The state budget funding allocation to support FYCSI is a momentous first step in building the foundation to ensure foster youth are given an equal opportunity to realize their dreams of a college education. New York State has an obligation to ensure that youth in foster care can make the transition to independence. A college degree is critical in that transition.

Therefore, to continue to support this transition, we urge the state to take the next steps:

1. **Commit to developing a sustainable funding strategy for FYCSI and allocate $4,101,585 in the 2016-17 state budget to support cohort 1, of 352 continuing students and 375 first-year students (cohort 2) for a total of 727 students.**

2. **Amend the FYCSI statute eligibility criteria to reflect the intended population as current or former foster youth and, to require students to apply for services by their 25th birthday.**

3. **Develop a standardized identification mechanism for students to self-identify for this initiative at the first point of contact (during application for admission) on CUNY and SUNY applications.**

4. **Implement a public marketing campaign that includes the creation of a website targeted to youth in care, their guardians, foster care agencies, and other stakeholders.**