Documentarisan, inhuMaine, Common Ground Friends

Jeff Chesebro, Director of Operations, Catholic Charities of Chenango

Sarah Watson, Assistant Director, NYS OTDA

Milica Milic-Kovacevic, Ph.D., Medical Anthropologist

Dustin Smietana, Undersheriff, Chenango County Sherriff's Office

Moderator:

Michael McMahon, Commissioner, Rensselaer County DSS

Broadway 1/2

Hoarding: Dutchess Counties MDT Approach

During this session, we will discuss how Dutchess County partnered with other county agencies to create a multi-disciplinary approach to combat hoarding. This presentation will discuss the history behind this initiative, utilization of ARPA funding for training, the task force that was created, and the current status of receiving referrals and implementation of services.

Presenters:

Gregory Gallo, LCSW Community Engagement & Prevention Coordinator, Dutchess County of Mental Health

Christie Bonomo-Gose, LMSW, Director of Adult Services, Dutchess County DCFS

Tracy Connelly-Hart, Deputy Commissioner, Dutchess County DCFS

Jean-Marie Niebuhr, Commissioner, Dutchess County Mental Health

Moderator:

Angie Allen, Commissioner, Essex County DSS

Broadway 3

Presence Under Pressure: Practical Regulation Skills for Human Services Work

Professionals in human services regularly navigate high-pressure interactions that require clear thinking, steady communication, and rapid decision-making. This session introduces practical, physiology-based tools that help staff remain grounded during moments of escalation while improving communication and reducing cumulative stress. Participants will learn how stress responses impact tone, pacing and decision-making, and how to regulate in real time. The session is interactive, immediately applicable, and designed to support both individual effectiveness and long-term workforce sustainability.

Presenter:

Chelan Vanno, Founder & Strategic Consultant, Organization: CP Innovations Group/The Portal

Moderator:

Stephanie Clark, Staff Development Coordinator, Saratoga County DSS

Broadway 4

Embodied Elevation: Strategic Guidance for Leaders

Gooch's interactive workshop combines ancient wisdom with modern, evidence-based practices leaving participants informed, uplifted, and empowered. Drawing on the tools used during her 2023 research demonstrating significant improvements in psychological well-being among incarcerated individuals, Gooch

Tuesday, July 21

shares practical tools that strengthen resilience, enhance well-being, and deepen impact when serving others in highly stressful environments. Participants will reconnect to their purpose, acknowledge core desire and core fear, and establish a daily habit supporting a personal or professional goal.

Presenters:

Leah Gooch, ORC (Offender Rehabilitation Coordinator) DOCCS (Department of Corrections and Community Services), & Illuminate Self, LLC, Founder

Peter Cohan, Recreational Program Leader II, Hudson Correctional Facility

Moderator:

Shelly Snyder, Director of Staff Development & Training, Steuben County DSS

Travers/Alabama

Understanding Wendy's Wonderful Kids and the Child-Focused Recruitment Model

This session provides an overview of the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption's signature program, Wendy's Wonderful Kids (WWK), and its evidence-based, Child-Focused Recruitment model. The presentation will cover how the WWK program has served youth in New York State since 2007, expanding across 50 counties. Participants will learn how WWK recruiters prioritize finding the right family for each child by building trusting relationships and maintaining smaller caseloads. The session highlights the program's commitment to the belief that every child is adoptable and deserves legal permanency regardless of age, background, or special needs and explores how this individualized approach leads to stronger permanency outcomes. Independent research has proven the WWK's Child-Focused Recruitment model to be up to three times more effective than traditional recruitment methods, particularly for older youth, sibling groups, and children with special needs.

Presenters:

Beth Stahl, Training Associate Director, Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption

Donna Minor, Senior Adoption Program Manager, Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption

Michele (Shelly) McCluskey, Family Finding Supervisor, Northern Rivers

Moderator:

Donna Becker, Commissioner, Schenectady County DSS

Highrock

New York State Housing Access Voucher Program

Staff from OTDA & HCR will present on the success of the Housing Access Voucher Pilot Program, gain feedback from Social Service Districts on experiences and talk next steps.

Presenters:

Daniel Buyer, Assistant Commissioner, NYS Homes & Community Renewal

Dana Greenberg, Director of Housing and Support Service, NYS OTDA

Moderator:

Denise Read, Deputy Commissioner, Monroe County DHS

Saratoga 1/2

Medicaid Eligibility Updates

In this session, members of the New York State Department of Health's Division of Eligibility and Marketplace Integration (DEMI) will provide updates in the following areas: review of recently issued policy guidance related to continuous coverage, the Medicare Savings Program, Payment Error Rate Measurement (PERM) and the Medicaid Eligibility Quality Control Program (MEQC), and other eligibility updates.

Presenters:

Gabrielle Armenia, Director, Division of Eligibility and Marketplace Integration, NYS DOH

Kathleen Johnson, Deputy Director, DEMI, NYS DOH

Bill Emery, Director, Bureau of Third Party Health Insurance, Medicare Savings Program and Recoveries, NYS DOH

Jason LaMountain, Deputy Director, Bureau of Third Party Health Insurance, Medicare Savings Program and Recoveries, NYS DOH

Tuesday, July 21

Daniel Washington, Eligibility Program Manager 2, Division of Eligibility and Marketplace Integration, NYS DOH

Mary Lisa, Director, Bureau of Program Review, Division of Eligibility and Marketplace Integration, NYS DOH

Moderator:

Kira Pospesel, Commissioner, Greene County DSS

Saratoga 3

Child Welfare Systems-CONNECTIONS, The Companion, and the Future

In 2025, OCFS launched the CONNECTIONS Companion to bring a more mobile-friendly platform to CONNECTIONS users. In this session, we will give an overview of exciting enhancements made to the Companion and discuss future projects. We will also discuss with child welfare staff how future system enhancements could help them do their job more easily and efficiently, including the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), all while improving outcomes.

Presenters:

Jason DeSantis-Associate Commissioner, CWCS, NYS OCFS

Brian Washock-Director of Program Systems Support, BSSI, NYS OCFS

Mark DeCicco-Lead Business Analyst, BSSI, NYS OCFS

Megan Scullin-CONNECTIONS Design Lead, NYS ITS

Moderator:

Amy Cunningham, Commissioner, Onondaga County DCFS

11:30am—1:15pm

Saratoga 2/3

Lunch

1:30pm—3:00pm

Concurrent Sessions

City Center Meeting Room 1

Child Welfare Case Law Review, Parts II

(1.5 CLEs, 90 minutes)

Part 2 will focus on termination of parental rights and miscellaneous other cases in the child welfare area.

Presenters:

Mark E. Maves, Esq., Counsel to NYPWA

Jennifer Sadaka, Esq., Senior Team Leader/ Legal Trainer, NYC ACS

Vineet Chawla, Esq., Family Court Legal Services, NYC ACS

Moderator:

Jessica M. Peaslee, Esq., Commissioners Counsel, Steuben County DSS

City Center Meeting Room C

Temporary Assistance, SNAP & Employment Roundtable

(Attendance is Limited to State & Local DSS)

OTDA will participate in a roundtable discussion exclusively for Public Assistance, SNAP and Employment Directors and their staff to discuss items identified by OTDA as agency priorities, as well as topics for discussion identified by districts.

Presenters:

Stephanie Boshart- Director Employment & Advancement Services, NYS OTDA

Sherry Tomasky- Director Food & Nutrition Policy, NYS OTDA

Tuesday, July 21

Stacey Nodelman - Director Public Assistance Policy, NYS OTDA
Gabrielle Armenia, Director, Division of Eligibility and Marketplace Integration , NYS DOH
Moderator:

Jennifer Robinson, Executive Deputy Commissioner, Onondaga County DSS/ES

Broadway 1/2

Child Support Program Updates, Part I

Come hear the latest program developments, including federal and state-level updates, annual performance and collections overview, recently issued and in development policy guidance impacting districts, recently released and in development training opportunities, and program operations updates.

Presenters:

Susanne Dolin, Assistant Director, NYS OTDA/CSS

Monique Rabideau, Assistant Director, NYS OTDA/CSS

Elizabeth McGeough Gamache, Bureau Chief - Program Operations, NYS OTDA/CSS

Karen Sicurelli, Bureau Chief - Data Management, NYS OTDA/CSS

Evelyn Addams, Bureau Chief - Policy and Training, NYS OTDA

Moderator:

Michelle Richmond, Grade B Supervisor, Saratoga County DSS

Broadway 3

From Mental Health Awareness to Culture of Care Action: Cultivating a Stigma-Free Workplace

Leaders are navigating heightened stress, emotional strain, burnout, and compassion fatigue within their teams and themselves, and are eager for effective workforce retention strategies. It is time that we leverage our influence and lead stigma-free, open conversations about mental health. Participants will actively engage throughout the workshop- a blend of education, reflection, and shared experiences, and prepare themselves to both mitigate burnout and confidently impact workplace well-being, and foster a culture of care, emotional resilience and personal agency!

Presenter:

Meichle L. Latham, LCSW, PLLC, Coach, Counselor, Consultant

Moderator:

Debra Stephenson, Staff Development Coordinator, Niagara County DSS

Broadway 4

Local Child Care Coalition: A Model for Bringing Stakeholders to the Table to Address Childcare Issues

During this session, we will discuss how Dutchess County partnered with the Workforce Investment Board and others to create a multi-disciplinary approach to child care access needs, and how this could be replicated in other counties. This presentation will discuss the history behind this initiative and the way the coalition is working to move the agenda forward.

Presenters:

Sabrina Jaar Marzouka, Commissioner, Dutchess County DCFS

Louise McLoughlin, Executive Director, Dutchess County Workforce Investment Board

Moderator:

Theresa Giovanniello, Deputy Commissioner, Dutchess County DCFS

Travers/Alabama

Healthy Families New York: Supporting Families and Local District Goals

Healthy Families New York (HFNY) supports LDSS and families at no cost to them. Join this session and learn how HFNY reduces child welfare involvement, effective practices for collaboration between LDSS and HFNY programs, and opportunities for increased utilization of this resource by families and LDSS. Panelists will include HFNY programs and LDSS collaborative partners.

Presenters:

Karen Kissinger, Director, Bureau of Family Strengthening & Community Support, NYS OCFS

Tuesday, July 21

Kristen Kirkland, Assistant Director, Office of Research, Evaluation Performance Analytics, NYS OCFS
Terri Beers, Program Manager, Healthy Families New York, NYS OCFS

Moderator:

Tracy McCaughey, Commissioner, Livingston County DSS

Highrock

Everything You Need to Know about Non-Residential DV Services

(Vendors are Prohibited)

This session is an overview of the following: what non-residential domestic violence core services are, what the district's responsibilities are for the provision of these services (including contractual obligations), a walk-through of various funding sources of districts and for DV providers, how to complete the 2026 Non-Residential DV Services section in the County Plan, and how non-residential DV programs fit into the ecosystem of domestic and gender-based systems.

Presenter:

Marie Limbach - Director, Bureau of Domestic Violence Prevention & Victim Support, NYS OCFS

Moderator:

Donna Becker, Commissioner, Schenectady County DSS

Saratoga 1

Medicaid Eligibility Client Management System Update

In this session, members of the New York State Department of Health's Division of Eligibility and Marketplace Integration (DEMI) will provide updates on the Wave 1 implementation of the Medicaid Eligibility Client Management System (MECM), plans for future Wave 1 enhancements that will occur in 2026 and Wave 2 planning.

Presenters:

Gabrielle Armenia, Director, Division of Eligibility and Marketplace Integration, NYS DOH

Sara Oberst, Deputy Director, Division of Eligibility and Marketplace Integration, NYS DOH

Moderator:

Kira Pospesel, Commissioner, Greene County DSS

Saratoga 2

DSS Fiscal Administrators Roundtable Discussion

(Restricted to LDSS—ONLY)

Come meet with your district colleagues from around the State to discuss policies and best practices in this new and evolving fiscal environment, including impacts on SNAP, Medicaid, Temporary Assistance, Homeless Services, Child Welfare, Child Care, and other important areas.

Facilitators:

John Befus, First Deputy Commissioner, Westchester County DSS

3:00PM

• **Coffee Break • Sponsored By—eXemplar Analytics Corp**

3:30pm—5:00pm

Concurrent Sessions

City Center Meeting Room 1

Authentication of Evidence: Photographs, Videos and Reversals Oh My!

(1.5 CLEs, 90 minutes)

Current caselaw surrounding authentication of evidence, focusing on video evidence and the new Court of Appeals case of Matter of M.H.

Presenters:

Jennifer Sadaka, Esq., Senior Team Leader/ Legal Trainer, NYC ACS

Tuesday, July 21

Vineet Chawla, Esq., Family Court Legal Services, NYC ACS

Moderator:

John Gavenda, Assistant County Attorney, Orleans County DSS

City Center Meeting Room C

Universal SNAP Caseload in a Larger District

Following the appointment of a dedicated Compliance Officer, Suffolk County's SNAP program has experienced a substantial rebound grounded in smarter workflows and stronger oversight. Through a universal eligibility caseload design and deliberate report management, the department reshaped examiner workflow, reduced backlogs, and stabilized performance. This session will share the journey, challenges, and practical solutions that supported the turnaround.

Presenters:

Jeannie Walker, Client Benefits Division Administrator, Suffolk County DSS

Bryan Bogad, Social Services Examiner IV, Client Benefits Administration, Suffolk County DSS

Moderator:

Christine Leoce, Manager I, Westchester County DSS

Broadway 1/2

Child Support Program Updates, Part II

This session will provide information on system enhancements and releases, Integrated Eligibility System (IES) projects, Contract Administration, Data Management, Fiscal Operations, and the State Disbursement Unit.

Presenters:

Shannon Smith, Bureau Chief - Integrated Eligibility System, NYS OTDA/CSS

Jennifer Pekins, Bureau Chief - Systems Operations, NYS OTDA/CSS

Linda Ward, Bureau Chief - Contract Administration, NYS OTDA/CSS

Jennifer Sherry, Bureau Chief - State Disbursement Unit, NYS OTDA/CSS

Tiffany Gardner, Bureau Chief - Fiscal Operations and Internal Controls, NYS OTDA/CSS

Judi West, Bureau Chief - Community Outreach, Customer Service, and Administrative Support, NYS OTDA/CSS

Moderator:

Michelle Richmond, Grade B Supervisor, Saratoga County DSS

Broadway 3

"The Meatball Mindset: How to Roll with Life, Lead with Heart, and Thrive Under Pressure"

In environments where pressure is constant and the stakes are high, the challenge is not just how to do the work but how to sustain yourself while doing it. This 90-minute interactive session, presented through the ongoing workforce development and leadership work taking place within the Schenectady County Department of Social Services under the leadership of Commissioner Brandy Hillard Bouldin, introduces The Meatball Mindset, a practical and human-centered approach to navigating stress, uncertainty, and emotional overload without losing yourself in the process. Through storytelling, experiential activities, reflection, and real-world application, participants will explore strategies to strengthen resilience, connection, communication, and purpose in high-pressure environments. Participants will leave feeling seen, energized, and equipped with tools they can immediately apply both personally and professionally.

Presenters:

Dr. Lisa Patierne, I'm Human

Brandy Hillard Bouldin, Commissioner, Schenectady County DSS

Moderator:

Denise Petersen, Director of Temporary Assistance, Schenectady County DSS

Broadway 4

Home Enabling Supports (HES)

Home Enabling Supports was officially launched on March 2nd of this year. This new service builds on our existing Assistive Technology HCBS Waiver and reflects recommendations from our 2022 ARPA AT/EMOD/VMOD Service Improvement Evaluation. The new service intends to empower people to live safely and more independently in their homes, participate in their communities, and reduce reliance on staff – resulting in stronger person-centered outcomes and a more sustainable system of support. Through a competitive procurement process, we selected 8 providers to deliver this service, ensuring coverage in every region of the state. Please join us for a presentation that will walk through what the service offers, who is eligible, and how to access it.

Presenter:

Robin Taylor, Program Operations Specialist, NYS OPWDD
Allison McCarthy, Deputy Director, NYS OPWDD

Moderator:

Meghan Rose, Director of Protective Services, Oswego County DSS

Travers/Alabama

Recognizing Lethality in Domestic Violence Cases: Lessons from the NYS Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team for Social Services Professionals

This workshop will provide an overview of domestic violence lethality assessment and identify common lethality indicators the NYS Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team has seen in its cases and what the team has learned through its review of deaths and near-deaths related to domestic violence in New York State since 2013. The presenters will share the team's findings, including lethality indicators, systems accessed by individuals before the death, strengths and challenges identified by the team, and implications for social services professionals.

Presenters:

Mary M. Walsh, Assistant Director of Policy, NYS OPDV
April Maas, Director of Policy, Innovation and Professional Education, NYS OPDV

Moderator:

Cyndi Stumer, DBH, Deputy Commissioner, Orleans County Department of Social Services

Highrock

The Child and Family Services Review and Program Improvement Plan

This workshop provides foundational information about the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) and the new Program Improvement Plan (PIP) Pilot offered to all states and territories in 2026, per the requirements of the US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (ACF). Areas covered during this session include outcomes, systemic factors, data indicators, and case reviews of the CFSR, along with metrics required under the new PIP Pilot in alignment with ACF's goal of A Home for Every Child.

Presenters:

Laura Wilmoth, Senior Director, CWCS, NYS OCFS
Christine Jones, Director, Bureau of Continuous Quality Improvement, CWCS, NYS OCFS
Sarah Beyer-Ellis, Director, Bureau of Oversight and Monitoring, CWCS, NYS OCFS

Moderator:

Mindy Banfield, Commissioner, Chemung County DSS

Tuesday, July 21

Saratoga 1/2

Integrated Eligibility System Program Update

(Vendors are Prohibited)

During this session, attendees will learn about IES Program updates, including accomplishments to date and plans going forward.

Presenters:

Caroline Thompson, IES Program Director, NYS ITS

Dennis Packard, IES Business Change Lead, NYS ITS

Bill Capozzi, IES Deputy Technical Director and Fair Hearings workstream lead, NYS ITS

Raju Cheeti, IES EECM/FM Workstream Lead, NYS ITS

Brian Waage, IES Platform and Shared Services Workstream Lead, NYS ITS

Mark Kedik, Deputy Commissioner for Technology, NYS ITS

Moderator:

Ed Bittig, Director of SNAP/HEAP/Medicaid, Schenectady County DSS

Saratoga 3

Policy Solutions for Caring for New York's Children and Youth with Complex Needs

Join representatives from CCBH, COFCCA, and the California Alliance of Child and Family Services to discuss statewide policy solutions to eliminating barriers to care that result in unmet needs and escalating conditions for children and youth with cross systems needs.

Presenters:

Kathleen Brady-Stepien, President and CEO, COFCCA

Adrienne Shilton, Senior Vice President, Public Policy & Strategy, California Alliance of Child and Family Services

Kayleigh Zaloga, President & CEO, NYS Coalition for Children's Behavioral Health

Moderator:

Mariah Ernhout-Fegley, Staff Development Coordinator, Ontario County DSS

5:00pm

Dinner on your own

Wednesday, July 22

Saratoga 1

LDSS Commissioners' Meeting

(Restricted to LDSS Commissioners Only)

7:30am—8:30am

Commissioners Only Networking Breakfast

8:45am—10:45am

Commissioners' Meeting & Policy Discussion

NYPWA President will facilitate a discussion on issues that arose during the conference and other compelling topic of interest to local commissioners.

10:45am—11:30am

Wrap-Up and Next Steps

• Coffee Break • Sponsored By—**Synaptein Solutions Inc.**

Wednesday, July 22:

7:30am—8:30am

Breakfast—Saratoga 3

8:00am—11:00am

Conference Registration—Hotel Lobby

9:00am—11:00am

Broadway 1/2

Meeting with State Agency Counsel

LDSS attorneys are invited to meet with OCFS (9:00-10:15) and OTDA (10:15-11:00) counsel to discuss questions related to their respective areas of practice as well as those where clarification from the State agencies are needed.

Facilitator

Mark E. Maves, Esq., Counsel to NYPWA

9:00am—10:30am

Broadway 3/4

Local DSS Fiscal Policy Dialogue

(Restricted to LDSS—ONLY)

Fiscal administrators will recap their conference experience and share any useful strategies they learned about or that they have already implemented locally.

Facilitator:

John Befus, First Deputy Commissioner, Westchester County DSS

Travers/Alabama

State and Local Child Support Dialogue

(Attendance is limited to OTDA & LDSS Child Support Coordinator Staff)

This session is designed specifically for Child Support Coordinators and is restricted to LDSS participants

Wednesday, July 22

only. This "wrap-up" session is an opportunity to discuss new policy and procedures that were presented at the conference and to strategize how local districts will be able to implement them, leaving time for Q&A.

Facilitators:

Maria Restivo, Child Support Enforcement, Coordinator, Ulster County DSS

A. Michelle Henry-Walker, FA Coordinator-Child Support Services, Monroe County DSS

Highrock

Director of Services Meeting

(Restricted to LDSS—ONLY)

Directors will recap their conference experience and share any useful strategies they learned about or that they have already implemented locally.

Facilitator:

Michelle Dowe, Deputy Commissioner, Schenectady County DSS

9:00am—12:00pm

Saratoga 2/3

SNAP Policy & Operations Workshop

(Restricted to LDSS & State—ONLY)

This workshop will provide OTDA and local district SNAP and Public Assistance directors (and/or their designees) with the opportunity to discuss important SNAP topics in greater detail. The session will address recent policy guidance, payment error trends, error prevention strategies, and other relevant issues. District directors (or designees) who oversee the administration of SNAP benefits are welcome to attend.

Presenters:

Sherry Tomasky - Director, Food & Nutrition Policy, NYS OTDA

Jamie Weeks - SNAP Field Operations Bureau Chief, NYS OTDA

10:30am—12:00pm

Highrock

The Art of the Ask

This presentation will touch on the principles of ethical professional persuasion and how they apply in social service settings. We will distinguish differences between persuasion, influence, and coercion in administrative decision-making and identify key techniques that improve communication with staff, clients, and policymakers.

Presenters:

Paige Rispoli, Training Specialist Orange County DSS

Erin Hume-Cocks, Staff Development Coordinator, Delaware County DSS

Jill Dillon, Staff Development Coordinator, Yates County DSS

Sal Patella, Staff Development Coordinator, Orange County DSS

Paperless Conference:

Conference information including the program brochure, meeting agendas, and materials will be in electronic format. Please plan to use your own laptop, tablet, or phone to access documents. You may wish to download or print them in advance. We will have printed name badges.

Legal Track Information

NYPWA Legal Topic Series for Attorneys and Non-Attorneys

All legal sessions are in-person only and will not be recorded. Local DSS attorneys are eligible for up to 10.5 hours of CLE credits with their paid registration and confirmed attendance.

Sign-in for CLEs opens 15 minutes prior to start of each session.

- **Are We Trustworthy? An Overview of Trusts and Trust Case Law from the Mundane to the Wild (1.5 CLEs, 90 mins.)**
- **"You Better Think Twice" Social Media and the LDSS ((1.5 CLEs, 90 mins.)**
- **Let's Be Reasonable (1.5 CLEs, 90 mins.)**
- **2026 Nuts and Bolts of Administrative Hearings before the Bureau of Special Hearings (1.5 CLEs, 90 mins.)**
- **Child Welfare Caselaw Review, Parts I (1.5 CLEs, 90 mins.)**
- **Child Welfare Caselaw Review, Parts II (1.5 CLEs, 90 mins.)**
- **Authentication of Evidence: Photographs, Videos and Reversals Oh My! (1.5 CLEs, 90 mins.)**

Materials will be posted at www.NYPWA.org for you to review and choose which documents to download to your device or print and bring to the conference.

Copies are not provided on-site.

Attorneys must attend in person to participate and to qualify for CLEs.

Documents will be posted approximately one week prior to the conference.

To access documents, click the "Education & Events" button on our website.

The NYPWA Financial Assistance Policy for Continuing Legal Education:

To apply, attorneys must submit a letter authorized by the local social services commissioner, explaining why this training is essential and include the unique circumstances as to why the agency and the attorney do not have the resources to cover the entire fee, and forward the request for a specific discount based on need to info@nypwa.org

COMMISSIONERS OF LOCAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES

July 2026

ALBANY	Erin Stachewicz (10/24)	NIAGARA	Meghan Lutz (5/20)
ALBANY CY&F	Nicole Ward – Acting	ONEIDA	Colleen Fahy-Box (6/18)
ALLEGANY	Donald Horan (7/24)	ONONDAGA - CFS	Amy Cunningham (3/22)
BROOME	Nancy J. Williams (12/17)	ONONDAGA – DSS/ES	Sarah Merrick (1/14)
CATTARAUGUS	Jessica Weinman (1/26)	ONTARIO	Philip Personale (4/25)
CAYUGA	Christine Bianco (1/22)	ORANGE	Lacey Trimble (6/24)
CHAUTAUQUA	Carmelo Hernandez (4/23)	ORLEANS	Shirley Mazourek (5/26)
CHEMUNG	Mindy Banfield (6/24)	OSWEGO	Lee Sullivan (7/24)
CHENANGO	Daniel Auwarter (7/19)	OTSEGO	Lisa Winne (6/23)
CLINTON	Gretchen Crowningshield (8/25)	PUTNAM	Sara Servadio (12/23)
COLUMBIA	Robert Gibson (6/17)	RENSSELAER	Michael McMahon (6/22) *
CORTLAND	Allison Veintimilla (6/26)	ROCKLAND	Patrick Frawley (6/26)
DELAWARE	Keith Weaver (10/24)	ST. LAWRENCE	Joseph L. Seeber (4/22)
DUTCHESS	Sabrina Jaar Marzouka (1/16)	ST. REGIS MOHAWK	Jade White (4/16)
ERIE	Karen Rybicki (10/24)	SARATOGA	Patrick Maxwell (6/23)
ESSEX	Angie Allen (1/23)	SCHENECTADY	Brandy Hillard-Bouldin (1/23)
FRANKLIN	Michele Mulverhill (9/14)	SCHOHARIE	Donna Becker (6/19)
FULTON	Trista Gordon (3/26)	SCHUYLER	JoAnn Fratarcangelo (3/13)
GENESEE	Carla Mindler (10/22)	SENECA	Michael Whitley (6/24)
GREENE	Kira Pospesel (6/04)	STEUBEN	Lise Reynolds – Acting
HAMILTON	Roberta Bly (7/12)	SUFFOLK	Sylvia A. Diaz – Acting
HERKIMER	Timothy Seymour (10/11)	SULLIVAN	Giselle Steketee – Acting
JEFFERSON	Karen Marcum (8/23)	TIOGA	Elizabeth Myers (12/25)
LEWIS	Jennifer Jones (7/15)	TOMPKINS	Brittanie Earle (7/25)
LIVINGSTON	Tracy McCaughey (2/22)	ULSTER	Michael Iapocce (2/12)
MADISON	Jesica Prievo (12/23)	WARREN	Christina Mastrianni (9/23)
MONROE	Thalia Wright (4/20)	WASHINGTON	Duane Vaughn (9/25)
MONTGOMERY	Matthew Beck (7/23)	WAYNE	Lisa Graf (10/22)
NASSAU	Jose Lopez (4/24)	WESTCHESTER	Leonard Townes (2/21)
NEW YORK CITY	DSS: Erin Dalton (3/26)	WYOMING	Ben Dennis (6/25)
	ACS: Rebecca Jones	YATES	Amy Miller (4/11)
	Gaston (4/26)		

* - Montgomery (2011-2022)

7/7/2026

2026 Board of Directors

NYPWA OFFICERS

President – Leonard Townes, Westchester
1st Vice President – Roberta Bly, Hamilton County
2nd Vice President – Meghan Lutz, Niagara County
3rd Vice President – Karen Rybicki, Erie County
Treasurer – JoAnn Fratarcangelo, Schuyler County
Past President – Sabrina Jaar Marzouka, Dutchess County

NYPWA BOARD MEMBERS BY JUDICIAL DISTRICT

Erin Dalton – District I, II, XI, XII
New York, Bronx, Kings, Queens, Richmond

Donna Becker (Schoharie) – District III
Albany, Columbia, Greene, Rensselaer, **Schoharie**, Sullivan, Ulster

Brandy Hillard-Bouldin (Schenectady)– District IV
Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Hamilton, Montgomery, St. Lawrence, St. Regis Mohawk Tribe,
Saratoga, **Schenectady**, Warren, Washington

Jenny Jones(Lewis) – District V
Herkimer, Jefferson, **Lewis**, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego

Nancy Williams (Broome) – District VI
Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Cortland, Delaware, Madison, Otsego, Schuyler, Tioga,
Tompkins

Amy Miller(Yates)– District VII
Cayuga, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne, **Yates**

Don Horan (Allegany)– District VIII
Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Niagara, Orleans, Wyoming

Vacant – District IX
Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Westchester

Vacant– District X
Nassau, Suffolk

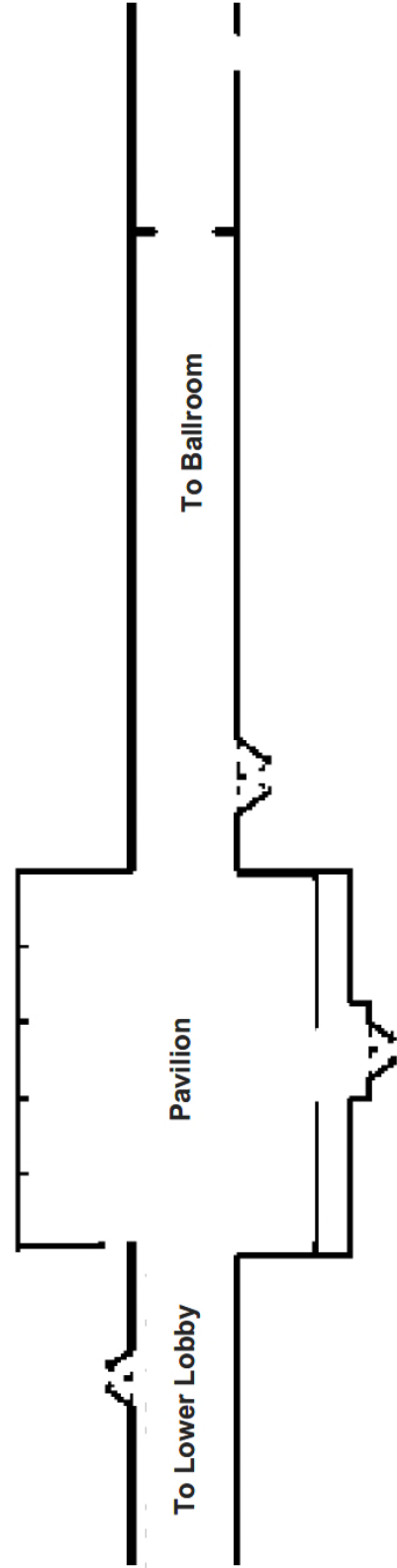
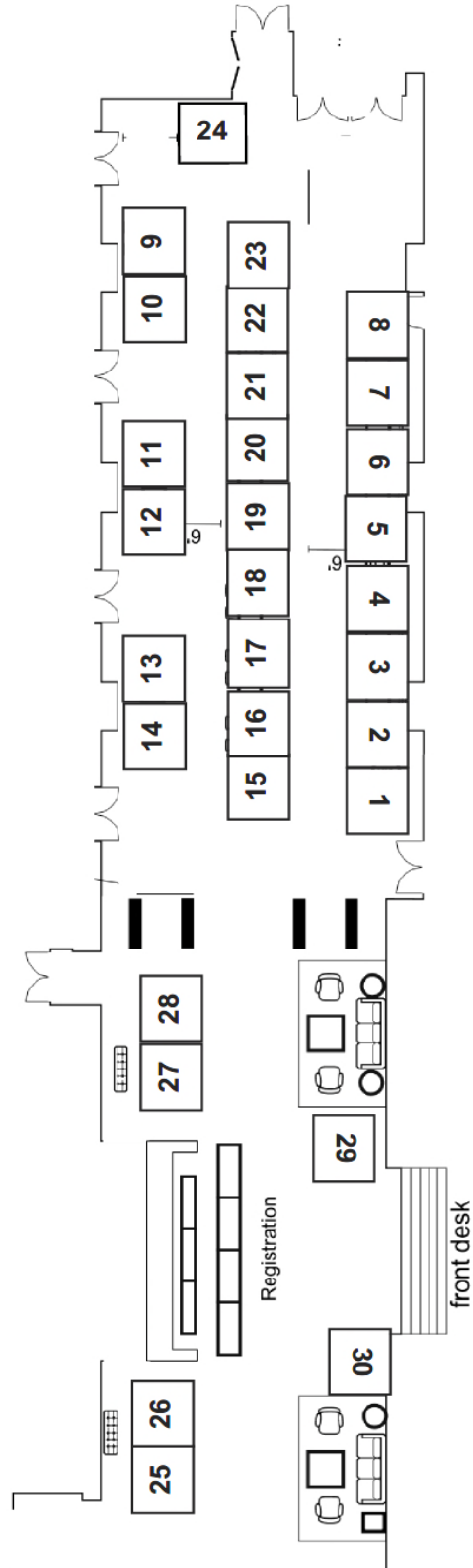
Tracy McCaughey
At Large
Livingston

Angie Allen
At Large
Essex

Nicole Gee, Membership Director
Paul Brady, Executive Director
John Liddle, Executive Director
Matt Barron, Director of Policy & Communications
Alex Crowell, Administrative Assistant
Mark Maves, Counsel to NYPWA (CLE/Legal Sessions)

Exhibitor Map

Lower Lobby & Gallery



Sponsors/Exhibitors/Advertisers

Sponsors:

TipCo Automated Systems:

- Coffee Break • Mon., July 20 @ 10:30am •
Booth: 1

Equifax:

- Coffee Break • Mon., July 20 @ 3:00pm •
Booth: 2

Deloitte:

- All Day Refresher • Tue., July 21 & Mobile App •
Booth: 5

EY:

- Coffee Break • Tue., July 21 @ 10:30am •
Booth: 6

Synaptein Solutions Inc.:

- Commissioner Coffee Break • Wed., July 22 •
Booth: 9

Exhibitors:

KidsPeace:

Booth: 10

American Public Human Services Association:

Booth: 11

Salesforce/Carahsoft:

Booth: 14

Diona:

Booth: 15

Youth Advocate Programs Inc.:

Booth: 18

Children's Behavioral Solutions/Acadia Healthcare:

Booth: 19

Northern Rivers Family of Services:

Booth: 22

Elastic:

Booth: 23

Accenture LLP:

Booth: 26

Beam Up Us:

Booth: 27

CLINICOM:

Booth: 30

Advertisers:

Healthy Together

CMA

Curam by Merative:

- All Day Refresher • Mon., July 20 •
Booth: 3

Argyle:

- Commissioner Coffee Break • Mon., July 20 •
Booth: 4

eXemplar Analytics Corp:

- Coffee Break • Tue., July 21 @ 3pm •
Booth: 7

Binti, Inc:

- Keynote Speaker • Mon., July 20 •
Booth: 8

FindHelp:

- Conference Technology•

Checkr:

- Conference Technology•

The Bonadio Group:

Booth: 12

RCM Healthcare Services:

Booth: 13

Together for Youth:

Booth: 16

NYSTEC:

Booth: 17

LaSalle School:

Booth: 20

Seven Hills Foundation Children's Services:

Booth: 21

The IMA Group:

Booth: 24

Northwoods:

Booth: 25

Maximus:

Booth: 28

SteadyIQ:

Booth: 29

datrixa

KinderSystem