

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH

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March 22, 2024
Start: 10:10 A.M.
Recess: 5:50 P.M.

HELD AT: COUNCIL CHAMBERS - CITY HALL

B E F O R E: Althea V. Stevens,
Chairperson

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Alexa Aviles
Gale A. Brewer
Rita C. Joseph
Linda Lee
Julie Menin
Chi A. Ossè
Lincoln Restler
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A P P E A R A N C E S

Keith Howard
DYCD Commissioner

Alan Cheng
First Deputy Commissioner

Nevita Bailey
Chief Financial Officer

Daphne Montanez

Darryl Rattray
DYCD

Dana Cantelmi
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Susan Haskell
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Jess Dannhauser
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Winette Saunders
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Margaret Pletnikoff
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Abdoillaye Diallo
Youth

Acont Abdoul Aziz Diallo
Youth

Anthony Turner
Youth

Nadirra Hakeem
Youth

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

Zaganah Stephens
Youth

Amal Kharoufi
Project Unite

Nedelyn Helena-Diaz

Samuya Grover
Bella Abzug Leadership Institute

Zayda Rojas
Figure Skating in Harlem

Nora Kouyate
Sadie Nash

Titilayo Aluko
Power Play New York City

Chayanika Roy
Stars CGI

Emily Gamble
Lower East Side Girls Club

Erica Gamble
Lower East Side Girls Club

McKenzie Abudu
Figure Skating in Harlem

Marsha Jean-Charles

Trenton Price
Salvador Cetner

Yarlyn Miguel Duran Lopez
Center for Community Alternatives Youth Action

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

Treyana L. Harry
Center for Community Alternatives Youth Action

Darren Garcia
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Anthony Posada
The Legal Aid Society

Patricia Mullen
Brooklyn Lehman College

Ira Yankwitt
Literacy Assistance Center

Annie Minquez
Good Sheperd Services

Caitlyn Passaretti
Citizens Committee for Children and Campaign for
Children

Jamie Powlovich
Coalition for Homeless Youth

Nora Moran
United Neighborhood Houses

Roslyn R. Morrison
The Legal Aid Society

Rob Saltares
Laureus USA

Ellinor Ruticey
The Door

Ashley Rajkumar
Safe Horizon Street Work Project

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

Katje King
Northern Manhattan Improvement Corp.

Donovan Swanson
Brooklyn Borough President, Antonio Reynoso

Edwin Santana
Freedom Agenda

Shawn Jean-Louis
Expanded Schools

Dr. Sophine Charles
Associate Executive Director for the Council of
Family and Childcare and Agencies

Sarah Jonas
Children's Aid

Steven Morales
All our Kin

Shannon Rockett
Carnegie Hall

Zainab Akbar
Neighborhood Defender Services of Harlem

Emma Ketteringham
Bronx Defenders

Lauren Sapiro
Brooklyn Defender Services

Wanjiro Gethaga
Social Work at the Center for Family
Representation

Yndiana Alba
Adult Learning Center

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

Jordan Otis
Center for Justice Innovation

Paula Puente
Adult Learning Center

Megan Nordegren
New York Sun Works

Ponny White
New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault

Erika Enchautegui
CPC, Early Childhood Learning

Charisma Adams
Exalt

Jason Alleyne
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Letty Hawthorne
University Settlement

Nora McCarthy

Leila Dunbar
Testifying on behalf of Daniel Gerard

Alejandra Ng
New York Tennis and Learning

Betty Baez Melo
Early Childhood Education Project

Rachael Gazdick
New York Edge

Derwin Greene
Kingsbridge Heights Community Center

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

Joanna Lund-Pops
Big Brothers, Big Sisters of New York

Marisha Harry
Freedom Agenda and the Campaign to Close Rikers

Natisha Romain
Red Hook Initiative

Raisa Reyes
Ali Forney Center

Sierra Kraft
I CARE Coalition

Shavon Lockron
Adult Learning Center at Lehman College

Katie Blondel
Red Hook West Houses

1
2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: This is a mic check, mic
3 check, mic check on today's hearing on Children and
4 Youth in the Chambers. Today's date is March 22,
5 2024, recorded by Walter Lewis.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good morning and welcome to
7 the New York City Council Hearing on Children and
8 Youth. At this time, we ask that you silence all
9 electronic devices. At no time is anyone to approach
10 the dais. If anyone has any questions during the
11 hearing, please see the Sergeant at Arms. Chair, we
12 are ready to begin.

13 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Good morning and welcome to
14 the Fiscal 2025 Preliminary Budget hearing for the
15 Department of Youth and Community Development. I'm
16 Council Member Althea Stevens, Chair of Committee on
17 Children and Youth Services. This morning we'll be
18 discussing the Fiscal 2025 Preliminary Budget
19 expenses for DYCD, which stands at \$1.1 billion.
20 This funding includes \$54.8 million in personal to
21 serve – to support the headcount of 553 positions.
22 The majority of the budget comprises of Other than
23 Personal Services \$1.1 billion. This Fiscal Budget
24 is \$234.5 million less than the Fiscal 2024 adopted
25 budget. This is partially as a result of Council

1 initiative, which are typically not reflected in the
2 budget at adoption but also includes PEGs on programs
3 to eliminate the gap, actions in both November and
4 Preliminary Plan.
5

6 We have to ensure the city is making true
7 investments in our young people. As we are seeing
8 the Census rates increase in juvenile justice centers
9 while at the same time, PEGs in programs that will
10 prevent young people from becoming justice involved.
11 So, I want to get a better understanding of the
12 impacts and the logic regarding the reduction of
13 agency programs and services.

14 Now is not the time to reduce our invest in the
15 future of the city. DYCDs Fiscal 2025 Preliminary
16 Budget has only one new need of \$4 million. Does the
17 agency believe this is a significant resource to meet
18 the needs of our youngest New Yorkers? An increased
19 commitment for the city to expand and strengthen
20 those pathways for success for children and youth
21 will yield countless dividends for the city.

22 The Council has pushed the Administration to
23 expand shelter services and capacity for young people
24 experiencing homelessness in DYCD youth shelters.
25 With the influx of asylum seekers, the need for

1 providing a safe space for individuals to reside
2 while receiving necessary wraparound support has
3 heightened. DYCD's youth employment programs
4 provides the city youth with paid experience.
5 However, we need to start reimagining the workforce
6 for young people because SYP and Work, Learn and Grow
7 is not enough. We need to find more ways to give
8 young people an opportunity to develop professional
9 skills and networking.
10

11 They enable the youth to learn and enhance
12 skills, develop productive work habits and strengthen
13 social and leadership skills. Hence, I want to see
14 more investments made to the initiative that lead to
15 direct exposure and access to paid workforce programs
16 that are designated to keep youth positively engaged
17 and learn valuable skills.

18 Finally, we have to ensure that organizations
19 providing critical service to our youth receive fair
20 contracts and adequate funding to pay and retain
21 staff and run the program successfully. Outstanding
22 payments to contract services, providers for youth
23 services, and other human service agencies must
24 immediately resolve and avoid moving forward. DYCD
25 has been tasked with managing the preparation of the

2 city's next generation of leaders to their full
3 potential and provide a great path for leaders to
4 come.

5 This Committee wants to ensure that all DYCD
6 programs are served as many young people as possible
7 at the highest quality as possible and to do so, they
8 must have significant resources, sufficient
9 resources. Our city's budget is a moral obligation
10 to the community members that we represent and as a
11 Council, our responsibility is to ensure that the
12 budget is adequate, transparent and accountable for
13 all New Yorkers.

14 As the Chair of Children and Youth Services and
15 with deep roots in the nonprofit sector, I want to
16 continue to advocate for accountability, accuracy and
17 to ensure that the budget we adopt reflects the
18 multifaceted needs of young people and families
19 citywide. This hearing is a vital part of the
20 process. I expect DYCD will be responsive to the
21 questions and concerns of Council Members. I look
22 forward to an active engagement with the
23 Administration for over the next few months to ensure
24 that the Fiscal 2025 Adopted Budget meets the goals
25 the Council has set out.

2 We want to ensure that the program for youth and
3 young adult are equipped and serving everyone in
4 need. I would like to thank this opportunity to
5 thank the A Team that's here with me today in
6 Chambers and back at the District Office, Sandra
7 Gray, Financial Analyst to the Committee, Aliya Ali,
8 Unit Head, Christine Yamati, Counsel to the
9 Committee. You would think I would say it right by
10 now right? I'm sorry. Elizabeth Arzt, Policy
11 Analyst to the Committee.

12 I would like to acknowledge the Council Members
13 who are here to join me today. We have Council
14 Member Linda Lee, Council Member Julie Menin, and I
15 will turn it over to Counsel, who will now swear in
16 the Administration.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Hi, good morning. If
18 everyone from the Administration could please raise
19 your right hand. Yeah, everyone at once please. Do
20 you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and
21 nothing but the truth before this Committee and to
22 respond honestly to Council Member questions? Thank
23 you. You may begin when ready.

24 Good morning Chair Stevens and Members of the
25 Committee on Children and Youth. I am DYCD

1 Commissioner Keith Howard and I'm joined today by
2 First Deputy Commissioner Alan Cheng and Chief
3 Financial Officer Nevita Bailey. We are pleased to
4 be here to discuss the Fiscal 2025 Preliminary
5 Budget.
6

7 The budget stands at \$1.1 billion. It is
8 comprised of: \$877 million, or 77.7 percent in the
9 city tax levy funds; \$141 million, or 12.5 percent in
10 intracity funds; \$99 million, or 8.8 percent in
11 federal funds; and \$11 million, or about 1 percent in
12 state funding.

13 This budget demonstrates Mayor Adam's strong
14 commitment to young people and families. It will
15 support DYCD's investments in programs to alleviate
16 the effects of poverty and to provide opportunities
17 for New Yorkers and communities to flourish.

18 As you know, we are deep into planning for the
19 2024 Summer Youth Employment Program, and I would
20 like to say thank you to the Council for your strong
21 support of the program. New York City again provides
22 100,000 summer youth opportunities for young people
23 ages 14 through 24 at more than 17,000 work sites.
24 Last summer, which was the 60th anniversary of the
25 program, and it was celebrated in a very amazing and

1
2 real way. We are more than pleased that 30 City
3 Council Members hosted Summer Youth Employment
4 workers, and for this summer, we hope that all 51
5 will participate. And I really want to thank the
6 Chair, Chair Stevens. You and just being a real
7 partner in pushing your fellow Council Members to
8 every year increase the participation of young people
9 in Summer Youth Employment Program. You've been a
10 real champion and a real partner in that space.

11 To reach a wide range of young people, we offered
12 the application and marketing material in nine
13 languages. About 11,500 participants were part of
14 tailored experiences for youth with barriers to
15 employment, including youth with disabilities, youth
16 experiencing homelessness, and youth who are justice
17 involved. Our program reached nearly 16,000 youth
18 from communities at high risk of gun violence and
19 over 13,000 of our participants were residents of
20 NYCHA development.

21 Might I add, this was the highest number served
22 to date. More than 20,000 were part of the Career
23 Ready program, which works with schools to align the
24 summer youth experience with high school academic
25 learning.

1 We released the 2024 application for participants
2 and worksites on January 22, 2024. The earliest
3 application released ever. We are focused on program
4 quality. We believe that this early release will
5 give participants more time to prepare for this
6 summer experience and give providers time to work
7 with the New York City business and nonprofit
8 community to develop additional worksite. To date,
9 we have held 25 targeted recruitment events in
10 priority police precincts, worked with the Crisis
11 Management groups, and partnered with NYCHA so that
12 applications, applicants can make use of their
13 digital vans. The online application closed last
14 Friday, but we are continuing targeting recruitment
15 to allow participants with barriers to employment the
16 opportunity to apply.

17 This year all SYEP participants will receive at
18 least two hours of financial literacy education as
19 required by Local Law 98 of 2023. But I also want to
20 add that the Administration top line has always been
21 financial literacy. DYCD also launched a financial
22 empowerment peer mentoring pilot, in which select
23 Work, Learn, and Grow participants will take CUNY
24
25

1
2 courses on financial literacy and serve as peer
3 mentors during SYEP.

4 Work, Learn, and Grow, a school-year extension of
5 SYEP, is now serving over 7,000 youth, it is the
6 largest class to date with more than one third of
7 enrolled youth residing in or attending schools in
8 the six priority precincts identified in the Mayor's
9 Blueprint for Community Safety. Also, for the first
10 time, our CMS providers, our Crisis Management
11 Services Providers had the opportunity to participate
12 in Work, Learn, and Grow with 19 CMS groups enrolling
13 over 330 participants. 38 Work, Learn and Grow
14 participants are serving as Youth Ambassadors to
15 students in temporary housing with a focus on
16 migrants youth.

17 In addition to our SYEP planning, we are actively
18 preparing for another summer wide ranging enrichment
19 program for the city Summer Rising Program in
20 partnership with New York City Public Schools.
21 Applications for this summer open March 1st and will
22 close on March 25th. And we expect to again serve
23 110,000 elementary and middle school students and
24 connect them with fun, hands on enrichment

1 experiences to strengthen skills, develop interest,
2 and cultivate curiosity.

3
4 Some of the programming that will be offered
5 includes drama, yoga, community service, visual arts,
6 sports, and competitive games. We appreciate the
7 opportunity to brief Chair Stevens and Joseph last
8 week on this summer program. We appreciate your
9 outreach and again, your engagement and your
10 partnership.

11 Last year, we introduced exploring futures, a new
12 feature of the program for middle school students to
13 facilitate early career exploration aligned with
14 their individual interest and passion. This program
15 exposed students to a wide range of career path,
16 enabling them to navigate and explore fields that may
17 have otherwise been unfamiliar to them. The program
18 includes visit to CUNY campuses, career connected
19 field trips and workplace tours. We look forward to
20 another year of this exciting program.

21 The Office of Neighborhood Safety ONS officially
22 joined DYCD in Fiscal Year 2024. This office
23 included the Mayor's Action Plan for Neighborhood
24 Safety, the Office to Prevent Gun Violence, Atlas,
25 and Precision Employment Initiative we call PEI.

1
2 These programs are aligned with DYCD's mission and
3 improve community and police relations, reduce crime,
4 incarceration and diminish contact with the justice
5 system.

6 Outreach includes hundreds of Staten Islanders in
7 the wake of the youth violence on the borough
8 Northshore and CMS team helping to make J'ouvert and
9 the West Indian Day Parade in Brooklyn the safest in
10 recent memory. ONS plays a major role in carrying
11 out a blueprint for community safety, announced by
12 Mayor Adams in July.

13 Finally, we are pleased to announce a new
14 program, the Neighborhood Youth Team Sports Program,
15 which offers awards up to \$50,000 for youth sports
16 programming to nonprofit organizations. This
17 opportunity to competitive youth sports programs,
18 which is supported by a state, New York State funding
19 source is now open for application in PASSport, bids
20 are due by April 12th of this year. We encourage
21 community groups to apply for contracts that will
22 begin July 1st.

23 The new program is in addition to our Saturday
24 Night Lights Program, which serve young people at 136
25 sites citywide. Saturday Night Lights programs offer

1 safe and engaging evening sports programs, including
2 basketball, soccer, volleyball, dance, and martial
3 arts.
4

5 Again, I want to thank you Chair Stevens once
6 again and the Committee Members for the opportunity
7 to discuss the Preliminary Budget. We are pleased to
8 answer your questions. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Good af- oh, it's still
10 morning. Good morning. Happy to have you guys here
11 today. We're going to dig right in because we have a
12 lot of questions and I'm going to start. DYCD's
13 Fiscal 2025 Preliminary Budget of \$1.1 billion is
14 \$234.5 million or 17 percent less than the Fiscal
15 2024 Adopted Budget of \$1.4 billion, excluded from
16 the Fiscal 2025 Preliminary Budget is \$151.7 million
17 of Council discretionary funding that is typically
18 added at adoption. What is the remaining \$8.23
19 million difference the results of? What programs or
20 services are being reduced in Fiscal 2025 as compared
21 to 2024?

22 NEVITA BAILEY: Good morning Chair Stevens. Nice
23 to see you.

24 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Good morning.
25

2 NEVITA BAILEY: Primarily the key difference is
3 discretionary funding. There are small changes to
4 our after-school program. I think there's a
5 reduction in Summer Rising and some of our other
6 after school portfolio that's represented of the
7 reduction in funding.

8 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Can you talk a little bit
9 about some of the small changes in the after-school
10 program? Like what that actually entails?

11 NEVITA BAILEY: There's been a slight reduction
12 to slots due to under performance in some programs.
13 And so, we just rightsized those portfolios to
14 reflect the attendance.

15 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Do you have a list of those
16 programs that's been rightsized with those
17 reductions?

18 NEVITA BAILEY: I think we can provide you with
19 more detail after the hearing.

20 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you. We'll
21 definitely will want to see those lists. Uhm, what
22 is the additional funding intracity city transfer of
23 \$970,000 in Fiscal 2024 and 2025 for the Advance and
24 Earn Program?

25 NEVITA BAILEY: Uhm, you said intracity?

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, intracity yeah.

NEVITA BAILEY: Sure, DYC partners with ACS to provide additional support for our persons in that program.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay. Uhm, the Young Men Initiative YMI has a reduction of \$200,000 in the Fiscal 2025 Preliminary Budget Plan. What is the reason for this reduction?

NEVITA BAILEY: Uhm, a slight reduction to our one contract 100 Black Men, and so that contract was reduced in the PEG.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And just thinking about this, such a small program and you know we had a hearing a couple weeks ago and was talking about how we need to be looking to expand that and making sure it's open more. Why would we pick a program that probably is in one of the smaller buckets to kind of reduce when we should be actually ramping that up?

NEVITA BAILEY: I understand your concern. I think that given the Fiscal climate, the agency was trying to figure out, how do we maintain and maximize our core programming. And so, this initiative is in partnership with City Hall and YMI and so, we

1
2 identify this contract as a contract that can be
3 reduced or not impacting our core services.

4 KEITH HOWARD: And I - I just want to add on
5 that.

6 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Sure.

7 KEITH HOWARD: Because I think one of the things
8 we have to put in proper perspective is the fact that
9 in a segment of time, DYCD along with other city
10 agencies of course had to undergo PEGs and we're not
11 excluded.

12 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Some agencies have been
13 excluded, which is part of the problem and you should
14 be excluded.

15 KEITH HOWARD: I recall being on the call and the
16 Mayor saying all hands-on deck.

17 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Hmm, hmm.

18 KEITH HOWARD: 183,000 as you mentioned an influx
19 of migrant asylum seeking in the last two years.
20 That is a very serious strain on any city's
21 resources. And the mere fact, coupled with the fact
22 that we have to balance the budget, which is based
23 upon our local law, as you know. I don't have to
24 tell you anything that you don't know.

1
2 No agency, no agency here is excited about PEGs
3 or service reductions. Alright, but this time in
4 what was happening in the previous PEGs, it was some
5 serious fiscal crisis that was happening in the city.
6 So, I just want to start on that preface alone, that
7 DYCD is not excluded from reviewing and making sure
8 that the city as a whole is fiscally sound and also,
9 the agencies that are required.

10 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Again, I hear you and I
11 understand. However, we know that that has not been
12 the case. In all city agencies were – some agencies
13 were excluded, one being NYPD because you know they
14 go over their overtime all the time and have no
15 consequences and so, we find money in those agencies
16 so we need to find money for our young people.

17 So, that's always going to be my stance. And so,
18 I understand there are places we can't tighten up but
19 I'm never going to have it be acceptable for it to be
20 for young people. So, I get it. We do have to make
21 reductions and we got to tighten our belts and we
22 have to live in reality but we also have to live in a
23 reality that we can't always take the hit in agencies
24 that are serving young people because these are the
25 agencies that typically have to take the hits and get

1
2 the deeper cuts. We were already struggling before
3 and we can't continue to struggle with our young
4 people. So, I understand we are in tough times but
5 I'm still going to push because a budget is our moral
6 priority and it always sets the tone for what we deem
7 important and to me, our young people should be our
8 main priority. So, I get it. We have tough times
9 but I'm going to push back each and every time,
10 especially when other agencies aren't taking the
11 cuts.

12 KEITH HOWARD: And we appreciate it and that's
13 why I started off in my opening statement, saying
14 that you've been a real champion in being able to
15 advocate for young people and youth and families. I
16 mean, that's a given. You and I have had offline
17 conversations. We've had on the record
18 conversations. Your effort to SYEP is on the record.

19 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Absolutely.

20 KEITH HOWARD: So, you'll get no argument here.

21 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Absolutely, we're on the
22 same page, so I'm always going to push and so, like I
23 said, the Young Men's Initiative Program, we had a
24 hearing and they were part of our portfolio. It's a
25 small portfolio. They've been doing really good work

1
2 and for a small program to get a cut, that's deeper
3 than some of the bigger programs and so, that's why
4 that, something that is a concern for me, especially
5 when we have continuously seen an increase,
6 especially men and Black men, and Latino men going
7 into the juvenile justice system. So, for me, we
8 have to make sure we're investing where it makes
9 sense.

10 So, I'm just going to go on to some more
11 questions. The Preliminary Plan includes a reduction
12 of \$10.3 million in Fiscal 2024 for the Preventative
13 Employment Initiative, Civilian Climate Corps
14 program. The programs objective is to provide jobs
15 to up to 3,000 individuals. How will this reduction
16 reduce this goal? Why are those funds being
17 eliminated?

18 NEVITA BAILEY: You mentioned a number of
19 savings, so can you -

20 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Oh, I'm sorry. The
21 Preliminary Plan includes a reduction of \$10.3
22 million in Fiscal 2024 for the preventative
23 employment initiative Civilian Climate Corps program.
24 The program objective is to provide up to 3,000 jobs
25 to individuals. How does this reduction reduce this

1 goal and will those funds uhm, and are those funds
2 being eliminated?
3

4 NAVITA BAILEY: So, I'm not familiar with the PE
5 Precision Employment. So, you mentioned a number of
6 other initiatives though.

7 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Hmm, hmm.

8 NAVITA BAILEY: I just want to just uhm, make
9 sure that we clarify that and so, the program that's
10 being reduced is a Precision Employment Initiative
11 and that's accruals as a result of changes to the
12 program design.

13 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: What were those program
14 design changes?

15 NAVITA BAILEY: I'm going to defer that to our
16 Associate Commissioner Daphne Montanez, where she can
17 expand more on what the Precision Employment
18 Initiative is doing in Fiscal Year 2024.

19 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And while you're coming up
20 I guess also just what boroughs are these programs
21 offered in and how is the agency publicizing these
22 programs?

23 DAPHNE MONTANEZ: Thank you Chair. So, the
24 Precision Employment Program was designed to target
25 communities most effected by gun violence by

1 providing job training including certifications and
2 uhm construction, HVAC, low voltage, electrical
3 skills as well as work readiness and wrap around
4 services.
5

6 Uhm, DYCD, the program actually transitioned to
7 DYCD at the start of the fiscal year and since that
8 time, we have been evaluating the program, the
9 program model and the trainings as we look to the
10 future of the program.

11 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So, how are these
12 reductions – is it going to change the goal of
13 helping 3,000 individuals and were these funds just
14 like totally eliminated because I know you're saying
15 you are evaluating the programs, like could you give
16 us some more details about –

17 DAPHNE MONTANEZ: So, we streamlined some of the
18 training offerings provided. So, because of those
19 streamlining of uh –

20 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And could you be more
21 specific about when you say streamline, what does
22 that mean exactly?

23 DAPHNE MONTANEZ: Sure, so we define the program
24 links. We can define the certifications offered.
25 There are more certifications that were offered, and

1
2 so, with the reduction of those training, that
3 reduced the actual overall budget.

4 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So, when you say you
5 streamlined, you kind of like folded into some of the
6 other things you were already doing currently at DYCD
7 because you already were offering some of the stuff?

8 KEITH HOWARD: Well, I just want to also clarify
9 that when the program came over from the Mayor's
10 Office of Criminal Justice -

11 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Hmm, hmm.

12 KEITH HOWARD: One of the reasons why it came
13 over is because it's one of the preventives
14 initiatives to attract and deal with young people who
15 are justice involved.

16 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Hmm, hmm.

17 KEITH HOWARD: The reason why it's over at DYCD
18 is because we provide programming for support. And
19 so, what Daphne is talking about is the basis of
20 being able to provide an infrastructure that the
21 program did not have.

22 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: What boroughs are these
23 programs offered in?

24 DAPHNE MONTANEZ: These programs are situated in
25 Brooklyn and in the Bronx. However, they target

1 communities that are most affected by gun violence
2 citywide.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And I don't feel like this
5 question was answered at all. So, will you still be
6 able to offer the 3,000 jobs that were initially
7 thought of for this program?

8 KEITH HOWARD: So, we are working with OMB to
9 have those conversations on what the program is going
10 to look like as we move forward. We are in full
11 support of having a program that deals with justice
12 involved young people. Those conversations are
13 actively happening with OMB.

14 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So, the 3,000 jobs isn't a
15 target anymore.

16 KEITH HOWARD: So, I think we need to be clear,
17 3,000 slots that can lead to potential employment
18 opportunities. So, we got to be clear on exactly -

19 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay, so are you going to
20 serve the 3,000 people? [INAUDIBLE 00:28:37] right
21 now.

22 KEITH HOWARD: No, I just want to be clear.

23 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I'm being clear too and
24 you're not giving me the answer, so.

1 KEITH HOWARD: Yeah, well, we're still working
2 with OMB to see exactly -

3 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So, no. So, the answer is
4 no, so let's just say no. Like, I don't know why we
5 got to go around and that's okay. Like, it's okay.
6 It's been transferred over. It's a new program.
7 You're figuring it out, so no, you're not going to
8 serve 3,000. It's okay to say no sometimes. Like,
9 it's okay.

10 KEITH HOWARD: And I just want to add that we're
11 still evaluating the program.

12 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Great and so, it's still
13 no. I don't know what we're doing.

14 KEITH HOWARD: We'll leave it there.

15 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I'm not leaving it there.
16 We're leaving it at no, you will not be serving the
17 3,000 people that it intended and you're trying to
18 figure that out. And so, I will make sure we will
19 come back with the question at a later date, so we
20 can figure out if you didn't hit the 3,000, what do
21 we do to get there and it's okay for it to be no.
22 That's it.

23 KEITH HOWARD: And again, the program is still
24 being evaluated.
25

1
2 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Great. It could still be
3 being evaluated but you still ain't getting the
4 3,000, so I don't why we're going down - I don't know
5 why you always do that. Like, it's okay, like say
6 no. During the previous oversight hearing for the
7 Committee on Youth Services Aging Contract for Aging
8 and Contracts. MOCs addressed the delay in
9 contracting process stating that there were a backlog
10 of \$2.- I mean, \$4.2 billion that the nonprofit
11 organizations were unable to access. What is DYCD's
12 current contract backlog?

13 DAPHNE MONTANEZ: Good morning Chair Stevens.

14 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Welcome back.

15 DAPHNE MONTANEZ: DYCD is hard at work. Welcome
16 back. Uhm, DYCD values the nonprofit sector and we
17 recognize that they are doing the work on the ground
18 in communities. And so, we have done a lot of work
19 over the last year to ensure there are no backlogs
20 for our contracting and we should have a very small
21 amount.

22 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Do you have the number?
23 The amount? The number?

24 DAPHNE MONTANEZ: I don't believe at this time
25 there's any backlog for FY24 as far as -

1
2 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: No backlog? Alright, well,
3 oh I love to hear that. So, you should love that.
4 We don't have no backlog. That should be bragging if
5 you don't have a backlog, right?

6 DAPHNE MONTANEZ: Yes.

7 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: You should be saying it
8 with your chest, like we don't have no backlog. We
9 did it. Like, what's happening today with you all?
10 It's okay, celebrate your success.

11 KEITH HOWARD: I'm going to say something and I
12 know you're going to disagree because you disagreed
13 the last year but I also want to pay special
14 attention to the fact that last year, with the 12-
15 week spring, we were able to work with our nonprofit
16 entity and City Hall at OMB to release at least \$4
17 billion. You know to the nonprofit sector. You're
18 going to tell me, as you often have, that that's
19 money that they've already had.

20 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I love it when you all
21 answer my questions for me.

22 KEITH HOWARD: But I can tell you it was a
23 streamlined approach and it was something that was
24 long overdue and it was something that the First
25 Deputy Mayor and also the Mayor had recognized and

1
2 the level of investment that was needed in order to
3 make sure nonprofits got paid on time.

4 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Listen, it's not that I
5 disagree, I just want to be clear. Like, remember
6 you said you want to be clear, I want to be clear
7 that we can't always celebrate when we are giving
8 people money, because if I owe you \$100, you want
9 your money and you're not going to say like, okay
10 it's a backlog. You're like, no, I want my money.
11 So, the nonprofits want their money. That's it.
12 That's all I want. That's all I'm saying. Uhm, but
13 like I said, if you guys are saying that there's no
14 backlog, I think that you should come in and make
15 sure that's a celebration because that's an
16 achievement, right?

17 So, since she says no backlog, I'm not going to
18 spend too much time on that then. So, we're going to
19 go into some programs. Uhm, can you provide the
20 Committee with total enrollment in Fiscal 2023 and
21 current enrollment in Fiscal 2024 for Compass, Sonic,
22 Beacon, there's a lot, so you might want to write it
23 down, it's pretty much all the programs. Compass,
24 Sonic, Beacon, Cornerstones, Learn and Earn, Train
25 and Earn, Adult Literacy and give a breakdown by

1
2 borough. It's a lot, I know. We could take it one
3 by one.

4 NEVITA BAILEY: Yeah, so you want to know them by
5 program area.

6 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yup.

7 NEVITA BAILEY: Okay, so I can give you by
8 program area, I cannot give it to you by borough.

9 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So, uhm, after this if you
10 guys could send that over, that would be very
11 helpful.

12 NEVITA BAILEY: Okay and so, this is year to date
13 and again things always point and time, so it may
14 change influx and so, I'm going to start with Compass
15 in FY25 our current enrollment is around \$94,000,
16 \$94,069. For Beacon, it's \$110,400.

17 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: You said Beacon \$110?

18 NEVITA BAILEY: Yes. For the Cornerstone
19 program, \$19,269.

20 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: You said \$19?

21 NEVITA BAILEY: Yes. RHY, I'm sorry, I'm going
22 to clarify my numbers again. I gave you 525, I'm
23 going to give you 524. Apologies, so for Compass it
24 is 96,714. For Beacon it is 116,178. For
25

1
2 Cornerstone it is 19,269, RHY 813. Is there any
3 other program that you were asking?

4 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Train and Earn.

5 NEVITA BAILEY: Train and Earn -

6 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And Learn and Earn, Adult
7 Literacy?

8 NEVITA BAILEY: Okay, Train and Earn is 1372,
9 Learn and Earn 1056, Adult Literacy 16,442.

10 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay, thank you and you can
11 get back with the borough breakdown at a later date
12 please. What is the current budget for each of those
13 programs at baseline? That is in its baseline?

14 NEVITA BAILEY: So, I'm going to reference FY25's
15 budget.

16 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Hmm, hmm.

17 NEVITA BAILEY: Okay, and so for Compass it is
18 385, Beacon 61.3, Cornerstone 59.2, RHY 50.7, Train
19 and Earn 17.4, Learn and Earn 3.5 and I believe the
20 remaining one that you asked about was adult
21 literacy, which is 13.4.

22 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Is the agency eliminating
23 the Conference Explorer's Program? And if so, why
24 especially since there has been basically

1 participation? There has been significant
2 participation in those programs.
3

4 NEVITA BAILEY: So, DYCD again valued our core
5 programming and we strongly believe that Compass does
6 phenomenal work in communities and so, we are not
7 minimizing that but we wanted to ensure that key
8 comprehensive services will continue and so, we are
9 in ongoing conversations with OMB against the
10 preliminary budget, and so, at this time, the Compass
11 Program is not funded in that budget.

12 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Hmm. I have real issues
13 with that. I mean, and listen I get it. We have
14 cards that are dealt but I think especially when we
15 are looking at the budget, we also have to be looking
16 at the correlation of what's also happening in the
17 city right. I have the fortune of sitting on the
18 Public Safety Committee and they talked about how
19 there's such an increase in crime with youths and
20 specifically this age. And so, what I'm seeing that
21 a program that at the same time, that are targeting
22 that same age group and then crime is rising for that
23 age group and then even with Summer Rising, we're
24 eliminating Friday's and we already know that SYEP,
25 that they're only going to pay \$750. It's like, do

1 we not see the correlation? And so, how are we not
2 investing in a group of young people who at the same
3 time are sitting – are the numbers in our juvenile
4 justice systems are like rising. So, I'm really
5 concerned about that and I understand it is tough
6 times and we have to make sacrifices but I think when
7 we're looking like holistically how does this work?
8 And this is why I'm happy that ACS is now under my
9 preview because I get to see the full circle of like,
10 oh wait a minute, if we are over here with these
11 programs and this is not helping them, like they're
12 going to end up here. And so, my job now is to make
13 sure that we are stopping that connection and if we
14 are eliminating programs especially for our middle
15 school kids, then that is going to continue and one
16 of the reasons why we champion middle school
17 programs, because for years there was no programs for
18 them. And now, I'm seeing it being rolled back real
19 slow and I'm uncomfortable. And I'm not saying this
20 is all your all fault but what I'm saying is, we got
21 to figure it out and this is going to be something
22 that I'm going to keep yelling about because I'm not
23 okay with this.

1
2 KEITH HOWARD: Well, let's put a pen in that for
3 a minute right because if our - if DYCD's budget is
4 77.7 percent in city taxi levy money, 77.7 percent,
5 and we have to go through service cuts, just like any
6 other city agency.

7 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Stop saying like any other
8 city agency.

9 KEITH HOWARD: Well, no, no, no.

10 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: All city agencies aren't -

11 KEITH HOWARD: Let's be clear.

12 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Uhm, hmm.

13 KEITH HOWARD: Those are painful decisions that
14 have to meet based upon the fiscal condition of the
15 city. So, if we have to go through service cuts,
16 it's going to affect programming period.

17 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Great, but if we're not
18 investing in the front, our young people are going to
19 invest in them back in and if we prevent them from
20 going to the juvenile justice system, it actually
21 saves the city money. So, let's - if you want to
22 talk about savings, the programs are actually going
23 to save the city money. So, if we want to think
24 about long term in savings, that's where we need to
25 start. And so, yes, do we need tidy up? Do we need

1
2 to go into reserves and figure it out? But I'm
3 telling you now, if we're not investing in our young
4 people, we're going to spend so much more money on
5 them while there in the juvenile justice system and
6 once they're there, they're going to end up in
7 Rikers. Like, it's a continuous cycle, so we cannot
8 say that like oh, we're in a fiscal crisis. Yes, but
9 we're going to be in a worse crisis in ten years.
10 So, I hear you and we're on the same page but I'm
11 talking about what it looks like of like making sure
12 that we're not spending way more money on the justice
13 system.

14 KEITH HOWARD: And you're preaching to the
15 converted.

16 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Great.

17 KEITH HOWARD: Okay, but I do want to add this,
18 that and I don't agree with what the Mayor has
19 actually said. Let's talk about what programs to
20 cut. I'll be glad to sit down with you, go through
21 the list of programs, and say okay, tell me exactly
22 where there should be cuts because any cut is going
23 to be -

24 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Oh, I could give you some -
25 you know I could give you some cuts, so don't tell me

1
2 to sit down with you. You know I will sit down with
3 you because there's some programs we could cut and we
4 could start, you want to start there? Because I
5 could start the programs that we could cut.

6 KEITH HOWARD: So, let's do it.

7 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: We could start because you
8 know Saturday Night Lights should be on the chopping
9 block, so don't go there. So, we could start with
10 that. We could also start with some other programs.
11 We could also start with Summer Rising and how the
12 \$80 million is going to DOE. We could actually put
13 into providers and have a much more robust summer
14 camp. So, you know I could go down the list.

15 KEITH HOWARD: Saturday Night Lights is a safety

16 -

17 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Again, if you actually
18 rolled it into the programs that you guys are already
19 doing it would actually save the city more money.
20 So, we could do this but like you know I know these
21 programs.

22 KEITH HOWARD: You do know the programs.

23 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And so, I can tell you
24 there is places we can cut and we could find savings
25 instead of eliminating programs that is going to

1
2 continuously put our kids in juvenile justice
3 systems. So, I want to be clear, we're on the same
4 page around like we don't want kids to end up there
5 but I don't think we're on the same page of how to
6 get there. And so there is places we can't find
7 savings. There are things that we can look at to
8 make sure that we can maintain programs at this time
9 and figure it out but we're not. We are literally
10 gutting a program that I believe that is going to -
11 if one kid ends up in jail or ends up shot somewhere
12 or ends up in these things, it's one too many. So,
13 that's where I'm at and so, I get it. There are
14 places we can save but eliminating programs at this
15 time when the census are rising, it's not okay with
16 me. And so, we're on the same page, I just don't
17 believe that this should be cut. That's all I'm
18 saying.

19 KEITH HOWARD: I hear you.

20 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: What type of evaluation
21 takes place when determining whether to eliminating a
22 program other than savings?

23 KEITH HOWARD: I'm sorry, could you repeat the
24 question?

25

2 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: What type of evaluation
3 takes place when determining whether a program should
4 be eliminated?

5 KEITH HOWARD: So, I thought we just had this
6 little-

7 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: No, you didn't. No, you
8 said it was for savings. So, what other, other than
9 savings, how did you determine that a program should
10 be eliminating? What else other than like, because
11 it's from my knowledge is these programs are actually
12 not - actually well attended. They didn't have any
13 other things. So, other than savings, why was this
14 program eliminated or any program? Because I don't
15 just want to talk about this, I want to talk about
16 how do we prevent this? So, what process is in place
17 that you put in to ensure that if you eliminate a
18 program, what are you looking at other than savings?

19 KEITH HOWARD: We look at the impact -

20 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And how do you do that?

21 KEITH HOWARD: In our programs area to determine
22 whether or not we can still provide the critical
23 services.

24 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: But how do you look at
25 impact? What does that mean? Give me like a

1
2 breakdown of like if you're saying you're looking at
3 impact, what is the impact? What does that look
4 like? I need more details because impact, that could
5 mean a lot of different things.

6 KEITH HOWARD: It can but it still doesn't answer
7 the question. The question is, based upon the fact
8 that we are heavy impacts levy money, how do we
9 decide based upon critical data that we have?

10 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So, what's the data?

11 KEITH HOWARD: And looking at critical impacts on
12 critical services and making sure that we provide -

13 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Commissioner, I'm asking a
14 specific question. What is the impact your looking
15 at? Other than savings because I said that. Other
16 than savings, what else did you take into
17 consideration? That is what I'm asking. So, yes,
18 you know I know that you had to have tough times.
19 Other than impact, how did you determine that this
20 program should be eliminated?

21 NEVITA BAILEY: So, Chair Stevens, we look at who
22 the persons are being served. We look up program
23 performance. We look at utilization in the area. We
24 look at key services. There are key core services
25 that we provide. Again, we're trying to alleviate

1
2 poverty and so, we want to make sure there are key
3 market programs after school, workforce programs,
4 SYEP, our Cornerstone programs, our programs at
5 NYCHA, ONS programs. Those are key programs in our
6 agency and we want to make sure that we keep them
7 whole as possible, especially if they have
8 comprehensive services. We look at how programs are
9 performing again like I mentioned. A lot of our
10 program and just go out and do site visits and then
11 we ensure, see how the person is performing. If
12 they're underperforming, maybe that program can be up
13 for a PEG if it comes up and again, utilization. So,
14 there's a whole host of things. Again, we don't want
15 to reduce programs. It is not our goal. It is not
16 our intent but again, if they're a tough fiscal
17 climate and things are hard for us to do, we kind of
18 figure out where can we make the best decision.

19 But ultimately, it is never our goal to ever
20 reduce services. We want to keep programs as
21 possible and again, most of our plan we're trying to
22 either maximize revenue or maximize accruals in our
23 programs because it's our goal to not cut slots or
24 services. Because again, we recognize the importance
25 of the work that these nonprofits do and so, again

1
2 we're just trying to figure out how do we maximize
3 funding where it's been given.

4 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Is there any other programs
5 that have areas that have underspending in any of the
6 other programs?

7 NEVITA BAILEY: Well, over the last couple years,
8 we've done a number of accrual PEGs and so we are
9 continuing to do that and so, as reflected in the PEG
10 there is no accrual PEGs in some of our other areas
11 and they redid that this year.

12 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I'm going to go onto SONYC,
13 what are the current number of seats in the SONYC
14 program and how many seats are being reduced?

15 NEVITA BAILEY: The SONYC program, I do not have
16 that in front of me as far as the number of slots for
17 this upcoming summer but I know that we reduced a
18 little over -

19 KEITH HOWARD: We can give you that information
20 offline.

21 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay. Will there be a
22 participant rate increase for SONYC and Compass
23 programs? What is the current rate and what could be
24 the potential new rate?

1
2 NEVITA BAILEY: Uhm, are you talking about the
3 rate of participation for -

4 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah.

5 NEVITA BAILEY: Okay, so are you referring to the
6 school year program or the summer program?

7 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: We can break it down
8 between the both of you. I'm sorry, I should have
9 specified.

10 NEVITA BAILEY: So, I believe for the school year
11 program, the middle school program and the target of
12 75 percent and rate of participation and for
13 elementary programs, it's 80 percent. There is not a
14 specific target for a rate of participation for
15 summer programming.

16 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: What is the attendance for
17 the Beacon and Cornerstone programs, the rate of
18 participation?

19 NEVITA BAILEY: I don't have that information
20 right in front of me but I can give you that after
21 the hearing.

22 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay, do you feel that
23 there's adequate space for Beacon programs and if
24 not, what changes are being made to implement more
25 space?

1
2 NEVITA BAILEY: Well, our Beacon programs are
3 located in school buildings and so, uhm, we believe
4 there's enough space for Beacon programs but if
5 there's any issues at a particular site, we will work
6 them and work with DOE to see how we can best make
7 sure that we can serve participants.

8 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: The Preliminary Budget
9 includes an additional \$4 million for Cornerstone, a
10 meal rate increase. Why uhm, could you talk a little
11 bit more about what those additional funds would be
12 used for and like, how did this come about? Because
13 I know there's been a lot of talk about meals on the
14 DOE side and so, I want to have a moment to kind of
15 talk about it on our side.

16 NEVITA BAILEY: \$4 million is supplemental
17 funding to cover the cost of the increased rate for
18 the reimbursement for meals. And so, we had other
19 funding that came in that's not city tax levy, and
20 so, the administration and the commitment to ensuring
21 that all participants are fed, provided additional
22 funding to make sure that we are whole on that
23 budget, on that contract.

24 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: How many young people are
25 being served through this program currently?

1
2 NEVITA BAILEY: I don't have that information in
3 front of me but I can get that for you.

4 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So, the funding increase
5 for Fiscal '24 will the meal rate increase require
6 funding in the overlapping years because it was only
7 for Fiscal 2024. So, what are we going to do moving
8 forward?

9 NEVITA BAILEY: I think this is the first year of
10 the contract, and so we are looking at utilization
11 and so we just wanted to make sure that we had enough
12 funding to cover this year but we're in ongoing
13 conversations with OMB to ensure that this is funded
14 in the outyears and we are confident that if a
15 participant needs food and uhm, they are in our
16 program, that they will get the food that they need.

17 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Uhm, I'm going to ask a
18 couple more questions then I'll hand it over to my
19 colleagues. Uhm, Advance and Earn, how many
20 providers are in the Advance Earn Program?

21 NEVITA BAILEY: Uhm, the Advance and Earn
22 program, I don't have it right in front of me as far
23 as the number of providers that we have. I'm going
24 to defer it to our Associate Commissioner Daphne
25 Montanez who can give you that information.

1
2 DAPHNE MONTANEZ: Uh, there are five providers
3 within the Advance and Earn program and we have seven
4 programs.

5 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Seven programs. Uhm, which
6 borough and district has the highest attendance rate
7 for the program?

8 DAPHNE MONTANEZ: I'll have to get those numbers
9 by borough for you.

10 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay. And how many adults
11 are currently in the Advance and Earn program?

12 DAPHNE MONTANEZ: Currently for fiscal year 2024,
13 we are enrolled at 1,077 young people.

14 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you. I'm going to
15 ask a couple more questions and then I'll hand it
16 over. I'm sorry.

17 So, the Preliminary Plan includes Fiscal 2025
18 budget headcount of 13 positions for the Office of
19 Neighborhood Safety. Is the budget headcount
20 significant to meet the needs of the program and what
21 is the current headcount for these programs?

22 KEITH HOWARD: So, with the Office of
23 Neighborhood Safety, we're still transitioning that
24 program over into DYCD. The conversation and the MOU
25 that we were able to sign was in February of last

1
2 year and July is when the programs and the contract
3 also transitioned as well along with the staff. So,
4 we're still in the transition year with the staffing
5 and the programs for the Office of Neighborhood
6 Safety.

7 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So, you're not sure if it's
8 significant? In the last, you haven't been able to
9 say yeah or nay, you need more or your still?

10 KEITH HOWARD: We're still, we're still
11 evaluating and we're in conversations with OMB to
12 make sure that the program has the resources that it
13 needs.

14 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: This program was
15 transferred from MOCs and at adopted last year. Were
16 there any major contract issues with the
17 organizations who had not received funding? What
18 improvements have been made to address the contract
19 problems that the program inquired occurred?

20 NEVITA BAILEY: So, again this is a transitional
21 year and so, DYCD has done a lot of work to ensure
22 that we try to ensure cash flow to these providers.
23 And so, for Fiscal Year 2025, as part of the
24 transition year, we are moving to our CMS portfolios
25 have direct contracts so that they will be able to

1
2 have a much more intentional and direct relationship
3 with DYCD and that way we can provide much more
4 support for fiscal management.

5 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Have any providers like
6 experienced any delays in receiving funding? Because
7 I know that was like a huge issue when it was on the
8 other side and I know that was one of the many
9 reasons why we transferred over. So, can you talk a
10 little bit about what the transition would look like
11 and have we seen less delays?

12 KEITH HOWARD: So, what we can honestly tell you
13 about the transition is that most of the
14 organizations in CMS require technical assistance and
15 capacity building to be able to build out their –

16 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And can you talk about the
17 technical assistance that you guys are actually
18 providing to those programs?

19 KEITH HOWARD: Well, basically improvement in
20 their governance policies. Uhm, we're talking about
21 improvement in their front office, processing. We're
22 talking about improvement in being able to submit
23 invoices in a timely way in PASSport. Those are some
24 of the system building that is required as we made an
25 assessment of the ONS and we still again,

1
2 transitioning and helping those organizations which
3 are vital to public safety.

4 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I know but I know you guys
5 want so much more, so talk about it. Like, I know
6 the work that you're all doing, so talk about the
7 stuff that you guys have been doing with them to like
8 help build out their capacity.

9 NEVITA BAILEY: So, Chair Stevens, DYCD is you
10 know we're a contracting agency. A lot of work with
11 program management and so DYCD has done a lot more
12 intentional work regarding again mentioned DA,
13 organizational development, work around ensuring that
14 the fiscal team is much more robust. I think there's
15 a lot more work that's been going, looking at program
16 design and program model to see what's effective,
17 what is not and again, we're in a transitional year.
18 And so, to just kind of do an assessment of the
19 program and figure out what is the best approach to
20 moving forward to make sure that we're meeting the
21 goals of the program area.

22 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: No, I agree and I know you
23 all have been doing that and I'm trying - I'm giving
24 you all a moment to brag about the stuff you all have
25 been doing.

1 KEITH HOWARD: Well, it's not bragging.

2 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: No, it is bragging and
3 again, brag about the stuff you've been doing. Like,
4 you've been doing some stuff and I know what you guys
5 have been doing.
6

7 NEVITA BAILEY: So, I'm going to allow Associate
8 Commissioner Darryl Rattray to -

9 KEITH HOWARD: But before Darryl, before Darryl
10 gets on.

11 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay. I'm like giving you
12 all an alley-oop.

13 KEITH HOWARD: So, I appreciate the alley-oop.
14 We're going to make sure we slam dunk it once you
15 give us the alley-oop but also, we want to also
16 understand that in terms of the infrastructure for
17 us, we were able to right size it by giving these
18 organizations advances. And these advances help them
19 to be able to continue programming in terms of their
20 continuity of service. And that was one of the major
21 things that these organizations needed. They needed
22 advancement. They needed advancement. They needed
23 technical assistance and they needed help in
24 invoicing and budgeting. That was very key.

1
2 DARRYL RATTRAY: Good morning Chair Stevens. So,
3 in addition to what the Commissioner and following
4 his vision, we made sure that as we entered FY24,
5 that every CMS provider had advances on their
6 contract. So, they had cash flow to go into the
7 summer, which is really important in their planning
8 and we also did their Labor Day Weekend, which was
9 important. So, again having cash flow during the hot
10 months of the summer where unfortunately at times
11 historically, uhm, crime could be up, we made sure
12 that one Labor Day weekend was one of the safest in
13 New York City's history and that our CMS providers
14 were supported. In addition to that, we are also
15 connecting them to our ecosystem.

16 So, part of the goal was, how do we take this
17 humans provider who's used to working within a
18 catchment but may not have access to all of the other
19 opportunities and resources within that catchment,
20 whether it be other nonprofits, community centers,
21 what are they connecting these young adults that
22 they're coming into engagement with. What are they
23 connecting them to? What are they connecting their
24 families to? We've been running a campaign ensuring
25 that we are having those meet and greets on the

1 ground. Chair Stevens I know you've been to some.
2 Where we are connecting them to those resources and
3 opportunities, whether it be through colocation.
4 Hey, here's now the opportunity for you to utilize
5 some of that space. Bring your services into that
6 community center. Provide an activity within a
7 center that also engages young adults from that
8 eighter NYCHA development or neighborhood.
9

10 So, we've been intentional about making those
11 connections and again, to what the Commissioner is
12 saying and what Deputy Commissioner, I want to say
13 Deputy Commissioner Nevita. I just upgraded you I
14 think.

15 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Alright, congratulations.
16 I hope she get a pay increase too.

17 DARRYL RATTRAY: And so what Nevita is saying, we
18 been also working with them on a capacity building,
19 their internal supports, their supports for
20 organizations and more importantly for me, we're
21 bringing them on to direct contracts with DYCD, so we
22 could be more intentional about supporting them.

23 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, and I mean, I know
24 that it's been a great effort around like really
25 trying to get the collaboration to go on around the

1
2 different programs in the DYCD portfolio, which makes
3 sense. Like, I was at them and they had homeless
4 run-away youth programs there and all the things and
5 so, those things to me are really important but even
6 thinking about like within DYCD, can you talk about;
7 and now especially because I'm also the Chair, what
8 the agency collaboration looks like as well and how
9 can we talk about that because I know one of the
10 things that I've been really pushing for is talking
11 about like, you know ACS has a lot of programs that
12 they're working on and you know they refer to you
13 guys and I know you guys refer to them, and so, could
14 you talk about what agency collaboration looks like
15 as well because I think that especially with the CMS
16 providers, it is important for them to be in like
17 those spaces and we're talking about the juvenile
18 justice system and even when they're coming home,
19 could we talk about what that full circle looks like
20 as well and how we can use the CMS providers to help
21 with some of that work and especially around
22 recidivism.

23 KEITH HOWARD: No, so let me start and Darryl,
24 you can definitely jump in. One of the things that
25 the Mayor was very, very intentional about was the

1 fact that city agencies, Commissioners, and line
2 staff and senior staff, we're collaborating together
3 with other city agents to make sure we share
4 resources. We have a very good relationship with ACS
5 being able to meet with them on a regular basis along
6 with public schools. Because I think with the CMS,
7 we have to be able to be invested in in public
8 schools, so, we are literally in public schools
9 working with the Chancellor and his team. We have
10 direct communication and relationship with Department
11 of Social Services to be able to provide those
12 benefits and those supports, victim services as well.

14 So, and may I add, also with the Office of
15 Emergency Management as well, looking at exactly
16 responses and things of that nature. We also have a
17 good relationship with NYCHA in terms of CMS because
18 when we look at the Mayor's Action Plan, we have to
19 look at the 30 precincts of NYCHA areas, excuse me.

20 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: The MOCs yeah, hmm, hmm.

21 KEITH HOWARD: Yes, that has the highest level of
22 violence. So, this is a multiagency approach to the
23 crisis management system and all of the levels of
24 investments that we have there.

2 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Oh, uhm, how many staff
3 currently work on contract evaluations for the ONS
4 programs?

5 KEITH HOWARD: 22.

6 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Just 2? Just you?

7 KEITH HOWARD: No, I was talking to myself.

8 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Oh, I thought you said just
9 you.

10 KEITH HOWARD: So, we currently have 18 staff
11 working in the ONS program.

12 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: 18? Hmm, do you think
13 that's significant to evaluate the significant
14 portfolio that just was like transferred over?

15 KEITH HOWARD: I think we're still going through
16 a transition a year and we're evaluating those
17 programs as we speak, in addition to having those
18 conversations with OMB.

19 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: OMB, hmm, I was not saying
20 it in a good way because you know how - Uhm, I'm
21 going to pause here. You all know I got more
22 questions but I like to leave some space for my
23 colleagues but I would like to also acknowledge
24 Council Member Williams and Council Member Brewer
25 also joined us and of course Council Member Williams

1
2 is the first one to have questions, so oh, she didn't
3 oh yeah you were there. I'm sorry. Hey girl, how
4 you doing? Uhm, but I'm going to turn it over to
5 Chair Joseph followed by Chair Lee. Oh Council
6 Member, I'm the Chair today, I'm sorry.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: We are the Co-Chair's
8 today.

9 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: You are not the Co-Chair.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: But we love our kids
11 because I am the Education Chair so our work is
12 intertwined, so I love that and that's why we fight
13 so hard for young people. Good morning.

14 KEITH HOWARD: Good morning. I have a few
15 questions around -

16 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Oh, it was Williams.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Oh, it was Council Member
18 Williams.

19 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yes, my bad, go ahead. She
20 skipped you. She is three on the list. You're not
21 here. Council Member Lee, it's you. Everybody is so
22 polite here today. Oh, because it's a panel full of
23 women.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: No, I'll go after you. No,
25 Chair Joseph, go. I'll go after you.

COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: I like the way they fight.

You see how we get along the sisters over here. Take some notes you all. Uhm, I wanted to talk around the DYCD literacy RFP included \$11.9 for adult literacy education, \$3.6 for adult basic education, high school equivalency and \$8.3 for basic education and Native Language, English as a new language. However, the Mayor's preliminary budget for FY25 include \$21.7 million for DYCD Adult Literacy. This is a difference of nearly \$10 million. What are those additional funds going towards?

NEVITA BAILEY: Good morning.

COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Good morning.

NEVITA BAILEY: Hi, how are you? So, essentially this is a technical adjustment. The funds are not in the appropriate area in the budget and so, we will making the judgement to move it but those funds are accounted for and they support our Advance and Earn program and YMI.

COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Quick question, what was the rational in determining the change in the RFP though?

NEVITA BAILEY: Can you elaborate what you're referencing when you say change?

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: The change the RFP. How
3 many students will this new RFP would serve.

4 NEVITA BAILEY: So, we do not anticipate any loss
5 in slots with the new RFP that's being released.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Okay, the RFP provides
7 per student reimbursement rate?

8 NEVITA BAILEY: Correct, borough participant
9 rate.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Okay, about 1,300 or is
11 it much? Okay, much lower than the 27 requested by
12 the Council in the New York City Coalition for Adult
13 Literacy. Do you feel per student rate,
14 reimbursement rate is sufficient?

15 NEVITA BAILEY: We believe sufficient based on
16 the funding that we have in our budget yes.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: I knew that was coming.
18 Was there any consideration made for the 2,700 rate?

19 NEVITA BAILEY: I think we recognize the
20 challenges. We looked at the services that were
21 offered and the cost and we believe that the 1,300 is
22 adequate to support what we are reflecting in the
23 RFP.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: This agency likes to save
25 money. So, by limiting the Adult Literacy Program to

1
2 only 41 neighborhoods though, the RFP limits which
3 program can applies only program located within the
4 41 designated NTA will be eligible. I know that was
5 one of the things we got from the providers that the
6 RFP was located in certain areas that normally are
7 not.

8 KEITH HOWARD: So, Council Member, help me
9 understand this.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Help you understand?
11 You're here to tell me.

12 KEITH HOWARD: Please, help me understand because
13 I'm still trying to wrap my head around the process
14 that we are all familiar with, right?

15 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Right.

16 KEITH HOWARD: So, we know that there's a concept
17 paper that gets issued. We know that in that concept
18 paper there's an exchange with all of the
19 stakeholders based upon exactly what we feel and what
20 the stakeholders feel should be a robust program.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Hmm, hmm.

22 KEITH HOWARD: Based upon the concept paper
23 that's where we have that equal exchange. So, we
24 also are aware that DYCD is an antipoverty agency and
25

1 that we're focusing on participants who in
2 neighborhoods who are the highest level of poverty.

3
4 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Right.

5 KEITH HOWARD: So, it's interesting to me that
6 when the concept paper came out, we did have
7 engagement from our stakeholders and we did have
8 engagement from certain members of the Council, but
9 the way that the RFP has landed deals specifically
10 with our investment in order to address inequities.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Got it.

12 KEITH HOWARD: So, I'm trying to understand you
13 know uhm, why is it that there are issues with
14 organizations or advocates saying that they have been
15 excluded? No one is excluded from the RFP. Everyone
16 can apply to the RFP.

17 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Well, I'm happy you're
18 saying that on record, so maybe they did not know or
19 they missed it, so that's why we're asking this
20 question because we did get a lot of calls as to why
21 certain groups felt excluded. So, now you're
22 clarifying it and that's what we're doing. I love
23 that. Well, everybody could apply but I think some
24 of the issue is around not just being able to apply
25 but not being considered because they're not in the

1
2 right catchment areas. And so, there is some
3 confusion around that, so if you can clear that piece
4 up because I think that's where some of the confusion
5 around adult literacy is that yes, everyone is open
6 to apply but providers feel like they will have less
7 of a chance if they're not in one of the NFTs so if
8 you can clarify what that is then it's because that's
9 where a lot of the providers are having push back.

10 KEITH HOWARD: Thank you.

11 NEVITA BAILEY: Dana Cantelmi, Agency Chief
12 Contracting Officer will respond to that question.

13 DANA CANTELMI: Good morning Chair. So, you're
14 right, everyone can apply to the RFP but as the
15 Commissioner said, our priorities ensure investment
16 are going to the most needed neighborhoods. So, at
17 this time, we can't predict who is going to apply to
18 the competition. How the scores are going to happen,
19 right? But they can apply and you know depending on
20 how the awards come and their scores, DYCD will make
21 the awards on the best interest of the city, ensuring
22 that we are taking those 41 neighborhoods into
23 consideration.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Is there a list of those
25 41 neighborhoods?

1 DANA CANTELMI: It's in the RFP, yes.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Okay, I'll look it over.

3 KEITH HOWARD: We can give it to you.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: I know you would, thank
5 you. Thank you Chair.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Uhm, hi everyone. This
7 is not a part of my questions but an issue that I
8 always have with RFP's and then working in city
9 agencies is you know we all know like when you craft
10 an RFP, you can intentionally craft an RFP to ensure
11 that there are opportunities across the spectrum or
12 you can curtail an RFP that only allows either for
13 certain providers to actually be awarded the
14 contract. And so, you know it's always interesting
15 to me and I know you guys put out these concept
16 papers across different agencies, but to me it's
17 always focused on whatever the intention is within
18 the agency that isn't always reflective of community
19 need and equity amongst the different providers.

20 So, I don't know if you have any further
21 information on how I guess moving forward in the
22 future, how you could curtail the criteria and the
23 scoring of these RFP's to increase opportunities
24 across the spectrum for providers because that's the
25

1
2 problem. Because it's a little disingenuous to say
3 like, oh, everybody can apply. Yeah, of course, we
4 know it's a public RFP but if you don't meet the
5 criteria to actually even be in the running for it,
6 why would you waste your time to apply for said RFP?
7 And there's been a ton of RFPs not just with DYCD but
8 other agencies that disproportionately affect certain
9 nonprofit organizations and if you look across the
10 board, the nonprofits that are actually being
11 contracted these awards, kind of fit the same mode.
12 And so, you know I just wanted to know within, you
13 know how you guys craft the criteria of the RFPs?
14 Are there any considerations around equity and
15 opportunity across multiple providers and not just
16 again curtailing the RFP to fit you know what your
17 intention is? Like RFPs can be bias and I think we
18 don't talk about that because we hide behind the RFP
19 because it seems like a democratic process but the
20 RFP itself can be bias. So, just wondering if you
21 have any feedback on that?

22 KEITH HOWARD: Let me see how I can explain this
23 to you because it's very, very important that I put
24 forth this clear message that we are guided by
25 procurement rules and we are guided by a robust

1 system of engagement based upon community and
2 community needs. Some of the RFPs that we're talking
3 about haven't been procured in 9, 10, 12 years. They
4 are old program models that we're looking to be able
5 to right size. This is why it's critical that we
6 have an engagement with all the stakeholders, both
7 small, large, mis-sized organizations. We have
8 engagement with the Council. We have engagement with
9 stakeholders in the community through our concept
10 papers and those engagements and those conversations
11 actually wind-up crafting what the RFP looks like and
12 what communities are served. We're also doing a
13 very, very robust job in bringing those small
14 organizations, those BIPOCs organizations into a
15 competitive situation where we're providing capacity
16 building and we're meeting with them in real ways to
17 make sure that they are strengthened enough to be
18 competitive in this space.

19
20 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay, I feel that and
21 you know I've worked with very stringent procurement
22 processes for a by state agency and still, I know and
23 working with procurement offices that you still can
24 curtail RFPs that do follow procurement procedures to
25 maximize opportunities across the spectrum.

1 So, I hear you. I just think often times you
2 know the agency of whomever is you know thinking that
3 they have the ideal opinion about what it should be.
4 You check those boxes but after you check those
5 boxes, the RFP still sometimes reflects uhm, a
6 dynamic that isn't necessarily equitable for agencies
7 or organizations across the spectrum but I'll move
8 on.

9
10 So, that's ONS. So, the budget cut close to
11 about \$90 million, uhm can you provide more details
12 on what exactly will be impacted? I think there is
13 some discrepancies around what specific services will
14 be impacted from the budget cut.

15 NEVITA BAILEY: So, hi Council Member Williams.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Hi.

17 NEVITA BAILEY: Can you elaborate on what you're
18 referencing regarding the \$90 million reduction?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: I think there, I just
20 saw it.

21 NEVITA BAILEY: Because to our knowledge -

22 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: It's not? Okay.

23 NEVITA BAILEY: Yeah, so there was a reduction to
24 the Precision Employment Initiative that was
25 referenced and that was a one-year reduction for this

1
2 current fiscal year, and we have not taken these
3 other substantial reductions to the program. I think
4 that – I just want to be clear about what you’re
5 referencing, the \$90 million that you’re referencing.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Right, so the FY24
7 Adopted Budget for ONS was I guess 206, roughly \$216
8 million. The prelim plan has it at roughly \$194
9 million. Uhm, FY25 is \$125 million, so it’s a
10 difference of about \$90 million for ONS specifically.

11 NEVITA BAILEY: So, what I can do is I can
12 provide a walkthrough for you after the hearing.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Yeah, that would be
14 good because \$90 million feels like a lot of money to
15 be cut from a particular program and so, just wanted
16 to have more details around what will be impacted by
17 way of the \$90 million.

18 NEVITA BAILEY: So, we are committed to not doing
19 any reduction to this portfolio. Again, DYCD
20 understands the importance of this portfolio and the
21 work that they do in this community and so, we’re in
22 ongoing conversations with OMB to ensure that funding
23 continues next year but I’m not familiar with the \$90
24 million reduction so we can follow with you offline.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay, still on ONS,
3 what is your relationship with the czar that was
4 appointed two years ago. There was like a czar of
5 gun violence that the Mayor announced, so just wanted
6 to understand how you're working with the czar.

7 KEITH HOWARD: So, we have a very good
8 relationship with who is the AT Mitchell who is the
9 czar for the Gun Violence Taskforce. We meet on a
10 regular basis. I have weekly meetings with AT
11 Mitchell.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: So, what do you guys
13 discuss?

14 KEITH HOWARD: We discuss programming. We
15 discussed investment in the CMS. We discussed
16 training for CMS. We discussed a lot of technical
17 assistance that's needed to grow out CMS. So, it can
18 be in a range of topics. We also meet with a core
19 group of some of the CMS providers every three weeks
20 on a Saturday to make sure that we are hearing from
21 them as well on how do we grow? How do we provide
22 resources? How we continue services as well.

23 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Uhm, Council Member, we'll
24 do second round if that's okay?

25 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Yeah, alright thanks.

2 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I'll have you come back.

3 Could we uh Council Member Lee and then followed by
4 Council Member Brewer and then Menin.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Hi good morning everyone.

6 I'm over here. Just wanted to ask a couple questions
7 also about the Adult Literacy RFP because I used to
8 run DYCD funded you know adult literacy programs at
9 my former nonprofit for many, many years and this is
10 going back to like Mike Owh days who then moved on to
11 become Director of MOCs and all of that, so very much
12 familiar with all the procurement contracting
13 processes and just wanted to dig in a little deeper
14 for the record about how you, what criteria were you
15 guys using in terms of creating more equity across
16 the city for these RFP's because I know that in my
17 communities, especially a lot of the harder, like the
18 languages that we serve in our communities are more
19 nesh and it may not necessarily fit into the
20 communities that we serve may not fit into those zip
21 codes that are outlined. And so, just wondering how
22 you're going to accommodate for that because going
23 back to Council Member Williams point, if I'm a
24 nonprofit executive and I see that these are the
25 requirements and the criteria, I may not have

1
2 capacity to have staff apply for these grants that we
3 may not get awarded for. And I brought up the same
4 point actually to Commissioner Vasani yesterday about
5 the club house RFP because in trying to recreate the
6 landscape of the clubhouses, they set the minimum
7 number of attendance, daily average attendance higher
8 to 300 when the national average is only 100. And
9 so, you have to – and so, I know that the smaller
10 club houses, many of them actually did not apply
11 because of that requirement and so, in changing the
12 RFP, I think we also need to recognize that there are
13 certain groups that will be left out and I just want
14 to know what the intention was there and also what
15 the outreach was to the current and former providers
16 for adult literacy and how that conversation happened
17 and how that was factored in.

18 KEITH HOWARD: So, we can talk to you about the
19 engagement that actually happened on multiple levels.
20 We can talk to you about the methodology as I had
21 indicated before, that we are an antipoverty agency.
22 We rest solely on guidance from Executive Order 45 in
23 terms of equity that all city agencies are required
24 to adhere to.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: But I just also want to
3 point out - I'm sorry, not to interrupt but I also
4 want to point out that in some communities, that
5 poverty is very hidden. So, it may not be reflected
6 in the data that you have and that's my point. Is
7 that especially a lot of these families in the Asian
8 community for example, they are multigenerational
9 living in the same home, so that poverty is not
10 showing up in the same way. So, just wanted to put
11 that on the record as well.

12 KEITH HOWARD: Oh, no I appreciate that and what
13 we did is we landed on the census report ACS to be
14 able to and NTA to be able to guide us in crafting
15 exactly what the RFP is actually going to speak to.
16 So, but I'll let Mike Bobbitt, our Deputy
17 Commissioner also talk about the engagement part as
18 well.

19 MIKE BOBBITT: Thank you Commissioner and thank
20 you Council Member Lee for the question. As the
21 Commissioner correctly references, we did rely on the
22 most recent American Community Survey data in
23 neighborhood tabulation areas to try to inform
24 program siting where it is likely that there are
25 persons in need. But under the program design,

1 participants can hail from anywhere in New York City,
2 so no one is precluded from participating or
3 presenting for services if they need services.
4 Poverty was the main criterion used and it's part of
5 the methodology that DYCD is using. Going forward,
6 as the Commissioner referenced having an equity
7 approach and trying to have a poverty alleviation
8 approach.

10 For the literacy RFP, 70 percent was based on the
11 highest poverty rates, 30 percent was based on
12 specific literacy related indicators. So, for adult
13 literacy, it's the number of English Language
14 Learners in New York City Public Schools for the AB
15 and HSC programs, the number of adults over the age
16 of 25 without a high school diploma and for ESOL it's
17 the number of individuals over five years with
18 limited English proficiency.

19 So, given the amount of resources available, we
20 did try to target informed program site decisions
21 with those criteria in mind, but again as I said,
22 participants are not excluded from being served
23 anywhere near.

1
2 KEITH HOWARD: and Mike, could you also speak to
3 the investments that we have in other program areas
4 like the HERC?

5 MIKE BOBBIT: Sure, well one other thing I meant
6 to mention earlier because you had asked about what
7 informed and also in support of what the Commissioner
8 is saying, there's extensive stakeholder engagement
9 that is done. That includes current DYCD funded
10 providers and other providers in the space. We also
11 made a point for the Concept Paper in the RFP of
12 talking to folks who may have given back contracts
13 over time. How can we right size? Look at staffing
14 models and program models, so that it would be less
15 likely in the future that providers would want to
16 give back a contract and look at trends both within
17 New York City as well as outside New York City and
18 talk to advocates and others in this space who are
19 informed. I'm sorry.

20 KEITH HOWARD: And the HERCs.

21 MIKE BOBBITT: Oh yeah, uhm there are also other
22 current investments outside of this perspective RFP
23 as the Commissioner mentions. We're providing
24 [INAUDIBLE 01:16:56] of the Humanitarian Emergency
25

1
2 Relief Center, so that's a different – serving a
3 different need through a different methodology.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Yeah, I have a HERC. I have
5 a HERC in my district, so uhm, okay, and then just
6 really quickly, out of the 41 NTA's, how many – did
7 it decrease or increase from the previous round of
8 RFP's and then also, if a group, If an area is
9 showing high percentages of LEP but not the poverty,
10 then how does that get factored in? And then I'll
11 save my second round of mental health questions for
12 later, sorry.

13 MIKE BOBBITT: I think that's a level of detail,
14 we want to have aside of our conversation with you
15 after the hearing about, so we can unpack it for you.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay, thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you. We're going to
18 go to Council Member Brewer and then Menin and I
19 would like to acknowledge Council Member Aviles who
20 has also joined us.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you. Uhm, just
22 also on the Adult Literacy. I mean I thought that
23 NYCHA would also be – because many of us have huge
24 numbers of NYCHA will not be included in your census
25 because the other neighborhoods around it will outlie

1
2 the NYCHA numbers. Do you take that into
3 consideration when you're doing the RFP's, NYCHA?

4 KEITH HOWARD: We're definitely going to have to
5 get back to you.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, I've been asking
7 this question for about 40 years, so it would be
8 great to get an answer.

9 Number two, on the adult literacy, the waitlist,
10 is that something that you look at because obviously,
11 I have about seven hotels. Everybody wants adult
12 literacy. Everybody wants to learn English. Is that
13 waitlist; nobody can get an appointment. Is that
14 waitlist taken into consideration when you're doing
15 the RFP? Or do you have waitlist information?

16 MIKE BOBBITT: Thank you for the question Council
17 Member Brewer. I'm not as familiar as perhaps I
18 ought to be about the waitlist you're referencing.
19 Could you say a bit more about it?

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Sure, I'm just saying I
21 would assume that many of the programs that you fund
22 particularly today, have - they've always had but
23 they have even more waitlists for people who want to
24 get in and there's no room.

1
2 So, that's what I'm saying, is there any
3 information along those lines because I have to say
4 as others here feel, the adult literacy at all
5 levels, whatever program you're talking about, but
6 libraries, the DYCD, nobody can get an appointment
7 because understandably good programs in great need.
8 So, I'm just wondering, do you keep track of the
9 waitlists?

10 MIKE BOBBITT: Thank you Council Member. Yes,
11 one of the things that we appreciate about the
12 Council's support, also making additional slots
13 available and so, with the one-shot funding that's
14 been available for the past 30 years, it has been our
15 practice to pull the providers and to find out what
16 their additional capacity is beyond they've occurred
17 initially under their RFP. So, it's a practice that
18 we've had in place for the past for the past several
19 years certainly.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, so at another time,
21 if you could let us know what that waitlist is, we'd
22 appreciate it.

23 MIKE BOBBITT: Sure.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Number two, NYCHA, when I
25 go to Rikers every one of the, not everyone, many of

1 the detainees know me, hi, Gale, hi Gale, hi Gale.
2 Why? Because I'm a huge supporter of NYCHA, of the
3 residents, as you are but too many of them are at
4 Rikers, too many of them. So, my question is,
5 despite the fact that you mentioned in your testimony
6 and in responses, that you're working with NYCHA. I
7 would love to see a lot more of your programs. First
8 of all, NYCHA's NYCHA and they don't have community
9 centers open enough hours. I've put more money into
10 hours in my neighborhood. I do know the borough of
11 Manhattan. I don't know anything about other
12 boroughs but I know about Manhattan and I know that
13 many of the community centers are not open long
14 enough hours. That there aren't enough programs and
15 I'm just wondering as you have your and the Mayor has
16 said correctly, they are the silo agencies but
17 somebody has to say that NYCHA is priority and we're
18 going to do all the programs that the Chair is talking
19 about plus in those NYCHA developments. They're just
20 not there. So, I'm wondering, what do you do to
21 focus on NYCHA?
22

23 KEITH HOWARD: And Deputy Susan Haskell will talk
24 about NYCHA but NYCHA is a real partner in the DYCD
25

1
2 space. As you know Council Member, we do run
3 programs in NYCHA.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I know.

5 KEITH HOWARD: A significant amount of programs
6 through our provider network but specifically, Deputy
7 Commissioner Haskell with NYCHA.

8 SUSAN HASKELL: I think you raise a great point
9 about additional hours and our investment in DYCD in
10 NYCHA community centers has continued to grow. It
11 started with 25 Cornerstones to 45, we now at 99
12 Cornerstone Centers about to be 100.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: What are the ages of
14 Cornerstone, the ages that you can address at
15 Cornerstone?

16 SUSAN HASKELL: K through adults. All ages,
17 different periods of day focusing on different ages,
18 childcare priority in the 3 to 6. We also have been
19 expanding hours, not just the locations of the NYCHA
20 community centers but in the summer, programs are
21 running 7 days a week until 11 p.m.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Yeah but we need winter
23 and summer. So, at some point, could you give us a
24 breakdown as to what you understand, what NYCHA
25 developments are in and the hours because it's my

1
2 understanding at least in Manhattan, it's not as
3 comprehensive as what you're suggesting and that we
4 do need a lot more programs at NYCHA and
5 unfortunately, fortunately DYCD is the place to go to
6 get these programs.

7 SUSAN HASKELL: Yes, we can give you the complete
8 list and the comprehensive hours.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, and then just
10 finally, I also want to just mention as an example on
11 the adult literacy, Riverside language would be an
12 incredibly good program that is not in one of the 41
13 neighborhoods but I assume that they could apply and
14 they may or may not get selected. Is that correct?

15 KEITH HOWARD: That is correct. They can apply.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: And then the financial
17 literacy that you do and generally, does it get
18 evaluated for the SYEP and just generally, how do you
19 do an evaluation of your programs? Is it done
20 internally? Is it done externally? And what's the
21 cost?

22 NEVITA BAILEY: So, hi Council Member Brewer. I
23 don't have the cost in the same front regarding the
24 evaluation but there are multiple evaluation
25 modalities that we take rather the internal,

1 external, we have external vendors who also conduct
2 evaluations and we have our internal team who do
3 evaluations via site.
4

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Alright, at some point
6 could you get us the outside because that might be an
7 easier cost of the outside evaluation vendors and
8 what they evaluate?

9 NEVITA BAILEY: Sure.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you very much Madam
11 Chair.

12 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you. I just have a
13 quick question. Deputy Commissioner Haskell, you
14 just said that there are 90 Cornerstones, soon to be
15 99? What?

16 SUSAN HASKELL: It's 99 now.

17 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Oh, it's 99, it's about to
18 be 100?

19 SUSAN HASKELL: Yeah.

20 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So, you're getting one new
21 one? What is it? What's the new one? Where's that?

22 SUSAN HASKELL: Oh, Gowanus.

23 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Oh, okay, okay I just
24 wanted to know. Council Member Menin. Thank you.
25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Thank you so much Chair.

3 So, in your prelim budget, you have funding for just
4 one new need. Obviously we're in tough fiscal times.
5 My question is, what new needs did you submit to OMB
6 that were not granted?

7 NEVITA BAILEY: So, we didn't - the preliminary
8 budget was not necessarily a new need plan. It was a
9 plan to submit for our savings and so, we are in
10 ongoing conversations with OMB regarding service for
11 next year and to make sure that there are no changes
12 to them.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: But okay, to be clear,
14 what new needs does the agency have moving forward
15 that you are going to be pushing for? I mean,
16 clearly your mandate is enormous. It's so important.
17 I'm concerned that with just one new need being
18 funded, what are you going to be focused on moving
19 forward to get the new needs funded?

20 NEVITA BAILEY: We have a strong relationship
21 with OMB and so, we are in ongoing conversations and
22 so, we want to make sure that for example, the
23 financial literacy, which is a mandate that came last
24 year, that that will continue next year. So, that
25 will be part of our new need conversation. I think

1 that it's just, it's influx and again, as I
2 mentioned, we have a number of program models that
3 have had changes and so, it's hard to pin down the
4 exact amount as we are still going through the
5 ongoing conversations about what we're doing next
6 year and how we're going to best fund them.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Speaking of the financial
9 literacy, who is running that?

10 NEVITA BAILEY: Well, DYCD provides additional
11 funding and the nonprofit providers for the mental
12 services.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Are you working with the
14 Department of Consumer and Worker Protection on that?

15 NEVITA BAILEY: Yes, we are.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: So, is DCWP's Office of
17 Financial Empowerment actually doing the financial
18 literacy?

19 NEVITA BAILEY: I'm going to defer to our Deputy
20 Commissioner Susan Haskell to further elaborate on
21 what financial literacy is being done about these
22 programs.

23 SUSAN HASSELL: Yes, our relationship with them
24 is really close. When we launched that program in
25 the last Fiscal Year, they helped us to develop the

1 curriculum, working hand and hand, we continue to
2 have a very tight partnership with them on the
3 financial literacy program.
4

5 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: But does - I feel like -
6 that's great that you got a partnership. What I'm
7 trying to get to is you've got an agency who has a
8 whole office of financial empowerment who runs over
9 30 financial empowerment centers. Are you partnering
10 with them? Are they the ones that are providing
11 that?

12 SUSAN HASKELL: Yes and we have put financial
13 counselors in each of the drop-in centers for run
14 away and homeless youth and they are helping to
15 train, you know provide curriculum and train those
16 workers so they could be doing it on the ground. I
17 don't know that they have capacity to meet you know,
18 to do individual counseling with every runaway and
19 homeless youth. What we're trying to do is build
20 capacity and knowledge and resources in the drop-in
21 centers with their support.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: I just want to make sure
23 that the agencies are not siloed and that you're
24 working collaboratively and not you know in tandem.
25

1
2 KEITH HOWARD: No, we're not and in fact, we just
3 recently had meetings with the Commissioner and her
4 team and we're looking to see how we can expand what
5 they do in terms of financial literacy to other parts
6 of DYCD, specially justice involved young people as
7 well.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Okay, one last quick
9 question on Summer Youth Employment, the November
10 plan includes a reduction in \$5.5 million for metro
11 cards for Fiscal Year 2024. Can you talk about that
12 reduction? And how many participants last year
13 received the metro card?

14 NEVITA BAILEY: Sure, so the reduction was a
15 savings because we were able to obtain accruals for
16 it. I do not have right in front of me the exact
17 number for the metro cards last year but we were able
18 to distribute a large amount last year to our
19 providers who were able to make sure those
20 participants were able to go into from their
21 employment.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Okay, thank you.

23 NEVITA BAILEY: You're welcome.

24 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Council Member Aviles.
25

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILES: Thank you Chair. Thank
3 you colleagues. Thank you DYCD staff for being here.
4 Apologies if I am repeating a line of questioning you
5 may have already responded to but uhm, this one is
6 very important to me and we've been engaged in
7 dialogue around it, the adult literacy program. Uhm,
8 hugely important and for the record, I have said over
9 and over again how underfunded this work is and how
10 critical and given the increases in the immigrant
11 population in our city, we've seen upwards of 40
12 percent of our city's population are immigrants.
13 Huge language needs. So, in terms of the current
14 DYCD literacy RFP, right it has a total of \$11.8
15 million in funding for adult literacy for adult basic
16 education, high school equivalency and ESOL. That's
17 nearly \$5 million less than the current fiscal 2024
18 funding for DYCD adult literacy. This \$5 million
19 reduction means that services will be cut for 7,000
20 students just over 16,000 students in 2023 to 9,000
21 in 2025.

22 The RFP will also likely lead to at least 12 City
23 Council Districts that currently have DYCD RFP funded
24 classes to lose those classes. Yet the Fiscal 2025
25 Preliminary Budget includes \$21.7 million earmarked

1
2 for DYCD Adult Literacy, which is \$10 million more
3 than what is in the RFP. Help us understand the
4 numbers here. So, what is the intended use of the
5 initial \$10 million that was added in preliminary
6 fiscal 2025.

7 NEVITA BAILEY: Hi, Council Member Aviles.
8 Council Member Joseph asked a similar question
9 regarding the variance in the funding and as I
10 mentioned to her, it's due to a technical adjustment
11 that needs to be made. There's additional funding
12 that you selected in the budget function that is not
13 necessarily allocated to this program area. There
14 will be no reduction in slots to the adult literacy
15 program moving forward and again, the funding that
16 you're referencing is associated with our Advance and
17 Earn and YMI area, program area.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILES: So, the current \$11.8
19 million, there was no reduction?

20 NEVITA BAILEY: The RFP currently that's out
21 there reflects baseline funding that DYCD has, DYCD
22 due to PPB rules cannot include one time funding in
23 the RFP. And so, what's reflected on the street
24 right now is baselined funding that the agency
25 currently has. As common, we get one-time funds

1 every year and when those one-time funds come in,
2 they will be added to the RFP and we will ensure
3 there will be no reduction slots. So, what you're
4 seeing right now is the baselined funding that's
5 reflected in our budget.

6
7 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILES: Okay, so in Fiscal, well,
8 we're saying in Fiscal 2024, the allocation in the
9 preliminary plan was \$46 million for adult literacy.

10 NEVITA BAILEY: Correct.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILES: And what we're seeing in
12 the '25 preliminary plan is \$21 million. And that's
13 a \$20 million reduction but you're saying \$10
14 million.

15 NEVITA BAILEY: \$10 million associated with
16 another program area, so that's reflected there and
17 then again, there's one-time funds that happen every
18 year that come into our budget that is associated
19 with adult literacy programs, so that's where you're
20 seeing the gap.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILES: So, that \$10 million
22 could not be – what do we want to baseline that \$10
23 million so that we're not having these discrepancies?

24 NEVITA BAILEY: I think DYCD will always
25 encourage baseline funding to our budget but that's

1
2 not our current status right now. And so, we are
3 moving forward with the funding that we have
4 currently in our budget.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILES: So, for the record, there
6 were also discrepancies between what is allocated in
7 the RFP and the overall program. How do you explain
8 those discrepancies? Does it take \$10 million to
9 provide \$10 million in funding for the RFPs?

10 NEVITA BAILEY: I'm not understanding your
11 question.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILES: So, what's the total
13 amount allocated for funding to providers in the RFP?

14 NEVITA BAILEY: The RFP currently reflects \$11.8
15 million for the providers for the adult literacy
16 area.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILES: Right, so that's the
18 total RFP. So, \$21.7 million that's in the
19 preliminary plan.

20 NEVITA BAILEY: And as I mentioned that \$10
21 million variance is associated with a different
22 program area.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILES: What's the program area,
24 I'm sorry.

1
2 NEVITA BAILEY: Advance and Earn and the YMI
3 funding was reflected in that area and so -

4 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILES: So, why is it in the
5 Adult Literacy program?

6 NEVITA BAILEY: It's a technical adjustment.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILES: Okay, I'm sorry this is
8 so difficult but it would seem to me we also have a
9 different line item. It should be there.

10 NEVITA BAILEY: That's why we're going to do a
11 technical adjustment.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILES: Okay, I got it. You know
13 the numbers don't math all the time and we've got to
14 keep asking these questions. Uhm, in terms of the
15 RFP process, I know we've talked a lot about it.
16 Uhm, we also have been communicating by letters, so
17 thank you for your response Commissioner.
18 Unfortunately, the response did not fully answer one
19 of the objections or the real concerns here around
20 eligibility in the NTAs. So, in the example of my
21 district, we have several eligible providers who
22 could apply. One of them will get the bonus. There
23 are other very qualified providers that are also
24 outside that have long histories of providing in the
25 district.

1
2 Given that criteria, all those providers will be
3 ineligible to apply. Is that correct?

4 KEITH HOWARD: That's not how we uh, that's not
5 what the RFP indicates. It indicates that -

6 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILES: Okay, I'd love for you to
7 correct it because even in your letter, it did say
8 that eligible providers within the NTA and everyone
9 else can apply outside of the NTA, given if there are
10 no eligible providers within.

11 KEITH HOWARD: So, it also indicates that based
12 upon the RFP, that uhm, number one and I repeated
13 this before and I'm sorry I have to repeat this again
14 that we're looking at -

15 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILES: Yeah, well we've been
16 repeating this on letters and -

17 KEITH HOWARD: Yeah, I understand that. Yeah,
18 we're going back and -

19 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILES: Providers are very
20 concerned as we are.

21 KEITH HOWARD: I think that the best thing moving
22 forward is for us to have a meeting so that we can
23 explain exactly how community-based organizations
24 that are doing this work, how they're not going to be
25 impacted in the way that is previously described.

1 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILES: I think that's what we've
2 been trying to do over the last couple months. I
3 guess lastly, uhm, I think obviously Council Members,
4 your team, we are all pursuing equity right? I think
5 it is absolutely important. I think what is a mess
6 here and how this RFP has been constructed and I
7 would probably argue this could applied to the other
8 changes in our government right that we need to do in
9 order to frontload equity and really lean into that.
10 It is someone of a disregard of the reality of the
11 infrastructure that we currently have on the ground.
12 And so, what I mean by that is right, we do have - we
13 have an infrastructure and if we are trying to shift
14 that infrastructure to lean into equity. It seems to
15 me that to get there we'd have to invest in moving
16 the whole infrastructure to produce more equitable
17 outcomes but it seems to me what this RFP is doing is
18 using kind of the data points of equity, disregarding
19 the actual infrastructure and challenges on the
20 ground, and then not investing actual additional
21 monies to fortify and move the infrastructure to
22 appropriately lean into equitable outcomes and
23 equitable services. There just seems a real
24 disconnect with our intention at the practical
25

1 realities and the fact that we're not – we're
2 actually cutting services and not investing and
3 expecting because we move a program or expect them to
4 be within a geography because of an ACS, that we're
5 actually pushing equity forward in meaningful ways.
6 So, I just, I feel like we, the statement here is I
7 would really like us to really interrogate this
8 beyond just these kind of data points without the
9 real realities of what is happening on the ground
10 because this is the pushback you're receiving from
11 providers, from Council Members, from people who are
12 not going to get access to desperately needed
13 services that the city is cutting quite frankly when
14 we know we're only, what is supporting 2 percent of
15 the need for adult literacy, right? And we have an
16 increasing community English Language learning
17 community that we need to service. So, I would like
18 us to really look at this again. I really appreciate
19 the agency over the last several years who have
20 really been looking at equity and trying to adjust
21 its own internal operations to lift that up. I
22 recognize that work is happening and earnest but
23 something is really missing in this analysis that has
24 us all very uhm, deeply concerned.
25

1
2 KEITH HOWARD: And I understand that and one of
3 the things that I appreciate is the fact that we can
4 agree that the equitable approach is what the
5 methodology when we are issuing the RFP, since this
6 RFP has not been procured since the Bloomberg
7 Administration, right? We also can agree that some
8 of the infrastructure that you just referenced in
9 terms of building capacity for organizations but not
10 only capacity but also to serve the people of the
11 highest need are in communities that are already pre-
12 existing programs in. In which organizations that
13 we've issued I believe two or three addendum to make
14 sure that we're fully communicating to the community-
15 based organizations and the network, saying that it's
16 inclusive. We're not excluding any organization from
17 applying but more importantly, we are making sure
18 that participants who need the service has access to
19 the services in those communities and one of the
20 other caveats that's part of the RFP and I'm pretty
21 sure Council Member you would agree, is that we have
22 in there as part of the building of the
23 infrastructure. For nonprofit organizations to be
24 able to lease commercial spaces in those communities
25 and pay for it in the RFP process. So, the

1
2 investments, the investments in community and
3 community needs, are what the ultimate goal is.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILES: How much additional money
5 did you add so that nonprofits can now lease
6 commercial space in different neighborhoods? What
7 was the addition? Did we add several million dollars
8 for that because the reality on the ground is to get
9 space in any neighborhood almost. To set up
10 infrastructure to bring staff in any neighborhood is
11 quite significant.

12 KEITH HOWARD: I wouldn't say any neighborhood, I
13 would say neighborhoods where the highest
14 concentration of need. So, that's the and where we
15 increase it with the PPB.

16 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Uhm, Council Member uh
17 we're going to do second round of questions.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILES: Yeah.

19 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I'm going to turn it over
20 to Council Member Williams. Council Member Lee, are
21 you ready? We'll go to Council Member Lee.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Sorry, okay. Uhm, this time
23 I just wanted to ask a few questions and I don't know
24 if you have, if there's a way to extrapolate this in
25 the budget but one of the things that as Chair of

1
2 Mental Health, Disabilities and Addictions Committee,
3 one thing that I wanted to focus on this year as part
4 of our mental health roadmap is youth this year in
5 mental health. And so, between all the different
6 programs with beacon, ISY, the Runaway Homeless Youth
7 as well as Out of School, and then of course Office
8 of Neighborhood Safety, are there components of
9 programming in there that are focused specifically on
10 mental health and how closely do you guys work with
11 DOHMH or DOE? And – because I know a lot of times
12 there's different silos that are usually up and I
13 love breaking down siloes and if there isn't that
14 conversation, is there a taskforce of some kind or
15 something between interagencies, which I believe
16 there is but I just wanted to see if there were more
17 specific numbers.

18 SUSAN HASKELL: There is mental health counsel
19 that we're part of with our agencies and yes, we work
20 very closely with the Office of Community Mental
21 Health. You named some of the program areas where
22 it's increasingly important for us to have mental
23 health services and in many ways just to make sure
24 that there is training and resources and referrals
25 happening in all our programs, in the Beacon, in

1
2 Cornerstones, in Compass programs. There are more
3 explicit mental health services available in the
4 runaway and homeless youth program area. That's been
5 in place for quite some time but Commissioner has
6 been clear from his early charges that we're going to
7 have to do more integration responding to the needs
8 of young people on mental health initiatives so, I
9 don't know if you were asking about numbers but it's
10 absolutely a priority across program areas. I'm only
11 talking about my own portfolio right now but also
12 workforce and our community development programs.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay, yeah, if you can, the
14 reason why I'm asking is because I want to know if
15 there are specific and this is where I'd like to hear
16 from you all in terms of specific requests or
17 recommendations on how we can better partner where
18 you think there needs to be more funding asks or
19 legislative changes that would be helpful to your
20 programming.

21 And so, just wanted to sort of put that out there
22 because that's something we're going to be looking to
23 do along with Chair Stevens over here and so, that's
24 going to be a big focus this year so I just want to
25

1
2 tell you now. That's why we got you on the
3 Committee.

4 KEITH HOWARD: Council Member, we are working
5 with a focus group of young people. Uhm, we had a
6 convening in six of the precincts with the highest
7 level of gun violence and in our town hall with the
8 Mayor, there were two, two topics that the young
9 people brought up that's possible issues for them.
10 Uhm, the first one was mental health and trauma. How
11 do we provide both mental health services to young
12 people and meet them where they are? We've been
13 convening and we'd love to have you be a part of that
14 as well. Focus groups of young people where we are
15 brining them in and having real conversations on how
16 to craft policies besides the investments that we
17 have in the working relationships that we have Eva
18 Wong and most of the organizations. And also, uh
19 having our community-based organizations to be able
20 to provide, if it's not director services, referral
21 services with young people as well.

22 I also want to add that with incentivizing the
23 young people to speak and talk about their mental
24 health has definitely allowed us to grow in this
25 space to the point where the staff and DYCD as a

1
2 policy-ship, when we procure these RFPs, especially
3 those that have old program models, you're going to
4 see based upon the Mayor and the Mayor's charge,
5 you're going to see mental health services and trauma
6 services as one of the key components.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Thank you. I love that and
8 I think that's the way to do it is to ask the youth
9 because that's where - I feel like the communities
10 where the best policies come from, so that you for
11 that and does OCMH also give funding for those
12 programs or is it? How does that?

13 KEITH HOWARD: So, we're working collaboratively
14 on exactly how to fund a joint program.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Hi, I'm back. You're
17 almost done, you're almost done. I mean I got a
18 couple more questions but we're almost there. We're
19 almost there. I do want to spend some time on
20 homeless runaway youth. Everyone knows this is one
21 of my areas that I've been advocating really hard for
22 because I don't feel like enough support is done with
23 your young people. So, in this area, it's been
24 reported that DYCD is currently providing services
25 under homeless runaway youth programs for asylum

1
2 seekers. Last week, the city reached an agreement
3 that would modify the longstanding requirements for
4 the city to provide shelters to whoever asks for it.
5 Under the agreement, asylum seekers between the ages
6 of 18 and 23 would be allowed to remain in shelter
7 for 60 days before they are required to move out.
8 The city may grant an exemption for us, for example,
9 individuals who demonstrate that they have been
10 trying to secure housing and were not able to. How
11 many asylum seekers are currently residing in DYCD
12 facilities? Oh, yes [INAUDIBLE 01:46:23] I got a
13 whole bunch of questions for you.

14 SUSAN HASKELL: Good morning. Uhm, we in Runaway
15 and Homeless Youth Services, we are working with any
16 young person who comes through the door. Many young
17 people enter through the drop in center ages 14 to
18 24. For young people who need residential services,
19 we're going to try to find a youth focused program in
20 our - what we don't track immigration status. We
21 don't have hard numbers on asylum seekers in our
22 programs. However, we are in constant communication
23 with our providers. They know who they're working
24 with. We do get estimates, projections from them.
25 At this time, it seems like a little over a quarter,

1
2 a little more than 25 percent of the young people
3 residing in the programs are asylum seekers.

4 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah and I do know that you
5 guys don't track the immigration status. So, I am
6 concerned about like how this agreement impact
7 services for young people are coming there, so
8 because now with this agreement, they have 60 days
9 unless they're demonstrating and so, could you talk
10 about like what things are being put in place and how
11 is this going to play out?

12 SUSAN HASKELL: I don't know if that will have a
13 direct impact on RHY services. I think for young
14 people who are certainly going to potentially require
15 more resources, more time, more support, uhm to be
16 able to have a longer stay will them exploring other
17 resources and other alternative housing. I think
18 that's a great move for young people. I don't know
19 that will have a direct impact on RHY services but I
20 to think it's going to be very impactful on the young
21 people who benefit from the longer stay.

22 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: What do you mean a greater
23 impact? Could you explain a little bit more?

24 SUSAN HASKELL: Uhm, what did I just say? Uhm, I
25 think for a young person, it may take longer to

1
2 identify additional resources, other housing
3 resources, so having that additional length of time
4 is going to be great for young people.

5 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, I mean, you know we
6 know that a lot of – one of the reasons we fought for
7 young people between that age to be in DYCD shelters
8 is just because it's just a different level of
9 empathy and love and support that they get that they
10 don't get at other places. And so, you know I just
11 want to make sure that we continue with that path and
12 not get to a place where it doesn't feel that way
13 anymore.

14 So, aside from the Covenant House, what other
15 safe housing location if any are currently occupying
16 asylum seekers? Because we know that there's been a
17 huge influx there but could you talk about some other
18 places that are also seeing a huge uptick?

19 SUSAN HASKELL: I think it's across the board.
20 There is variation program to program. Uhm, some of
21 the other providers that come to mind, I know Safe
22 Horizon, Project Hospitality. I really think that
23 it's across – it has an impact across the board but I
24 can give you more details about those surveys
25 reporting and where there may be like more demand.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay, the PMMR stated that
3 in the first four months of Fiscal 2024, 1,720 youth
4 and young adults were served through case management
5 at RHY drop-in centers. A 19 percent increase from
6 Fiscal 2023. What is the length of time someone is
7 allowed to stay in a drop-in center?

8 SUSAN HASKELL: There's no limit to the amount of
9 times you can come back to a drop-in center for
10 resources. I think in this way it's a great support
11 for all young people, including migrant youth because
12 it's a place you can go to get resources with no
13 limit on your time.

14 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Are there enough beds to
15 serve youth and young adults considering the influx
16 of asylum seekers?

17 SUSAN HASKELL: We are more than ever before. I
18 would say we are maximizing the resources that we
19 have runaway and homeless youth.

20 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So, we're going to say no
21 it's not enough beds. Agree?

22 KEITH HOWARD: Well, I think we also have to
23 acknowledge that with the you know 183,000 for the
24 past two years that have come through our shelter and
25

1
2 I know you've acknowledged this as well that you know
3 with 813 beds, DYCD is a small player in this whole -

4 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So we're going to say no,
5 so we agree. So why you all want to - just say no.

6 KEITH HOWARD: But I also want to highlight the
7 fact that our system wasn't meant to handle 183,000
8 people seeking shelter.

9 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Even before the asylum
10 seekers was here, we didn't have enough beds.

11 KEITH HOWARD: Yup.

12 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So, I'm never going to let
13 that go. Even before that, when I got here, there
14 was not enough beds. So, could we all agree, do we
15 have enough beds for young adults? What's the
16 answer? No. No, you're not going to say it?

17 Alright, hmm, I tried you know I'm never going to
18 give that up until I get more beds I don't care.
19 They don't want to say no. Dang it, I want them to
20 say no.

21 How many beds are providers for each age group in
22 RHY?

23 SUSAN HASKELL: Sorry, I missed the first part.

24 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: How many beds are provided
25 for each age group in RHY?

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SUSAN HASKELL: Uh, it's 813 beds in total.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: 813?

SUSAN HASKELL: Yup, 60 of those are for 21- to 24-year-olds.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So, again, the answer is no. 60 beds is not enough. Uhm, is there a current process in place to address the need for beds at the drop-in center? Because I know that that was a whole thing, young people are not supposed to be at the drop-in center and especially with the increase and influx, has there been anything to address that?

SUSAN HASKELL: No, there drop-in centers are not shelters and they don't have beds and there's not like planned overnight sleeping going on in drop-in centers.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Is HC aware of young people or young adults being turned away at drop-in centers? If so, why?

KEITH HOWARD: So, this is an article that came out in the paper which we totally 100 percent disagree with some of the facts that was sited in the article.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Alright, talk about it.

1
2 KEITH HOWARD: In fact you know young people,
3 because of the amount of asylum seekers that we've
4 been getting, the city has seen, we try to make sure
5 through our drop-in centers that young people, if
6 beds are not available that they are referred to a
7 DSS, homeless services beds or they are referring to
8 reticketing beds.

9 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: But we know our kids don't
10 want to - our young people don't want to go to those
11 shelters because they experience trauma.

12 KEITH HOWARD: So, again our shelter system
13 weren't met for this large capacity.

14 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: But that was even before.

15 KEITH HOWARD: So, we are over worked and we're
16 at a crisis in terms of the level of services that
17 are being asked for without investment that we need
18 from the federal government.

19 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Let me tell you, we are on
20 the same page. The federal government needs to do
21 their share, right? You will never get me to not
22 agree with that but I do still think even before this
23 crisis this was still an issue and you know even in a
24 crisis, we got to walk and chew gum at the same time.
25 So, we really need to spend some time really thinking

1
2 about this and even thinking about you know the
3 vouchers that we could be giving out with City FHEPS
4 could help alleviate some of this and that hasn't
5 been happening either. So, you know, I think that
6 Council's been really trying to help support some of
7 the alleviation in the shelter system. So, maybe if
8 we can all get on the same page with that and not
9 DYCD because that's not you all but on the same page
10 with the administration to start issuing these City
11 FHEP vouchers, we could probably make some space for
12 our young people.

13 Uhm, my next question is, has the agency been
14 able to address the need for permanent housing
15 specialists in DYCD funded drop-in shelters? Uhm, we
16 know this has been a successful thing. It's been
17 really great to have these peer navigators to kind of
18 help uhm and we know that that was like temporary
19 funding but what does this look like moving forward?
20 And is there any desire, appetite to have this be
21 baselined and permanently?

22 KEITH HOWARD: So, we recognize that housing
23 navigators are important to the Runaway Homeless
24 Youth program and we're currently working and talking
25

1
2 with OMB to see exactly how we can continue that
3 number of investment.

4 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay, thank you. I'm going
5 to talk about Summer Rising. Alright, the November
6 Plan included a reduction of \$19.6 million in Fiscal
7 2025 in the outyears that will greatly impact all New
8 York middle schools by reducing the hours of
9 eliminating Friday services in Summer Rising. What
10 other impacts will this have on middle school
11 students? Because it's my understanding that
12 Friday's were some of the highest attendance, so can
13 we talk about that? And we know why it's because
14 they don't want to go to class, so.

15 KEITH HOWARD: So, again we're back to the budget
16 and being able to make these hard choices right? So,
17 I just think that we need to understand that the
18 fiscal conditions of where we were before and the way
19 that we had to navigate in this space to be able to
20 look at service and service impact. The good thing
21 is that we're going to be able to serve 110,000 young
22 people this summer. You and I are going to be out in
23 the community as we are every summer looking at
24 programs and understanding exactly that young people
25 are going to thrive in the enrichment program. But I

1
2 want to put a pen on the fact that doing this whole
3 fiscal crisis, which we're still in.

4 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Hmm, hmm, I'm aware.

5 KEITH HOWARD: That service impact was real but
6 we are able to provide the critical services and
7 support of Summer Rising and also working with our
8 partners over in New York City Public Schools.

9 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I am sure that \$80 million
10 that we're sharing with you, it could have been used
11 and could have served a Friday, so young people could
12 have programming Monday through Friday. You know, I
13 remember camp used to be a good time. They used to
14 go on trips and do all these great things and you
15 know.

16 KEITH HOWARD: And I think they will continue to
17 do that.

18 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Hmm, not the same. Not the
19 same. Uhm, what other services will be eliminated or
20 reduced because of the fiscal crisis that we're in?
21 In specially talking about Summer Rising.

22 NEVITA BAILEY: Hi Chair Stevens. There are no
23 other reductions to the Summer Rising Program other
24 than what was reflected in the budget.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Does the agency have any other plans to change any type of summer program offered to middle school students?

KEITH HOWARD: Could you be more specific?

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Just meaning like I know like we're reducing Friday's but like, you know Friday's was the day where they actually did like more recreational, the trips, so are we thinking maybe one of those days - because I know we've, even in the conversation I had within the meeting, we talked about uhm, what does it look like in having more flexibility with the DOE schedule and not being so rigid? Will we be allowing you know maybe longer enrichment days or something like that to give young people some reprieve and not just the you know morning half sitting in the class and then the second half doing recreation.

KEITH HOWARD: You know one of the things I have to give Chancellor Banks credit for him and his team is that we work very collaboratively together to make sure that the issues surrounding Summer Rising, that you have brought to our attention last year in terms of and the year before that in terms of recruitment. In terms of exactly what a good program model looks

1
2 like. We've been able to work through those issues
3 and we've been able to land in a good space.

4 Summer Rising last year was one of the most
5 amazing programs and experiences that I have been a
6 part and I know you have as well because we went out
7 together. And I don't see any changes in terms of
8 being able to offer the same service lines.

9 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, I mean and you know I
10 think of the other piece when we talk about
11 collaboration and I still feel like it doesn't feel
12 like 100 percent partnership when it comes to the
13 sharing of loads and I still see DOE taking much more
14 of a lead and that's still a concern for me and I'm
15 going to always advocate to make sure that our
16 program providers are having a say in the same way
17 because those things are still happening. I know
18 that there's been great efforts to try to make it
19 seem more collaboratively but from talking to
20 providers, it is still feeling very heavy handed on
21 the DOE side, thinking about you know providers
22 having to have staff there to help teachers in the
23 morning and then at 12, the teachers are out the door
24 and thinking about what does that really look like
25 and principals having a lot more say over what's

1
2 going on because they're in charge of the building
3 and not really being collaborative.

4 So, you know as we are continuing this summer, I
5 want to make sure that we continue to make sure that
6 our providers have a voice and have a say and I know
7 that things were put in place from the meeting. They
8 were saying that what I like to call, planned, forced
9 collaboration. Uhm, forced you guys you some forced
10 collaboration sometimes but it has to happen
11 sometimes but I still see the gap in talking to
12 providers. They are still feeling that it is not as
13 equal as it is being portrayed and that's a disserve
14 right? Especially because we know even when we think
15 about the recruitment, providers are doing
16 recruitment on a regular basis and as we can see on
17 the DOE side. No disrespect, that's just not where
18 their specialty is. They don't do recruitment, we do
19 recruitment and so, I'm still confused on why DOE is
20 taking a lead on recruiting and putting that
21 information when that just does not make sense. I
22 think we are an expert on a lot of places and that's
23 one of them and we got to get to a place where we are
24 leading in the things and leaning into them.

1
2 And so, I don't think you all could disagree with
3 me on that, right? You all agree with me, right? We
4 are the experts, right?

5 KEITH HOWARD: We are joined at the hip and we do
6 collaborative programming together and we don't
7 separate the two in terms of wins for the city,
8 right? So, public school, New York City public
9 school, DYCD, we're joined at the hip. We work
10 collaboratively together and we run a very robust and
11 good program. If you have providers that are still
12 having issues because Susan and her team, they have
13 regular meetings with providers to deal with specific
14 issues. I would love to hear what those issues are
15 and perhaps you and I can tackle those issues with
16 providers and to make sure that they are getting the
17 right guidance to make sure that these programs
18 continue to be robust.

19 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah and here's the thing.
20 You all know I will hold on a minute but I think some
21 of the things, but you know specially
22 microaggressions and so, some of the things could be
23 addressed as going and have a conversation and some
24 things shouldn't have to be addressed and we
25 shouldn't have to be there to let a principal know

1
2 that they can't just supersede a program director or
3 you know kick a kid out because they have an issue
4 with it.

5 And so, some things we do address and we always
6 work in collaboration but we know that it's still,
7 there's still a lop side and you know.

8 KEITH HOWARD: And that's why Chancellor Banks to
9 his credit has elevated that decision making to the
10 superintendent and the superintendents are who we
11 meet with on a regular basis just to make sure that
12 the senior leadership within New York City public
13 schools are having more of a say so.

14 SUSAN HASKELL: And I'd like to add, our
15 collaboration with DOE does get better every year. I
16 think you'll see more improvements this summer in
17 terms of like CBO access to enrollment information
18 and some of the things you've been asking for. You
19 acknowledged that things seem like they are going a
20 little better.

21 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I did. I am acknowledging
22 it but it's still not there. I mean, I just can't
23 wait till the day where we're back to where all they
24 need to do is manage the buildings but that's just
25 me. I want to go back to camp. I want my kids to

1 have fun but you know it has been getting better.

2 Each year we address different things and we did have
3 a meeting the other day and I can see that the
4 efforts are being made and things are being taken
5 into consideration. So, but I'm still going to push
6 for summer camp.
7

8 Uhm, so, I have a couple more questions on Summer
9 Rising. I have a few more questions, so bear with
10 me. I'm almost done, home stretch. Does the HC have
11 a process to address students enrolled in the Summer
12 Rising program that requires to move from shelter?

13 Uhm, so is there like a plan put in place especially
14 with some of our young people being asylum seekers
15 and you know moving? And I know this was the issue
16 in my district specifically. We had a couple of
17 young people that were moved from a shelter to
18 shelter. Do we have anything in place to kind of
19 support and help those young people?

20 SUSAN HASKELL: Yes, for example, transportation.
21 If you've registered for a Summer Rising location and
22 you're home location changes, your shelter location
23 changes, you'll have transportation to go to the
24 program of your choice. The program you applied to
25

1
2 and got a seat in and who will be giving supports to
3 temporary housing, yes.

4 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay thank you. Is there
5 additional support for providers that are serving
6 students with disabilities?

7 SUSAN HASKELL: Yes, I think we again continue to
8 strengthen our relationship with the Office of
9 Students with Disabilities and Department of
10 Education and planning trainings in collaborating on
11 program offerings, especially where they're
12 collocated maybe with a District 75 school. Uhm, we
13 continue to strengthen the process for requesting
14 paraprofessional support when it's required for a
15 student to be successful. We will continue to work
16 on supports.

17 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: What is the rate of pay for
18 students with disabilities and the difference between
19 the regular rate? Is there a change in the rates for
20 Summer Rising working with students with
21 disabilities?

22 SUSAN HASKELL: No, I will acknowledge every
23 Summer Rising program is - every DYCD funded program
24 is working with students with disabilities. DYCD
25 doesn't have a different rate but we absolutely will

1 offer support to help programs, make sure that young
2 people get the best service in their program.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Alright uhm, that's
5 interesting because they have additional needs and
6 you need to have more staff, so.

7 SUSAN HASKELL: Well, I think I mentioned we
8 could provide a paraprofessional through Department
9 of Education. There are nursing, there are other
10 supports and those are costly, they're just not
11 showing up in you know, they're not DYCD budget.

12 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: What happens when para's
13 aren't available? Because we know there's a para
14 shortage and that's been challenges and issues in the
15 past.

16 SUSAN HASKELL: I'm not anticipating any
17 challenges this summer.

18 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Hmm, maybe I'll ask DOE.
19 They should be anticipating that challenge. Alright,
20 well uhm, what are the additional outdoor activities
21 for riders for students and during Summer Rising
22 Programs?

23 SUSAN HASKELL: Outdoor activity. We love it
24 when young people get outdoors. In particular during
25 the enrichment portion of the CBO led activity.

1
2 There are local fieldtrips. There is play. We will
3 support providers to identify near my parks. They
4 don't have like something happens directly -

5 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, or they don't have a
6 playground in their school because that's one of my
7 fights. I have a couple of schools in my district
8 that don't have playgrounds.

9 SUSAN HASKELL: That's right, we want to make
10 sure that they have access to a nearby playground.
11 The Commissioner mentioned exploring futures for uhm,
12 middle school youth. We want to make sure that
13 they're integrating career exploration in their
14 outdoor activities including virtual and in-person
15 visits to CUNY. The opportunities to explore New
16 York City outdoors are unlimited.

17 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay, what are your
18 thoughts on why OMB reduced DYCD's budget for the
19 programs supported due to a low utilization rate
20 while increasing DOE's budget for Summer Rising
21 Programs? Did any discussions take place with OMB
22 prior to reducing the reductions being made?

23 KEITH HOWARD: So, you're asking us to provide an
24 opinion on OMB and New York City public schools.

25 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I'm asking -

1 KEITH HOWARD: Investment in a funding source –

2 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I'm asking you to comment
3 on a reduction in your programs while another
4 programs and was there discussion? Did you guys have
5 a discussion before? Was that made or was that made
6 for you?
7

8 NEVITA BAILEY: We were not in discussion
9 regarding the restoration of DOE, the New York City
10 Public Schools budget.

11 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay, that's it, see. I
12 have a couple more questions but I have some uh, I
13 have Council Member Menin and then Council Member
14 Aviles and then I'll come back for my last set of
15 questions.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Thank you so much. I did
17 have a question that I felt was not answered that I
18 asked in the last round and that again, relates to
19 Summer Youth Employment. The fact that the November
20 plan includes a reduction of \$5.5 million for metro
21 cards for Fiscal Year 2024.

22 So, I'd specifically asked if all participants
23 last year received a metro card and I feel like we
24 did not get a clear answer on that.

1
2 NEVITA BAILEY: All participants who requested a
3 metro card or received a metro card for our summer
4 program last year.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: But when you're saying all
6 who requested, how is everyone supposed to know that
7 that is available?

8 KEITH HOWARD: So, as I recall that the issuance
9 of the metro cards was provided to our community-
10 based organizations and they had direct
11 responsibility to issue it to students who actually
12 was of need. Now in terms of what's happening for
13 this Summer Youth Employment Program. We are still
14 in conversations with OMB to make sure to see whether
15 or not metro cards will be issued again this summer.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: But just to be clear, when
17 you say last year, how many specifically young people
18 receive -

19 KEITH HOWARD: We can get a number for you.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Yeah, because I feel like
21 you're kind of dancing around that you're not giving
22 us the numbers.

23 KEITH HOWARD: No, I actually, we don't have a
24 number for you right now. We can provide with a
25 number or unless Nevita was able to look for it.

1
2 NEVITA BAILEY: I'm sorry, so and we also have
3 Associate Commissioner Daphne Montanez up here who
4 can also expand on the slots that were given out last
5 year. But last year, DYCD distributed 91,000 metro
6 cards.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: 91,000.

8 NEVITA BAILEY: That's correct.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Thank you. Thank you very
10 much.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILES: I'll be very brief,
12 lightening round. No long tomes about how I feel
13 about what we're doing. So, today, related to the
14 literacy program. So, today you noted the current
15 RFP serves 16,000, served 16,000 people for the ALP
16 contract?

17 NEVITA BAILEY: The current RFP for adult
18 literacy?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILES: Yeah.

20 NEVITA BAILEY: Adult literacy currently serves
21 around 978 participants. That's currently what our
22 funding supports.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILES: 900 and -

24 NEVITA BAILEY: I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I
25 apologize, a little over 11,000.

COUNCIL MEMBER AVILES: A little over 11,000.

What's the projected service level under the new RFP?

NEVITA BAILEY: The same. We anticipate no service loss.

COUNCIL MEMBER AVILES: The same, so 11,000 will be -

NEVITA BAILEY: Approximately 11,000. There will be adjustments based on the awards and how it's happening but we do not anticipate any service losses in the next RFP.

COUNCIL MEMBER AVILES: Got it and in terms of how much funding was dedicated to support literacy in the HERCs in Fiscal 2024?

NEVITA BAILEY: A little over, uhm a little under \$1 million dollars serving about 900 participants.

COUNCIL MEMBER AVILES: I'm sorry, a little under one million, nine hundred participants?

NEVITA BAILEY: A little under \$1 million and it's about 900 participants.

COUNCIL MEMBER AVILES: Okay, I'm repeating because it's hard to hear in this room.

NEVITA BAILEY: No problem.

COUNCIL MEMBER AVILES: And in terms of the projection of funding for literacy services in the

1
2 HERCs for Fiscal 2025, what's the projection for
3 that?

4 NEVITA BAILEY: At this time, that's still being
5 discussed as far as negotiations for next fiscal
6 year. And so, the HERCs funding was supported with
7 the one-time funds that we received last year and we
8 are hopeful that we'll receive it again this upcoming
9 fiscal year so we can continue providing our service.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILES: Okay. And then, and then
11 a quick shift. In terms of uhm, the cuts to Compass
12 Explore. I- you'll hear testimony from a local
13 organization but we have related to NYCHA, we have an
14 organization that surpassed all of its attendance
15 requirements over performing and yet, is going to be
16 faced with extreme cuts. Can you tell us what is
17 happening here?

18 NEVITA BAILEY: Again, this is not reflective of
19 their performance as a program. We value all of our
20 Compass Explore programs. As the Commissioner has
21 indicated throughout the testimony today, that DYCD
22 was faced with fiscal challenges and we had to comply
23 with the guidance that we received. And so, again,
24 we prioritize keeping whole our comprehensive
25 services. And so, for the Compass Initiative, we

1 wanted to minimize reductions in that portfolio and
2 so, unfortunately we had to target the Compass
3 Explore program area.
4

5 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILES: Do you take into account
6 the compounding of facts of other RFPs that cut
7 services and how they hit the same geographic
8 community? So, for example, with Red Hook, NYCHA,
9 they also got programs cut through the Department of
10 Transportation who claims there was an abundance of
11 services that don't exist and they were duplicative
12 contracts disappearing there. Not having access to a
13 library. Like the community has compounding problems
14 and cuts all over the place and it's the same kids,
15 our most deeply impoverished children in the
16 district. How does that factor into these
17 assessments?

18 NEVITA BAILEY: Well, Chair uhm, Council Member
19 Aviles, DYCD is not privy to the information that
20 other city agencies use when it comes to making
21 budget reductions, so we can't speak to other
22 agencies doing the investments in those areas. All
23 we can say is in DYCD, we looked at across the board,
24 again as I mentioned previously attendance,
25 participation, keeping whole or making sure that we

1
2 minimize any disruption to our core programs. And
3 so, what we'll try to do as mentioned, we use accrual
4 PEGs, we use revenue maximization where possible. We
5 really tried to minimize any kind of service
6 reduction and as the Commissioner mentioned for
7 Summer Rising, we prioritize keeping the same service
8 levels and made adjustments to the model but we kept
9 the same service level, because where possible we'd
10 like to minimize any kind of service reduction to our
11 participants.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILES: Great, uhm, thank you. I
13 know you don't have access to everything else in the
14 city, I would just suggest that perhaps conversations
15 with the Council Members who are seeing the multiple
16 cuts and how they're hitting particularly our most
17 impoverished right but the community that we are all
18 working so hard to support, and yet we're all cutting
19 them in different ways.

20 So, there should be a more comprehensive, maybe
21 intergovernmental look at all those communities to
22 see what we are doing to them instead of like, you
23 know everyone is kind of worried about their own
24 budget and not realizing that it's the same families
25

1 we're cutting across the board. So, thank you so
2 much for your time.

3
4 NEVITA BAILEY: You're welcome.

5 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I'm back. Hold on, I got
6 to put my earpiece on because I can't hear. Hold on,
7 it keeps falling out. So, I have a follow up
8 question for the metro cards. So, uhm, and you just
9 stated that you guys had gave out 91 metro cards but
10 -

11 KEITH HOWARD: 91,000.

12 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: 91,000 metro cards, sorry
13 91,000 metro cards. In FY24 you had a PEG for the
14 5.5 because of uhm, non-utilization, so can you talk
15 about how did you still give out the 91,000 cards?

16 NEVITA BAILEY: We used the - there was \$11
17 million that was given to DYCD to support metro cards
18 purchasing. \$4.5 was in FY23, \$5.5 was in FY24, the
19 \$91,000 that was referenced was used in the money
20 that was associated with the \$4.5.

21 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Oh and so, that was just
22 under the \$4.5?

23 NEVITA BAILEY: Correct.

24 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay, alright. I have a
25 couple more questions. So, Darryl you could just

1
2 start making your way up here because these are all
3 you brother because I'm talking about Saturday Night
4 Lights, so you could just start making your way up.
5 Alright then just sit there, you got to come up at
6 some point though because the net source is our ONS
7 too. We're at the home stretch. We're almost done,
8 I promise you.

9 So, Saturday Night Lights, what is DYCD and
10 NYPD's budget for Saturday Night Lights program?

11 NEVITA BAILEY: Saturday Night Lights. Chair
12 Stevens, you're throwing curve balls at me.

13 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: You know I ask about those
14 all the time.

15 NEVITA BAILEY: I don't have that right in front
16 of me. I can get back to you on that.

17 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay. How much overtime
18 was utilized for this program? You might not have
19 this number for NYPD.

20 KEITH HOWARD: In terms of DYCD staff?

21 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Oh, I know we don't get
22 overtime so, that's only NYPD side.

23 KEITH HOWARD: Very little in DYCD.

24 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: We don't get overtime. We
25 do this for the love. We get overtime in love. Uhm,

1
2 what are the locations and activities provided at
3 these programs? And so, I know we have what is it
4 136 now?

5 KEITH HOWARD: 136 locations.

6 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: 136 locations. Could you
7 talk about some of the activities that are going on?

8 NEVITA BAILEY: So, Chair Stevens, this is for
9 clarity. There's 141 sites that are operating.

10 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Oh, look at that.

11 NEVITA BAILEY: 136, I'm seeing 141 but that's
12 fine, I think does it also include the parks?

13 DARRYL RATTRAY: Yeah, we have directly 120 and
14 there's 16 sites for Parks Department. So, 136.

15 NEVITA BAILEY: Go ahead Darryl.

16 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I told you to come up.

17 DARRYL RATTRAY: No, so we and Chair Stevens you
18 know this well, a mix of activities primarily, they
19 should be concentrating on the sport. From 5 to 7,
20 middle school, young people from 7 to 9 high school
21 aged young people. For the first hour, it should be
22 some type of intensive skills and drills learning of
23 that sport and the second hour should be some
24 competitive play. With that being said, it's
25 enveloped in a mentoring style component youth

1 development infused connecting the young people,
2 creating a safe space, NYPD officers are in those
3 spaces Chair Stevens. They are also connecting with
4 youth people. They create that environment.
5

6 KEITH HOWARD: Let's pause for a minute because I
7 know where this is going. So -

8 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I love when you all answer
9 my questions for me.

10 KEITH HOWARD: If you are aware of any sites in
11 which you see NYPD officers not engaging -

12 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: They don't but -

13 KEITH HOWARD: With young people, we would like
14 to know and perhaps you and I and Commissioner Caban
15 can go to those sites and see exactly what you're
16 seeing and what is being told to you. So, I'm
17 offering that.

18 DARRYL RATTRAY: And Chair Stevens, to the
19 Commissioners point, some of the FAQs around this is
20 both one, if any sites of concern, let us know. We
21 are doing an extensive look at sites to ensure that
22 they are vibrant. They are active and these are the
23 right locations.

24 Two, if you have any providers in mind that or
25 any locations that you think could use an SNL

1
2 program, let us know so we could put that on the
3 radar.

4 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I will give you all that.
5 You all did when I called you out a couple but you
6 know how I feel about this program. So, what are you
7 guys doing to evaluate the success of this program?

8 DARRYL RATTRAY: So, we heard you from the last
9 uh, you know preliminary budget testimony, so we are
10 actually working to try to procure a program
11 evaluator to make sure that we evaluate -

12 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So, you're trying to find a
13 program evaluator currently or?

14 DARRYL RATTRAY: We're researching that as we
15 speak.

16 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Do you have any specific
17 SNL programs that's dedicated to girls as far as
18 sports?

19 DARRYL RATTRAY: We have several.

20 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Because that's some of my
21 concern, where it's like, lots of SNL programs are
22 boy heavy.

23 DARRYL RATTRAY: Yeah, we definitely have
24 several. The two off the top of my head right now.

1
2 One in Far Rockaway that does girls volleyball and
3 then we have a girls soccer program.

4 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: You got 2 programs out of
5 136? You could name 2 programs that are designated
6 to the girls.

7 DARRYL RATTRAY: Right in here and now I could
8 get you a list.

9 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I want a list.

10 DARRYL RATTRAY: We could get you a list of which
11 locations have which sport.

12 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And I would like a
13 breakdown of attendance boys and girls in these
14 programs.

15 DARRYL RATTRAY: We could add it.

16 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Because I know you all
17 don't have it now. I would like that, thank you.

18 Are there any program activities available for
19 students with disabilities? Like specifically for
20 SNL?

21 KEITH HOWARD: I think we could provide that to
22 you as well.

23 DARRYL RATTRAY: Let us respond offline and get
24 back to you with a list of locations.

2 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And that's a curb ball
3 because I don't think I've asked that one before too.
4 Alright, this is my last set of questions. Oh, look
5 these Council Members are coming back around, so I'm
6 going to ask my questions and I'm going to let them
7 close out. Alright, uhm, so Mayor Eric Adams
8 committed to funding Crisis Management System at \$86
9 million for Fiscal 2024 by investing in additional
10 \$8.5 million. Those with additional funds CMS,
11 expanded to 45 operating and 31 impacted
12 neighborhoods borough wide, creating a greater demand
13 for strategic legal wrap around services by CJU. CJU
14 has been an integral part of the CMS since its
15 inception and has helped.

16 So, my question is in reviewing fulfilling CJU
17 contractual obligations, what factors were considered
18 when reducing CJU funding as it relates to the PEGs?

19 NEVITA BAILEY: Are you referencing the reduction
20 for legal aid?

21 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yes, I heard you all.
22 Your all mics was on. You got to cut the mics off
23 when you whisper.

24 NEVITA BAILEY: So, yes, there was a reduction
25 for uhm, I believe FY25 you're referencing.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Hmm, hmm.

3 NEVITA BAILEY: Yeah, so there was a reduction to
4 that contract in FY25 to meet our PEG.

5 KEITH HOWARD: Right, we also acknowledge the
6 fact that of course it was very hard because we
7 understand how impactful Legal Aid is in terms of the
8 you know providing legal services as well. But
9 again, it's one of those decisions that had to be
10 made in terms of how do we maintain critical services
11 during this fiscal crisis.

12 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So, the CJU funding reduced
13 CMS direct legal services like we just said and
14 obviously it's a big - but they also included a 24-
15 hour hotline, Safe Surrenders in collaboration with
16 NYPD, Emergency Transfer Housing for New York City
17 NYCHA residents. So, what in considering obviously
18 we're in a crisis right but when we're reducing those
19 services, are there other things that are going to be
20 able to put in place to kind of fill that gap?
21 Because those are crucial and critical things, right
22 and so, what other things are going to be put into
23 place to kind of like fill those gaps because it's
24 going to be a gap?

1
2 KEITH HOWARD: Well, let's also recognize the
3 fact that legal services are also offered by other
4 institutes and also there's a lot of private entities
5 that do pro bono work. We know that I believe it's
6 DSS and public libraires and some other -

7 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Public libraries is being
8 cut to so we might not want to talk about them.

9 KEITH HOWARD: So, we just want to put that out
10 there as a placeholder that you know funding is
11 available and services are happening in the community
12 in terms of legal services. But also, understand the
13 fact that we do have city agencies like DSS when it
14 comes to victim services that we lean on and we
15 collaborate with to make sure that some program gaps
16 that you just identified, that we can work together
17 with the -

18 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So, have those things
19 already been identified because like the 24-hour
20 hotline, the emergency transfer, like -

21 KEITH HOWARD: So, emergency transfers, we work
22 collaboratively with DSS and also NYCHA and again,
23 understanding the program gaps that you just
24 mentioned and highlighted, we are leaning on other
25

1
2 city services and other agencies to be able to fill
3 those gaps.

4 DARRYL RATTRAY: And Chair Stevens, adding to
5 what the Commissioner is saying, the tough cut that
6 we had to make with Legal Aid Society, wasn't 100
7 percent cut. They still have funding in their
8 budget. We're following up with them to ensure that
9 that funding is maximized and getting to the young
10 people who need it the most.

11 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: How did you come up with
12 the \$1.5 million amount for this cut? And what data
13 did you rely on to support the cuts for this amount?

14 KEITH HOWARD: So, again you know when we look at
15 program cuts, I believe Nevita mentioned we look to
16 make sure that critical areas, critical services
17 still could be maintained.

18 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: But did you talk with like
19 the provider to like kind of see and like say okay,
20 what services, like did they have a say or did you
21 just like make the decision without even like kind of
22 talking to the providers? How was that conversation
23 or was the cut made and then - other than the data?

24
25

1
2 NEVITA BAILEY: I'll defer to Deputy Commissioner
3 Darryl Rattray to expand more on how the savings are
4 identified.

5 DARRYL RATTRAY: And in this case, and the
6 Commissioner said it earlier a few times around the
7 city in the moment. In November when we had to make
8 these tough decisions, we wanted to ensure that we
9 weren't cutting core direct services. So, those are
10 the boots on the ground, the staffing that we have
11 for Cure Violence, the Crisis Management System and
12 we had to make some really tough decisions around the
13 PEG that we put in. So, we did cut legal aid
14 society. Were they part of that discussion? They
15 were not. We are meeting with them now again; they
16 still have a significant budget \$1.5 million for
17 services. We're meeting with them to follow up to
18 ensure that we maximize that \$1.5 million and getting
19 those services to the young adults that need it the
20 most in addition to understanding the other services
21 throughout the city that we can connect to our
22 providers.

23 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I think that and just
24 thinking about good partnership right? Like, I think
25 a conversation even before when you're having because

1
2 they could probably give you insight on a program
3 that could have been – that made a little bit more
4 sense and could have figured things out and had a
5 more conclusive conversation, understanding we are in
6 a crisis and we have to see each other as partners,
7 and a partnership looks like we have conversations
8 before things happen and not after.

9 So, I would like for us to get into a practice of
10 like when we're having these tough decisions, bring
11 them into the table. You're still going to have to
12 make the decision, but I think having decisions
13 together, it just looks a lot better and the cut
14 isn't as deep because they can like figure it out and
15 maybe they can like juggle some things around and
16 provide those services, and so, I think that's part
17 of the issue that's going around, going on right now.
18 And so, thinking about how do we not only just use
19 data, but also see our providers as partners in these
20 conversations. Because I'm a little sad to hear that
21 now we're having a conversation about it and so, it's
22 like kind of like going back, because it's like
23 alright well we did it but like we could have just
24 had the conversation.

1
2 So, my last question is going to be with CJU
3 providing legal services and to expanding team as
4 partners participate in the cure violence and
5 community members. How does this reduction and
6 funding affect CMS expansion to 31 neighborhoods?
7 Because I know you guys are in the evaluation stage
8 and the program is just being you know being brought
9 over to you guys. Like, what are you guys going to
10 do around some of the other stuff because I think the
11 other piece is and thinking about a conversation we
12 had like very early on. This is a new program and
13 coming under you now is going to be like oh, now I
14 won't get these legal services and so, could you talk
15 about like what this is going to really look like I
16 mean, because I don't - obviously we're having tough
17 times and I want to also make sure that like as we're
18 making these decisions that it's a little bit more
19 holistic because like you guys said before, you're in
20 evaluation stages, so to have to make a cut like
21 this, it's really concerning that like it wasn't a
22 conversation with the providers because you still are
23 evaluating the programs.

24 KEITH HOWARD: So, I think you actually provided
25 the things that we need to do right. So, we need to

1
2 go back to the provider and have those conversations
3 to make sure that program gaps are being addressed
4 and that we need to look at those critical services
5 that Legal Aid also provides. And I think that they
6 are one of the vital agencies out there that's doing
7 the real work.

8 So, to your answer, I think that we need to
9 seriously have conversations with them. In addition
10 to letting them know exactly where we're looking to
11 refer those clients whom they may be able to have
12 resources.

13 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Uhm, I'm going to turn it
14 over to Council Member Brewer then Council Member
15 Williams.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you very much Madam
17 Chair. So, I think earlier, you said that about 18
18 staff people are working on contracts. So, I guess
19 my question because it sounds like a small number
20 because you have so many contracts. So, I want to
21 know how many contracts you are working on. How many
22 contracts does each staff member have assigned to
23 them? Maybe there's a variety of numbers there and
24 what's the timing to get those contracts done? It

1
2 seems to me that's a small number of people for all
3 your contracts, that's why I'm asking.

4 DARRYL RATTRAY: Council Member Brewer, thank you
5 for the question and let me clarify. The 18 members
6 are actual staff who work directly with the programs
7 and sites. They also assist with the contracts but
8 we have a – of course, they came into the DYCD
9 ecosystem, so there's a larger number of people who
10 work on contracts. I'll hand it over to our First
11 Deputy Commissioner to expand on that.

12 ALAN CHENG: Yeah, I just want to add that uhm,
13 just to clarify, we have separate units that work on
14 the payments as well as the development, making the
15 contracts and getting them registered so that's
16 separate and apart from the team that Darryl is
17 talking about, which oversee just the program. They
18 go out and do the site visits, do the technical
19 assistance and all that stuff. So, we have whole
20 unit, uhm, I want to say like in Finance we have what
21 70 or so?

22 NEVITA BAILEY: Yeah, so we have at least 50
23 staff that are dedicated strictly on process
24 contracts.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, how many contracts
3 do they process?

4 NEVITA BAILEY: Well, it ranges, DYCD has over
5 1,000 contracts. So, it ranges and we've done a lot
6 of work over the last year to streamline our
7 processes to kind of expedite it to minimize the
8 change of any kind of backlogs.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: And so, the 18 just go
10 out to the field? What do the 18 actually do?

11 NEVITA BAILEY: I think he's referencing more of
12 program oversight and support and technical
13 assistance on a day-to-day basis.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Alright, so how many
15 programs do they have, each of the 18?

16 DARRYL RATTRAY: They have a mix anywhere from I
17 want to say 12 to 15 based on their portfolios, it
18 could be crisis management system. It could be a Map
19 providers. They have combinations within their
20 portfolios.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, so there are other
22 people in addition to the 18 who are doing that work
23 because if you're looking - I'm trying to -

24 DARRYL RATTRAY: We're doing the actual contract
25 development, budget development work, that's correct.

1
2 NEVITA BAILEY: So, Council Member Brewer, DYCD
3 has our Finance Office has almost 80 staff. Our
4 procurement office has over 40 staff, so we have a
5 bit over 120 staff who are dedicated strictly on
6 financing and contract processing for our providers.
7 So, as you're referring to is our day-to-day program
8 management and oversight to our providers and there's
9 18 staff for that.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay and you feel that
11 that's enough? I mean, there's never enough I
12 understand but do you feel that's not something that
13 needs a new need because you know we do get
14 complaints as you can imagine, mostly you know it
15 just takes a while. Your services are extremely
16 needed and small groups and groups that are doing
17 God's work in many cases, so I'm just wondering how
18 long does it take? Is there any improvement in the
19 streamlining as a result of streamlining and getting
20 these contracts out the door?

21 NEVITA BAILEY: Yeah, sure Council Member Brewer.
22 DYCD last year, over 600 contracts for FY24 to make
23 sure that providers are able to get their funds at
24 the beginning of the year and we had a 25 percent
25 advance that we initiated this year. As we were

1 transitioning to a new fiscal system, we prioritize
2 getting cash out the door and so, we made sure that
3 we released additional \$139 million just in a new
4 reflection of the Summer Rising, SYEP and all sorts
5 of things. 95 percent of our budgets are approved
6 and so we believe that we're currently adequately
7 staffed to make sure that we can process our
8 contracts and budgets effectively.
9

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, maybe others would
11 feel that you need more but I appreciate -

12 NEVITA BAILEY: There's always room for
13 improvement.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Yeah, but I appreciate
15 that OMB is hovering somewhere. Thank you very much.

16 DARRYL RATTRAY: Thank you Council Member.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you. One
18 question. Thank you so much Chair. In Fiscal 2024
19 Adopted Budget it included terms and conditions and
20 as of February, the agency did not submit two
21 reports, one on adult literacy but I'll just talk
22 about the one on Saturday Night Lights where you were
23 supposed to submit daily attendance numbers
24 disaggregated by location. Do you know if its now
25 been submitted?

1
2 NEVITA BAILEY: We can share that. We can follow
3 up after this hearing to submit any kind of documents
4 that are due.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Yeah, I just thought it
6 was important to ask that question on the record
7 because the Chair spent a lot of time talking about
8 her opinions about Saturday Night Lights and not
9 really understanding how the programs are being
10 evaluated and the Council put in terms and conditions
11 last year but you all haven't submitted that. And
12 so, I think a lot of times at the agencies, we don't
13 know everything. You guys know most of the things,
14 well Chair Stevens does but a lot of us are
15 generalists, we don't have details of what's
16 happening within your agencies and so, when we ask
17 questions or we're asking for data so we can better
18 ask questions and better understand what's going on.
19 So, it's a little disappointing that we don't get the
20 information in a timely fashion.

21 KEITH HOWARD: I clearly understand that but I
22 don't know if you were in the room when that question
23 was raised and we -

24 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: I wasn't, I had to
25 leave.

1
2 KEITH HOWARD: And we acknowledged the fact that
3 you know the Chair mentioned that she wants program
4 evaluation for Saturday Night Lights.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: I heard you say that
6 but outside of the program evaluation there was -

7 KEITH HOWARD: But that's going to include the
8 numbers.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: I know but whether or
10 not you have a program evaluator, last year in the
11 adopted budget the agency by way of terms and
12 conditions was supposed to submit this information.
13 So, in absence whether or not you have a program
14 evaluator, you are still required to submit that
15 information.

16 KEITH HOWARD: So, we'll take a look at exactly
17 what we're required to submit based upon exactly what
18 was asked of the Council and we can get back to you
19 on that.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you.

21 KEITH HOWARD: Okay.

22 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I'm back. I do have two
23 more questions. Uhm, so this is homeless runaway
24 youth. Do DYCD's Homeless Runaway Youth program have
25 referral access to city funded legal services for new

1
2 arrivals and what is DYCD doing to ensure that youth
3 have access to immigration legal services? Yes, that
4 was for you Susan.

5 SUSAN HASKELL: Yeah, we absolutely are connected
6 with all city legal services to make sure runaway and
7 homeless youth are having access to that. We meet
8 regularly with our agency partners around resources
9 to make sure that we're giving the most up to date
10 current contact information and status. That's a
11 really important part of the work with runaway
12 homeless youth. Even before the migrant crisis, uhm
13 just making sure that every young person, not knowing
14 when somebody comes to the door, what their
15 immigration status is, what their legal needs are.
16 Just making sure that all young people and runaway
17 homeless youth know where those resources are.

18 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, I know this was a
19 huge thing for the - oh is my time up? Oh, uhm, is a
20 huge thing and understanding especially with asylum
21 seekers because this has been a huge uptick and I
22 know it's been hard for everyone to get legal
23 services and I know that some other legal services
24 have been put on the backburner because of the uptick
25 with asylum seekers. So, definitely want us to

1
2 continue to think about what it looks like to make
3 sure that young people have access to that and
4 continue to expand on that.

5 And just one more question, the Local Law of 79
6 of 2018 reports that the shelter access report July
7 through December 2023 shows that almost a 7,000
8 percent increase of youth being denied youth shelter
9 beds due to the lack of vacancies compared to the
10 same report for the first half of 2023. What is DYCD
11 doing to expand RHY bed capacity to meet the
12 increased need?

13 SUSAN HASSELL: I think we discussed this a
14 little bit earlier when we were talking about whether
15 there you know, the number of runaway and homeless
16 youth beds and the demand on those beds. I don't
17 know, 7,000 sounds high.

18 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I know it does. I think
19 that's why they sent it to me again because I know it
20 was high but I didn't know it was a 7-, almost a
21 7,000 increase.

22 SUSAN HASSELL: Yeah, I think we had a couple
23 hundred, roughly 250 - that's not the - something
24 very close to that unable to access in the July to
25

1
2 December period that we reported and so, it was a big
3 increase from previous reports.

4 KEITH HOWARD: But I also want to indicate and I
5 think we addressed that drop-in centers, we're able
6 to make sure that young people are getting referred
7 and I don't think that was reflected in the article
8 that came out. Young people were being referred to
9 Department of Homeless Services and also to the
10 reticketing to make sure that those beds are
11 available.

12 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: No, listen I hear you but
13 the kids don't want to go there, so we could refer
14 them to the DHS shelters all we want but they don't
15 want to go there and so, what happens is they end up
16 in the hospitals. They end up at the McDonalds.
17 They end up everywhere else other than there, so we
18 can refer them but we know that's not where they want
19 to be because they are not getting the support that
20 they need.

21 So, I definitely want to make sure that I'm going
22 to continue to fight to expand this and make this a
23 huge issue because it is necessary. So, like yes, we
24 can say they can go to DSS but we know that that's
25 not where they need to be and we don't want them to

1
2 go there. Like, none of us want them to go there, so
3 I will leave it there because I want to make sure
4 that our young people know that they are being heard
5 and especially our homeless and runaway youth
6 population that we don't focus on a lot in the city.
7 And it is important that we know that there's a need.
8 We know that we're in crisis and we can't just say
9 that its crisis for some but you guys made it. How
10 was that? Was it too bad?

11 KEITH HOWARD: Thank you so much. We appreciate
12 you as always.

13 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you guys so much.

14 KEITH HOWARD: Council Member Williams, thank you
15 so much. We appreciate you.

16 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Oh look she's still here.
17 So, we'll be taking a recess and waiting for our next
18 group of folks to come in. Thank you guys so much,
19 really appreciate it.

20 KEITH HOWARD: Thank you.

21 [RECESS 02:38:18]- [02:43:53]

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good afternoon everyone. For
23 those of you who have just arrived, a couple of
24 ground rules. Please do not approach the dais at any
25 point. If you have a question that needs to be

1 asked, find one of the Sergeant at Arms, we'll relay
2 the message. Also, no food or beverages allowed. If
3 you have coffee or any type of open containers,
4 please remove them from the chambers at this time.
5 We should be starting in about five minutes. If you
6 are here to testify and have not filled out a witness
7 slip, please do so at this time at the back table for
8 the Sergeant at Arms.
9

10 [RECESS 02:44:28]- [02:52:50]

11 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Good afternoon. Alright,
12 so we are going to get started. Good afternoon
13 everyone and welcome to the second part of today's
14 budget hearing. I'm Council Member Althea Stevens
15 and I serve as the Chair to the Committee of Youth; I
16 mean Children and Youth Services.

17 The second part of today's Committee hearing is
18 the Fiscal 2025 Preliminary Budget and the 2024
19 Preliminary Mayor's Management Report or the PMMR,
20 the Administration for Children Services or ACS.
21 Thank you to Commissioner Dannhauser for joining. We
22 are also joined by oh, Council Member Williams. Oh
23 just you. Oh just you, thank you for being here.
24 Everybody else is downstairs.
25

2 assistance from 200 percent to 300 percent of the
3 federal poverty lines, and then again to 85 percent
4 of the state median income.

5 I believe more families, especially those in high
6 needs community will benefit from the much-needed
7 childcare services. In Fiscal 2023, ACS saw an
8 increase of nearly 20 percent in the number of
9 children's adopted, as compared to prior years.
10 Additionally, the number of children's with close to
11 home placements in the first four months of Fiscal
12 2024 increase by 30 percent compared to Fiscal 2023.
13 Unfortunately, the Close to Home program was
14 subjected to a PEG in November's plan that was not
15 restored in the Preliminary Plan.

16 Juvenile Justice is an area of ongoing concern to
17 the Council. According to the PMMR, ACS saw an
18 average of daily population in juvenile justice rise
19 37.1 percent. When comparing fiscal 2023 to fiscal
20 2022 and by an additional 11.6 percent when comparing
21 the first four months of fiscal 2024 to last fiscal
22 year.

23 Administration to juvenile justice increased by
24 34.5 percent when comparing fiscal 2023 to the prior
25 fiscal year driven by the increase in arrests. I

1
2 would like to learn more about ACS strategy to
3 stabilize the juvenile justice system to ensure that
4 the trauma informed community-based treatment is
5 provided whenever possible, as well as that ACS
6 vision for keeping the city kids in the right track
7 out of criminal justice system. I also look forward
8 to hearing from ACS and dealing with staffing issues
9 as well as capital upgrades to the two secured
10 detention facilities Horizon and Crossroads.

11 I look forward to today's discussion on the
12 budgets actions including the preliminary plan, the
13 PEGs on November and Preliminary plans, performing
14 matrix including the PMMR and the vital ACS programs
15 such as Close to Homes, preventive services,
16 childcare and foster care. I am particularly
17 interested to hear how ACS strategically meeting the
18 multiple facet needs of at-risk families across the
19 city and working to increase the utilization of
20 preventative services that ensures the health, safety
21 and stability of families and children.

22 It is the Council's responsibility to ensure that
23 the city's budget is fair, transparent, accountable
24 to New Yorkers, and as the Chair of Children and
25 Youth Services, I will continue to push for

1
2 accountability, accuracy, and to ensure that the
3 budget reflects the needs and interests of the city.
4 This hearing is a vital part of this process and I
5 expect that ACS will be responsive to questions and
6 concerns of the Council Member.

7 I look forward to an active engagement with the
8 Administration over the next four months to ensure
9 that the fiscal 2025 budget meets the goals of the
10 Council that the Council has set. I would like to
11 thank both my staff, my Committee Staff and my staff
12 in helping to prepare for today. Simal Hamid(SP?),
13 Julia Haramis, Unit Head oh and Christina
14 Yamati(SP?), Elizabeth Artz and my entire team who
15 are here with me today and back in the District
16 Office.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Hi, good afternoon. Please
18 raise your right hand. Do you affirm to tell the
19 truth, the whole truth and nothing btu the truth
20 before this Committee and to respond honestly to
21 Council Member questions. Thank you. You may begin.

22 JESS DANNHAUSER: Good afternoon. I am Jess
23 Dannhauser, the Commissioner of the Administration
24 for Children Services. Thank you Chair Stevens and
25 the members of the Children and Youth Services

1
2 Committee for holding today's hearing on our
3 Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2025. I
4 appreciate the opportunity to share the important
5 work we are doing at ACS to help make New York City a
6 more safe, just, and equitable place for children,
7 youth and families to live and thrive. I'm joined
8 today by First Deputy Commissioner Winette Saunders
9 and Margaret Pletnikoff, who is the Deputy
10 Commissioner for the Division of Finance.

11 I want to take a moment to recognize that this is
12 ACS's first hearing before this new Committee formed
13 to specifically focus on the children, youth and
14 families of New York City. Thank you to the Chair
15 and members of the Committee for your commitment to
16 children and families. We at ACS are grateful and
17 look forward to working together with you in the
18 coming years.

19 At ACS we envision a New York City where children
20 and youth are safe and thriving and families are
21 supported as their most important resources and
22 protectors. My testimony today will focus on some of
23 our many accomplishments from the past year as well
24 as our budget plan for the upcoming fiscal year.
25

1
2 As you may know, ACS is required by law to
3 respond to all reports of suspected abuse or
4 maltreatment forwarded to us by the New York
5 Statewide Central Register, SCR reports. This past
6 year, ACS responded to 61,505 SCR reports. Of which
7 38 percent involved Black families, 45 percent
8 involved Hispanic Latinx families and 7 percent
9 involved Asian families, 5 percent involved White
10 families. We know that in New York City a Black
11 child is nearly 7 times more likely to be a subject
12 of an SCR report than a White child and a Hispanic
13 child is nearly 5 times more likely to be the subject
14 of a report than a White child.

15 ACS does not control the front door of the child
16 protection system because we do not and cannot
17 control what calls are made to the state, nor what
18 reports the state accepts. Nonetheless, this
19 Administration has decided that we must play a vital
20 role in informing the decision making of mandated
21 reporters through new trainings and by widening
22 pathways to family support without an investigation.

23 To be clear, many reports we receive are entirely
24 appropriate, called in by people in good faith
25 believe a child is in danger at risk of maltreatment.

1
2 There are also situations where I believe that there
3 would have been a better option to support families
4 because even though a family might need some help, a
5 child is not in danger.

6 Given this, we were taking a number of steps to
7 reduce unnecessary calls to the SCR and increase
8 supports for families without the need for an
9 investigation or without a report at all.

10 Our job at ACS must be to get this right, to help
11 reduce the volume of unnecessary reporting on the one
12 hand and on the other, to ensure our child protection
13 teams have the training, support and resources to
14 identify the children who are in danger, make sound
15 decisions and ensure families who need help get it.
16 With the support of our Deputy Mayor, ACS has
17 embarked on a citywide strategy to reduce the number
18 of unnecessary child welfare reports and replace SCR
19 reports where appropriate with supports that can meet
20 the needs of families further upstream. This is how
21 we can reduce the number of families experiencing the
22 formal child protection, prevent child maltreatment
23 and help families feel and be comfortable and save
24 enough to ask for and receive help without judgement
25 or fear.

1
2 Specially, we've been collaborating with city
3 agencies who staff in mandated reporter roles,
4 generate the highest volume of reports, to provide
5 revised training and supportive materials so that
6 they better understand when a report is necessary and
7 when it is not. How they can support a family
8 without reporting to the SCR.

9 For example, we have jointly trained over 6,000
10 staff in New York City public schools, the largest
11 source of reports citywide and more than 65 sessions
12 and have developed the training that reached tens of
13 thousands of school based personal last fall. As a
14 result, we have seen the number of SCR reports from
15 schools dropped by more than 10 percent so far this
16 school year. Alongside a substantial increase in
17 referrals from schools directly to prevention
18 programs and other supportive services without
19 involving the child protection system.

20 We have also been training Department of Homeless
21 Services staff and DYCD after-school providers and we
22 help provide the training for Health and Hospital
23 staff. These tailored sessions provide mandated
24 reporters with tools they need to not only access
25 whether a report is truly needed, but also how to

1
2 connect families with services and supports outside
3 of the traditional child protection system. For
4 those cases that are called into the SCR, we have
5 increased the percentage that we assign to the CARES
6 track, which is New York City's version of a state
7 authorized non investigative child protection
8 response in appropriate cases. With CARES, there's
9 no traditional investigation, no court involvement
10 and no determination.

11 In CARES, specially trained child protective
12 staff assess the safety of the children and then
13 partner with the family to identify their needs,
14 empower the family to make decisions that address
15 their needs and the needs of their children and
16 connect families to appropriate services. The CARES
17 approach is family centered, family driven and
18 solution focused. In just two years, we doubled the
19 number of CARES units from 31 to 64 and the number of
20 CARES cases opened rose 150 percent from 4,000 in
21 calendar year 2021 to 10,000 this past calendar year.
22 With now more than 25 percent of incoming child
23 protection cases diverted to the non-investigative
24 CARES track.

2 This past October, we initiated a pilot to
3 standardize the information child protection staff
4 provide to families in the start of investigation.
5 So parents are explicitly informed of their rights at
6 the start of investigation. It will be the first in
7 the state to provide a standardized printed plan
8 language notification of rights to parents at the
9 onset of an investigation.

10 In January of this year, we determined the pilot
11 was successful and we are expanding the use of this
12 notification to be citywide before the end of June
13 2024. We want to minimize the involvement of
14 families with child protection and the family courts
15 whenever safely possible. With the expansion of
16 CARES and the implementation of a state law that
17 changed the standard of evidence in child protection
18 cases, we have seen the number of families with
19 findings of abuse or neglect drop steadily in recent
20 years, down 14 percent from 2021 to 2023, which is
21 nearly 2,000 families fewer.

22 Since 2017, it is down 45 percent, about 10,000
23 families fewer getting an indicated case. We have
24 reduced the number of ACS Article 10 filings in
25 Family Court, seeking court supervision even more

1 sharply, down by 25 percent since 2021 and by more
2 than 50 percent since 2019. As a result, the ACS
3 Financial Plans better align our staffing models as
4 we've been able to decrease headcount for both the
5 family court attorneys who would have handled these
6 cases and the child protection staff in the family
7 service units who would have supervised these
8 families. This is a \$1.1 million gross reduction,
9 \$433,000 CTL for 15 lawyers and a \$2.9 million gross
10 reduction \$1.1 million in CTL for 40 child protection
11 staff.
12

13 These vacancy reductions reflects our reduced
14 involvement with families, with no impact to current
15 staff. We are also working hard to reduce families
16 interaction with the child protection system by
17 providing resources and support upfront. We are
18 taking intentional efforts to increase the number in
19 percentage of families whose prevention program,
20 participation initiates with the community-based
21 referral rather than filing a report to the SCR.

22 New York City has one of the most robust
23 prevention service arrays in the country. Our
24 prevention services can provide help with concrete
25 needs, parenting skills, service referrals and

1
2 counseling, and are also available regardless of
3 immigration status.

4 We have been adjusting our prevention programs to
5 reflect the changing needs of communities. This has
6 included taking steps in the past few financial plans
7 to close the most underutilized programs and right
8 size slot capacity in our intensive family treatment
9 and rehabilitation model. While also launching a new
10 respite program and a new school based early support
11 prevention model with contracts that will begin this
12 July.

13 We have been transparent and collaborative with
14 our prevention partners throughout this process and
15 we have significant capacity available in all program
16 types throughout the city. In calendar year 2023,
17 almost 15,000 families are served in ACS contracted
18 prevention programs. Our new school based early
19 support prevention programs aims to provide families
20 with meaningful and effective support while avoiding
21 unnecessary child protective responses by more easily
22 connecting families in need to services and
23 resources.

24 The new program builds upon ACS's ongoing work
25 with New York City public schools to reduce

1 unnecessary reports to the SCR. The school based
2 early support program will address stressors,
3 economic, academic or behavioral that may impact a
4 child's wellbeing, help address families concrete
5 needs and help strengthen social connections and
6 engagement with the school community. Families can
7 be referred to school based early support programs by
8 school personnel or community-based service providers
9 or seek services on their own. Beginning in July,
10 the school based early programs will serve
11 approximately 1,280 families each year at elementary
12 and middle schools.

14 As part of their contracts, provider agencies
15 offering these programs will identify at least three
16 partner elementary and/or middle schools in their
17 districts and must maintain a presence in each
18 school. Providers are also required to
19 collaboratively co-design at least four school-based
20 offerings per year based on the needs and priorities
21 of the school community. This may include school
22 outreach efforts, youth development activities, peer
23 support groups, cultural celebrations and other types
24 of events that may connect families to other
25 community resources.

1 As part of this new program, a portion is being
2 funded with just city funds, which will allow some
3 families to participate in services without the need
4 to open a traditional program services case. We have
5 also continued our work to expand the family
6 enrichment centers. Last month, we announced the
7 next nine providers recommended for awards. FECs are
8 welcoming walk-in centers that are codesigned with
9 community members to enhance child protective
10 factors, like social connectedness, access to
11 supports in concrete needs and parental resiliency.
12 Key to the success of the FEC models that our
13 provider partners work hard to ensure community
14 members play essential role in each centers unique
15 design to meet the wants and needs of local children
16 and families. There are currently 12 FECs that are
17 open throughout the city and we'd be very pleased to
18 arrange a time for the Committee to visit some. Our
19 Office of Child Safety and Injury Prevention is
20 continuing to lead efforts to provide parents,
21 caregivers and child serving professionals with the
22 information and resources they need to avoid
23 unintentional injuries and keep children safe. This
24 week is National Poison Prevention week and tomorrow
25

1 we are once again reminding parents, family members
2 and other adults about the poisoning risks associated
3 with medication, household chemicals, button
4 batteries, cannabis infused edible products and other
5 toxic household items.
6

7 Tomorrow, along with our partners at the New York
8 Poison Center, Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield and Life
9 of Hope Center in Brooklyn, We will share information
10 about the risks and symptoms of poisoning in children
11 and provide guidance on how to safely store
12 medicines, cannabis infused products, and other
13 potential poisons and what to do if you know or
14 suspect a child has been exposed.

15 Participants will receive free lock boxes to keep
16 medicines and potentially toxic household items
17 locked and out of reach of children. We're also
18 focused on increasing access to childcare by
19 providing families vouchers that help them pay for
20 care. ACS currently provides childcare assistance
21 through childcare vouchers supported by the State
22 Child Care Block Grant, as well as other state,
23 federal and city funds. Childcare assistance from
24 ACS is available to eligible low-income families with
25 income at or below 85 percent State Median Income or

1
2 \$99,250 for a family of 4, as well as families with
3 child welfare involvement. ACS has been working hard
4 to expand support for low-income families, and from
5 January 2023 to January 2024, the number of children
6 enrolled in care with the support of an ACS-issued
7 low-income voucher rose 134 percent from about 13,800
8 to over 32,000.

9 I want to take a moment to thank the childcare
10 staff who have been processing this new volume of
11 applications and the City Hall team for creating the
12 new My City Portal so families can complete their
13 applications online.

14 Our commitment to providing families with the
15 services and supports they need as far as upstream as
16 possible has led to a continued decline in the number
17 of children in foster care with the historic low of
18 under 6,400. For those children and youth who do
19 need to come into foster care, ACS has maintained our
20 commitment to placing children with kin, meaning
21 family or close friends, with 45 percent of children
22 currently in care with family or friends.

23 ACS is also committed to working with our
24 provider partners to provide children and youth in
25 care and their families with the services and

1 supports they need to thrive, and in most cases
2 return home. To accomplish this, ACS re-procured
3 foster care, with contracts that began this past July
4 2023. Throughout this transition year, our provider
5 partners have brought on a new workforce of parent
6 advocates with lived experience, to help parents
7 navigate the child welfare experience and safely
8 reunify with their children more quickly. They have
9 also implemented a new trauma-informed training for
10 foster parents and staff, and incorporated the new
11 Enhanced Family Foster Care program, which blends the
12 traditional regular and therapeutic models into one
13 program with more substantial resources and supports,
14 and which will increase stability for children even
15 as their therapeutic needs may fluctuate over time.
16 The EFFC model also embeds parent advocates on case
17 planning teams, to increase parent voice in services
18 and permanency planning.

19 We are continuing to strengthen our programs and
20 initiatives that have demonstrated success including
21 Fair Futures, which provides coaching and tutoring to
22 thousands of youth up to age 26, and College Choice,
23 which is now providing housing, tuition, stipends and
24 other supports to more than 350 youth in foster care
25

1
2 up from under 200, when we lost the program, who
3 attend college.

4 ACS also oversees services and programs for youth
5 at every stage of the juvenile justice continuum,
6 which includes community-based alternatives for youth
7 who are at risk as well as for their families.

8 Alternative to detention programs, secure detention
9 services at Crossroads Juvenile Center and at Horizon
10 Juvenile Center, non-secure detention services and a
11 Close to Home Juvenile Justice Placement System. Our
12 goal for all of these programs is to provide youth
13 with the education and behavioral skills and supports
14 they need to thrive while preventing further or
15 deeper penetration to the justice system.

16 The juvenile justice system has transformed and
17 thankfully we rarely see youth with minor offences in
18 our detention programs, as they are diverted towards
19 community based therapeutic interventions. Upon
20 opening 25 years ago, Crossroads and Horizon Juvenile
21 Centers serve youth who are on average 14 and 15
22 years old. The vast majority of those young people
23 were remanded for less than 60 days on family court
24 charges. As a result of Raise the Age, 16- and 17-
25 year-olds charged in the Youth Parts of Supreme Court

1
2 and ordered to be detained are now more appropriately
3 held in juvenile facilities instead of adult jails
4 and these young people can remain in ACS facilities
5 until they turn 21 years of age.

6 Today, there are 238 youth across 2 secure
7 detention centers, which are now approved by the
8 state for a total combined capacity of 267. About
9 half of these young people are over age 18 and about
10 70 percent are being detained on allegations and
11 charges related to gun violence.

12 Acknowledging this older population of youth, and
13 longer lengths of stay, we are taking steps to
14 transform our detention centers to comprehensively
15 meet their needs and capacity for insight, growth,
16 and change. To better serve young people in
17 detention, ACS is working to build an annex at the
18 Horizon Juvenile Center. The annex, which will be
19 constructed within the current footprint of Horizon,
20 will include larger classrooms, including specialized
21 arts and science classrooms and trade workshops to
22 allow us to offer new and innovative vocational
23 programming, an industrial kitchen with an expanded
24 serving area and additional dining halls, 8 bed
25 residential units, an expanded medical and mental

1 health clinic, and improved spaces for outdoor
2 recreation. Moreover, modern design will engender a
3 developmentally appropriate, trauma-responsive
4 environment. These enhancements will help us meet
5 the unique needs of the young adults in our care
6 today. The fundings for the Annex are in our capital
7 budget.

9 ACS is continuing to strengthen our community-
10 based programming and collaborating with our city
11 partners to do the same. It is important to note
12 that New York City's juvenile detention population is
13 smaller than other large American cities. Chicago,
14 which is one-third the size of New York City, has a
15 population in detention that is more than 65 percent
16 of New York City's secure census. Philadelphia,
17 which is five times smaller than New York City, has
18 almost the same number of young people in secure
19 detention.

20 While most of the youth in our secure detention
21 facilities have cases pending in the adult court
22 system, youth with cases in the Family Court system
23 are also now older and have more serious cases. Many
24 of them have had their cases removed to the Family
25 Court from the Supreme Court. These youth can be

1
2 ordered to be placed in our Close to Home system,
3 which is limited to youth classified as juvenile
4 delinquents in Family Court and ordered to be in
5 residential placement. Close to Home programs offer
6 structured residential care for youth in a small,
7 supervised and home like environment. In contrast to
8 the traditional larger juvenile placement facilities
9 model so common in other jurisdictions, Close to Home
10 programs have been intentionally designed to enhance
11 participation in programming while preserving the
12 safety and security to youth, staff, and the
13 community.

14 Today, there are approximately 90 youth in Close
15 to Home. Over the past several financial plans, ACS
16 has reduced unused Close to Home capacity, and in the
17 most recent plan, our budget for Close to Home is
18 aligned with our new contracts for 147 beds, which
19 will go into effect this July.

20 Earlier this month, ACS announced the programs
21 recommended for the new Close to Home awards. The
22 foundation and mission of Close to Home will remain
23 in place as the new contracts are implemented.
24 Programs will be evidence based and effective in
25 addressing the needs of the population served. In

1 addition the youth, their families and communities
2 will be the primary motivation in making sure that
3 services and resources often include behavioral
4 support, education specialists, recreational staff
5 and after care services. Youth treatment will start
6 the first day of placement focusing on successful
7 reintegration within their families and communities.
8 Close to Home will continue to provide Fair Future
9 coaches to our youth to help with reentry to the
10 community beyond completion of their Close to Home
11 program.

12
13 ACS's proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2025 is
14 \$2.7 billion, including \$830 million in city tax
15 levy. This represents a one percent decrease from
16 FY24 Adopted Budget and is due in large part to
17 savings measures instituted in the November Plan,
18 this January plan, and one year Council and
19 Administrative funded initiatives.

20 As you can see in this testimony, our
21 implementation of the citywide PEGs in both the
22 November and January budget plans have been as
23 thoughtful and strategic as possible, focusing on
24 reductions that are consistent with our priorities
25 and will not negatively impact our programming to

1 support families. In addition, we have closed the
2 remaining gap through revenue maximization.
3

4 As you can see, ACS and our providers have
5 continued to make progress in our efforts to support
6 children, youth and families, in the least intrusive
7 manner possible. As Commissioner, I had the
8 opportunity to meet with, shadow and learn from staff
9 throughout the city, including our child protection
10 Borough Offices, legal units, detention facilities,
11 the Children's Center, training sites, childcare
12 resource areas, and the hardworking administrative
13 teams. I continue to meet with and visit our
14 provider agencies prevention, foster care, FEC,
15 community partnerships and juvenile justice sites. I
16 continue to be deeply moved by the commitment and
17 passion the staff have for supporting families.

18 I want to take a moment to thank all of the staff
19 from ACS and our provider agencies for the work they
20 do each and every day. I also have the opportunity
21 to listen to those with lived experience with the
22 child welfare and juvenile justice system, along with
23 advocates, legal service providers, the philanthropic
24 community and communities themselves. We know that
25 there is more work to do. We remain committed to

1
2 listen closely, particularly to those who have first
3 hand experience with our system and to continue to
4 learn so that we can deepen our understanding and
5 evolve our work even further. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you Commissioner.
7 This is our first hearing together, so I will be nice
8 but I do have a number of questions and some
9 concerns. Frankly, I mean, you know I know we, even
10 before I took over this part of my portfolio, we had
11 a conversation about the detention centers, which I
12 am very concerned about because I truly believe if we
13 build it, they will come, and I know we were in a
14 very interesting predicament because the census is
15 rising and we want to make sure kids are comfortable
16 but I just have to go on record for saying like, I
17 feel like we got to figure this out because I don't
18 want to floor to be nicer or bigger, it's not to have
19 young people in the facility, so. I just wanted to
20 make sure I stated that before I jump into some of my
21 questions. But uhm, I'm going to start with
22 childcare and new needs and the voucher program. The
23 preliminary plan includes an \$81 million new needs
24 for childcare in Fiscal 2024 as well as a 3 million
25 other adjustments for childcare. Both adjustments

1
2 were made in Fiscal 2024 and were not baselined. How
3 are those funds amount – how are those funding
4 amounts determined and what are the funding sources?

5 JESS DANNHAUSER: Thank you Chair Stevens. So,
6 we've been doing a lot of work, our childcare teams
7 to expand voucher enrollment. Overall, total voucher
8 enrollment just in the last two years have gone from
9 about 48,000 children enrolled in vouchers to 74,000
10 children. That includes on the low income vouchers
11 an increase from about 7,000 to over 31,000, actually
12 about 35,000 today, as of today's report.

13 So, spending is increasing. Most of the funding
14 for childcare is through the state CCBG Block Grant,
15 and so, as we enroll more families and we have
16 permission from OMB and Authority to continue to
17 enroll family with children, we are – money gets
18 moved from the Block Grant into our budget and so,
19 it's an ongoing assessment with OMB. We've seen
20 really wonderfully high increases in demand for
21 childcare vouchers since the launch of my city. And
22 our team has been able to improve the application
23 processing for about 1,200 children a month to almost
24 5,000 children a month.

1
2 So, there's also a CTL portion that you
3 referenced, the 81 million that typically relates to
4 vouchers, via cash assistance. There's a CTL
5 requirement there, and so HRA is also processing
6 vouchers and enrolling families. So, we're in
7 ongoing conversations with the Mayor's Office, Office
8 of Childcare and Early Education, with OMB, and we
9 are absolutely going to continue to move forward in
10 the year ahead and enrolling more and more families
11 in childcare.

12 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Why was the amount added
13 for only one year and not baselined?

14 JESS DANNHAUSER: Uhm, mostly because it's been a
15 real surge and demand. We're assessing what that
16 looks like. Most of the money as I mentioned comes
17 from the state. We will see what the state puts in
18 their budget. And so, the money will be there but it
19 is something that's still being assessed.

20 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: By how much is it currently
21 outpacing the baseline budget? And when does the
22 agency plan on adjusting the baseline budget to more
23 align with the current level of demands?

24 JESS DANNHAUSER: So, I'm going to ask Margaret
25 to speak to that a little bit. We are on pace to

1
2 spend over \$800 million this year for voucher
3 spending, which is up over double, \$400 million in
4 2022. We expect those conversations OMB to continue
5 about adding it to the baseline.

6 MARGARET PLETNIKOFF: Great, uhm, hi.

7 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Hi.

8 MARGARET PLETNIKOFF: Hi Council Member. So,
9 uhm, we continue to evaluate the need and we continue
10 to increase provider rates. We've actually managed
11 to increase the rates for 93 percent of our providers
12 and those rates go retro back to October, so it
13 constantly changes our projections. So, we've been
14 working very closely with OMB to identify what our
15 need is going to be for the current year and to work
16 with them to ensure that we have sufficient funding
17 to meet those needs. In terms of our outyear
18 planning, we are working very closely with OCFS to
19 understand what funding is going to be made available
20 and continuing to work on the projections as we see
21 vouchers increase in both the low-income side and on
22 the mandated population.

23 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you. Uhm, what is
24 actually spent on childcare? Uhm, what was actually

1 spent on childcare in Fiscal 2023 and in Fiscal 2024
2 thus far?

3
4 JESS DANNHAUSER: So, in 2023, on the voucher
5 spending is a about \$670 million and we're on pace
6 for \$830 million plus this year.

7 MARGARET PLETNIKOFF: I'll say that it looks like
8 we could even spend slightly more at \$880. That's
9 our current projection.

10 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay, thank you. Can you
11 walk me through, walk us through the difference in
12 the childcare voucher programs that ACS offers? What
13 are the applicable age ranges and eligible criteria
14 for each program?

15 JESS DANNHAUSER: Sure, so there's low-income
16 vouchers, which a family of 4 making about \$99,000 a
17 year is eligible for. Those are based on income and
18 there are a number of families who access a childcare
19 voucher through involvement with prevention or
20 protective. And so, we make sure that any family
21 that we come into contact with, we can offer them a
22 voucher immediately. That is charged to the
23 preventive state dollars, the what was 16,535 and is
24 now 6,238. There's about 16,700 families in that
25 program and about 35,000 families in the low-income

1
2 vouchers. Those are the two primary pathways to a
3 voucher.

4 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay. What's the current
5 enrollment levels in each program and how much
6 additional capacity is there for new applicants?

7 JESS DANNHAUSER: So, the current enrollment for
8 child welfare is 16,700 and for low income 13

9 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: You said 16,700?

10 JESS DANNHAUSER: Hmm, hmm and for low income
11 it's about 34,500.

12 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: 34,500?

13 JESS DANNHAUSER: Correct and you know, as some
14 of these numbers are a couple weeks old and we're
15 processing them very quickly, so the other question
16 that you had Chair?

17 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Uhm, and how much
18 additional capacity is there for new applicants?

19 JESS DANNHAUSER: Yeah, right now, we have
20 authority to continue to enroll applicants for the
21 year ahead. We are working to look at those
22 projections. We're trying to hear more about what
23 the state is going to invest. It's really important
24 that most of the money here comes from the state via
25 lot of federal funds and so, what they end up putting

1
2 in the budget is going to determine some of those
3 capacity but we're analyzing this as we go but we are
4 absolutely remain open for enrolling families in
5 vouchers.

6 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you. In the
7 preliminary plan, preventative programs saw a \$2
8 million reduction in Fiscal 2025, \$4 million in
9 Fiscal 2026, \$6 million in Fiscal 2027 and \$8 million
10 in Fiscal 2028. Preventative programming provides
11 vital services to value children in at risk families.
12 What programs and services does this relate to and
13 how was the funding amount determined?

14 JESS DANNHAUSER: So, we took a look at our
15 preventive services system and what families were
16 needing. There's been, as I was referencing in my
17 testimony, significant changes in our child
18 protective practice. And so, we've been working with
19 providers on new pathways to prevention. Over the
20 last few months, we've seen a stark increase in
21 families coming to prevention through community
22 referrals and an overall increase, but we have a lot
23 of capacity. We have over 3,500 slots that are
24 available today. So, when we were looking at the
25 PEG, we looked at providers that were running

1 programs that had utilizations that was very low. In
2 many cases, in less than 20 percent, so we first
3 closed programs where there was not sufficient
4 demand. We then worked with our providers most
5 recently across our family treatment and
6 rehabilitation programs, there seemed to be in many
7 of the programs demand that was smaller. We said, we
8 want to make sure you can still meet your fixed
9 costs. We want the programs that continue to be very
10 strong. And so, we created a new model budget with
11 them for a 96-slot program. It was traditionally a
12 128-slot program. About 10 providers went down to
13 that 96-slot program but we actually made sure that
14 all of the fixed costs and they could still pay their
15 staff etc., they could pay the rent. It was a really
16 collaborative process with our providers and that was
17 the way in which we did the most recent PEG. We
18 think we have sufficient capacity. If we get to a
19 place where we are needing to wait for preventive
20 services, we can always go back and look at ways in
21 which we can expand it. We're also trying to change
22 preventive services. I think it's been a vital,
23 vital service for families for so many years but
24 we've heard from families, we've heard from advocates
25

1 that want to make sure the families feel safe
2 pursuing preventive services. So, one of the new
3 things we're doing with city tax levy only in our
4 school based early support programs, is that we are
5 allowing providers to serve families without opening
6 up a preventive services case. When we open a
7 preventive services case, that's how we get
8 reimbursed by the state. To be clear, when you open
9 a community referral preventive service system that
10 does not go into the child protection system, there's
11 a separate, a long-time lawsuit called the Advocates
12 Lawsuit. That sort of protects those so families are
13 not being connected to the child protective system if
14 they seek, but we also just want to make things as
15 nimble as possible. A family might need help for a
16 couple weeks. And so, we're going through a
17 strategic planning process around preventive services
18 but we have the capacity that we need.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, uhm, I mean I'm happy
21 to hear that other things are put in place like you
22 know, the school-based stuff because I think that
23 that sometimes is a good point of contact for
24 families to be able to access some of the things and
25 you know one of my running things for a long time has

1
2 just been you know, you guys have so many services
3 sometimes you can't access it unless you have a case.
4 And so, I'm happy to hear like with the enrichment
5 centers and now with the school point of access, like
6 families will be able to get access to some of the
7 services that they haven't been able to access before
8 but I also just want us to also make sure that we're
9 being cautious right because when we think about how
10 the numbers in foster care has been down tremendously
11 and a lot of that has been because of the services
12 right and so, I think that we have to just make sure
13 that we have a balance and we are consistently
14 evaluating and making sure that those numbers don't
15 start to increase because we know that that work in a
16 preventative sort of space is so vital, important, in
17 that way.

18 JESS DANNHAUSER: Absolutely.

19 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Uhm, so I think you kind of
20 already like kind of alluded this but I guess just a
21 little bit more detail, uhm because some slots have
22 been eliminated already. But in how many programs in
23 which in specific programs have there been
24 elimination of slots. And I know you spoke a little
25

1
2 bit about that already and what is the breakdown of
3 slots being reduced in each program or location?

4 JESS DANNHAUSER: So, we're going from about
5 12,700 slots to about 11,500 slots. That is across
6 all of the fiscal plans since we began making these
7 PEGs so the new capacity again, we have 11,500. We
8 have about 3,500 available and so, we are - they're
9 across the city. There was some in a variety of
10 neighborhoods, we can get you the exact number. Some
11 of them were in different sort of types of
12 programming or family support programs. Some were in
13 evidence-based programs that just weren't being
14 utilized. It really was about utilization at the
15 front end where - and there many - sometimes there's
16 more than one program in a community, so we looked
17 across that community to make sure that there was
18 available slots. There's available slots in every
19 community that we serve. We can get you the exact
20 numbers of the breakdown.

21 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay, thank you.

22 JESS DANNHAUSER: Do you want me to give them to
23 you now?

24 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Oh, if you have them.
25 Sure, why not? Let's do it.

1
2 JESS DANNHAUSER: Uh November Plan FFT program
3 Brooklyn of a 144 slots and a family support program
4 in Brooklyn of 96 slots. Both programs are very
5 unutilized by 20 percent utilization. Total slot
6 reduction for November was at 240. January, we did
7 not eliminate any program. We reduced our FDR
8 program by 320 slots from 2,304 to 1,984 in the way I
9 was describing earlier by going from 128 to 96 for 10
10 of our providers. So, total reduction in those two
11 plans was 560.

12 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And so, I know that there
13 was some under utilization in some programs but were
14 there any programs where there are waitlists and we
15 see like an increase?

16 JESS DANNHAUSER: We are not seeing any
17 preventive programs where there are a waitlist.
18 There are some preventive programs that are
19 traditionally around 100 percent. Those providers
20 typically have a really deep community connections
21 and are offered a whole range of services in addition
22 to prevention but there's capacity in every
23 community.

24 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay, so juvenile justice
25 increased in program information. The PMMR report

1
2 and 11.7 percent increase of admissions to the
3 juvenile justice detentions when comparing to the
4 first 4 months of Fiscal 2024 to the same period in
5 Fiscal 2023, going from 566 admissions to 632.
6 Admissions in juvenile detentions increased by 34.5
7 percent when comparing to Fiscal 2023 to prior fiscal
8 years. ACS has also saw an increase in the average
9 length of stay in secure and nonsecure facilities in
10 the first 4 months of Fiscal 2024 when it was 43 days
11 up from 27 days during the same time period in Fiscal
12 2023. What factors are contributing the increase in
13 admission to the juvenile justice facilities and why
14 is the average length of stay increasing?

15 JESS DANNHAUSER: So, we're seeing an increase
16 obviously that concerns us into our juvenile justice
17 facilities. Most of those young people who came, the
18 632 that you referenced, about half of them spend a
19 very, very short time, sometimes hours. The police
20 might drop them off at Crossroads, medically cleared
21 and then in nonsecure detention.

22 There are young people who are facing very
23 serious charges, about 70 percent of our young people
24 who are there are related to gun violence or
25 allegations of gun violence. Likely their trial is

1
2 going to take some time and so they are staying with
3 us much longer periods. So, about half of our
4 population in secure detention is over 18. I think
5 you know for some context, in 2013, there were about
6 300 16- and 17-year-olds at Rikers. In 2016, there
7 were 200. In 2018, 125 and today, we have about 110
8 with us in secure detention.

9 So, the population has come down. These
10 facilities were not built to fully account for Raise
11 the Age and then COVID of course. I'm concerned
12 about any young person who has to come to us.

13 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Agreed.

14 JESS DANNHAUSER: I think even - I just want to
15 set some of that context, but whenever we have the
16 discretion we are moving young people to nonsecure
17 environments and to preventive services. We work
18 with our partners at other city agencies, everything
19 from the Department of Probation to working with our
20 colleagues at MOCJ, working with the Sheriff's
21 Offices around things like electronic monitoring. We
22 worked to you know talk to the DA's about seeing
23 where our cases can get moved along. Of course, we
24 don't want to affect the young persons outcome, so we
25 don't want to move it in a way that doesn't give them

1
2 vigorous due process. So, we're happy that they're
3 with us instead of in an adult facility but we are
4 looking at ways to try to reduce this and move more
5 and more of our services upstream.

6 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, I mean, I just spent
7 the first half of my day talking about cuts and
8 programs that would prevent young people from even
9 ending up there, and so, you know in my rant earlier,
10 it was just really about, if we're seeing an increase
11 in our juvenile justice systems and we're seeing a
12 decrease in the programming, if that's not addressed,
13 then we're going to just be in this reciprocal cycle.
14 And so, you know understanding that you guys see them
15 at the end and I'm thinking about how do we then
16 start thinking about how do we reach them before they
17 even get there because it's really alarming. You
18 know any increase is just unacceptable to me and I
19 know a lot of times it's like, oh it's because of
20 raise the age. Yes, that is a factor but we also
21 still need to be thinking about how do we prevent it
22 and also because we know once young people get
23 justice involved, it becomes a revolving door. And
24 so, even as we're thinking about uhm, closing Rikers
25 Island and bringing down the population, part of that

1 conversation needs to also be talking about, how are
2 we preventing young people from entering the justice
3 system from the onset because that's also a
4 decarceration plan as well. And I don't feel like
5 the juvenile piece is a part of that conversation,
6 which makes me really uncomfortable. So, definitely
7 look forward into continuing to have more
8 conversation about that and thinking about how are we
9 preventing our kids from even ending up in these
10 places. I have a couple more questions on this topic
11 before I move on.

12
13 What is ACS doing to manage these increases and
14 is the current levels of expense and capital funding
15 adequate?

16 JESS DANNHAUSER: So, we have capital money that
17 is dedicated to the annex and I just want to say
18 before I answer your question, to be clear, when I
19 referenced Raise the Age, we think it's a good thing.
20 Raise the Age is a really important law and so, we
21 share your, and we share all of your concern and
22 desire for ongoing discussions.

23 We have capital money that is dedicated over the
24 course of several years to the Horizon Annex, which
25 will allow for the— and thank you for visiting us

1 along with Council Member Restler. It will allow for
2 the halls that you saw to be much smaller. So there
3 will be eight-bed facilities. There will be better
4 classroom spaces. As you know, food is really
5 important to everybody but to young people -

6 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: They were very clear that
7 they want better food.

8 JESS DANNHAUSER: That's right and better when
9 you come back -

10 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: They said they want pizza
11 and all of it.

12 JESS DANNHAUSER: Yeah, DC Ginsburg is uh, sends
13 us a picture of every meal to make sure that we're on
14 our P's and Q's on that. So, we make sure that this
15 facility, I hope, it's 48 more beds. It's on the
16 Horizon space. Our hope is that we can move young
17 people in there. It will give us an opportunity and
18 swing space to hopefully in the future create better
19 spaces across all of Horizon and Crossroads.

20 You know I think it's important to say in Close
21 to Home, you know we've seen that even though there's
22 been a slight increase over the last while, we
23 originally had over 300 beds predicted for Close to
24 Home. And so, now we're in a place where it's been
25

1
2 under 100 for a long time and so, our commitment is
3 to try to keep the population down no matter how many
4 beds that we have. I totally understand the fear
5 around if you build it they will come but we want to
6 make sure that 13 and it's important we do currently
7 have 238 young people to your question about space
8 who are with us. We have approval from the state to
9 go to 267 in the current spaces but we don't want to
10 be at that number, we want to make sure that we
11 continue to both lower the length of stay and prevent
12 children from coming in.

13 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: What's the current
14 population of both Horizon and Crossroads?

15 JESS DANNHAUSER: So, it is 238. Combined I
16 believe it's approximately 130 at Crossroads, which
17 is the main intake center and about 110 or so at
18 Horizon.

19 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: What percentage of young
20 people at Horizon and Crossroads are going to school
21 each day?

22 JESS DANNHAUSER: So, it's about 80 percent in
23 Crossroads. It's about 65 percent at Horizon. We
24 are working really hard. We, over the last year,
25 created dedicated space to – dedicated school

1 liaisons just there to encourage young people to go
2 to school. What we've heard from some of the young
3 people particularly at Horizon lately is that they
4 want to pursue the GED track and we've seen a number
5 of young people be able to successfully achieve their
6 GED. They're 17, 17 and a half and so we're working
7 with the Department of Education, New York City
8 public schools to increase the number of young people
9 who can be on that GED track with a one-on-one tutor
10 and we want to be responsive to their - they weren't
11 in school very often before they came to us and we're
12 trying to reengage them in school but also be
13 responsive to what they're telling us the track that
14 they want to be on.

16 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: What percentage of
17 participants are participating in non-school
18 activities or other scheduled program each day and
19 what percentage of youth don't participate in school
20 or programming?

21 JESS DANNHAUSER: So, we don't keep exactly those
22 numbers. You know we saw the question last night and
23 we'll get you the exact numbers that we can get you.
24 I think there is a whole variety of programming,
25 music and performance art. We have a lot of Carnegie

1 Hall who is here, who does a lot of great work with
2 us. We have Spoken Word. We have creative writing.
3 We have part beyond the music. We have yoga. We
4 have recreational activities and then we have special
5 events, celebrating the holidays. And so, there's a
6 full program array and we can get you the details of
7 participation.
8

9 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay, thank you. As
10 highlighted in the Fiscal 2024 PMMR, ACS has seen an
11 increase in juvenile justice population in the past
12 few months. Reports have emerged siting shortages in
13 beds at Horizon and Crossroads relating to juveniles
14 being placed in classrooms. How many total beds are
15 there in each site? What is the current occupancy
16 rate for each one and how often is Horizon sort of at
17 maximum capacity? And when this happens, what is the
18 standard protocol for ACS to follow managing
19 additional placements when beds are not available?

20 JESS DANNHAUSER: So, we have as I mentioned 238
21 young people with us today. We are approved by the
22 state at 267. That includes somewhere in the range,
23 it depends on gender and placement but somewhere in
24 the range of 30 authorities; we have to have 30 young
25 people in temporary bedding. We have not used that,

1
2 it's typically around between 5 and 10 young people.
3 We were primarily relying on classrooms during the
4 evening for this. The young people have been
5 integrated into halls, so they do all their
6 programming on the halls even if they slept in a
7 temporary bed in a classroom. The young people and
8 the staff said to us, "can we actually bring the
9 temporary bedding onto the hall?" So, they're in the
10 sort of area, the communal area and we have
11 accommodated that and so, the young people, once
12 they've been integrated into the hall, they go to
13 school with their hall. They go to programming with
14 their hall. They are more typically sleeping on the
15 hall in the temporary bedding.

16 Typically, it's about 5 to 10 young people at
17 night that are in that situation. It is not a
18 situation that we are you know pleased with but you
19 know public reports have said children sleeping on
20 the ground or floors. That is not true or hallways.
21 The classrooms are vacated during the day when
22 they're used for classroom operations.

23 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah. It's a dilemma.

24 JESS DANNHAUSER: It sure is. It sure is.

25

1
2 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Because you know, we don't
3 wants kids sleeping in a hallway. We don't want them
4 sleeping in classrooms but I also don't want the
5 facility to be built out, so again, I understand that
6 it's a procurement and also just thinking like I said
7 of like how do we just not have young doing more work
8 to prevent our young people from being in these
9 facilities I think is going to be, should be our main
10 priority and I think you know we could all agree on
11 that.

12 So, I'm going to move on and go to Close to Home.
13 The preliminary plan does not restore the Close to
14 Home PEGs included in November plan. The programs
15 are a baseline PEG of over \$7.5 million starting at
16 Fiscal 2025. What is the reduction amount
17 determined? What services or programs does it relate
18 to and how did this reduction impact recent made
19 awards?

20 JESS DANNHAUSER: So, we originally had, we've
21 made a few cuts to Close to Home capacity over the
22 past couple of years. We originally had about 301
23 slots in close to home. We just awarded 147 and we
24 currently have 90 young people in Close to Home, so
25 it's about a 70 percent utilization rate.

1
2 Importantly, we took a lot of the resources and many
3 of them will be in the same buildings and home-like
4 environments. We took the great majority of the
5 resources and shrank the size of the program but kept
6 the resources there, which will allow them to pay
7 staff. It's going to lower the staffing ratio to
8 youth ratio from 6 to 1 to 3 to 1. You know
9 incorporate Fair Futures, program and ed specialists
10 and the maximum size of a Close to Home Program will
11 go from 12 to 9.

12 So, it is, we originally asked for bids for 135
13 beds. We worked with OCFS in looking at our trends
14 over the last several months and they allowed us to
15 go forward with 147 beds, which we really appreciate
16 to make sure that we have the capacity that we need.
17 We don't want to have extra capacity for placement
18 for children. That's not necessary. This is
19 something we will keep a close eye on as well. We're
20 really happy that the new contracts, you know as you
21 know contracts take nine years and the providers have
22 made clear to us what would be helpful in some of the
23 things that they're challenged by and we think that
24 the new contracts are responsive to that.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, I mean even with
3 meeting with some of the providers and I know we
4 actually have a whole hearing coming up around this.
5 Even with, they understand the need for the smaller
6 environments and they actually encourage it but even
7 with the smaller numbers, mean that they're going to
8 be - their contracts are lower but the cost of
9 running the facility are pretty much still the same
10 right because the rent doesn't change and those
11 things. And so, how is that taken into consideration
12 in thinking about when uhm, having these contracts
13 right like you know, they have to have facilities
14 which takes up a lot of the budget even before you
15 get to staff and all the other things. Can you talk
16 to me a little bit about like what the consideration
17 was around there? Because I think that that's where
18 some of the challenges I'm hearing from providers
19 with this new -

20 JESS DANNHAUSER: You know the words were just
21 shared with them and I think as they see the budgets
22 and complete their budgets they'll see that there is
23 a significant increase in the resources available per
24 young person and includes fixed costs like the -
25 whether they're renting or they have other facility

1 related costs. So, we think this is you know I don't
2 have the exact per youth, maybe Margaret does, costs
3 for young people. It is a significant enhancement.

4 MARGARET PLETNIKOFF: Sure, uhm, I can share for
5 our nonsecure placement, the daily rate has moved
6 from 943 to 1,011 and for the limited secure
7 placement, it's remained about the same but it
8 doesn't, it basically it has to do with the type of
9 setting and the children placed there. And
10 additionally, we now have a new TRC, so that the TRC
11 program is six beds at 1,153 is the daily rate.

12 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: What is the budget for the
13 Close to Home program in Fiscal 2024 and Fiscal 2025
14 and in the outyears?

15 JESS DANNHAUSER: Close to Home I believe 2023 is
16 118 and in 2024, it's going to go to 110 and stay
17 there in the outyears.

18 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: What funding sources
19 support these programs?

20 JESS DANNHAUSER: Uhm, primarily city tax levy.
21 We do not receive state funding for – there is no
22 increase for Raise the Age and there has not been any
23 new dollars for Close to Home.
24
25

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: It definitely sounds like the state needs to check in a little bit more.

JESS DANNHAUSER: That would be nice.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Wouldn't it? Hmm, hmm, we should really talk to them about that huh. Uhm, I hear you, don't worry. I know you're writing. Oh, I didn't even acknowledge you, so sorry. We have Lincoln, Council Member Lincoln Restler joining us today. Thank you for joining us. Oh yeah, she was already here.

Uhm, okay, give me the PEGs. How does ACS plan to determine in the events that demand increase beyond the current budget is the agency planning to request a restoration in executive plan?

JESS DANNHAUSER: We are not for Close to Home.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay.

JESS DANNHAUSER: And we will continue to assess as I mentioned earlier, we initially were going to contract for 135 slots. We were analyzing the trends and we met with OMB and they allowed us to add the additional 12 slots.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: How's the Close to Home connecting with Cure Violence sites to ensure youth

1 safety when uhm, transitioning back into the
2 community?

3
4 JESS DANNHAUSER: So, there are Cure Violence
5 providers who come to the Close to Home facilities
6 themselves and there's also credible messengers that
7 work with young people on after care and then we're
8 also providing for the first time the Fair Futures
9 programming for young people post aftercare who are
10 leaving Close to Home. Secure Violence is in the
11 facilities themselves developing relationships with
12 young people and sticking with them.

13 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: When was the Close to
14 Home's tutoring contract ended and why did ACS choose
15 not to continue this program and how much does the
16 Close to Home tutoring program cost and how much
17 would it cost to reinstate?

18 JESS DANNHAUSER: Maybe it was about \$1 million.
19 The tutoring was ended when we did our workforce
20 contracts which were awarded last year and so, we're
21 working, they are providing a lot of tutoring in
22 secure detention. This is an issue that we work with
23 New York City public schools. They have Saturday
24 tutoring so the young people, most of the young
25 people in Close to Home go to Bronx Hope or Bellmont

1
2 which are passage academy, very high attendance
3 rates, very intensive work with the young people.
4 So, this came to my attention, we'll take a look at
5 it and explore ways in which we can support the
6 providers to make sure there is sufficient tutoring.

7 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, that's going to be
8 important to make sure that young people are given
9 the support that they need with their academics while
10 they are in these spaces. Capital commitment plans,
11 so in ACS capital commitment plan funding in Fiscal
12 2024 increased by 144 percent, since in the Fiscal
13 2024 Adopted Commitment Plan, growing from \$61.5
14 million to \$149.9 million. Additional total
15 commitments for ACS across Fiscal 2025 to 2028 oof
16 the preliminary commitment plan increased by 8
17 percent when compared to adopted.

18 Many agencies saw a reduction in their commitment
19 plan in the preliminary capital plan and deferral of
20 projects furthered into the further future. Why is
21 this true for ACS and how were those adjustments
22 determined?

23 JESS DANNHAUSER: So, we, our budget is a ten-
24 year capital plan and so, when you see there actually
25

1 was reductions but there was money moved from the
2 sort of outyears, 30 to 33 to the front end.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: What causes the significant
5 increase in the capital plan? Is this the
6 additional?

7 JESS DANNHAUSER: It is from, it's just moving
8 the money from -

9 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: But this is for the Horizon
10 expansion.

11 JESS DANNHAUSER: This is for the Annex, there is
12 money there for work at the children center. There's
13 some IT money there for, mostly for cyber security
14 and there's a move of the ACS headquarters which will
15 be a more efficient space over time.

16 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: One of the largest projects
17 is the 110 William Street relocation with a total
18 commitment of \$43 million. Can you provide any
19 additional information regarding this budget
20 including the scope and timeline?

21 JESS DANNHAUSER: So, ACS is moving from 150
22 Williams Street, which it's been at since - and we
23 are moving to 110 Williams. This is something that
24 DCAS has worked on for a number of years, moving to a
25 more efficient space design, open floor planning.

1 We'll be moving over the course over the next year to
2 18 months.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Another large project
5 titled, Children's Aid Society with a total
6 commitment of \$24.5 million related to the
7 construction design of 13 classrooms. Can you
8 provide additional information regarding this project
9 including the scope and timeline? Where were those
10 classrooms be located? If possible, please provide a
11 breakdown capacity of each classroom and how many ACS
12 experts to utilize those rooms?

13 JESS DANNHAUSER: I can't but there's a good
14 reason for it. Borough President initiative, it's
15 managed by EDC. The funding just goes through ACS.

16 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Interesting. Well, I'm
17 going to pause here and pass it to my colleagues and
18 first on the list is Council Member Restler.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Wonderful. Well, I just
20 firstly want to congratulate you Chair Stevens on
21 taking on this expanded role. I think it was a
22 really smart decision by the Speaker and I'm excited
23 that ACS is going to get the attention that it
24 deserves. I think sometimes in general welfare, with
25 so much going on at HRA and DHS, ACS would get lost

1
2 and it's really important that we're in active
3 communication, conversations, the Council providing
4 the oversight and the input that's needed. And so,
5 congratulations and we have the right person leading
6 the helm. It's good to see you Commissioner and
7 team. Thank you all for your work.

8 I just wanted to come back to the issues related
9 to secure detention that Chair Stevens was asking.
10 So, we're currently at 238 kids in Horizons and
11 Crossroads, is that right?

12 JESS DANNHAUSER: Correct.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: And you said that the
14 state has expanded the legal capacity to 267 across
15 the two facilities. That includes 30 temporary beds.
16 So, the legal capacity was what when you were
17 appointed Commissioner?

18 JESS DANNHAUSER: Uh, the legal capacity when I
19 was appointed, I believe was somewhere around 212.
20 We did a number of things within the current space to
21 bring rooms that were - had been mothballed so to
22 speak back on line within the halls and that sort of
23 was our first level increase and then, we have been
24 on this having this waiver from the state several
25 months.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: And there is significant
3 capital funding in your budget for improvements at
4 Crossroads and Horizons. Are you anticipating
5 expansion of the capacity for each facility?

6 JESS DANNHAUSER: Only for Horizon in this
7 current plan. The Annex would be 6, 8 bed units, so
8 much smaller units and allow is to you know have the
9 right ratios and right now we have about you know 12
10 to 15 young people in a hall and so, the smaller
11 halls would be much more appropriate.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: What will be the new
13 anticipated legal capacity at Horizon's?

14 JESS DANNHAUSER: It will be somewhere in the
15 range of 270, 280.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: 270, 280 total?

17 JESS DANNHAUSER: Yeah, not counting, hopefully
18 we won't be using any of the temporary space. The
19 temporary bedding that I was mentioning earlier.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Right. So, you know we
21 all know the unfortunate stats. In the last year,
22 the DeBlasio Administration, there were 108 kids in
23 secure detention. Now, we're at 238 more than
24 doubled in a very short period of time. The number
25 of kids getting sent to jail. To me, is the

1
2 phenomenal increase in the number of kids getting
3 sent to jail is the single most disturbing statistic
4 of the Adams Administration. And you know we've seen
5 the legal capacity at Horizons and Crossroads grow by
6 26 percent already with a planned further expansion
7 with the investments at Horizons.

8 I, as you acknowledged, and Chair Stevens said so
9 eloquently, we're concerned about the reality that if
10 you build it they will come. We're building it.
11 We're expanding it. We already done a 25 percent
12 expansion and there is yet more to come. I would
13 like to ask something that's not that I think is in
14 your broader expertise if not in your full narrow
15 mandate as ACS Commissioner and would welcome teams
16 input as well. What are the preventative and
17 diversion-oriented investments that you think would
18 be most helpful? And have the cuts at the Department
19 of Probation, the \$5 million in aggregate cuts to the
20 impact program to next steps and to Arches? Have
21 they driven - have they been responsible for helping
22 to drive the increased census?

23 JESS DANNHAUSER: Thank you Council Member and
24 thank you for your attention on these important
25 issues. There's a lot of conversations going on

1
2 about youth services and now that the budget has been
3 more stabilized looking at where we want to make
4 there's the appropriate investments. The majority of
5 this increase happened before those, so I don't think
6 we can attribute it. I have had conversations with
7 the Commissioner there. We've heard from the courts
8 and interest in making sure intensive case management
9 is available and she made sure that that was up and
10 available in both the Bronx and Brooklyn. And so, we
11 are looking as carefully as we can across the
12 Administration and conversations to make sure that we
13 have the appropriate youth services.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Can you offer any
15 specific suggestions of youth services diversion
16 programs, ATI, ATDs, that you think would help?

17 JESS DANNHAUSER: Yeah, you know I think it's a
18 broad range right. So, everything from the work that
19 New York City Public Schools does with young people
20 and making sure that they have the best pathways to
21 education. It's all of the youth, great youth work
22 that DYCD does. All the way to sort of further
23 upstream when a young person has been arrested and is
24 diverted into court.

1
2 If you look at our services, uh that we provide,
3 they're primarily attached to family court. So, as
4 an alternative to Close to Home placement, we have
5 our JJI program. We have our FAD program, in those
6 programs we've added things like Fair Futures, which
7 provides coaching to young people and develops
8 relationship-based services is what I believe in. I
9 think that obviously it's a whole approach. There
10 are times when family therapies are best indicated
11 and we have a plethora of those where families really
12 want to help. Where parents are feeling like they're
13 struggling. We once had hundreds of young people
14 coming into foster care through pens petitions. We
15 have almost none now and that has been because of
16 concerted services. I know that's different than
17 juvenile justice but just to concerted services,
18 family led services, and so, those are the kinds of
19 things that I believe work for young people and for
20 families.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Well, much of what you
22 described, sounds like a lot like the impact contract
23 that DOP released an RFP for selected cases. They
24 were taking over I believe from Esperanza, supposed
25 to serve 175 kids in our family support system,

1
2 provide them with the access to care and support that
3 they need, therapeutic programming, mentoring,
4 support the kids and the families, be a really
5 effective diversion tool. DOP for no apparent reason
6 cut the program and never actually enacted the
7 contract and I'm deeply concerned that you're the one
8 on the receiving end, you're on the end of the line
9 and have to manage this increased census and don't
10 have the tools at your disposal to actually help
11 drive it down, which I believe you want to do. And
12 so, I hope that the Administration, then the Mayor
13 and the OMB Director and their wisdom empower ACS to
14 do more to help us reduce the number of young people
15 who are being incarcerated in New York City today.

16 Certainly the folks who were responsible for it
17 are not taking – responsible for that work are not
18 taking it as seriously as they should. So, I really
19 appreciate the extra time Chair Stevens. Thank you
20 very much for the opportunity.

21 JESS DANNHAUSER: Thanks Council Member.

22 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Well, thank you for being
23 here. Uhm, next we have Council Member Williams
24 followed by Council Member Joseph.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you. Hi

Commissioner. Happy to hear about your work around SCR reporting issues. Hopefully there is more that we can do there and was really happy to hear about what you discussed with reducing families interaction with the child protection system by providing resources up front. So, prevention but I did notice that a few preventative programs were slashed and I think prevention is critical because it presents future issues that might be more costly down the line. So, just wanted to know if you can share some more insight and details on the decision to uhm decrease some preventative programs. I know it was cited that they were underutilized. If you can just talk about what those programs were and how you arrived at that decision.

JESS DANNHAUSER: Sure, so over the course of the last several plans, we have made modest cuts to preventive services. In November, we cut an FFT program in Brooklyn 144 slots and a family support program also in Brooklyn of 96 slots for a total of 240. Both of them had utilization around 20 percent.

We didn't eliminate any in January, but instead what we did was create a new model budget for our

1 family treatment and rehabilitation program to have
2 96 slots for about 10 of the programs. It was
3 originally 128. We worked with the providers to
4 understand their budgets. What fixed costs would
5 need to be met so that those programs are strong and
6 stable going forward.
7

8 You know our, what we're seeing in child
9 protection and preventive services is our preventive
10 services are absolutely vital. At the same time
11 there's a lot of support and services that parents
12 are butting with their feet to pursue and we really
13 honor that in our protective work and making sure
14 that families get the kind of help that they need and
15 where they need it.

16 We have still well over 3,000 slots available for
17 families across our entire continuum. We didn't end
18 any program type and we didn't end any sort of
19 programs across every neighborhood that remains
20 programs. We will absolutely watch this. We are
21 encouraged that over the last few months, we've seen
22 somewhere about a 15 to 20 percent increase in
23 families coming to preventive services and a lot of
24 that being through community pathways, not through a
25 call to the SCR and investigation.

1
2 So, if there is a need that grows here, we will
3 absolutely and we are actively trying to fill those
4 slots. Looking at what families want most
5 importantly. So we are there voting with their feet
6 to go and trying to move resources to providers that
7 are meeting those family's needs.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: When you say where
9 families go, I guess proactively themselves, what
10 type of sites or programs do you find that families
11 are proactively going to themselves?

12 JESS DANNHAUSER: It's a range. It's a range but
13 it really comes down to providers who are deeply
14 community based, have the most consistent utilization
15 and you know I was very lucky to go visit a site of
16 Arabic American on Atlantic Avenue and it was such a
17 vibrant place and their preventive program that
18 provided evidence based treatment to families was
19 downstairs but it was booming with folks who were
20 learning language in parent support groups and it was
21 sort of deeply community driven and we have so many
22 providers who do that and we're working with all of
23 our providers to be able to make sure those are the
24 kinds of environments that families can come to.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: I mean I had more
3 questions but - okay. Uhm, so I wanted to talk about
4 escape rate for nonsecure facilities. We noticed and
5 I'm not sure if the data; we have current data or you
6 have other data because I know you mentioned that
7 some of the numbers for like Close to Home has
8 decreased but we noticed that the rates have almost
9 doubled for individuals who are escaping nonsecure
10 facilities, so just wanted to know if you have any
11 sense as to why that is occurring. You know I know
12 staffing and other resource issues could be a problem
13 but just wanted to know why you think the escape rate
14 has increased in nonsecure facilities?

15 JESS DANNHAUSER: While it has increased, it's
16 still very, very low. It's a very, very low
17 percentage. I believe we'll get the exact number but
18 it is not a common occurrence. These are nonsecure
19 facilities. We want to make sure we're treating
20 young people. We're nonsecure facilities in ways
21 that protect them and protect the staff but also
22 allow for their liberties. There are times when a
23 young person in Close to Home or nonsecure has a home
24 visit and decides not to come back and we have to go
25 and work to bring them, engage them and bring them

1
2 back to the facility and there have been a couple
3 times where young people have – it's more like a walk
4 than our Awal then escape because these are nonsecure
5 facilities but it's something we are working with
6 providers to make sure that they have the appropriate
7 staffing. If they're driving, if young people are
8 coming back from home passes that there are ways in
9 which they make sure their engaged in them and
10 getting them to come back into the program?

11 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you. Just some
12 more questions and when we just heard from your
13 sister agency, DYCD, we talked a lot about RFPs and
14 how contracts get crafted and the criteria that
15 ultimately makes it difficult for certain nonprofits
16 to be competitive in being granted in RFP. And so,
17 can you share how you craft RFPs or not craft them
18 that creates opportunities for a variety of
19 organizations, so not just small nonprofits, midsize
20 nonprofits, large nonprofits, like how do you ensure
21 that there is some level of equity around who is sort
22 of positioned to compete?

23 JESS DANNHAUSER: Thank you for the question.
24 It's very important. The RFP process obviously has
25 to be one of highest values, right is around the

1
2 objectivity and so, the results hit my desk and
3 that's just about it. But your point is we have real
4 opportunity to shape them in how we craft them right?
5 What we value in the scoring and how we select the
6 neighborhoods. In the instance you know we're
7 looking at where there is need and objective measures
8 across the board. The best way for to engage local
9 schools.

10 In one example we saw recently in our new family
11 enrichment center contracts, we have probably the
12 widest range of types of organizations that we've had
13 in contracts at ACS. And so, we have small faith-
14 based organizations. We have settlement houses that
15 have been contracted with ACS in the past. I think
16 part of that is for the model and so, it's important
17 to both value performance but also value community
18 connectivity and so, you can rate based on - you can
19 sort of use different percentages depending on what
20 you value. So, in each process we go through it and
21 try to make sure that we're valuing community
22 connections, community embeddedness. It is obviously
23 not a perfect system but that's what we try to do.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Yeah, I just have a
25 quick follow up question to that because you

1 mentioned like community, I guess engagement or how
2 should I frame it uhm, I guess organization ties to
3 community might get weighed but how does that get
4 weighed in comparison to other metrics that you are
5 valuing proposals on? Because you know sometimes
6 certain components of an RFP might carry more weight
7 than others and so, that's great that you consider
8 community ties but if community ties and I don't
9 know, so I'm asking if community ties get scored
10 lower than some other type of criteria, how does that
11 ensure equity?
12

13 JESS DANNHAUSER: Hmm, hmm. It depends on the
14 RFP and whether there's a history of those kinds of
15 services. In most cases, I think it's somewhere
16 between 20 and 30 percent. There is a portion that
17 goes to things like experience with that kind of
18 work. There's a portion that goes to the scope of
19 services. Are they writing that they will be able to
20 deliver that kind of service while - so it depends on
21 the RFP but typically in that range.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay, one more
23 question. Uhm, so as the 16 contracts awarded for
24 school based preventative programs. Can you share
25 how many organizations actually receive the

1
2 contracts? Because it's my understanding that one
3 organization received multiple contracts. So I just
4 wanted to know in total, like out of all of the
5 awards granted citywide, what were the number of
6 organizations that actually received said contracts?

7 JESS DANNHAUSER: We'll get you those numbers. I
8 think it's somewhere around 10 or 11 but we'll get
9 you those numbers.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you. Thanks
11 Chair.

12 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you. Council Member
13 Joseph.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you Chair. Good
15 afternoon Commissioner and team. How are you? First
16 and foremost, let me ask you a question. How is the
17 Office of Foster Care in the New York City Public
18 School? How is that working out?

19 JESS DANNHAUSER: We are finding them to be very
20 collaborative with us and our education team at ACS
21 is in constant contact with them. They helped us to
22 work on an issue that I know is close to your heart
23 around school transportation, so we've been very
24 pleased that there's been a dedicated staff there.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: How is transportation for
3 students in foster care? How is that coming along?

4 JESS DANNHAUSER: So, since our last hearing and
5 thank you for your question. We sat down, we heard
6 from providers that they were not in fact getting
7 reimbursed at the levels that we wished and so, we
8 sat down with New York City Public Schools, created
9 an MOU. They are very clear that for young people
10 who are eligible for transportation, for a bus,
11 during the period that it takes to set that up,
12 typically somewhere around 10 days but it could
13 extend further that New York City Public Schools will
14 reimburse providers for the cost of that. So,
15 including whether there's someone who is accompanying
16 the young person, the cost of car fare, I believe
17 it's up to \$100. And so, that has gone, we've
18 checked in with some providers. We know some
19 providers have been reimbursed and we're making sure
20 that the process is working.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Well, thank you for that.
22 So, I have a couple questions around new needs. In
23 the preliminary plan includes \$118 million in new
24 need for foster care in the fiscal 2024 only. How is
25 the funding amount determined and how will that be

1
2 utilized and what services and programs are covered
3 under that amount?

4 JESS DANNHAUSER: Thank you for that question
5 Council Member. Uhm, this is another thing that
6 relates to the state, so we are you know we're
7 thrilled. A couple years ago, when the state settled
8 and started to enhance the rates for foster parents
9 along with adopted parents and guardianship for
10 families who are no longer connected to the system,
11 they didn't put any money in them. And so, we are
12 regularly analyzing with OMB the \$118 million really
13 is to pay for those rate increases and we're very
14 glad that we're able to do it but I hope the state
15 will contribute in that regard.

16 So, the RFP that was recently awarded in foster
17 care, all of those services are supported with this
18 \$118 million but it's primarily for those rates.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you. Can you walk
20 us through the state mandate this relates to and what
21 amounts are covered by city and state? What amount
22 is covered by us and what amount is covered by the
23 state?

24 JESS DANNHAUSER: So, the state has a block
25 grant, right? So, that's how they fund foster care

1 primarily and so, only when they increase that block
2 grant, which they didn't do in a large way. I think
3 they might have added a few million dollars. So,
4 this is all being covered by city tax levy.
5

6 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Wow, well the state got
7 to come up. Have there been any recent rate changes?
8 If so, what were the changes and where were they
9 instituted? When did that go into effect, the rate
10 changes?

11 JESS DANNHAUSER: Those rate changes went into
12 effect I believe at the end of calendar year 2022.
13 Well get you -

14 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: You'll get me that
15 answer. Thank you.

16 JESS DANNHAUSER: And it's across - you know as
17 you know Council Member and thank you for your
18 dedicated service. There are different rates for
19 different types of foster care and we've changed
20 removing from sort of a very distinct between our
21 therapeutic and what used to be called regular family
22 based to one program that's enhanced family foster
23 care. The rate is based on the need of the child as
24 you know.
25

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Okay, correct, thank you.
3 Uhm, how much is the full budget for foster care in
4 fiscal 2024? What was the baseline budget for Fiscal
5 2025 and in the outyears?

6 JESS DANNHAUSER: The Fiscal 2024 uhm, our
7 expenses look like they're going to be \$800 million.
8 Outyears, FY25 is \$669 and we're - this is, OMB put
9 this money in for to address '24, the \$118 million
10 and we're in conversations with them about how to
11 address '25.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: I was about to ask about
13 the gap, okay, thank you. So, what did you spend in
14 2023 and so far in 2024?

15 JESS DANNHAUSER: \$720 million in 2023 and I
16 believe through February it's \$467 million to date in
17 2024.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you. I have one
19 more question Chair please? Thank you. I'm looking
20 at the - we were looking at the PMMR report and it
21 showed that there was an increase of number in
22 children entering the foster care system. In the
23 first four months of Fiscal 2024, when there were
24 1,012 children that entered the foster care system.
25 This is a 10 percent increase when compared to a 19,

1
2 919 children who are in foster care during the same
3 period in Fiscal 2023. What shifted? What happened?

4 JESS DANNHAUSER: Yeah, it's a short period from
5 our analysis. It's actually a higher percentage of
6 older young people who are coming in. To set some
7 context to your – uhm, in 2010, there were around
8 6,000 removals of children. In 2015, there was
9 3,600. In 2020, which we know is COVID year, there
10 was 2,803. 2022 went down further to 2,715 and last
11 year, we came up to 2,781, still below the 2020
12 numbers.

13 So, since 2010, from 6,000 to 2,781, we never
14 want a young person to come into care unless it's
15 absolutely necessary and so, we are working very,
16 very diligently to keep those numbers down where they
17 basically have stayed flat since the pandemic and our
18 intention is to make sure that children are safe. At
19 the same time, to do it as often as possible by
20 supporting their families.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: How often do you check
22 into a child that was in care for a certain amount of
23 time? What's the cutoff time that you stop checking
24 in on a child that entered care?

25 JESS DANNHAUSER: Never.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: The timeline? Never,
3 right?

4 JESS DANNHAUSER: No, we don't stop checking. Do
5 you mean after the child leaves?

6 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: After a child leaves and
7 returns home to the family, what's the support system
8 that's in place?

9 JESS DANNHAUSER: It depends. There are
10 instances where a judge determines that ACS's
11 involved is over immediately. There are children who
12 have come into foster care on an emergency basis,
13 something happened in the family and they need that
14 support for a short period of time. There are others
15 where there's a child discharge and that typically is
16 somewhere around six months and we're - the providers
17 remaining involved with the family and supporting the
18 family. Most child discharges are successful.

19 As you know, for young people, we are offering
20 them coaching until they are 26 years old. We're
21 glad to see a decrease in the number of young people
22 who are aging out of care but we know that those
23 young people need us and if they so choose and many
24 are, we're going to be there for them through college
25 choice, through [INAUDIBLE 04:19:10] etc.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Right, of course. How
3 does ACS ensure a foster care system adequate
4 capacity to funding to address this increase without
5 reducing level of service available to children in
6 foster care?

7 JESS DANNHAUSER: So, we have contracts for about
8 6,300 in our AFC program. About 500 for children
9 with special medical or other special developmental
10 needs and a little over 750 for residential. Today,
11 across the two types of family-based care, we have
12 under 6,000, 5,821 in family-based care and about 516
13 in residential care of the 767. So, the number of
14 young people in residential care has steadily been
15 declining as well.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: I know one of your goals
17 when we spoke the last time is to increase the amount
18 of kin gap for foster parents. How is that looking?
19 How is that data?

20 JESS DANNHAUSER: Yeah, so we are seeing this
21 year, we ticked up yet again in the number of
22 children who are with kin, so we're about 44 percent
23 of children. This is up from you know the low 30's
24 five or so years ago. We want to continue to push
25 that further in the direction you know above 50

1
2 percent and higher. We just changed business
3 processes to get the child protective specialist some
4 support on supporting kinship parents because it's
5 really important that when a child is initially
6 placed with them, they get their support as fast as
7 possible and so much about whether that works as
8 whether we're able to deploy that quickly. So, we
9 have redone that business process and are continuing
10 to find ways to make sure if a child does have to
11 come into care they're with family.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: They're with family,
13 that's great, really good. How about our
14 unaccompanied minors? How many do you have in
15 custody?

16 JESS DANNHAUSER: So, we don't have an exact
17 number of unaccompanied minors but what I can tell
18 you is we've seen an increase in the number of young
19 people who are brought into care on destitute
20 positions and so, in 2021, there was 49 in that
21 calendar year. In 2022, there was 64. In 2023,
22 there was 94 and we've seen 17 through February. So,
23 it is not a huge number but it's a very important
24 number and these young people we're working with as

25

1
2 any other child in foster care to get them the
3 supports that they need.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Absolutely, I know you
5 said the numbers have increased. What referral
6 services are you providing? What kind of support?
7 Uhm, are they being - is there petitions being filed
8 for them in court within the 14 days?

9 JESS DANNHAUSER: We are able to file the
10 petitions on time. We are providing them all of the
11 services that we provide all of our children in
12 foster care. In addition, we've been able to make
13 investments to make sure that translation services
14 and interpretation services are available. As many
15 of the young people speak language other than
16 English.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: And mental health support
18 in all of that.

19 JESS DANNHAUSER: Indeed.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: I'm going to ask a
21 question that is on everybody's mind. When I go into
22 the subway system, I'm seeing young, young, young
23 children selling candies on a train and on the bus.
24 How is that being addressed?

2 JESS DANNHAUSER: You know we want to make sure
3 we're deploying help to those families and so, those,
4 obviously that's happening on the subway system but
5 families are living in communities all across our
6 city and so, whether it's the family enrichment
7 centers, we've been working with the HERCs to provide
8 preventive services where families are interested in
9 that and where we can be supportive. We've been
10 working with DHS and the shelter providers and so,
11 you know we don't want children coming into foster
12 care because they're subsisting right and their
13 parents are trying to make ends meet but we want to
14 make sure we're out there supporting families in the
15 best way. And so, what we have found to date is to
16 be available in communities on site at the HERCs and
17 onsite in the shelters where possible.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: And while we're doing
19 informational sessions for the parents that at 5
20 years old, they should not be selling candies in the
21 subway. I'm seeing them and my colleagues are also
22 seeing them as well, so uhm.

23 JESS DANNHAUSER: We're working across agencies
24 and would be really interested in having
25 conversations with you.

1 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: I would love that. Thank
2 you so much.

3 JESS DANNHAUSER: Thank you.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Chair, thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you. Uhm, I have a
6 couple of more questions and I know we have a second
7 round and Council Members Williams has some
8 additional questions. Let me start with Promise NYC
9 because I know this was a huge Council initiative and
10 folks who are really excited about this. So, in
11 Fiscal 2024, the Adopted Budget included a \$16
12 million new needs for Promise NYC in Fiscal 2024
13 only. The preliminary plan did not include any
14 additional funding for the program. Will the program
15 be continued in Fiscal 2025 and beyond and if so, how
16 much additional funding will be added and can you
17 provide the most recent slot utilization data for
18 Promise NYC and breakdown by borough?

19 JESS DANNHAUSER: Yes, thank you. Promise has
20 been a terrific program. We appreciate the Council's
21 support and the Mayor's support of it. There is not
22 money in Fiscal Year 2025 at this point but know that
23 there's going to be ongoing conversations about that.
24 There are, I'll walk you through the numbers of
25

1 enrollment. In the Bronx, there's 123 children
2 enrolled, in Manhattan, 109, in Brooklyn 197, in
3 Queens 204 and 20 on Staten Island. There's 130
4 children that have been newly enrolled this year and
5 about 630 who are enrolled total.

6
7 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Does ACS or the providers
8 keep a waitlist and if so, how many families are
9 currently on the waitlist?

10 JESS DANNHAUSER: They do not keep waitlists but
11 they do, many of the providers are providing other
12 services and keeping track of who might be interested
13 but it's not a follow waitlist.

14 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Hmm, interesting. ACS
15 budget includes \$3.1 million in Fiscal 2024 and \$3.4
16 million in Fiscal 2025 for costs related to city
17 asylum seekers, response efforts. What is this
18 funding rate for and are any other services
19 contracted? If so, how much and to which groups and
20 for which services?

21 JESS DANNHAUSER: So, this is - Children's
22 village runs a successful program for families,
23 relocations program that we've been funding through
24 ACS about \$800,000. There's one staff member at the
25 asylum seeker operation. It's state funded but it

1
2 comes through ACS and then we have been working on
3 translation through Accurate. So, the money has been
4 for those activities.

5 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So, and so, most of those
6 are contracted out? So, you don't have positions
7 directly in ACS that are -

8 JESS DANNHAUSER: No.

9 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay. Okay, the
10 preliminary budget includes a baseline PEG of \$1.4
11 million starting at Fiscal 2025 for the Family
12 Service Unit. This savings is also included in the
13 baseline headcount reduction of 20 positions starting
14 in Fiscal 2025. What programs and services does this
15 relate to and how is the reductions among determined
16 and how will this impact services and programs for
17 families?

18 JESS DANNHAUSER: So, this is related to, the
19 Family Service Units are Child Protective Specialists
20 who are responsible for working with families during
21 their supervision. As I mentioned earlier, we have
22 dramatically reduced the use of supervision and so,
23 we took vacancies from those units and are just not
24 going to fill them and so, that's where that cost
25 came from. I think this is consistent with our

1
2 priorities and consistent with our values and one of
3 the places where we think it's an appropriate cut.

4 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: The November Plan included
5 a PEG of \$10.1 million in Fiscal 2024, \$5.2 million
6 in Fiscal 2025 and \$5.4 million in outyears related
7 to out of state Carter cases. Can you explain what
8 the savings relate to and how were those amounts
9 determined and is this the complete elimination of
10 programs within ACS and how many slots were
11 eliminated?

12 JESS DANNHAUSER: So, these are programs that
13 operate through public schools. So, these are
14 placements that families have worked to get through
15 the Department of Education. And so, children are
16 placed in these schools. The money comes through the
17 local service district, which happens to be ACS. In
18 this case, so it's simply a reestimate of the number
19 of students who are a value of those services.

20 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay. The PMMR shows that
21 there has been a steady decline in numbers of
22 families entering child welfare preventative
23 services. In Fiscal 2021, there were 837 families
24 dropping to families in Fiscal 2022 and further to
25 669. What factors led to the decrease of families

1
2 entering the preventative services in the past few
3 years?

4 JESS DANNHAUSER: Starting with COVID and then
5 associated workforce issues that have gone on since
6 then. They've gotten somewhat better. We're really,
7 really pleased with the Mayors announcement last week
8 about investments in the workforce. So, that's the
9 primary reason. We have seen over the last three
10 months a very stark increase about over 20 percent of
11 families newly coming to preventive services and as I
12 mentioned earlier, we're pleased that that increase
13 is primarily being driven by community referrals not
14 by child protective referrals.

15 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: In previous years, ACS has
16 voiced its plan to increase the number of family
17 enrichment centers to 30 sites by 2025. I believe
18 you talked about this a little bit in your opening
19 but how many have we opened up to date and could you
20 give the breakdown by borough?

21 JESS DANNHAUSER: Sure. 12 are open. There are
22 4 in the Bronx. There are 3 in Brooklyn, 2 in
23 Manhattan, 2 in Queens, and 1 in Staten Island. Uhm,
24 8 additional providers have contracts since last year
25 and they are going through the process of engaging

1
2 community, picking space with community, deciding on
3 the name, and deciding on what offerings will be
4 there. 2 of those are in the Bronx, 2 are in
5 Brooklyn, 1 in Manhattan, and 3 in Queens, and then
6 we just made recommended awards in the last month to
7 2 more in the Bronx, 3 in Brooklyn, 2 in Manhattan
8 and 2 in Queens.

9 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And I know that uhm part of
10 what the enrichment centers, there's been a lot of
11 conversation around having community engagement but
12 what engagements are you doing with like local
13 electeds like myself and Council Members for them to
14 be a part of the planning and opening process?

15 JESS DANNHAUSER: Yeah, thank you for that. So,
16 what's really important and we want to make sure that
17 the family enrichment centers are clearly distinct
18 from child protection, from things that anybody would
19 be concerned to go towards. So, the providers in
20 each community that are selected do that engagement,
21 they name a local parent advisory committee and
22 develop those relationships. The parents determine a
23 lot of the community outreach. They have an advisory
24 board that gets elected. Many of them reach out to
25 their Council Member or community boards if that

1
2 didn't happen in incidents, we will make sure it gets
3 fixed. But it's really important that they have a
4 broad engagement of the entire community. That was
5 reached out in Far Rockaway and beautiful new opening
6 and very, very robust engagement from electeds, from
7 the local community and we want to make sure that
8 happens each time.

9 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, I definitely want to
10 make sure that happens as well, so definitely want to
11 continue to talk offline and brainstorm about it and
12 I know I'm supposed to reach out to you about what
13 I'm doing in my district. So, we should definitely
14 do that.

15 JESS DANNHAUSER: Great.

16 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Uhm, the PMMR shows the
17 increase in number of CARES cases, which went from
18 545 in Fiscal 2022 to 800 587 in Fiscal 2023, an
19 increase of 54.9 percent. For the first 4 months of
20 the Fiscal Year 2024, there were 288, 2884 up 46.2
21 percent when compared to the same period in Fiscal
22 2023 when there was only 1972. What is contributing
23 to the considerable increase in CARES cases and how
24 does CARES case differ from the traditional child
25 protected cases and does ACS have aa plan to expand

1
2 the use of CARES system to cover more cases going
3 forward? If so, what is the timeline and how much is
4 this increase anticipated?

5 JESS DANNHAUSER: So, we are – this is about
6 diverting cases from the traditional child protective
7 investigation, which is relatively flat, although
8 we're very excited about the decrease in reports from
9 public schools based on the new training and the
10 accessing family supports.

11 So, this has been very intentional. It's up 10
12 times since 2017. We went in the past year from 48
13 units to 64 units. These are dedicated units using
14 the CARES approach. So, we're about 25 percent, 1 in
15 4 responses to a child protective, an SCR call I
16 should say are using the CARES approach. We're
17 currently evaluating how much further to go there.
18 It's very important that we distinguish though that
19 we don't want people calling the state registry
20 because they want a CARES approach. We can provide
21 that support through preventive service or a
22 community-based service. This is just a way to make
23 sure that we're reducing the number of families
24 getting unnecessary indication of child maltreatment,
25 which can have lingering effects as you know and

1
2 we're really thrilled that the work done in cares is
3 sort of deeply embedded in good social work
4 principals and practices.

5 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, uhm and I think even
6 for me I think I want us to also be thinking about
7 because for so long, ACS has been in a bubble and
8 we've only had one route to get some of these
9 service, and so continues to think about what does it
10 look like as the information campaign, so families
11 could actually know about the new services that's
12 happening because I know we're talking about like the
13 expansions and some of the other things that we're
14 doing to kind of help prevent some of these things
15 and I'm really excited about the state registry thing
16 because we know sometimes those are not used in good
17 faith but also thinking about how do we make sure
18 families know that now, there's other touch points
19 that they can use to get some of the services that
20 they desperately need that they didn't have access to
21 before. So, uhm, I know you guys are probably doing
22 that already, but want to make sure that that is a
23 continuous thing of thinking about how we get this
24 information out.

1
2 JESS DANNHAUSER: If I can say Chair Stevens, I
3 think it's certainly incumbent upon us at ACS. We
4 also know that there extraordinary community leaders
5 and advocates who want to make sure that there are
6 services developed, that you don't have to touch the
7 child welfare system at all and so, that is also a
8 really important part of the solution. There are
9 state legislative solutions that we think need to be
10 carefully looked at, mandated reporter laws in
11 particular. So while we really try to have it be
12 used differently, we also think some structural
13 changes are important to consider and explore.

14 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Absolutely, coming down the
15 home stretch. Uhm, the end of the pandemic federal
16 funding is set to expire at the end of current
17 calendar year and many agencies are working to
18 determine how to address the shortfalls. As the
19 preliminary plan, ACS has \$8.6 million in budgeted
20 and Fiscal 2024 and \$9.1 million budgeted for Fiscal
21 2025 from pandemic sources. What programs or
22 services does this funding relate to and does this
23 agency expect to fully expand all budget pandemic
24 related funding in Fiscal 2024 and 2025? And if not,
25 why not and how much will remain unspent?

1 JESS DANNHAUSER: Margaret.

2 MARGARET PLETNIKOFF: Sure, so the funding in
3 FY24 and FY25 was previously ARPA funds, which are
4 expiring but the city actually backfilled those with
5 CTL and those pay for the indirect cost rate and at
6 this point, I believe we are expecting full spending.
7

8 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Oh, okay, thank you. Uhm,
9 many families have expressed concerns about ACS
10 investigations conducted in homes. In recent news,
11 ACS has formed a new campaign aimed at informing all
12 parents under investigation their legal rights in
13 order to improve those investigations. In this new
14 campaign citywide, is this campaign citywide and if
15 not, when will it be expanded to be citywide?

16 JESS DANNHAUSER: We are about halfway there and
17 we'll be done it's looks like we're on target for the
18 end of May and certainly by the end of June we'll be
19 citywide where we're providing families with
20 information on the outset of an investigation
21 including that we need their permission to come into
22 the home, which they can deny and that they can call
23 an attorney at any point during an investigation.
24
25

1
2 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And does this campaign
3 include like any media outreach, social media as well
4 as just like on the onset of an investigation?

5 JESS DANNHAUSER: It's less a campaign and more
6 about this individual information but we have reached
7 out to media outlets to let them know what we're
8 doing. The Daily News covered it and we would be
9 happy to continue to find ways to make that public.

10 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you. Council Member
11 Williams, do you have additional questions?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Yeah, uhm, I just
13 wanted to note that my question around the number of
14 contracts. I just wanted to make it clear that the
15 reason why I asked that question is because across
16 many agencies, not just ACS, especially when it comes
17 to like smaller nonprofit organizations, nonprofits
18 that are run by people of color. In the case of for-
19 profit contracts with MWBE's, agencies in government
20 really do have the opportunity to craft RFPs in a way
21 that maximizes opportunities and so, then when you
22 have 16 RFPs and you know we noticed that one
23 organization got multiple contracts, it just does not
24 feel like an equitable system. So, I just wanted to
25 like make that connection but I look forward to

1 hearing about which organizations did receive the 16
2 citywide contracts.

3
4 The question – two questions that I have is from
5 my colleague Council Member Riley, who I was very
6 interested in his questions because I never knew that
7 the Committee on Special Education was in ACS. Is
8 this accurate?

9 JESS DANNHAUSER: Uh, the budget, the dollars
10 flow through us. It is at New York City Public
11 Schools. It is not with us.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay, so do you – are
13 you able to answer any questions around expectations
14 with reduction in funding for the Committee on
15 Special Education? Uhm, you know the fact that 40
16 percent of students in foster care are classified as
17 students with disabilities more than twice the city
18 rate? So, are you able to share or opine on how
19 these impacts might affect students academically?
20 This was two questions from Council Member Riley.

21 JESS DANNHAUSER: Not in a sufficiently informed
22 way for Council Member Riley. I will say ACS pays
23 for – these are typically residential placements that
24 the Department of Education, New York City Public
25 Schools has set up and the room and board comes

1 through ACS. As I understand it, this was simply a
2 reestimate of the cost. It was not a determination
3 of how many services would be needed going forward.
4

5 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay and the Chair has
6 questions about the Carter cases, can you also
7 explain? I did not realize that ACS also had
8 something to do with Carter cases. I did not realize
9 that.

10 MARGARET PLETNIKOFF: Sure so uhm DOE or NYCPS is
11 require by law to provide for the educational needs
12 of NYC children and if the child cannot be served by
13 school and NYC, then the city is required to pay for
14 the child education out of state or county.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: No, I know what Carter
16 cases are. I think I'm most interested in
17 understanding what is ACS's role?

18 MARGARET PLETNIKOFF: Our role, we don't have
19 anything to do with the -

20 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay.

21 MARGARET PLETNIKOFF: We just have to pay for the
22 care and maintenance costs.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay, so similar to the
24 Committee on Special Education. Why? Why does it
25 not just go through -

1
2 JESS DANNHAUSER: I believe it relates to the
3 fact that it has to be a local social service
4 district that pays for the room and board component
5 and the rates are set through that process and so, we
6 are the passer there but we can get you a definitive
7 answer on that.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay, thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: One more question. The
10 proposed Fiscal 2025 State Budget includes a
11 permanent increase of \$75 million for children
12 welfare expenses for temporary aid to needy families
13 and flexible fund for family services. We are not
14 clear on the implementations this would have on ACS
15 and if interacted, an additional increase if there
16 are other changes in a proposed state budget that
17 could impact the agency. Will ACS services or
18 programs be impacted by this reduction? If so, how
19 and are there other proposals in the recent released
20 state budget that you have flagged that could either
21 positively or negatively impact the agency?

22 JESS DANNHAUSER: So, Mary would you answer the
23 piece about the TANF piece and then I'll talk about
24 the state.

2 MARGARET PLETNIKOFF: Sure, uhm, I think we are
3 evaluating those changes. The prior changes with the
4 Title 20 funds have sometimes been a reduction in
5 funding to other agencies and then city rebalances
6 between the agencies, so on the specifics, I think
7 I'll have to get back to you.

8 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you.

9 JESS DANNHAUSER: And on the state budget, I
10 think as we mentioned earlier, investments in
11 juvenile justice and services are - we have not seen
12 them from the state. We have not seen them from
13 Close to Home and so, as we're talking about deeply
14 important services for youth, I think we want to see
15 the state step up there.

16 The preventive reimbursement remains every year,
17 brought down to 62 percent instead of 65 percent.
18 There's also an important policy that we're
19 interested in seeing pass, which is the delinking of
20 work hours to authorized hours for childcare. So,
21 right now, a family can only get childcare for hours
22 that they're working primarily. Obviously families
23 are doing a lot of other things. They have to go to
24 the grocery store. They have to take care of things
25 and so, we want to see a delinking between the

1 authorized hours. It's in both one house budget
2 bills. The Governor did veto it last year, but we're
3 hopeful that we can get it passed this year.

4
5 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Well, I hope so too because
6 we know the state needs to do their part as well.
7 So, uhm, with that, that is the conclusion of my
8 questions. Thank you. I wasn't so bad was I?

9 JESS DANNHAUSER: It was a very great
10 conversation Chair.

11 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you. We're going to
12 take a little break and thank you all the providers
13 that have been sticking it out with me all day
14 because I know some of you all was out there since
15 9:00 rallying but I need to take a break and we will
16 be back with public testimony and thank you.

17 JESS DANNHAUSER: Thank you so much Chair. Thank
18 you Council Members.

19 RECESS [04:43:17]- [05:01:23]

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good afternoon. We are going
21 to reconvene. We want everyone to please find their
22 seats. Just a quick reminder, no food or beverages
23 are allowed in the Chambers. If you are here to
24 testify, even if you registered on Zoom, you still
25 need to fill out a witness slip at the Sergeant at

Arms desk in the back of the room and also, no one approach the dais at any point. Thank you.

[05:01:42]- [05:01:49]

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Well, welcome back. I just want to say thank you guys who have been sticking it out all day. You guys are the real MVP and I am here to have public testimony. So, I'm going to turn it over to Council to start calling up the panels.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, before we turn to public testimony, I want to remind members of the public that this is a formal government proceeding and that decorum shall be observed at all times. As such, members of the public shall remain silent at all times.

The witness table is reserved for people who wish to testify. No video recording or photography is allowed from the witness table. Further, members of the public may not present audio or video recordings as testimony but may submit transcripts of such recordings to the Sergeant at Arms for inclusion in the hearing record.

If you wish to speak at today's hearing, please fill out an appearance card with the Sergeant at Arms and wait to be recognized. When recognized, you will

1 have two minutes to speak on today's hearing topic.

2 If you have a written statement or additional written
3 testimony you wish to submit for the record, please
4 provide a copy of that testimony to the Sergeant at
5 Arms.
6

7 You may also email written testimony to
8 testimony@council.nyc.gov within 72 hours of this
9 hearing. Audio and video recordings will not be
10 accepted. We will be limiting public testimony today
11 to two minutes each. For in-person panelists, please
12 come up to the table once your name has been called.
13 Our first panel will be Abdoillaye Diallo, Acont
14 Abdoul Aziz Diallo, Anthony Turner, Nadirra Hakeem,
15 Zaganah Stephens, Amal Kharoufi, and Nedelyn Helena-
16 Diaz.

17 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Please step forward and I
18 just want to remind everybody that we will be
19 sticking to a very strict two minutes. We have a lot
20 of folks signed up. I do want to hear everyone, so I
21 will be making sure we're sticking to the two minutes
22 today.

23 ZAGANAH STEPHENS: Okay, hi, good afternoon. I'd
24 like to thank the Chairs Althea Stevens and the rest
25 of the members of the Committee for the Youth and

1
2 Children for the commitment to meeting the needs of
3 youth and the opportunity to testify today. Sorry.

4 My name Zaganah Stephens, I am the Youth Advocacy
5 Fellow for Coalition for Homeless Youth and a leader
6 of Project Unite, which is a collaboration between
7 youth with lived experience of homelessness and child
8 welfare system whose advocating for the needs of
9 youth in both systems. As a person who has lived
10 experience of homelessness as a youth in the system
11 for seven years, it's my peers recommendations for
12 the following: I would like to talk about City
13 FHEPS. Despite the legislation passed by City
14 Council, the Mayor is refusing to follow the law and
15 permit young people served in runaway and homeless
16 youth programs to access City FHEPS vouchers without
17 having to first enter the adult shelters. And
18 moreover, young people transitioning out of foster
19 care were left out of this legislation increasing
20 access to City FHEPS. It is unacceptable. I've been
21 effected by this policy. I've experienced youth
22 homelessness for seven years and though the majority
23 of my time has been spent in DYCD, at a certain point
24 I realized it was my only chance that a City FHEPS
25 voucher would have to be obtained through DHS. This

1
2 policy caused me at least two extra years of
3 homelessness due to snow ball effects from the mental
4 toll of the DHS system and staff and moving.

5 Had I been able to obtain City FHEPS while in the
6 DYCD shelter, perhaps I wouldn't have spent nearly
7 one-third of my life in the youth shelter system.

8 I also want to talk about housing navigators for
9 all young people in RHY. We need \$1.5 million in the
10 DYCD budget to maintain housing navigators. The
11 implementation of housing navigators completely
12 revolutionize the youth shelter system. They play a
13 pivotal role because they help youth figure out their
14 options and navigate a roof list housing system and
15 without them, I don't know what our shelters would be
16 doing. They should be baselined. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you and I agree, they
18 should be baselined. Which ever is fine.

19 NEDELYN DIAZ: I'm going to share my testimony
20 now. My name is Nedelyn Diaz. I'm a lived expert
21 from the NYC Youth Action Board and Project Unite.
22 Project Unite is a collaborative - oh.

23 As someone who has experienced homelessness and
24 housing instability, I am deeply connected to
25 protecting young people and securing housing in a

1 proactive and safe way. The city should create
2 pathways for professional development and economic
3 mobility for peer navigators working with young
4 people. Peer navigators are essential because they
5 provide young people with guiding as credible
6 messengers and are easier for young people
7 experiencing housing instability to relate to.
8 Despite this, they are among the most vulnerable
9 workers in our system and their positions have been
10 cut in recent budgets. This all takes a toll on
11 young people they serve and illustrates the barriers
12 to economic mobility and professional opportunity for
13 those who enter this career.
14

15 Restore funding for the 16 peer navigator
16 positions and DYCD RHY system for \$1.6 million and we
17 urge ACS to ensure that all new contracts awarded
18 will allocate funding for one peer position per
19 contract. We also demand that the city increases the
20 number of DYCD transitional independent living
21 programs for homeless young adults ages 21-24.

22 As someone who has stayed in a TIL I can tell you
23 that without one, I would have had to face potential
24 street homelessness or remain in a more unstable
25 environment. There are a lot of young people who

1 don't have somewhere to sleep without adequate space
2 and beds available. Young people used to be able to
3 rest at drop ins but they can no longer do that. The
4 city requires a shift to ensuring young people have
5 shelter and housing, temporary or permanent.
6

7 The city must providing funding for 40 additional
8 21-24 year olds beds at 5,500 per bed as well as 60
9 beds for 18-21 year olds beds. That brings us to a
10 total of 100 additional DYCD HRY beds for funding of
11 \$5.6 million. And it's important that we secure
12 funding for older youth beds as they are closer to
13 entering youth shelter and can't be removed from
14 their bed if there is no space available for younger
15 individuals.

16 If you allow me a few more seconds to finish my
17 testimony, I'm almost done.

18 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: 10 seconds.

19 NEDELYN DIAZ: 10 seconds. Runaway and homeless
20 youth shelters do not have the funding needed to
21 cover the true cost of running programs, therefore we
22 ask for an additional \$5.5 million to right size the
23 DYCD crisis.

24 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you.

25 NEDELYN DIAZ: Thank you.

1
2 AMAL KHAROUFI: Hi, my name is Amal Kharoufi,
3 pronouns she, they. Thank you to the Chair members
4 today. I am a Youth Advocate with Project Unite
5 Youth Empower Transforming Care and I'm here today
6 standing as someone who has personally experienced
7 the challenges of housing instability in New York
8 City and even after finally securing housing, I found
9 myself grappling with a multitude of uncertainties
10 and unanswered questions that we'd have in mind for
11 any undue the progress that I have made and while
12 some people would say, I should be happy that someone
13 finally got back to me about a voucher with an
14 unrealistic expiration date despite the fact that I
15 displayed five years of the longest game of frogger.
16 All too often, once housing is secured, many are left
17 to tangle a maze of processes and barriers alone
18 while carrying our feelings of isolation and
19 uncertainty. This is where community-based hubs
20 could step in as a beacon of hope and support. These
21 hubs are essential for providing comprehensive
22 support during and after housing has been attained.

23 As we move towards creating trusted, community-
24 based resources for young people facing homelessness,
25 regardless of where they are from, we need to make

1 critical investments right now in HRY drop-in
2 centers. Unite is calling for a one-time 30 percent
3 contract increase for a DYCD funded drop-in center
4 contracts to work with young people who need support
5 right now. That would mean a \$1.63 million
6 investment. But we need to think bigger than that.
7 We also want to build community-based hubs that go
8 beyond drop-in centers. That includes peer support
9 to foster a sense of belonging and solidarity, which
10 is essential for overcoming challenges associated
11 with transitioning to stable housing. Trauma
12 informed services that acknowledge and address the
13 unique experiences of individuals who have faced
14 adversity and trauma.

16 Housing navigations that services that help young
17 people not only secure housing but maintain it for
18 the long wrong. Financial planning assistance to
19 help young people manage the resources. Legal
20 support to the rights of young tenants and
21 educational and employment assistance to pursue their
22 goals. We need to invest in drop-in centers in this
23 city budget. We also need to work together to build
24 these hubs so that we can be beacons of hope of
25 sources and empowerment for individuals like me who

1 are striving to build a better future for themselves.

2 Thank you.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Agree with everything all
5 three of you have said.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And last in this panel, we
7 have Anthony Turner on Zoom. Anthony, you may begin
8 when the Sergeant starts your clock.

9 ANTHONY TURNER: Thank you so much for that and I
10 want to say thank you to all the Council Members.
11 Hopefully, everyone can hear me here. My name is
12 Anthony Turner and I'm the YEB Director for the
13 Center for Fair Futures. The Fair Futures model
14 provides one on one coaching, social emotional
15 academic career housing and life skills, supports to
16 young people from 6th grade to the age of 26. The
17 model has been implemented and scaled across all 25
18 New York City foster care agencies and currently
19 serves nearly 4,000 young people between the ages of
20 11-26.

21 The model is also being implemented across the
22 New York City Juvenile Justice system. In the first
23 years of Fair Futures implementation, all 25 foster
24 care agencies implemented the model. Over 500 staff
25 were hired and received 7.5 days of training. These

1 staff in turn provided nearly 4,000 young people in
2 foster care with one-on-one coaching, tutoring and an
3 array of individualized academic career development
4 and housing supports.
5

6 Fair Futures was launched during the COVID-19
7 pandemic. Despite the significant challenges that
8 presented, early results are strong systemwide.
9 Despite the challenges presented by COVID-19 by the
10 end of the first year, nearly 99 percent of young
11 people engage with their Fair Futures coach. I just
12 kind of want to share my personal experience. Having
13 a coach was vital for my success. A lot of times I
14 felt like I wouldn't be able to make and I also had a
15 lot of housing challenges uhm, and having a coach was
16 really - pushed me beyond my limits. So, I just want
17 to say from my ask at the Center for Fair Futures,
18 we're just hoping to stay baselined and uhm, I
19 appreciate everyone to be hearing my testimony.
20 Thank you.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you so much to this
22 panel. Our next panel will be Samuya Grover, Zayda
23 Roja, Nora Kouyate, Titilayo Aluko, and Chayanika
24 Roy.
25

1
2 EMILY GAMBLE: Hi, my name is Emily Gamble and I
3 am a Senior in high school and I've been a member of
4 Girls Club for the past five years. Girls Club has
5 been a constant place of support for me during this
6 time. After a long day, I take comfort in knowing
7 that there's a place I can go to that will greet me
8 with warm smiles, a meal, and a genuine interest of
9 wanting to know how I am. I know that no matter how
10 my day was before, I'll have the opportunity to take
11 part in classes and activities that will give me the
12 choice to discover a new interest without the
13 expectations of who I should be weighing on me.

14 Whether exploring the edges of the universe in
15 the planetarium or harvesting potatoes and
16 strawberries with Mama Gen on the rooftop, I know
17 that for the rest of the day, I'll be doing something
18 that will make me confident and proud of who I will
19 wake up as tomorrow.

20 Girls Club has instilled an unwavering sense of
21 determination and pride in myself that I will carry
22 with me through the rest of my life. My only hope is
23 that when I graduate, I can eventually come back and
24 to the same thing for the young girls who will come
25 after me. That is why I am here, to ask for

1 restoration of funding to girls and gender expansive
2 serving organizations like the Stars Citywide Girls
3 Initiative. Thank you.

4
5 SAMUYA GROVER: Hi Council Member Stevens and
6 Committee Members. My name is Samuya Grover, I'm a
7 Bella Abzug Leadership alumni. Bali has been a
8 member of the Stars Citywide Girls Initiative for the
9 past four years. I was not only lucky to attend
10 their summer program, which was incredibly empowering
11 in every way but also to become a recipient of their
12 leadership scholarship.

13 Bali helped me in so many ways, all the way from
14 finding a community and feeling empowered as a young
15 woman to finding my voice and my power as a leader.
16 I'm who I am today because of the learning and
17 enrichment that Bali offered. Organizations like
18 Bali and Star CGI member organizations give New York
19 City young women a much-needed safe space to be
20 themselves and find their inner voices encourage to
21 achieve things they really want and need.

22 I cannot stress it enough how it would be
23 imperative that funding for future generations of
24 young women and gender expansive youth is restored.

2 TITILAYO ALUKO: Good afternoon. Council Member
3 Stevens, great to see you again. My name is Titilayo
4 Aluko, I'm a Power Play alumni, Star CGI fellow, here
5 to share my testimony of the importance of
6 stabilizing the nonprofit sector. Participating in
7 Power Play empowered me to be the woman I am here
8 today.

9 I am privileged to be surrounded with a support
10 system of strong women and friends who consistently
11 encourage me to speak up and advocate for myself.
12 One of the many programs I participated in is the
13 Youth Leadership Council, which helped me develop my
14 advocacy skills, be able to speak on issues that
15 impact minority communities. I remember standing out
16 in the program, being very reserved and quiet through
17 small groups and pray God sessions and became very
18 vocal and confident when I speak.

19 This led me to be selected as a Star CGI Fellow
20 in 2020 alongside 10 other young women from the Star
21 CGI partner organizations. We work together to
22 produce and facilitate 100 percent youth led townhall
23 conversation with then Council Member Adrienne Adams
24 on the topic of education equity.

1
2 As a young person who benefited greatly from the
3 nonprofit sector program such as Power Play and now
4 has the privilege of speaking in front of you here
5 today, I can attest to the positive impact that these
6 youth programs have on young people. I sit side by
7 side with other young women and Star CGI fellows
8 requesting a restoration of funding to girls and
9 gender expansive serving organizations like Star CGI.
10 Thank you.

11 ZAYDA ROJAS: Hello, my name is Zayda Rojas. I
12 am 16 years old and I am a participant of Figure
13 Skating in Harlem. I have been a participant for
14 nine years now. I'd like to thank you for the
15 opportunity to testify and thank you to the City
16 Council for championing programs and services for
17 young people.

18 FSH uses skating to develop leadership and
19 academic achievement in hundreds of girls like me
20 each year. It's a door for opportunity for our young
21 girls of color, the hope of our future and making
22 dreams possible and a reminder that anyone can do
23 anything no matter the color or background. Figure
24 Skating in Harlem creates a safe atmosphere for young
25

1
2 girls to express themselves in ways they'd be
3 suppressed in the outside world.

4 In our program, we use the power of our
5 representatives to reach out beyond the horizons and
6 let the world hear our name. For this we attend
7 Gallas and fund raisers, meeting important people to
8 conduct with and spread the word of our amazing
9 accomplishments. I am calling on the City Council to
10 continue making the investments in programs and
11 services for girls and gender nonconforming youth.

12 The Stars Initiative is an example of the kind of
13 investments that girls/young people need. Thank you.

14 CHAYANIKA ROY: Hello, my name - hello, Council
15 Member Stevens. My name is Chayanika Roy. I'm a 19-
16 year-old student from Hunter College and most
17 importantly I'm a menti at Girls Right Now. One of
18 the ten organizations that make up Star CGI. Girls
19 right now has been the most important thing for me as
20 I transition from high school to college. Most
21 people, when they think about support, they think it
22 stops at high school. You're an adult now. You're
23 independent now. You should do things on your own
24 now. The idea that you stop needing support when
25 you're a young adult is not only not true, you

1
2 actually need more support. College makes me feel
3 isolated and lonely and it is now that I need
4 connection more than ever. Girls Right Now is an
5 amazing community which pairs young women and gender
6 expansive youth like myself with amazing mentors who
7 do everything from supporting you when you want to
8 cry about an exam to helping you find internships and
9 jobs. Connections are important and the connections
10 at Girls Right Now are everything. They help you
11 emotionally, socially, economically. I do not know
12 what I would do without my mentor. They make my life
13 richer. Stars CGI costs about \$1.4 million to fully
14 fund. That is about 0.00013 percent of the budget,
15 of the 2025 Fiscal Year. Frankly, cutting its
16 funding will not make a significant enough difference
17 in the city's budget to save money. Instead, you're
18 keeping girls away from the connections which not
19 only improve their lives, they improve the city.
20 Fully funding Star CGI allow young women in these
21 programs to enter your workforce, your economy and
22 your society.

23 And frankly when the city government is already
24 thinking about cutting funds from libraries and
25 schools, resulting in cuts in after school programs.

1
2 Is there anywhere else that these young girls can go?
3 Simply there is nowhere. Please join us at the youth
4 town hall tomorrow where we will join in trying to
5 fully expand funding. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yes, we know they were all
7 great and you guys know I love to hear from the kids
8 and I did hear your invitation for tomorrow. It is
9 on my list but as you have a lot on the Saturday
10 schedule so I will try to be there but I can't make a
11 commitment as of yet, but I'm trying my best. Thank
12 you though. So, thank you guys, appreciate you all.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, our next panel will be
14 Erica Gamble, McKenzie Lewis, Mahlah Abudu, Marsha
15 Jean-Charles, Trenton Price and Emily Gamble.

16 MCKENZIE LEWIS: Hello, my name is McKenzie
17 Sherrie Lewis and I am a participant of Figure
18 Skating of Harlem. Thank you for the opportunity to
19 testify and thank you to the City Council for
20 championing programs and services for young people.

21 FSH uses skating to develop leadership and
22 academic achievement in hundreds of girls like me
23 each year. Each year, we grow confidence on and off
24 ice. Benefits of FSH has allowed me to become a
25 powerful speaker and an effective leader in the

1
2 community. It has also allowed me and my sisterhood
3 to focus on future goals and develop positive healthy
4 lifestyles.

5 I am calling on the City Council to continue
6 making investments in the programs and services for
7 girls and gender nonconforming youth. The Stars
8 Initiative is an example of the kind and of the
9 investments that girls and young people need. Thank
10 you very much.

11 MAHLAH ABUDU: Hello, my name is Mahlah Abudu. I
12 am 17 years old and a senior in high school. I have
13 been a part of Figure Skating in Harlem for the past
14 nine years and I am proud to say that FSH has been a
15 backbone and has helped me through so many lessons
16 that surpass the ice-skating rink.

17 Through financial literacy classes, academic
18 classes, stem classes and college prep, I have been
19 able to thrive as well as be surrounded by a
20 community of sisters. I know after a long day of
21 school, I can come to this program and be supported
22 by fellow Council Members, staff members and fellow
23 sisters who will always have my back through thick
24 and thin.

1
2 As I part ways with FSH, as I'm going to be a
3 senior and going off to college, I know that FSH will
4 always have my back and will always be a pivotal
5 focus on my life.

6 I am calling on the City Council to continue to
7 fund programs like FSH as well as the Stars
8 Initiative to continue to thrive, to help girls
9 thrive like me. Thank you.

10 TRENTON PRICE: Wonderful testimony. Thank you
11 Chair Stevens and members of the Committee on
12 Children and Youth. My name is Trenton Price, I am
13 the Executive Director of the Salvadori Center. I'm
14 a former middle school teacher, school leader and
15 district leader for arts education here in New York
16 City before joining Salvadori.

17 At Salvadori we provide steam education services.
18 That's stem plus the a for arts and in our case
19 architecture to schools, after school sites and NYCHA
20 community centers across the five boroughs focusing
21 on the built environment. For context, last year
22 Salvadori taught over 8,000 students in 129 schools
23 and NYCHA community centers. Our goal is to make
24 stem and the arts come alive through hands on
25 project-based learning that practices the soft skills

1 of collaboration, creativity and problem solving just
2 like real life architects, designers and engineers.

3 We're grateful to have the support of the Council
4 through many different casa, digital inclusion and
5 literacy grants as well as the after-school
6 enrichment program and the speakers initiative. It
7 is this work from the speakers initiative that brings
8 me here today.

9 As a long-time partner of NYCHA for over 15
10 years, we see first hand the need for robust out of
11 school time programming for children and youth. In
12 our programs, young people clammer for the
13 opportunity to work together and build solutions to
14 design challenges that impact their community. These
15 real-life challenges engage their brains, foster
16 collaboration and make connections to career pathway
17 as they may not have otherwise considered. With so
18 many pressing priorities for the residents of NYCHA
19 and other shelters, we know that programming for
20 children and youth can sometimes feel like less of a
21 priority but to the contrary, investing in pathways
22 for children and youth is one of the most critical
23 things we can do to support the success of future
24 generations.
25

2 I want to thank the Council for their investment
3 in the futures of children and youth and I want to
4 encourage you to continue to deepen that support for
5 out of school time programming for young people in
6 NYCHA and shelters who need it most through CASA,
7 after school enrichment and speakers initiative.
8 Thank you.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you so much to this
10 panel. Our next panel will be Yarlyn Miguel Duran
11 Lopez, Treyana L. Harry, and Darren Garcia.

12 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: You guys can get started
13 whenever you're ready.

14 TREYANA HARRY: Dear Council Members, it serves
15 me well to advocate on behalf of my community. My
16 name is Treyana Harry. It is a pleasure being here.
17 I am a sales representative and solopreneur. I am
18 also a resident of East New York. I attend Regent
19 University. As one of the members, the Youth Action
20 Leadership Council Program, I co-lead the News Letter
21 Project. Being a part of this youth development
22 program has impacted my leadership collaboration
23 skills. I have learned how to foster critical
24 thinking in the workplace and implement problem
25 solving strategies on its youth that affect our

1
2 social norms. I felt heard because I was surrounded
3 by people who valued my opinion. Through the
4 program, I had the opportunity to receive mentorship
5 and prove my research skills, practice public
6 speaking, teach others, volunteer at a community
7 local church, attend youth justice events and
8 facilitate event planning to raise awareness about
9 its youth at young peoples faith.

10 Our curriculum provides opportunities for young
11 people to explore individuality and self-awareness.
12 It improved their educational perspective on topics
13 like [INAUDIBLE 05:30:23], political science, youth
14 activism, behavioral economics and I'm sorry guys.
15 Basically, the program helps people to feel safe,
16 educated and you know it makes you feel proud about
17 yourself because you're learning a new skill and
18 that's what this is about.

19 [INAUDIBLE 05:30:53] Moser said, "Education costs
20 money but then so does ignorance." I sincerely
21 appreciate your help. Best regards, Harry.

22 DARREN GARCIA: Good evening City Council. I
23 hope everything is well. My name is Darren Garcia, a
24 16-year-old junior at Brooklyn Institute for Liberal
25

1
2 Arts and I'm a proud member of the Youth Action
3 Leadership Council.

4 After being recommended by my friend Annatti (SP?)
5 and to CCA programming, I swiftly became a member of
6 the Youth Action Leadership Council where I
7 immediately started to gain knowledge on topics like
8 servants, leader, philosophy, the effects of
9 structural racism, the art of debating and public
10 speaking as well as organizing projects. As it
11 relates to those projects, I am a co-lead of the News
12 Letter Project and Community Benefits Project. As
13 the co-lead of the News Letter Project, I focus on
14 bringing awareness to our program, hopefully gaining
15 support toward helping our community.

16 As a co-lead of the Community Benefits project,
17 respond to communities that would appreciate extra
18 help with things like pantry work, donating clothing
19 and helping set up community gardens for later
20 harvest. I humbly present this message to you hoping
21 to convey the significance of our endeavors. As
22 stewards of our city's resources, I implore you to
23 consider the profound impact of investing in our
24 programs. By supporting initiatives like ours, you
25 are not only investing in the future of our youth but

1
2 also in the resilience and vibrancy of our
3 communities. Funding our projects will not only
4 amplify our outreach efforts but also facilitate the
5 tangible hands-on support that is vital for the
6 wellbeing of those we serve.

7 In conclusion, I express my sincere gratitude for
8 your attention to this matter. Together, let us
9 continue to strive towards a future where every
10 member of our community is supported, empowered, and
11 equipped to thrive. Thank you for your
12 consideration.

13 YARLYN DURAN: Greetings City Council Members.
14 My name is Yarlyn Duran and I am a 17-year-old
15 student from the Dominic Republic who resides in
16 Cypress Hills. I proudly attend Brooklyn High School
17 and I am a member of the Youth Action Leadership
18 Council. And in NTCA, I have attended two programs.
19 One, the Youth Action Leadership Council and two, the
20 Community Compost program.

21 One, the Community Compost program focuses on
22 renovating and rebuilding community gardens to grow
23 fresh produce and in this program, I was able to
24 rebuild old gardens and plant seeds to grow produce
25 for the community.

2 Two, I am also a member of the Youth Action
3 Leadership Council where I am a coleader of two
4 prestigious projects in the Youth Action Leadership
5 Council, namely the Community Benefits Project and
6 the Know Your Rights Campaign Project. As a member
7 of the Youth of YALC, I have had the opportunity to
8 learn how to have the confidence of a leader, help
9 those in need and how a team functions as leaders.

10 One thing YALC has pushed me to do is to be
11 creative and have the ability to do critical
12 thinking. We also do advocacy work, such as
13 supporting the Youth Justice Opportunities Act in the
14 communities not cages. Now, the funding would allow
15 programs like YALC in the community compost program
16 to expand and bring more benefits. Thank you for
17 your time and consideration and allowing me to
18 testify here at City Council.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you to this panel. Our
20 next panel will be Anthony Posada, Patricia Mullen,
21 Ira Yankwitt, Annie Minquez, Caitlyn Passaretti,
22 Jamie Powlovich and Nora Moran.

23 ANNIE MINQUEZ: Good afternoon Chair Stevens and
24 the members of the Committee. My name is Annie
25 Minquez and I am the Vice President of Government and

1
2 Community Relations at Good Sheperd Services. I also
3 serve on the steering committees on the Campaign for
4 Children and the Coalition for Homeless Youth and I'm
5 the Co-Chair of the NYC Advocacy Committee for
6 [INAUDIBLE 05:35:25].

7 Good Sheperd operates many of the programs
8 discussed today. I want to just kind of like
9 highlight a few things. I will submit a longer
10 testimony. On ACS, I wanted to talk about salary
11 parity. A youth development specialist at ACS makes
12 roughly about \$47,000 starting compared to \$36,000 if
13 they work in a CBO. ACS also offers a signing bonus
14 and annual cost of living adjustments that CBOs just
15 cannot compete with. We want to thank the Council
16 and the Mayor and the work of the Just Pay Campaign
17 for the most recent multiyear COLA deal that will
18 help us recruit and retain staff and we look forward
19 to discussing salary parity to ensure that the human
20 services workforce makes a livable wage.

21 On DYCD, as an after-school provider, we want to
22 support the need to restore cuts to after school and
23 Summer Rising. As a runaway homeless youth provider,
24 we want to ensure that there's an additional
25 investment of \$16.4 million towards RHY. And on Cure

1
2 Violence, I want to just to elevate that there is a
3 \$5.14 million cut to the Office of Neighborhood
4 Safety and specifically a \$1.4 to Legal Aid. Our
5 Bronx Rises against Gun Violence program has been
6 partnering with the Legal Aid since its inception.
7 They are imbedded in our programs and the communities
8 who are supporting the Bronx. They attend and they
9 table our community events and they participate in
10 our hiring panels. They also host a series of
11 workshops and they are building relationships with
12 the community before what they are in crisis, and
13 then when there is a crisis, communities trust Legal
14 Aid because they're there to support them. So, thank
15 you so much for the opportunity to testify and I look
16 forward to taking any questions.

17 ANTHONY POSADA: Thank you Chair Stevens. You
18 are a true champion for young people and communities
19 in New York City. Cutting \$1.5 million from the CJU
20 budget undermines the incredible success of the CMS
21 network in eradicating gun violence in our
22 communities. As you know, because you were part of
23 that panel, New York City Data Council Reports show
24 that a 19 percent reduction in criminality in
25 precincts that have a CMS site connected to them.

1
2 Although those sites are impacted by a \$1.5
3 million cut to our services. Our comprehensive legal
4 services serve to defend, educate and organize our
5 communities, which are vital to ensuring public
6 safety in our city. As you know, we have a 24/7-hour
7 hotline for legal emergencies such as arrests,
8 housing evictions. We assist community members on
9 obtaining their rap sheets so they can apply for
10 seeing of their convictions and I can go on and on
11 and on. We educate community members on their rights
12 on how to navigate legal systems and their rights
13 during police encounters, which we all know can be
14 life threatening.

15 Most recently, we were in your district
16 connecting with community members with our mobile
17 justice unit meeting them directly in their
18 neighborhoods right outside of Lincoln Hospital. The
19 Mayor committed to an additional \$8.5 million for the
20 Crisis Management System, so here he is cutting \$1.5
21 million from the Community Justice Unit.

22 In Fiscal Year 2023 alone, we served 7,045
23 people. This year, in the first six months of fiscal
24 year 2024, we are at 4,074. We are on track for a 15
25 percent increase. You have in our testimony letters

1
2 from all of our community partners including ManUp,
3 DEVO, Life Camp, Speak these Forward, Drum, 100
4 suits. Restoring the funding of the CJU is restoring
5 our communities that are in crisis. Commissioner
6 Howard said that people can go to DSS for legal
7 services, that is inaccurate. Also, people who go to
8 Office of Victim Services are denied services if
9 they're alleged to being gang members and that is
10 critically important for everyone to know. Thank you
11 for your time.

12 ROSLYN MORRISON: Good afternoon, oh, thank you.
13 Collaboration already. Good afternoon Chair Stevens
14 and member of the Committee. I'm Roslyn Morrison,
15 I'm a Senior Attorney at the Legal Aid Society in the
16 community justice unit. I'll keep this very short
17 and brief but I wanted to provide some concrete
18 examples of what my colleagues on both sides and
19 supervising, co-supervising Anthony Posada just
20 shared.

21 Legal Aid very much provides direct services in
22 earlier testimony, there was an inference made that
23 cutting the Legal Aid budget was a cut made to avoid
24 cutting direct services and I'd like to just make it
25 very clear that the work that we do, the very

1
2 frontline work that we do and the support that we
3 provide, particularly in collaborations with our CMS
4 partners is direct services. So, specifically and
5 I'm responsible for the sites and providing support
6 to the sites in Queens such as CCD, 100 Suits, Life
7 Camp, Rising Ground, Elmcors, Roxade Street, is a lot
8 of the work that we do keeps violence from happening
9 in the first place. It's helping people in crisis
10 before things escalate.

11 So, for example, in addition to the legal
12 hotline, which is 24 hours a day 7 days a week, I
13 often get phone calls of arrests in real time. I've
14 spoken to and mitigated very tense situations where
15 there is a battalion of officers outside of a door
16 and people very fearful were on the other side. I
17 was able to intervene and actually a colleague of
18 mine and I went out to the scene to make sure that
19 everyone stayed safe.

20 So, this is just an example of direct services
21 that we provide and we need to have proper funding to
22 assist our CMS partners and really keep communities
23 safe. Thank you.

24 IRA YANKWITT: Good afternoon Chair Stevens. My
25 name is Ira Yankwitt and I'm the Executive Director

1
2 of the Literacy Assistance Center and a proud member
3 of the New York City Coalition for Adult Literacy. I
4 had prepared written testimony for this afternoon but
5 this morning, DYCD dropped a bombshell and I think
6 what I want to do with my two minutes is put my
7 testimony aside and just speak directly to what they
8 said. My plan today was to come and talk about the
9 \$10 million that is in the Mayor's Preliminary Budget
10 for adult literacy over and above the funding for the
11 RFP and talk to you about the way that we thought
12 that that \$10 million could be used to enhance the
13 RFP, to provide wider and better services for a
14 larger number of students here in New York City.

15 But of course, this morning, what we heard from
16 DYCD is that \$10 million is a technical error and
17 actually isn't going to be used for adult literacy
18 programming at all. This is devastating news. DYCD
19 said earlier that they're serving 16,000 students a
20 year. That is less than one percent of the 2.2
21 million adults in need of adult basic education, high
22 school equivalency or ESL services. This RFP has a
23 very specific number 9,117 students, that's how many
24 will be served with that \$11.85 million.

1
2 I don't understand how DYCD could testify this
3 morning that that's not a cut to go from 16,000 to
4 9,100. So, what I am imploring you and the Council
5 to do is to ignore what DYCD said this morning and to
6 fight not only for that \$10 million but to get it
7 baselined in the RFP so that we can use it to expand
8 services to the 12 Council Districts that are going
9 to be left out from the RFP and to not create the
10 Hunger Games like fight that we're going to see in
11 districts like Council Member Aviles's where they
12 have four or five excellent adult literacy programs
13 who are going to fighting for crumbs of funding. So,
14 please ignore what they said, fight for the \$10
15 million to be baselined. Thank you.

16 CAITLYN PASSARETTI: Hello Chair Stevens and
17 thank you for the Children and Youth Committee for
18 hosting this hearing. My name is Caitlyn Passaretti,
19 I'm a Policy and Advocacy Associate with Citizens
20 Committee for Children. In my oral testimony today,
21 I'll be laying out three cuts I want to specify.
22 However, we are here to uplift all of the priorities
23 spoken on the panels prior, the Coalition of Homeless
24 Youth and the Campaign for Children.

1
2 back Summer Rising in this manner deprives our youth
3 of valuable learning experiences and extend beyond
4 the classroom. Lastly I want to stress the
5 importance of baselining \$20 million for Promise NYC
6 in our city's budget. This program is a lifeline for
7 undocumented families entering, they can access
8 essential childcare services. It is about equity and
9 inclusivity. Ensuring that every child regardless of
10 immigration status has access to the support they
11 need to thrive. By securing funding for Promise NYC,
12 we uphold our commitment to building a city where
13 every child has equal opportunities to succeed.
14 These asks, if fulfilled will help support our city
15 and our youth. We look forward to continuing our
16 work with you to achieve these demands and thank you
17 for the opportunity to testify.

18 PATRICIA MULLEN: Hi, I'm Patricia Mullen and I
19 am the Director of the Adult Learning Center at
20 Lehman College. I'm proud to say that I'm a Bronx
21 kid. I am the recipient of adult literacy programs
22 and that my mother got her GED and that was the first
23 time we had regular paychecks coming into our
24 household, therefore my sister could go to Lehman
25 College and graduate and I eventually became a high

1
2 school teacher in the Bronx, all because my mother's
3 GED.

4 I am here to speak about two issues that often
5 get misunderstood when we talk about adult literacy.
6 Adult literacy providers in New York City seek to
7 hire the people that they are teaching. I do not
8 want to hire more White ESOL teachers who do not live
9 in the Bronx, nor do I want to hire more White case
10 managers who do not live in the Bronx who are not
11 recipients of programs like mine. I am not against
12 White teachers or case managers but I believe more
13 effectively services are rendered more effectively
14 when you've been in the shoes of the people who are
15 asking you for help.

16 I see my mother in myself in the students that we
17 help. The other thing I want to dispel is waitlists.
18 The effort that CBO's and agencies like mine who put
19 into waitlists, we're not answering the phone and
20 putting a name down. To effectively manage a
21 waitlist, we must test and place the student at a
22 level and then that student there waits an entire
23 year for a program. So, right now, I have 300 Bronx
24 residents who have already been on our waiting list
25 for a year, so when I place my students this

1
2 September, I will once again have another waiting
3 list of these people. So, I really hope that the
4 adult literacy budget is baselined. Thank you.

5 JAMIE POWLOVICH: Afternoon Chair. Thank you for
6 the opportunity to testify today. My name is Jamie
7 Powlovich. I use she, her pronouns and I'm the
8 Executive Director of the Coalition for Homeless
9 Youth. I will be submitting longer, more formal
10 written testimony but I'd like to use my time today
11 to talk about our ask with some real examples from
12 this week and I know you heard a lot about our ask
13 already from our allies and the young people that
14 testified earlier.

15 Overall we're looking for an additional \$16.455
16 million in funding for the DYCD Runaway and Homeless
17 Youth Programs to support a number of critical needs
18 and support services that young people are in
19 desperate need of.

20 Just this week on Wednesday, we got a call about
21 two 16-year-old twins there. Unaccompanied minors
22 that entered this country by themselves. They didn't
23 speak any English and they didn't know where to go.
24 Thankfully, they found someone on the street that
25 spoke their language and was able to get them in

1 contact with the coalition. From there we were able
2 to refer them to one of the youth shelter programs,
3 where they're now being housed together. But that
4 was only because there were beds. This morning, we
5 got a call before 6 a.m. from an 18-year-old from
6 Brownsville who had been sleeping on the train for
7 the past five days because he was afraid to go to the
8 adult shelter system and there were no beds in the
9 youth shelter system for him. We encouraged him to
10 go to one of the 24-hour drop-in centers which he
11 did, where he could get a meal and shower and
12 services. Also, just now, while we were sitting in
13 this hearing, we got texts from our mutual aid allies
14 that are outside of St. Bridges with a group of
15 teenagers that are new to this country that were
16 being ushered onto buses to be brought to sleep in a
17 hanger outside of JFK airport. That shouldn't
18 happen. It's wrong and I know you heard the DYCD
19 Commissioner testify that they don't need new beds
20 but they do and this is why and these are the real
21 examples of the young people that are suffering
22 because of it.
23

24

25

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Well, you know I've been championing these beds since I got here and I won't stop until I get them, so.

JAMIE POWLOVICH: And we appreciate it and you're loud and bold in all the beautiful and right ways.

Good afternoon. My name is Nora Moran. I'm the Director of Policy and Advocacy at United Neighborhood Houses. We work with New York City Settlement Houses. My written testimony has more detail but wanted to just draw attention to three cuts that we're very concerned about in that 2025 Preliminary Budget. The first is, the PEG is \$6.9 million to DYCD for afterschool programming. It will eliminate over 3,500 after school seats. Very concerning for a variety of reasons, especially because the Compass Explore providers are hitting their rates of participation. You know these are not under-utilized programs and so, restoring them is going to be crucial especially right now. Taking any money out of the after-school system is bad as we look ahead to a future procurement. We need to make sure all of those dollars are there and accounted for and that families have access to services.

1
2 The second is the cut of \$19.6 million to summer
3 rising programming. Frankly, it is offensive that we
4 found \$80 million for the Department of Education for
5 their Summer Rising program but we can't have a full
6 week or day of programming for middle school
7 students. This has also gone unaddressed in provider
8 planning calls and providers have not been given any
9 guidance on how to plan or prepare appropriately for
10 middle school students this year. This is something
11 that has to be restored in Exec so that families know
12 you know what to expect this summer and then
13 providers can plan appropriately and young people can
14 come to programs for a full day and a full week.

15 The last cut we draw attention to is around the
16 Promise NYC program. This program needs to be
17 restored and baselined at \$20 million. Also ideally
18 in the Executive Budget, you know this is a program
19 that's providing a crucial service for families who
20 have very few other childcare options because of
21 their immigration status and they need to know that
22 their childcare vouchers are going to be available to
23 them past June 30th to have that continuity of care.
24 Thank you so much.
25

1
2 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you. Uhm, I was tell
3 them as they were coming up, I was like this is the
4 panel of people I speak to on a regular basis. Like
5 literally, like Annie is like my new like staffer at
6 this point but I just, I do have a couple of
7 questions because there was a couple of things that
8 was said during the hearing that I feel like I want
9 to make sure we clear for on the record. And I do
10 want to start with Legal Aid and even talking about
11 one of the questions I asked the Commissioner today
12 was around uhm, how was the decision made around the
13 cuts and it was just like oh, yeah, we didn't speak
14 to them. And so, they said that they are in the
15 process of speaking with you guys now about the cuts
16 and what it looks like. So one, I just want to get
17 confirmation if that meeting has happened. If
18 they've reached out already because that was said it
19 was taking place now and they did admit that they
20 should have spoken to you guys before they made the
21 cuts but -

22 IRA YANKWITT: Not a single word ever. I'm glad
23 you brought it up because I thought I was like; I
24 didn't bring that up. So, the Commissioner says for
25 the first time on the record that it's a good idea to

1
2 talk to us, right? Like, you have this partnership
3 with us that provides critical legal services to the
4 community but yet you don't reach out to us when
5 you're making a decision of this magnitude. That is
6 going to hurt communities, right? Because people
7 don't go to DSS for legal services, right? We build
8 the trust in the community. Right, like who says
9 that right? We go to communities. We build trust as
10 Annie just laid out so people know that they can come
11 to us and people who are in crisis right? People who
12 just got arrested; people who are about to be
13 evicted. People who are about to be deported.
14 Runaway youth who don't know where to go, how to
15 navigate these systems. So, talking to us about a
16 decision like this, critically important.

17 So, I'm happy to have the conversation. I
18 introduced myself to him on his way out, gave him my
19 card. He was surprised, I said well, yeah, we've
20 kind of being doing this for a long time, so talk to
21 us.

22 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And I will follow up as
23 well.

24 IRA YANKWITT: I know you will.
25

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I definitely will be.

Nora, I just had a question for you even round the Summer Rising piece because I brought that up today around the \$80 million for DOE and I have not been shy that I believe that we need to be moving towards a camp model and that actually would save the city money and I don't think I asked this here but I know I asked this in our planning meeting around like what evaluation is being done around learning because it's - oh I asked that at the hearing with DOE. What evaluation is being done around uhm, summer learning loss because they're toting that like this is needed and we all know that studies have always shown even camp, because it's not just summer camp and they're not just playing, it's education enrichment. I feel like there's similar gains in the same way and so, can you talk to me a little bit about some of the concerns they have, especially around Summer Rising and the middle school students having Friday's cut?

NORA MORAN: Yeah, so we have heard from our middle school Summer Rising providers that Friday's were often their best attended days.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, because they don't want to go to school.

1
2 NORA MORAN: Because they do field trips and fun
3 things and that's what people are interested in. And
4 so, the concern of not having that as an option at
5 all is going to make Monday through Thursday seem a
6 lot less appealing and so potentially they took
7 greater drop off and so, yeah, definitely a great, a
8 really important engagement tool. And then to the
9 broader question around evaluation, I mean that's
10 something that we've also asked about. You know what
11 are the gains that come out of running a model like
12 this? We know that there is like parent evaluation
13 particularly for younger students who might not be
14 able to do an evaluation, to ask you know what they
15 thought about the program but in terms of any kind of
16 pre and post tests to kind of understand improvements
17 and gains. To our knowledge, we have not seen that
18 but we do know that there are some of our providers
19 who run center-based summer programs who do that at
20 their own volition and are to show that you know the
21 programs they run so low in house with their own
22 staff are able to document gains over the eight-week
23 period.

24 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, I mean because it was
25 just really frustrating for me because when I think

1
2 about summer program and where we are, it's being - I
3 feel like there's a total round like oh, we need this
4 piece because they're not learning and I think that
5 is just a disservice and kind of disrespectful to our
6 providers who have been doing this for a number of
7 years. And often, doing, and connecting the dots
8 from what's happening in the classroom to the real
9 world. So, I just wanted to make sure we uhm, was
10 able to kind of clear that piece up and even around
11 like the summer learning loss and trying to make sure
12 that it's lucrative. And so when we're thinking
13 about because we are in a crisis right? We are in a
14 budget crisis and I was even asked, well, we have to
15 make hard decisions and I think when we're making
16 hard decisions, we should be making them that make
17 sense right? So, if we're looking at a program that
18 is not really having that much gains, then how do we
19 say, alright this \$80 million, that's literally
20 saving \$80 million in the budget where we wouldn't
21 need because we're supplementing DOE and we know that
22 we're struggling getting teachers to come in there.
23 The students don't want to be there and we're
24 thinking about middle school. The enrollment was
25 already declining because of the piece around the

1
2 school piece and so now, I have fear that's it's
3 going to be even greater this year in addition to
4 SYEP only giving them \$750 for that age population
5 and so, I am very concerned about what the summer is
6 going to look like. And so, I'm definitely wanting
7 to make sure we're working with our cornerstone
8 providers because that's probably going to be the
9 only safe haven that that population is going to have
10 at this point because we're really gutting these
11 programs. I don't have any more questions but Jamie,
12 I'm going to keep fighting for these beds and I hear
13 all of that and thank you guys all for all being here
14 and I really, really appreciate all the work that you
15 do.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you to this panel. Our
17 next panel will be Rob Saltares, Ellinor Ruticey,
18 Ashley Rajkumar, Katje King, Danovan Swanson and
19 Edwin Santana.

20 ASHLEY RAJKUMAR: Good afternoon. My name is
21 Ashley Rajkumar and I'm a Senior Case Manager at
22 Street Work Project Lower East Side, a program at
23 Safe Horizon. The nations largest nonprofit victim
24 services organization. Safe Horizon helps 250,000
25 New Yorkers each year who have experienced violence

1
2 and abuse. Street Work Project provides shelter,
3 showers, hot meals, and so much more to homeless and
4 street involved young people. It helps them find
5 safety and stability.

6 We're grateful for the Council's many years of
7 collective support and for championing our nonprofit
8 human services sector. I submitted my full testimony
9 but I want to emphasize a few points. First, Safe
10 Horizon is a proud member of hashtag just pay. A
11 racial, equity and gender justice campaign committed
12 to ending the government exploitation of human
13 services workers. We're grateful for the multiyear
14 COLA agreement recently announced by the Mayor and
15 we're here to partner with you all to ensure its
16 implemented meaningfully and correctly.

17 Second, City Council initiative funding
18 contracted through the ACS and DYCD supports our
19 child advocacy centers, Street Work project,
20 Immigration Law Project, and Safe Chat program.
21 These investments are investments in public safety.
22 Safe Horizon is also a proud member of the Coalition
23 for Homeless Youth. We join them in urging the city
24 to fund support services, immigration legal services
25 for youth, new arrivals, and unaccompanied minors,

1 right sized or DYCD contracts, fund housing
2 specialists and peer navigators at 100 additional
3 DYCD, RHY beds and give RHY housing vouchers.

4 I, as well as my colleagues at Street Work
5 Project Lower East Side and uptown, have seen first
6 hand how the lack of funding and access to resources
7 have negatively impacted the homeless youth of New
8 York City.

9 We have continued to see an increase of new
10 arrival youth in need of services that we were not
11 fully capable of providing for due limited resources
12 provided by the city. We ask that youth support as
13 intermission of ending youth homelessness. We can
14 end youth homelessness. Young people rely on us
15 everyday for bare necessities. They need and deserve
16 all of our efforts and support.

17 From our chefs that provide delicious, nutritious
18 meals, to our youth service aids, that provide direct
19 respite and our case managers who work tirelessly -

20 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you.

21 ASHLEY RAJKUMAR: To connect our clients to
22 resources and provide limiting housing options.

23 We all do our part. It is time for our
24 government to do theirs. Thank you.
25

1
2 DONOVAN SWANSON: Hi, good afternoon Chair
3 Stevens. I've submitted our full testimony. The
4 Borough President again just wants to thank you for
5 your continued support in championing these issues.
6 I could not agree further with everything said here
7 today and you know, the reality is, this is a self-
8 imposed budget crisis that this Administration has
9 put forth and in while tough decisions may need to be
10 made, these cuts do not make sense and undermine a
11 lot of the initiatives that the Administration has
12 put forth, particularly in the areas of safety.

13 And so, I'm going focus specifically on a couple
14 of issues but again, we are continued partners with
15 the Council on this work. So, Summer Rising is a
16 popular program that provides fun and enriching
17 experiences for our youth and keeps them safe and off
18 the streets during this summer. While the Borough
19 President was pleased to see the Administration
20 restore cuts to DOE's share of the program, we also
21 share concerns with the \$19.6 million gap that still
22 exists within DYCD share and including in outyears.
23 The cut impacts Friday programming, which will force
24 middle school students and their families to either
25 pay out of pocket if they have even the opportunity

1
2 to for other programming or worse, leave students
3 without an opportunity for productive activities that
4 we know are enriching for their lives.

5 The Borough President encourages this
6 Administration to baseline funding for Summer Rising.
7 In many of the things that's also included in this
8 testimony is that we are also observing the same lack
9 of collaboration that's happening between our
10 providers and DOE. And as personally a former
11 provider that can speak to that experience, in the
12 setting that was collaborative, we have providers
13 coming into new settings with new principals in
14 potential buildings that they've never worked in,
15 being told how they are going to roll, how they are
16 going to recruit and that's not an even partnership
17 and so, the dollars need to also mirror the fact of
18 the collaboration that we want to see with a program
19 like this.

20 Also, echoing some concerns without our Compass
21 programs, the fact that over \$3,000 was cut within
22 the most recent PEG is concerning and you know, I'll
23 just say very quickly that when they say
24 underutilized seats, that could be for a number
25 reasons and why we need to have more data and be more

1 transparent in this process, and so everything is
2 included in our testimony but again we are partners
3 here in this work and feel free to collaborate with
4 our office.
5

6 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you and
7 underutilization, uhm, I am aware that sometimes
8 there's so many other factors to take into
9 consideration and so many other agencies that's
10 responsible for that, so we are on the same page and
11 thank you.

12 KATJE KING: Good afternoon. My name is Katje
13 King, I'm the Director of Education at Career
14 Services at the Northern Manhattan Improvement
15 Corporation. I have submitted our full testimony but
16 I am here to say thank you for the Council's
17 significant support of our programming over the years
18 and to advocate for renewed funding in Fiscal Year
19 2025. With the support of the City Council, we are
20 able to provide adult education services to over 350
21 individuals each year, over 60 percent of which
22 require additional case management and referral
23 services provided both in house and through our
24 community partners. We've also enrolled over 238
25 children in Promise NYC, the maximum level under our

1 contract. These represent only a portion of the work
2 we're doing throughout the city. Progress that is
3 dependent upon consistent funding or organizations
4 like NMIC operate under city contracts established
5 with DYCD and after years of operation under
6 contracts negotiated prior to the pandemic, the
7 release of the new RFP does not demonstrate a
8 significant change in the funding or staffing levels
9 which we've been advocating for for years. There is
10 no dedicated funding for staffing to promote and
11 maintain instructional quality and the contract only
12 requires one part-time case manager to support over
13 100 clients annually. This is not a service level
14 that meets the needs of our clientele. However the
15 City Council has generously supported the Adult
16 Literacy Pilot Project, which through which we were
17 able to provide enhanced case management services and
18 instruction to clients in our Adult Education
19 Programs. This money is essential to the success of
20 these programs and empowers them to adequately staff
21 a high-quality program.

22 We also would like to advocate for money for
23 Promise NYC, a childcare assistance pilot program
24 piloted through ACS, a vital service for low-income
25

1
2 immigrant families who are otherwise ineligible for
3 federally subsidized childcare, covering Manhattan
4 and the Bronx, NMIC is working with families to
5 connect them to childcare programs. And
6 additionally, our Youth Build program we appreciate
7 your ongoing support for that and hope we can
8 continue to have your support. Thank you.

9 ELLINOR RUTICEY: Good afternoon. MY name is
10 Elli Ruticey. I'll be speaking on behalf of the
11 Doors Legal Services Center. The Door is a
12 comprehensive youth development organization that has
13 been supporting young New Yorkers since 1972 and
14 houses a DYCD RHY drop-in center. As my written
15 testimony will detail, the young people that we work
16 with at The Door are extremely vulnerable and are in
17 desperate need of support from the city. For
18 example, at a recent drop-in legal clinic for runaway
19 homeless youth, Door staff members spoke with a 20-
20 year-old who was forced to leave his home country
21 after rebel forces broke into his family's home,
22 raped his sister and beat his brother to death before
23 his eyes.

24 Another young person we met at the RHY clinic
25 fled his home country after years of being hit,

1 whipped and physically abused by his father.

2 Unhoused young people like these two young adults
3 need access to the safety, stability and services
4 offered in youth shelters. As it stands, there's an
5 extreme shortage of youth shelter beds and as a
6 result, an alarming number of unhoused young people
7 between the ages of 18 and 24 are instead being
8 placed in HERCs. HERCs are inappropriate
9 environments for young people because they lack
10 privacy, do not provide sufficient food, offer
11 practically no support services and displace
12 residents every 30 to 60 days. It is impossible for
13 already vulnerable youth to find stability in
14 community within the HERC system.

15
16 Thus, I urge the city to fund additional DYCD
17 youth shelter beds so that more young people can
18 benefit from the DYCD system. Young people without
19 legal status also need access to free immigration
20 legal services. Every day at the door, our staff
21 members turn away young immigrants needing legal
22 support and representation. Most of whom have strong
23 claims for legal relief. Just last month, we
24 received over 50 requests for immigration legal help.
25 If the city does not provide funding to remedy the

1
2 current shortage of legal services providers, an
3 unacceptable number of young people who are eligible
4 for immigration relief will not receive necessary
5 legal help.

6 I urge the city to fund youth so they have no
7 cost to immigration legal services. Thank you.

8 ROB SALTARES: Thank you Chair Stevens and
9 Council Members. I am Rob Saltares, New York City
10 Program Officer at Laureus USA, which is a grant
11 making nonprofit organization that supports the
12 growth and impact of programs at Youth Sport for
13 positive youth and community outcomes. Citywide,
14 Laureus works with 60 direct service organizations
15 who collectively serve about 172,000 young people, 86
16 percent of which are from under resourced
17 communities.

18 I am living proof of the profound impact of
19 sport. I am the son of immigrant parents who raised
20 a boy in an East Harlem NYCHA development. Thanks to
21 the support of a sport-based youth development
22 program; shout out to Harlem RBI. I avoided becoming
23 part of the many statistics that outline the
24 struggles of our under resourced communities. The
25 benefits of youth sport programming are clear. It

1 helps develop social emotional skill sets, decreases
2 health risk factors, it reduces anxiety, depression,
3 while improving self-esteem. The sport-based youth
4 development approach is anchored by relationship
5 building which allows for a sport to be a
6 preventative measure against community violence,
7 which was a huge theme today. SBYD programs provide
8 role model, safe spaces to heal from trauma,
9 opportunity for community building and are typically
10 delivered in an out of school time setting when rates
11 of violence amongst youth are likely to be the
12 highest.
13

14 A recent peer review study in the American
15 Journal of Preventative Medicine found that meeting
16 the nations healthy people 20, 30 youth sport
17 participation goal cannot only improve or would not
18 only improve children's physical and mental health
19 but could also save \$80 billion in reduced medical
20 and mental health costs.

21 We applaud the steps that the city and state
22 leaders have taken thus far to create dedicated
23 funding pools, specifically for youth development and
24 sport programming. Currently, OCFS administers the
25 youth team sport and youth sports opportunity fund to

1
2 counties to redistribute to local organizations. As
3 we consider the FY25 budget, I just urge you all to
4 continue to support as it will make changes that will
5 last a life time. Thank you.

6 EDWIN SANTANA: Thank you Chair Stevens and the
7 Youth Services Committee Members. My name is Edwin
8 Santana. I am a member and community organizer at
9 Freedom Agenda. I believe that the city budget
10 should reflect what we value and I believe that the
11 most New Yorkers value our youth. If we value our
12 youth, then we should invest in the programs and
13 services that serve our youth, but Mayor Adams seems
14 to have a different priority. He slashing funding
15 for everything that supports our youth and doubling
16 down on arresting and incarcerating them. It's
17 shameful. It's also not going to do anything to drop
18 down crime. I can tell you from my own experience as
19 a person who entered juvenile detention at 13 and 15
20 years old.

21 Instead of giving me the proper services to help
22 me in my youth, I was incarcerated and all that did
23 was expose me to the horrors that come with the
24 criminal justice system. The same is happening with
25 the youth today. Let us not forget that there are

1 over 1,000 young people 25 and under at Rikers today.
2 Not to mention the over populated Horizons and
3 Crossroads facilities. Incarceration is not the
4 answer but that is what Eric Adams wants to believe.
5 The Mayor's Budget proposes a 25 percent cut to
6 Department of Youth and Community Development. That
7 includes huge cuts to the Office of Neighborhood
8 Safety for things like Cure Violence Programs,
9 employment programs, as well as legal services,
10 recreational events and youth service coordination
11 but you know what he's not cutting? The Department
12 of Correction. Even though they have four times more
13 officers per person in custody than the average jail
14 system and even though they are the only city agency
15 that is actually required to shrink in the next three
16 years under the plan to close Rikers.

17
18 Bottomline, Rikers is hell, especially for people
19 living behind the walls but also for all the people
20 who work there. So, DOC is expected to have over
21 1,400 vacancies this year and Mayor Adams isn't
22 planning to cut any of them. He keeps saying he
23 expects the jail population to rise and I can see how
24 he would expect that when all the policies and
25 designs to create that outcome but I know and you

1 know that that is the wrong path. This City Council
2 knows that our communities will be safe and strong
3 when we support our young people instead of
4 criminalizing them.
5

6 In the full, written testimony, which I will
7 submit, you'll see a full budget analysis from the
8 Campaign to Close Rikers that calls on the City
9 Council to cut DOC's bloated budget and redirect
10 those resources to our youth and our communities.
11 Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you and I 100 percent
13 agree. I think me yelling today showed that but I
14 did have a question for Rob just around I'm not sure
15 if you heard the Commissioner's testimony today
16 around the announcement of the neighborhood youth
17 team sports program and I believe we've had like
18 prior conversations about this. Uhm, and just wanted
19 to get your take on like this program being announced
20 today and feedback because I know you've been
21 championing this.

22 EDWIN SANTANA: No absolutely and thank you for
23 bringing that up. We are super excited to see this
24 fund announced earlier this month that there will be
25 an RFP for it. That is one of two funding streams

1 that is currently like specific to youth sports.

2 We're still waiting on the other one and excited
3 about the prospects of it coming. In addition -

4 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: But have we heard anything
5 about the other one being released any time soon or
6 no?

7 EDWIN SANTANA: No, I haven't received any
8 updates on that.

9 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay.

10 EDWIN SANTANA: In addition to this funding,
11 which is awesome, we'd love to see like impact
12 reports and like how we're actually moving the
13 needle. Like, playing a sport we know can be
14 inherently amazing but programming a sport with like
15 youth and community outcomes in mind, is -

16 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Oh, I agree, which is why I
17 had the Saturday Lights Program because it does no
18 evaluation. It's just like there's walls and like
19 kids go running, they'll be safe and that's just not
20 productive programming. Uhm but thank you and those
21 are all the questions I have for this panel.

22 EDWIN SANTANA: Thank you.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Our next panel
24 will be Shawn Jean-Louis, Dr. Sophine Charles, Sarah
25

1 Jonas, Roslyn R. Morrison, Steven Morales and Shannon
2 Rockett.
3

4 SHAWN JEAN-LOUIS: Good afternoon Chair Stevens.
5 Shawn Jean-Louis, Policy Director over at Expand at
6 Schools. We're the school intermediary, working to
7 support out the school program quality in partnership
8 with the Council via citywide initiatives and
9 partnership with New York City Public Schools via
10 their empire state after school contract, as well as
11 with the direct service providers actually doing the
12 work on the ground.

13 I'm going to submit longer formal testimony that
14 really goes into the nature of how we stand in
15 solidarity with you in the field around the Compass
16 and to Summer Rising but I wanted to use my time
17 today to highlight some things happening at the state
18 level that really could impact and exacerbate some of
19 the conditions that are happening with the DYCD cuts.
20 As you might know, the state kind of combined their
21 Advantage Afterschool program and their Empire
22 Afterschool Program. It's a one program called Leaps
23 and the Leaps RFP recently released only serve
24 children up to the age of 12, so eliminating service
25 for a lot of middle school students as well as high

1 school students. You know and we both know that
2 that's an age group as you said earlier that could
3 afford to have our arms wrapped around them rather
4 than pushing them out.

5
6 The second thing is that the RFP limits service
7 to three sites per school district and there are many
8 service providers providing much more service and
9 much more to three sites across districts between
10 Empire and Advantage. And so, uhm students and
11 families are guaranteed to lose out on service based
12 on that cap.

13 And so, just wanted to flag that you know Expand
14 That is really looking for working in partnership
15 with the Council and the field to kind of triage and
16 figure out how to fill some of these new gaps in the
17 immediate term, as well as working in partnership
18 with New York City Public Schools and DYCD to engage
19 in the systemic transformation that's necessary, so
20 that less and less triage is necessary and we're more
21 proactive instead of reactive. Thanks for the time
22 this afternoon, appreciate it.

23 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you.

24 STEVEN MORALES: Hi Chair Stevens. My name is
25 Steven Morales. I am the New York Policy Director at

1
2 All Our Kin and we're a nonprofit organization that
3 trains, supports and sustains family childcare
4 educators operating home-based childcare businesses.
5 I want to talk a little bit about childcare and the
6 role that ACS plays in childcare. I testified
7 earlier on Monday in the Education Committee but it's
8 important because our childcare system, we need to
9 envision it as a birth through five continuum. So, I
10 understand why we have multiple committees and
11 multiple agencies working on these things but I just
12 want to bring that to the table here and really talk
13 about how we must invest in early childhood education
14 broadly and we see what this Administration is
15 proposing to cut in a bunch of areas. I want to
16 highlight a couple of key recommendations that ACS
17 specifically can do.

18 First off, they can raise voucher pay rates for
19 family childcare and all childcare providers, federal
20 regulations were just updated to allow cities and
21 states to pay the maximum reimbursement rate and ACS
22 must take advantage of that because they're not doing
23 it right now. And second, we need to expand access
24 to childcare for families. There's two key ways to
25

1 do that. Well, there's a lot which is in my full
2 testimony but two key ways I want to highlight.

3
4 First, folks have talked about it. You asked
5 about it earlier. We must expand Promise NYC. It's
6 been extremely, extremely utilized and actually we
7 know that there's other folks who aren't able to
8 utilize it for childcare for undocumented children
9 which is crucial to getting families on their feet
10 when they arrive here. We need to see at least \$20
11 million for that in the budget ideally baselined.
12 And second, presumptive eligibility, which would
13 allow families to immediately begin receiving
14 childcare assistance upon applying. Again, that's a
15 federal regulation that was just updated. We're
16 allowed to do that. We need to start doing that. We
17 need to also then fully build out our investments in
18 our early childhood and education system. So, thank
19 you for the time today.

20 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you.

21 SARAH JONAS: Thank you Chair Stevens and members
22 of the Children and Youth Services Committee for the
23 chance to testify today. My name is Sarah Jonas and
24 I'm the Vice President of the Youth Division at
25 Children's Aid. Our commitment to serving youth and

1 families is unwavering. However, like providers
2 across New York City, we encounter countless
3 operational and financial hurdles that make it
4 difficult both to retain staff and to seamlessly
5 provide high quality programming.
6

7 Simply put, our government contracts for youth
8 programs like afterschool and summer do not cover the
9 full cost of operating these programs. The youth
10 services system is in a moment of crisis. Yet this
11 Administration has called for a \$6.9 million cut to
12 the Compass system and a \$19.6 million cut to DYCD's
13 half of Summer Rising. This is unconscionable and
14 will further strain and drain an already depleted
15 system.

16 Children's Aid calls for the restoration of all
17 the proposed cuts to youth programs, including but
18 not limited to Compass and Summer Rising. We urge
19 the city to prioritize the needs of our youth
20 development workforce, including the need for higher
21 wages, cost of living adjustments and flexible
22 contracts.

23 To strengthen the afterschool program network, we
24 urge the city to immediately release a request for
25 proposals for the Sonic Compass System by the end of

1
2 calendar year 2024. After school contracts moving
3 forward, must prioritize our workforce through higher
4 wages and flexible terms.

5 Thank you so much for your time. We had a group
6 of young people here with us this morning and when we
7 looked at them, we know that you're with us in terms
8 of supporting their promise, helping them to thrive
9 and making sure that we're investing in them and not
10 cutting these programs that are so critical to their
11 future, and to unlocking all of their potential and
12 their dreams. We look forward to partnering even
13 more with this Council to make sure our youth and
14 families thrive with every opportunity that they
15 deserve. Please let me know if I can answer any
16 questions. Thank you.

17 DR SOPHINE CHARLES: Good afternoon. It's almost
18 evening. I have. I'm Dr. Sophie Charles. I am the
19 Associate Executive Director for the Council of
20 Family and Childcare and Agencies, also known as
21 CAFCA downstate and I am, our agencies, we represent
22 more than 100 nonprofits across the State of New York
23 and at least 60 nonprofits here in New York City
24 providing foster care prevention services, juvenile
25 justice and rest care services.

2 I first want to say that I'm testifying on behalf
3 of our agencies and Council Member Stevens, you have
4 to know that our agencies think that you're a
5 rockstar in terms of taking care of and supporting
6 our needs and I just want to say thank you for your
7 support of our agencies and the mega win on the three
8 percent COLA's over three years. That's a big deal
9 on top of the workforce enhancement and we thank you
10 for that.

11 I'm sitting here listening. I will submit
12 testimony, formal written testimony but I'm listening
13 to everyone that's coming forth and providing
14 testimony and I'll say that we're still on the
15 workforce angle. Annie Minquez testified earlier
16 that we must have workforce parity. In order for our
17 nonprofit workers and our agencies to survive, we
18 need to have parity on the level of what's happening
19 with government and that's a really big deal. Out of
20 all the asks that are coming before you today, if our
21 nonprofits and our workers workforce, if they're not
22 available we can't retain them and hire them, then
23 we're not going to be able to deliver. And I will
24 say that our nonprofits actually raise private
25 dollars to support many of the programs as my

1
2 colleague here just said from Children's Aid. For
3 example, the migrant and asylum seeker families, they
4 our agencies are paying out of private dollars to
5 support them and that's a priority for the city. So,
6 we need the city to prioritize the needs of the
7 agencies and we need to support youth infrastructure
8 in order to provide the aftercare programs for our
9 nonsecure and secure youth who are in these centers.
10 And I'll have more on my written testimony but we
11 need your support for the agencies and the workforce.
12 Thank you.

13 SHANNON ROCKETT: Good afternoon Chair Stevens,
14 my name is Shannon Rockett and I am here today on
15 behalf of Carnegie Hall. As a member of the Cultural
16 Institutions Group, Carnegie Hall takes seriously our
17 public service commitment to our city's residents.
18 Because our own work has focused so heavily on
19 creative youth development and young artists
20 training, we were very encouraged to hear Speaker
21 Adams emphasis on supporting our city's young people
22 and investing in key human services among her
23 priorities for the year ahead.

24 With the City Council's support, arts and culture
25 have been highly effective resources to address many

1 human services initiatives, especially in youth
2 development. For this reason and many more, we urge
3 the Council to restore the devastating cuts to
4 culture that have been enacted this year and called
5 for in the next.
6

7 For more than 20 years, Carnegie Hall has
8 invested deeply in creative youth development
9 programming. We have partnered with city agencies
10 and community organizations to ensure that our
11 programs intentionally reach young people who
12 otherwise would not have access to these
13 opportunities. I'll give two examples. First,
14 Future Music project, which delivers afterschool
15 music workshops to 150 to 200 young people annually
16 in ACS nonsecure and secure placement and detention
17 settings. Through this program, teaching artists
18 help young people to develop as artists, critical
19 thinkers and collaborators and to explore creative
20 expression in a supportive environment.

21 Second, the B side, our free intensive program
22 for at least 40 New Yorkers ages 14-22 interested in
23 the business of music with a focus on young people
24 connected to Carnegie Hall through our human services
25 partners including ACS, DOE, DCLA, DOP, DHS, DYCD,

1
2 NYCHA and MOME as well as community partners such as
3 Children's Aid Society, Good Sheperd Services and
4 Credible messenger organizations such as life camp.
5 The B side provides participants in an interactive
6 space to learn about the inner workings of the music
7 industry. Young people receive metro cards,
8 refreshments and stipends for their participation.
9 Our impact and partnerships throughout the city
10 demonstrate an investment in the arts and culture is
11 a compound investment in human services and our
12 communities. Cuts to arts and culture therefore have
13 a compounded negative effect on our communities. We
14 urge the Council to prioritize and protect funding
15 for arts programming for young people in the year
16 ahead. Thank you for your time.

17 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you and I just wanted
18 to say, Just Pay was the first step and so, we all
19 get pay parity because that's up next so we have to
20 get Just Pay so now we have to fight for Pay Parity,
21 so it is on the table and I understand the importance
22 of it and understanding like the historical context
23 behind it because we understand that they contract
24 with the nonprofit because it's cheaper and they know
25 we're going to do the work because we love the work

1 and so, you know I'm ready for the fight. You all
2 know I'm always ready for a good fight so we will
3 definitely get there and we are going to be
4 championing that for our next budget cycle, so thank
5 you.

6
7 PANEL: Thank you.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Our next panel will be Zainab
9 Akbar, Emma Ketteringham, Lauren Shapiro, Wanjiro
10 Gethaga, Yndiana Alba, Jordan Ortis and Paula Puente.

11 PAULA PUENTE: Good afternoon, my name is Paula
12 Puente and I'm from Peru. I was a CUNY student and
13 I'm a CUNY employee now. I'm a partnership
14 coordinator at the Adult Learning Center at Lehman
15 College. During the first years of living in the
16 United States, finding a job without knowing the
17 language was not even possible. At the age of 20 I
18 became a nanny looking after four children for a wage
19 of \$8.00 an hour. It was the only job that was
20 allowing me to pay for my bills and also save for
21 learning English.

22 While many may wonder, there are places where you
23 can learn English for free. Unfortunately, I
24 attempted to sign up for various organizations
25 offering three English classes but the waiting list

1 was long. As a result, I ended up enrolling in
2 expenses courses classes that I couldn't sustain for
3 more than six months. Finally, after living in the
4 country for three years, I was able to attend CUNY.
5 LaGuardia Community College was the first school that
6 I went. I took the program and then I am in art and
7 science. After that, I transferred to City College
8 where I studied psychology. I did different jobs as
9 an art teachers and I found a culture I brought on
10 myself.
11

12 Now, I work as a Partnership Coordinator at the
13 Adult Learning Center at Lehman College. I take
14 pride in my work because I help many people who dream
15 of having a better job. Just like once I dream it.
16 Every day I receive calls from individuals who want
17 to learn English, improve themselves and change their
18 life. Our program has many people on the waiting
19 list. I understand them because I was one of them
20 one time. Thank you.

21 YNDIANA ALBA: Good afternoon [INAUDIBLE
22 06:31:40] and Council Members. My name is Yndiana
23 Alba, I'm a Dominican student at the Adult Learning
24 Center at Lehman College. I have been in this
25 country for eight years and I have been a student in

1 English two years. I came to this country like many
2 people, looking for better opportunities for my
3 family and me.
4

5 The Adult Learning Center program has opened the
6 doors for me to learn English. Thanks to them I have
7 a job where I can express myself in Spanish but I can
8 also learn and express myself in English. I want to
9 finish this English program, so I can go to the
10 university, have a career, give a better life to my
11 children, help my community and people like me who
12 want to learn English and continue their education.

13 This English program is not only important to me,
14 this English program helps more than 800 people
15 every year. We have a waiting list with 300 students
16 who want to learn English. Today, at this moment, I
17 am the boss of each of them. I can see daily how
18 people suffer for not speaking the language, for not
19 being able to have a good job and offer a better life
20 to their families. I hope that they can benefit from
21 this program like I'm doing and can have more
22 opportunities in this country. Thank you.

23 JORDAN ORTIS: Good afternoon Chair Stevens.
24 Good to see you again. My name is Jordan Ortis, I'm
25 the Deputy Director at Midtown Community Justice

Center, formally the Midtown Community Court, which is the project of the Center for Justice Innovation. Thank you for time and opportunity to testify today.

Shootings have decreased by nearly 25 percent across the city but data shows that both perpetrators and victims of gun violence are getting younger. The center is working to address these trends in neighborhoods across the city with programs such as SOS, also known as Safe Our Streets, Rise and Midtown's own Youth Weapons Diversion programming operated with Family Court.

The Center operates at many points of criminal justice continuum leading prevention, diversion, ATI, SRP and enriching community-based programs and we believe that this programming is both through sustainable community driven solutions at Center and local stakeholders in the development and operation. Through this work it has become abundantly clear that we must safeguard these supports and services for our young people.

At Midtown we seek a dedicated funding source to sustain and enhance our youth weapons diversion pilot for young people arrested on weapons related charges. Founded on restorative practices, the program called

1
2 Youth Pack, fills a gap in holistic alternative to
3 prosecution programming's for 14- to 17-year-olds
4 giving them an early offramp from the traditional
5 family court process with outcomes in education,
6 employment, community building and family
7 reunification. Successful completion of the program
8 is alternate decline of prosecute with a sealed
9 record. When a case has already been filed, the
10 petition is withdrawn and the case is sealed,
11 preventing a full criminal process, a record and the
12 many collateral consequences for young people at a
13 pivotal age.

14 These funds will help most of the program
15 staffing to expand and enhance the use of restorative
16 justice strategies and help cover resources such as
17 stipends, travel expenses and food. It's important
18 to refrain from divesting in vital services for the
19 Council to remain steadfast in these commitments and
20 to work to enhance public safety for young people
21 beyond enforcement.

22 Your continued support allows the Center to keep
23 working with at risk and systems involved youth
24 providing tailored services to help them live
25

healthier, safer and more economically sane lives.

Thank you for your time.

ZAINAB AKBAR: Thank you Chair Steven. My name is Zainab Akbar and I'm the Managing Attorney of the Family Defense Practice at Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem. I am testifying here today with my colleagues from Bronx Defenders, Brooklyn Defender Services and Center for Family Representation and I'm here to provide a background on our work and how we utilize our City Council right to Family Advocacy initiative funding to benefit New Yorkers we represent.

Just as our public defender colleagues in criminal court serve as an essential counter balance to the massive power of the criminal legal system, we provide essential representation and due process protections as public defenders in family court and with the City Council's support during ACS investigations and Appeals of SCR records.

Together, we represented tens of thousands of parents in Article 10 cases in family court and we have prevented thousands of children from needlessly entering the foster system. We have reduced the New York City foster census by almost 50 percent by -

1
2 since 2007. This translates to nearly \$40 million in
3 annual savings to the city and the preservation of
4 family bonds that are priceless to our clients, their
5 children, and to our society at large. Keeping
6 families together and out of the system is a racial
7 justice issue. ACS's own data shows that they
8 separate Black and Brown children from their parents
9 and place them in the foster system at rates hugely
10 disproportional to their presence in the total
11 population of New York City's children.

12 ACS's own internal investigations demonstrate
13 that they target Black and Brown families and that
14 line case workers are pressured by their superiors to
15 coerce vulnerable families to relinquish their
16 constitutional rights during investigations. The
17 current system of mandated reporting creates a staff
18 dynamic that funnels huge numbers of vulnerable Black
19 and Brown families into a system of child safety
20 theater. Where families experience intrusive
21 investigations without any evidence that the system
22 actually prevents or reduces harm to children. What
23 harms children is being separated from their
24 families. What harms children is entering the foster
25 system, which literally guarantees higher delinquency

1 rates, higher rates of teen birth, lower lifetime
2 earnings and increased likelihood of criminal legal
3 system involvement as youth and adults.
4

5 Of the hundreds of New Yorkers we represented in
6 Fiscal Year 2023 during an ACS investigation, 83 to
7 nearly 93 percent did not have cases filed against
8 them as a result of our advocacy. I just have a
9 little bit more.

10 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Ten seconds.

11 ZAINAB AKBAR: Okay. Of the small percentage of
12 cases where Article 10 cases were filed, on average
13 86 percent of the children stayed home with family or
14 their parents rather than in the foster system. We
15 have successfully advocated for having SCR reports
16 amended or sealed in 90 to 100 of cases in Fiscal
17 Year 2023 and we are asking City Council to continue
18 our funding in the Right to Family Advocacy
19 initiative.

20 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you and you did great
21 by getting that in, the last ten seconds in.

22 ZAINAB AKBAR: I did it.

23 LAUREN SAPIRO: Good afternoon. My name is
24 Lauren Sapiro, I'm the Managing Director of the
25 Family Defense Practice at Brooklyn Defender

1
2 Services. Our offices have been providing data to
3 the city for years, showing that the Family Defense
4 Contracts are drastically underfunded, leading to
5 unmanageable caseloads and very high attrition rates.

6 In 2019, the crisis in parent representation was
7 documented on the state level and a report by then
8 Chief Judge DiFiore's Commission on Parent
9 Representation. Following that report, the States
10 Office of Indigent Legal Services or ILS, under took
11 a study and issued caseload standards for parent
12 representation, which demonstrated just how
13 underfunded these contracts are.

14 The Family Defense contracts must be adequately
15 funded so we have the interdisciplinary resources we
16 need to avoid family separation and achieve family
17 reunification quickly, thereby reducing the time
18 children spend in foster care and saving the city
19 money.

20 Now that the RFP for these contracts has been
21 released, we are very hopefully the city will provide
22 the increased funds needed for our offices to meet
23 caseload standards. We urge the City Council to
24 continue partnering with us to ensure adequate
25 resources for parent representation, which will

1
2 ensure equity and fairness to the Black and Brown
3 communities that are impacted by the family
4 regulation and family court systems. In addition, we
5 have two requests. We ask the City Council to call
6 on the Governor and the state legislature to
7 appropriate \$50 million in this years budget for
8 parent representation. This was requested by ILS and
9 is supported by Chief Judge Wilson.

10 These funds would supplement the money the city
11 provides. And we also ask you to urge the Governor
12 to resend removing \$230 million from the ILS fund,
13 I'm sorry, Indigent Legal Services fund, which was
14 established by the legislature in 2003 to improve the
15 quality of public defense. These funds were designed
16 to help the counties and the city to support the work
17 of public defenders including family defense work.

18 Thank you Chair Stevens and the Committee.

19 EMMA KETTERINGHAM: Good afternoon Chair Stevens.
20 My name is Emma Ketteringham and I am with the Family
21 Defense Practice at the Bronx Defenders. Today, we
22 urge City Council to continue the funding for the
23 right to Family Advocacy Project, which provides
24 desperately needed due process protections for the
25

1
2 low income primarily Black and Brown families
3 targeted by ACS.

4 Specifically, this funding provides much needed
5 and otherwise unfunded legal representation during
6 OCFS hearings and truly ameliorates one of the most
7 unfair and harmful consequences of an ACS
8 investigation. At the conclusion of each
9 investigation, ACS will determine whether the report
10 against a parent should be "indicated." This is a
11 determination made solely by ACS. If ACS indicates
12 the case, the name of the parent is placed on the
13 State Central Registry as a person who has maltreated
14 a child. This is true, regardless of whether the
15 case is ever brought to court and the evidence
16 reviewed by a judge and the consequences are
17 enormous. The record remains for years. Barring
18 parents from categories of employment and the ability
19 to support their families, barring individuals from
20 becoming the custodial parent of their children, and
21 it can even bar relatives from becoming kinship
22 caregivers to children for whom parental care is
23 unavailable, passing those children to strangers.

24 The only way off the SCR registry is to challenge
25 the listing through a hearing and representation by

1 an attorney is critical to the hearing being fair.
2
3 ACS is always represented by Council and the hearings
4 require legal expertise and skill. Yet under current
5 law, without this initiative, parents have no access
6 to Council in SCR hearings unless they are wealthy
7 and can afford to hire their own.

8 Most importantly funding this initiative is a
9 matter of racial justice. It is Black and Brown New
10 Yorkers who are most disadvantaged by the SCR
11 process. With this funding, we have provided
12 representation to hundreds of parents and succeeded
13 in amending and sealing records up to 90 percent of
14 the time. This work is a way to address the systemic
15 racial inequities, economic disparities and family
16 instability perpetuated by ACS targeting. Thank you.

17 WANJIRO GETHAGA: Hi, good evening. My name is
18 Wanjiro Gethaga and I am the Managing Director of
19 Social Work at the Center for Family Representation.
20 Thank you Chairperson Stevens and the members of the
21 Committee of Children and Youth for holding this
22 hearing today. Every parent charged with neglect or
23 abuse is entitled to an attorney as soon as a case is
24 filed in court but prior to that time, ACS conducts
25 an invasive high stakes investigation and makes

1
2 critical decisions like whether to remove a child or
3 file a case in court. Typically without the parent
4 having any access to legal counsel. Thanks to City
5 Council funding of the Right to Family Advocacy
6 Project, CFR along with Neighborhood Defender
7 Services, Bronx Defenders, and Brooklyn Defender
8 Services, again representing some parents during ACS
9 investigations in 2020.

10 Currently, parents with family regulation
11 involvement, who cannot afford to hire counsel are
12 not provided assigned attorney's. Until ACS files an
13 abuse or neglect case against them in Family Court.
14 The four cases filed in court; however, critical
15 decisions are made that have grave consequences for
16 how cases proceed. Including whether the family will
17 be diverted to prevention programs and services,
18 whether the case will be filed in court and most
19 significantly, whether children will be separated
20 from their parents and if so, who will care for them.
21 Without access to counsel during this critical,
22 important investigative stage of an Article 10 case,
23 parents are forced to meet with ACS, make critical
24 decisions affecting the integrity of their family,
25 discuss the allegations against them and navigate the

1 states intervention in their family without any
2 formal support.
3

4 In contrast, ACS has access to legal
5 representation throughout their investigation. This
6 project at the City Council is a critical element of
7 keeping families together whenever possible. Our
8 staff meet with parents, discuss the allegations and
9 potential solutions and help parents navigate the
10 investigation process, which can often be extremely
11 intrusive and traumatic.

12 In addition, social workers funded by this
13 project can work to put services in place that may
14 result in deciding not to file a case at all. Thank
15 you for your time today.

16 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you. No questions
17 for this panel.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Our last in-person panel will
19 be Megan Nordegren, Ponny White, Erika Enchautegui,
20 Charisma Adams, Jason Alleyne, and Letty Hawthorne.

21 Hi, good afternoon and it is. Thank you for
22 listening on a Friday afternoon at 5:00.

23 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: No, thank you guys for
24 staying and being here.

1
2 MEGAN NORDEGREN: Councilwoman Stevens, it's very
3 nice to see again. The last time I saw you was at
4 High Bridge Green picking lettuce and basil and
5 tomatoes and cucumbers. I'm Megan Nordegren, I'm
6 with New York Sun Works. We are a known profit
7 organization that builds innovative science slots in
8 schools and in these hydroponic classrooms, like at
9 High Bridge Green, we use this hydroponic technology
10 to educate students and teachers about the science of
11 sustainability and to bring quality stem education
12 through the lens of urban farming. We envision a
13 generation of environmental innovators empowered to
14 create global climate solutions. We transform in the
15 classroom in any New York City Public School into a
16 hydroponic lab and this is a cost-effective solution
17 that gives students the opportunity to learn critical
18 sustainability, science and climate topics while they
19 grow nutritious food right in the classroom year
20 around using state of the art technology. And most
21 of these have been built with capital funding
22 generously given by our City Council members and our
23 Borough Presidents.

24 Our program is integrated right into the science
25 teaching making it cost effective and effective but

1
2 also used after school. We're currently working with
3 over 300 schools throughout the city and many of
4 these you know are facing budget cuts. We don't have
5 a line item in the budget. We instead you know
6 advocate for our schools for DYCD funding through
7 expense funding but also for capital funding for the
8 upfront.

9 So, we really you know, so the support from the
10 City Council members is essential to hands-on
11 programming that provides you know real world
12 training to our students and we urge you to fund stem
13 education. Thank you so much.

14 ERIKA ENCHAUTEGUI: Hello, good evening everyone.
15 Good afternoon. Thank you Chair Stevens and City
16 Council - and thank you for testifying and for the
17 opportunity today. My name is Erika Enchautegui. I
18 am a provider specialist at Early Childhood Learning.
19 I enrolled in this program for the Chinese American
20 Planning Council.

21 CPC is the largest Asian American social
22 organization in the U.S. providing vital resources
23 for more than 80,000 people per year. In the City of
24 New York, many of the families that we serve are
25 working class and unfortunately do not have the means

1
2 to pay for affordable quality and accessible
3 childcare. CPC has provided these services for many
4 years and has been able to meet the growing needs of
5 working New Yorkers and our dedicated staff who have
6 worked overtime to ensure children and families
7 thrive and work independently. I work with childcare
8 providers who often care for children for free and
9 cannot afford – families cannot afford to pay.

10 Across the city, 126,500 children under the age
11 of 5 rely on contracted early childhood programs or
12 use vouchers for subsidized care. CPC operates 6
13 early childhood centers through contracts with the
14 DOE, serving over 310 children ages 0-4. Our early
15 childcare programs are lifelines to many of the low-
16 income immigrant communities we serve. Barriers like
17 long waits, immigration status, tedious application
18 processes make it very difficult for families and
19 community members to get services.

20 However, universal care system proposed under a
21 bill led by Council Member Gutierrez would alleviate
22 this confusion and frustration. This proposal would
23 create a more – this proposal – sorry. Thank you.
24 The universal led by Council Member Gutierrez would
25 alleviate this frustration and confusion. We are

1
2 urging for an allocation for \$20 million for Promise
3 NYC to help our community and we are also asking for
4 salary parity for our child care workers. I
5 appreciate this opportunity to testify on these
6 issues today. Thank you.

7 JASON ALLEYNE: Good evening Chair Stevens,
8 members of the Children and Youth Committee, all
9 Council Members and the audience in attendance today.
10 Thank you for all the work you do and for the
11 opportunity to testify on this important topic. I am
12 Jason Alleyne, Chief Program Officer at Exalt, an
13 organization that works with youth impacted by the
14 criminal justice system, ages 15-19 from all five
15 boroughs. I am pleased to be here today representing
16 our CEO Gisele Castro and joining me today is an
17 Exalt alumnus Charisma Adams.

18 This hearing is on the topic of the proposed
19 funding levels for the agencies charged with
20 supporting the youth of New York City. As is often
21 said, budgets are reflection of priorities. Truly,
22 can there be a higher priority than the future of our
23 city, which rests in the hands of our young
24 residents?

1
2 At the core and especially in the lingering wage
3 of the pandemic impacts on youth, providing programs
4 and services that educate and engage, that combat the
5 underlying conditions that lead to the school to
6 prison pipeline, is essential for a strong future.

7 We encourage the city to remain committed to
8 providing robust services and resources to those
9 youth programs such as SYEP and others that support
10 teenagers, especially during the out-of-school hours.
11 We also support funding for ACS that will provide the
12 staffing, resources, and support to ensure that an
13 experience in juvenile detention, when that is
14 necessary, is a path to a brighter future, not a
15 lesson in delinquency.

16 At Exalt, we strongly support juvenile justice
17 reform such as Raise the Age and see the positive
18 outcomes of that policy, however we know that young
19 people continue to be arrested and detained at
20 troubling rates. Exalt fundamentally believes that
21 the antidote to youth incarceration is innovation.
22 Our one-of-a-kind approach, which combines criminal
23 justice interventions with court advocacy,
24 educational reengagement, and workforce preparedness
25 proves the old adage that an ounce of prevention is

1
2 worth a pound of cure. At Exalt, our graduates once
3 chronically truant and dropped out of school on 98
4 percent on track to graduate or obtain their GED
5 within 2 years, 70 percent of the young people that
6 come to us with open court cases have their sentence
7 reduced or dismissed, 95 percent do not recidivate
8 and 100 percent of our graduates complete an 8 week
9 \$18 an hour paid internship that provides economic
10 power and a doorway to the world of meaningful work.
11 We strongly encourage this committee to continue your
12 critical work providing both oversight and resources
13 to the staff and programs of the agencies here today
14 can run efficiently and effectively for the benefit
15 of us all. Thank you again Council Member Stevens
16 for the invitation to testify today. I would like to
17 turn it over to Charisma now, after which we are
18 available to take your questions.

19 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you.

20 CHARISMA ADAMS: Good afternoon and thank you for
21 the invitation here today. Council Member Stevens, I
22 heard you speak on Monday at Exalt at the Women's
23 month celebration. Thank you so much for sharing
24 your story and giving us encouragement and advice. I
25

1
2 really related to what you said and I am grateful to
3 have been there and met you.

4 I am here today to share my story, which is
5 living proof that investing in young people pays off.
6 My name is Charisma Adams and I am 18, born and
7 raised in Canarsie Brooklyn New York and have been to
8 many different high schools. Now, I am currently an
9 urban [INAUDIBLE 06:54:04] and graduate in exactly 96
10 days. I have to be honest with you, two years ago, I
11 didn't think that I would be graduating high school.
12 When I started high school, I had a lot of anger
13 issues. I got into this big fight with some other
14 girls in my high school and long story short, the
15 police was involved and I was referred to Exalt. My
16 experience at Exalt was nothing but life changing. I
17 learned how to compose myself and I've learned how to
18 be professional. I made friends who have been
19 through the same thing I have been through and I also
20 have teachers who had experiences like mine. That
21 made me feel like I was being understood and I didn't
22 feel judged. I graduated from Exalt in April of last
23 year and now I'm involved in their alumni program.

24 In June, I am headed to basic training in Chicago
25 because I'm going to be serving for the Navy and I

1
2 will become a medic. I understand what you all do in
3 leading this city and choosing how to spend the money
4 and it's not easy but I know that spending money to
5 make sure teenagers like me have options like Exalt
6 is the right move. I think that is very important
7 that old people who are involved with Exalt, who get
8 in trouble, can be helped and become better people.
9 Because I had the opportunity, I learned that the way
10 you grow up is not the way you have to be. Thank you
11 again Council Member Stevens and everyone here today
12 for listening.

13 PONNY WHITE: Okay, sorry about that. Good
14 afternoon Council Member Stevens and thank you to you
15 and each member of the Committee for holding this
16 time for all of us. My name is Ponny White, I work
17 as the Senior Prevention Coordinator for the New York
18 City Alliance Against Sexual Assault.

19 For over 20 years, the alliance has worked to
20 prevent sexual violence and reduce the harm it causes
21 through education, research and advocacy. I'm here
22 today to talk with you about the importance of sexual
23 violence prevention for New York City youth and to
24 ask for \$125,000 in support of our project
25 Empowerment Program through the Young Women's

1 Initiative. Sexual violence prevention programming
2 that focuses on teenage girls is essential.

3
4 According to the CDC, in 2021 alone, 18 percent of
5 high school girls experience sexual violence. These
6 rates have been rising and at a disproportionate rate
7 in comparison to the sexual violence experience by
8 young boys. The alliances project addresses sexual
9 violence in a way that leverages community strength
10 and prioritizes young girls leadership development
11 with a focus on social norm change, healthy
12 relationships, practicing consents and safe bystander
13 engagement techniques. We work to broaden the reach
14 of DOT to a diversity of young women of color and
15 LGBTQIA+ youth.

16 As a DOT facilitator myself and somebody who has
17 survived sexual violence, I'm grateful to be in this
18 space with young folks who are challenging and
19 deconstructing regressive social norms and creating a
20 society that is rooted in mutual respect, safety and
21 dignity. To prevent sexual violence across New York
22 City, it is essential that we train and empower
23 youth. Our project DOT is a proven program that
24 changes young women's lives and initiates ripples of
25 impact throughout their communities. We're asking

1
2 for the Council's continued funding through the Young
3 Women's Initiative of \$125,000 to support this
4 transformational work. Thank you for your time and
5 attention. I welcome your questions after.

6 LETTY HAWTHORNE: Good evening Chair Stevens.
7 Thank you for the opportunity to speak. My name is
8 Letty Hawthorne and I am from the Bushwick section of
9 Brooklyn before it became trendy.

10 I am the Assistant Program Director at Atlantic
11 Terminals Cornerstone for University Settlement. We
12 would like to raise budget concerns that our after-
13 school programs are facing. We believe that DYCD
14 should reconsider how they calculate Rate of
15 Participation which many of us know is ROP. Since
16 COVID, the landscape for how families use after
17 school has changed tremendously but that does not
18 mean that there is not the same, if not a more need
19 since COVID for these services. For example, parents
20 who have flexibility for hybrid work may only work
21 two to three days of after school for their children.
22 As well, many students are now facing two to three
23 days of additional academic tutoring with the DOE.
24 We want to continue to support that.

1
2 These students need our after-school programs for
3 either two to three days a week because they are in
4 DOE enrichment but with the ROP situation, DYCD does
5 not count that. So, we would like to – we are
6 seeking that for all of the students who are with us
7 as far as attendance. Additionally, we are excited
8 to welcome and support asylum seekers in our programs
9 but the system created by the city makes it extremely
10 difficult if not impossible for asylum seekers
11 seeking to enroll their students in our programs.
12 Since their buses only run during the beginning and
13 end of the school day, many of these students are
14 unable to enroll in our programs because they have no
15 transportation. Even if they can enroll in the
16 afterschool programs, they can't stay for longer than
17 a few months because they are moved to different
18 shelters.

19 This inconsistency in the student population
20 makes it difficult for after school programs. Can I
21 continue? Thank you. To maintain stable enrollment
22 and it's where our funding is dependent on that and
23 an inflexible rate with participation we are also
24 worried about how this will negatively impact our
25 programs.

1
2 We will submit longer testimony. Thank you so
3 much for having me. I'm happy to answer any
4 questions that you have.

5 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you. I do not have
6 any questions for this panel but Charisma, I do want
7 you to know and I would like you to let all the other
8 young ladies know at Exalt, I started my Monday out
9 talking to this group of powerful women, young women
10 and you guys kept saying I inspired you but you all
11 poured it into me. I don't think you guys realize
12 that people in these positions need to see and hear
13 stories and just be around the light that you guys
14 all have and so, please just go back and let those
15 young girls know that like, I needed that more than
16 they needed me in that moment. So, I know you all
17 keep saying I inspired you but like, just to see that
18 you guys didn't have the opportunity, didn't use it
19 as a failure and using it as a launch pad for your
20 next steps, continuing makes me understand why I
21 fight as hard as I do and why I do the things that I
22 do. So, starting out my week, talking to you guys
23 and then being here today, fighting for you guys,
24 there's no other way that I want to do so thank you,
25 thank you, thank you.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, thank you to this
3 panel. That concludes our in-person testimony and we
4 are going to take a five-minute recess before we
5 transition to remote testimony. [07:01:06]-
6 [07:06:29]. Okay, we're ready to begin the remote
7 testimony. For virtual panelists, once your name is
8 called, a member of our staff will unmute you and the
9 Sergeant at Arms will set the timer and give you the
10 go ahead to begin. Please wait for the Sergeant to
11 announce that you may begin before delivering your
12 testimony and our first panelist will be Nora
13 McCarthy. Nora, you may begin once the Sergeant
14 starts your clock.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

16 NORA MCCARTHY: Hi everybody, thank you so much
17 for having me and I apologize that I could not come
18 in today in person. I'm the Director of the New York
19 City Family Policy Project, which focuses on the
20 child welfare system in New York City and I know some
21 of you have seen our report on the State Central
22 Register. The SCR receives hotline calls and decides
23 whether they meet the criteria under state law to be
24 investigated. Our report found that New York
25 screened out far fewer hotline calls than almost any

1
2 state. New York is rejecting only 25 percent of
3 calls while the national average is 50 percent. That
4 suggests that thousands of New York City children and
5 families are experiencing totally unwarranted
6 investigations because the state is not using it's
7 screen out authority.

8 While the power to hold the state agency
9 accountable lies with the State Legislature, there
10 are steps that the City Council and this Committee
11 could take to better protect New York City children
12 from unwarranted investigations and their impacts.

13 First, in future hearings, you can ask ACS to
14 describe cases it is seeing where a report should not
15 have been registered for investigation and seek to
16 understand the steps ACS has taken to close those
17 cases quickly to reduce harm to the family. For
18 example, CARES cases often can be closed after the
19 seven-day assessment but in 80 percent of cases, they
20 stay open for 40 to 60 days. The Council can seek
21 data and ask questions about ACS is using or not
22 using it's power to quickly close these unwarranted
23 cases.

24 Second, you can ask ACS about steps it is taking
25 to assess malicious reports and to refer them for

1 prosecution. Again, ACS does not have to complete
2 every intrusive step in a full investigative protocol
3 such as entering the home, asking for health and
4 mental health and school records and talking with
5 neighbors, teachers, and doctors. The Council can
6 seek to learn more about ACS is responding to
7 probable malicious reports and taking steps to reduce
8 the impact of children and families and refer these
9 to Law Enforcement.
10

11 Lastly, through joint hearings, this Committee
12 can seek information about the steps that New York
13 City agencies and human services providers –

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time is expired.

15 NORA MCCARTHY: Are taking to reduce hotline
16 calls. Okay, we know about investigations is
17 [INAUDIBLE 07:09:09], parent social networks and lead
18 parents to fear seeking help, which can make children
19 feel less safe. This Committee can hold ACS
20 accountable for its practices during investigations
21 and can seek to address over affording by other city
22 agencies and contracted providers. Thanks so much.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.
24 Our next panelist will be Daniele Gerard. Daniele,
25 you may begin when the Sergeant starts your clock.

1
2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

3 LEILA DUNBAR: Thank you Chair Stevens and
4 Committee Members, my name is Leila Dunbar. I'm a
5 Paralegal at Children's Rights, testifying for
6 Daniele Gerard, a Senior Staff Attorney at Children's
7 Rights.

8 Since 1995, Children's Rights has been a national
9 advocate for youth in state systems. We are also a
10 member of the New York City Jails Action Coalition
11 and advocate on behalf of young adults on Rikers.
12 New York City's young adults need the Council's help.
13 We call on you to close Rikers by August 2027. Mayor
14 Adams proposed budget will reduce the chances of
15 closing Rikers on time in accordance with the law
16 passed by the City Council by cutting funding for
17 alternatives to incarceration, the Supervised Release
18 program and reentry services to the tune of \$27.8
19 million and failing to adequately fund community
20 resources.

21 All of these programs will reduce the population
22 on the island and in its closure. We urge your
23 Committee and the Council to restore these cuts and
24 more as detailed in my written testimony. The cuts
25 that the Administration is proposing will uniquely

1 affect young adults incarcerated on Rikers.

2 Incarceration reduces youth success and education and
3 employment and also leads to lasting damage to their
4 health and wellbeing.

5
6 On the other hand, ATI will lead to better
7 outcomes for young adults and adolescents, all while
8 costing far less than incarceration. Reducing
9 funding for alternatives to confinement and reentry
10 services makes no sense morally, ethically, or
11 fiscally. Instead of allocating \$2.6 billion to the
12 Department of Correction, the Council should reduce
13 the departments uniformed headcount, eliminate
14 vacancies and hold staff accountable for chronic
15 absenteeism.

16 Both incarcerated young adults and New York City
17 taxpayers deserve better and better for their money.
18 Truly the City Council can see its way clear to
19 reducing the cruelty and degradation that define our
20 criminal legal system. We look to you and Speaker
21 Adams to negotiate a fair, just and reasonable budget
22 that serves all New Yorkers including young adults
23 and adults on Rikers and excavates closure of the
24 Island. Thank you for the opportunity to testify
25 today.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Our next panelist will be Alejandra. You may begin when the Sergeant starts your clock.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

ALEJANDRA NG: Good afternoon. Thank you Chair Stevens and the members of the Youth Service Committee for allowing me to testify. My name is Alejandra Ng and I'm the Program Manager of Community Tennis at New York Tennis and Learning funded as New York Tennis League Inc.

I have been a part of the NYJTL family for over 20 years, first starting as a participant when I was 10 years old. Growing up in a Latino soccer driven and low-income household with immigrant parents, tennis didn't seem like a sport that was for me. However, I'm only one of thousands that have been able to benefit from NYJTL's free programming. Funded, I know that physical education and fitness initiative, NYJTL provides quality tennis instruction, educational programming, and character development to youth in every borough of New York City. Through our community tennis program and school tennis program, allowing us to reach nearly 90,000 youngsters annually.

1
2 It is our belief that talent is universal. That
3 access and opportunity are not and that is why we
4 have strived over the last 53 years to introduce the
5 sport of tennis to all children including those with
6 special needs. The overwhelming majority of the
7 young people we serve are Black, Latino, Asian, and
8 from immigrant communities and nearly 70 percent of
9 our participants are 10 and under.

10 Many of our participants come from low-income
11 families and neighborhoods, where young people lack
12 access to learning the sport of tennis. We are
13 extremely grateful for the Council's support
14 throughout the years, but this year, we are seeking
15 \$1 million in citywide funding, an increase of
16 \$200,000, our first increase in 16 years. Unlike
17 contracts with DYCD and other agencies, Council
18 discretion in contracts are not eligible for COLA
19 increases. The only way for the Council to address
20 COLA is to enhance funding to the its initiatives.

21 Giving the years of rising costs as well as the
22 impact of inflation, it has become an increasingly
23 challenging for NYJTL to continue to provide the
24 level of tennis programming that we known for with
25 our current level of funding.

1
2 appreciate the City Council's efforts to secure
3 funding. Unfortunately, the Mayor's Preliminary
4 Budget does not include funding to continue this
5 crucial initiative and hundreds of children risk
6 being turned away from their programs after June.

7 Many childcare and preschool programs including
8 the New York City public schools infant and toddler
9 program, as well as 3K and PreK programs that offer
10 extended hours, require family to qualify for
11 subsidized childcare assistance in order to enroll.
12 These programs have historically excluded children
13 who are undocumented, as they are not able to – as
14 they're not eligible for the subsidy based on state
15 and federal restrictions.

16 Since its launch in January 2023, hundreds of
17 families of children who are undocumented have been
18 able to secure childcare funding through Promise NYC
19 to attend a variety of early childhood programs.
20 Thanks to the program, children have benefitted from
21 safe, high-quality programs that prepare them for
22 success in elementary school and beyond while their
23 parents have been able to work and connect to
24 resources.

1
2 Unfortunately, this funding is set to expire in
3 June. Meaning that children risk losing a seat in
4 their program and new families will be unable to
5 apply. In Fiscal year 2023, the city allocated \$10
6 million, which served approximately 600 children for
7 half the year from January to June of 2023. Last
8 year, the city allocated just \$16 million for the
9 entire fiscal year instead of the \$20 million that
10 was requested.

11 So, for Fiscal Year 2025, as demand continues to
12 grow, we recommend that the city allocate and
13 baseline \$20 million in the Administration for
14 Children Services budget for Promise NYC. Thank you
15 for the opportunity to speak to you today and I'm
16 happy to answer any questions.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.
18 Our next panelist will be Danny Lamb. Danny, you may
19 begin when the Sergeant starts your clock.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

21 RACHAEL GASDICK: Hi, Chair Stevens and member of
22 the Committee. I'm Rachael Gazdick, I'm the CEO of
23 New York Edge and we're here today to ask that you
24 prioritize New York Edge's Fiscal Year 2025 citywide
25 funding request. We are seeking \$1.2 million under

1
2 the Council's after school enrichment initiative, an
3 increase of \$200,000 over last year. This would be
4 our first increase in 16 years.

5 We are also seeking for the first time \$250,000
6 under the Council's Social and Emotional Learning for
7 Students initiative, SEL integrated into every
8 element of our programming at New York Edge. New
9 York Edge is the largest provider of school based
10 after school programming and summer programming in
11 New York City. We serve over 30,000 students in all
12 37 Council Districts and we also serve in 134
13 schools. Our mission is to really encourage young
14 people to become the next doctor, the next Pixar
15 animator, the next book publisher and we do that by
16 way of, we have a children's book publishing company
17 that the children just sign books at the strand and
18 they're sold at Barns and Noble and on Amazon.

19 Our sports leagues are run throughout the year.
20 We offer well over 50 different sports for kids. On
21 Saturdays, we have full programs of hundreds of kids
22 in parks and gyms. The flag football leagues this
23 year, the finals were played at the Jets Stadium and
24 it's a very organized sport. Our health and wellness
25 and our arts programs perform at Rockefeller Center.

1
2 This weekend we have the step competition and the
3 winner will go to Washington DC with Step Africa. We
4 have national chess champions, and so, we really are
5 building a program that allows kids to see
6 themselves. Our podcast, which I cohost with middle
7 schoolers, just won the anthem award.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time is expired.

9 RACHAEL GAZDICK: Thank you.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Our next panelist
11 will be Derwin Greene. You may begin when the
12 Sergeant starts your clock.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

14 DERWIN GREENE: Okay, good afternoon. Thank you
15 everyone for this time. Good afternoon elected
16 officials and representatives. On behalf of
17 Kingsbridge Heights Community Center, I would like to
18 say thank you for the opportunity to have our
19 contribution to this important discussion Council
20 with others who are using their voices this
21 afternoon.

22 After school programming is an integral part of
23 our society, ensuring that our youth have access to
24 safe spaces to learn or receive education and
25 resources that are not available to them in school.

1
2 After school programs engage students in ways and
3 areas that may not be possible during the school day
4 based on their objectives and obligations that
5 schools are required to meet. After school
6 programming participants receive SCL groups, stem
7 activities, internship opportunities, hot meals,
8 shared advocacy exposed to post-secondary education
9 and careers and having the opportunity to be the
10 fellow youth to develop socially in order to be more
11 tolerant in emotionally developed adults. That
12 should be the goal. Provide opportunities and
13 resources to youth to overcome the external and
14 internal factors in themselves, families and
15 communities in order to thrive and break cycles of
16 poverty and inequity as they progress through life.

17 In my role as a social worker since the pandemic,
18 I have administered numerous mental health
19 assessments and have had countless conversations in
20 groups and one on one with youth where youth has
21 expressed apprehension, trepidation, and ambiguity
22 about their ability to obtain a career that would
23 sustain them as an adult.

24 At a time where students feel less hopeful about
25 their future because they are so overwhelmed by the

1 challenges they bring, why are we indirect with
2 creating more barriers that they will have to
3 overcome? It is easy to understand the correlation
4 of how a lack of education can lead to a lack of
5 opportunity. It is quite obvious a lack of resources
6 will lead to a lack of hope for our youth. This is
7 highly true of Black and Brown youth who face
8 numerous systemic hurdles in order to just to be
9 alive and graduate high school in New York City.
10 Every dollar removed or cut is a resource that is
11 vital to our children development. Budget cuts are
12 people. These are people who are willing to stand in
13 the gap and fill up with families because of very
14 mitigating factors that families and parents are not
15 able to be all things for their children.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time expired.

18 DERWIN GREENE: Okay, thank you.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.
20 Our next panelist will be Joanna Lund Pops.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

22 JOANNA LUND-POPS: Thank you Committee Chair
23 Stevens and the members of the New York City Council
24 for holding this important hearing of the Committee
25 on Children and Youth. My name is Joanna Lund-Pops

1
2 and I am the Director of Program Innovation and
3 Government Relations at Big Brothers Big Sisters of
4 New York City, also known as BBBS of NYC.

5 I'm here today to advocate on behalf of the
6 thousands of youth who BBBS of NYC serve each year
7 and young people across all five boroughs. According
8 to Mentor New York, one in three young people in New
9 York will grow up without a mentor, and over 500,000
10 young people in New York need or want a mentor. Long
11 term mentorship like BBBS NYC's evidence based one to
12 one mentoring model is linked to positive youth
13 outcomes can mitigate barriers to opportunity and
14 reduces the likelihood of adverse childhood
15 experiences.

16 In BBBS NYC's work place mentoring program, we
17 match high school students with corporate volunteers
18 to prepare them for post-secondary success. In our
19 Community Based Mentoring program we provide one to
20 one mentoring to New York City youth in a community-
21 based setting by matching them with a vetted and
22 trained adult volunteer from the community. Both of
23 our mentoring programs not only connect youth to
24 transformational mentoring relationships but also
25 provide opportunities for youth to deepen their

1 career readiness skills, acquire social capital and
2 grow their SCL skills.
3

4 As we look to FY25, we hope to continue to ignite
5 youth potential with the support of the Council, who
6 have long been champions of our programming and the
7 youth whom we serve. Thank you to the Council for
8 your ongoing support of BBBS of NYC through both our
9 designative initiative and individual discretionary
10 allocation. It is imperative that New York City
11 Council fully fund our organization and all other
12 programs that provide essential services to the youth
13 in our city. Their success is New York City's
14 success. Thank you.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.
16 Our next panelist will be Dr. Marsha Jean Charles.
17 You may begin when the Sergeant starts your clock.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

19 DR. MARSHA JEAN CHARLES: Good afternoon Chair
20 Stevens and members of the Committee on Children and
21 Youth. Thank you for the opportunity to testify
22 today. This is Rajo, he really wanted to be on
23 camera and Jess will be here too.

24 For over 25 years, the Brotherhood Sister Sol has
25 been at the forefront of social justice educating,

1
2 organizing and training to challenge inequity and
3 champion opportunities for all. With a focus on
4 Black and Latinx youth, this is where young people
5 claim the power of their history, identity, and
6 communities to build a future they want to see.

7 Brotherhood provide around the clock support and
8 wraparound programming making space for Black and
9 Latinx young people to examine their roots, define
10 their stories, and awaken their agency. We believe
11 that all youth deserve safe, high quality, holistic
12 and positively transformative educational
13 experiences. If we believe in equity, as we do, and
14 want to create the future all New Yorkers deserve, we
15 must build within our school system, systems of
16 accountability, restorative justice and behavioral
17 management that do not include the NYPD and
18 holistically support student success.

19 Our vision for education in New York public
20 schools include safe, restorative, and healing
21 environments where all students have the opportunity
22 to learn and grow. And to meet this goal, we must
23 equitably reach for our New York State public schools
24 and defund the tactics that push out marginalized
25 students. Our youth at the Brotherhood Sister Sol

1 collectively not only want but need the city to
2 provide New York City schools the funding and mental
3 health support along with funding for wellness
4 centers within their schools. Our youth demand a
5 confession of the cuts of the education budget and
6 that our elected officials protect critical programs
7 funded with the \$1 billion in federal COVID relief
8 funds including protecting the baselined current \$21
9 million allocation for restorative justice, \$5
10 million for mental health continuum, and \$77 million
11 for counselors, social workers, and mental health
12 professionals.
13

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has expired.

15 DR. MARSHA JEAN CHARLES: Thank you. The social,
16 the school based restorative justice and social
17 emotional support -

18 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you.

19 DR. MARSHA JEAN CHARLES: Funding and creating
20 restorative programs in our schools. We ask that you
21 continue this funding.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.
23 Our next panelist will be Marisha Harry. You may
24 begin when the Sergeant starts your clock.
25

1
2 MARISHA HARRY: Good afternoon Chair Stevens and
3 Committee members. Thank you for allowing me to
4 testify today. My name is Marisha Harry, I'm a
5 member of Freedom Agenda and the Campaign to Close
6 Rikers. I'm also a Brooklyn neighbor. I am writing
7 this testimony to emphasize the need for quality
8 mental health treatment for our children, youth and
9 families. Due to the lack of resources and multiple
10 barriers, most people in our communities are not even
11 aware of their diagnosis and even those who are
12 cannot find adequate help without their disability
13 being seen by society as behavioral.

14 As a result, our communities are being punished
15 and abandoned on Rikers Island while their mental
16 health continues to deteriorate and worsen. Children
17 are always the first to be impacted by the traumas
18 and historical neglect communities like mine face.
19 Since my younger brother was 12, I'd watch him cycle
20 through the system despite DOE and DOH knowing about
21 my brothers diagnosis of both ADHD and Oppositional
22 Defiant Disorder. This was hard for me as an older
23 sister. I wanted to desperately find him the help he
24 needed but I didn't know what it looked like and the
25

1
2 resources I could not find. The resources I found
3 were only punitive.

4 When my parents asked for help, it came from the
5 form of multiple ACS cases which were used as a
6 threat to my brother and my parents to change
7 behaviors that neither of them had control of. As a
8 result, he became a target to NYPD at an incredibly
9 young age which created huge turmoil labeling him
10 throughout Brooklyn and has failed him throughout his
11 childhood sitting in Rikers Island for two and half
12 years and now sitting in prison miles away from me
13 and my family.

14 Today, I am one of the main support pillars in my
15 brothers incarceration but I am also a mother of two
16 boys, one is diagnosed with the same ADHD ODD as my
17 brother. I refuse to let the same thing happen to my
18 child as our city continues to overfund agencies like
19 Department of Corrections and NYPD. I fear that the
20 experience is still the reality for the youth in my
21 community because of the mayor's budget priorities.

22 Under Mayor Adams, our city's youth incarceration
23 is up and so are racist practices like stop, question
24 and frisk.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time is expired.

1
2 MARISHA HARRY: The Mayor plans to maintain a
3 \$2.6 billion budget. Thank you for your time.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.
5 Our next panelist will be Natisha Romain. You may
6 begin when the Sergeant starts your clock.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

8 NATISHA ROMAIN: Chair Stevens and members of the
9 Committee on Children and Youth. My name is Natisha
10 Romain and I am Director of Adolescent Services at
11 Red Hook Initiative, also known as RHI. RHI is a
12 community-based organization in Red Hook Brooklyn
13 serving 6,500 public housing residents annually
14 through various youth and community programs. I'm
15 here to testify today on our organization regarding
16 the cuts to DYCD funding in the proposed FY25
17 Preliminary Budget and what this will mean for the
18 young people we serve. I know that you have heard
19 from many community groups who are deeply impacted by
20 the proposed \$6.9 million cut for after school
21 programs.

22 In our district alone, this means that 203 youth
23 will lose access to program seats. At RHI, these
24 cuts will directly remove 53 seats in our after-
25 school program, specifically to sunseting of an

1 overenrolled and successful compass explore program.

2 To a young person, a seat in our program is a safe
3 place to go after school. To a young person, the
4 seat is an opportunity to get access to college
5 scholarships. To a young person, this seat is an
6 opportunity to confide in a social worker after a
7 stressful day. The seat represents a youth worker
8 who will be onsite to support them, an academic
9 advisor who checks their homework and a facilitator
10 who works with them on projects relating to
11 reproductive rights, community safety or community
12 farming. To a Red Hook family, this seat is an
13 opportunity to have much needed child care while at
14 work.
15

16 With these impending budget cuts, the Red Hook
17 community will lose 53 chances to empower our next
18 generation. The next generation of college
19 graduates, the next generation of reproductive health
20 educators, the next generation of community
21 organizers. The loss of these 53 seats is more than
22 just an after-school program, it is a threat to the
23 future of Red Hook. We represent a community that is
24 constantly starved for resources around education,
25 youth programming, job development, library services

1 and more. The City of New York must do better to
2 serve our families and these cuts represent a
3 reversal and not forward progress. As a community-
4 based organization serving Red Hook families, we see
5 how critical the resources DYCD provides are.

6
7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time is expired.

8 NATISHA ROMAIN: We ask that you work
9 collectively to avoid these cuts. Thank you for the
10 work of the Committee and the opportunity to testify.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Our next panelist
12 will be Raisa Reyes. You may begin when the Sergeant
13 starts your clock.

14 RAISA REYES: Thank you to the Committee and
15 Chair Stevens for allowing testimony today and your
16 commitment to supporting LGBTQ youth. My name is
17 Raisa Reyes, pronouns she, her. I'm the Outreach
18 Coordinator at the Ali Forney Center. As the states
19 largest and most comprehensive service for LGBTQ
20 youth, experiencing homelessness and a member of the
21 Coalition of Homeless Youth, we advocate with them
22 for the additional \$16 million 455 thousand in DYCD
23 RHY funding.

24 Over the last year, we have seen an increase in
25 the amount of youth accessing our drop-in center

1 including more minors and new arrivals and
2 unaccompanied youth with no increase to funding,
3 along with our partner programs in the continuum, we
4 have been doing the best we can with what we have in
5 making it stretch.
6

7 We are doing 15 to 20 new intakes a day to
8 address this issue. The city needs to fund DYCD
9 drop-in centers to be able to meet the increased
10 needs and pressure on programs by adding \$1.63
11 million and a one-time 30 percent contract increase
12 for DYCD funded drop-in center contracts. To meet
13 the direct time sensitive needs of new arrivals, we
14 need youth specific legal services funding \$625,000
15 since youth in DYCD programs have been excluded from
16 city funded legal support. As a society, we have
17 failed when anyone, especially children and youth are
18 unhoused.

19 So, it's our duty to do everything we can do to
20 get them out of homelessness quickly and permanently.
21 At AMC, our waitlists have significantly grown in the
22 last six months. For the first time in over a year,
23 we have a waitlist for 16- and 20-year-olds and in
24 our 21 plus beds are over 100. Even before 21 plus
25 youth who were waiting six months for an emergency

1 housing bed, relying mostly on 24-hour drop-in
2 centers. In order to meet the consistent need of our
3 21 plus youth, we need an additional 100 DYCD RHY
4 beds. Additionally, programs should be able to
5 decide if they want to change some under 21 beds to
6 meet their current needs -

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you. Your time has
9 expired.

10 RAISA REYES: Thank you.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.
12 Our next panelist will be Sierra Kraft. You may
13 begin when the Sergeant starts your clock.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

15 SIERRA KRAFT: Good evening. Thank you
16 Chairperson Stevens and the Committee on Children and
17 Youth for inviting testimony. My name is Sierra
18 Kraft and I'm the Executive Director of the I CARE
19 coalition. We are a coalition of legal service
20 organizations providing free representation to
21 unaccompanied immigrant children facing deportation
22 in New York City by advocating for universal access
23 to counsel.

24 Having access to an attorney can be a matter of
25 life and death for immigrant children and families.

1
2 Immigrants are not granted the right to an attorney
3 in immigration proceedings, not even they're
4 children. I was attending a court hearing the other
5 day and a two-year-old was expected to represent
6 himself, which is simply unacceptable.

7 While New York continues to rank fourth highest
8 in the country for number of unaccompanied arrivals,
9 with over 8,500 young New Yorkers arriving annually.
10 We see thousands of young people who are fleeing
11 violence and trauma in their home country in search
12 of safety protection and opportunities in New York
13 City and without representation, they stand just a 15
14 percent chance of winning their case, resulting in
15 rapid deportation back to countries where their lives
16 are at risk.

17 With the support from City Council through the
18 unaccompanied minors, the Families Initiative, you've
19 made it possible for I CARE to stand alongside over
20 12,000 young immigrants. Children represented by I
21 CARE attorneys have over a 90 percent success rate
22 and I CARE attorneys are on the front lines every day
23 defending immigrant children's rights and upholding
24 New York values. However, we haven't received an
25 increase in over 5 years while thousands of young

1
2 people await legal support, vulnerable to deportation
3 if they cannot find an attorney.

4 Today, we urgently call upon the city to
5 prioritize funding for the many unaccompanied minors
6 in New York City that are reliant on I CARES critical
7 legal services. You've heard from some of our
8 partners today, we're a coalition of 7 legal service
9 providers and we're seeking \$5.7 million this year to
10 serve 1,800 children through legal screenings, know
11 your rights trainings, direct representation and
12 referrals.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you. Your time is
14 expired.

15 SIERRA KRAFT: Thank you.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Our next panelist
17 will be Shavon Laron.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

19 SHAVON LOCKRON: Good evening everyone. My name
20 is Shavon Lockron(SP?) I work for the Adult Learning
21 Center at Lehman College. You've heard my colleague
22 speak today about the need for adult literacy and
23 ESOL classes. I'd like to touch specifically on the
24 need for digital literacy for adults.

1
2 I'm currently teaching a basic computer skills
3 and software skills class to ESOL students and as I
4 started teaching, I reflected on my own journey to
5 digital proficiency and it started with elementary
6 school, a weekly computer class and continued at my
7 family's home computer. And I raise this because it
8 outlines two crucial elements that our adult students
9 are missing, which are explicit instruction from a
10 teacher and access to resources. You likely take for
11 granted knowing the difference between the shift and
12 cat slot keys or the difference between a left and
13 right click on a mouse but once upon a time, learning
14 that difference took explicit instruction. Then it
15 took practice, a lot of practice.

16 Though we forget how we learned because it was
17 simply incorporated into the demands of our daily
18 lives at school and at work. But for our adult
19 education students, they instead see those demands as
20 barriers to jobs, to educational opportunities, to
21 their child's future.

22 When asked the first day of class, why are you
23 here? Their answers were along the lines of it's
24 everywhere. You go to the doctor and you have to
25 check in with a tablet. We must learn computers just

1
2 to exist in society. Many of our students are
3 proficient on their smart phones but they don't often
4 know how to type. They can't organize and download
5 files. They can't organize their email inbox and
6 they don't know how to keep their personal
7 information safe and secure online. All of this
8 digital know-how requires explicit instruction from a
9 teacher and hours and hours of practice. That
10 practice is hard to come by when you don't have a lot
11 to offer Wi-Fi at home.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you. Your time is
13 expired.

14 SHAVON LOCKRON: Thank you.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and we have one
16 more person Katie Blondel. You may begin when the
17 Sergeant starts your clock.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time begins.

19 KATIE BLONDEL: Good afternoon. I've listened to
20 all the testimonies. Thank you Council Member
21 Stevens for this hearing on our children and youth.
22 I'm the President of Red Hook West Houses over here
23 in Brooklyn and we've been under steady construction
24 for about eight years. We have no play areas, no
25 watering stations, nothing. Our library, though the

1
2 Mayor did restore the budget, our library is gone for
3 the next two years under renovation. We have so much
4 resiliency work going on, we have no place for the
5 children. And as a person who grew up in Brooklyn,
6 went to PAL and really you know relied on these
7 services, I'm imploring you to do not remove any
8 seats from the Red Hook community. We've been
9 suffering for a long time with environmental burdens
10 as well as really finding it hard to get people to
11 even want to come to support us, whether that's you
12 know staff or whatever and the thing is, these
13 children need something to do. We cannot have young
14 people in the street with nothing to do, and for that
15 reason, I sat here since 10:00 listening to all the
16 different comments but I want my taxpaying dollar to
17 go back to these areas around public housing because
18 they don't you know even though they have community
19 centers, a lot times they don't have use for it or
20 the center is not big enough for the population. We
21 have 3,000 apartments in Red Hook with one community
22 center in the front but you know we need to keep the
23 after-school services open. As a young parent, I
24 didn't want my kids to come home to an empty house.
25 An empty house and an ideal mind is the devils

1 playground. So I implore you to keep our children
2 busy by making sure they have after school programs
3 and food to eat after school.
4

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you. Your time is
6 expired.

7 KATIE BLONDEL: Thank you so much.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. That concludes
9 our remote testimony. If there's anyone that we
10 missed who would like to testify via Zoom, please
11 raise your hand and we'll call on you in the order of
12 hands raised.

13 Okay, seeing no one else, I will turn it back to
14 the Chair for closing statements.

15 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Uhm, I just want to say
16 this was a very long hearing and the first hearing
17 that we have Children and Youth but I want to say
18 thank you to everyone who has been here from 10:00.
19 Special shout out to ACS who has Stephanie and DePaul
20 here being the designated survivors and listening to
21 the testimonies of the community and providers. Also
22 special shoutout to all the staff, our Sergeant at
23 Arms who have been holding it down all day. I really
24 appreciate it and this was to me, understanding that
25 we are in a fiscal crisis but a budget is a moral -

1
2 it's a moral document of where we believe things are
3 important and if we do not deem our kids important,
4 we will continue to see cuts in this program and
5 everyone knows that I will fight to the end to ensure
6 that we are prioritizing our young people across the
7 city. So, thank you to everyone who was here since
8 9:00 this morning and with that, I adjourn this
9 hearing. [GAVEL]

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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 April 22, 2024