

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE

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January 21, 2015  
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HELD AT: Committee Room - City Hall

B E F O R E:  
STEPHEN T. LEVIN  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
ANNABEL PALMA  
CARLOS MENCHACA  
COREY D. JOHNSON  
DONOVAN J. RICHARDS  
FERNANDO CABRERA  
RITCHIE J. TORRES  
RUBEN WILS  
VANESSA L. GIBSON

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So we don't have a gavel this afternoon so I'm just going knock on the, on the table here. Good afternoon everybody. I'm Council Member Stephen Levin, Chair of the City Council's Committee on General Welfare. And today the city is going to examine the new rental assistance subsidies known as Living In Communities or LINC. We are also hearing resolution number 503 which I have sponsored that calls on the state legislature to, to create a hospitality gift fund for the homeless. Before we begin today I would like to thank the staff that helped put together today's hearing; Tanya Cyrus and Andrea Vasquez council to the committee and legislative analyst as well as my staff Matt Ojala and Rommie Metal. I'd also like to welcome today Department of Homeless Services Commissioner Gilbert Taylor and Human Resources Commissioner Stephen Banks and all of the advocates and providers that are here today to testify as well as other members of the administration. As you are all aware New York City is facing record levels of homelessness that we have not seen in New York City since the great

1  
2 depression. There are currently over 58,500  
3 individuals in the Department of Homeless Service's  
4 shelter system including almost 25 thousand  
5 children. I just want to repeat those numbers so  
6 that everybody can have them sink in. 58,500  
7 individuals here in New York City, among those 25  
8 thousand children in New York City's Homeless  
9 shelter system. Individuals and families are also  
10 staying in shelter for longer than ever with  
11 families with children averaging stays of 429 days,  
12 adult families at 523 days and single adults at 318  
13 days. These are the averages across the city.  
14 Homelessness has skyrocketed during the previous  
15 administration. Over the course of the Bloomberg  
16 Administration homelessness increased almost 70  
17 percent. Although that time period includes an  
18 economic recession the previous administration took  
19 steps that led in my opinion directly to the  
20 increase in the number of homeless families in  
21 shelter including ending the Section 8 and NYCHA  
22 priority for homeless families and replacing it  
23 with the short term Advantage rental subsidy.  
24 Advantage despite its flaws was ended in 2011  
25 leaving thousands of family to return to shelter

1 when they could no longer afford their apartments.  
2 This legacy and the growing shelter census was  
3 inherited last year by the de Blasio administration  
4 and the shelter census continues to grow. There  
5 have been very laudable and concerted efforts  
6 spearheaded by our commissioners testifying today.  
7 And I want to thank you for your leadership, for  
8 working with this committee and the council, and  
9 for your dedication. I think that that is.. your,  
10 your dedication and ingenuity in tackling this  
11 issues is you know beyond question and above  
12 reproach. And we want to acknowledge that at the  
13 outset here. At today's, at today's hearing we will  
14 examine the administration's efforts during the  
15 first year to combat the homelessness crisis.  
16 Specifically we'll examine the new rental subsidy  
17 program LINC, LINC unlike the former Advantage  
18 program is tailored to specific populations within  
19 the shelter system. The first set of LINC subsidies  
20 launched in September of 2014 were aimed at  
21 families with children living in DHS and HRA  
22 shelters. LINC 1 is for working families, LINC 2  
23 for vulnerable families with multiple shelter  
24 stays, LINC 3 is for families including a survivor  
25

1 of domestic violence. LINC 4 and 5 launched in mid-  
2 December of 2014 is for single adults and adult  
3 families. With LINC 4 providing rental assistance  
4 for seniors in shelter and LINC 5 for those who are  
5 employed. For the first year LINC aims to move  
6 approximately 6,000 individuals and families out of  
7 the shelter. After the program's launch and  
8 providers reported that recipients have, were  
9 having a difficult time finding landlords willing  
10 to accept the program. Today we will examine the  
11 current status of the program and if recipients  
12 have been successfully renting apartments and  
13 leaving the shelter system. We're also in,  
14 interested in discussing whether the steps taken  
15 including LINC and the reinstatement of NYCHA and  
16 Section 8 priority for homeless families are enough  
17 to effectively combat the homelessness crisis.  
18 NYCHA is the only resource entirely within the  
19 city's control in order to move families out of the  
20 shelter system and into permanent housing. Of all  
21 the resources out there NYCHA is the one that the  
22 city has complete jurisdiction over. The 750 units  
23 set aside in 2014 are a fraction of what is needed  
24 and what was called upon by advocates to address a  
25

1  
2 crisis this serious and it must be increased. We  
3 must maximize the use of all of the resources that  
4 we have available at the city's disposal. So I want  
5 to thank you very much to Commissioners Banks and  
6 Taylor, Deputy Commissioners, for your testimony  
7 that you're about to give and for your dedication  
8 to this incredibly important issue. I want to  
9 acknowledge my colleagues who are here today;  
10 Annabel Palma of the Bronx, Carlos Menchaca of  
11 Brooklyn, Fernando Cabrera of the Bronx, Ruben  
12 Wills of Queens, and Corey Johnson of Manhattan.  
13 Before you testify I have to ask... Do you affirm to  
14 tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but  
15 the truth in your testimony before this committee  
16 and to respond honestly to council member's  
17 questions?

18 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: I do.

19 COMMISSIONER COMMISSIONER BANKS: I do.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you. You may  
21 proceed.

22 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So good afternoon  
23 Chairman Levin and members of the New York City  
24 Council Committee on General Welfare. My name is  
25 Gilbert Taylor and I am the Commissioner of the New

1  
2 York City Department of Homeless Services. I'm  
3 here today with Commissioner Stephen Banks of the  
4 Human Resource Administration as well as with  
5 Loraine Stevens, my first Deputy Commissioner at  
6 DHS and Bruce Jordan, the Chief Homeless Program  
7 Prevention Officer at HRA. Thank you for the  
8 opportunity to testify this afternoon. In today's  
9 testimony I will discuss the major... of  
10 homelessness, DHS's prevention efforts, and detail  
11 the development and implementation of the Living in  
12 Communities rental assistance program also known as  
13 LINC. New York City is facing pronounced economic  
14 inequality. Due to low wages and lack of affordable  
15 housing the cost of living has increased.  
16 Approximately 46 percent of New Yorkers live near  
17 poverty and approximately 22 percent of New Yorkers  
18 live below the poverty line. One in three New  
19 Yorkers work low wage jobs. Working full time at  
20 the minimum wage, at a minimum wage earns a salary  
21 of less than 20 thousand dollars per year. Over 75  
22 percent of low income households spent one third of  
23 their income on rent and 47 percent spend over half  
24 of their income on rent. The reality of this income  
25 inequality manifests itself in the city shelter



1 system which currently houses approximately 58  
2 thousand individuals. When faced with drivers such  
3 as eviction domestic violence and overcrowding  
4 individuals and families are unable to afford the  
5 basic cost of living. As a result the number of  
6 individuals and families entering shelter continues  
7 to exceed the number of those who exit. The average  
8 length of stay in shelter now is 412 days for  
9 families with children, 536 days for adult families  
10 and 329 days for single adults. As part of our  
11 strategic plan to reduce homelessness in New York  
12 City our agency's initial focus is on prevention.  
13 DHS strives to prevent homelessness whenever  
14 possible and believes that shelter should be the  
15 very last resort. The home based prevention program  
16 is a cornerstone of our agency's efforts to prevent  
17 homelessness. Last year DHS doubled its prevention  
18 efforts after obtaining a 20 million dollar  
19 investment in home base. The total funding of the  
20 program is now at 42 million dollars from a  
21 combination of state, city, and federal funding. At  
22 the beginning of the administration we had 14 home  
23 based offices. The investment enabled us to add  
24 nine additional locations in New York City to now  
25

1  
2 have a total of 23 offices throughout the five  
3 boroughs. The home base program is nationally  
4 recognized and proven to help families remain  
5 stably housed and to remain out of shelter. Last  
6 year home base served over 12 thousand households.  
7 Of those served 95 percent were able to remain  
8 stably housed in the community and avoided entering  
9 shelter. The recent expansion will allow the  
10 program to serve over 20 thousand households  
11 annually. Home based interventions have cut shelter  
12 applications nearly in half and have reduced the  
13 number of days that's spent in shelters by 70  
14 percent. Home base is a five borough network of  
15 neighborhood based services. The program's offices  
16 were located in communities where DHS sees the  
17 largest number of shelter entrants. Home base  
18 provides customized assistance to individuals and  
19 families such as eviction prevention, landlord  
20 mediation, and short term emergency funding to  
21 prevent evictions and to address rent arrears. It  
22 also provides financial counselling and assistance  
23 in obtaining employment and public benefits. Legal  
24 service is also available in collaboration with the  
25 city's human resource administration which is now

1 out stationing staff directly in the home based  
2 locations to enhance prevention services. These  
3 services include anti-eviction legal services as  
4 well as rent assistance for struggling families.  
5 Through our initial focus, though our initial focus  
6 is on prevention once individuals and families have  
7 entered shelter our challenge is to connect them to  
8 permanent housing. Since the beginning of this  
9 administration there has been unprecedented  
10 collaboration and coordination between DHS, the  
11 Human Resource Administration, the Department of  
12 Housing Preservation and Development, and the New  
13 York City Housing Authority to address the issues  
14 of homelessness in New York City. This partnership  
15 has allowed us to transition families to permanent  
16 housing through NYCHA, through HPD Section 8  
17 vouchers and to create the LINC rental assistance  
18 program. DHS in collaboration with NYCHA has  
19 already housed over 1,000 families in public  
20 housing during the first half of the school year of  
21 2015. During the second six months we are already  
22 moving forward with the next 750 families. With HPD  
23 Section 8 vouchers DHS expects to exit 400 families  
24 with children, and 100 adult families from shelter  
25

1 this year. Since the Advantage program ended there  
2 have been extremely limited subsidy programs and  
3 resources available to assist families to exit  
4 shelter. At the beginning of this administration in  
5 early 2014 we recognize that rental assistance  
6 could be a valuable tool and work with the state to  
7 create a program that meets these needs. This led  
8 to the creation of the Living in Communities, LINC,  
9 rental assistance program. The city launched LINC  
10 1, 2, and 3 in September of 2014. The program's  
11 goal is to assist nearly 4,000 families per year to  
12 achieve housing permanency outside of the DHS and  
13 HRA shelter systems. Link is designed for families  
14 who have been in shelter the longest period of  
15 time. LINC certified families may pay some  
16 percentage of their income towards rent and receive  
17 financial rental assistance and aftercare services  
18 as part of the program. LINC certification is  
19 renewable each year for up to five years. LINC one  
20 is targeted towards working families in the DHS  
21 shelter system and can also accommodate some  
22 working families in the HRA system. LINC one  
23 families will pay 30 percent of their income  
24 towards rent. A member of the, a member of the  
25

1 family must work at least 35 hours per week and  
2 have been employed for at least 90 days before  
3 certification. The family must also have an active  
4 or single issue public assistance case and not  
5 exceed 200 percent of the federal poverty line.  
6 LINC one will assist 11 hundred and one families to  
7 move to housing permanency annually. LINC 1  
8 families will receive aftercare services from the  
9 DHS home base prevention providers and thereafter  
10 from HRA's revamped employment programs. The  
11 program model will center on the following three  
12 components; initial assessment and career  
13 investment, financial counselling, and  
14 individualized coaching and case management. The  
15 employment program will also provide ongoing client  
16 engagement, referrals to social supports, job  
17 retention and placement, and advancement and  
18 training. LINC 2 is targeted towards families with  
19 recurring shelter stays. LINC 2 families will pay  
20 30 percent of their income towards rent. Eligible  
21 families are required to have experienced two or  
22 more previous shelter stays of 30 days or more with  
23 at least one of the prior stays having been within  
24 the past five year. LINC 2 families must have some,

1  
2 some income whether earned or unearned, be eligible  
3 for public assistance in the community, and have an  
4 active or single issue public assistance case. LINC  
5 2 will initially assess 950 families to move to  
6 housing permanency. The LINC 2 after care component  
7 will also focus on prevention which is of  
8 particular importance since these families are  
9 chronic shelter stayers. The services will adhere  
10 to the Home to Stay program model which relies on  
11 the practice of critical time intervention to  
12 engage families through intensive case management.  
13 Critical time intervention is an evidence based  
14 practice proven to assist vulnerable populations to  
15 make successful transitions in a specific amount of  
16 time from shelter to permanent housing. Generally  
17 that time is nine months divided into three phases.  
18 The practice focuses on developing and  
19 strengthening each client's long term ties with  
20 formal and informal community supports. The program  
21 will include budgeting assistance and regular check  
22 ins to ensure that the family maintains stable  
23 housing. LINC 3 is for domestic violence survivors  
24 in DHS shelters or in HRA domestic violence  
25 shelters. Eligible families are certified by HRA as

1 domestic violence survivors. They also should be  
2 eligible for public assistance in the community and  
3 have an active or single issue public assistance  
4 case. Unlike LINC 1 and LINC 2 a LINC 3 family's  
5 contribution is a calculation of their shelter  
6 allowance and existing income. LINC 3 will assist  
7 1,000 families in DHS shelters and 900 families in  
8 HRA shelters to move to housing permanency this  
9 year. My colleague Commissioner Banks will also  
10 discuss LINC 3 and the aftercare services for the  
11 same in his testimony. Recognizing the need to  
12 support single adults and adult families to exit to  
13 permanent housing DHS introduced two additional  
14 LINC programs in late December of 2014. LINC 4 will  
15 assist 11 hundred elderly and medically frail  
16 singles or adult families to move to housing  
17 permanency. LINC 5 will assist 1,000 working  
18 singles or adult families to move to housing  
19 permanency. Similar to the other programs LINC 4  
20 and 5 clients will pay 30 percent of their income  
21 towards rent. Clients are eligible on the basis of  
22 being in the DHS shelter for single adults or adult  
23 families or DHS safe haven or drop in centers. They  
24 must have an active or single issue public  
25

1 assistance case and the household income cannot,  
2 cannot exceed 200 percent of the federal poverty  
3 line. LINC 4 is renewable for as long as the  
4 assistance is required and those eligible must have  
5 a member of the household over the age of 60, 60 or  
6 above. LINC 5 individuals must have been working  
7 for at least 30 days to be eligible for the program  
8 and can receive assistance for up to five years.

9 LINC rental assistance programs are funded in, with  
10 a combination of city, state, and federal funding.

11 The state committed 40 million dollars over four  
12 years for LINC 1. And the city is at minimum  
13 matching that amount. The LINC 2 program is funded  
14 by savings derived from reductions to the agency's  
15 shelter system. The total annual allocation for  
16 LINC 2 is approximately 15 million dollars with the  
17 source of the funding being a mix of city, state,  
18 and federal revenue. LINC 3, LINC 4, and LINC 5 are  
19 all funded by city tax levy dollars. In order to  
20 ensure the success of LINC we have focused on  
21 learning from past experiences with similar  
22 programs. We have made a number of enhancements  
23 intended to support our clients and those who  
24 decide to host them as tenants. We have been  
25



1 collaborating with landlords and brokers whose  
2 partnership is an essential component in ensuring  
3 placement for our clients. In October of 2014 we  
4 issued two incentives to the LINC program. A  
5 landlord lease signing bonus as well as a, a  
6 special supplemental assistance fund. These program  
7 enhancements will provide bonuses to landlords for  
8 signing LINC leases and additional protections any  
9 event of rent arrears or apartment damage. We also  
10 raise LINC minimum rent levels to match Section 8  
11 rent levels. We're appreciative that our  
12 collaboration with the state and HRA allowed the  
13 LINC programs to come to fruition. However the LINC  
14 programs is, are still in their early stages. We  
15 still have a long way to go and anticipate  
16 accomplishing a great deal with these programs.  
17 More work must be done to reduce our census and  
18 LINC is a significant tool that we will use to do  
19 so. These programs are not one size fits all but  
20 rather are tailored approaches to support the  
21 different populations that we serve. We truly  
22 believe that this will be an effective pathway to  
23 permanency for our clients. There have been  
24 hundreds of LINC placements to date and we are  
25

1  
2 committed to reaching the projected number of  
3 shelter exits in our first year. To achieve our  
4 annual goals we need the support of the council and  
5 housing providers to ensure that our families are  
6 able to transition to permanent housing. Thank you  
7 for the opportunity to testify before you today on  
8 such a very important issue and for bringing  
9 attention to the LINC programs. I'll turn it now  
10 over to Commissioner Steve Banks.

11 COMMISSIONER COMMISSIONER BANKS: Good  
12 afternoon. My name is Stephen Banks. I'm the  
13 Commissioner of the New York City Human Resources  
14 Administration. And I'd like to thank the City  
15 Council's General Welfare Committee and all the  
16 members in particularly the chair Steve Levin for  
17 giving us the opportunity to testify today about  
18 HRA's efforts to address homeless prevention in New  
19 York City in general and the Living in Communities  
20 or LINC program in particular. My colleague,  
21 Department of Homeless Services Commissioner Taylor  
22 has already given an overview of the LINC program  
23 which is a joint effort of DHS and HRA. I'd like to  
24 add just one important point that has a particular  
25 residence for me personally as many of you know. In

1  
2 my prior position along with the mayor when he was  
3 the public advocate I and my colleagues fought to  
4 prevent the abrupt end of the prior  
5 administration's Advantage rental assistance  
6 program. Unfortunately for both the affected  
7 families and the affected landlords I lost that  
8 case by a vote of four to three in the New York  
9 Court of Appeals. Landlords remember the summary  
10 termination Advantage and the serious challenges it  
11 created for them. That's why the de Blasio  
12 administration worked very hard to design the LINC  
13 program based on lessons learned from prior rental  
14 assistance programs like housing stability plus in  
15 Advantage, and by listening to challenges faced by  
16 landlords and brokers. For example consider these  
17 contrasts between Advantage and LINC. Under  
18 Advantage once a family moved into an apartment the  
19 city offered no follow-up services. Under LINC  
20 there are intensive aftercare services for families  
21 with children, many of them starting from the time  
22 that the clients enter the shelter and they  
23 continue through the length of the program and  
24 there are additional supportive services available  
25 for the individuals in LINC 4 and LINC 5. Under

1  
2 Advantage it was not clear whom landlords can call  
3 when there was a problem. Under LINC we have a  
4 central HRA hotline with trained staff to address  
5 landlord's concerns. Under Advantage if a family  
6 was sanctioned or was no longer on public  
7 assistance the rental assistance automatically  
8 stopped being paid and the landlord was left on his  
9 or her own to deal with the issue. Under LINC cases  
10 of LINC families are monitored in order to conduct  
11 a thorough review and provide necessary assistance  
12 to that family to remedy the situation through a  
13 process of, that we will be placing flags on those  
14 cases. Under Advantage if a tenant did not pay her  
15 or his portion of the rent there was no assistance  
16 offered to the landlord. Under LINC first there's  
17 an ongoing aftercare in continuous services  
18 provided to the families and individuals in those  
19 particular programs all geared towards helping them  
20 maintain their employment and rental assistance and  
21 meet their responsibilities. Second, every effort  
22 will be made by HRA to assist and pay any rent  
23 arrears if necessary. And third there is the  
24 special 3,000 dollar fund that Commissioner Taylor  
25 described that each landlord can access throughout

1 the duration of an individual apartment lease if no  
2 other city funds are available to address a  
3 particular problem. Under advantage a main  
4 requirement was that a family be on public  
5 assistance. Under LINC there are targeted  
6 populations that have to meet very specific  
7 criteria, employment, domestic violence survivor  
8 status, multi-system involvement. Each family that  
9 is offered a LINC certificate is carefully screened  
10 by DHS and HRA. Under Advantage the program was for  
11 only one or at most two years. Under LINC there is  
12 an annual renewest [sic], renewal process up to  
13 five years to provide sufficient time for most  
14 families to achieve self-sufficiency. For those few  
15 who may not be able to do so within the five years  
16 we will evaluate their needs on a case by case  
17 basis to prevent loss of housing and reentry into  
18 the shelter system. Under Advantage the program set  
19 maximum rent levels below the level set by the New  
20 York City housing authority for, for Section 8  
21 program. Under LINC we have discretion to pay rent  
22 levels up to the Section 8 levels and in November  
23 we exercised our discretion to do so. In sum we've  
24 worked hard to learn the lessons of past problems  
25

1  
2 and designed a program that will work for both  
3 landlords and our clients. Landlords are key to  
4 success of the LINC programs in our efforts to  
5 reduce homelessness. And we've made a major effort  
6 to reach out to landlords to encourage them to  
7 participate. HRA and DHS have conducted outreach to  
8 landlords, management companies, and brokers in a  
9 variety of ways. For example HRA sent a mailing to  
10 more than 70 thousand landlords and management  
11 companies that currently receive rental payments  
12 from HRA informing them about LINC and the special  
13 enhancements for landlords. The landlords and  
14 management companies that are already housing HRA  
15 clients were also invited to a special forum at  
16 HRA. Both DHS and HRA have held a series of  
17 landlord and broker meetings at which participants  
18 have voiced questions and concerns and ideas about,  
19 ideas about the LINC programs. Both Commissioner  
20 Taylor and I have participated in many of these.  
21 The Rent Stabilization Association also provided  
22 opportunity for Commissioner Taylor and me to  
23 describe the link program and address questions  
24 from RSA members at an RSA forum in December at the  
25 New York County Lawyers Association. In addition

1  
2 Commissioner Taylor and I regularly make personal  
3 calls to largest landlords and management companies  
4 that currently work with the city housing HRA  
5 clients outlining the benefits of the LINC programs  
6 and offering to expedite rentals through the  
7 leasing process. Moreover the Department of Housing  
8 Preservation Development and Commissioner Vickie  
9 Bean have been key partners in reaching out to  
10 landlords and management companies to encourage  
11 them to participate in the LINC program. We also  
12 welcome the assistance of any members of the  
13 council who can help us in encouraging landlords to  
14 participate in the LINC program and materials can  
15 be provided to your offices if that would be  
16 something in which you could help us with.

17 Commissioner Taylor described the basics of the  
18 LINC programs and I'll provide some additional  
19 details regarding LINC 3 which is aimed at domestic  
20 violence survivors in both the HRA and DHS  
21 shelters. It's important to understand LINC 3 for  
22 HRA's domestic violence survivors in the context of  
23 the overall services that HRA provides to domestic  
24 violence survivors. The HRA domestic violence  
25 shelter system is the largest of its kind in the

1 country. It includes 44 confidential emergency  
2 shelter facilities throughout all five boroughs of  
3 New York City with a total bid capacity of 2,228  
4 bids which can accommodate approximately 800  
5 families in seven transitional housing tier two  
6 shelter which have 243 units for clients. In FY2014  
7 the HRA domestic violence system including our  
8 partners in the not-for-profit community served  
9 11,105 individuals which included 3,877 adults,  
10 6,784 children and families, as well as 444 single  
11 adults. Emergency domestic violence shelters  
12 provide temporary housing and supported services  
13 for up to 180 days in a safe environment for  
14 survivors of domestic violence and their families.  
15 This 180 day limit is set forth in a New York state  
16 regulation. Previously after 180 days in emergency  
17 shelter families were either able to leave shelter  
18 with available continuing non-residential support  
19 services, move to HRA transitional tier two  
20 housing, or if they still needed to be in a shelter  
21 obtain shelter from DHS. However using the new LINC  
22 program instead of sending families from HRA  
23 shelters to DHS shelters we're working to move  
24 these families with children into permanent  
25



1 housing, into a permanent home. Implemented in  
2 September the LINC rental assistance program helps  
3 families move back, move from temporary emergency  
4 shelter back into the community as quickly as  
5 possible by paying a portion of their rent for up  
6 to five years if they continue to qualify. They're  
7 now five LINC programs as described as Commissioner  
8 Taylor with one LINC three specifically designated  
9 for domestic violence survivors in both the DHS and  
10 HRA shelters. It's aimed at survivors who have been  
11 in the HRA shelters for the longest periods to  
12 avoid having to transfer these families from the  
13 HRA, HRA system to the DHS system when the 180 day  
14 regulatory time limit's reached. Almost half of the  
15 total LINC rental assistance program this year, 19  
16 hundred slots out of nearly 4,000 is set aside for  
17 families who are survivors of domestic violence.  
18 LINC 3 is designed for survivors of domestic  
19 violence on public assistance who constitute  
20 approximately 85 percent of domestic violence  
21 survivors in the HRA shelters. However those who  
22 are working in an HRA shelters the longest may also  
23 qualify for the other LINC programs on a case by  
24 case basis as we proceed with implementation of  
25

1 this new rental assistance initiative therefore  
2 survivors can access more than just the 19 hundred  
3 slots in LINC 3 that are available for clients in  
4 the HRA and DHS systems. In addition to the LINC  
5 rental assistance program as we have reported  
6 previously to the council in testimony regarding  
7 HRA's reform initiatives, HRA and DHS and the New  
8 York City Housing Authority have worked together to  
9 streamline the NYCHA application process for  
10 families in the HRA and DHS shelters who have been  
11 certified by HRA's No Violence Again, NoVA, staff  
12 as survivors of domestic violence previously even  
13 though HRA had determined that such families where  
14 survivors, they are required to obtain duplicative  
15 additional documentation to obtain the NYCHA  
16 domestic violence priority. As a result very few  
17 families in the HRA and DHS shelters were able to  
18 receive the NYCHA domestic violence priority. This  
19 process has now been reformed so that HRA  
20 certification is sufficient. HRA, DHS, and NYCHA  
21 have identified the families in HRA and DHS  
22 shelters whom HRA has certified as domestic  
23 violence survivors who have pending NYCHA  
24 applications. These families are being designated  
25

1 as the domestic violence priorities. NYCHA, DHS,  
2 and HRA are now working together on an allocation  
3 of apartments for these domestic violence  
4 survivors. This new priority process for certified  
5 survivors of domestic violence in HRA and DHS  
6 shelters will continue on an ongoing basis with a  
7 number of families moving into NYCHA apartments  
8 with the domestic violence priority each year  
9 dependent on available apartments. In addition to  
10 these efforts to LINC families to permanent housing  
11 we have also expanded HRA's efforts to prevent  
12 homelessness in the first instance. In addition to  
13 the LINC program which is aimed at moving families  
14 out of shelter the administration's working very  
15 hard to assist families at risk of eviction and  
16 thereby prevent homelessness and entry into the  
17 shelter system in the first instance. To bring  
18 together all of HRA's resources dedicated to this  
19 important mission and to make sure that  
20 homelessness prevention is a priority. We created  
21 HRA's homelessness prevention administration headed  
22 by Chief Homelessness prevention officer Bruce  
23 Jordan who is to my right. Let me just take a  
24 minute to talk about Bruce, not to embarrass him  
25

1 but to highlight the key role that he plays at HRA.  
2 He started as a case worker almost 26 years ago.  
3 He's been doing homelessness prevention work for 20  
4 years. He brings an impressive depth of knowledge  
5 and more importantly passion to this work. And he  
6 represents the strong commitment that the entire  
7 staff has to preventing and reducing homelessness.  
8 He, himself spends time on Saturdays night times  
9 speaking directly to homeless families trying to  
10 assist them in relocating them out of the shelter  
11 system. The creation of the new Homelessness  
12 Prevention Administration is the substantial  
13 expansion of HRA's prevention services. HRA has a  
14 citywide homelessness diversion program with  
15 specialized homelessness diversion units located in  
16 40 job centers. The homelessness diversion units  
17 constitute a innovative focused effort at  
18 maintaining permanent housing for families and  
19 individuals at risk of eviction both to avoid their  
20 entry into the city's emergency shelter system and  
21 to enable to them to maintain stable housing in  
22 their communities. HRA's homelessness diversion  
23 program included specialized staff and teams  
24 located all HRA job centers citywide and in the  
25

1 Department of Homeless Services Intake Facilities  
2 in the Bronx and in Manhattan where families and  
3 individuals facing homelessness seek shelter. The  
4 Homelessness Diversion Program operates in  
5 conjunction with a centralized emergency rental  
6 assistance unit, the RAU at HRA that resolves tens  
7 of thousands of emergency rental assistance  
8 requests a year out of a central office with staff  
9 located in each of the seven housing courts and all  
10 five boroughs. The homeless diversion and rental  
11 assistance units have been supported by a landlord  
12 ombudsman services unit, LOSU, that provides  
13 services to landlords with specific inquiries as  
14 well as selective assistance with emergency rent  
15 processing and a call center that responds to  
16 inquiries from staff clients and landlords. In 2014  
17 with the de Blasio administration support for and  
18 commitment to homelessness prevention, affordable  
19 housing, and reducing income inequality HRA  
20 reorganized its homelessness prevention efforts  
21 with the creation of the homelessness prevention  
22 administration that I described. The existing  
23 homelessness diversion programs rental assistance  
24 unit and landlord ombudsman services unit continue  
25

1  
2 to be critical components in HRA's prevention  
3 efforts with their effectiveness and reach  
4 augmented by enhancements and new initiatives  
5 described in this testimony. The other program  
6 areas, the legal assistance initiatives unit, the  
7 early intervention outreach team, and the rental  
8 assistance program have been added as part of a new  
9 more comprehensive homelessness prevention effort.  
10 Here's how... expanded our efforts. Homelessness  
11 diversion units are located in all HRA centers  
12 throughout the city and at the PATH facility, and  
13 at the 30<sup>th</sup> Street intake center for single adult  
14 males and adult families and at the woman's shelter  
15 intake center in the Bronx. The mission of the team  
16 is to provide services to maintain families and  
17 individuals in permanent housing and avoid  
18 placement in emergency shelter. The new initiatives  
19 include the fact that the diversion units at PATH  
20 and other DHS shelter intake facilities have now  
21 begun taking public assistance applications from  
22 families and individuals referred by DHS. This  
23 process is expediting public assistance benefits  
24 for these clients and helps families and  
25 individuals avert shelter entry by giving them the

1 support to return to the community. As part of  
2 their efforts to help families and individuals  
3 applying for shelter to return to or find housing  
4 in the community as an alternative to shelter these  
5 diversion units are now utilizing new diversion  
6 tools that include financial short term support for  
7 diverted families and individuals in the community  
8 and expanded short term assistance for families and  
9 individuals who are able to afford, find affordable  
10 housing. The rental assistance unit, the RAU,  
11 serves as a safety net to prevent families and  
12 individuals from becoming homeless. The RAU staff  
13 reviews requests for emergency rental assistance  
14 received from diversion units and in many case  
15 from... HRA center staff and community advocates and  
16 elected officials. In addition to its centralized  
17 operation the rental assistance staff members have  
18 been out stationed in the city housing courts in  
19 all five boroughs and at the Harlem Community  
20 Justice Center in the Red Hook Community Justice  
21 Center. Rental assistance housing court services  
22 are targeted to households that are eligible for  
23 cash assistance, food stamps, and Medicaid or that  
24 are under 200 percent of, the federal poverty limit  
25

1  
2 and for families with children or under 125 percent  
3 of that limit for single adults and adult families  
4 and HRA has the discretion to grant exceptions to  
5 policy where these levels are exceeded and the case  
6 is otherwise eligible and permanent housing can be  
7 preserved. New initiatives in this area include  
8 first in exercising its discretion in evaluating  
9 emergency rental assistance requests. HRA RAU staff  
10 considers now all available means to prevent  
11 homelessness on a case by case basis. This approach  
12 is especially important for particularly vulnerable  
13 groups of clients such as senior citizens, persons  
14 with disabilities, adult protective services cases,  
15 families with children under the age of 18, NYCHA  
16 residents, Section 8 tenants and families with a  
17 history of homelessness. For example a vulnerable  
18 family may not have money to pay rent the next  
19 month but that family may be able to demonstrate  
20 the ability to obtain employment, third party  
21 assistance, a roommate, or other help in order to  
22 show that they have the capacity to pay the rent  
23 after the crisis is averted. Rather than pay the  
24 substantial cost of emergency shelter after an  
25 eviction it makes far more sense to pay arrears in



1 such cases in order to preserve permanent housing  
2 and avert the trauma of homelessness. As  
3 Commissioner Taylor described HRA is now deploying  
4 on-site staff at home base offices around the city.  
5 HRA staffing and home base offices facilitates  
6 coordination and referrals from home base to the  
7 rental assistance unit and expedites the approval  
8 of emergency rental assistance requests from home  
9 based clients as well as interaction with job  
10 centers to help solve client public assistance case  
11 issues that may be obstacles to preventing an  
12 eviction. Rental assistance staff is now stationed  
13 at three home based offices, two in the Bronx and  
14 one in Brooklyn. And by the end of 2015 the staff  
15 will be deployed in up to 13 offices. HRA rental  
16 assistance unit will shortly have staff located at  
17 NYCHA administrative hearing offices at 250  
18 Broadway in Manhattan. This will facilitate and  
19 expedite review of NYCHA referrals of applicants  
20 for rental assistance who are scheduled for an  
21 immediate NYCHA chronic rent delinquency  
22 termination of tenancy hearing. For referred  
23 tenants the hearing will be adjourned for 30 days  
24 to allow for rental assistance unit review and  
25

1 possible resolution of the delinquency hearing  
2 process. Rental assistance unit staff will also  
3 work with these NYCHA residents to help develop  
4 strategies to prevent a recurrence of a rent  
5 delinquency. At its housing court offices and home  
6 base locations in addition to evaluating requests  
7 for emergency rental assistance rental assistance  
8 unit staff can now take public assistance  
9 applications which among other benefits expedites  
10 the granting of emergency rental assistance. HRA  
11 also recently created a central rent processing  
12 unit to centrally process and issue and deliver  
13 rental assistance unit approved emergency rental  
14 assistance grants instead of issuing those grants  
15 in multiple centers around the city. The new  
16 process is a result of an overall faster and more  
17 efficient rent arrears check delivery which has  
18 enhanced HRA's ability working with community  
19 advocates and other agencies in many cases to  
20 prevent evictions in homelessness. Between June and  
21 the beginning of January this new unit issued more  
22 than 80 thousand individual rental assistance  
23 checks which is more than have ever been issued in  
24 any period of time in the prior history of HRA. A  
25

1 newly developed electronic funds transfer process  
2 is now used by HRA central rent processing unit and  
3 family independence administration to transmit  
4 approved emergency rental assistance payments to  
5 NYCHA instead of paper checks. Expansion of the use  
6 of EFT, the electronic funds transfer process to  
7 large private landlords is now under development.  
8 This more efficient and expeditious development,  
9 provision of rent payment further enhances our  
10 homelessness prevention efforts. We also have an  
11 early intervention outreach team that is the  
12 homelessness prevention admonition's new office to  
13 provide early intervention outreach in order to  
14 reach families and individuals in need of legal  
15 assistance and emergency rental assistance. The  
16 team's work is currently based on early warning  
17 referrals from housing court judges with early  
18 warning referrals soon to be added from NYCHA  
19 tenant arrears cases and NYCHA Section 8 eviction  
20 actions as well as adult protective services  
21 referrals and referrals from New York City Martials  
22 directly to this unit. The outreach team makes  
23 referrals for tenant council to legal services  
24 organizations in accordance with contractual  
25

1 allocations set by HRA's legal assistance  
2 initiatives unit. The rental assistance program is  
3 a new HRA program designed specifically to help  
4 implement the new link initiative and HRA operates  
5 LINC in collaboration with DHS. The rental  
6 assistance program manages the leasing and ongoing  
7 payment administration of the program. The unit  
8 runs clearance checks and schedules Department of  
9 Homeless, Housing Preservation Development  
10 inspections to ensure that LINC apartments are safe  
11 and appropriate for tenants. And after overseeing  
12 the lease signing the unit updates the, the public  
13 benefits of information ensures that payments go  
14 out on a timely basis. Staff also addresses  
15 requests for information services from landlords  
16 and tenants and community advocates. The landlord  
17 ombudsman services unit was established to address  
18 the needs and concerns of landlords and management  
19 companies that provide permanent housing for  
20 families and individuals receiving public  
21 assistance. Solving these problems early can  
22 prevent eviction actions and protect the tenancies  
23 of HRA clients and affordable housing. The unit's  
24 original focus was to deal with mailed shelter  
25

1 allowance checks that were returned by the post  
2 office and the correction and change of landlord  
3 addresses the role is now greatly expanded. And the  
4 unit check processing division now expedites most  
5 move outs from the shelter system in conjunction  
6 with DHS including relocation to HPD programs,  
7 NYCHA, Section 8 apartments, and private apartments  
8 among other programs in the emergency one-shot-deal  
9 program and ongoing rental assistance programs.  
10 Lastly the legal assistance unit manages HRA's  
11 legal assistance programs. The provision of civil  
12 legal assistance is part of HRA's overall efforts  
13 to address poverty and prevent homelessness. The  
14 legal assistance initiative was created following  
15 the consolidation at, at HRA of all of the city's  
16 civil legal services contracts or legal services  
17 organizations. In fiscal year 2015... consolidated  
18 all these programs in the city's base line budget  
19 at HRA. The consolidation was implemented to  
20 enhance coordination effectiveness in these  
21 important programs. The legal assistance unit  
22 administers these programs and 18.8 million dollars  
23 in associated funding that's been consolidated at  
24 HRA. That consists of 13.5 million dollars for  
25

1 anti-eviction legal services which represents an  
2 increase of 7.1 million dollars above the previous  
3 funding levels as part of the mayor's new  
4 initiative to prevent homelessness that were  
5 announced during this fiscal year and 5.3 million  
6 dollars for legal assistance for immigrants  
7 including legal services for survivors of domestic  
8 violence, immigrant workers and immigrant city  
9 residents with legal needs involving citizenship  
10 and permanent residency. As part of the budget  
11 agreement between the mayor and the city council as  
12 you know 17.625 million dollars in discretionary  
13 funding has also been added to the city budget for  
14 this year for these programs at HRA and these  
15 programs are also administered as, by the legal  
16 assistance initiatives unit. 11.725 million dollars  
17 for civil legal services including civil legal  
18 services on a citywide basis, legal services for  
19 low income workers, legal assistance to obtain  
20 unemployment insurance benefits and federal  
21 disability benefits, legal services for survivors  
22 of domestic violence, legal services for veterans  
23 and anti-eviction and... housing services. A million  
24 dollars for additional legal assistance to address  
25

1 the surge in unaccompanied minors who have come to  
2 New York City ensuring that the due process rights  
3 of this vulnerable population are protected and  
4 children in New York City have access to council  
5 while receiving assistance with social medical and  
6 mental health services. 4.9 million dollars for  
7 unique family unity project to keep immigrant  
8 families together and avoid, avert deportation. In  
9 combination these programs prioritize providing  
10 civil legal assistance in core matters involving  
11 the essentials of life, legal problems in the area  
12 of housing, family matters, access to healthcare  
13 and education, subsistence income. Overall these  
14 HRA civil legal assistance programs emphasize the  
15 provision of preventive legal assistance that can  
16 avert or reduce the need for litigation as well as  
17 the need for the provision of comprehensive  
18 services that require seasoned well trained civil  
19 legal services staff to address often complex  
20 interrelated matters. In some... HRA operates an  
21 extensive homelessness prevention program as part  
22 of the city's overall effort to alleviate  
23 homelessness under the de Blasio administration.  
24

1  
2 And we thank you for including us in this hearing,  
3 we welcome your questions.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you  
5 Commissioners. That is a lot to digest. So...

6 COMMISSIONER COMMISSIONER BANKS: We've  
7 been very busy at HRA.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: We've been joined by  
9 Council Member Donovan Richards of Queens. And I'm  
10 going to turn it over to my colleagues first and  
11 then, and then we'll, we'll circle back and, and  
12 ask some follow-up questions. But... start off with  
13 Council Member Fernando Cabrera.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Thank you so  
15 much Mr. Chair for I know normally the chair begins  
16 with the questions so I really appreciate... to start  
17 with questions. Wow that was a lot. I think I the  
18 five years that I've been here, four years, that  
19 was the longest presentation. It's probably because  
20 you...

21 COMMISSIONER COMMISSIONER BANKS: Is  
22 that positive.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: You are, you  
24 are doing a lot so... So here, here's my. I want to  
25 start with a real broad question here and please



1  
2 excuse my ignorance but we're doing all of this  
3 work and yet we have the highest numbers ever  
4 recorded since the depression. So my first question  
5 is, is, what's the root of this problem? How long  
6 it's going to take us to turn it around? Are the  
7 numbers that we're starting to see right now are  
8 they going to, is this just a Band-Aid? Is, are,  
9 are we going to be able to do more? And I... the  
10 number was 5,000 you... through LINC that you've been  
11 able to help, 5,000 and change if I, I recall? So  
12 help me out here because I, you know I like to see...  
13 we're talking about ten years from now we're going  
14 to be able to see this, to be able to have some  
15 kind of a stabilized situation? And then I have a  
16 follow-up question.

17 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So I'll start. So  
18 the, the census at this point in time is, is over  
19 58 thousand individuals right. And so I think it's  
20 important just to flag that it took some time for  
21 that number to grow as large as it has grown right.  
22 And so you know the stark realization is that  
23 poverty in New York City is manifesting itself as  
24 homelessness unlike in many other places in this  
25 country. And so with that being the reality you

1 know to your question Council Member thinking about  
2 low wages, thinking about income inequality,  
3 thinking about unfortunately individuals and  
4 families who cannot afford the homes and the  
5 apartments that they're living in right. And so we  
6 know the drivers of homelessness on the family side  
7 include eviction. We know that tragically it  
8 includes domestic violence and, and, and people,  
9 individuals who are fleeing violent situations and  
10 forced to come into shelter. And then there's also  
11 overcrowding. There are a lot of people who are  
12 living in, in very overcrowded situations and  
13 unfortunately can't continue to live that way. So  
14 our strategy to really take this one has been to  
15 look at it from clearly prevention right. So we  
16 have to do everything that we can possibly do to  
17 keep people in the homes and the apartments that  
18 they're currently living in. We have to start there  
19 right. And so everything that Commissioner Banks  
20 spoke to and our home based work that we've been  
21 doing over the past year has really been tailored  
22 to make sure that anyone who is housed can, can  
23 stay housed right. We do know that we can't always  
24 prevent people from coming into shelter. And that  
25

1  
2 being the case then the second strategy has to be  
3 to create a foundation, to create tools that will  
4 help people to move to housing permanency. And  
5 that's what we've been doing over the past year.  
6 And the first day of this administration really...  
7 structuring the LINC programs and thinking about  
8 rental assistance, thinking about who we can serve,  
9 making a concerted decision on the part of families  
10 with children to serve those who have been in  
11 shelter the longest period of time. Looking at  
12 targeted populations. Knowing that a third of our  
13 families with children who are in shelter have  
14 someone in their household who is working, working  
15 full time like all of us are doing. And being able  
16 to structure a program that can help them with some  
17 financial assistance to capitalize on their, their  
18 efforts in terms of work to help them move to  
19 housing permanency. The same is true in terms of  
20 accessing public housing units. And, and, and also  
21 accessing Section 8 vouchers for a certain number  
22 of clients within our system which I testified to.  
23 So creating this foundation, focusing on  
24 prevention, and really understanding that this is  
25 going to be a process, it's not going to be a

1  
2 discreet event right. So it's not going to be you  
3 know we will end homelessness in 10 seconds. But I  
4 do think all of what we've done and all of what  
5 we've, we've testified to is our demonstrative  
6 commitment to really building a platform and a  
7 foundation that can help us to turn the dial on  
8 this right. And so that's what we, we've been  
9 working on and that's what we're continuing to do  
10 with LINC and with other programs.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: I'm sorry  
12 commissioner because what I just heard you just  
13 share is a recap of what we heard the last 45  
14 minutes. But I, I really didn't get an answer.  
15 Maybe you don't have the answer right now. What's  
16 the diagnose, what's the prognosis actually? We  
17 know the the diagnosis. What's the prognosis? How  
18 long is this going to take us utilizing LINC... you  
19 know where can we expect a year from now, five  
20 years from now, ten years from now.

21 COMMISSIONER COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well  
22 I, I just add to, to try to answer your question  
23 that a lot of the programs that we described and I  
24 appreciate the forbearance to give us the  
25 opportunity to describe them are programs that many

1  
2 of you and this committee have called for for  
3 years.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Yes absolutely.

5 COMMISSIONER COMMISSIONER BANKS: And  
6 had they been in place for years we would be in a  
7 different junction now. Putting these programs in  
8 place over these last number of months gives us a  
9 much better place to address the question you're  
10 asking. But on the other hand LINC has just begun.  
11 We, you know in earnest it really began to move out  
12 people around thanksgiving time. The legal programs  
13 took some time for the providers and the courts and  
14 everyone to be able to be in their, in the, in the  
15 right place. So I think we see this hearing as an  
16 opportunity to lay out to you a very comprehensive  
17 strategy that didn't exist previously and to convey  
18 to you that we feel the urgency of your question  
19 which is when are you going to be able to see the  
20 conclusions. And I think the most candid answer to  
21 give you is with, work very hard to programs in  
22 place. We feel the urgency for a child to you know  
23 at... a year in shelter is, is, is just unacceptable.  
24 And so we're very focused on getting a place where  
25 we can give you an answer that you could rely upon.

1  
2 But I think the first stage was to get all the  
3 programs in place and be able to address the  
4 problem.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: And, and let me  
6 be clear. Maybe I should have started with this,  
7 that I think we have, we had an epic failure during  
8 the Bloomberg Administration in terms. I mean just,  
9 it just totally got out of hand. I, your  
10 compassionate approach, your strategic approach I  
11 think that someone took time to really think about  
12 the process and think about ways to, to begin to  
13 make the turn. But I like you know, and I hear  
14 what you, and I appreciate your answer which  
15 basically as, you just trying to get it going. And  
16 from what I hear it is that we won't know until we  
17 had enough time to evaluate and to see you know how  
18 the numbers pan out and, and get some kind of  
19 projection right?

20 COMMISSIONER COMMISSIONER BANKS: I  
21 think also, I would ask that you also take away  
22 though the, the sense that we're not being static  
23 about this. We're constantly evaluating is  
24 something working and if something's not working as  
25 well as we believe it should we're making changes.

1  
2                   COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: And also being  
3 innovative to the extent that we can, you know we,  
4 we developed LINC 4 and LINC 5 in December right,  
5 so last month. And really thinking about what could  
6 we do for single individuals and adult families in  
7 giving them a resource as well. So we're constantly  
8 looking at it and constantly trying to add to it to  
9 make sure there are more, more tools available than  
10 fewer.

11                   COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: I just going to  
12 ask one more question and difference to my  
13 colleagues. And, and that is in terms of data and  
14 surveys with, with the population that you serving.  
15 Are you getting any feedback or is there a process  
16 to get feedback from those involving LINC? What's  
17 been their experience? And then alongside with that  
18 is what's the biggest complaints if any that you're  
19 getting from the advocates?

20                   COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So I'll take the  
21 first question in terms of feedback from program  
22 participants. And so we are routinely checking in  
23 with our clients who have been certified for LINK  
24 certificates in terms of their experience to find  
25 apartments as well as with our clients who have

1 moved out with LINC. By way of the aftercare  
2 components to really understand how are they doing,  
3 to understand what their experience had been and to  
4 use that to inform the process going forward for  
5 all of those who will move. We also working with  
6 the housing community and working with landlords  
7 and brokers. And you know Commissioner Banks had,  
8 had spoken to this in his testimony. We have had  
9 very many meetings where we've sat with those who  
10 would be hosting our clients to get a sense of the  
11 program. How it could have worked, what can make it  
12 better. We've been responsive to the feedback that  
13 they gave us and it did take some time but we've  
14 been in a place where we've actually been able to  
15 kind of hear what the concerns were and to address...  
16 to advance the program. With respects to the, the  
17 feedback to the advocates... so we are in constant  
18 dialogue with the advocates. You know we have an  
19 open line of communication with many advocacy  
20 organizations including the Coalition for the  
21 Homeless. We have routinely sought their advisement  
22 on these issues and we have incorporated that into  
23 our planning. And so the lines of communication are  
24 open and constant and you know the feedback has  
25



1  
2 been extremely helpful over the past year and it's  
3 ongoing.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: But what's... I'm  
5 sorry I'm just very concrete kind of a person and,  
6 and specific. I, I just wanted to hear what are the  
7 biggest complaints.

8 COMMISSIONER COMMISSIONER BANKS: So  
9 I'll give you an example of a complaint and an  
10 example of how we resolved it. So when we initially  
11 implemented LINC 3 there were concerns that if you  
12 were working in a domestic violent, in an HRA  
13 domestic violence shelter would that preclude you  
14 from getting it? That was not our intention. That  
15 was something that was flagged for us in terms of  
16 our communications.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Gotcha.

18 COMMISSIONER COMMISSIONER BANKS: We  
19 corrected that communication and that came as a  
20 result of dialogue back and forth with the domestic  
21 violence providers as well as the... [cross-talk]

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Are there any  
23 outstanding complaints that there... that have put  
24 forth that you still have to review or implement a  
25 strategy of action?

1  
2 COMMISSIONER COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well  
3 as we all know the world isn't perfect.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Sure.

5 COMMISSIONER COMMISSIONER BANKS: And so  
6 on any day of the week there could be an issue that  
7 arises with a particular family, with a particular,  
8 with a particular process we've got. I think what's  
9 different about the approach we're trying to take  
10 is an openness to hear complaints.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Absolutely.

12 COMMISSIONER COMMISSIONER BANKS: And if  
13 something could be done better to not view  
14 ourselves as a repository of all creativity.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Beautiful. And,  
16 and, and the feedback that you're getting back is  
17 that anecdotal data or, or is, do you have a  
18 survey, do you have any cycle matrix...

19 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So we are  
20 evaluating these programs. The evaluation process  
21 has begun but it has not yet completed. So it is  
22 anecdotal information as well there's a company  
23 that will be evaluating LINC for us, all portions  
24 of it.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Okay. Looking  
3 forward to seeing the data. Again let me just say  
4 this is a breath of fresh air, what I'm hearing in  
5 terms of your strategy and looking forward to see  
6 the outcome and to, of any way that we could be  
7 helpful we will, we're more than willing to do so.  
8 Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you. Thank you  
10 Council Member Cabrera. Before going over to  
11 Council Member Wills I just wanted to ask a couple  
12 of very quick questions here. To get a clear  
13 picture of, of how the LINC program is performing.  
14 So I'm just going to go category by category. And  
15 if you could provide us with the most accurate  
16 information that you have available. So with LINC 1  
17 there was for the first year, the first 12 months  
18 of the program being in operation there's a target  
19 of 1,101 move outs to permanent housing. How many  
20 have been currently moved out into permanent  
21 housing under LINC 1?

22 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So under LINC 1...  
23 let me give you a... looking for my break down. Okay  
24 got it. Under LINC 1... I'm sorry. Okay so to date

1  
2 there have been 328 exits for all programs. Under  
3 LINC 1 there was 132.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: 132... and that's, and  
5 that's moved out or received notification letters?

6 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Moved out.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Moved out. How  
8 many, do you know how many notification letters  
9 have been sent out for LINC 1?

10 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Certification  
11 letters for LINC 1 have been at... Okay so the  
12 aggregate number for all three, there are 19  
13 hundred and 38, 1,938 certification letters that  
14 have been issued for all three programs, LINC 1, 2,  
15 and 3.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Not including  
17 LINC 4 and 5?

18 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Correct.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

20 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: And I can get you  
21 the breakdown in terms of the certification numbers  
22 for each one of the programs hopefully by...

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay so you just  
24 have the aggregate number right now?

25 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Mm-hmm.

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2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. For LINC 2  
3 how many move outs?

4 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: LINC 2 there have  
5 been 56 move outs.

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: 56. LINC 3 excuse me  
7 how many move outs?

8 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: LINC 3 there have  
9 been 140 move outs.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: 140. LINC 4?

11 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: LINC 4. So LINC 4  
12 started in December.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah.

14 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: The middle of  
15 December. I'm getting it..

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: While we're looking  
17 for the LINC 4 and 5 let me just give you the HRA  
18 data on LINC 3. So initially there were 257  
19 families certified for it in the HRA system. 73  
20 families have already moved in that include 254  
21 people. And by the way in terms of the LINC 1, 2,  
22 and 3 numbers that Commissioner Taylor gave before  
23 in terms of thinking about the census that's 1,072  
24 people right that have moved out to date.

25 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right right.

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2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: From the DHS  
3 system.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Sorry when you're  
5 saying from the, from the HRA system you mean in  
6 the LINC 3, in the LINC 3 system, LINC 3 program.

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: In the LINC, in the  
8 LINC 3 program in the HRA domestic violence  
9 shelters 257 families were certified, 73 have moved  
10 in...

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So of the 140 73  
12 were, were in HRA, were moved into permanent  
13 housing directly from the HRA shelter?

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: 73, correct.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: 73, got it.

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Without, without  
17 going from HRA to DHS.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Got it. Got it.

19 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So the LINC 4 move  
20 out number has been 22 individuals. These are  
21 single individuals.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: LINC 5 the move out  
23 number has been 55 individuals.

24 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: 55, okay.

25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And, and then... last  
3 question and then I'll turn it over to Council  
4 Member Wills. Of those numbers do you have how many  
5 of those placements happened in the month of  
6 January so we know like... Because I know that there  
7 was a, there was a, a ramping up period and so it  
8 would be helpful for us if we're... you know because  
9 the, the issue that I have is I want to, I want to  
10 make sure that we are on track to have every  
11 placement made during the first 12 months of the  
12 program. So you know by next September,  
13 September/December including the LINC's 4 and 5 by  
14 that time we want to be able to see 6,000  
15 placements throughout the system. And so obviously  
16 we got off to a slow start. So if we, if we could  
17 see what the numbers are for the first three weeks  
18 of January that, that would be helpful to, to know  
19 kind of what, what the, what the pace is right now..  
20 [cross-talk]

21 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: And so we can, I  
22 mean we do track it every week and we can get you  
23 that information because we do have it. But I will  
24 say... [cross-talk]

25 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: ...even better, yeah.

1  
2 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: November 7<sup>th</sup> is  
3 when we had raised the rent levels from LINC 1, 2,  
4 and 3.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Mm-hmm.

6 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: And prior to  
7 raising the rent levels the, the number of moves  
8 were far fewer than what we have seen to date.  
9 Since we raised the rent levels the uptake in terms  
10 of the program has been dramatic. And so we saw a  
11 marketable increase in terms of the number of  
12 apartments that were being presented for, for  
13 rentals of our clients. We also saw an increase in  
14 the number of leases that were signed and then  
15 subsequently an increase in a number of move outs  
16 that take place.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right. So I think a  
18 good snapshot actually would be say the last week.  
19 Because now we're back to business after the new  
20 year and a good snapshot would be last week how  
21 many in each category were placed and then you know  
22 multiply it by 52 to see if we're on place for  
23 6,000.

24 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: We  
25 have it.



1  
2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Do you, could  
3 you give that to us real quick.

4 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So I can tell you  
5 last week we made 94 percent of our target for LINC  
6 move outs. But I don't want to, I know the  
7 percentage but I want to give you the numbers so I  
8 can give it to... [cross-talk]

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay 94 percent,  
10 that's pretty good.

11 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Mm-hmm.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Turning it  
13 over to Council Member Ruben Wills.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Good afternoon.  
15 Thank you Commissioners for all of the work that  
16 you have done in restructuring what was the  
17 Advantage program. A lot of questions were already  
18 answered in your testimony. I just have seven, it's  
19 going to take about ten minutes but I would like  
20 some specificity on... ten minutes, sorry about that  
21 Annabel. Well the Commissioner took 40 minutes, I  
22 just, I just did 10 okay. The first question is you  
23 said that you raised the rates for rental rates  
24 November 7<sup>th</sup>. Can you give us an idea of what the  
25

1  
2 rates are now for like one bedroom, two bedroom,  
3 three bedroom?

4 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So we had raised  
5 the, the rent rates to be comparable to the Section  
6 8 rent levels so we had heard feedback from the  
7 landlord community that the rent rates were too low  
8 and not competitive. So for a family of four we are  
9 now subsidizing 15-15, so 1,515 dollars a month for  
10 I guess a one bedroom apartment two bedroom  
11 apartment for a family of four. So we have..

12 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: I'm sorry a  
13 family of four, does that mean a husband and a  
14 wife, or does that mean husband and wife's two  
15 children, or one parent and three siblings, it  
16 could be... [cross-talk]

17 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Any variation.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: So that would  
19 help, that would... deal with the apartment, the  
20 bedroom configuration also?

21 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Correct. And so we  
22 raise the rent levels to be competitive with the  
23 Section 8 market and, and, and structure so that we  
24 could effectively identify apartments that our  
25

1 clients could actually afford to move into. And  
2 that took place on November 7<sup>th</sup>.

3  
4 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIS: Okay, so have you  
5 found... and I don't know if you found it yet. I know  
6 you said there was... uptake in leases being signed  
7 after the increase in the rent went through. But  
8 have you had any conversations with people that  
9 would say that these rents actually would limit the  
10 types of communities that you could actually have  
11 these rental units in?

12 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So we... [cross-  
13 talk]

14 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIS: ...you can't go to  
15 Park Slopes... 15 hundred dollars.

16 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So there, there  
17 are some considerations in terms of housing stock  
18 and how much it costs to live in different  
19 communities in New York City so we know that right.  
20 And we have at each one of our shelters, a majority  
21 of our shelters we have housing specialists who are  
22 working with our clients directly on their housing  
23 searches. And as part of their work while they're  
24 in shelter we are working with them to you know  
25 understand exactly what they can afford with the

1 rental assistance program but also looking  
2 futuristically so that at the conclusion of the  
3 program period at the end of five years we want to  
4 make sure that they're in a position to continue  
5 paying the rent going forward right. And so you  
6 know factoring that into the client counselling  
7 that's taken place is something that we've stressed  
8 upon our providers. But making sure that our  
9 aftercare services are working towards building,  
10 building income building wealth, you know helping  
11 families in their journey to housing self-  
12 sufficiency, that's what we're, we're, we're doing.  
13 So considering where you live if you live in a  
14 neighborhood that has very very high rent that has  
15 to be factored into the planning up front in terms  
16 of... structure your move out. And then can you  
17 sustain and can you maintain it going forward. So  
18 we're having those conversations and really  
19 thinking about that in our planning.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: But has the  
22 structure limited the areas in which the clients  
23 are able to live now. If I am in Clinton Hills and  
24 I am charging 3,000 dollars in rent you can't  
25

1  
2 really come to me and tell me you're paying 15, 15  
3 hundred.

4 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Correct.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIS: So it does limit  
6 it to certain communities?

7 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So it absolutely  
8 would. I mean as it would for anyone.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIS: Not intentionally  
10 but it just does.

11 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: But I think it  
12 would for anyone right. So anyone who's seeking to  
13 rent an apartment and wanting to rent an apartment  
14 that they can afford to maintain and pay for right.  
15 And so you know it's certainly, it's a  
16 consideration but it also is rooted in client  
17 counselling and the work that we do with our  
18 clients who are in shelter to ensure that they can  
19 find apartments that will be sustainable right in  
20 the long term. That is really the key.

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I would add to that  
22 Council Member I understand the, you know where  
23 your question's coming from but we wanted in  
24 exercising our discretion to the 15, to raise the  
25 rent to the 15-15 rate to have to be one city

1 standard so that we didn't have Section 8 tenants  
2 with one, Section 8 holders with one level and LINC  
3 holders with another level. The original level was  
4 set at 12 hundred dollars for the typical family  
5 based upon the sort of advantage experience and the  
6 rule gave HRA and DHS the discretion to increase  
7 the, the amount so we did. But the amount we  
8 increased it to is to ensure that there's one  
9 standard for rental assistance programs in the  
10 city.  
11

12 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Okay. I see that  
13 you have a lot built in to help landlords now. And  
14 we really appreciate that. That was one of the  
15 stigmas that were added to the clients right? The  
16 landlords were not receiving any help from the  
17 city. Once something happened the client went out  
18 of non-compliance or whatever it was. But I wanted  
19 to ask if the landlord, if they receive, you say  
20 that they receive assistance but are they going to  
21 receive assistance on everything, legal assistance  
22 on everything as far as maybe a client that breaks  
23 the rules of the lease? It can be a client, and  
24 this is not something that's malicious. A client  
25 can just say hey god bless me I'm in a house.

1  
2 Somebody in my family has now going through an  
3 emotional and traumatic experience, come live with  
4 me, the landlord might not be that open to that,  
5 another person or another two persons coming in  
6 living in the apartment. In a scenario like that  
7 many others, does the landlord get assistance from  
8 the city to help with that?

9 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So it is  
10 structured as part of our aftercare programs. But  
11 there's also kind of a central hot line that we've  
12 given to all landlords at both HRA and DHS... single  
13 point of contact. You'll know which provider is  
14 working with the family that's currently in your  
15 apartment but in the event that you want to just  
16 reach out to one soul, you know one soul place that  
17 does exist right. And so that hotline can be  
18 contacted to help us then to understand how our  
19 clients are faring in their new homes right. And so  
20 we wouldn't anticipate what you're describing  
21 because we would expect that our aftercare  
22 providers will be working on the ongoing bases with  
23 our clients and would understand that if there are  
24 situations that evolve that could compromise their,  
25 you know their, their housing well that could be

1  
2 off-putting to the landlord that they would address  
3 it in a moment. But we have communicated to all  
4 landlords who are taking on clients that we are  
5 going to be responsive and that we are going to  
6 make sure that our clients succeed. The key here is  
7 we want every client who moves into permanent  
8 housing with this program to succeed. And so we're  
9 going to do everything that we can possibly do  
10 between our two agencies to ensure their success  
11 right. And so you know really making sure that the  
12 lines of communication are opening, open,  
13 understanding you know what our clients need  
14 concretely to maintain their homes and supporting  
15 them. And then certainly that's something that  
16 we're committed to doing because that will not just  
17 make the program successful but at the end of the  
18 day we're doing all of this for the people who are  
19 on the receiving end of this, of this, of the  
20 subsidy right. And so they've been in shelter the  
21 longest. We want to make sure that when they exit  
22 they don't return. We want to support them in, in,  
23 in their housing.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Are we, what is  
25 your view on the return to the, the previous



1  
2 communities or is that something that has come up  
3 in discussion if I'm a client and I come out of,  
4 of... [off mic comments] if you come out of South  
5 Jamaica and I would like to return back to South  
6 Jamaica. You know my kids have been raised there,  
7 things like that. How, how much push are we using  
8 to make sure that if apartments are available they  
9 can be placed back in the communities that they  
10 come out of.

11 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So borough  
12 preference and community preference is something  
13 that's factored into the search process. It's part  
14 of that client engagement and client counselling  
15 around the independent living plan and around the  
16 housing search that should be taking place. People  
17 come from communities right and so they want to,  
18 they may want to go back to the place where they  
19 had gone to church, they may want to go back to the  
20 place where you know their extended families live  
21 in close proximity. And to the extent that we can  
22 facilitate that we want to. It may not always be  
23 possible right. And so then the question then  
24 becomes how to we make sure that they're connected  
25 to their communities in a different way. But if it

1  
2 is at all possible and if we're able to identify  
3 units that can house someone from the community in  
4 which they've come from that would be, that would  
5 be ideal.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLS: Are we keeping  
7 stats on that? Are you, is that... [cross-talk]

8 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So we know where  
9 our clients are being placed. You know we have  
10 information in terms of where they're seeking  
11 housing right. And we know that there's some,  
12 there're some communities where you know they're,  
13 they're more popular than others. So to answer your  
14 question very directly yes we know where our  
15 clients, clients are being placed and we can  
16 understand where they came from and where they're  
17 going.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Last two  
19 questions. You guys have, you, you mentioned four  
20 agencies that you have worked with regularly to  
21 make this, this transition to prosperity, something  
22 that's seamless. But one of the questions that  
23 we've had for a long time is the fact that when we  
24 have shelters move into a community or I mean  
25 beyond the fact that there's no community

1  
2 engagement shelters move into a community or  
3 apartments, these new LINC programs coming in. I  
4 don't see a formula but we haven't been presented  
5 with a formula that deals with extra aid for the  
6 schools, extra aid for the ACS daycare centers.  
7 We've worked really hard especially in southeast  
8 Queens to make sure that our daycare center's  
9 online and we have available seats. But we have  
10 never been presented, I don't know if you have,  
11 with any plan that says you have seven schools in  
12 the area we know that these three schools have  
13 enough seats to house them if the parents are going  
14 to send their children there or the daycare but  
15 they've gotten no, no extra resources, no OST slots  
16 given. There are no... you know things like that. So  
17 I'm asking what are we doing with the residual  
18 community portions that need that assistance to  
19 make sure that these, that these clients do have a  
20 room to prosperity after the transition from  
21 homelessness.

22 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So I, I, so let  
23 me, let me, let me just... [cross-talk]

24 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: It's okay if you  
25 don't have an answer... [cross-talk]

1  
2 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: No no I... [cross-  
3 talk]

4 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIS: We haven't got  
5 one and... [cross-talk]

6 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: ...I'm thinking...  
7 [cross-talk]

8 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIS: ...it's okay, I'm  
9 just asking.

10 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So I'm thinking  
11 about as it pertains to housing as it, I'm thinking  
12 about it as it pertains to housing units that  
13 currently exist and families that are moving from  
14 shelter into, into permanent housing. And so those  
15 units exist right. And I would suspect that the DOE  
16 you know or schools or other community  
17 organizations would account for that housing stock  
18 being available and account for whatever resources  
19 they would need in order to house people in those  
20 units that currently exist, distinguishing it from  
21 a shelter placement for example but as housing. So  
22 people moving into their communities. So we want to  
23 make sure that our families are connected to those  
24 resources and you know really engage those systems  
25 around what they would need to support our families

1  
2 whether it is schooling or whether it is any of a  
3 social service that they would need. And we will do  
4 that and we have done that in terms of community  
5 connections and, and, and helping families  
6 transition from shelter to housing. But I, I, I do  
7 go back to where I began in terms of if I have my  
8 head around your question correctly so there should  
9 be some, some, some, some preemptively planning  
10 because there are units that are vacant there that  
11 families will move into whether they're coming from  
12 our shelters or whether they're coming from  
13 somewhere else and occupying those units.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: I mean yes  
15 because if you look at areas specifically southeast  
16 Queens and Brooklyn that were hit hardest with the...  
17 crisis right. The city can't really anticipate  
18 housing stock because a lot of the houses that were  
19 moved into previous to the construction boom were  
20 houses that were changed from one family to two  
21 family, three family structures were built. So now  
22 these housing, this housing stock may be coming on  
23 line as new people move and invest so they could  
24 not have anticipated that. So we have a lot of  
25 landlords and I'm going to ask you publically to

1  
2 make sure you come into southeast Queens and meet  
3 with our landlords and real estate brokers because  
4 we have a lot of people who are moving in who are  
5 investors who live there, not just investors in  
6 other areas, that may move into a, to a three  
7 family home, that this assistance would help them  
8 pay their mortgage and at the same time provide  
9 somewhere for someone to live but the amount of  
10 children that move in could not have been  
11 anticipated. So we wanted to make sure that that  
12 does start to become more geographically... okay. My  
13 last question is the amount of people in the  
14 shelter system that come from out of state is now  
15 what, or the percentage of them?

16 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So the percentage  
17 on the single side I would actually have to, to get  
18 for you...

19 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Mm-hmm.

20 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: I will say that on  
21 the single side of our system it's... the right to  
22 shelter and you know anyone can present seeking  
23 shelter on the single side of our system, there's  
24 no eligibility criteria per say. We do have a  
25 number of out of state shelter residents on the

1  
2 single side of our system. On the family side it's  
3 a, it's a bit, it's a bit different. And again I  
4 would have to get you that percentage as well. But  
5 I will just say that what we have seen in terms of  
6 that, the dynamic is that there are a number of  
7 families that may move out of state who are from,  
8 originally from New York and circumstances may not  
9 necessarily allow them to remain in the state that  
10 they move to. Either something happens and then  
11 they come back to New York.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Mm-hmm.

13 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: And when they come  
14 back to New York they're, they're, they're  
15 technically an out of state resident coming back to  
16 New York. But they had been in New York before  
17 right. And so...

18 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: So we separate  
19 the ones who were originally from New York from the  
20 ones who are from out of state originally and come  
21 to New York, what percentage would that hover  
22 around?

23 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: I would have to  
24 get you that, that number. We have it, I would have  
25 to figure out what it is and get it to you.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIS: Is that number  
3 once you find it I'm wondering if that number's  
4 significant enough to want to push around the idea  
5 of an out of state task force where we may want to  
6 go out to the other municipalities and teach them  
7 how to set up their DHS programs for their  
8 communities also or for their states and cities?

9 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So you know I, I  
10 would say in respect of what the number is there  
11 certainly should be some communication with other  
12 jurisdictions about how do they, how do they house  
13 people who are from the communities right? How do  
14 we make sure that if someone is living in another  
15 state that's where they're from right? And, and I'm  
16 sure you would agree that's where their community  
17 base and anchors are. And if there's a way in which  
18 another jurisdiction can maintain that person from  
19 that community, in their community. That would be  
20 optimal for, for him or her and for the child at  
21 issue in terms of the family unit. So any type of  
22 dialogue that can happen in that regard I think  
23 would be helpful.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIS: Thank you both...  
25 you've done great work. Thank you Chair.



1  
2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you Council  
3 Member Wills. Council Member Annabel Palma. And we  
4 were joined by Council Member Ritchie Torres.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: Thank you Mr.  
6 Chair. Commissioner Taylor Commissioner Bank thank  
7 you so much for your testimony and I really  
8 appreciate the contrast between Advantage and LINC's  
9 highlighted in, in your testimony Commissioner  
10 Banks. I think you know it's, is day and night in  
11 terms of what we can be doing in terms of helping  
12 families not only move out of the shelter system  
13 but remain in, in their homes and in their  
14 communities. I want to talk a little bit about the  
15 landlord incentives and while my esteemed colleague  
16 raised that we didn't help landlords enough and,  
17 and there's a lot of incentives for land, and a lot  
18 of help for, for landlords I think we also need to  
19 highlight that. There was a lot of bad actors in  
20 terms of landlords that made millions and millions  
21 of dollars on, on the backs of poor people. And so  
22 I, I believe that this program you know while it's  
23 helping poor families not only staying the  
24 community and move out of shelter but will attract  
25 those good actors and landlords that want to make

1  
2 sure that they're truly helping individuals while  
3 still maintaining their you know profit margin  
4 right. So I want to talk about the thousand dollar  
5 incentive and the 3,000 dollar fund you mentioned.  
6 Are those two separate, two separate monetary  
7 amounts for, for the landlords?

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yes the, the  
9 thousand dollar incentive is a time limited  
10 incentive. It's, it's meant to address market  
11 forces in terms of trying to address some of the  
12 issues that Council Member Levin raised about the  
13 urgency. And so providing an incentive we thought  
14 for a time limit would help. It has helped in the  
15 sense that prior to you know frankly thanksgiving  
16 and the rents, the rates were just increased prior  
17 to thanksgiving and that's when the incentive  
18 really took hold. And it certainly had an effect in  
19 terms of the numbers of move outs during the month  
20 of December and thus far in January. The 3,000  
21 dollar fund is a fund that's simply set up to  
22 address concerns honestly that we think are covered  
23 by everything else we're doing but at the end of  
24 the day as you could imagine is someone who's  
25 renting their property might say well what if all

1 that fails what are you going to do. And that's  
2 what the 3,000 dollar fund is. It's not a payment.  
3 It's a fund that exists to try to address problems  
4 that might arise if all other things fail. So if  
5 the aftercare services to address the problem..  
6 [recording cuts out] if arrears payments that HRA  
7 is making don't work, if the availability of other  
8 services that we can connect the, the client, the  
9 tenant to don't work, then at the end of the day is  
10 there some fund that would be available to try to  
11 address rent that might be owed or, or damages or  
12 other things. That's what the fund is. It's not a,  
13 a fund that's, that's available to be draw down  
14 unless a number of other things occur that don't  
15 address the underlying problem.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: And the thousand  
18 dollars in the, 3,000 dollars does that have  
19 anything to do with the monies.. Where's that money  
20 coming from? Is that part of the 40 million dollars  
21 that the state is putting in and the city's  
22 matching?

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: These are all part  
24 of the overall cost that we're taking on and  
25 running all of the five programs and some of the

1  
2 dollars are city tax levy dollars. Some of the  
3 dollars are a combination of federal and state  
4 funds. But as you can see this is a tremendous city  
5 tax levy investment in these programs because it's  
6 what you've always said in so many, and the chair  
7 of the committee's always said that an ounce of  
8 prevention is worth a pound of cure and that's what  
9 we're really... a guiding principal in, in, in so  
10 many of these initiatives.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: In, in creating  
12 those incentives and using, and using some of those  
13 dollars to create this fund did that have an impact  
14 on the overall capacity of LINC vouchers... to the  
15 program?

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well the, the  
17 incentive, the thousand dollar incentive is a time  
18 limited incentive to encourage move outs and the  
19 special 3,000 dollar fund is a fund that we hope  
20 never to have to use. So there isn't an impact on  
21 the number of, of people that we can relocate as a  
22 result of having these two things in place.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: And regardless...  
24 in your testimony Commissioner Banks you  
25 highlighted the state's commitment of 40 million

1  
2 dollars for the program and, and that the city at  
3 minimum will match that. Is there an opportunity on  
4 the city's part to see an increase in that or...

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well that, that's  
6 for the LINC 1 program. LINC 3 is, is currently 100  
7 percent city tax levy funded. So there is a  
8 substantial commitment of city dollars. And LINC 2  
9 as Commissioner Taylor described is really a, a  
10 creative program that DHS has been able to put  
11 together as a result of obtaining savings in terms  
12 of the rental rates in certain other shelters. So  
13 the funding streams are defined for each of them  
14 and we didn't stop at LINC 1 where there was a  
15 certain commitment that was being made for a joint  
16 state city program, we went ahead and created a  
17 whole new program that's city funded as well as  
18 LINC 4 and LINC 5 are city funded.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: The program is a  
20 five year program with having to recertify every  
21 year.

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Correct.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: What, what is  
24 the, what are the criterias in terms of  
25 recertification and what will, within the five

1  
2 years what will pull our income level, you know if  
3 there, a significant increase in income change will  
4 that then be the reason why somebody will not..

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well in order to be  
6 able to get to a place where the family's able to  
7 be self-sufficient and pay the rent the hope is  
8 actually that income will increase during the  
9 course of the five years and the annual  
10 recertification process is one that's really a  
11 forward looking one as well as a, a, a backward  
12 looking one. It's one that sort of evaluates what  
13 kind of progress is being made towards getting to a  
14 position to be able to, to pay the rent after a  
15 five year program, five year period of time. And  
16 data on rental assistance programs show that people  
17 over time are able to not have to continue to  
18 receive them on an ongoing basis we've set this  
19 program up as a way to give much more time based  
20 upon what you know other programs have demonstrated  
21 in comparison to advantage to get to that place.  
22 And then as we indicated there may well be a few  
23 families that have challenges at the end of the  
24 five year period we're going to work with them

1  
2 because it's in nobody's interest to see them  
3 return to the shelter system.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: Right. In, in  
5 terms of the five years for those families or  
6 individuals who are not employed and considered  
7 unemployable is there an opportunity for them to  
8 seek training programs, education, and to be able  
9 to further enhance their skills and, and be  
10 integrated into the workforce.

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I mean certainly  
12 the families that are receiving public assistance  
13 benefits will have all of the various services that  
14 we're putting in place as part of this next two  
15 year phase out of the WEP program and enhancements  
16 of our employment programs those, all those  
17 services will be available to families receiving  
18 public assistance in addition to the aftercare  
19 services that will be available to families in any  
20 of the LINC's as well as the LINC 4 and 5 for single  
21 adults that are aimed at trying to help people  
22 maximize income. To the extent that someone is  
23 unemployable we'll clearly be working with people  
24 to get SSI benefits to bring that kind of income  
25 into the household. It's really an approach that's

1 focused on how can we maximize income in the  
2 household.

3  
4 COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: How, how are  
5 families with mental illness and disabilities I  
6 guess addressed in, in this whole LINC's..

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well families that  
8 are in receipt of SSI of which there are certainly  
9 a, a number are, are certainly able to participate  
10 in the LINC 2 program. And many are able to  
11 participate depending on the concept, construct of  
12 the family in the LINC 3 program as well. And then  
13 of course 4 and 5 are, are targeted to single  
14 adults.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: and in regards  
16 to, to the, the aftercare and, and helping the LINC  
17 participants or clients identify the proper housing  
18 fit for them, how, is there a particular database  
19 that DHS and HRA has or are the, is it incumbent  
20 upon the social workers or, or workers who are  
21 helping the client go out there and find, you know  
22 identify these apartments and then lead them to  
23 them.

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well it, it works  
25 in, in multiple ways. And both DHS and HRA staff



1  
2 are working to identify apartments that can be made  
3 available but also the providers in the shelter  
4 systems are, are doing, are playing an important  
5 role as well in terms of helping families identify  
6 apartments and then sell to staff looking out for,  
7 to try to identify apartments. And so there's a, a,  
8 a very strong partnership effort going on between  
9 the agencies and part, and the provider staff to  
10 locate, identify, and match apartments. And then  
11 the aftercare services that you asked about are,  
12 there are several agencies, not for profit agencies  
13 that will be matched to families. So that it's not  
14 a situation where the family's going to have to go  
15 out and find the aftercare, they'll be matched to  
16 it.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: And then my last  
18 question I guess will be... Is there, given that  
19 you're modeling the, the LINC's program after  
20 Section 8 is there a time limit for an individual  
21 who receives the voucher to be able to go out and  
22 find an apartment. Like the Section 8 gives you you  
23 know a certain amount of time before they take the  
24 voucher back.

25

1  
2           COMMISSIONER BANKS: ...set a, we've set a  
3 time limit for that. But given the, the issues in  
4 terms of raising the rent recently and all the  
5 issues that we have put in place to improve the,  
6 enhance the program we're clearly going to be  
7 flexible with that in this, in this initial  
8 iteration of the program to ensure that the people  
9 that have the, the certificates now are able to  
10 move out because that's what our aim is as  
11 Commissioner Taylor said to get people back in the  
12 communities.

13           COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: And and what's...  
14 if, if you, what is the timeline to be able to use  
15 the voucher?

16           COMMISSIONER BANKS: It's a...

17           COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: To be able to  
18 identify an apartment?

19           COMMISSIONER BANKS: It's, it's 90 days.

20           COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: 90, okay.

21           COMMISSIONER BANKS: But again having  
22 issued a number of vouchers since September and  
23 then raise the rent, the rent levels in November we  
24 recognize that, that there are challenges for this  
25 particular group of families.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: Who determines  
3 when the 90 day comes and an individual is not able  
4 to identify an apartment, who determines whether  
5 the... you know it's, the voucher's revoked or is  
6 there a process to reapply?

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I mean the, it, it,  
8 in partnership with HRA and, and DHS are  
9 administering the program. And depending on which  
10 LINC it is there's a greater involvement of, of DHS  
11 in, in those decisions. And I think that you can be  
12 assured however that our aim is to get people to  
13 keep their vouchers and find apartments and  
14 particularly in this initial startup period we're  
15 going to be very flexible.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: Okay. Thank you  
17 so much for your testimony. I really appreciate the  
18 work that's being done and I will continue to make  
19 sure that I'm, I'm the consistent partner that I've  
20 been in any, in enabling us to address the issues  
21 that are affecting the people that we're trying to  
22 serve. Thank you.

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Thank you.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: Thank you Mr.  
25 Chair.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you Council  
3 Member Palma. Council Member Richards.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Thank you  
5 Chairman. And I thank you Commissioners for your  
6 hard work and steadfast work in certainly making  
7 things better for families who don't have certain  
8 means to, to obviously make it. So I had a few  
9 questions. First I'll start with the apartment  
10 question. And I wanted to know is there a  
11 particular portal or something that your clients in  
12 particular working from when they need to go out  
13 and find apartments. And I say this and I think  
14 what Annabel said was certainly great because I was  
15 in my office last week and we had a constituent and  
16 she's a senior citizen who was given a voucher... I  
17 don't know, I can't tell you which program, if it  
18 was LINC or, or which program it was. But her  
19 timeframe for looking for an apartment was running  
20 out. And you know we, I believe my office might  
21 have reached out to DHS to ask for an extension  
22 because she's, was not successful in finding an  
23 apartment. So my question is what are you guys  
24 doing to ease that burden on in particular clients.  
25 Is there a particular portal or, or is that a

1  
2 thought that you guys are thinking of and, and, for  
3 the future because it is hard to find an apartment...  
4 I meant for average people out here nowadays. So  
5 what are we doing to help connect them better to  
6 finding an apartments? And I guess I can go into my  
7 second question in terms of the mayor's housing  
8 plan what are you guys doing to work with HPD in  
9 particular on some of these affordable housing  
10 projects that are forthcoming to connect residents  
11 directly to housing?

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: On the first  
13 question for this particular group that was the  
14 first group that got the notifications back in  
15 September with the time limit running we're, we're  
16 going to work out a way to essentially notify them  
17 about their extension so we don't have people who  
18 have additional stress added because they were  
19 given a certificate and because of issues relating  
20 to changes that were made to program, wasn't as...  
21 took some time to, to... [cross-talk]

22 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Mm-hmm.

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: ...ramp up  
24 essentially. And in terms of the mayor's housing  
25 plan that of course is an important background

1  
2 available, availability of housing in, that was,  
3 that was developed and implemented to, to address  
4 the kinds of things that the hearing has been  
5 really focused on. We develop LINC together DHS and  
6 HRA because we wanted to not wait. And..

7 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Mm-hmm.

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: ...you know one could  
9 say there's a, this is a multi-year housing  
10 program, it's going to provide more units so we'll  
11 be okay.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Mm-hmm.

13 COMMISSIONER BANKS: You know the, the  
14 mayor and the deputy mayors and, and the  
15 commissioners we didn't want to do that and LINC  
16 was developed because we need to have something on  
17 the ground now that's available as the housing plan  
18 is implemented we're going to be very, very  
19 grateful for the opportunities to connect our  
20 clients to housing available through those programs  
21 too.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Mm-hmm. So my  
23 question is.. and I hear you but what are you doing  
24 to ease the burden on people looking for apartments  
25 now? Is there a particular portal they can, is

1  
2 there a particular phone number they can call to  
3 look for to get direct information about apartments  
4 or there non-profit organizations you guys are  
5 working with because I can only imagine how it  
6 feels to be out looking for an apartment in this  
7 environment now. And I'm just remembering that lady  
8 who came into my office a few weeks ago whose,  
9 looks like, and you know she, and she's part of an  
10 organization in the community, was an active  
11 resident in the community who obviously fell on  
12 hard times. So for a person like that is there a  
13 particular place or number they can call to find  
14 out availability for apartments.

15 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So I, I do hope  
16 that the person you're referring to if she was in  
17 one of our shelters I do hope that, that she knows  
18 that there, you know there should be someone at the  
19 shelter that she's in to help her with the housing  
20 search. So having said that and to answer your  
21 question very directly both of our systems and  
22 commissioner banks has alluded, had stated this  
23 actually in his testimony, we did very direct  
24 outreach to landlords and to brokers since this  
25 program was launched. And so we, we actually did

1  
2 advertisements in... and in Metro New York to let  
3 perspective landlords know that we were interested  
4 in renting apartments for the LINC program. So our  
5 outreach had been taking place for many months and  
6 continues to take place. We continue to meet with  
7 brokers. We have a broker's bonus that's in place  
8 with the program to incentivize their helping us to  
9 find apartments. We at DHS have a central portal in  
10 our website for landlords who are interested in  
11 registering apartments for consideration for LINC  
12 so they can actually go to the website. They can  
13 upload the information about the apartment and then  
14 we will begin our screening and inspection of the  
15 apartment process by way of them doing so. Every  
16 day we're getting apartments that are actually  
17 being uploaded into our system and we are then  
18 sending that information to our providers so that  
19 they know you know we got X number of apartments  
20 today. Do you have families that can you know fit  
21 into this configuration in this particular borough  
22 so...

23 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: So my question  
24 is is that information readily available to the  
25 clients.



1  
2 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: so yes, I mean the  
3 clients...

4 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: So they can go  
5 on the website and see apartments themselves or...

6 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: No the portal is  
7 not for clients to actually go on the website to  
8 look for apartments themselves. We actually, our  
9 expectation is that our providers will work with  
10 them in the process of finding apartments. And so  
11 that includes literally transporting them from  
12 shelters to apartments you know to actually view  
13 them, working with them in terms of any interviews  
14 that they may have to participate in for  
15 perspective apartments, really going through the  
16 housing search and asking you know them where  
17 they're interested in in living and really our, our  
18 providers are also doing what we've been doing as a  
19 system in terms of working with brokers directly  
20 finding apartments, finding housing stock, and then  
21 connecting clients to the same.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Okay. Would  
23 you guys be open to, to such a suggestion? And, and  
24 I only make this suggestion because I know that  
25 there are more individuals out there looking for

1  
2 apartments. And, and I don't want to discredit the  
3 organizations they're working with or the, the, you  
4 know or individual organizations obviously who are  
5 supposed to do this service.

6 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So yes.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: So a  
8 suggestion to me I meant... One if, if you're trying  
9 to make people more self-sufficient than they are  
10 out there looking for apartments it would, just be  
11 easier rather than adding that case load one to the  
12 organization... apartment. You know imagine a person  
13 comes every five hours is there an apartment. It  
14 would just be much easier if they can directly go  
15 on a website or something and look to see... I, I  
16 don't want to keep beat, beating a dead horse...  
17 [cross-talk]

18 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So it is a  
19 suggestion. We're open to all suggestions..

20 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Okay.

21 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: ...right. And I will  
22 say that what you're describing is, what I've  
23 described is not majorly exclusive from what you're  
24 describing. And so the expectation is that in our  
25 work with clients that will do both in terms of

1  
2 help them to understand how to look for apartments  
3 and where they can look for apartments and also  
4 help them in a process themselves.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Okay. I would  
6 just suggest that, that, that... Mr. Chairman  
7 certainly I think that's something that we, we  
8 should certainly be looking at them to do. The  
9 other question I had was in terms of NYCHA housing  
10 in particular. So I notice administration has set  
11 the goal of placing 750 individuals a year I  
12 believe in NYCHA. And I wanted to know why are  
13 those numbers so low and why aren't we looking at  
14 what we have? Are you guys looking at increasing  
15 that number in particular because that's something  
16 in the city's control. It's in a, we know the  
17 inventory there. And I'm concerned that with the  
18 numbers we have now you know if we're saying we  
19 have over 50 thousand people homeless now how are  
20 we going to really drastically reduce that number  
21 if we're not using what we have in a more efficient  
22 manner. So my question is what are we doing with  
23 NYCHA housing? And we know of apartments that are  
24 probably ready, readily available. You want to know  
25 how we know because our tenant presidents come to

1  
2 us and they say Donovan there's been an apartment  
3 sitting on floor one for over five months now and  
4 it's ready. Matter of fact we want to move into  
5 that apartment. You know so what, what are we doing  
6 to ensure that we can connect residents to NYCHA  
7 better?

8 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: And so I'll start.  
9 You know we'll say that you know at, at the outset  
10 of everything NYCHA has been you know a very, a  
11 very good partner with us in this work. And we  
12 have, we have been working with them closely to  
13 identify how we can make sure that our clients who  
14 can live in NYCHA units have access to the same.  
15 And so in my testimony I did reference the fact  
16 that last year we did move I believe over a  
17 thousand families into NYCHA units. And what's  
18 truly... it was kind of an amazing feat in terms of  
19 having the, the housing stock be available and the  
20 DHS staff you know to their credit they work very  
21 closely with NYCHA but they really did the heavy  
22 lifting in terms of you know connecting our  
23 clients, matching our clients, getting them to..  
24 maybe able to move into these units. And you know  
25 lessons learned from that process it's something

1 that we can certainly do and do well with NYCHA.  
2 And so the commitment for the additional units in  
3 each of the out years is something that we are  
4 optimistic will certainly help our clients and that  
5 we're going to pursue and that we'll access and tap  
6 into.  
7

8 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Do you know  
9 how many units NYCHA currently has and I know  
10 they're not, I don't know if they're here but do  
11 you know how many NYCHA apartments are readily  
12 available today?

13 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: I do not.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Okay.

15 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Have that  
16 information.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: I think that's  
18 something that we should look at because imagine  
19 they have 5,000 more apartments out there. You know  
20 and this is if, if we're going to really put a dent  
21 in homelessness we have to get serious about it. I  
22 mean not to say that you're not serious about it  
23 but I think that you know certainly looking at what  
24 we have available now would show certainly even  
25

1  
2 more good will and, and reduce the numbers more  
3 drastically in a, in a more rapidly fashion.

4 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: And, and so just  
5 to say and I'll let Commissioner Banks weigh in.  
6 You know it is certainly one part of our plan to  
7 reduce homelessness we've testified to. And it is  
8 a, it is a part that we will continue looking at  
9 and discussing with NYCHA. But I, I'm very pleased  
10 to report that in what we did last year was really  
11 helpful to all of the families who are currently  
12 living in those units and anticipate that it will  
13 help the many more families that will be able to  
14 move into public housing with the allocation that  
15 we you know ben been afforded at this point in  
16 time.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: And then for  
18 the LINC program, my last question Mr. Chairman  
19 thank you for your patience... so are you looking for  
20 an increase in your budget to ensure... So right now  
21 I think through your LINC program you're serving,  
22 your goal is what 5,000 people a year. Am I  
23 correct? Or are my numbers off?

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: It's 6,000 with  
25 all...

COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: 6,000.

COMMISSIONER BANKS: ...all three, all five of the programs. And I think understanding what your question is on this I think it's a, it's been a fluid process we've been adding programs as we go along and we're going to keep you advised of how we're doing that.

COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Are you, are you confident that we were drastically reduced in numbers with these particular programs every year or, or, or my, my question is is there enough resources there now or as we move forward will you be seeking more resources to ensure that you could double capacity per year?

COMMISSIONER BANKS: I...

COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Because it seems to me if you're doing 6,000 you know a year, 6,000 I meant we'll be here god willing another eight years or whatever it is. It would take you eight years to reach 48 thousand. And I mean you could play, I guess we can play with all of these formulas and expect half the drop off. I mean I'm not... the, the big number cruncher but you know my

1  
2 question is are you confident that we can get there  
3 with what you're doing now?

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I think we have to  
5 see how these programs work. And I think what we've  
6 demonstrated over the last several months is as we  
7 see things that need to be changed we, we'll, we  
8 won't, we won't hesitate to make the changes. I  
9 think it's a good question you're asking but I also  
10 think that it, the place we're at we're very  
11 focused on making the programs work and then  
12 evaluating whether that's enough or whether more is  
13 needed. And, and on the housing authority question  
14 you asked just to emphasize what Commissioner  
15 Taylor said so.. in the first half of this fiscal  
16 year essentially, the end of the last calendar year  
17 a thousand families got moved out and DHS and NYCHA  
18 and HRA helps in terms of the, the sort of payment  
19 of the funds or is already working on the net 750.  
20 And we're also looking at what we can do in terms  
21 of addressing move outs of domestic violence  
22 survivors from the HRA and DHS system. So NYCHA's  
23 been a good, a good partner with us. Underlying  
24 your question I, I, I get the, the sense that we  
25 have two which is the urgency..



1                   COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Mm-hmm.

2                   COMMISSIONER BANKS: ...of getting the  
3 programs to work and addressing what's accumulated  
4 over a number of years. And you know as I said  
5 earlier if you and your colleagues called for a  
6 number of the things that we're doing now if they  
7 had only been done years ago we, we wouldn't be  
8 where we are today.

9                   COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Mm-hmm. Thank  
10 you Mr. Chair. But I just want to say, commend you  
11 once again for the work that you are doing and just  
12 urge us to move even more with the, with the, it's  
13 for 2015 to even move more with an urgency to  
14 reduce this number because it's only going to grow.  
15 I fear it's only going to continue to grow if we do  
16 not move with that urgency and we're kicking the  
17 can down the road. I know programs we have to sense  
18 if they work but we're going to have to figure a  
19 way to, to, to, we're going to have to figure a way  
20 to evaluate these programs very quick and if we're  
21 going to really put a dent in this number so.. and I  
22 know you share that goal with us and you know none  
23 of us like you know people sleeping on the street  
24 or, or, or people having to live in a homeless

1  
2 shelter because they don't have the means. But  
3 we're going to have to move with even a more  
4 urgency.

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: You're absolutely  
6 right and that's why you know when we implemented  
7 the program in September with the Advantage rent  
8 levels essentially it took us about six weeks to  
9 say we got to make a change and so we did.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: And then my  
11 last point is you guys... And I, this is just from,  
12 from a landlord's perspective I guess from what we  
13 heard in the past... landlords were not getting their  
14 money in a timely fashion. So I think that hurts  
15 the case when people go back out to look for  
16 apartments and that hearsay is out there. Well the  
17 city did not get... money in the past when they had  
18 Advantage or whatever it is and I think that there  
19 may need to be a rebranding strategy put out there.  
20 We will pay you time or there is, this is a better  
21 system that we have now and I think that's what's  
22 hurting the case for many clients who go out there  
23 to look for apartments now.

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: You're, you're  
25 right. And that's, and that's why in all of the

1  
2 discussions that Commissioner Taylor and I have  
3 been having with landlords we've been careful to  
4 emphasize that we have, you know we're, we're  
5 monitoring the cases so we won't be closing cases.  
6 We're expediting rent arrears payments when rent  
7 arrears build up. The number of checks we issued in  
8 a six month period of time is unprecedented. And,  
9 and it's to try to address exactly what you're  
10 describing.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: I would  
12 suggest to get those stories out there.

13 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Okay we'll keep  
14 doing that.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Thank you.  
16 Thank you Chair.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you Council  
18 Member Richards. Thank you Commissioners it's, it's  
19 now 3:00 p.m. I know you've been here for a long  
20 time. I know everybody's exhibited a lot of  
21 patience this afternoon. I know it's chilly in  
22 here. I assure you the heat is all the way up so... I  
23 apologize for our limitations there. We do have a  
24 number of questions that we need to get on the  
25 record. And so I will go through them as quickly as

1 possible and I apologize in advance if I'm jumping  
2 around from, from subject to subject. I want to  
3 start with regard to the pace that we're keeping,  
4 this kind of builds on what Council Member Richards  
5 was saying, if we allocate all 6,000 LINC subsidies  
6 in this year. So you know in the first twelve  
7 months of, of the program and we allocate the  
8 current allotment for NYCHA units... So if that's  
9 another 750 this year or a thousand if that  
10 includes the Section 8 units. Do you expect in  
11 your, in your projections that the overall census  
12 will decrease as a result of, if, if everything, if  
13 we allocate every resource budgeted for allocated  
14 in this current year is that going to, is that  
15 going to yield that, the results at the end of that  
16 year that we're hoping for?

18 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So... [cross-talk]  
19 We do expect that if everything proceeds as we as  
20 we want it to all of the Link subsidy programs, all  
21 of the NYCHA units, Section 8 vouchers, as well as  
22 our front door prevention and diversion work.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah.

24 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: That, that we, we  
25 would expect that the census should decrease from

1  
2 what it is now. That, that's why we're doing all of  
3 this.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah.

5 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: You know to  
6 ultimately get to that goal we have to just make  
7 sure that every cylinder is firing at you know  
8 every instance. And we're looking at it so closely  
9 with our staff and with our providers to make sure  
10 that each program is moving forward. And to  
11 Commissioner Banks' point if we find that there's  
12 some change that needs to be made or some amendment  
13 that needs to be crafted then we're doing it in a  
14 very timely and quick way. So this is live time.  
15 Like this is really in the moment looking at it  
16 every week, getting a sense of our progress and  
17 really wanting to understand how we're advancing  
18 our goal of really driving down the census.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So I know that the  
20 census today is, is around 58 thousand. That's down  
21 slightly from a number that we saw a couple of  
22 months ago. I think a couple of months ago it broke  
23 60 thousand. Is that, is that, is that not correct  
24 that a couple of months ago it was, or a month or  
25 two ago it was, it had broke 60 thousand?

1  
2 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: It had not broken  
3 60 thousand.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay is it, is it,  
5 was there a decrease at any point over the last six  
6 months?

7 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So yes I mean  
8 it's, you know it had.. we're now currently at a  
9 place where we can expect a seasonal increase  
10 because of the weather in January. So we see more  
11 single individuals coming in. We also just hit a  
12 period where at the, at the end of the holiday  
13 season we can, we can see, we can expect that there  
14 will be some seasonal increase in terms of the  
15 number of families that are coming into the system  
16 as well or applying for shelter entry because the  
17 school year has ended and the next school year is  
18 about to begin. So this is a period of time where  
19 you know the number kind of ebbs and flows. And so  
20 when the weather breaks we know when the census  
21 will trend downward and we know when it will trend  
22 upward but it had not hit 60 thousand. And we're  
23 looking at it every day right. And so we're  
24 reporting it. But we're, we're being very aware of  
25 our front door prevention measures and diversion

1  
2 measures and also wanting to understand how we're  
3 exiting families and individuals from the system.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: But there's, there,  
5 was there a particular dip that, that was  
6 noticeable statistically that you can contribute to  
7 any particular thing?

8 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: We had a, we had a  
9 decrease in, around the holiday weeks. I want to  
10 say the last two weeks of December we had seen a  
11 significant uptick in LINC move outs right, lease  
12 signings. We had a goal with our, our landlords who  
13 were engaged at the time that if they were to sign  
14 leases that the lease signing bonus at the time it  
15 was scheduled to expire in December 31<sup>st</sup>. and so  
16 there was a real push and a number of leases were  
17 signed. Those two weeks were banner weeks for us  
18 and we've actually outpaced our self last week from  
19 those two weeks. So when families moved out then  
20 we, we did see, we saw the census going downward  
21 right. And then we predicted that with the bad  
22 weather and the code blue days inclement weather  
23 that we're facing that would come back up.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Speaking of  
25 the, the front door has, is there, can you in

1  
2 comparison to point in time last year are there,  
3 are we seeing a, a greater rate of people coming  
4 into the shelter system today than we were a year  
5 ago or is it, is it fewer?

6 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So the overall  
7 number of applications on the family side has  
8 decreased. We are not seeing more people applying  
9 for shelter at the front door, more families  
10 applying for shelter at the front door. And you  
11 know we believe that that could be attributed to  
12 you know the, the work that's been done by HRA, the  
13 work that's being done by our home based providers  
14 but really kind of the preventive work in the  
15 communities to try to maintain people in their  
16 homes.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So there's, there's  
18 not as many applications. Are there more people  
19 going in, I mean more people being granted shelter  
20 in other words are they... under the previous  
21 administration there was a significant effort to,  
22 to divert families. Is, are there more families  
23 actually entering the shelter system, getting  
24 placements within the shelter system?  
25



1  
2                   COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So the eligibility  
3 rate on the family side of our system had gone up  
4 last year. And the correlation with it going up was  
5 that there was less kind of churning at the front  
6 door of the system in times of families having to  
7 reapply for being found ineligible and then having  
8 to come back. So we had taken a look at the, the  
9 work that was being at the front door in 2014 when  
10 this administration took office. And we continue to  
11 look at it every day right, to make sure that our  
12 due diligence is being applied in terms of  
13 administering the eligibility requirements for  
14 family shelter entry. But yet it had gone up last  
15 year and right now it's actually trending a bit  
16 downward. But you know we're looking at it every  
17 week to get a sense of exactly how the decision  
18 making is taking place.

19                   CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: With, with regard to  
20 HRA services the number of, of one shots that are  
21 being issued right now you know say average per  
22 week how does that compare to a year ago at this  
23 time?

24                   COMMISSIONER BANKS: It's up and we can  
25 get you exact data on that but it's up because of

1  
2 all the things that we are doing. As I said to one  
3 of your colleagues we're really very focused on... an  
4 ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Mm-hmm. So it's,  
6 it's a, it's, it's, it's up, you, can you give a  
7 percentage or, or vaguely where it is in terms of  
8 the measure of that?

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: It's, it's, there's  
10 a, there's a, there's definitely been an increase  
11 because of all the outreach that's been done and  
12 all the efforts I mean remember now that referrals  
13 are coming to us directly from housing court judges  
14 in a way that they weren't previously. And we're  
15 getting the NYCHA referral system running in, in  
16 full tilt. So there's a lot of places where  
17 previously people fell through the cracks that  
18 we're getting referrals and you know you can, I'm  
19 sure you've heard the stories, I know you've heard  
20 the stories over the years have... you know someone  
21 in an apartment that, that could have been  
22 preserved if only they had been provided with a  
23 rent arrears grant. Those kinds of cases are being  
24 referred to us by a range of different places now.

1  
2 And we're granting arrears in those cases as I  
3 think anyone, anyone would want us to.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Speaking to the, the  
5 services that HRA's providing and that you detailed  
6 in your testimony what measures are, internally are  
7 you using what standards or, or you know points are  
8 you looking at to measure success at this point? Or  
9 how are you going to be able to, to, as the  
10 programs go along monitor that?

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well for example  
12 the legal services programs are programs that we're  
13 going to be looking at when we get to the end of  
14 the fiscal year to see whether or not we've had an  
15 impact on the numbers of people seeking shelter as  
16 a result of eviction. Has there been any, any  
17 change in that. That's a, that's a pretty you know,  
18 it's a, it's a service that we've all supported for  
19 many years and it's a service that we think is  
20 important which is the reason why the mayor put in  
21 additional resources to expand it. And our  
22 projection is that it'll have an impact on, on  
23 shelter entries and we'll be able to monitor that  
24 by the close of the fiscal year.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Is, it's too early  
3 at this point to be able to, to measure that?

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well again if you,  
5 if you think about the trajectory of a housing  
6 court eviction case the, if a provider's assigned  
7 the case in November it's probably not over now so...

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right.

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: ...it doesn't lend  
10 itself to weekly metrics.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Mm-hmm.

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: It lends itself to  
13 look at to where we got to by the end of the fiscal  
14 year. So there are, there are a number of things  
15 like that that are related to Commissioner Taylor's  
16 evaluation of how we're doing in terms of  
17 applications and to the extent that we can report  
18 now that, that applications are down. We have a  
19 number of preventive strategies that are in place  
20 that are, that are associated with that. The  
21 applications are down and we implemented a lot of  
22 prevention strategies. But we're going to monitor  
23 each one and, and determine the impact of each and  
24 continue those that are working and phase out those  
25 that we don't think are as effective as other

1 strategies we've implemented. It's as Commissioner  
2 Taylor said very much real time weekly evaluation  
3 of how are things going as opposed to you know  
4 let's periodically look at it. It's a week, it's a  
5 weekly evaluation.  
6

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Oh. Back to the LINC  
8 programs. If after this years' time all of the  
9 research, all of the, the allocations have, have  
10 not been distributed or, you know there's, the, the  
11 subsidies are still, there's still subsidies on the  
12 table. What would then happen? Would those be  
13 rolled over? Would, would the budget be then  
14 adjusted downward or would it continue to remain  
15 where it is or is this a question to address in the  
16 budget?

17 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I mean again the  
18 focus of the relocations is across two fiscal years  
19 because it's, it was really an allocation that ran  
20 into September. Or, or a program that was  
21 implemented..

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I'm sorry just for,  
23 just for the, the, the benefit of the committee  
24 the, that's then it's all, it's going to be  
25

1 allocated a portion of it in FY15 a portion in FY16  
2 or is...

3  
4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well LINC 3 for  
5 example is a program that we, it's all city tax  
6 levy, it was implemented in, in September and our  
7 goal was during that 12 month, month period of time  
8 how would we do in terms of relocations. The LINC 2  
9 program is based upon projected savings and we'll  
10 be about, able to evaluate are those saving  
11 materializing that continue to support the program.  
12 And those savings as a result of reducing the,  
13 certainly the shelter rates and LINC 3, LINC 1 is a  
14 joint state city program that's key towards that  
15 fiscal year. Although the program was a key to the  
16 state's fiscal year although the program was  
17 implemented in September.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Mm-hmm.

19 COMMISSIONER BANKS: So everything  
20 crosses fiscal years. We're very much focused on  
21 getting the numbers out.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah.

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: And when we, if we  
24 got to a point where we didn't quite hit the  
25 numbers that's not going to be a situation that,

1  
2 that is, is one that's going to deter us from  
3 continuing to implement new programs.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: What if the opposite  
5 is true, if you're, if you're able to allocate more  
6 than, than your projected amounts what would then  
7 be the case?

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well we certainly  
9 have, have had the support of the administration  
10 in, in implementing the programs. And right now I  
11 know both agencies are full speed ahead with  
12 implementation. Should we get to the point where we  
13 have relocated everybody with the, with the rental  
14 assistance packages that we have for this  
15 particular 12 month period of time. I'm sure we'll  
16 evaluate what's to do next because there's still  
17 plenty to do.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Has anybody been  
19 denied LINC? So far has that, has that happened?  
20 Has anybody been... that's in the shelter system  
21 currently whether it's in the DHS system or HRA  
22 system is anybody been denied for compliance  
23 reasons or anything like that?

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Not for compliance  
25 reasons but we're, we're, when we implemented the

1  
2 program we advised people that they were getting  
3 their certificates now and we advised others that  
4 they were not so that everybody had a concept of  
5 whether they were getting one or not getting one.  
6 And we gave an opportunity to appeal if you thought  
7 we made a mistake. And so... [cross-talk]

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: What would be some  
9 reasons why you wouldn't... [cross-talk]

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: ...you know we're  
11 giving it to the longest stayers in the system and  
12 so you had just come in.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uh-huh.

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Or you weren't  
15 working at all. Or you weren't a survivor of  
16 domestic violence. Or you didn't have multi-system  
17 involvement. And so we gave everybody notification  
18 that we were implementing these programs in case we  
19 had made an error in our own determination as to  
20 whether or not you fit in one of the programs and  
21 we gave people an opportunity to contest. There  
22 have been a small number of people that are, that  
23 have a different view and we're trying to work  
24 those cases out with those people.



1  
2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So what is the  
3 process for appealing then? What does somebody do?

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: You can have a  
5 conference initially with the, the agency, so  
6 predominantly DHS. And then you can have a hearing,  
7 an impartial hearing at HRA.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We haven't got any  
10 cases to the hearing stage. Again our belief is  
11 that most of them should be resolved at the  
12 conference stage because they really do represent  
13 objective application of information. And the only  
14 difference would be in the event that we had made a  
15 mistake which is why we created the appeals process  
16 in case we had made a mistake.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I believe... each LINC  
18 program requires an open public assistance case, is  
19 that correct?

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: At the point of, of  
21 exiting from the shelter system. Because the  
22 shelter payment is being paid through public  
23 assistance dollars.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right.  
25

1  
2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: And we want to be  
3 able to at that point be able to pay a brokers fee  
4 if we need it to be able to issue a security  
5 voucher if we need it, furniture allowance if we  
6 need it. So it's not an extra challenge for the  
7 families that have been certified because they  
8 already need a public assistance case if you will  
9 to pay for the shelter cost. That doesn't mean they  
10 need a public assistance case in the way that  
11 people would traditionally think of a public  
12 assistance case.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So that has not been  
14 an obstacle then for any, for any...

15 COMMISSIONER BANKS: ...should not be.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: ...LINC subsidy  
17 allocations that somebody does not, is having  
18 trouble getting their, all their requirements for  
19 a... case or anything..

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Okay as to that  
21 issue if there were to be somebody who was actually  
22 a public, an ongoing public assistance recipient as  
23 opposed to a family such as I described..

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Mm-hmm.

25

1  
2                   COMMISSIONER BANKS: ...given the high  
3 goal or high premium we're putting on actually  
4 moving people out we're... work with that family to  
5 address whatever problems there might be in their  
6 actual public assistance case.

7                   CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: One thing that's  
8 been a concern... it was, it was certainly raised  
9 early on when there was, seemed to be some trouble  
10 with landlords taking... the LINC subsidy was... this  
11 issue of source of income discrimination. You know  
12 under New York City human rights law sorts of  
13 income discrimination is prohibited. Landlords  
14 cannot refuse to accept legal sources of income  
15 including government subsidies. Have you, has, have  
16 we been encountering this as a, as an issue? Have  
17 there been any claims made that, that somebody's... I  
18 mean just anecdotally we heard a, you know a, some  
19 accounts in the press that people were going to,  
20 you know that had been given a notification letter,  
21 went to landlords, landlords said we're not going  
22 to take LINC. Obviously that was happening a lot.  
23 Several months ago, less so now. But has there been  
24 any, any investigation as to whether that's a  
25 violation of, of New York City Human Rights Law.

1  
2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We're, we've been  
3 very vigilant for such cases. Cases that we  
4 originally heard of turned out to be like the rent  
5 wasn't high enough and that, those were part of our  
6 calculation and ultimately we needed to use the  
7 discretion that the rule gives, gives us to  
8 increase the rent.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Mm-hmm.

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: If we hear of such  
11 cases we're, we're very interested in pursuing  
12 them. I know that there was a lot of back and forth  
13 about what was attributed in, in some public  
14 comments that were made and we were very pleased  
15 to, Commissioner Taylor and I to be able to be  
16 given access by the Rent Stabilization Association  
17 to speak to their membership. And the president,  
18 Joe Sprouseburg [sp?] spoke very supportive of the  
19 efforts that we were making in the, in the agencies  
20 to make reforms and improve programs. And we were  
21 given the opportunity to make essentially exactly  
22 the same presentation we made to you about the  
23 differences between advantage and.. and LINC.

24

25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Are you encountering  
3 any instances where landlords are saying they'll  
4 take LINC 1 but not LINC 2 or 3?

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I mean I've, I've...  
6 it's like the initial issue of people saying well  
7 landlords won't take it. We haven't actually seen  
8 it but we'd be very open to considering it. We're  
9 not sure why that would be given the fact that the  
10 distribution of where programs people are in has  
11 been reflective of landlords being interested in  
12 all three programs. And then now the additional  
13 two.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: We've, we've, we've  
15 heard kind of through the grapevine third hand that  
16 there's been some instances where a landlord has  
17 indicated that they're, they're willing to take  
18 LINC 1 but not other LINC's.

19 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We'd be happy to  
20 look into any of those. It hasn't been the  
21 experience in terms of... you know... If that were the  
22 case systemically one would think that we'd have  
23 all LINC 1s and no LINC 3 move outs for example.  
24 And we're actually not seeing that at, we're  
25 seeing... [cross-talk]

1 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right right.

2  
3 COMMISSIONER BANKS: ...a fairly even  
4 distribution between LINC 1 and LINC 3 for example.  
5 The, the program, LINC 1 being a program for people  
6 who... [cross-talk]

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And two being  
8 significantly lower. Is there, is there any reason  
9 why you think LINC 2 is such, such a lower amount?  
10 If 132 LINC 1s, 140 LINC 3s and 56 LINC 2s, is  
11 there, do you think there's any reason for that?

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: You know we are  
13 trying to unpack that. You know we're trying to get  
14 a sense of exactly what, what is driving that. You  
15 know the LINC 2 families tend to be larger in terms  
16 of household composition. And so that could be one,  
17 one variable but it, you know we're looking at it  
18 across the board to get a sense of exactly why the  
19 traction seems to be different.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Change gears for a  
21 second here. Just this past weekend Governor Cuomo  
22 [sp?] announced as part of his 2015 opportunities  
23 agenda couple of things that were obviously of  
24 interest to this committee was investing on the  
25 state level an additional 220 million dollars in

1  
2 homeless services. I'm reading from the governor's  
3 press release here detailing the governor's support  
4 continuing this effort Governor Cuomo [sp?]  
5 proposed to invest an additional 220 million  
6 dollars in homeless services over the next several  
7 years including funding for New York City rental  
8 assistance and other programs that address the  
9 city's growing homeless population. Do, do you, are  
10 you privy to exactly how the state plans on using  
11 that additional funding. And is that, is that, is  
12 it your understanding that's... state FY16, is that  
13 right?

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I mean as you know  
15 the budget's just been released today..

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uh-huh.

17 COMMISSIONER BANKS: ...and you know we  
18 appreciated the support that the state gave us for  
19 LINC 1 and 2 and we're looking forward to learning  
20 exactly what dollars are going to be available to  
21 us to move forward and we expect to have those  
22 conversations as soon as we can. But at this point  
23 we haven't seen the actual documents other than to,  
24 to know that they've been very supportive of us of  
25 what we've been doing the current fiscal year.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And getting to the,  
3 looking a gift horse in the mouth section of the  
4 hearing there's the, the governor announced  
5 investing 183 million dollars in supportive housing  
6 as part of NYNY4 with the goal of creating 5,000  
7 new supportive housing units across the state. Is  
8 it your... I know advocates have called for 20  
9 thousand units as part of NYNY4, do you, do you  
10 think that 5,000 units is sufficient at this time?

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I mean we've got to  
12 sit down with our state counterparts and see  
13 exactly what the dollars are, what the numbers are,  
14 what the partnership's going to be. And again the  
15 documents are just coming out today and we really  
16 need to sit down with our, our state partners to,  
17 to see how we're going to proceed forward.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Is it the  
19 position of the city that we're going to be trying  
20 to negotiate a higher number of units or is...

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We're looking  
22 forward to sitting down with our state partners and  
23 discussing how to move forward.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Sorry jumping back  
25 to the LINC program do, do, how long is it, do you



1  
2 foresee keeping the rent levels at the adjusted  
3 amount? Is that a, a, the type of thing that is a  
4 temporary change or is that something that, that is  
5 going to remain consistent for the rest of the  
6 fiscal year or beyond that. And if it's beyond that  
7 how long do you envision that to be the case?

8           COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, well first of  
9 all we assured all participating landlords that  
10 should there be a change in the future it won't  
11 affect any tenants that are currently in place. And  
12 these are always things we're constantly evaluating  
13 but the record shows what the record shows which is  
14 when we, when we initially implemented a rent level  
15 that was associated with the advantage levels.  
16 Needed to exercise our discretion to go to the  
17 Section 8 level and that's certainly where we are  
18 now and we're getting apartments at that level and  
19 we weren't getting apartments at the prior level.

20           CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: In terms of the  
21 aftercare programing can you walk us through a  
22 little bit more of who's going to be providing the  
23 aftercare services? Are we working with the not-  
24 for-profit community. How are those contracts being  
25 awarded? You know in, in terms of case management

1  
2 are we looking at full on case managers, social  
3 workers? Can we flush that out a little bit and,  
4 and... detail a scope of that?

5 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So for each of the  
6 programs where families are moving out with LINC we  
7 have started the initial engagement with our home  
8 base providers. So the home base providers are  
9 delivering concrete services to connect into the  
10 communities that they're moving into anticipating  
11 that for LINC one they'll be working with the HRA  
12 employment programs that are being... I'll let  
13 Commissioner Banks talk about that. For LINC 2 we  
14 had issued a procurement and RFP for critical time  
15 intervention which is a model that I spoke to in my  
16 testimony and those awards are currently being I  
17 believe granted at this point in time. So...

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: How much? Sorry how  
19 much across the city? How much in terms of the  
20 dollar amount?

21 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: I can get it for  
22 you. I can get you the value of that, of that  
23 procurement. I don't have it at my fingertips. But  
24 we do have it. That went out. That was... responded  
25 to... selected and so those programs will be up and

1  
2 running imminently. For LINC 3 we are again working  
3 very closely with HRA in terms of the aftercare  
4 services that are provided to their clients who  
5 come out of domestic violence shelters for our LINC  
6 3 clients as well. So I'll ask Commissioner Banks  
7 to talk about the employment programs as well as  
8 the DV aftercare components.

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I mean in terms of  
10 employment we have existing contracts with some  
11 providers that are providing services to people who  
12 are in the shelter system. In the immediate  
13 implementation phase we're working off of those  
14 contracts. But as we described at the, hearing in  
15 our employment plan which has now been approved by  
16 the state we're going to be going through a bidding  
17 process to revamp all of our employment programs  
18 and through that process we'll have contractors  
19 selected that could be the same ones, could be  
20 different ones but it'll be through a new process  
21 to move forward with that. So in the short run  
22 we're building off existing contracts and moving  
23 forward we're going to be doing... solicitation.  
24 Terms of LINC 3 we have great terrific domestic  
25 violence provider partners that... shelters provide

1  
2 other services and we're going to be using those  
3 contracts to, to absorb these particular families  
4 in that program as we go forward we'll evaluate the  
5 need to make any enhancements to those contracts.

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Those contracts  
7 currently in FY15 are not, are they being enhanced  
8 by HRA for the aftercare services, like the, the...

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: we're, we're  
10 actively looking at that currently. But we have the  
11 contractors in place who could take in the short  
12 run given these numbers what we're talking about  
13 and in the long run we're looking closely at how to  
14 do what you're, what you're asking me.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And these are  
16 providers that have experience working... [cross-  
17 talk]

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Correct.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: ...with domestic  
20 violence...

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Correct.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: ...survivors?

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Correct.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: ...have that  
25 expertise?

1  
2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Correct, they run  
3 our shelters. They do a terrific job and we have  
4 every confidence that they will continue to be able  
5 to do that.

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: What is the process  
7 for noncompliance with, with LINC requirements. If  
8 it's, if, if somebody has a requirement for keeping  
9 a certain number of work hours or other types of  
10 requirements if... is there, is there, you know if  
11 they're not in compliance with... or aspect of, of  
12 the aftercare model is there... can their subsidy be  
13 cut off due to noncompliance or, and what would be  
14 that process, what would that process look like?

15 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well you know I'm  
16 an optimist by nature so we're going to have enough  
17 services in place to try to have those cases be few  
18 and far between. There is ultimately a process to  
19 terminate, terminate the assistance and somebody  
20 could, could challenge that decision. But we think  
21 we're going to have enough services in place to  
22 avoid that happening. Again the goal of this isn't  
23 to look for technical noncompliance issues. The  
24 goal of this is to ensure that people are able to  
25 make the progress that they need to be able to make

1 to be able to pay the rent at the end of the, end  
2 of the time period. So that's what all efforts are  
3 going to be focused on in, in the renewal process.  
4 And we're going to be working very closely with the  
5 aftercare staff to, to ensure that we are  
6 successful rather than just go into it assuming  
7 that there's going to be problems.

9 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: And so that's the  
10 critical piece, the aftercare component. And to  
11 your question about if someone were to lose their  
12 job. So sometimes things happen right...

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right yeah.

14 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: And so if a, if an  
15 aftercare provider is working with someone who is  
16 threatened with losing the position that they  
17 currently hold we would expect that that aftercare  
18 provider would be working with them to address  
19 whatever the presenting issue is so that they can  
20 keep their job. If they can't keep their job then  
21 the next question becomes how do you go about  
22 getting another one right. And how do you go about  
23 increasing the number of hours that you're working  
24 so that you can continue to be eligible for the,  
25 for the, for the rental assistance. And so...

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Is there a certain  
3 time period where if they can't get into compliance  
4 they would be at risk of losing, losing the  
5 subsidy?

6 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So again we  
7 haven't gotten down that, you know we haven't  
8 gotten there right...

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: It hasn't happened  
10 yet.

11 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: It hasn't happened  
12 and we, we hope, we hope that the assistance that  
13 we'll provide our clients will prevent it from  
14 occurring but if it does then we have to really  
15 consider well what, you know what are the  
16 surrounding circumstances and the context behind  
17 the situation because everyone's experience is so  
18 unique. And so we would approach it that way to  
19 really make sure that we can support our clients in  
20 maintaining their homes and staying out of shelter.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: We had a hearing  
22 back in October... excuse me no I'm sorry the October  
23 2014 hearing, hearing of the committee on a  
24 coordination of services for DV survivors... Some DV  
25 residential provider stated that they had a number

1  
2 of residents who were working and did not qualify  
3 for public assistance and therefore could not  
4 qualify for LINC 3 but were also not eligible for  
5 LINC 1 because they were living in an HRA DV  
6 shelter. Are you aware of this particular issue?  
7 And if so what are we doing to address it?

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We solved it in  
9 October. The issue I think here, my testimony at  
10 the time said that LINC 3 was for 85 percent of the  
11 people in the shelter system. And as we implemented  
12 it we would evaluate how to deal with the remaining  
13 numbers of people, I believe it's about eight  
14 percent are employed and then the remain, the, the  
15 gap has other sources of income. And so in, in the  
16 conversations with domestic violence providers they  
17 identified this as an obstacle. And our view was  
18 that it, it affected relatively few number of  
19 people in comparison to the goal of the program.  
20 But since it's a program as Commissioner Taylor and  
21 I think of, really try to convey that it's almost  
22 failing by family it would, didn't make any sense  
23 not to give providers the ability to move such  
24 families out. And so we said on a case by case  
25 basis we would give providers the ability to move



1  
2 such families out through LINC 1. We also gave the  
3 ability in the rule that we published recently to  
4 move families among programs so in the event that a  
5 family is in LINC 3 and he gets employment we're  
6 going to evaluate how to, how to deal with that  
7 because we don't have there be an incentive not to  
8 get employment.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I wanted to ask  
10 about the HPD affordable housing stock that's  
11 currently in existence throughout the city. Can you  
12 speak to the number of, of units that are part of  
13 you know the overall affordable housing stock of  
14 New York City? How many of those units have been  
15 allocated to LINC recipients at this point?

16 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So we don't have a  
17 specific designation in terms of number of units  
18 that are set aside, HPD set aside units for LINC. I  
19 will tell you that you know we have clients who,  
20 who have LINC and clients who have Section 8 and  
21 clients who are moving by way of MRT and... vouchers  
22 and... So we work with HPD to try to place all of  
23 those clients and... set aside stock and they've been  
24 good partners in helping us to you, you know in  
25 helping us when making the referrals and also

1  
2 coordinating our efforts with them to ensure that  
3 all of our clients who are referred can ultimately  
4 see any units that are available and potentially  
5 move into them. So the process is ongoing. You know  
6 we're working very closely with them but there's  
7 no, no discreet number that's been set aside for  
8 all these programs... all these programs are being  
9 referred.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right I'm, I'm, I'm  
11 not really asking about set asides necessarily.  
12 What I'm asking about is you know there's, we have  
13 this, this existing housing stock. There's turnover  
14 in, you know in your, in your local neighborhood  
15 not-for-profits affordable housing development  
16 whether it's you know it's, it was, it could be  
17 built with tax credits or it was built with housing  
18 trust fund or it's you know... And every, you know  
19 most neighborhoods around New York City have those  
20 developments. They've been built over the last 30  
21 years. There's turnover in those units from time to  
22 time and the, the not for profit is under an  
23 obligation to make sure that the individual moving  
24 in you know complies with income requirements but,  
25 but that doesn't, it does, it's not, you know it's

1 not the lottery system that would be involved in  
2 say a set aside for a new development, a new  
3 affordable housing development. I'm, I'm just  
4 wondering whether... these are, these are all not-  
5 for-profit housing developers or, or providers. And  
6 in addition to that the affordable components in an  
7 AB20 in a, in a 421A project you know obviously  
8 throughout the city there's, we have that  
9 affordable housing stock under the jurisdiction of  
10 HPD. And so I'm wondering whether HPD is doing that  
11 type of outreach to their partners in the  
12 communities to say we need you guys to step up, you  
13 have the units, we can ensure that you'll get your  
14 rent paid through LINC, we need you to step up and  
15 make these units available. I' just wondering  
16 whether that conversation is happening with HPD's  
17 partner agencies in the communities.

19 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So it is happening  
20 and it has happened and they're working very  
21 closely with us to make sure that if there are  
22 units available that our clients can be referred to  
23 the same and access the same.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: One thing that's  
25 come to our attention as part of the DHS data

1 dashboard for the fiscal year to date 2015. That's  
2 alarming and if you, if you look at the FY15 versus  
3 14 comparisons you know we're, we're up at, at  
4 every, at every metric you know our average of  
5 about somewhere between 10 and, and 12 percent... it  
6 ranges between 10 and 14 percent. The outlier  
7 though, this is for, for various age groups. The  
8 outlier in that is with individuals 65 years and  
9 older. So for, for those individuals and families  
10 with children there's been an increase of 36  
11 percent compared to FY14. In, in terms of adult  
12 families 42 percent increase compared to FY14 year  
13 to date. And single adults 16 percent increase year  
14 to date. But obviously that's alarming, that's an  
15 alarming metric. Are you seeing this? What, what do  
16 you think it's an indication of and how are we  
17 addressing that?

19 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So that I'm clear  
20 on your question... so these are, are households or  
21 individuals who are entering over the age of 65?

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah we're, we're  
23 seeing it just in, in terms, by your data we're  
24 seeing these remarkable increases over last year's  
25 FY to date. And so we're seeing you know 60... sorry

1  
2 a 36 percent increase for families with children 65  
3 years or older, 42 percent increase for adult  
4 families, and 16 percent increase in single adults  
5 for people over the age of 65. So I'm just  
6 wondering are you seeing this and on the ground and  
7 what's the plan here? What do you think it's  
8 indication of? What do you think's going on here?

9 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So you know I  
10 don't, I don't think that it's very different from  
11 the other drivers for homelessness for you know the  
12 different individuals and families who enter our  
13 system. I mean I do think that there is more, more  
14 vulnerability on the part of those who may be over  
15 the age of 65, if they're on a fixed income and if  
16 their expenses are going up and they're unable to  
17 afford their residents. So we are looking at it  
18 very closely in partnership with the Department for  
19 the Aging, with DFTA. We are actually entering into  
20 an MOU with them to talk about case management  
21 services for our clients who may have been in  
22 shelter in that age range who are exiting. But on  
23 the, you know in terms of the housing resource LINC  
24 4 was actually the creation to target single  
25 individuals who are over the age of 60 and adult

1 families who had someone in the households over the  
2 age of 60, to afford them the opportunity to exit  
3 from shelter with some, some support. And so for  
4 the other populations we're looking at it very  
5 closely and again I, I think you know of  
6 grandparents who may be caring for children who may  
7 be under, you know having issues in terms of  
8 affording the rent. Like how do we target our  
9 efforts to make sure that there needs being met to  
10 prevent them from having to come into shelter. So  
11 our, our prevention efforts are tailored across  
12 many different groups at home base as well as the  
13 work that we're doing with HRA. And we're looking  
14 at every discreet population to get a sense of what  
15 do we need to do for that population to keep them  
16 in their homes or to help them exit from shelter.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Are there any, are  
19 there any efforts, preventive efforts that are  
20 specifically tailored to older adults... if there...  
21 particular resources that are out there and  
22 available to adults over the age of, of 60 or 65?  
23 I'm thinking example housing units, 202 units that  
24 are out there, senior housing, things like that. I  
25 mean are you looking at tailoring preventive

1  
2 efforts so that there's a, a, a punch list of  
3 resources that are available specific to that  
4 population.

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I mean as the, as  
6 we identified the sort of housing court referral  
7 system, the marshal's referral system and the adult  
8 protective services referral system, all of those  
9 three enhancements to what we're currently or had  
10 been doing at HRA previously. We think we'll be  
11 able to target that group, particularly when we  
12 consider them for rent arrears and making the  
13 judgment about doing everything possible to keeping  
14 them out of the shelter system, especially given  
15 the implementation of LINC 4 which is aimed at  
16 being able to relocate all those who are already in  
17 we want to do everything possible to keep new, new  
18 seniors from coming in.

19 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: That's also the,  
20 the work that we're doing with DFTA right. So on  
21 the front end right, if they are working with  
22 clients who are threatened with housing instability  
23 ensuring that they are referring those clients to  
24 home base, ensuring that we're catching it  
25 upstream. And so our coordination work with DFTA is

1  
2 really targeting this as well as aftercare services  
3 for those who are exiting from shelter who are in  
4 that age range.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right I mean it's,  
6 it's something honestly that I've been seeing in,  
7 in, in neighborhoods, the neighborhoods that I  
8 represent which have a lot of two family homes or  
9 non-rent stabilized, four or five unit buildings.  
10 I, I've been seeing... you know over the last couple  
11 of years this scenario where a senior citizen who's  
12 been in their apartment for 15 20 25 years but not  
13 rent stabilized, the building is sold. The building  
14 is, the owner passes away, leaves the building to  
15 son, daughter, niece, or nephew and, and the, the  
16 senior then gets a, either an eviction notice or a  
17 notice of hundred percent rent increase. And, and  
18 we see it a lot and obviously for a senior citizen  
19 somebody over the age 65 you know to, to go into a  
20 shelter is truly the, the very last resort. And  
21 you're not seeing senior citizens going into the  
22 shelter system unless it is absolutely... they've  
23 exhausted every single other option. And so that's...  
24 we're seeing, I, I see it firsthand. So yeah as  
25 much as we can keep track of that and, and head



1 that off wherever it's happening I think it's, it's  
2 a worthy thing to do. Speaking of home base, has  
3 the expansion of home base, has you seen it as  
4 effective? Are there, you know as you're doing this  
5 week to week assessment of these programs what's,  
6 what are you, what's, what are you coming up with  
7 lately on the, on the home base expansion?

9 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So the home base  
10 expansion has been very successful. They're targets  
11 in terms of enrollments of families that we have  
12 for our home base providers and they're meeting,  
13 exceeding their targets. So families are coming in.  
14 We also had done an advertising campaign for home  
15 base some months back. We're doing another one.  
16 We'll be doing that hopefully within the next few  
17 weeks to really get the word out that home base is  
18 a resource that should be pursued in the event that  
19 an individual or family is threatened with housing  
20 instability. So we're casting our net wide and we,  
21 by opening up more offices we've seen that there  
22 has been more, more, more presence and more access  
23 to those offices from clients who need it.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Just have a couple  
25 of more questions that I want to focus on. And

1  
2 again I appreciate everybody's patience here. With  
3 regard to the fund of last resort that we're  
4 talking about is that, is there, is there a chance  
5 that that fund will also be able to cover legal  
6 fees or some legal fees incurred by the owners or  
7 is that something that's, that's not on the table..  
8 [cross-talk]

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: That's, that's not  
10 the intention of, of that fund. It's to cover any  
11 arears that might accrue that couldn't be covered  
12 by anything which again we would expect it to be  
13 able to be covered by anything else, it'd be the  
14 rare rare rare case where it would not and for any  
15 damages that would be in excess of the security  
16 voucher.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: But, but legal,  
18 legal fees are, that's maybe something you don't  
19 want to go down, the road you don't want to go down  
20 or...

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: As I said the  
22 intention of the fund is to cover, cover those two  
23 things.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: In looking broadly  
25 at connecting clients to all the services that,

1 that they can qualify for and I know that that's  
2 very much the intention of, of your two agencies  
3 and I very much appreciate the focus of this  
4 administration I'm making sure that, that the  
5 resources that are out there and available to folks  
6 that they have access to those and that, that  
7 they're receiving the assistance to, to, to sign up  
8 for it, for everything that they can. It, are, are  
9 we exploring a, a coordinated assessment and  
10 placement system to be used for case management and  
11 kind of, you know I, I have for example I was  
12 talking, I went out and visited a not-for-profit  
13 provider who had, is working with a, with single  
14 stock. And was, was very impressed at the way that  
15 they were able to integrate you know new software  
16 or technology so that you can kind of get a broader  
17 array of services linked up to the, the clients.  
18 Are we looking at that now in terms of looking  
19 forward over the next five to ten years?

21 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So we are... single  
22 stop model is actually one that does help our  
23 clients tremendously. But we're also looking at it  
24 across city systems. And so it is very common that  
25 clients who are in shelter have involvement with

1  
2 other city agencies particularly in the health and  
3 human services portfolio. And so looking at how we  
4 are working with our clients who are in shelter who  
5 may be child welfare involved, who may be of the  
6 age so that they're getting case management from  
7 DFTA who may certainly have an HRA case and  
8 understanding ways in which we can coordinate our  
9 work around individuals and families who are  
10 multisystem involved to ensure that we are working  
11 in alignment is something that we are pursuing with  
12 great vigor right. So the unprecedented  
13 collaboration that we had with the housing agencies  
14 as well as with HRA is also true for other social  
15 service agencies that are working with our clients  
16 in, to make sure that we can improve clients,  
17 improve outcomes for our clients across the board.  
18 And that's defined differently by each agency but  
19 really wanting to coordinate our work to make sure  
20 that we are in alignment in terms of outcomes for  
21 our clients to improve the same.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Couple of more  
23 questions here. In terms of capacity and.. make this  
24 a hearing about capacity I'm glad that, that it  
25 hasn't been but obviously that is an issue that

1 hangs over a situation constantly. It's come to our  
2 attention that there may be some instances where  
3 individuals with disabilities are being placed in  
4 shelter that does not accommodate to their  
5 disability. And as, as a result of the capacity  
6 issue. We're, we're talking about you know our  
7 current capacity levels being you know less than  
8 one percent vacancy, that was a tremendous amount  
9 of pressure on, on where we can place individuals  
10 is, that, has that happened and if so what are we  
11 doing to address that..

13 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: And so we have in  
14 place at our intake points of entry for families as  
15 well as individuals systems that can assess their  
16 need for any specific type of accommodation if they  
17 are disabled. Each of those sites we have are  
18 handicap accessible in terms of PATH... and our, our  
19 women's intake point of entry I believe in the  
20 Bronx. And if someone presents in our Brooklyn  
21 Office they are transported to the Franklin Woman's  
22 intake assessment office for processing. And so we  
23 have sites, we have shelter sites that are ADA  
24 compliant that are wheelchair accessible and we are  
25 prioritizing the placement of any client who would

1  
2 require the same at those sites. So even if we are,  
3 we are yes constraint for capacity but we're trying  
4 to make informed and very quick decisions about  
5 where we can initially play someone so that the  
6 placement it meets their needs right. And so that  
7 assessment is taking place and we're using the  
8 resources that we have in order to make the best  
9 placements that we can to assist... for clients who  
10 require the same. Now moving LINC right would help  
11 us to open up more capacity because then we'd have  
12 more inventory in terms of units and exiting  
13 families and individuals from shelter to permanent  
14 housing helps us in this regard. So that's another  
15 reason why we're so intent on making sure that the  
16 LINC program and all of our other housing programs  
17 are successful because we can use it to benefit to  
18 clients who would then need to come, come into  
19 shelter and make sure that we have space to  
20 accommodate them.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you. If there  
22 are specific instances where we're hearing about  
23 this happening we should have, be able to have that  
24 kind of, you know a dialogues so... bring it to your  
25 attention.

1  
2                   COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: And if you can  
3 please send us that information we would like to  
4 have it. And lastly I just wanted to touch quickly  
5 upon the issue of NYCHA units. We, obviously we  
6 feel strongly that the 750 units plus the Section 8  
7 units are not sufficient to meet the need, we've  
8 made that clear both to you both and to the NYCHA  
9 chair. And we're going to continue to make that  
10 case. Have we seen in the initial placement of, of  
11 NYCHA families what has been the experience? Are  
12 they, has there been any complaints of those NYCHA,  
13 of those families in the NYCHA developments... has,  
14 has it gone smoothly? What has overall been their  
15 experience and you know as, has there been any  
16 negative experiences?

17                   COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Those families who  
18 move to NYCHA were supported by home base in terms  
19 of aftercare to help connect them to the new  
20 communities that they were moving into. Home base  
21 has been working with each individual family to get  
22 a sense of what their unique housing needs are and  
23 you know really troubleshooting any issues and also  
24 working closely with NYCHA with the property  
25 developments. Hearing from them if there are

1 clients who are experiencing any type of crisis and  
2 then circling back to the client to then address  
3 the same. So the lines of communication are open  
4 and we, we have biweekly meetings with NYCHA social  
5 service leadership to talk about our clients who  
6 are now in their housing, in the public housing  
7 units. And for the most part I will say that our  
8 clients have been doing extremely well in their new  
9 homes and enjoying the same.  
10

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: When determining  
12 what number NYCHA would take on and settling on  
13 that 750 did they express concern that families  
14 coming out of the shelter system would be  
15 disruptive to the NYCHA communities? Was that one  
16 reason why the number was, was lower than, than  
17 what advocates were calling for?

18 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So NYCHA again has  
19 been a really good partner in all of this and they  
20 understood the value of affording our clients NYCHA  
21 units in order to house them. We all considered how  
22 do we make sure that our clients are fully  
23 supported as they move into any, any home. So all  
24 of what we've been talking about whether it's LINC,  
25 whether it's NYCHA, whether it's HPD it's all a



1  
2 company with aftercare. And it's, it wasn't to  
3 placate any concerns that NYCHA had it was really  
4 what we thought would be most helpful to our  
5 clients. Alright and so we have seen that you know  
6 really making sure that there's someone who can  
7 help a family who's been in shelter for quite a  
8 long period of time to acclimate living outside of  
9 shelter once more that it's a benefit.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Do you think there's  
11 a possibility that this year we... seeing, seeing how  
12 successful that was both in terms of how quickly  
13 it, it happened, how, you know how, how smoothly  
14 it, the interagency coordination was, went and  
15 obviously showing that there's still, you know we  
16 are still you know at, at this precipice in terms  
17 of capacity within the system, in terms of numbers,  
18 overall census is, is, is still you know at a  
19 unsustainable level. Do you think that there's a  
20 possibility that this year we're going to be able  
21 to see a significant increase from NYCHA in terms  
22 of the number of units that they're going to be  
23 putting towards addressing this issue?

24 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: We're definitely  
25 going to continue our work with NYCHA. We're going

1  
2 to access the units that have been allocated to our  
3 clients. We are going to try to do it as quickly as  
4 we can and really just continue the joint  
5 collaboration around having the resource of public  
6 housing be available to those who are in shelter.  
7 But we're looking at it very closely, talking every  
8 week basically with them, and really trying to find  
9 ways to make sure that our clients can have access  
10 to those units and they've committed as you know  
11 the allocation to the same.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Would it be helpful  
13 to your department if NYCHA were to put forward  
14 more units to address this issue?

15 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Again look at the  
16 math. They gave 1,000 in the first half of the  
17 fiscal year. They were already on the next 750 and  
18 we're talking about how many for domestic violence  
19 survivors. So that's a pretty good partnership that  
20 we're having in terms of getting us to the place  
21 we're at. I think a fair question will be when we  
22 get to June how many do we actually move in and I  
23 think you'll see the, see the numbers.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay that was my  
25 attempt at a gotcha but it didn't work.

1  
2 Commissioners I want to thank you very much for  
3 your time, for your candor, for your testimony,  
4 very helpful. We're going to let you guys go. If  
5 you could leave a staff member or two so that they  
6 can hear the public testimony that would be greatly  
7 appreciated by the committee and we will call up  
8 our first public panel. Thank you very much. First  
9 panel will have Josh Goldfein from the Glade  
10 Society with Coalition for the Homeless. And I know  
11 that, my apologies to Coalition for the Homeless I  
12 saw that Mary Brosnahan had to unfortunately leave  
13 before she was able to testify so. Along with Mr.  
14 Goldfein, Stephanie Budsaw? Liz Hoffman from CCC.  
15 And Christy Parque from Homeless Services United.  
16 Go ahead, thanks.

17 JOSH GOLDFEIN: Thank you Chair, Mr.  
18 Chair and the, and the members of the committee.  
19 We'll try to be brief given the, the hour and Mary  
20 Brosnahan apologized for having to leave. She had  
21 to deal with the budget that's coming out today. I  
22 think that Council Member Richards and also the  
23 Chair hit on exactly what the issue is. LINC is a  
24 very promising program. We're very grateful that  
25 the city developed a, such a strong program to

1  
2 replace an absence of any program. But as we seen  
3 the program is slow getting started and it seems  
4 unlikely if not impossible that the city can meet  
5 the numbers that they've projected given how slowly  
6 the program has gotten started. And we certainly  
7 appreciate that, the history from the prior  
8 administration explains why it's been difficult for  
9 them to get the program rolling and we're very  
10 hopeful that by this time next year they'll be  
11 moving out a lot of people but so far it seems that  
12 they're, they're in a very difficult position. And  
13 in order to make up for that as you correctly  
14 identified there's only one resource that's  
15 entirely available to them and that is the New York  
16 City Housing Authority. And New York City Housing  
17 Authority turns over 6,000 apartments every year.  
18 The majority of those apartments are given to... the  
19 majority of those vacancies are filled without any  
20 regard to the housing need of the applicants. So  
21 they, they're currently giving a vast majority of  
22 apartments who have not demonstrated any housing  
23 need and only saving 750 or 500 per year for  
24 shelter residents. They could give a much greater  
25 share of that 6,000 apartments to people who have

1 demonstrated a need and we have called for them to,  
2 for the Housing Authority, the Legal Aid Society  
3 and Coalition for the Homeless in our joint  
4 testimony repeat our call for the Housing Authority  
5 to set aside at least 25 hundred apartments on an  
6 annual basis for shelter residents. They could  
7 fill... consistent with their own priorities they  
8 could give those apartments to DV survivors, they  
9 could give them to working people, they could  
10 identify all kinds of people that meet their  
11 current criteria within the shelter population and  
12 they could move those folks out. And that resource  
13 is entirely within their control. As we heard from  
14 Commissioner Taylor the families who have moved out  
15 from the shelter system into the housing authority  
16 are doing well. It's the, the place where people  
17 have the most stable kinds of outcomes along with  
18 people who get Section 8. And that's really going  
19 to be the solution to their problem. They could  
20 also as I think you tried to get them to  
21 acknowledge make greater use of HPD affordable  
22 housing departments. Those could certainly be  
23 available to shelter residents and a lot of the  
24 developers are, who are producing that housing are  
25

1 getting help from the city, they're getting great  
2 deals from the city, and they should, could give  
3 something back and provide more of those  
4 apartments. I think you also identified that the  
5 New York, New York commitment that's been announced  
6 for single adults and some families those numbers  
7 are not going to be enough also. And the city's  
8 going to have to push to get more. Just on the LINC  
9 program itself very briefly. There are a number of  
10 changes that we testified about at HRA that we  
11 would like to just repeat here, changes that could  
12 be made to the LINC program be as you, as you  
13 asked. The five year duration is probably  
14 unrealistic for many families and HRA could  
15 introduce a way to, an exception to policy or a  
16 program to extend that if necessary beyond the five  
17 years and in fact they've done that for the LINC's,  
18 for, in the LINC's 4 and 5 programs. In the, they're  
19 requiring for the, for the working component they  
20 require 35 hours of work per week per household.  
21 And in the advantage program we saw that most  
22 families were able to come up with about 30 hours a  
23 week. So we recommended that they reduce the number  
24 of hours that the family's required to work. 35  
25

1  
2 hours seems to be unrealistic. And they should also  
3 incorporate a greater number of families who are  
4 disabled, people who have fixed income and maybe  
5 are not going to meet the criteria and are... are not  
6 going to have any other realistic way of moving out  
7 of the shelter system other than with a LINC  
8 program that meets their needs or into the housing  
9 authority. A final way that the city could take  
10 some steps to reduce the shelter population and get  
11 people into permanent housing immediately would be  
12 to convert many of the existing cluster site  
13 apartments into permanent housing, to identify  
14 people who are in apartments that would work for  
15 them who have a viable way that could pay rent  
16 there. They could be treated as tenants and the  
17 landlords could be told you know these are now your  
18 tenants, give them a lease. Many if not all of  
19 these cluster site apartments, the scatter site  
20 apartments that DHS is using are rent regulated.  
21 And the people who are in them have tenancy rights  
22 and they could easily become tenants. And with that  
23 I'm going to turn over the microphone to... coalition  
24 for the homeless who is a shelter resident and  
25 would like to talk about the LINC program.

1  
2                   STEPHANIE BUDSAW: Hi, my name is  
3 Stephanie Budsaw. I'm from the Martia Lou Squad  
4 [sic] The Martia Lou Squad is a group of homeless  
5 families... living in a cluster sites and that are  
6 demanding permanent housing. The Martia Lou Squad  
7 has been advocating to city hall for permanent  
8 housing. We've been going forward. We're going to  
9 meet with elected officials, senators, and we've  
10 been protesting to obtain permanent housing. Here  
11 with me we have a list of the Martia Lou Squad. On  
12 this list is our names, email addresses, children  
13 names. With this information we're hoping that  
14 someone can get started with placing us in  
15 permanent housing. Some of the families been in the  
16 shelter two and three years. Some families reenter  
17 the shelter as of result of the dysfunctional work  
18 advantage. We think, well we believe we know that  
19 permanent housing can be obtained when New York  
20 City housing allocates 2,500 apartments per year  
21 from homeless families alone. Also while I'm in the  
22 homeless cluster sites I've done 20 HPD  
23 applications. And on each applications for an  
24 example if there's 80 units only one is allocated  
25 for low income. So also if you issue 4,000 LINC



1  
2 vouchers for homeless families only per year that  
3 would also be a way that we can gain permanent  
4 housing. With that being said we hope in the time  
5 to come that we're going to hear from somebody as  
6 it relates to the Martia Lou Squad and other  
7 families... housing. It's not rocket science. The  
8 money that they're spending for us to stay in these  
9 cluster sites and storage units half the families  
10 could have been out of the facilities. Again we are  
11 demanding permanent housing at 2015 and we hope  
12 that someone can help us. I've emailed Vickie Bean  
13 [sic] on the HPD projects and it's only not enough  
14 affordable unit to no avail. Nobody responds to  
15 emails and this is serious situation. Nobody wants  
16 to be in a cluster site okay. The kids, not my kids  
17 but, it's not, some kids are getting sick. Parents  
18 are delving into depression okay. And to make a  
19 long story the rich is getting richer for poor  
20 people and it's not fair, it's not even fair it's  
21 not human okay. And something needs to be done.  
22 Thank you for your time.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, thank you  
24 very much for your testimony and for, for your  
25

1  
2 advocacy and for organizing around this issue. Is,  
3 you're currently in a cluster site right now?

4 STEPHANIE BUDSAW: Yes.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Is, are, how are the  
6 conditions at that site?

7 STEPHANIE BUDSAW: Well in my unit, my  
8 unit is fine. But I don't want to be there. That's  
9 not even the point. They're spending 3,000 dollars  
10 per month to house us.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah.

12 STEPHANIE BUDSAW: And not including my  
13 storage bill. So it's about 5,000 dollars a month  
14 they're spending on me to stay in a cluster site  
15 and they could break that into 25 hundred dollars I  
16 could have been or found an apartment.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right.

18 STEPHANIE BUDSAW: It's just, it's just  
19 like I said it's not rocket science and it needs to  
20 be addressed. It's not, the numbers are not going  
21 to go down.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right.

23 STEPHANIE BUDSAW: So something needs to  
24 be done immediately. And if NYCHA would allocate 25  
25 hundred apartments again for homeless families

1 permanent housing could be obtained. Two, 4,000  
2 LINC vouchers per year for homeless families and  
3 HPD. I emailed Vickie Bean maybe ten times to ask  
4 her what's her stance on this HPD not allocating  
5 enough units for low income people. You have, I, I  
6 have a college degree, you have people who work in  
7 a shelter who want to do better who deserve a, a  
8 brand new apartment or a low income apartment. I  
9 got a 40 thousand dollar student loan, where am I  
10 going to find a job okay. It's not fair.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So I look forward to  
13 working with you. And there's I think a lot of  
14 areas where we can work together on this. If, in  
15 the next couple of weeks certainly my office will  
16 be reaching out and we'll, we'll figure out a time  
17 to, to come up with you know collective strategy  
18 on, ongoing on all of these levels.

19 STEPHANIE BUDSAW: Okay thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Very much...

21 STEPHANIE BUDSAW: I'd appreciate it.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: ...appreciate your  
23 testimony. Thank you. Thank you very much.

24 CHRISTY PARQUE: Hi, good afternoon. My  
25 name is Christy Parque. I'm the Executive Director

1  
2 of Homeless Services United, the coalition of the  
3 non-profit homeless service programs in the city.  
4 So that includes the shelters, the drop in centers,  
5 outreach, and prevention providers. Which I was  
6 very happy to hear today the liberal use of the  
7 word prevention which it's a new day in New York  
8 City when that word is really being embraced. And I  
9 think it is much more cost effective and I support  
10 the two commissioners in, in their efforts to  
11 really put prevention out there. So I, I think  
12 that's probably the most important piece of my  
13 testimony but I do want to commend them for that.  
14 And largely along with my colleagues up here I,  
15 I'm, you know mostly it's just a, it's a commending  
16 of the city for their efforts for creating the LINC  
17 program. We want to commend them for creating a, at  
18 least a path now for people out of shelter for the  
19 some 60 thousand folks that are in shelter. And  
20 that doesn't include as I always say it doesn't  
21 include the people in the domestic violence  
22 shelters or the people who've had fires who are in  
23 HPD shelters. So we really, the, the problem's much  
24 bigger than, than we think or is talked about  
25 publically. So I think that this program is just a

1 beginning for us to really address the issue. The,  
2 a few things that I really want to commend them for  
3 and I think it's worthwhile doing this because we  
4 don't often do this enough is to commend the... as  
5 Commissioner Banks said it was a fluid program, we  
6 use the term flexible program. And that's what we  
7 had been fighting for for the last few years is the  
8 creation of a flexible program. And you see  
9 examples of that by modifying the rent levels. Very  
10 smart move on their part. Also doing things to  
11 incentivize the landlords. Also very smart move on  
12 their part. We commend them for that. Creating  
13 subsidies for seniors and single adults, peoples  
14 with, people with disabilities fantastic move. And  
15 we look forward to more fluidity in this program  
16 particularly as the populations of people change in  
17 the shelter or the people that become eligible for  
18 their shelter. And that being said we want to  
19 support the testimony of Legal Aid and Coalition  
20 for... as outlined in my testimony we share a number  
21 of suggestions. And so as I say in my testimony I  
22 want to commend them but I also would be remiss as  
23 an advocate for not making some suggestions to the  
24 program. But two things I do want to commend them  
25

1  
2 for I, that I heard that was not included in my  
3 testimony, the use of electronic checks. HRA, I'm  
4 hearing this from all aspects of my membership how  
5 much better it is and so we really want to thank  
6 New York City for coming in to at least for the  
7 anti-poverty programs. I would say, I don't know  
8 when, when did EFT start but maybe 1990. So we're  
9 glad that HRA has brought things up to 1990.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right right, to the  
11 late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

12 CHRISTY PLAQUE: So we commend them for  
13 that. We also... the other great impact that we're  
14 seeing is the participation and partnership that's  
15 happening between HRA and DHS and also by  
16 collocating HRA staff in the home base offices. We  
17 have just been hearing great things from our  
18 members and also the people they serve about how it  
19 just solves so many problems and it's such a good  
20 move. So we thank them for that. And onto my role  
21 of being an advocate. We wholeheartedly support the  
22 idea of a good cause waiver or an exception to rule  
23 whatever it is at the end of five years that  
24 creates a safety net for people who are moving into  
25 those apartments because it's very hard to change

1 your life and raise your income that quickly in  
2 five years. And I also think it would go a long way  
3 to providing or... some of the fears of the  
4 landlords. So we think that is a great idea. Along  
5 with the issue related to the 35 hours a week our  
6 worker, our tenants and our clients know have low  
7 wage jobs. They're shift jobs, they do not have the  
8 ability to have a set schedule which is difficult  
9 on just the level of raising a family or trying to  
10 go to school but it also if you create a  
11 requirement for a housing subsidy for an issue they  
12 don't control it becomes an unworkable housing  
13 subsidy for them. So we would like to see more  
14 flexibility around that. The other area for  
15 flexibility is just in general when we're looking  
16 at renewal I know we're not there yet and I know  
17 that Commissioner Banks is very sensitive to this  
18 issue of what renewal will look like down the road  
19 and I'm sure Gilbert Taylor, Commissioner Taylor  
20 will also be mindful of paying close attention a  
21 year from now or nine months from now when people  
22 are up for renewal. But we really do need this to  
23 be as flexible as possible. The folks who are my  
24 members who have been charged with doing the  
25

1  
2 aftercare work need to make sure that when it comes  
3 time for renewal they are given sufficient  
4 information and time to work with those families to  
5 make sure that they have got the paperwork in on  
6 time, that relationships with the landlord are in  
7 good shape, that everything is in place, that the  
8 renewal can go through without a problem. It would  
9 be a shame to have come up with this great plan and  
10 work to get people out of shelter and stabilize  
11 them for that one year and then lose it because of  
12 very strict renewal requirements or poor  
13 coordination and I, I don't think anybody in the  
14 city wants to see that kind of failure happen. And  
15 the other area which I was happy to hear the  
16 commissioner's report on was this idea of  
17 coordination and reporting back on data and  
18 periodic evaluation. I would like to thank them for  
19 that and I'm glad that there's an outside source  
20 that's going to be conducting that evaluation. I  
21 hope that they will be sure to include folks like  
22 us who are up here at the panel, not just  
23 advocates, not just professional data analysts but  
24 also the people who are you know using the program  
25 to move out. So those would be the clients and the



1 tenants themselves as well as the landlords.  
2  
3 Because if this program's going to succeed it needs  
4 all of the stakeholders to have their needs met but  
5 also to bring their best, their best ideas to the  
6 table. Let's see just trying to get through this  
7 quickly. Related to moving solutions beyond a  
8 subsidy we wholeheartedly support the expansion of  
9 NYCHA units as well as, we are eager to go through  
10 the governor's budget to see exactly what it means  
11 to have 200 million dollars extra for homeless  
12 service, homeless programs as well as the 5,000  
13 units of supportive housing. So we encourage the  
14 council and the city to be strong advocates for  
15 more supportive housing. I'm glad to hear your  
16 comments council member on that. And I want to get  
17 to my part of the testimony that people don't often  
18 talk about which is referring to or thinking about  
19 our shelter staff as a key resource and an asset.  
20 And later on in my testimony I won't... the whole  
21 thing but I really talk about the shelter staff as  
22 being the lynch pin, the key to making this program  
23 work. Because we're the ones in our shelters every  
24 day compassionately working year after year with,  
25 this is now the third subsidy that I've worked

1 under. And our staff just keep working and keep  
2 making those connections both with their clients  
3 and with the landlords and they're the ones that  
4 are responsible for selling this program. And I  
5 want to thank them for their good work and I don't  
6 think they get thanked enough for day in and day  
7 out the work that they do to try and bolster the  
8 spirits and provide the services to the clients all  
9 in the meantime having to deal with record high  
10 numbers, poorly resourced shelters, and they  
11 themselves are struggling to make a living in New  
12 York City. You know just in general I think there's  
13 been some discussion about what's going on with the  
14 uptake of this program. It's not surprising that  
15 there would be a bit of a slow uptake of the LINC  
16 program. This, I'm sure it doesn't come as a  
17 surprise to the city. My members have extensive  
18 history with the creation and implementation of  
19 rental subsidies and most recently as I mentioned  
20 the advantage program. It's a reasonable  
21 expectation that from new policy creation to full  
22 implementation there will be a lag due to bridging  
23 knowledge gaps and also just the need to promote  
24 it. Additionally the many iterations and  
25

1  
2 termination of the advantage subsidy has created a  
3 lack of confidence in LINC by shelter residents and  
4 landlords and brokers. However the slow uptake  
5 really, and I want to stress this, is not a  
6 reflection of the efforts of my members and the  
7 shelter staff overall to engage clients in the LINC  
8 process. They work diligently every, every day with  
9 clients to identify available apartment units and  
10 connect with landlords and brokers in their  
11 community. The true key to success of the LINC  
12 program will be supporting the staff and shelters  
13 who work compassionately with the city's most  
14 needy. We're lucky in New York City that we have  
15 such an extensive array of professional experience,  
16 very knowledge based shelters and we should be  
17 supporting them. They are indeed our greatest  
18 assets and we must honor them in the work by giving  
19 them a living wage. Most of our workers have not  
20 had a wage increase in six years, some much longer  
21 than that. We have a surprisingly high retention  
22 level of our staff and that really just comes  
23 because they have fantastic hearts and care about  
24 the work that they're doing. We do have some  
25 shelters where 40 to 50 percent of their staff have

1 had some experience of homelessness in the past, 40  
2 to 50 percent. Previously our contracts required us  
3 to have a mandatory I think, I don't remember the  
4 ration but it was at least one for every certain  
5 number, 500 thousand dollars I think in city money  
6 that, that has since changed. But we really do have  
7 a commitment to our staff and I think the city  
8 should have a commitment to our staff if we're  
9 going to be the ones held responsible for both in  
10 the shelter and providing the aftercare services  
11 for making this program a success. Just a little  
12 bit, what we learned about our members recently  
13 through a survey was that the vast majority of our  
14 workers... interface with the homeless shelter and  
15 program participants like home base, outreach and  
16 prevention fall within 50 percent of the area  
17 median income. Which means that they would qualify  
18 for low, or very low income housing where it  
19 available to them. And not, as not unlike the  
20 situation of the people that they're serving in the  
21 shelter. Most of our staff are unfortunately one or  
22 two paychecks away from living on the edge  
23 themselves. We know that New Yorkers are struggling  
24 to make ends meet. I was happy to hear the  
25

1 commissioner talk about, in his testimony  
2 Commissioner Taylor talked about 75 percent of low  
3 income households spend one third of their incomes  
4 with 47 percent spending half or more on their  
5 rent. That is our staff. Those are the people that  
6 are working in the shelters every day. And we want  
7 to make sure that we're doing everything we can to  
8 support them. So to go to that end we really need  
9 to look at a few more things that are contributing  
10 to just the work load and the impact of what's  
11 happening in the shelters and what the shelter  
12 staff are facing, not just with the increase of  
13 folks coming in and the need for capacity but the  
14 shelters themselves, the cost of operating these  
15 programs have increased dramatically while budgets  
16 have not. Utility cost for shelters for my members  
17 have told me they go up anywhere between eight and  
18 25 percent. These are for shelters that may have  
19 had contracts for 10 or 12 years and they've not  
20 had an increase for utilities in 10 or 12 years.  
21 And each year utilities go up. Health insurance  
22 increases as everybody knows across the country  
23 depending on the kind of program you have 5 to 20  
24 percent annually. It's not uncommon for those kinds  
25

1 of increases. Again our contracts have not  
2 increased. Shelter contracts have not increased  
3 resulting in tight budgets and preventing shelters  
4 from increasing wages which it has a negative  
5 impact on staff retention for experienced staff and  
6 recruitment. And those experienced staff are the  
7 ones that are going to be able to sell this  
8 program, the LINC program to landlords and brokers.  
9 They're going to be able to use their connections  
10 with the community that they've built over years  
11 and years and if they're gone we will see a drop in  
12 the LINC program take up. We also need to look at  
13 the, what's going on with the shelter capacity.  
14 With this increased need there's also an increased  
15 impact on the physical plant structure of our  
16 shelters. And we have not seen an increase, any  
17 increased resources for staffing for the staff who  
18 actually maintain those buildings or turn those  
19 units over quickly when people move out. We haven't  
20 seen new needs approved in years for buildings to  
21 keep them in tip top shape. Our porters are  
22 maintenance workers who maintain our buildings are  
23 now required to do more with less. And  
24 unfortunately our, our largely lowest wage workers  
25

1  
2 despite their key role, they are literally the eyes  
3 and the ears of the shelter. They're on 24 hours a  
4 day, 7 days a week. And yet sadly there's some of  
5 our lowest paid workers add about on average 13  
6 dollars an hour. We must create reasonable case  
7 loads and provide sufficient time and resources for  
8 staff to engage with clients to really serve their  
9 clients and look at their... and figure out a real  
10 permanent path for people to exit shelter into the  
11 community. The dramatic demand for services means  
12 that there have been increased workloads for case  
13 managers and housing specialist. In general the  
14 case loads are exceeding the required one to 25 for  
15 case managers, so that's one case manager for 25  
16 clients and the 1 to 50 for housing specialists.  
17 And that is not going to be a good sign for the  
18 LINC program, we don't have enough staff to engage  
19 on that. As I testified in last year's preliminary  
20 budget and executive budget hearing, and I'll be  
21 testifying again coming up, our sector is still  
22 recovering from the recession and six years of  
23 poorly thought out performance incentive plans  
24 disguised as pegs that drained millions of dollars  
25 from our shelter budgets. Shelters do not have the

1  
2 resources to keep up with the demand for services  
3 to maintain their facilities and adequately  
4 compensate their staff or recruit new ones. If we  
5 are to see a successful LINC program we must ensure  
6 that all components and stakeholders of these  
7 programs are supported to do their part. This  
8 includes reasonable and achievable program  
9 requirements and guidelines for participants,  
10 accountability and reasonable compensation for  
11 landlords and brokers, and I'm going to really  
12 stress this again fair and adequate resources and  
13 supports for the staff who are the lynch pin  
14 between the homeless clients and the landlord, and  
15 the landlord. So we call upon the city and we hope  
16 that this committee and the city council will honor  
17 its commitment to our heroes. They're my heroes.  
18 Who by you knot the work they do every day really  
19 we need to be showing that we believe in them and  
20 support the work that they're doing by providing  
21 them salaries that reflect their level of  
22 professionalism, their dedication, the effort, and  
23 hard work as well as providing them with regular...  
24 going forward. So thank you for your time and  
25



1  
2 commitment. We really appreciate the opportunity to  
3 testify and I'm happy to answer any questions.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: thank you Ms.

5 Parque. Just one quick question for you. The, the  
6 wrap, I'm sorry the, the aftercare services that,  
7 that your member, members are providing as part of  
8 LINC, are the resources sufficient you know that  
9 coming from DHS in terms of the contracts or is, is  
10 there going to be a need for an increased budget  
11 allocation for, for those services?

12 CHRISTY PARQUE: I, I think one they  
13 city just announced the recipients of the after,  
14 official aftercare contract so I haven't seen those  
15 contracts.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

17 CHRISTY PARQUE: I, I would be a poor  
18 advocate if I said it would be sufficient. I think  
19 it's probably not going to be sufficient. And we  
20 won't really know about what it's going to take  
21 until we get closer to looking at what's happening  
22 at renewal. But I can tell you now from what I'm  
23 hearing is that the home based providers would like  
24 to be much more hands on which means being able to  
25 be at every lease signing, making sure there's

1  
2 coordination happening there, having enough staff  
3 to be around when they you know can go and do more  
4 home or apartment visits, those kinds of things.  
5 Those are very costly. And I am sure that if I  
6 quickly pulled any of those providers they would  
7 say what they put into the budget will meet the  
8 need and they'll go over it by using other private  
9 funding. So they could probably use much more  
10 money. But until I see the actual RFP results.. I  
11 won't have a clear answer on what the specific need  
12 is.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Thank you.  
14 Hoffman.

15 ELIZABETH HOFFMAN: Good afternoon. My  
16 name is Elizabeth Hoffman and I'm the Policy  
17 Associate for Housing and Homelessness at Citizens  
18 Committee for Children of New York. CCC is a 71  
19 year old independent multi-issue child advocacy  
20 organization dedicated to ensure, ensuring every  
21 New York child is healthy, housed, educated, and  
22 safe. I'd like to thank Chair Levin and members of  
23 the General Welfare Committee for holding this  
24 important hearing. We are grateful for the city  
25 council's interest in helping homeless families and

1 adults. In the interest of time I'm going to  
2 summarize my testimony. Rental assistance programs  
3 have proven to be an effective way to enable  
4 homeless families to move out of shelter and into  
5 affordable housing. With record numbers of families  
6 and children living in shelter for longer periods  
7 of time it was clear New York City needed a rental  
8 assistance program for homeless families. CCC is  
9 grateful to the governor and mayor for coming to an  
10 agreement and providing funding to support the  
11 creation of a vital rental assistance program now  
12 called the Living in Communities program. It's  
13 important that we continue to grow LINC and ensure  
14 an increasing number of families can leave shelter  
15 for affordable housing. In order to achieve our  
16 goal of safely reducing the number of children and  
17 families in shelter CCC respectfully submits the  
18 following recommendations. One, secure additional  
19 funding for annual rent increases. In order to  
20 ensure that families are able to stay in their  
21 apartments after the initial year of the program  
22 it's essential for LINC to be able to keep up with  
23 increasing rents. Currently DHS does not have the  
24 money in its budget to account for annual rent  
25

1  
2 increases. If rents increase annually and the LINC  
3 budget is unable to meet the increased rental rate  
4 families could end up returning to the shelter  
5 system. To prevent this additional funding needs to  
6 be secured to meet the needs of increasing rents in  
7 the out years of LINC. As landlords in New York  
8 City typically increase rent annually and families  
9 will not be able to endure this increase on their  
10 own. CCC stands committed to working with the  
11 administration and the city council to advocate for  
12 additional state funds as they are needed. Two,  
13 increase program funding to ensure capacity.  
14 Currently funding allows for 4,000 families to be  
15 placed annually through LINC 1, 2, and 3. While  
16 this is a very good start we hope that in the  
17 future there will not need to be caps on the annual  
18 number of families who can take advantage of the  
19 program. Three, create an additional program to  
20 help more families. All LINC programs require a 30  
21 percent contribution of earned or unearned income  
22 towards rent. The families are eligible for public  
23 assistance and that the households have an active  
24 or single issue public assistance case. Not all the  
25 families in shelter will be able to meet these

1  
2 program requirements. Some of the families may  
3 qualify for supportive housing, however those who  
4 do not qualify for LINC or supportive housing and  
5 don't receive disability benefits need an  
6 opportunity to exit the shelter system. In order to  
7 ensure that all families with children have a path  
8 out of shelter we believe additional strategies  
9 need to be explored for these families. Four,  
10 ensure access to social services. Families in the  
11 shelter system typically have a myriad of  
12 challenges to overcome in addition to housing.  
13 These issues can be what led to housing instability  
14 in the first place. With an average stay of 427  
15 days many families in shelter have had the most  
16 housing stability of their lives while in the  
17 shelter system. Thus the move out of shelter can  
18 create stress for families as they adjust to being  
19 independent. In order to ensure that families in  
20 LINC remain safely and stably housed it's essential  
21 that families receive supportive services in  
22 addition to their housing assistance. In addition  
23 supportive services should be available to families  
24 even when their subsidy ends in order to help  
25 families remain permanently housed. Thank you for

1  
2 this opportunity to testify. CCC appreciates the  
3 city council's interest in this very critical  
4 issue.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much  
6 for your testimony. I want to thank this panel for  
7 your good work and for your advocacy and we have  
8 obviously important work over the next couple of  
9 months as we're looking towards the budget here in  
10 the city and in Albany. We did, you know we had... it  
11 was a good, it was a good start I think in terms of  
12 what, what the city brought to the table in 2014  
13 and there's more to do obviously. But, but I think  
14 that we got off on the right foot by establishing  
15 these programs. Obviously the renewed engagement at  
16 HRA is very welcome and, and the commitment of DHS  
17 is... you know it's, it's been very positive. But  
18 they wouldn't have gotten there without a lot of  
19 the work that your organizations have been doing in  
20 terms of keeping the pressure on and keeping the  
21 right policy solution... So I want to thank you very  
22 much for all of your work.

23 ELIZABETH HOFFMAN: Excuse me. If I may  
24 Chair Levin I do have one suggestion that was not  
25 part of our testimony. And again I may be

1  
2 overstepping but as one of the, when we're thinking  
3 about who the stakeholders are we really see that  
4 the council members of New York City are key  
5 stakeholder. And we would love to work with you  
6 about creating some sort of PR or outreach plan so  
7 that we can help the council welcome our homeless  
8 folks back into their communities and have them be  
9 sort of an embassy [sic] and ambassador to the  
10 landlords in your communities to help them get the  
11 word out about these programs and how we can help  
12 with the uptake. So we would love to work with you  
13 as embassaries [sic] or ambassadors to the  
14 landlords and brokers.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: You certainly have  
16 my commitment as chair of the committee and I'm  
17 sure that all of the members of the committee and,  
18 and the council would be gladly partaking in that  
19 effort. Thank you. Next panel. We have Ted  
20 McCourtney Sanctuary for Families, Judith Kahan for  
21 sorry The Center Against Domestic Violence sorry,  
22 Michael Polenberg Safe Safe Horizon, and Nathaniel  
23 Fields Urban Resource Institute. Pardon. Oh, okay.  
24 I see. You have to, is the mic on?

25 UNKNOWN FEMALE: I think it's on...

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: There you go, okay.

UNKNOWN FEMALE: ...yes. I take good, I might even be saying good evening. Good afternoon committee chair and committee members. And thank you for the opportunity to testify today. Nathaniel Fields, the Co-Chair of the New York City Coalition of Domestic Violence Residential Providers and the President of the Urban Resource institute is a 15 year old non-... 35 year old non-profit organization dedicated to providing quality, compassionate innovative client directed services to victims of domestic violence. Judith Kahan is the CEO of the Center Against Domestic Violence, the oldest domestic violence shelter provided in the state and the other co-chair of the Coalition. Together we offer the testimony on behalf of the coalition and organization representing all of New York City's licensed non-profits. Thank you for holding this hearing today about LINC and allowing us to testify about how the program is impacting domestic violence victims. We recognize that LINC is a valid housing resource to help our families move out of shelter and into permanent housing. And we applaud the city for dedicating funding to this effort and



1  
2 for including victims of domestic violence, a group  
3 that, that compromises about 30 percent of New York  
4 City homeless families. This is something the...  
5 community has long asked for and we are excited to  
6 have the important resources at our disposal. It  
7 should be noted that HRA has been extraordinarily  
8 responsible to concerns raised by domestic violence  
9 service providers. The agency successfully  
10 advocated for a version of the LINC programs for  
11 persons fleeing domestic violence. LINC 3 and it  
12 has been made itself available in unprecedented  
13 ways to ensure the success of the LINC initiative.  
14 High level HRA officials have personally attended  
15 meetings with the coalition to make sure advocates  
16 including housing specialist understand the program  
17 well and we are prepared to assist shelter  
18 residents to move to permanent housing. HRA is  
19 housing weekly phone calls with providers to  
20 monitor the progress of the rollout and the, and  
21 troubleshoot challenges as they arise. HRA has met  
22 with leadership of domestic violence service  
23 providers and attended networking receptions with  
24 shelters and landlord partners to help persuade  
25 them to, to rent to domestic violence shelter

1  
2 directors. HRA has been responsive to concerns  
3 about success to LINC 1 by realizing a limited  
4 number of certifications to working families and  
5 domestic violence shelters. This is something we  
6 are grateful for and hope to excess.. expanded.

7           NATHANIAL FIELDS: Great. I'm Nathaniel  
8 Fields, the other Co-Chair of the DV Coalition as  
9 well as the President and CEO of Urban Resource  
10 Institute. And I've learnt a long time ago that  
11 brevity does have its place particularly at 4:35.  
12 My colleagues to my right and those that follow  
13 will talk more deeply about LINC and our with at  
14 HRA. And as you've all heard we know that HRA's  
15 been very responsive, particularly after the last  
16 hearing to this hearing and accepting a lot of the  
17 recommendations proposed by advocates and survivors  
18 of domestic violence. You all looked at the data.  
19 And when we have one critical challenge here in New  
20 York City.. This mayor's addressed it, the City  
21 Council's been talking about it. We really thank  
22 the council, particularly the chair for calling  
23 this hearing. Our challenge is going to be  
24 specifically around affordable safe housing. And we  
25 will need to do even more things, more innovative

1 things some of which you've heard today as it  
2 relates to current housing stock like at NYCHA and  
3 some other things in identifying appropriate safe  
4 housing. We will face staggering numbers in the  
5 summer as we always have as a city when you look at  
6 our increase in domestic violence incidents rising  
7 and the number of requests for shelters increasing.  
8 So we will have to walk, we have to be even more  
9 deliberate in our approach. My colleagues will have  
10 those recommendations. We urge the council to  
11 listen carefully and we would also welcome the  
12 opportunity to meet with you all to continue to  
13 engage in strategy. So thank you for your time and  
14 thank you for holding this very important hearing.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you for your  
17 testimony. Sorry before you go on I want to  
18 actually call up two other individuals to be part  
19 of this panel because it coincides with your  
20 background. So Catherine Trapani from New Destiny  
21 Housing and Erin Feely-Nahem from Food First  
22 Incorporated.

23 TED MCCOURTNEY: Okay I'll go ahead  
24 while they're...

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: ...pull up, you can  
pull up chairs as well.

[background conversations]

TED MCCOURTNEY: Okay if I go ahead?

Thank you for the opportunity to address you today.

My name is Ted McCourtney. I work for Sanctuary for

families as the Director of Sarah Burke House, our

transitional domestic violence shelter in the

Bronx. Sanctuary for families is a non-profit

agency dedicated exclusively to serving domestic

violence and sex trafficking victims and their

children. I am also a member of the steering

committee of the New York City Coalition of

Domestic Violence Residential Providers, a

coalition that includes all of the organizations

providing domestic violence shelter in New York

City. I'm here today to speak in support of the

LINC housing program. Admirably New York City

devotes considerable resources to supporting a

robust domestic violence shelter network. We

encourage women to escape dangerous relationships.

We offer them safe confidential shelter where they

and their children have access to extensive

clinical services. Our shelters provide families

1 the opportunity to begin putting their lives back  
2 together again. And clients that enter our shelters  
3 make significant progress towards stability and  
4 self-sufficiency urging their time with us. However  
5 much of the stability is destroyed if there are not  
6 safe housing options available to them at the end  
7 of their shelter stay. After the demise of the  
8 Advantage housing program in 2011 our clients were  
9 left without viable housing options. And at the  
10 conclusion of their shelter stay they often faced  
11 an impossible decision, become homeless again or  
12 return to a dangerous situation. Thankfully this is  
13 no longer the case for our clients at Sarah Burke  
14 House. With the implementation of the LINC program  
15 our clients again have a pathway to safety and  
16 stability after their stay in shelter. When the  
17 LINC program was introduced in September I was  
18 pleased housing assistance would finally be  
19 available to our clients. However I along with many  
20 of my colleagues in the DV community also had a  
21 number of concerns about the program. Clients in DV  
22 shelters were only able to access LINC 3 which  
23 requires an open public assistance case. As a  
24 result the subsidy is not available, was not  
25

1  
2 available to our working clients who typically  
3 constitute 35 to 45 percent of our clients at Sarah  
4 Burke House. In addition to remain eligible clients  
5 who moved into LINC 3 apartments would not be able  
6 to work during the five year duration of the  
7 subsidy. Finally I was concerned that the subsidy  
8 amounts were too low to cover suitable housing in  
9 New York City. These concerns were brought to city  
10 officials including human resources administration  
11 Commissioner Banks and have now been addressed.  
12 LINC 1 has been made available to clients in DV  
13 shelters allowing our employed clients to now  
14 access housing assistance. The LINC 3 program has  
15 been modified to permit on a case by case basis,  
16 clients to maintain their housing subsidy if they  
17 gain employment while in their apartments. And the  
18 subsidy levels offered through LINC have been  
19 raised to Section 8 levels allowing our clients to  
20 access adequate housing options. In previous years  
21 when housing programs were available to our clients  
22 Sarah Burke House regularly placed 70 to 100  
23 families each year into safe permanent housing. In  
24 2013 without these housing support we were only  
25 able to place 18 families into permanent housing in

1  
2 the entire year. Since September when LINC was  
3 introduced we have transitioned 20 families out of  
4 Sarah Burke House and into permanent housing. And  
5 pending the results of two, two apartment  
6 inspections I am expecting to move at least 18  
7 clients out of Sarah Burke House and into permanent  
8 housing in a six week period. I have worked at  
9 three different domestic violence shelters in New  
10 York City over the past 13 years and I have never  
11 seen clients moving into permanent housing at a  
12 rate this high. The LINC program as currently  
13 constituted has proven to be a tremendous resource  
14 for our families in shelter. It is vitally  
15 important that this program remain in place. Thank  
16 you.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much  
18 for your testimony and all the good work that, that  
19 you do, thank you.

20 MICHAEL POLENBERG: Good afternoon  
21 Council Member. Michael Polenberg, Vice President  
22 of Government Affairs for Safe Horizon, the  
23 nation's leading victim assistance organization. So  
24 I'll try to be very brief with the testimony. Like  
25 my colleague from Sanctuary we've had some success

1  
2 in moving families out of our shelters and into  
3 housing through LINC. As of today we've helped 21  
4 families move from our tier 2 shelter and emergency  
5 shelters and they've signed lease agreements and  
6 moved into housing. Eight additional families have  
7 been approved for apartments by landlords and are  
8 just waiting for their application packets to be  
9 approved by HRA. While we count each of these  
10 placements as a profound success we are continuing  
11 to look at ways to build on our accomplishments. We  
12 do anticipate that the rate at which we're able to  
13 connect our clients to apartments will increase in  
14 the weeks and months ahead as word gets out about  
15 the viability of the LINC housing program. There's  
16 some nice little success stories in the testimony,  
17 I won't read them now but I hope you will later  
18 when you have a chance. So what are the challenges  
19 many of which you've heard today, the biggest  
20 challenge in our eyes is the legacy of the  
21 advantage housing subsidy and specifically the  
22 concern from the real estate community that  
23 fluctuations in public policy priorities could  
24 leave them, the landlords in lease agreements with  
25 tenants who no longer have the means to pay the



1  
2 rent. At the request of our partners at HRA safe  
3 horizon convened a meeting late, late last year  
4 with providers and landlords, brokers, and the city  
5 to discuss the LINC subsidy and how it will work.  
6 Several members of the real estate community noted  
7 they had felt burned by Advantage and wanted to  
8 know how the subsidy will be different. And you  
9 heard Commissioner Banks outline many of the ways  
10 that it does differ. I think clearly there's more  
11 work that still needs to be done to disinvest  
12 landlords and brokers across the city that LINC  
13 will suffer the same fate as Advantage. Another  
14 challenge will be fighting the perception that  
15 households on public assistance placed through the  
16 LINC 3 subsidy will somehow be less desirable than  
17 those placed through LINC 1 for working households.  
18 We'll work with legal advocates to try to ensure  
19 our clients don't face income discrimination but we  
20 know that landlords may try to, still try to  
21 reserve the units for those tenants who they see as  
22 more stable. The sad truth is that for all of us  
23 who provide shelter whether it's a domestic  
24 violence shelter or homeless shelter we're all  
25 competing with one another to place our residents

1 in the same very limited pool of affordable  
2 housing. And that's the big, sort of the big...  
3 Finally a piece about homeless youth. You know Safe  
4 Horizon operates a street work project which  
5 provides a range of services to homeless youth. We,  
6 clients in the, the DYCD shelter system  
7 unfortunately have been left out of the LINC  
8 housing program. They're not available to young  
9 adults in the DYCD youth shelters. Many of these  
10 young people if not most of them will transition  
11 from chronic youth homelessness into chronic adult  
12 homelessness and will face a significant decline in  
13 life chances. This could be prevented with access  
14 to a rental subsidy in the housing that results  
15 from this basic support. So we do hope the city can  
16 look at the kids who are in the DYCD shelters and  
17 extend the LINC benefit to them as well. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you Michael.

19 CATHERINE TRAPANI: Alright good  
20 evening. My name is Catherine Trapani and I'm the  
21 Housing... [cross-talk] Director. Yeah it is right.  
22 I'm the Housing Link Director at New Destiny  
23 Housing Corporation. We are a 20 year old non-  
24 profit organization dedicated to the long term  
25

1 safety and stability of survivors of domestic  
2 violence and others at risk of homelessness. And I  
3 want to testify today really based on our  
4 experience as an early user of LINC 3 as a landlord  
5 certainly you, our organization does a lot of  
6 advocacy work and I echo all of the words of my  
7 colleagues here today. And I do, before I sort of  
8 get into our landlord experience want to really  
9 commend HRA for being super responsive throughout  
10 the entire process and modifying programs based on  
11 feedback as was discussed by Commissioner Banks  
12 today. In fact I did have one note in my testimony  
13 about transitioning from LINC 3 to LINC 1 post  
14 lease signing because as landlords that is  
15 something that is a concern that you don't want  
16 the, the tenant to move in and then do well, get a  
17 job, transition off of public assistance only to  
18 have no ongoing rental assistance. So I was really  
19 pleased to hear Commissioner Banks say that that is  
20 something that he is willing to work on in a case  
21 by case basis with those clients. So I do just want  
22 to talk our experience as a landlord for low income  
23 housing renting up a recent project because it  
24 really indicates that better interagency  
25

1 cooperation would be helpful in maximizing the use  
2 of various subsidy programs to best serve homeless  
3 families with varying levels of need. So we talked  
4 a little bit about HPD's role in this process and I  
5 hope that our example will be sort of a good  
6 illustration of, of how it can go a little bit  
7 better. We were extremely fortunate to receive  
8 seven project based Section 8 certificates from HPD  
9 which we used in our latest project for... set aside  
10 for HRA shelter residents. At the same time that we  
11 were identifying tenants for the units in our  
12 building that had Section 8 HRA was just beginning  
13 to distribute LINC 3 certificates to persons in  
14 shelter. HPD which appeared to have little  
15 information about LINC determined that applicants  
16 with LINC 3 were not eligible for those Section 8  
17 units that we were assigning them. New Destiny  
18 meanwhile often didn't know which applicants had  
19 LINC 3 since our application process was well  
20 underway by the time certifications were issued for  
21 the program. We were trying to allocate units in  
22 our project to base subsidies to ensure that those  
23 most in need of the long term housing subsidies  
24 like Section 8 were not displaced by those who  
25

1  
2 might be able to successfully escape homelessness  
3 with a shorter term intervention. It was often when  
4 applicants were sent to Section 8 briefings at HPD  
5 that New Destiny learned that these applicants had  
6 LINC. Many were therefore turned away by HPD due to  
7 their LINC eligibility and New Destiny had to go  
8 back and either reassign units or work with HRA to  
9 resend LINC eligibility to ensure that the  
10 applicant could be placed in an apartment that was  
11 actually appropriate for their needs. So as you can  
12 imagine the process was really confusing for the  
13 applicants, our tenants, and New Destiny. So the  
14 lack of interagency coordination also shows up in  
15 other ways that affect landlords seeking to serve  
16 homeless domestic violence survivors from HRA  
17 shelter system. HPD's current administrative plan  
18 permits users of all, all city shelter systems  
19 eligible to apply for HPD's homeless housing  
20 resources. This aspect of the plan has never  
21 actually been implemented. Specific allocation of  
22 Section 8 certificates for homeless domestic  
23 violence survivors has never been identified nor  
24 has a referral protocol between HRA and HPD been  
25 developed. As a result of domestic violence shelter

1 residents and the landlords that seek to actually  
2 house them have been prevented from accessing these  
3 resources. Greater interagency contact and  
4 coordination between HRA and HPD including  
5 designating a specific allocation of Section 8  
6 vouchers for HRA DV shelter residents and  
7 establishing interagency referral protocols would  
8 open up HPD resources to domestic violence  
9 survivors, help ensure that resources are  
10 appropriately allocated and decrease confusion for  
11 landlords trying to house the homeless families.  
12 And to facilitate this coordination the creation of  
13 an interagency taskforce on homelessness would be  
14 really helpful. Because you hear about you know HRA  
15 and DHS working together on LINC, DHS and HPD  
16 working together on the Section 8 but, but it seems  
17 like the signals are getting crossed. I know that's  
18 something that you have talked about Council Member  
19 Levin. So I hope that we can work on that together.  
20 Sort of the last thing I wanted to say about our  
21 experience as a LINC landlord is that we had five  
22 LINC 3 applicants for one of our buildings in the  
23 Bronx and lease signings were held at advent units  
24 at the PA centers of the boroughs where the  
25

1 applicant's shelters were located. And as a result  
2 New Destiny's Director of Property and Asset  
3 Management had to go to three different boroughs on  
4 five different days to sign leases. And for us as  
5 well as most landlords it was an inefficient use of  
6 time. And so if we're trying to incentivize  
7 landlords to participate in the program we hope  
8 that if you're taking three or more LINC 3  
9 applicants for housing that they can bundle those  
10 lease signings in the same borough on the same day  
11 to sort of make the program run more smoothly.  
12 We've talked to Commissioner Banks about this and,  
13 and I believe they're working on this and we look  
14 forward to sort of seeing that process come  
15 forward. Despite all of the challenges associated  
16 with the implementation of LINC 3 I really do need  
17 to say that HRA has been extraordinarily responsive  
18 to our questions and concerns. Our rent..  
19 coordinator reports that her experience with the  
20 LINC 3 program has been exemplary. The directors  
21 and staff at HRA's emergency intervention services  
22 have been very helpful and responsive. Apartment  
23 inspections, lease signings, and check cutting and  
24 pick up had been handled efficiently. So this is  
25

1  
2 really tremendous. The staff has worked really  
3 really well with us in our, in our property  
4 management teams. So this is a really promising  
5 initiative but it's not without its flaws and we  
6 look forward to continuing to work with the council  
7 and HRA to strengthen the program and hopeful that  
8 some of the concerns that we did mention today will  
9 be addressed.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much  
11 for your testimony. That was very helpful. Thank  
12 you.

13 ERIN FEELY-NAHEM: Yes, I'll have to  
14 change this to good afternoon or good evening.  
15 Thank you Chair Levin and other members of the  
16 committee for the opportunity to testify. My name  
17 is Erin Feely-Nahem. I am the Executive Director of  
18 Food First Family Project, a non-profit agency  
19 incorporated in 1993 to provide emergency shelter  
20 to domestic violence survivors. I'm also the co-  
21 chair of the New York City Coalition of Domestic  
22 Violence Residential Providers Housing Committee  
23 along with Catherine. To understand the  
24 difficulties providers and their clients face while  
25 utilizing this subsidy one must recognize the fact



1 that in New York City affordable housing for the  
2 middle class is difficult to find. And for the  
3 working poor or those on a subsidy it is almost  
4 impossible. Today there is a housing emergency with  
5 less than five percent vacancy rate in available  
6 housing. Where does that leave families who are  
7 working for little more than minimum wage or who  
8 are on public assistance. With the strength of the  
9 market on the landlord side no matter what HRA  
10 promises or how tempting they make landlord bonuses  
11 or enhanced rents the concern that grew out of the  
12 city's decision to abandon the Advantage program  
13 remains. As well as the concerns that arise when  
14 considering the prospect available for viable  
15 appointment for a tenant with... been on public  
16 assistance for a number of years once the housing  
17 subsidy ends. This past September in an effort to  
18 reduce the escalating homeless population HRA  
19 developed and rolled out the LINC initiative.  
20 Although this initiative's focus is primarily on  
21 housing the homeless within the DHS system unfairly  
22 limiting access to the various LINC subsidies for  
23 domestic violence survivors within the HRA shelter  
24 system to their credit HRA has designed and rolled  
25

1 out a version of the program, LINC 3, for persons  
2 fleeing domestic violence who have active public  
3 assistance cases. Advocates recognize and  
4 acknowledge the tremendous efforts that HRA has  
5 made in creating and rolling out this initiative  
6 which will allow a portion of the families who  
7 enter our system for safety to leave with safe  
8 permanent housing. Unfortunately though there are  
9 other families within our system, our shelter  
10 system as well who would benefit and be better  
11 served by other versions of LINC including those  
12 designed for working families, LINC 1 yet access,  
13 yet access to that version of the program is  
14 extremely limited. I think we've had about 20  
15 certifications that have been distributed to the  
16 domestic violence shelters. And I think when I  
17 looking at the number he was speaking about 73, we  
18 had 55 families a couple of week, weeks ago so that  
19 would probably 18 that have LINC 1. In addition  
20 single individuals and seniors who are using the  
21 domestic violence shelter system to escape violence  
22 do not have access to the other LINC subsidies  
23 unlike those in DHS who have access to LINC 1, LINC  
24 3, LINC 4, and LINC 5 as well as LINC 2. When  
25

1 looking at the success of the LINC initiative in  
2 terms of the housing market landlords might also  
3 find the versions where tenants are working and  
4 required to make meaningful rental contributions,  
5 LINC 1, and versions that are not time limited,  
6 LINC 4 and 5 more attractive than others, LINC 3,  
7 which puts DV survivors at a competitive  
8 disadvantage when searching for housing. Many  
9 landlords prefer working tenants compared to those  
10 that are reliant on public assistance. Although HRA  
11 has made tremendous efforts towards reducing  
12 unnecessary sanctions landlords may still remember  
13 the limited support they received in the past.  
14 Fueling this concern could also be the fact that if  
15 a LINC 3 participant becomes employed and their  
16 public assistance cases closed they become  
17 responsible for their rental payments unless they  
18 are permitted to transition to LINC 1 or some other  
19 rental assistance program. Now again today we  
20 learned from Commissioner Banks that they have  
21 changed the final rule and that they're working to  
22 find a process that will allow this. But at this  
23 point it is our understanding that it was not or is  
24 not possible to transition from LINC 3 to LINC 1 if  
25

1 a tenant becomes employed after a lease is signed.  
2 It is a shelter to housing initiative. While we do  
3 understand that HRA will make every effort to help  
4 LINC 3 tenants remain stably housed using the sweet  
5 of aftercare and eviction prevention program  
6 sponsored by the agency the uncertainty surrounding  
7 how these families will be able to handle the  
8 entire rent burden aft a potentially short period  
9 of time is a concern. Despite the challenges  
10 associated with the way the program is being  
11 targeted it should be noted that HRA has been  
12 extraordinarily responsive to questions from DV  
13 providers making themselves available in  
14 unprecedented ways to ensure the success of the  
15 LINC initiative. High level HRA officials  
16 personally attended meetings with the Coalition of  
17 Domestic Violence Residential Service Providers  
18 Housing Committee, is hosting weekly phone calls  
19 with providers to monitor the progress of the roll  
20 out and troubleshoot challenges as they arise. HRA  
21 has also met with leadership of DV service  
22 providers, attended network receptions with  
23 shelters and landlord partners, and has been  
24 responsive to the concerns about LINC, access to  
25

1 LINC 1 by releasing the limited number of  
2 certifications to working families in DV shelters.  
3 This something we are grateful for and hope to see  
4 this access expanded. Initially the program was  
5 targeted towards long term stayers and shelter  
6 focusing on the tier two shelter system. The system  
7 is much smaller than the emergency shelter system  
8 such that begin... wait, I'm sorry. This system is  
9 much smaller than the emergency shelter system such  
10 that beginning there was easy... wait I'm sorry... such  
11 that beginning, in the beginning there was easier  
12 access since it involved training a smaller number  
13 of staff on the programs. An added benefit of doing  
14 this this way was to allow those who had been  
15 homeless the longest to obtain housing first. While  
16 one can understand why the administration chose to  
17 do it this way there were some unintended  
18 consequences. Commissioner Banks understands that  
19 no one seeking safety in the DV shelter system  
20 wants to remain homeless after the state funded  
21 maximum length of stay of 180 days expires. He  
22 instituted a policy where HRA agreed not to  
23 discharge families to DHS shelters solely because  
24 they reached the maximum amount of time allowed by  
25

1 the state. Instead families are being held in the  
2 shelter beyond the 180 day point until a more  
3 favorable option can be found. This policy both  
4 reduces unnecessary and stressful transitions for  
5 families as well as relieve some of the pressure  
6 that the already overburdened DHS shelter system.  
7 At the same time because the LINC program began and  
8 is still concentrated in only seven DV tier 2  
9 shelters families in the emergency DV shelters must  
10 wait until those in tier 2s are successful with the  
11 LINC program before they are eligible for a viable  
12 housing option. The result is that fewer families  
13 are exiting the emergency DV shelter system and it  
14 is near, now at near capacity. This started to  
15 create bottleneck in the shelter system where needy  
16 families in the community who need to flee domestic  
17 violence cannot access specialized DV emergency  
18 shelters due to a lack of space and are forced to  
19 either seek refuge in the DHS shelter system which  
20 isn't equipped to meet their service needs or  
21 remain in dangerous situations until space becomes  
22 available. HRA has now started to provide  
23 certification to families within the emergency  
24 shelter system as well as clients reach and exceed  
25

1 the 180 day limit. It is our hope that the LINC  
2 program gains traction, vacancies will begin to  
3 come up in tier 2 shelter systems allowing those in  
4 DV emergency system to move to a more transitional  
5 setting and permanent housing alleviating the  
6 bottleneck and allowing those in crisis access to  
7 appropriate shelters. We hope that the city is  
8 monitoring the impact of these housing programs to  
9 ensure that this is in fact occurs. If not the city  
10 may wish to consider realigning resources to serve  
11 families in emergency DV shelters as well as those  
12 in DHS and DV tier 2 shelters to create sufficient  
13 turnover in the emergency system to allow those who  
14 need to escape abuse access to the appropriate  
15 services. This year once again DV survivors living  
16 within the HRA system unlike families within the  
17 DHS shelter are not eligible for any of the 500  
18 APD, HPD Section 8 vouchers available nor for the  
19 project based Section 8 apartments that NYCHA had  
20 offered to families in the DHS system. They're also  
21 excluded from the NO homeless priority preference  
22 for NYCHA available to DHS families and they're  
23 placed, which places them behind working families  
24 and homeless families within the DHS shelter. Out  
25

1  
2 of the 750 placed last year I question how many  
3 were domestic violence survivors. That's just... In  
4 addition housing options did not become available  
5 for our... If additional housing options do not  
6 become available for our population it is possible  
7 that the current homeless rehousing policy will  
8 hamper efforts to combat domestic violence.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much  
10 for your testimony, obviously all the great work  
11 that all of your programs do day in and day out.  
12 Your right on the front lines. You know what's  
13 happening. So I very much appreciate your  
14 testimony. Look forward to hearing more from you as  
15 well in the coming months and, and making sure  
16 that... and one, one encouraging thing obviously is  
17 that both Commissioners Banks and Taylor indicated  
18 that they are, they are adapting. And where issues,  
19 they know issues are coming up and they're, they're  
20 looking to address them immediately and, and  
21 that's, I think that's reflected in all of your  
22 testimony. So let's continue to work together.  
23 Raise the issues when they need to be raised to the  
24 appropriate people and, and make sure that there's  
25 success here. But I, I want to thank you all very



1 much for your patience and for your testimony.

2 Thank you.

3 UNKNOWN FEMALE: Thank you so much.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And final panel Jeff  
5 Foreman, Care for the Homeless, Sherry Jonas [sic],  
6 sorry Sharell Jonas [sp?] Partnership for the  
7 Homeless Family Resource Center, Lucinda Lewis  
8 Picture the Homeless, and Bill Busk Community  
9 Voices Heard. Thank you guys very much for your  
10 patience. I know it's been a long afternoon.

11 JEFF FOREMAN: Thank you Mr. Chairman.  
12 My name is Jeff Foreman. I'm the Policy Director at  
13 Care for the Homeless. We're the oldest and largest  
14 provider of healthcare exclusively to homeless  
15 people of all ages in New York City. It's our  
16 expectation that in this calendar year we will see  
17 12 thousand individual homeless people and over 35  
18 thousand clinic visits in our 33 federally  
19 qualified health centers, our street medicine  
20 teams, and our mobile health clinic. I have  
21 submitted testimony but I'm not going to read this.  
22 I'll try to summarize as quickly as I can. First of  
23 all we do want to make it clear how appreciative we  
24 are of the great work that the city has done that,  
25

1 that the committee is done and that you Mr.  
2 Chairman have done in giving us tools to help fight  
3 homelessness in New York City. The basis for all of  
4 our advocacy is that poor choices created modern  
5 day homelessness and better choices could end it.  
6 These tools are the better choices but we do have  
7 concerns and we, I don't want to make the perfect  
8 the perfect the enemy of the good here but these  
9 programs are very vital to us, the prevention work  
10 that's being done, the NYCHA and federal resource  
11 priorities, and the LINC programs. But, but I'd  
12 like to mention about four areas that we do have  
13 concerns about. First and most obvious is the  
14 scale. These programs are not scaled to the size of  
15 the problem. I know that's an issue that, that you  
16 have personally raised specifically with respect to  
17 the NYCHA housing this is not the level of NYCHA  
18 housing that has historically been prioritized and  
19 it's not a level of housing that is scaled to the  
20 problem. That's also true with the the LINC's  
21 program. So scale is our number one concern. We  
22 also have a real concern about the term of the  
23 program. We know from the advantage program that a  
24 short term subsidy doesn't really work very well.  
25

1  
2 These programs are all programs that are one year,  
3 one year with either two year extensions or four  
4 years of extensions but three years or five years  
5 will not be sufficient for some people. We should  
6 really write this program in a way that it can  
7 succeed. The better term would be no term limit and  
8 of course longer is always better than shorter.  
9 We're also concerned about some of the  
10 administrative issues. There are a number of them  
11 but for example we're concerned that there are some  
12 of the definition on administrative things that are  
13 written into the program are going to be very very  
14 hard to enforce. We know for example that when we  
15 say that someone is eligible because they work 35  
16 hours a week that they are almost always going to  
17 be a very low income low wage worker. And they have  
18 very little control over their hours. If you are  
19 working an average of 35 hours many weeks you won't  
20 work 35 hours. We also know that because the  
21 programs are aimed at families with children who  
22 grow up and other definitions... hard to administer.  
23 It was great to hear today and we have great  
24 confidence in the officials that testify today, was  
25 great to hear about all the flexibility... better

1  
2 than flexibility is writing into the programs the  
3 right ways to do these things. And I might add  
4 that's also far more dignified for our clients and  
5 far less stressful to them. And finally I want to  
6 add something that I don't think anybody has  
7 addressed before but we also want to be on record  
8 in support of your legislation for the state  
9 hospitality gift fund. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you Mr.  
11 Foreman, thank you.

12 Good afternoon. You have to excuse me,  
13 this is my first time. My name is Sharell Jonas and  
14 I'm a family advocate with the Partnership for the  
15 Homeless, the family resource center located in  
16 East New York, Brooklyn. And I'm here today to  
17 share my experience with the LINC subsidy program.  
18 Carlotta Cooper [sp?], a client of mine is a 51  
19 year old African American mother with three  
20 children currently, currently living in a DHS  
21 shelter. The family was approved for the LINC  
22 program. Ms. Cooper keeps a log of the landlords  
23 and brokers she contacts and the landlords are  
24 reluctant to accept the program because they don't  
25 trust it. Either they are not properly informed

1  
2 about the program or have negative experience when  
3 the Advantage subsidy program ended. Ms. Cooper is  
4 saddled with the burden of selling the program to  
5 landlords. She's at a loss for explanations when  
6 they ask what's going to happen in five years when  
7 the subsidy ends. Tenants are no longer eligible or  
8 the city stops paying. She only has three months to  
9 find an apartment, not enough time especially  
10 during the winter and holiday months. I understand  
11 the program is intended to alleviate current  
12 demands on the shelter system but are we setting  
13 these families up for failure when the program ends  
14 or will they end up back in the shelter? Our  
15 families are unemployed... or I'm sorry our families  
16 are underemployed working families, disabled  
17 individuals trying to live off their SSDI/SSI  
18 benefits some of them with no enhancing  
19 possibilities. They're barely scraping by. They  
20 don't qualify for affordable housing because they  
21 can't meet the minimum annual household incomes for  
22 their family sizes. LINC is a temporary subsidy. It  
23 is not a long term solution. We need to address the  
24 infrastructure, the lack of housing for our  
25 undeserved, underserved populations. Thank you.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you. Thank you  
3 very much for your testimony. And welcome to the  
4 city council.

5 [background comments]

6 BILL BUSK: Good afternoon, actually at  
7 this point I should be saying good evening. But  
8 thank you for staying till the end Council Member.  
9 And to repeat something I said the last time I saw  
10 you it would be nice if the other committee members  
11 heard the public comments because it's the comments  
12 of the public... and I've noticed that most of the  
13 other groups who spoke before me and who will be  
14 speaking after me are speaking for large  
15 organizations. So they're one person speaking for  
16 many. Anyways you know me but just for the record  
17 it's Bill Busk and I'm a member of Community Voices  
18 Heard which has been around for, going on close to  
19 20 years and was originally started by Gale Aska  
20 [sp?] and some other women who were in the shelter  
21 system back in the Julianne days. And my, I was in  
22 the shelter system for three years. The only reason  
23 I got out is because five years ago today I had an  
24 operation which led to my... being disabled and when  
25 I finally got SSD they placed me in supportive

1 housing. At the time I was moved in Advantage was  
2 completely shut down and previous to that they only  
3 had working Advantage. And I, my doctors weren't  
4 allowing me to work. Previous to that before the  
5 operation I was working. They didn't have any  
6 openings. So it is a pleasure to see... so this is  
7 what CVH wanted me to say. We appreciate the new  
8 attitude with the current mayor and the current  
9 administration and also the new city council. It's  
10 a huge difference with HRA and their approach  
11 toward homelessness especially after the last three  
12 years of the Bloomberg Administration when there  
13 was no housing program to replace advantage. So now  
14 we have the new LINC program. I appreciate the  
15 concerns that I've heard other people express  
16 during this past four hours. But CVH we do at least  
17 appreciate that there is a new program and the  
18 efforts to try to address things. One thing that we  
19 like is that this is in line with the belief of  
20 Community Voices Heard and many other community  
21 groups that it costs the city more money to place  
22 people in homeless shelters versus to rent an  
23 apartment. We appreciate that the new LINC programs  
24 address families and address vulnerable  
25

1  
2 populations, I've heard domestic violence victims  
3 mentioned a lot today, and also addresses  
4 individuals. Remember back during the advantage  
5 program individuals were one of the first groups  
6 that were eliminated when they started cutting back  
7 on the program which being an individual that left  
8 me up the boat with no paddle. So we appreciate the  
9 changes. We appreciate the current address... oh I'm  
10 sorry. We appreciate the current approach to  
11 address the causes for the individual's cases that  
12 leads them to homelessness. And I hope that that  
13 would help eliminate the revolving door syndrome of  
14 people returning especially as been mentioned  
15 people who were in the old advantage program and  
16 the advantage... when it runs out of time they wind  
17 up back in the shelters. Personally I appreciate  
18 the fact that the clients in the LINC program would  
19 be paying 30 percent of their income because that's  
20 true affordable housing that's an advantage that I  
21 have being in supportive housing. I have an issue  
22 with the zone system of affordable housing that  
23 NYCHA uses because I know that there's some  
24 multiple, there's some families with multiple  
25 working family members that can barely make the 30



1 percent of the zone. The zone doesn't apply to them  
2 personally, just applies to the area. There is  
3 concern about the number of affordable housing  
4 units that are available. But once again with the  
5 new administration I know Mayor de Blasio has  
6 housing initiative to create more affordable  
7 housing. However there's going to be no new NYCHA  
8 buildings. So there's been a lot of concern  
9 expressed about NYCHA units available for homeless  
10 people. There's a problem that New York State is a  
11 right to, I mean New York City I'm sorry is a right  
12 to shelter city. And we have a lot of folks coming  
13 here from other parts of the state and also from  
14 other states taking advantage of that. So that kind  
15 of overburdens our system. Commissioner Banks had  
16 mentioned at one point that this should be handled  
17 as a statewide initiative which I totally agree and  
18 would help alleviate that problem. It was also  
19 mentioned, there was also been mention several  
20 times about the landlords. I know from my own  
21 experience when I was illegally evicted that New  
22 York City does not have enough resources to follow-  
23 up and address bad landlords whether it's for just  
24 repairs or for landlords that are kicking people  
25

1  
2 out so they could raise the, the rents. So I,  
3 finally I would just like to echo what Council  
4 Member Donovan Richards expressed a concern about  
5 why only 750 NYCHA units are earmarked for families  
6 in the homeless system. Thank you very much for  
7 your time. And thank you very much for still being  
8 here. And I would also like to just take this final  
9 moment to remind you the last time I came and spoke  
10 and you were hosting the committee was dealing with  
11 homeless veterans. I think that was in November or  
12 December and that is still a huge, that is still a  
13 huge problem. So please I know today we're here to  
14 talk about LINC but, but, but please don't forget  
15 the huge issues of homeless veterans in the city.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you Mr. Busk.  
17 Thank you for your patience and staying through  
18 this whole panel. Thank you very much for your  
19 patience and staying these many hours. Really  
20 appreciate you staying and, and for your important  
21 testimony, making sure that it's on, here on the  
22 record.

23 BILL BUSK: Thank you.

24 LUCINDA LEWIS: Thank you. Good  
25 afternoon. My name is Lucinda Lewis and I'm

1 considered by DHS standards chronically homeless.  
2 [clears throat] excuse me. I was in three of their  
3 rental, rental assistance programs throughout the  
4 years. I am currently in a private family shelter.  
5 I am working a member of DC1707 local 253 and also  
6 a member of Picture the Homeless, an organization  
7 that fights for the civil rights and permanent  
8 housing for the, for homeless New Yorkers. I would  
9 like to start talking about the LINC program. To me  
10 this won't be a concrete and long term program due  
11 to the similarities of LINC, HSP, and work  
12 advantage, child advantage. We will see the same  
13 rate of recidivism as we saw with those two  
14 programs ending as I am living testimony to the end  
15 of those programs. Due to LINC, due to the LINC's  
16 program's temporary status many landlords have  
17 shunned away from the, the program. They don't want  
18 anything to do with it. It was very embarrassing  
19 and time consuming to try to find a participating  
20 landlord only to find that they rejected you  
21 because you have a temporary subsidy. There are  
22 children that are suffering too. They are wondering  
23 why can't they have a permanent house or home like  
24 their friends. Programs like Section 8 are concrete  
25

1  
2 and permanent. So why don't, why doesn't the city  
3 want, why does the city want to waste money on  
4 temporary evaporating subsidies such as the LINC.  
5 If Mayor de Blasio wants to learn from the city's  
6 mistakes he should ask many homeless families and  
7 individuals what they need and what were the  
8 downfalls. My situation does not apply to the  
9 LINC's criteria. I am not eligible for temporary  
10 assistance when I leave the shelter. I do not, I  
11 make too much for food stamps and cash assistance  
12 but you need cash assistance to be eligible for the  
13 LINC program. I am also in a private shelter, not  
14 H, DHS or the other one. And most of the programs  
15 require you to be in a DH shelter. We need a  
16 program without a welfare component, one that  
17 reflects the current times. We need a effective  
18 program, we need an effective permanent rental  
19 voucher. After reading the state's proposal for the  
20 hospitality fund Picture the Homeless members  
21 realized that this is not a permanent solution to  
22 homelessness. The proposed legislation would give  
23 grants and contracts to non-profit service  
24 providers. But it is not clear which non-profits  
25 would be chosen for eligibility. Many non-profits

1  
2 for example oversee homeless shelters but have an  
3 abysmal track record and treat people with, without  
4 respect or dignity. When a, when... gave families of  
5 941 Interville [sp?] Avenue 24 hours to leave there  
6 was little or no accountability. What  
7 accountability will there be regarding the money in  
8 this hospitality fund? That's a question. Instead  
9 use funds in contracts or grants to nonprofit  
10 homeless peoples need a permanent subsidy that is  
11 sustainable and flexible. Housing providers need to  
12 feel secure knowing that this subsidy won't run out  
13 and the apartments will be paid for even if an  
14 apartment is vacant. A permanent subsidy should be  
15 a flexible, should be flexible so that homeless  
16 individuals and families can move in with ease. I  
17 need an apartment so I can feel stable. So that my  
18 children can remain focused. They are living in  
19 fear of not knowing when they're going to be  
20 transferred. I don't need services. I need a home  
21 with stable housing. Homelessness will go down. In  
22 the past when the, in the, with the hiatus of  
23 programs running out, of the Advantage program  
24 running out, excuse me, you were told, you would  
25 sent, you were told that you would be sent to the

1  
2 next step if you didn't move out into your own  
3 apartment and that's what happened to me. And that  
4 is what happened to me. Instead of going to the  
5 next step I moved out into my own apartment while I  
6 was working which I'm still at the current job I  
7 could not afford the rent and ended up back in the  
8 shelter system. I have been in this shelter since  
9 March 2013 and I'm currently still here in the same  
10 shelter. If the city council passed this resolution  
11 we want to know where the funding is coming from,  
12 where is it going and how is it going to be spent.  
13 There should be an oversight committee to hold  
14 people and agency responsible. There must be a  
15 screening for all eligible non-profits to ensure  
16 honesty and bad behavior isn't rewarded. Lastly we  
17 urge the city council to work with the city and  
18 state agencies to match these funds in a permanent  
19 rental subsidy fund for many homeless people we  
20 just need a small subsidy to get an apartment. But  
21 for some a larger subsidy will be necessary. This  
22 will save the city money because people will be  
23 focused in bettering their lives and people will be  
24 out of the shelters which cost over 3,000 dollars a  
25 month. The last time I checked that's how much they

1  
2 pay for me and my family who are currently living  
3 in a shelter. We have been chronically homeless for  
4 12 years. That costs the city over 400, 43,200  
5 dollars, enough to buy a house in the suburbs but  
6 New York is our home and I live and work here and I  
7 would like to stay. We at, we at Picture the  
8 Homeless fight for permanent housing not shelter.  
9 We, we look forward to working with the city and  
10 state to ensure housing for all. Thank you for your  
11 time and patience.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you Ms. Lewis.  
13 Thank you for your testimony. Thank you to this  
14 entire panel again for your advocacy, your staunch  
15 advocacy. As I said to the previous panel we have a  
16 lot of work still to do. You know I feel like we  
17 have partners now in the city government that are  
18 coming at this with the best of intentions. And,  
19 and with, with a, an eye towards addressing and  
20 solving some of our, our most difficult challenges.  
21 And so look forward to you all being part of, of,  
22 of that conversation. Make sure you have a seat at  
23 the table and that you have direct lines of  
24 communication with the administration. But thank  
25 you all very much for your testimony. And being

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that I don't have a gavel I'm going to just knock  
these cups on the, on the, on the table. But at  
5:23 the hearing is adjourned.

[gavel]



C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Transcription \_\_\_\_\_