

Margaret Maley, Parent Child Center Coordinator at Northwestern Counseling and Support Services

Budget Hearing 2/13/2016

St. Albans, VT

I live in St Albans and I work at the Parent Child Center at Northwestern Counseling and Support Services. Just recently I transitioned out of the role of the coordinator for the Children's Integrated Services program. CIS provides home visits and early childhood programs that support children's health, development, and learning. Through CIS, families and early care providers have access to a variety of resources including financial assistance, nursing, mental health and developmental screenings for our youngest children.

CIS has been level funded for 7 years, but in that time, we have seen an increase in children who are in states custody, more families struggling to meet basic needs, and an increase in rising caseloads and expectations for the staff who provide these services paired with inadequate compensation. CIS is prevention-focused and was designed to lessen, if not eliminate, the need for future services that are costlier and less efficient. I am here to ask that you increase the funding for Children's Integrated Services to approximately \$2.5 million for FY '18. I feel strongly that investing in children's early years is critical to seeing continued progress on family safety and stability as well as an opportunity to contribute to an overall cost savings in health care. Thank you.