



April 9, 2026

The Honorable Chairman DiPalma
Honorable Members of the Senate Finance Committee
Senate Lounge- State House
Providence, RI 02903

My name is Beth Bixby, and I serve as the Chief Executive Officer of Tides Family Services. For more than forty years, Tides has worked alongside the State of Rhode Island to support children and families involved in the child welfare, juvenile justice, and children's behavioral health systems. Our services are community-based and family-focused.

I want to begin by acknowledging the significant work that has gone into workforce development and the progress being recognized in the Governor's FY2027 budget proposal.

Tides is strongly supportive of continued funding for the Ladders to Licensure Program under Article 10, Section 42-166-2 of the FY2027 proposed budget.

Rhode Island College's Clinical Career Ladders to Licensure Partnership, focused on Social Work and Clinical Mental Health Counseling, includes Child & Family Services of Rhode Island, Community Care Alliance, Family Service of Rhode Island, Tides Family Services, and the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth, and Families. William James College's Behavioral Healthcare Ladders to Licensure Partnership, focused on Clinical Mental Health Counseling, includes Communities for People, Tides Family Services, and Family Service of Rhode Island. These partnerships are helping to build a stronger pipeline of licensed behavioral health professionals across our state.

At Tides, we currently have 7 staff members actively participating in this program, and an additional 7 staff members attended the most recent joint recruiting event. We anticipate that at least four additional staff members will complete the program in 2027, including two in the one-year accelerated MSW program.

Continued investment in this program is not only fiscally responsible but essential to sustaining and expanding its early success. Without ongoing funding, we risk losing momentum at a time when the demand for services continues to grow, and the need for a resilient workforce has never been greater.

I respectfully urge the Committee to support the inclusion of funding for the Ladders to Licensure Program in the FY2027 budget. This investment will yield long-term benefits for our workforce, our healthcare system, and the individuals and families who rely on these critical services.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony

Sincerely,

Beth A. Bixby, LICSW
Chief Executive Officer
Tides Family Services