



Thursday, May 29, 2025

**Testimony of
Jessica S. Tisch, Commissioner
New York City Police Department**

**Hearing before the New York City Council
Committees on Finance and Public Safety**

**Thursday, May 29, 2025
10:00 A.M.**

New York City Police Department's FY2026 Executive Budget

Good morning, Speaker Adams, Chair Salaam, Chair Brannan, and members of the City Council Committees on Public Safety and Finance. I am Jessica Tisch, Commissioner of the New York City Police Department (NYPD). I am joined at the table today by First Deputy Commissioner Tania Kinsella; Deputy Commissioner of Management and Budget Kristine Ryan; Deputy Commissioner of Legal Matters Michael Gerber; and Deputy Chief Gregory Clifford, commanding officer of the Office of Management, Analysis, and Planning; as well as other members of my executive staff. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the NYPD's Fiscal Year 2026 Executive Budget.

In March, we provided comprehensive testimony on many topics ranging from crime reduction strategies, to internal NYPD reforms, to public safety legislation. Today, we are here to provide updates on some of those issues, and to discuss more ways we can work together on behalf of all the people we serve.

Major crime in New York City continues to go down in our precincts, on our subways, and in our housing developments. NYPD officers have taken more than 2,200 illegal guns off our streets in 2025, and nearly 22,000 since the Adams administration began. This has helped drive down citywide shooting incidents by 20% from this point last year.

And the NYPD's work in May has been exceptional. We just had the safest Memorial Day weekend in terms of gun violence that New York City has ever seen, with the fewest shootings in recorded history, and zero shootings on that Sunday – the first time that has happened in the 32 years we have been keeping records. And with two full days remaining in the month, we are on track to have the fewest murders and the fewest shootings for any May on record.

This is the result of smart strategy, thoughtful execution, precise analysis, and 49,000 people all focused on one thing: public safety. And that focus on crime fighting is at the heart of our Summer Violence Reduction Plan. This plan continues the work that has made our neighborhoods, subways, and housing developments safer – through the expansion of our citywide Zones.

As we have seen over the past several months, this data-driven, scalpel approach works. Throughout our Zone deployments – in some of our city's most violent areas – major crime is

down nearly 20% year-to-date.

Now, we have expanded and repositioned our deployments based on current data, crime trends, and community concerns. The result is 70 Summer Zones covering 57 different commands across all five boroughs. This is the largest deployment of its kind in department history: 1,500 uniformed officers on foot posts in precincts, public housing, and in our subways – and all of them focused on high-priority index crimes and shootings.

The summer is just getting underway, but the early returns are very promising.

Since May 5, major crime in our Summer Zones during deployment is down nearly 30%, with double-digit decreases in robbery, felony assault, burglary, grand larceny, and auto theft. Shootings are down more than 57%, and major subway crime within these zones is down 29%.

Just as I laud the NYPD's successes fighting crime, I am equally candid about the challenges we still face. Whether it is surging recidivism, faults in the discovery law, or the proliferation of illegal firearms, we must deal with every issue directly. And that includes juvenile gun violence.

Two weeks ago, a 16-year-old girl was killed by a stray bullet fired into a group of children by a 14-year-old boy, who was handed the gun by a 13-year-old boy. It was a tragedy – but it was not an aberration.

From 2018 to 2024, the number of children under the age of 18 arrested with a gun increased by 136% in New York City. Over the same time, shooters under age 18 went up by 92%, and young shooting victims increased 81%.

Why? What happened?

Among the factors, the first part of New York State's "Raise the Age" law took effect in 2018. The legislation changed both the age of criminal responsibility and the way teenage offenders are processed in the courts. The idea behind this was one we all agree with: Children should not be treated like adults in our criminal justice system. But as the law took effect, here is what we saw:

When the age of criminal responsibility went up, the age of criminal suspects went down. Gangs and crews began recruiting younger and younger members, and had them carry the guns and commit the shootings, robberies, and assaults. Before "Raise the Age," about 30% of our arrests of individuals under age 18 were for a major felony. Now, it is 60%.

And we cannot forget: When more shooters are kids, more shooting victims are kids, too. This is serious – and seriously bad things come from a consequence-free environment.

Over the next year, we need to have honest conversations about how the criminal justice system deals with youth offenders – because the current trajectory is unsustainable, and unsafe. I do not come here with all the answers, but I look forward to working with the Council on effective youth strategies.

In the first quarter of this year, shootings in New York City fell to their lowest level ever. We had the second-fewest homicides in recorded history. There were double-digit crime declines across Patrol, Transit, and Housing. The public safety gains made by the women and men of the NYPD were truly historic.

But even as crime and violence fell, New Yorkers were telling us that they still did not feel safe.

Chronic conditions in their neighborhoods like abandoned vehicles, homeless encampments, illegal parking, unreasonable noise, public drinking and urination, and open-air drug markets give the impression of chaos and disorder. They make people feel unsafe – and calls to 311 concerning quality-of-life issues nearly doubled in the past six years. So, in direct response to these increased 311 complaints, the NYPD launched the Quality of Life Division in mid-April – recentering our approach to public safety.

Since inception, Our Q-Teams have resolved thousands of 311 calls across six commands, helping to clear blocked driveways and bike lanes, settle noise complaints, and keep our public spaces safe and orderly. And they have ensured that these issues are addressed promptly and do not languish for days.

This work is having a real impact: In less than six weeks, the Quality of Life Division has seized more than 200 illegal mopeds and recklessly operated e-bikes; removed more than 2,000 abandoned, derelict, or unregistered vehicles; cleared around 440 encampments; and inspected more than 400 smoke shops – padlocking around 50 of them.

In 2025, quality of life enforcement is not about preventing more serious crime. In fact, it is not about crime at all. It is about improving quality of life, being responsive to community complaints, and fixing the very real issues people are dealing with every day – including out-of-control e-bikes.

Every person is obligated to follow the basic rules of the road. When it comes to traffic safety, compliance is not optional. We will not tolerate e-bikes driving recklessly, running red lights, ignoring stop signs, driving on the sidewalk, and riding against traffic. Residents have consistently raised fears about serious injury or worse – and this enforcement initiative is in direct response to their concerns.

And the enforcement looks different now for one simple reason: our previous approach was not working. B-summonses returnable to traffic court are part of a regulatory framework designed for licensed car drivers. If you ignore a B-summons, you have your license suspended. If you are a menace on the roads and accumulate enough points on your license, it will be suspended. None of this makes any sense for e-bikes, because a license is not required to operate one. So instead, for certain hazardous offenses we are issuing C-summonses – returnable to criminal court.

This is the option available to the NYPD under the current law – and we are eager to work with the Council and the State Legislature on a new, meaningful paradigm for biking enforcement.

But I want to be clear: Far from being a war on e-bikes, this enforcement initiative is designed to keep these vehicles as a viable and sustainable transportation option in New York City. There is a desperate need for legislative reform to keep pace with the reality on the streets – and to the extent that has not happened yet, it has created dangerous conditions. The NYPD is responsible for keeping people safe consistent with the law, and we will continue to do so.

In 2025, the NYPD has issued nearly 251,000 summonses to cars versus about 5,100 summonses to e-bikes. So clearly, this initiative is only one part of our larger effort to ensure safe streets for all New Yorkers – work that is saving lives. This year, traffic fatalities are down 24%, and collision injuries are down 12%. And every vehicle-type collision category is down year-to-date, with one exception: e-bikes.

The NYPD depends on the public trust. That trust is built by unimpeachable integrity, and it is maintained by strong, ethical leadership. Over the past five months, we have reshaped our executive leadership, amended our vehicle pursuit policy, reduced waste and redundancy in our vehicle fleet, and returned more than 1,000 cops from administrative roles back to patrol. We continue to enhance efficiency, improve policy, and reinforce accountability.

When I was last here, I said that we were focused on our disciplinary process and ensuring that it is fair and effective. That means having an Internal Affairs Bureau that identifies and roots out cases of misconduct and having a Department Advocate's Office that prosecutes those cases rigorously.

It also means that we must have a thorough and consistent process when the CCRB substantiates allegations of misconduct. When I started in this position, I became concerned that some of our procedures for CCRB cases had come unmoored from the principles that guide our disciplinary system. We needed to make changes, and we did.

For example, paragraph 2 of our 2012 MOU with the CCRB states that when the CCRB is seeking charges and specifications against an officer, there are certain circumstances in which the Police Commissioner can retain the case rather than it being prosecuted by the CCRB. In particular, I can take this step when there are ongoing parallel or related criminal investigations, or in the interests of justice when an officer has no disciplinary history or prior substantiated CCRB complaints.

But just because I can do something does not always mean that I should. I am committed to being thoughtful about when I exercise this authority, and I have been. Last year, the department took 93 cases away from the CCRB pursuant to this "Provision 2" authority. In the first four months of this year, that number was 13.

And until a few months ago, we were imposing a "short SOL" rule that administratively closed hundreds of CCRB cases that came to us shortly before the statute of limitations expired. I ordered the Department Advocate's Office to reverse that policy decision and eliminate that rule. My directive is clear: cases should not be closed on technicalities, and we must make substantial efforts to review every case brought to us by the CCRB. In 2024, 848 CCRB cases were closed because of "short SOL." Since we made this change on March 1, there have only been three. Going forward,

that number can be zero – and it should be.

But I want to be clear: The CCRB needs to do its part here. Our Department Advocate's Office is making herculean efforts to process cases quickly. In some instances, we only have days – and this is not fair to the officers or to the complainants. We urge the CCRB to review its own procedures and take steps to process cases expeditiously.

Discipline is important; even more important is to improve our practices so that we get it right and there is no need for discipline. My team is working closely and collaboratively with the Federal Monitor to achieve the goals of the monitorship and ensure that our stop, question, and frisk practices are constitutionally sound. That is why, at ComplianceStat, we are laser-focused on the constitutionality of the stops, frisks, and searches conducted by our officers. We are putting time and resources into ComplianceStat, and it is working.

In the third quarter of 2024, the Monitor found that 91% of our stops were lawful, compared to 82% in the first quarter. We also improved over that time when it comes to frisks (79% compliance versus 62%) and searches (78% compliance versus 67%). Through ComplianceStat, we can, and will, push those compliance rates even higher.

When we talk about stops, we also must acknowledge longstanding racial disparities. The Monitor has found that, controlling for various factors such as the crime being investigated, when it comes to a variety of post-stop outcomes – such as frisks, searches, arrests, summonses, use of force, and the recovery of contraband or weapons – racial disparities over time have been substantially reduced or been eliminated entirely.

For the stops themselves, racial disparities remain – and we are working with the Monitor to formulate a Fourteenth Amendment Compliance Plan that will tackle that issue head-on. When it comes to constitutional policing, we are proud of our successes and clear-eyed about the challenges that remain. We will continue to identify where we fall short and implement ways to be better. New Yorkers deserve nothing less.

As you know, I am committed to the efficient and appropriate use of overtime at the NYPD, and our Overtime Management Plan is achieving that goal. In the first half of fiscal year 2025, the NYPD's overtime spending was about 11% above the previous year. Now, we have not only slowed that trend – we have reversed it.

Since the plan was implemented, each month has seen significant reductions in overtime spending year over year. When compared to the same month in 2024, January overtime spending was down 9.7%, February was down 10.1%, March was down 14%, and April was down 15%.

You can clearly see the improving trend as the plan has been honed and refined over time – and these reductions resulted in combined savings of \$40.4 million over the first four months of 2025 compared to last year.

Overall, with this renewed focus and enhanced compliance measures, we anticipate that our

overtime spending will be lower than the target established with the Office for Management and Budget for fiscal year 2025 – and significantly lower than it would have been if no measures were taken in January.

To be clear: None of this has come at the expense of public safety. We continue to do all the necessary work to reduce crime and improve quality of life. No one does it better than the women and men of the NYPD – but it is no secret that we need more of them. And as I have said before, this is not a budget problem.

We have the will, and we have the means – but lately, we do not have the applicants. The result is an 11% drop in NYPD uniformed headcount over the past seven years.

It is simple: more cops on patrol make our city safer. Hiring 1,000 recruits in January of this year was a good start, but it was not nearly enough. So, we expanded our eligibility requirements, reducing the number of college credits needed to apply from 60 to 24. This brought the NYPD more in line with modern standards, since most of our peer agencies do not require any college credits at all. Those changes took effect in February, and the impact was immediate.

In the past few months, more than 12,600 new filers have registered to take the police officer exam, and more than 4,000 previously ineligible applicants moved to reopen their cases. Daily applications are up 75%, going from an average of 56 per day up to 98, and about 4,100 people have registered for the next police exam. This gives us a fighting chance to reach Mayor Adams' goal of 35,000 uniformed officers by the fall of next year – a headcount we haven't seen since 2022.

Our department's goal is to hire about 3,500 new officers in 2025, continuing the year-over-year increases from the 2,041 hires in 2022; 2,356 in 2023; and 2,631 in 2024. This is good news for our city, but we need the news to be even better. Increased headcount means less overtime, less stress on our workforce, and better service for New Yorkers. I am confident we can get there, and we appreciate the Mayor's and the Council's support in this effort.

There are many other areas, as well, where the NYPD and City Council can work together to increase public safety and dramatically improve the quality of life in our city.

First, we propose a change to the Administrative Code to make it a misdemeanor to possess an ATV within the confines of New York City. Though ATVs cannot be legally operated on New York City roadways, they can be legally possessed – making enforcement of the law challenging.

Second, we need to revisit the law regarding groups wearing masks in public. What was a public health necessity five years ago has now become an easy way for criminals to hide their identities – and we cannot allow this to continue.

The members of the NYPD and the New York City Council want the same thing: a safe city for all. Whenever possible, we should be working together toward that shared goal – and I am eager to partner with you on any policies and legislation that get us closer to achieving it.

And finally, the Council has before it a bill that would ban the department's Criminal Group Database. We spoke about this at our hearing in March, and since then the Database has continued to play a critical role in keeping our city safe. This intelligence tool helps us to understand crew-related violence and identify potential retaliation targets after a shooting. Simply put: this investigative tool helps the NYPD save lives.

We saw this in late April when we announced a major gang takedown with the Southern District, where a long-term investigation led to the indictment of 27 Tren de Aragua members on charges including racketeering, and sex trafficking. Every single person indicted was listed in the Database.

Similar gang cases were recently closed in Queens and Manhattan this year with help from the Database, including the early-May assault in Times Square against our cops by Los Diablos de la 42 – a splinter set of TDA. Several of those suspects were listed in the Database, which aided in their swift apprehension.

I have been clear and consistent on this: If you want to work with us to improve the Database, we are eager to sit down and discuss this together. But do not eliminate it. Doing so will make our city and its people less safe.

Now, I will speak briefly about a topic on the minds of many New Yorkers: immigration enforcement.

Under city law, we are not allowed to participate or assist in civil immigration enforcement, and we do not. We have been very clear and consistent on this, and our officers understand that this is a red line we cannot cross. At the same time, we will continue to target criminals, regardless of their immigration status. As permitted by law, we work daily on criminal investigations with federal law enforcement through various task forces, and that partnership requires that we share information. That is what it means to conduct a joint investigation, and to work collaboratively with our federal partners.

Some have asked whether we should reconsider our cooperation with federal agencies on criminal investigations in light of their work with ICE. The short, straight answer to this is no.

Working with our federal partners on criminal matters is crucial to the safety of our city. We are talking about cases to protect our city from terrorism; saving children from exploitation and sex trafficking; and combatting transnational criminal organizations. The only way these investigations are successful is by NYPD detectives working seamlessly with federal agents on a daily basis. Interfering with that work would be disastrous for the people of New York City.

Now let me be clear: I am nobody's fool. If we were to find that a federal agency had not been honest with us, if we were told that a records request was for a criminal investigation but in fact that was not true, then that would be a tremendous breach of our trust. And we would need to reconsider how we do business with that federal agency. I have been very upfront about that with all our federal partners.

But my experience has been just the opposite. We have an incredibly good relationship with our federal partners – a relationship built on mutual respect and trust. I know that I value that relationship, and I know that my federal counterparts feel the same way.

Now, turning to the Mayor's Executive Budget and its impact on the NYPD in the coming fiscal year:

In totality, the NYPD's Fiscal Year 2026 Expense Budget is \$6.14 billion, the vast majority of which – 92% – is allocated for personnel costs. The remaining 8% is dedicated to non-personnel costs, which include costs for technology that provides officers with immediate access to critical data and applications, safety equipment, our response vehicles, and facilities.

We are grateful for the additional new funding of \$322.9 million included as part of the Executive Budget, which is for the following (in the current fiscal year only): \$301.8 million to address our structural overtime shortfall in the current fiscal year and \$21.1 million toward the department's structural technology funding shortfall. Mayor Adams has proven his commitment to public safety again and again, and the NYPD is thankful for his continued support.

In addition to the department's operating budget, our Ten-Year Capital Strategy includes \$1.55 billion for fiscal years 2025 through 2035. This funding is critical for: facility construction projects (over \$698 million, or 45% of the capital budget), including a renovated firearms training facility; communications and other information technology infrastructure (over \$428 million, or 28%); and large vehicle lifecycle replacements, including ESU trucks, tow trucks, boats, and helicopters (\$385 million, or 25%).

While we have not yet experienced any direct impact on our federal funding levels under the new administration, we are closely monitoring any directives and new grant guidance. Federal funding, while only making up 3.7% of our budget, covers critical functions within the department.

On average, the NYPD receives just under \$200 million each year in new federal grant funding – and the majority of that support, historically, comes from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The DHS grants enhance the Department's counter-terrorism capabilities, especially in the transit system and at our ports. These grant funds have supported counterterrorism efforts by funding the department's efforts to, among other priorities, deploy officers within the transit system, and train officers to respond to chemical, ordinance, biological, and radiological threats or incidents.

On March 27, 2025, the Department of Homeland Security issued the Federal Fiscal Year 2025 Standard Terms and Conditions that will accompany new grant agreements. Among other provisions, the grant template includes a requirement that grant recipients certify certain forms of cooperation with federal civil immigration enforcement with the Department of Homeland Security and immigration officials.

In addition to future funding awards being at risk, because most federal grants span multiple fiscal



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years, potential constraints on new funds could also affect dollars already awarded. At present, the department has approximately \$246 million in authorized but unbilled spending across all open grants – federal fiscal year 2020 through the most recent federal fiscal year 2024 – which could be at risk. Of this, \$212.1 million is DHS, \$18.4 million is DOJ, and \$15.5 million is from other federal sources.

On May 13, 2025, New York State Attorney General Letitia James joined 19 other state attorneys general in a lawsuit challenging the new DHS conditions. The complaint argues that tying emergency management and disaster relief funding to state immigration enforcement actions unlawfully exceeds the department's statutory authority.

Federal grant funds are essential and critical to safeguarding New York City residents and visitors, as well as our critical transportation and port infrastructure. The NYPD will be closely following any news and updates regarding this lawsuit and will continue to work with OMB to assess any potential impacts to this critical funding stream.

In my 17 years working in city government, I have never accepted the status quo when the status quo no longer serves New Yorkers. With that philosophy in mind, over the past six months the NYPD has reduced crime, launched a series of new strategies and plans to improve safety and quality-of-life, and instituted a number of reforms to improve our efficiency, effectiveness, and performance. We are proud of this progress, but we also know there is more work to do.

I am driven by that work, and committed to a strong partnership with the Council. We may not always agree, but there will always be clear communication and mutual respect – and a shared focus on the safety and wellbeing of all the people we serve.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, and my staff and I look forward to answering your questions.

**Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice
Testimony to the New York City Council
Committees on Finance and Public Safety
Thursday, May 29, 2025**

Good afternoon, Chair Salaam, Chair Brannan, and esteemed committee members – thank you for this opportunity to present our FY26 executive budget and priorities.

I'm Deanna Logan, Director of the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, and joining me today is Chief of Staff Nora Daniel, Chief Financial Officer Robert Fiato, and Chief Operating Officer Candice Julien.

I imagine with all the moving parts of NYC the evolution of our agency in recent years may not be front of mind. That's fine if I get you to remember that MOCJ is an essential service in the Public Safety continuum designed to make a difference; not headlines.

The Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice is an agency on the rise, doing invaluable work to help reduce our jail populations; combat hate crimes; stop those that seek to reduce our housing stock and make our neighborhoods safer by breaking cycles of criminal behavior that plague New Yorkers.

We work with defense attorneys and prosecutors to improve our justice system using data to innovate pilot programs you won't find anywhere else in America. We empower justice-impacted New Yorkers make safer transitions back into the community.

We don't want anyone spending one day more – or one day less – in jail than necessary.

At the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, we bring stakeholders together to create solutions. Now, we're doing it under our own, standalone agency code too, having completed a two-year transition that improved our Information Technology, human resources, and oversight capabilities.

For the upcoming fiscal year, our executive budget proposes 787 million dollars to sustain our vital programs. Today, I'll explain why that's not an expense, but an investment for New York City.

One core investment: re-entry programs.

Providing meaningful pathways for New Yorkers to successfully return home from incarceration is essential – for the benefit of both the individual and the neighborhoods they call home.

Individuals with criminal records often face immense challenges -- finding housing, a stable job, access to medical care, continuing their education and just being supported in their humanity as people and citizens. Our programs help bridge those gaps.

We allocate 26 million dollars a year to re-entry initiatives that include:

- discharge planning while still at Rikers or prison
- employment support
- and comprehensive services after release, to help stabilize life for the justice-involved person...and their families.

Our office also directs 32 million dollars annually to Alternative to Incarceration efforts – known as “ATI.”

This program helps reduce incarceration by offering structured alternatives to jail for more than 5,000 New Yorkers each year. We address root issues, like mental health and substance misuse, while holding participants accountable.

Connecting individuals to important services, while keeping them in their communities – often, with their families – helps lower incarceration rates, recidivism rates, and the cost to taxpayers.

The Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice leads pretrial innovations, including our successful Supervised Release Program. Introduced in 2016, S.R.P. gives judges the option to release individuals – with supervision – into stable situations that are closer to their families.

Similar to ATI, we provide assistance in attending court, accessing employment services, and getting referrals for treatment when necessary.

Thousands benefit from supportive supervision each year, instead of sitting in jail.

When I was here last month, I told you about our pilot providing intensive support for high-needs individuals operating in Queens and Manhattan. This pilot is the epitome of how we use data to innovate solutions.

Individuals with higher needs must be supported by people with more experienced clinical expertise. Infusing highly specific person-centered care in our services means that the more experienced clinical staff support fewer individuals and thus increase the amount of time they spend with each client addressing the client's needs. In this pilot our ability to review the research data and real time testing of the service models is yielding some promising early results, including significantly lower rearrest and noncompliance rates. We are looking forward to sharing more as the pilot continues.

A foundational building block of stability is housing.

Without a reliable place to leave your things and come back to, individuals leaving jail or prison are far more likely to spiral and find themselves once again navigating the criminal legal system.

But provide someone the stability of a home; and they're less likely to fall back into cycles of crime. Participants in our program are about 30% less likely to be rearrested in the year after transitional housing, compared to the year prior.

This program evolved from a pandemic-era emergency program into a remarkable, sustainable system that helps thousands of individuals every year – with hundreds of people leveraging that support and stability to find safe, permanent housing.

These Programs Work

A significant part of this work that must not be forgotten is that the providers of all these services are caring professionals who ensure they offer solutions centered on the people we serve.

Given the essential foundation housing provides, we also fight to keep the housing market affordable for all New Yorkers, through the work of our Office of Special Enforcement.

Their efforts to combat illegal short-term rentals preserves housing for local renters and stability for New York neighborhoods.

In the two years since Local Law 18 took effect...we've seen the world's largest online booking sites remove illegal short-term rentals from their New York listings.

In partnership with the Department of Buildings and FDNY, they're ensuring residential spaces remain safe, livable, and available for New Yorkers.

Our Office for the Prevention of Hate Crimes (OPHC) is a small – but mighty – team innovating new ways to tackle bias and hate – and they're setting an example for the rest of the country.

We work with NYPD, community organizations, and other stakeholders to educate, de-escalate, and support affected communities. We fund grassroots initiatives under the "Partners Against the Hate" program, and we support the "Breaking Bread, Building Bonds" initiative launched by Mayor Adams.

MOCJ works hard to preserve a cornerstone of justice for tens of thousands of New Yorkers: equal access to legal defense.

We coordinate the City's provision of criminal Indigent legal services including conflict counsel cases handled by the Assigned Counsel Plan. Working collaboratively with the state we ensure that the City affords quality representation for those who can't afford private counsel.

To better-manage this work, we created a dedicated legal team focused on contracts and fiscal matters...which helped our finance staff register all contracts on-time in FY25...and we're on track to repeat that success in FY26.

With dozens of MOCJ programs and hundreds of MOCJ partners – it would take me hours to detail all the impact our work is having across New York City. But a few last highlights you should know about:

- "Project Reset" is a fantastic second-chance program helping low-level, nonviolent offenders avoid criminal records through a pre-arraignment diversion program.
- "Restorative Justice" is a program that uses the time-tested strategy of bringing parties together to promote healing – as well as public safety.

- “Project Restore Bed-Stuy,” is a deterrence pilot in collaboration with the Office of the Kings County District Attorney and Columbia University Social Relations Lab that afforded 30 young men the agency to exit cycles of gun and gang violence – and offered a new de-escalation model for cities everywhere.
- “Flip the Script” featured on Fox news earlier this week, is a program for justice-involved youth in Brownsville, who are now working apprenticeships in the film industry...and producing their own movie that will receive a red-carpet premier later this year.
- And our CDL training and employment program which was last week featured nationally on the CBS Evening News – for its stunning success in helping justice-involved New Yorkers land six-figure jobs in the trucking industry.

Change is hard work. We’re doing that work.

While we don’t expect to fix every challenge in our criminal justice system; we are making it fairer for the individuals in the system.

We’re improving safety – and the health – of communities across the city.

With a front-row seat to how our investments are improving lives, I can confidently say *your* investment in the Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice – now its own, stand-alone agency – will help advance your constituents’ priorities too.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss our solutions...and I look forward to our continued partnership in advancing justice and safety.

TESTIMONY ON BEHALF OF LOCAL 372 | NYC BOARD OF EDUCATION EMPLOYEES
DISTRICT COUNCIL 37 | AFSCME
TO THE PRELIMINARY BUDGET HEARING ON PUBLIC SAFETY
MAY 28, 2025
2:00 PM

Chairman Yusef Salaam and distinguished members of the committee, I am Donald Nesbit, Executive Vice President of Local 372 - NYC Board of Education Employees, District Council 37 - AFSCME. It is the honor of Local 372 to present this testimony on behalf of the Level-I and Level-II School Crossing Guards that we represent under the leadership of our President, Shaun D. Francois I. Local 372 respectfully requests that the City restore the School Crossing Guard vacancy positions that were cut from the previous budget, additional City funding to support the promotion of a city-wide public awareness campaign to stop the violence against School Crossing Guards, and permanent reforms to School Crossing Guard pay practices, conforming same to that of other DOE support staff titles.

Local 372 has long testified that the need to hire additional School Crossing Guards is vital in order to keep our children safe from the dangers of reckless drivers, and to ensure that our School Crossing Guard members are not stretched thin by the continuous decline of staff. Student-pedestrians often face major safety traffic hazards everyday caused by double-and-triple parked cars at bus stops sited in close proximities to school buildings, and School Crossing Guards are often the first line of defense in ensuring the safety of these students. These workers have risked their own health, safety and lives to perform these vital services to the community, and as the number of School Crossing Guards continue to decline, thousands of school children cross main intersections without any supervision, putting our children's safety in jeopardy. The need for increased protections for our student pedestrians and members of our communities make it essential that the City of New York allocate funding for the additional hiring of School Crossing Guards. In 2023, Mayor Eric Adams

authorized the elimination of almost 500 open school crossing guard positions, completely nullifying the hiring of additional School Crossing Guards. Immediately following the reduction of school crossing guard positions in March 2024, an 8-year-old boy lost his life just five blocks from his elementary school, due to a driver's recklessness.¹ Refusing to increase the additional School Guards, and conversely, eliminating the line of existing vacancies for School Crossing Guards, sends a dangerous message to our parents and school communities: the safety of NYC school children is not the City's priority. Local 372 works to address and combat this disappointing insinuation, by respectfully requesting that the City restore the line of 500 School Crossing Guard open vacancies that was eliminated in 2023, as well as including more funding in the City budget for additional School Crossing Guard roles, providing our school children with heightened protections as they travel to and from school.

Throughout the last couple of years, there has been significant coverage on violence experienced by transit workers while on the job. In response to the same, Governor Hochul and the Legislature, working with the City Council, enacted numerous legislation that implemented protections addressing the violence towards transit workers and riders. Just last week, in marking one year since the implementation of the Executive's five-point subway safety plan, the Governor highlighted reductions in New York City transit crimes and her Administration's ongoing efforts to expand safety initiatives throughout the transit system.² What we have not heard addressed is the similar risk of violence that School Crossing Guards face on a daily basis. That is why **Local 372 further respectfully requests** City funding to support the promotion of a city-wide public awareness campaign to stop the violence against School Crossing Guards.

¹ *Gothamist*: "Queens parents struggle to get crossing guards after 2 students killed in traffic," Sept. 27, 2024, <https://gothamist.com/news/queens-parents-struggle-to-get-crossing-guards-after-2-students-killed-in-traffic>

² Press Office: Safe Subways: One Year After Deploying Additional Law Enforcement and Safety Measures..., March 6, 2025, <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/safer-subways-one-year-after-deploying-additional-law-enforcement-and-safety-measures-governor>

While increasing the number of School Crossing Guard positions solves the staffing and safety issue, it does not solve the equity problem that our members currently face. School Crossing Guards work a 25-hour capped part-time schedule that includes early morning, lunch time and after school hours, serving almost a million public-school children. Our members do not get paid for snow days and certain holidays where the schools shut down but the City remains open, leaving their paychecks dependent on the whims of the weather. With more school holidays being added to the school year calendar, it increases the number of days that School Crossing Guards cannot come to work. These are the determining factors as to whether a School Crossing Guard can put food on the table. For many New Yorkers who are living paycheck to paycheck, like School Crossing Guards, any one unanticipated day off from work can be the difference between making ends meet and financial ruin.

Despite working under the New York Police Department (“NYPD”), School Crossing Guards are functionally analogous to school support staff titles working under the New York City Department of Education (“DOE”). Likewise, School Crossing Guards and DOE school support staff should also share the same privileges and pay rights. Just as DOE school support staff are compensated for this lost time, so too should School Crossing Guards be similarly compensated. On top of the equity concern, it also poses a retainage issue. Due to the acknowledged dangers that come with the position, in addition to not having pay benefits that are on par with other DOE support staff titles, the current pay practices for School Crossing Guards are harmful to these vital workers. Within the School Crossing Guard membership, 90% are women, 85% are Black and Latino, and many of our members are at higher risk because they are older, with 33% of the membership aged over 55 years old. To that end, **Local 372 requests** permanent reforms to conform School Crossing Guard pay practices to that of other DOE support staff titles.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony and for your continued support on behalf of Local 372’s School Crossing Guards.

THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL'S EXECUTIVE BUDGET HEARING COMMITTEE ON
FINANCE AND COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026

PRESENTED BY:
JANE FOX

ASSOCIATION OF LEGAL ADVOCATES AND ATTORNEYS, UAW LOCAL 2325

MAY 29, 2025

My name is Jane Fox, Chair of the Legal Aid Society Attorneys Union. I represent 1,100 attorneys of the 3,400 legal service workers in the Association of Legal Advocates and Attorneys, UAW Local 2325. I'm here to talk about our contract campaign at the Legal Aid Society.

We have been bargaining with Legal Aid Society management since March and have yet to receive any economic offers. This morning, we learned that Legal Aid management told our sister Investigators unit that they would not receive an economic offer until June 24th. Our contract expires in 32 days on June 30, 2025. Today, our members are walking on practice pickets across four boroughs and this afternoon we return to the bargaining table for 5 more hours of negotiations.

We are committed to bargaining in good faith with our employers. While we do not want to strike, we are prepared to withhold our labor to win better wages for the long-term. We do not intend to work on an expired contract.

In March, I testified about the attrition crisis that is decimating our ranks. Our wages have not kept up pace. The salaries of NYC public defenders rank dead last among defenders in 14 major cities when adjusted for cost of living. We make a sliver of what our union siblings at the federal defenders make. We do not have a defined benefit pension. We are not in the state retirement system.

We are now also facing an attack on federal student loan relief programs that threatens to burn up our salary gains and destroy hiring and retention in legal services for decades to come.

Budgets are value statements. Our clients, working class New Yorkers, deserve the absolute best legal representation—they do not deserve less than any rich person in this city.

When you devalue us, you devalue the people we serve. If you continue underfunding us, we will see the attrition crisis speed up. Your constituents will be increasingly represented by less and less experienced attorneys with higher and higher caseloads. They will not get justice. That is not an acceptable outcome to us and it shouldn't be acceptable to you.

By our employer's estimate, this Council needs to increase funding to the Legal Aid Society by at least \$74 million dollars to make sure our demands at the bargaining table are met.

At Legal Aid, we are one union and our members are on the same salary scale regardless of which court they practice in or which contract they are paid on. Public safety is more than just public defense. This is why it is essential the City allocate commensurate increases in the Adopted budget to the housing and immigration contracts—so our employer can meet our core economic demands, to retain experienced staff with increased salaries and provide a path to a dignified retirement.

The money our communities need for experienced attorneys and robust public defense is a fraction compared to what you spend on law enforcement—\$205 million in 2024 for NYPD settlements and an estimated \$1.1 billion this year for NYPD overtime. The funding we need is well within your reach. You have the power to value your own communities by investing in us.

If negotiations do not improve in the next month, we are prepared to withhold our labor and interrupt essential city services to win a fair contract. We are fighting for us and for the working class New Yorkers who deserve nothing less than the best.



Asian American Federation

Testimony to the New York City Council Committee on Finance + Committee on Public Safety

May 29, 2025

Written Testimony

I want to thank the Committees for holding this critical hearing and giving the Asian American Federation (AAF) the opportunity to testify on the public safety needs of our community. My name is Daphne Thammasila, I am the Associate Director of Programs at AAF, representing the collective voice of more than 70 member nonprofits serving 1.5 million Asian New Yorkers.

In 2025, public safety for New York's Asian community is more tenuous than ever. A sharp rise in anti-immigrant policies at the federal level, combined with ICE's increasing encroachment on city authority and a rise in targeted violence and rhetoric against Asian communities, has eroded public trust and instilled fear and unease in our communities.

To our community, public safety means much more than policing. It means survivors of domestic violence can seek help without fear of detention or deportation. It means workers can travel safely, report labor abuses, and seek justice without retaliation. It means neighbors can step forward when others are harmed, without language barriers or fear of consequence. And it means every family can send their children to school or access healthcare without second-guessing their safety. These are the foundational rights and freedoms our communities deserve.

At AAF, we understand that trusted, culturally competent, and community-led solutions are critical to achieving true and lasting community safety. Our member organizations, deeply rooted in the lived experiences of the Asian community, have been consistent and trusted advocates in supporting and safeguarding our communities - especially through crises such as COVID-19 and the rise in anti-Asian hate.

Sustaining Anti-Violence Programming: Hope Against Hate

In recent years, Asian American communities have faced compounding crises - racialized violence, economic insecurity, linguistic isolation, and a devastating mental health toll. As each wave of anti-Asian violence and anti-immigrant sentiment continues to ripple through our communities in new ways, many Asian New Yorkers are increasingly afraid to leave their homes. Recent increases in Islamophobia—affecting South Asian, Arab, Muslim, and Sikh communities—as well as the resurgence of Anti-Asian sentiment following the November 2024 presidential election underscore the ongoing threats faced by Asian New Yorkers.

As a response to community safety concerns, in 2021, AAF launched the **Hope Against Hate Campaign (HAH)** to address the persistent threats of anti-Asian violence. Since its inception, HAH has proven to be a crucial program for our community partners, providing essential safety

programs in multiple languages, including safety training, youth programs, and victim support services. Currently, the HAH Campaign, supported by 30 Asian-led organizations across New York State, serves 22 ethnic communities in 30 languages.

During the last three years, AAF has achieved the following through our Hope Against Hate Campaign to address anti-Asian violence:

- Re-granted over \$6 million to over 30 Asian-serving member and partner agencies to implement the various program areas of the Hope Against Hate Campaign;
- Held over 600 safety training workshops to train over 17,918 individuals in 14 languages
- Recruited and trained over 417 Community Companions to provide language assistance, outreach, and safety escorts.
- Provided 997 protective accompaniment and presence services in NYC's three Chinatowns to keep community members safe
- Reached 10,658 youth with community education, anti-bullying initiatives, and emotional and mental health support services
- Provided wraparound victim support services to 7,090 survivors of anti-Asian violence.
- Distributed over 23,000 safety resources to Asian New Yorkers with information on how to keep themselves and community members safe in 13 Asian languages.

Since FY 22, AAF has been an anchor organization for the Partners Against the Hate Forward Initiative (PATH), and we have worked with 6 sub-anchor organizations to build a community-centered safety infrastructure in Asian-majority neighborhoods across the City in direct response to the persistent threat of anti-Asian hate. We have accomplished the following under our HAH Community Safety Program, which is entirely funded by the PATH grant:

- Distributed over 23,200 safety resources to vulnerable community members, including AAF's safety booklet on conflict de-escalation and situational awareness, available in English and the most commonly spoken Asian languages in New York City: Arabic, Bengali, Burmese, Traditional and Simplified Chinese, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Nepali, Tagalog, Thai, Urdu, and Vietnamese;
- Outreached and provided safety resources to over 1,450 small businesses, faith centers, and community centers to increase awareness of safety resources and enlist their help to distribute safety resources to community members;
- Trained over 1,980 community members in physical self defense, conflict de-escalation, and situational awareness, and upstander intervention techniques to keep themselves and their communities safe;
- Provided over 990 community members with protective presence and accompaniment services;
- Recruited 417 volunteers to serve as Community Companion volunteers;
- Trained 594 community companion safety volunteers in skills such as physical self defense, conflict de-escalation, upstander intervention, and situational awareness; and
- Hosted five community conversations in Asian-majority neighborhoods to explore community perceptions of safety and collectively identify solutions for preventing anti-Asian violence.

In 2023, we surveyed 99 volunteers from our citywide Community Companions Program to assess the program's impact as part of our brief, [More than Just Strategies: The Lasting Impact of the Hope Against Hate Campaign](#). Nearly half (47%) reported fearing anti-Asian bias incidents at least some of the time, with 40% altering their daily routines due to safety concerns. Hate crimes ranked among their top community worries, and volunteers consistently cited our protective accompaniment and presence services as promoting immediate feelings of safety.

Specifically, nearly 90% of respondents said these trainings helped them fulfill their roles as Community Companions, with many asking for even more frequent and in-depth sessions. Approximately one-third of volunteers reported personally experiencing an anti-Asian bias incident, and over half expressed doubts about police responsiveness — a gap our HAH Campaign helps to fill. Our partners routinely heard from residents who felt safer turning to our trained volunteers than navigating language barriers and mistrust in law enforcement. As the program has gained visibility, residents have increasingly sought out volunteers for resources and support, underscoring the program's effectiveness and trust within the community.

It's clear that HAH has been a vital program for our partners and the community members they serve, yet funding for the Partners Against the Hate (PATH) Forward Initiative was slashed by \$30,000 for FY 2026. During a time when sustained and increased investment in this work is crucial to the survival and safety of our community members, it is a devastating move to cut funding. PATH provides essential funding to community-based organizations to deliver proactive support to Asian New Yorkers to prevent anti-Asian hate. For many immigrant families, these services are the first and often only point of access to safety resources that are linguistically accessible, stigma-sensitive, and grounded in cultural understanding.

Without sustained and increased investment in PATH, many of these programs, trusted by the community and uniquely positioned to deliver effective care, risk being scaled back or cut altogether.

Despite the recent decision to decrease PATH funding by \$30,000, AAF will continue our work to strengthen our network of 30+ community-based organizations and invest in our 6 PATH sub-anchor organizations to deliver in-language safety training, victim support services, and youth programming and strengthen their community safety infrastructure in fiscal year 2026. Through convenings, community outreach, and public education, we will continue to address the needs of those most impacted by anti-Asian violence and respond to emerging needs while convening partners regularly to foster collaboration and share strategies to combat hate.

Our ask today is simple: We call on the City Council to invest in our nonprofits and ensure that they are provided with enough resources to implement and expand essential services to support our diverse community's public safety and mental health needs.

We urge the City Council and members of the Committee to consider the following recommendations to make sure Asian New Yorkers feel safe in their city:

- Restore PATH's full funding and to increase investment in this indispensable initiative.

- Support PATH anchor organizations by allowing them to provide safety programming using a culturally and linguistically competent approach that works the best for our communities;
- Increase funding for anti-violence and immigrant safety programming, like that being implemented as part of our Hope Against Hate (HAH) Campaign and RISE (Rapid Immigrant Support and Empowerment);
- Support recovery services in Asian languages to help victims heal from the trauma and increase access to mental health services for all communities to reduce harm.

In an environment where our communities are surrounded by misinformation, fear, increasing isolation, and hate violence, AAF believes it is more critical that we reinforce our connections to support safety for the entire Asian and Immigrant community. Supporting these initiatives helps keep Asian New Yorkers informed, connected, resourced, and safe.

Now more than ever, we must act decisively to protect the dignity, safety, and rights of Asian New Yorkers. The Asian American Federation and our partners are ready to continue the work of advocating for our communities, but this work cannot be done alone. We call on the City Council to invest in these trusted community organizations that deliver vital services and keep our communities safe and resilient in the face of crisis. The Asian American Federation thanks the Committees for your continued leadership and for this opportunity to testify. We look forward to collaborating to make New York City a place where all communities - especially our Asian immigrant neighbors - can thrive and live without fear.

Courtney Bryan, Executive Director

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 - Manhattan District Attorney (forthcoming)

The Center for Justice Innovation is a non-profit organization that seeks to transform the policies and practices of the justice system to make it fair, effective, and humane. The Center operates the following sites throughout New York City.

- Family
- Criminal
- Community Development
- Civil/Housing

Click on the name of any program to learn more.

STATEN ISLAND

- 1. Staten Island Justice Center

MANHATTAN

- 2. Harlem Community Justice Center
- 3. Headquarters
- 4. Manhattan Justice Opportunities
- 5. Midtown Community Court

MULTI-BOROUGH

- 6. Legal Hand (Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens)

BRONX

- 7. Bronx Child Trauma Support
- 8. Bronx Community Justice Center
- 9. Bronx Community Solutions

BROOKLYN

- 10. Brooklyn Justice Initiatives
- 11. Brooklyn Mental Health Court
- 12. Brownsville Community Justice Center
- 13. Neighbors in Action
- 14. Red Hook Community Justice Center
- 15. Supervised Release Program

QUEENS

- 16. Queens Community Justice Center (Jamaica and The Rockaways)

Staten Island

Brooklyn

Queens

Manhattan

Citywide

- Access to Justice
- Alternatives to Incarceration
- Driver Accountability Program
- Gender and Family Justice
- Neighborhood Safety Initiatives
- Parent Support Program
- Project Reset
- Restorative Justice Practices
- RISE Project
- Strong Starts Court Initiative
- Youth Action Institute
- Youth Impact

For More Information
Hailey Nolasco
Senior Director of Government Relations
hnolasco@innovatingjustice.org

Courtney Bryan. Executive Director

Good afternoon Chair Salaam and esteemed members of the Committee on Public Safety. My name is Hailey Nolasco and I serve as the Senior Director of Government Relations for the Center for Justice Innovation (the Center).

The Center for Justice Innovation is a community justice organization committed to promoting safety and advancing justice in collaboration with communities, courts, and those most directly impacted by the justice system. For nearly 30 years, we have worked to build safe, thriving neighborhoods through innovative programming, groundbreaking research, and nationwide technical assistance. Our close partnerships with both courts and communities allow us to bridge the divide between them—fostering communication, trust, and mutual understanding. Whether supporting individuals involved in the justice system, empowering community members to lead research on issues that affect them, or working to make every neighborhood truly safe, we are guided by the conviction that lasting justice begins in the community.

We acknowledge and appreciate the funding included in the Mayor’s Executive Budget that aims to create a safer and more equitable New York. This budget rightly recognizes that public safety and justice go beyond the courtroom, allocating resources toward holistic responses that address the root causes of justice system involvement. In particular, we are grateful for the restoration of funding for Project Reset—our community-based diversion program for low-level offenses—and we sincerely appreciate the Council’s continued advocacy and support.

Unfortunately, the Center has not been immune to federal funding cuts. These reductions have far-reaching impacts on our organization and our community partners. The cancellation of grants that support Community Violence Interrupters threatens critical services dedicated to youth violence prevention, community safety, and more. We have seen the effectiveness of this work firsthand—especially in building the infrastructure that supports prevention and healing. When fewer resources reach our communities, safety suffers. We cannot afford to lose the progress we’ve made.

We urge the Council to remain steadfast in its support for proven, community-based models of safety and justice. Your investment is more vital than ever. Today, I will highlight a selection of our Community Justice programming. Continued City Council investment is essential to maintaining and expanding these programs in the neighborhoods we serve.

Bronx Community Justice Center

The Bronx Community Justice Center works to create a safer, more equitable South Bronx through community-driven public safety initiatives, youth opportunity, and economic mobility efforts. Using a neighborhood-centric, localized model, meaningful engagement ensures programming is deeply embedded locally and thus maximally effective.

This area is highly impacted by the criminal justice system and community violence, with disproportionately higher rates of incarceration, violent crime, and disinvestment. In 2023, the

violent crime rate was more than triple the citywide rate.¹

Most recently, gun violence has increased in the Bronx, particularly among youth. In 2024, Bronx youth accounted for 45 percent of the city's youth shooting victims, a 17 percent increase from 2023. The South Bronx has a high rate of disconnected youth, with 30 percent of youth ages 16-24 out of school and not working, the highest high school drop-out rate in the city. The area has one of the highest numbers of juveniles held in secure detention in NYC.²

This indicates an urgent need for programming for this population. To meet this need, the Bronx Community Justice Center is requesting support for two vital youth-focused programs, Insight Initiatives and In-She-Spire.

Insight Initiatives is a community-based program for young people ages 14 to 24. The program is specifically designed to engage youth who have been impacted by violence and/or gang involvement. Insight Initiatives utilizes a localized program model that is strongly rooted in the neighborhoods the program serves and where youth live. Insight Initiatives leverages community engagement as the foundation of its successful approach. It uses a transformative, healing-centered model to allow youth to take accountability for their actions, contribute to their communities, and address root causes to prevent future justice involvement. Many of the participants, who are justice-involved youth, have also experienced harm and trauma which oftentimes leads to substance misuse as a coping mechanism. As such, with support from City Council, the Justice Center hopes to expand Insight Initiatives to also provide support for justice system-involved youth struggling with substance misuse.

In-She-Spire works to create a safe, empowering, and nurturing environment designed to address the unique needs of young women, femmes, and gender-expansive individuals between the ages of 14 and 24. In the South Bronx, this population encounters a distinct set of challenges, resulting in fractured community bonds, overrepresentation in the criminal justice system, and involvement in gangs. Project In-She-Spire is dedicated to fostering meaningful social connections among these young women and gender-expansive youth, with the aim of supporting positive development, strengthening resilience, and boosting self-esteem. Project In-She-Spire's goal is to provide participants with the vital skills and resources needed to navigate systemic obstacles and overcome adversity, ultimately building a brighter future.

Staten Island Justice Center

In response to growing community need, the Staten Island Justice Center has worked in close collaboration with the Richmond County District Attorney's Office to plan and begin operationalizing programming for a Staten Island Community Justice Center. When fully implemented, this Community Justice Center will offer a robust array of programming, including replications of community-based interventions piloted and established at the Center for Justice Innovation's existing Community Justice Centers in the Bronx, Queens, and Brooklyn. In FY2023, with City Council support, the Staten Island Justice Center conducted a public safety assessment, which sought to pinpoint community strengths, needs, and gaps in service for Staten

¹ New York University Furman Center. (2024b, May 21). Mott Haven/Melrose Neighborhood Profile. <https://furmancenter.org/neighborhoods/view/mott-haven-melrose>

² New York City Mayor's Office of Youth Employment. (2021b, January). Connecting Our Future: 2020 Disconnected Youth Task Force Report. <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/youthemployment/downloads/pdf/dytf-connecting-our-future-report.pdf>

Island residents. The results of the survey helped shape the Community Justice Center planning process as well as the development of several initiatives being piloted in FY2024, also with City Council support. The Staten Island Justice Center seeks continued funding for FY2026 in order to fully implement several of the piloted initiatives, including youth and placemaking programs.

The Staten Island Justice Center has provided an array of programs to the entire borough of Staten Island since 2009. In 2024, the Justice Center served over 2,500 youth and adults, providing alternatives to incarceration and detention, diversion options, as well as individual and group programming in the areas of mentorship, work readiness and placement, civic engagement activities, positive prosocial engagement, health and wellness, and peer leadership—all with the unifying goal of supporting people in building successful lives and avoiding justice system involvement.³

EmpowerHER

At the Center's Staten Island Justice Center (SIJC) and the Queens Community Justice Center (QCJC), there has been an increase in the number of female participants (including female-identifying participants) referred to Alternative to Incarceration programming, a trend that is reflected nationwide.⁴ The Staten Island Justice Center has been offering ATI programming since 2020. In its first full year of operation, 2021, Staten Island ATI programming served 94 female participants representing about 21 percent of ATI participants. This number has steadily increased each year, and in 2024, 200 women were served through Staten Island's ATI program, approximately 29 percent of the 678 participants served. The Queens Community Justice Center has also seen a notable increase in the number of female participants referred to its ATI program: in 2022, Queens ATI programming served 91 female participants; this increased to 325 in 2023 and 334 in 2024.⁵ These upward trends in both Staten Island and Queens underscores the growing demand for resources for women and emphasizes the importance of responsive support for female participants in ATI programs. To meet this rising need, the Staten Island and Queens Justice Centers are requesting funding from City Council to develop specialized ATI programming to meet the unique needs of female-identifying participants.

Research shows that women who come into contact with the justice system often have unique needs and experiences that differ significantly from those of men. Women involved in the justice system are more likely to have experienced physical, emotional, or sexual abuse compared to their male counterparts.⁶ In addition, they often report higher rates of mental health issues and substance abuse disorders.⁷ Women involved in the justice system may face greater challenges securing stable, well-paying jobs upon release, impacting their ability to provide for

³ Center for Justice Innovation. (2025). Justice Center Application and Reset referral database. [Data file].

⁴ Budd, K. M. (2024, July 23). *Incarcerated Women and Girls*. The Sentencing Project.

<https://www.sentencingproject.org/fact-sheet/incarcerated-women-and-girls/>

⁵ Center for Justice Innovation. (2025). Justice Center Application and Reset referral database. [Data file].

⁶ *Women and Girls in the Justice System: Overview*. Office of Justice Programs. (2020, August 13).

<https://www.ojp.gov/feature/women-and-girls-justice-system/overview>

⁷ Council on Criminal Justice. (2024, July). *Women's Justice: A Preliminary Assessment of Women in the Criminal Justice System*.

<https://counciloncj.org/womens-justice-a-preliminary-assessment-of-women-in-the-criminal-justice-system/>

themselves and their families. Finally, a large portion of women involved in the justice system are mothers and often the primary caretakers for their children.⁸

Internal data collected from female participants at the Staten Island Justice Center and the Queens Community Justice Center support these findings. At the Staten Island Justice Center, 29.5 percent of women served in the ATI program were flagged as having mental health needs and 62 percent flagged for employment needs, which correlated with economic challenges. At the Queens Community Justice Center, education, employment, and housing are consistently identified as the top areas requiring attention for women. In 2023, 18.4 percent of female participants flagged education as a need, 56.4 percent cited employment, and 26.7 percent identified housing. By 2024, these figures increased, with 30.2 percent of females flagging education needs, 61.1 percent indicating employment needs, and 31.9 percent highlighting housing as a priority.⁹ Addressing these unique needs with gender-informed approaches can lead to better outcomes for female ATI participants.

With support from City Council funding, the programs will launch EmpowerHer: Pathways to Justice, which will provide both group and individual programming to address the needs of female participants. Funding will be used to hire a case manager for Staten Island Justice Center and a case manager for Queens Community Justice Center, who will deliver trauma-informed and gender-specific programming that address the intersections of trauma, race, gender, and sexuality for women involved in the justice system. Psychoeducational groups will aim to address the most pressing needs of women in the justice system, in tandem with individual case management services. The program's primary focus will be on addressing economic development, health, mental health, and parental support needs.

Reimagining Intimacy through Social Engagement (RISE) Project

The RISE Project transforms responses to intimate partner violence (IPV), focusing specifically on its intersection with gun violence. Gun violence and intimate partner violence are often viewed as separate problems that require different responses, but neighborhoods impacted by high rates of gun violence also have the highest levels of reported domestic violence incidents. Access to a gun makes it five times more likely that a partner experiencing abuse will be killed.¹⁰

The project works with 30 gun violence prevention programs Citywide to train staff on intimate partner violence, facilitate workshops and ongoing groups with youth participants, and execute community events raising awareness around intimate partner violence.

Additionally, RISE provides support and technical assistance when gun violence sites are responding to incidents of violence that are IPV related. This partnership with gun violence prevention programs has provided important access to information to help identify sites where gun violence is likely to occur. As a large percentage of New York City gun violence is IPV related, anti-violence programs need to improve their ability to understand IPV dynamics. Additionally, partners have benefited through the education and prevention efforts that RISE

⁸ *Women and Girls in the Justice System: Overview*. Office of Justice Programs. (2020, August 13). <https://www.ojp.gov/feature/women-and-girls-justice-system/overview>

⁹ Center for Justice Innovation. (2025). Justice Center Application and Reset referral database. [Data file].

¹⁰ Center for Justice Innovation. *Rise Project*. New York, NY. <https://www.innovatingjustice.org/programs/rise-project>

provides to youth and the community at large. RISE also benefits from this partnership, because gun violence prevention programs that are on the ground 24/7 in neighborhoods with the highest rates of IPV are building relationships with individuals who are engaged in violence. This allows RISE direct access to a high-risk population to offer them much needed resources.

RISE also provides direct case management services for individuals experiencing intimate partner violence and provides healing circles for individuals causing harm to acknowledge and change their attitudes and behaviors. RISE also facilitates programming for youth from neighborhoods most impacted by gun and intimate partner violence. Youth engage in a seven-week program to develop a place-based project to increase public safety with a healthy relationships lens. With offerings in areas such as visual arts and journaling, RISE engages participants to design and create a culminating interactive community activation. The approach is rooted in community healing, neighborhood-specific, and place-based principles. The culminating exhibit included pieces on identity, healthy relationships, boundaries, consent and more. Additionally, youth participants have hosted a teen dating panel for their peers where they discussed topics relevant to healthy relationships and community accountability.

Moreover, RISE reaches tens of thousands of individuals each year through public campaigns (e.g., via social media), community events, and direct engagement to change community norms, increase access to resources and information, and ultimately prevent intimate partner violence. Last year (FY24), RISE directly engaged 5,222 people through a variety of community events and services, such as workshops, trainings, crisis support, small business poster board campaigns, citywide barbershop talks, and community healing responses to intimate partner violence-related incidents.¹¹

With continued and increased investments in RISE, we can further our capacity to reach more individuals experiencing intimate partner violence through a community-centered approach.

Neighborhood Safety Initiatives

Neighborhood Safety Initiatives (NSI) supports the implementation of NeighborhoodStat (NSTAT), a resident-driven community organizing initiative and comprehensive strategy to enhance public safety and strengthen community well-being in 30 public housing developments.

NSI enlists residents, City agencies, and community-based partners to help move beyond enforcement and address the factors underlying safety – providing opportunities for work and play, health and well-being, and youth development; promoting activated, well-maintained spaces through community and human-centered design; and improving trust between neighbors with a responsive and just government. Their mission is to improve community safety in places impacted by historic disinvestment by creating opportunities for residents to identify key issues underlying crime and participate in the decision-making to address these priorities. Through NeighborhoodStat (NSTAT), we harness the collective expertise of residents, government, and community partners to drive meaningful dialogue, problem-solving, and, ultimately, create positive change at both the neighborhood and administrative levels.

NeighborhoodStat connects residents to social services and community resources; increases the security and quality of shared community space by working with residents to physically improve and maintain public space, thereby enhancing a positive sense of ownership;

¹¹ Center for Justice Innovation. (2024). RISE_FY Yearly Quarterly Tracker – FY24.

increases civic engagement; and enhances the capacity of residents to improve public safety and wellbeing in their communities. Adopting a participatory justice model, NeighborhoodStat works with local organizers to provide direct investment into historically underserved communities and ensures that those most affected and most marginalized, especially those who have been historically left out of these conversations, have a say in improving health and wellbeing, safety and justice, economic stability, physical space, and youth development policies that affect their lives.

Last year, the program reached over 50,000 residents of the New York City Housing Authority utilizing the following strategies:¹²

- **Invest in Residents:** Neighborhood Safety Initiatives hires, trains, and supports community organizers; recruits and organizes resident leadership teams; designs and implements social programs; manages community action plans; and implements data collection and evaluations. Social programs include youth mentorship, coding courses, music mentorship, adult entrepreneurship training and support, intergenerational green space stewardship, healing and justice events, public education campaigns like those around COVID-19, summer time basketball series, economic mobility events, and more. Neighborhood Safety Initiatives also respond to residents' immediate needs. The program coordinates collaboration across city agencies and other non-profit partners to answer food needs, connect residents to resources, and host conflict resolution events. In 2024, over 400 intergenerational residents were actively involved in resident stakeholder teams, taking the lead in identifying both the issues plaguing their communities and driving positive change.
- **Transform Public Spaces:** Neighborhood Safety Initiatives works with residents to re-envision public spaces to make them more welcoming and promote people's well-being. In the last five years the program has designed and implemented a series of community gardens and recreational public spaces, wayfinding projects, murals, creative lighting installations, and a pop-up outdoor program with movable kiosks where partner agencies can provide information and supportive services to the community. Since 2017, Neighborhood Safety Initiatives has overseen the co-creation and implementation of over 65 built environment projects and social programs. These initiatives include murals, open plazas, community gardens, pop-up modular resource hubs, music programs for youth, and adult entrepreneurship programs in collaboration with NYCHA community stakeholders.

Save Our Streets (S.O.S.)

The Save Our Streets (S.O.S.) program is offered out of both Neighbors in Action and the Bronx Community Justice Center.

S.O.S. is a replication of the Cure Violence model, which employs a public health approach to prevent gun violence, partnering with local organizations, faith leaders, residents, and the individuals most likely to be involved in a shooting. Our staff prevent gun violence from occurring by mediating conflicts and acting as peer counselors to people who are at risk of

¹² Center for Justice Innovation. *Neighborhood Safety Initiatives*. New York, NY.
<https://www.innovatingjustice.org/programs/neighborhood-safety-initiatives/more-info>

perpetrating or being victimized by violence. We work closely with neighborhood leaders and businesses to promote a visible and public message against gun violence, encouraging local voices to articulate that gun violence is unacceptable. These local voices are respected pillars of the community, adults that youth and their families know and trust.

Using public health strategies, S.O.S. seeks to prevent the spread of violence. Its key elements are:

- **Community Outreach and Hospital Response:** The program deploys outreach workers and violence interrupters who engage youth and adults in the community at risk of perpetrating or being victimized by violence. The staff, who all have intimate knowledge of life on the streets, serve as counselors, offering advice and guidance on how to respond to conflicts without violence. They use positive peer pressure to redirect high-risk individuals towards school or jobs and help them think and behave differently about violence. Violence interrupters' primary focus is to prevent shootings from occurring by engaging in mediation. Hospital responders partner with local hospitals to respond to shooting injuries, connecting with gunshot-wound victims and their families at the hospital to offer resources and prevent retaliation.
- **Public Education:** S.O.S. staff and volunteers distribute palm cards and posters with messages that promote peaceful conflict resolution, decry violence, and offer S.O.S. as a safe resource for people at risk of experiencing gun violence. Merchants have signs in their windows to support our "Stop Shooting. Start Living," message and count the number of days since the last shooting. Social media, texting, and e-mails keep the community updated and involved. S.O.S. campaigns are often designed particularly to reach youth with a specific, thought-provoking focus.
- **Faith-Based Leaders:** Faith-based organizations are an essential partner in the S.O.S. violence-reduction strategy. Faith-based leaders are encouraged to preach against gun violence from their pulpits, attend vigils, counsel people who are potentially involved in gun violence, and refer high-risk individuals to the program.
- **Community Mobilization:** S.O.S. has built strong relationships with local businesses and agencies to spread an anti-violence message and promote community collaboration. Staff, participants, and volunteers organize block parties, arts showcases, presentations, and trainings to advance the idea that gun violence is both unacceptable and preventable. The program organizes community forums, rallies and marches, speak-outs, and barbecues to advance a simple idea: our community is moving past gun violence. S.O.S. also organizes a rally or vigil in the location of every shooting to call attention to and denounce the tragic results of violence. Local residents work as canvassers to promote events and disseminate program information.

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. Now more than ever, the Center is counting on the support of our partners in the City Council to sustain this vital work. The loss of federal funding threatens to roll back years of progress, and the consequences will be felt most deeply in the neighborhoods that can least afford it. We urge the Council to continue prioritizing resources for the programs and people that make our neighborhoods safer and more just. True public safety is built through sustained investment in community-led solutions—programs that

prevent harm, support accountability, and foster trust. The Center for Justice Innovation remains committed to working alongside the City Council to advance these goals.

Courtney Bryan. Executive Director

FY26 Center for Justice Innovation Proposal Summaries

Major Cross-Site Proposals

- **#197482 - Center for Justice Innovation General Funds - \$750,000**

Innovative Criminal Justice Programs; Speaker's Initiative (Renewal/Redesign)

Description: This is an application to support the continuation of the Center for Justice Innovation's innovative criminal justice responses, community-based public safety initiatives, and access to justice programs across all five boroughs in New York City. City Council's support allows us to serve tens of thousands of New Yorkers with mental health services, family development, youth empowerment, workforce development, and housing, legal, and employment resource services. Our goal continues to be improving safety, reducing incarceration, expanding access to community resources, and enhancing public trust in government to make New York City stronger, fairer, and safer for all. With expanded funding, the Center will be able to make deeper investments in housing justice: a key priority area that underpins our efforts at large to build community justice.

- **#194898 - Driver Accountability Program - \$885,000**

Diversion Programs; Alternatives to Incarceration (Renewal)

Description: The Center for Justice Innovation's Driver Accountability Program has been proven to improve street safety by changing driver behavior, while minimizing harms perpetuated by the criminal justice system's historically punitive responses. It does so by offering a proportionate and meaningful alternative to fines, fees, traditional prosecution, or short-term incarceration for vehicular charges; and by utilizing principles of restorative justice to address the dangerous behaviors that are the primary cause of pedestrian fatalities. The program currently operates at seven sites in all five boroughs, with six of those sites receiving support from City Council. This application seeks funding to sustain those operations, as well as the operations of its more intensive version, Circles for Safe Streets, which brings together drivers and their victims for a process of accountability and healing in cases where traffic crashes have caused critical injury or death.

- **193911 - Bronx Project Reset - \$710,000**

Diversion Programs (Renewal)

Description: The Center for Justice Innovation seeks renewal funding to continue expanding diversion services for adults in the Bronx through its Bronx Community Solutions site. These diversion services build on Bronx Community Solutions’ success running the City Council-funded Project Reset restorative model for six years, the Center for Justice Innovation’s deep experience providing community- and court-based restorative justice programming since 2013, and the robust support and collaboration of Bronx court system stakeholders. With ongoing City Council support, Bronx Community Solutions will continue offering same-day at-arraignment Project Reset programming that gives eligible individuals the opportunity to participate in programming at their first court appearance and receive an immediate dismissal the same day. This programming, first piloted in 2024 with City Council funding, addresses the large gap in services caused by the inability to contact many Bronx Reset and Bronx HOPE (Bronx Heroin Overdose and Prevention Education) pre-arraignment diversion participants before their initial court date. Ultimately, these expanded diversion services reduce the collateral consequences of justice system involvement while instilling accountability; address underlying reasons for justice system involvement; and alleviate the massive backlog in the court system, an issue that disproportionately impacts the Bronx.

- **#197405 - Manhattan Rapid Reset - \$280,000**

Diversion Programs; Alternatives to Incarceration (New)

Description: The Center for Justice Innovation (Center) is seeking support for Rapid Reset, an expansion of the Citywide pre-arraignment diversion program, Project Reset, in Manhattan. In partnership with the Manhattan District Attorney’s Office, the Center’s Midtown Community Justice Center (MCJC) launched Rapid Reset in late 2023 to provide an opportunity for pre-arraignment diversion to all eligible individuals who appear for court. Like the decade-old Project Reset, Rapid Reset offers people one session of programming, connections to voluntary services, and a chance to receive a “decline to prosecute” from the District Attorney’s Office, in lieu of a court appearance. MCJC offers Rapid Reset at all Desk Appearance Ticket (DAT) arraignment parts at 100 Centre Street and at MCJC.

- **#194075 - Felony Alternatives to Incarceration - \$1,385,000**

Diversion Programs; Alternatives to Incarceration (Renewal)

Description: The Center for Justice Innovation (Center) seeks continued and expanded funding to support its Brooklyn Felony Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) programming for individuals arrested on violent and non-violent felony charges in Kings County. This programming offers holistic and individualized community-based interventions and rigorous judicial monitoring of participants on felony cases, thereby reducing the use of jail and prison sentences and leading to reduced criminal dispositions. The enhanced funding would target two areas of particular need: housing support and peer support. Specifically, the additional funds requested would support the hiring of two additional staff members: a Housing Case Manager, and a Peer Mental Health Specialist. These two

staff members would significantly enhance the capacity of the Felony ATI Programs to better meet the increasingly complex needs of our growing population; and ultimately, improving outcomes for participants and society.

- **#194130 - EmpowerHER: Pathways to Justice, a gender-responsive program for female ATI participants - \$300,000**

Diversion Programs; Alternatives to Incarceration (New)

Description: This is an application to expand the Center for Justice Innovation's Misdemeanor Alternative-to-Incarceration (ATI) programming in Queens and Staten Island across two operating programs: Queens Community Justice Center and Staten Island Justice Center by adding EmpowerHER: Pathways to Justice, a gender-responsive program for female ATI participants. The goal of the ATI programs is to offer a single point of access to a wide array of community-based services as alternative sentencing options in criminal cases, thereby reducing incarceration and improving public safety by addressing the underlying issues that lead to justice system involvement. Funding will support staffing and program delivery to meet the unique needs of female ATI participants at the Queens Community Justice Center and Staten Island Justice Center.

- **#193978 - Bronx Project Heal - \$52,935**

Support for Victims of Human Trafficking (Renewal)

Description: This application is for Bronx Project HEAL (Helping to Empower through Advocacy and Leadership), an evolution of the Bronx Human Trafficking Intervention Court (HTIC) initiative. Based on the National Project HEAL curriculum, developed by the Center for Justice Innovation, Bronx Project HEAL is a leadership development and peer support initiative for justice-involved gender-based violence and human trafficking survivors that is informed by, co-created with, and often co-led by, survivors themselves. It is a 3- to 4-month voluntary program that aims to enhance the capacity of survivors to become leaders and advocates in the Bronx community by offering community-based professional development experiences, leadership and advocacy opportunities, and mentorship and peer support. Funding will support the implementation of the survivor leader empowerment program aimed at providing professional development services, including leadership and advocacy training, to survivor leaders to enhance their professional skills and encourage their participation in anti-trafficking policy and advocacy efforts.

- **#195412 - Pro Se Pilot Program - \$188,917**

Information and Referral Services; Mental Health Services for Vulnerable Populations (New)

This application seeks to expand an ongoing pilot program to provide holistic case management and legal navigation services for pro se litigants in civil court (i.e.,

individuals who are representing themselves in court without the assistance of an attorney). Currently housed in Judge Anne Swern's Kings County Civil Supreme Courtroom, the Pro Se Support Program connects unrepresented litigants with a case manager/social worker who works to address the underlying needs which bring these litigants to court. Judge Swern brought this idea to the Center for Justice Innovation as a response to the types of cases pro se litigants in her court were bringing, noticing that almost always an underlying resource gap was the true source of the issue before the court, and that a legal resolution often failed to address these underlying issues. By providing case management and legal navigation services to unrepresented litigants, The Pro Se Support Program seeks to increase civil access to justice for indigent, marginalized populations, prevent mental health crises and criminal offending upstream, and save the court time and resources.

- **#194222 - Strong Starts Court Initiative - \$100,000**

Children Under Five (New)

Description: The Center for Justice Innovation seeks funding to build the capacity of the successful Strong Starts Court Initiative to meet the needs of infants, toddlers, and their families throughout New York City and help build a sustainable program not entirely dependent on private foundation support. The Strong Starts Court Initiative is a Family-Court-based project; it employs a two-generational approach to provide specialized supports for infants, toddlers and their families who have child protection cases, and it works to educate court-based professionals in an approach focused on early child development that will transform the traditional family court response to this extremely vulnerable population.

Bronx Community Justice Center

- **#192488 - Bronx Community Justice Center Insight Initiatives - \$100,000**

Court Involved Youth Mental Health (New)

Description: The Bronx Community Justice Center (Justice Center), an operating project of the Center for Justice Innovation, seeks Court Involved Youth Mental Health Initiative funding to enhance the Insight Initiatives program (Insight). Insight is a diversion and alternative-to-incarceration program for young people ages 14 to 24. Insight is specifically designed to engage youth who have been impacted by violence and/or gang involvement. Insight is a community-based, localized program model that is strongly rooted in the neighborhoods the program serves and where youth live. Insight leverages community engagement as the foundation of its successful approach. Insight uses a transformative, healing-centered model to allow youth to take accountability for their actions, contribute to their communities, and address root causes to prevent future justice involvement. Many of the participants, who are justice-involved youth, have also experienced harm and trauma which oftentimes leads to substance misuse as a coping

mechanism. As such, with support from City Council funding, the Justice Center hopes to expand Insight to also provide support for justice system-involved youth struggling with substance misuse.

- **#192552 - Bronx Community Justice Center In-She-Spire - \$100,000**

Young Women's Leadership Development (New)

Description: The Bronx Community Justice Center's Project In-She-Spire works to create a safe, empowering, and nurturing environment designed to address the unique needs of young women, femmes, and gender-expansive individuals between the ages of 14 and 24. In the South Bronx, girls encounter a distinct set of challenges, resulting in fractured community bonds, overrepresentation in the criminal justice system, and involvement in gangs. Project In-She-Spire is dedicated to fostering meaningful social connections among these young women and gender-expansive youth, with the aim of fostering positive development, strengthening resilience, and boosting self-esteem. Project In-She-Spire's goal is to provide participants with the vital skills and resources needed to navigate systemic obstacles and overcome adversity, ultimately building a brighter future.

Bronx Community Solutions

- **#197361 - Bronx Community Solutions Driving While Intoxicated Program - \$100,000**

Member Item; Bronx Delegation (New)

Description: Since 2010, Bronx Community Solutions (BCS) has assisted all individuals ordered by court mandate to complete a screening and assessment and any potential treatment associated with a charge of Driving While Intoxicated (DWI). This initiative began at the request of the judiciary, who noted that participants were having difficulty navigating the complicated network of private providers of these statutorily mandated services. While BCS never charges any cost to participants for services, private providers of DWI treatment regularly charge participants \$300 to \$400 to complete a screening and assessment. BCS has negotiated with several providers who have been willing to accept a reduced fee of \$150 to serve the volume of court mandated cases that come from Bronx Criminal Court, but that remains a significant financial hurdle for participants and a barrier to entering the treatment process as soon as possible, thus making Bronx streets safer. To eliminate this financial burden on participants and expedite the treatment process, this application seeks funding to cover the costs of DWI treatment and assessments for BCS participants, and to fund the staffing of a DWI Treatment Coordinator so that BCS may continue to do the necessary work of connecting court-mandated participants to treatment.

Brooklyn Mental Health Court

- **#192513 - Brooklyn Mental Health Court Court-Involved Youth Mental Health - \$150,000**

Court Involved Youth Mental Health (Renewal)

Description: The Court-Involved Youth Mental Health initiative of Brooklyn Mental Health Court provides specialized support to youth ages 18 to 24, who have unique social and cognitive needs and who represent a growing percentage of the cases we serve. Since 2017, more than 191 youth in this age range have been served by Brooklyn Mental Health Court. Thanks to City Council support, we hired a new dedicated Youth Engagement Social worker who leads youth programming and fosters close relationships with our participants. Renewed funding will enable us to continue and strengthen our youth-focused programs, provide meaningful activities and healthy meals and snacks to our participants, continue essential training for staff, and maintain our critical Youth Engagement Social Worker.

- **#192478 - Brooklyn Mental Health Court - \$100,000**

Speaker's Initiative (Renewal)

Description: Launched in 2002 as the first mental health court in New York City, Brooklyn Mental Health Court (BMHC) is a specialized court that seeks to craft meaningful responses to the problems posed by defendants with mental illness in the criminal justice system. Addressing both the treatment needs of defendants with mental illness and the public safety concerns of the community, BMHC links defendants with serious and persistent mental illnesses or neurodevelopmental disorders (such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder), who would ordinarily be jail- or prison-bound, with long-term treatment as an alternative to incarceration. BMHC performs psychosocial assessments and psychiatric evaluations, comes up with treatment plans, monitors clients' adherence to treatment plans, and refers clients to community-based services. For FY26, BMHC is seeking renewal funding to enhance its support of some the City's most vulnerable residents.

Brownsville Community Justice Center

- **#192523 - Brownsville Community Justice Center Brownsville Girls Collaborative - \$150,000**

Young Women's Leadership Development (Renewal)

Description: The Brownsville Girls Collaborative (BGC), a cornerstone of programming at the Brownsville Community Justice Center, is a leadership development program focused on the holistic empowerment of young women in the community. The program creates a safe space for young women from Brownsville, who are at high risk of violence or justice involvement, to engage with Justice Center staff, facilitators, and one another.

Throughout the year, the Justice Center will work with BGC participants to address the root causes of trauma, violence, and risk behaviors to reduce justice system contact and develop participants into positive actors within the Brownsville community.

Queens Community Justice Center

- **#190772 - Queens Community Justice Center UPLIFT - \$100,000**

**Mental Health Services for Vulnerable Populations;
Court-Involved Youth Mental Health;
Speaker's Initiative;
Community Safety and Victims Services (Renewal)**

Description: To address the high levels of exposure to community violence and trauma among young men of color in Queens, the Queens Community Justice Center piloted UPLIFT in FY22 with City Council support. Through the pilot, staff provided trauma and healing services to justice-involved young men of color, ages 16-25. Given the program's initial success, the Justice Center was able to fully implement and sustain the program, thanks to the ongoing support of City Council. By offering client-driven individual therapeutic sessions and supportive group workshops, case management and victim services assistance, and advocacy and mentoring, UPLIFT participants are supported to recognize, process, and heal their own trauma, resulting in better life outcomes. This year, the Justice Center requests funding to continue UPLIFT's critical work through the following initiatives: Court-Involved Youth Mental Health, Mental Health Services for Vulnerable Populations, Community Safety and Victim Services, and Speaker's Initiative.

The RISE Project

- **#191278 - RISE Project IPV Community Intervention - \$150,000**

Domestic Violence and Empowerment (Renewal/Expansion)

Description: This is an application for continued support of the RISE Project. RISE is a part of New York City's Crisis Management System, working in partnership with Cure Violence sites to provide community-based intimate partner violence (IPV) prevention services to individuals at risk of being impacted by gun violence in communities most impacted. RISE works to reduce IPV by engaging individuals who are causing abuse in voluntary programming to stop violence and change behavior, change community norms to reduce tolerance for IPV, train credible messengers to identify risk factors for IPV, build skills to talk about IPV, and connect community members in need of services to RISE. RISE incorporates components of the Cure Violence and restorative justice models in its work.

Staten Island Community Justice Center

- **#195496 - Staten Island Community Justice Center - \$200,000**

Speaker's Initiative (Renewal)

Description: In response to growing community need, the Staten Island Justice Center has worked in close collaboration with the Richmond County District Attorney's Office to plan and begin operationalizing programming for a Staten Island Community Justice Center. When fully implemented, this Community Justice Center will offer a robust array of programming, including replications of community-based interventions piloted and established at the Center for Justice Innovation's existing Community Justice Centers in the Bronx, Queens, and Brooklyn. In FY23, with City Council support, the Staten Island Justice Center conducted a public safety assessment, which sought to pinpoint community strengths, needs, and gaps in service for Staten Island residents. Continued City Council support in FY24 and FY25 enabled the Staten Island Justice Center to use the results of the survey to inform the Community Justice Center planning process, as well as develop, pilot, and implement several new initiatives responsive to identified community needs. The Staten Island Justice Center respectfully seeks continued funding for FY26 to support this ongoing work, and, particularly, to sustain full implementation of the piloted initiatives, including youth and placemaking programs.

- **#192670 - Staten Island Community Justice Center Youth Wellness Initiative - \$130,000**

Court-Involved Youth Mental Health (Renewal)

Description: This a renewal proposal for Staten Island Justice Center's Youth Wellness Initiative (YWI), a program providing wrap-around services to court-involved and justice system-impacted youth in Staten Island, ages 12 to 18, to decrease the likelihood of long-term justice involvement and support those who may have unmet mental health needs. We specifically seek to engage youth who have participated in some form of community harm (such as assault, robbery, or gang violence) or who have experienced community harm such as community violence or violence at home. YWI works to decrease community harm and the likelihood of long-term justice involvement through transformative education, youth-led community engagement, peer support and mentorship, and individual short-term counseling and advocacy. YWI also offers interactive and holistic family resources and support to parents or guardians who may need assistance in caring for their youth while navigating the justice system. Participants will be able to translate their therapeutic encounters into an opportunity to restore themselves back into their communities.



DARCEL D. CLARK

THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
BRONX COUNTY

March 6, 2025

Speaker Adrienne Adams
New York City Council
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Dear Speaker Adams and Members of City Council:

On behalf of the Bronx District Attorney's Office, I am pleased to write this letter in support of key Center for Justice Innovation (formerly, Center for Court Innovation) FY25 City Council Applications. Funding will expand:

- pre-arraignment early diversion options;
- mental health supports;
- restorative justice programming;
- human trafficking survivor leadership initiatives at the intersection of intimate partner violence and gun violence; and
- innovative pilot programs that address pressing needs in communities within the Bronx.

These programs will enable the Bronx to move towards our shared vision of reducing unnecessary and harmful involvement in the legal system wherever possible and allow us to build public safety through sustainable community-driven solutions.

For the past several years, the City Council has supported the Bronx with **\$710,000** to invest in early system diversion, which includes Project Reset, the Center's citywide pre-arraignment diversion model and same day at arraignments programming that re-directs New Yorkers with misdemeanor arrests from the court system. Project Reset Bronx includes borough-wide restorative justice circles to aid in diversion. This has offered relief from the collateral consequence's participants might otherwise experience if arraigned for low-level crimes. We support the Center's continuing to partner with the Council to implement the next generation of early system diversions for the Bronx to continue to lead the City in scaled restorative justice-based interventions.

The Bronx County District Attorney's Office partners with the **Bronx Child Trauma Support** program to support clinical assessment and treatment of child victims and witnesses to crimes in the Bronx. The continued support of the Council will baseline these direct services conducted through evidenced-based and trauma-informed intervention models designed to prevent or reduce post-traumatic stress symptoms, suicidality, re-traumatization, and future victimization.

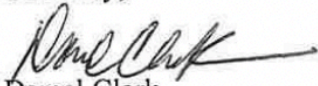
Thanks to meaningful changes in the treatment of trafficking victims in the justice system, the Center's Bronx Human Trafficking Intervention Court (HTIC) referrals continue to decline. **Project Healing and Empowerment through Advocacy and Leadership** (Project HEAL) is a survivor leadership and peer support initiative for human trafficking survivors. Additionally, we support the Center's RISE Project which is used in Family Court and provides community-based intimate partner violence prevention services in communities most impacted by gun violence.

Since 2010, Bronx Community Solutions (BCS) has assisted all individuals ordered by court mandate to complete a screening and assessment, **DWI treatment**, and enrollment in the **Driver Accountability Program**. This initiative began at the request of the judiciary, who noted that participants were having difficulty navigating the complicated network of private providers of these statutorily mandated services.

Finally, we support continuation of the **Center's Innovative Core Funding** which addresses the immediate needs of all borough residents by piloting novel and effective approaches to anti-gun violence, victim services, mental health integrations to diversion.

The Center has a long and documented history of conducting original research and operating direct service programs in the Bronx. Their mission to promote equality, dignity, and respect in communities aligns with my Office's vision. Together we can reimagine a fairer and more holistic approach to justice. We can do this by reducing incarceration as well as by building substantial and meaningful community-based support. I encourage the City Council to consider funding each of the Center's programs which will ultimately enhance fairness, accountability, and safety for the people of the Bronx.

Sincerely,



Darcel Clark



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
RICHMOND COUNTY
MICHAEL E. McMAHON
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

February 28, 2025

Honorable Adrienne Adams
New York City Council
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Re: Support for Center for Justice Innovation Fiscal Year 2026 Initiatives

Dear Speaker Adams and Members of the New York City Council:

I am pleased to offer my support to the Center for Justice Innovation's application to expand alternatives to incarceration opportunities and to provide mental health support, early diversion programming at the intersection of intimate partner violence and gun violence, restorative re-entry options for individuals and their families, pre-court eviction prevention options, and innovative pilot programs that address pressing needs in communities across the city. Many of these important initiatives and programs will advance Staten Island towards our shared vision of reducing unnecessary and harmful involvement in the justice system and build public safety through sustainable community-driven solutions.

CJI's long and documented history of conducting original research and operating direct service programs in Staten Island to promote equality, dignity, and respect in communities align with my office's vision. My office has proudly partnered with CJI in the development of a **Staten Island Community Justice Center** to reduce crime and incarceration, strengthen community trust in justice, and create safer, more equitable neighborhoods through community-driven public safety initiatives, youth opportunity, and economic mobility efforts. To maintain existing operations and plan for new programming, existing Justice Center staff will dedicate time to the development of new initiatives and activities including data collection and evaluation plans. Together, we reimagine a fairer and more holistic approach to justice, aiming to reduce incarceration and conviction and build substantial and meaningful community-based supports through innovative courts and alternatives to incarceration programming and services. I strongly encourage

investment in each of the programs and areas outlined above to ensure that they can continue this successful work.

I further urge the Council to support **Youth Impact Staten Island**. The Youth Impact program (formerly Youth Court) is a multi-pronged youth leadership development program focused on peer-led mentorship and violence intervention and prevention practices, with a goal to keep young people in school and out of the criminal legal system, while inspiring community safety and healing from a youth-centered perspective. The program primarily uses a restorative justice model through structured in-school violence intervention partnerships and organized civic engagement. Participants develop hard skills including in oral and written communication, facilitation, conflict resolution and research processes; learn the impact and infrastructure of the justice system; and are trained in community planning and organizing.

Individuals demonstrating persistent and untreated mental illness require access to culturally competent mental health treatment. To address gaps in mental health-related support for court-involved youth in Staten Island, I urge the Council to continue and expand support for the Staten Island Justice Center's **Youth Wellness Initiative**. This initiative provides vital mental health services that address trauma and promote healing for young people on Staten Island involved in the justice system or at-risk of justice system involvement. Additionally, the initiative is geared towards providing holistic support to families by supporting the parents and caretakers of youth enrolled in the initiative.

To address the issue of street safety, I support the continuation and expansion of the Center's **Driver Accountability Program** to provide a constructive and restorative response to dangerous driving and work to change the risky driving behavior of people charged with driving-related offenses in criminal court. The Driver Accountability Program is also addressing more serious cases through a second tier of programming, Circles for Safe Streets, which brings together drivers and their victims through a restorative justice process.

I also urge the Council to continue supporting **CJI's RISE Project**, which provides community-based intimate partner violence prevention services in communities most impacted by gun violence. RISE works to reduce intimate partner violence by engaging individuals who are causing abuse in voluntary programming to stop violence and change behavior, changing community norms to reduce the tolerance for violence, and training credible messengers to identify risk factors for intimate partner violence.

The Council should continue and expand support for **CJI's Innovative Core Funding**. CJI uses this funding to respond to the immediate needs of Staten Island residents by piloting novel and effective approaches to anti-gun violence, providing victim services, mental health integrations to diversion, and other pilots to test for scalable solutions.

Thank you for your kind consideration of this letter as you make important financial determinations on behalf of the City of New York.

If you have questions, please contact Agency Chief Contracting Officer and Grants Coordinator, Dr. Lisa Sloan, via telephone at (718) 556-7089 or via email at Lisa.Sloan@rcda.nyc.gov.

Sincerely,



Michael E. McMahon
District Attorney

MEM/aem



ERIC GONZALEZ
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

**DISTRICT ATTORNEY
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March 21, 2025

Adrienne Adams
Speaker, New York City Council
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Dear Speaker Adams and Members of City Council,

On behalf of the office of the Kings County District Attorney, I write in support of key Center for Justice Innovation FY26 City Council Applications to sustain critical investment in the following areas:

- alternatives to incarceration,
- mental health support,
- programming at the intersection of intimate partner violence and gun violence,
- and innovative pilot programs that address pressing needs in communities.

These programs will enable Brooklyn to continue to move towards our shared vision of reducing unnecessary and harmful involvement in the justice system wherever possible and building public safety through sustainable community-driven solutions.

The Center has submitted a proposal for continued support of its **Brooklyn Felony Diversion Programs**, which assist my office in expanding diversion opportunities for felony alternatives to incarceration (ATIs) across Brooklyn, while maintaining public safety and accountability. The Brooklyn Felony Alternatives to Incarceration Court, launched in January 2020 with Council support, offers clinical assessments, individualized community-based interventions, and judicial monitoring on felony cases. I urge the Council to continue funding to this initiative to reduce unnecessary incarceration and strengthen diversion opportunities in Brooklyn. Also included in that application is a request for continued support of the Center's renowned **Brooklyn Mental Health Court**. For the past twenty plus years, Brooklyn Mental Health Court has served as a pioneering model that offers community-based mental health treatment, paired with rigorous judicial monitoring and case management for defendants diagnosed with serious mental illness and facing felony charges. If not for the intervention of this specialized court, these defendants would be facing long-term incarceration in our jails and prisons. Support for this program is an essential component of our effort to address the mental health crisis in our City.

I urge the Council to continue supporting the Center's **RISE Project** which provides community-based intimate partner violence prevention services in communities most impacted by gun violence. RISE works to reduce intimate partner violence by engaging individuals who are causing abuse in voluntary programming to stop violence and change behavior; changing community norms to reduce tolerance for violence, and training credible messengers to identify risk factors for intimate partner violence.

To address the issue of street safety, I support the continuation of the **Driver Accountability Program**, which seeks to change the risky driving behavior of people charged with driving-related offenses in criminal court, while simultaneously reducing reliance on fines or short-term incarceration for those offenses. The Driver Accountability Program is also addressing more serious cases through a second tier of programming, Circles for Safe Streets, which brings together drivers and their victims through a restorative justice process in cases of serious crashes that have resulted in serious injuries or fatalities.

Finally, the Council should continue and expand support for the Center's **Innovative Core Funding**. The Center uses this funding to respond to the immediate needs of Brooklyn residents by piloting novel and effective approaches to anti-gun violence, victim services, mental health integrations to diversion, and other pilots to test for scalable solutions.

The Center's long and documented history of conducting original research and operating direct service programs in Brooklyn to promote equality, dignity, and respect in communities align with my office's vision. Together we reimagine a fairer and more holistic approach to justice, aiming to reduce incarceration and conviction wherever possible and build substantial and meaningful community-based supports. I encourage investment in each of the Center's programs to enhance fairness, accountability, and safety for the people of Brooklyn.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric Gonzalez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small horizontal line at the end.

Eric Gonzalez
Kings County District Attorney

Testimony of Caitlyn Passaretti, Senior Policy Associate
Citizens' Committee for Children of New York
Submitted to the New York City Council FY'2026 Executive Budget Oversight Hearing
Public Safety Committee
May 29th, 2025

Since 1944, Citizens' Committee for Children of New York has served as an independent, multi-issue child advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring every New York child is healthy, housed, educated, and safe. CCC does not accept or receive public resources, provide direct services, or represent a sector or workforce; our priority is improving outcomes for children and families through civic engagement, research, and advocacy. We document the facts, engage, and mobilize New Yorkers, and advocate for solutions to ensure the wellbeing of New York's children, families, and communities.

We would like to thank Chair Salam, Chair Brannan, and all the members of the City Council Committee on Public Safety and Finance for holding today's important hearing on the FY26 Executive Budget, and how to improve the delivery of essential services and programs for NYC youth and young adults to build sustainable public safety practices.

Restore Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) and Supportive Programming for Youth and Young Adults

Extensive research demonstrates the positive impacts of ATI and reentry programs, including lowering recidivism and crime.¹ Moreover, for every dollar invested in ATI programs, studies estimate between \$3.46-\$5.54 in returns, in addition to reduced costs for the criminal justice system and better community health outcomes.² We are glad that the Executive Budget restored and baselined \$7.6 million for Alternatives to Incarceration and \$4.7 million for re-entry services. These restorations will ensure these programs can support New Yorkers through case management, therapy, housing, employment training and more.

While these restorations are important, there is still a deep need for additional discretionary ATI funding to help scale community-based alternatives to incarceration. CCC, in tandem with the New York City Alternatives to Incarceration and Reentry Coalition, **requests an increase in funding through the Council's ATI Discretionary fund of \$2.4 million, or an additional \$200,000 per organization**

State Advocacy: Waiver of Hardship for Raise the Age

Last fall marked six years since Raise the Age was first implemented across New York State, ending a shameful chapter in our history of prosecuting 16- and 17-year olds as adults regardless of the offense. Prior to the passage of this legislation, thousands of 16- and 17-year-olds were held in dangerous conditions on Rikers Island and other adult jails across the state. Moreover, these youth were

¹ Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice. ATI Report. Accessed: <https://criminaljustice.cityofnewyork.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/MOCJ-ATI-RNR-Report-2019.pdf>

² New York State Alternatives to Incarceration and Reentry Coalition (2024). Unlocking Potential: The Role of Community-Based Alternatives in Strengthening Public Safety. Accessed: https://www.lac.org/assets/files/Unlocking-Potential_The-Role-of-Community-Based-Alternatives-in-Strengthening-Public-Safety.pdf

systematically locked out of age-appropriate services in family court programs designed to meet the needs of adolescents and avoid the barriers of an adult criminal record.

Youth crime has consistently decreased since Raise the Age implementation in 2018. In New York City alone, since 2013 there has been a 48% decrease in adolescent arrests for serious offenses.³ Evidence from implementation across the State clearly shows how the law has improved community safety and youth well-being.

Despite making up half of the state's youth justice system population, New York City is currently excluded from accessing the Raise the Age funding because the City exceeds the tax cap prescribed by state law. However, it is possible to access this funding by submitting a waiver of hardship, indicating that our city and our programs need the resources that are available through the Raise the Age law. New York City accounts for half of the state's youth justice system population and should be able to access more funding. However, Mayor Adams has yet to apply for the waiver of hardship, despite the administration's claim that the current fiscal cliff necessitates drastic cuts to many of the supportive services and programs that are vital to New York City's youth and families.

It is critical to invest in programs and organizations that are serving our communities through youth development, violence-prevention services, and other alternatives to incarceration to prevent the necessity of further investment in the carceral system. **We therefore urge the Council to work with the Mayor and the administration to submit a letter with the waiver of hardship to allow NYC to be considered for the funding. The ability to access RTA funding for community investments would be transformative for youth and communities in New York City.**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

³ In NYC, there was a decline of 77% in total arrests, and a decline of 48% in Index Crimes for youth under the age of 18. Data from the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services: Juvenile Arrests (Non-NYC) 2013-2022; Analysis of New York City Police Department data by Citizens Committee for Children of New York for 2013-2022. On file with the author.



Testimony of:

The Bronx Defenders, Brooklyn Defender Services, Legal Aid Society, Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem, New York County Defender Services and Queens Defenders

Presented before

The New York City Council Committee on Public Safety and Committee on Finance

Fiscal Year 2026 Executive Budget Hearing

May 29, 2025

This testimony is submitted jointly by The Bronx Defenders, Brooklyn Defender Services, The Legal Aid Society, Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem, New York County Defender Services, and Queens Defenders. As New York City's public defenders, we serve hundreds of thousands of low-income people, overwhelmingly Black and brown New Yorkers, each year. Thank you to Committee Chairs Salaam and Brannan for the opportunity to testify about our pressing budget needs.

In March, we testified that our offices needed a 25% increase in personnel budgets to ensure competitive salaries for our staff and an additional \$15 million was needed to adequately fund our homicide representation services. We requested a 10% increase in health insurance costs as well as a 10% increase in occupancy and OTPS expenses, which have risen for years without corresponding funding.

After that testimony, the mayor's budget included an additional \$20 million to address increased caseloads for our offices. This money is limited to new staff or possibly a small raise across our offices.

As we have testified for many years, one of our biggest issues is the attrition we face due to our staff salaries not keeping up with salaries across New York State and around the country. While our attorneys start at about \$80-\$85,000, public defenders in Los Angeles, Atlanta, San Francisco and Seattle all start at or above \$100,000. Other pay scales are similar, including the federal defenders. When you take cost-of-living into account, NYC salaries are far behind cities like Houston, Minneapolis and Denver.

Most of our offices are currently bargaining with our unions and face the very reasonable request from our staff to match the salaries of equivalent jobs in equivalent cities. To meet that request, the citywide need is for an infusion of about \$100 million more across the offices that provide this essential and constitutionally required service to the people of New York City.

We urge the city council to assist our offices by assuring that at least an additional \$100 million for the city's public defender offices is added to the FY26 Executive Budget to cover¹:

- Increased staff salaries
- Increased health insurance costs
- Increased occupancy and OTPS expenses
- Increased need for collateral services for our clients, especially immigration advice and assistance.

Recruitment and Retention Crisis

Public defenders in New York City earn significantly less than their counterparts in other jurisdictions with similar living costs. They also make less than other attorneys working in similar jobs in the New York City legal system, such as Corporation Counsel. Many staff have taken second jobs, endure crippling debt, or even face housing insecurity. This financial instability leads to burnout and high attrition rates.

While our attorneys and advocates choose this work out of dedication to justice, they deserve salaries that reflect the essential nature of their roles. The pay gap is stark: 18B panel attorneys earn \$158/hour, while our attorneys average only \$60/hour, assuming a 35-hour work week (which most far exceed). Federal Defender Offices in New York routinely hire attorneys from our offices at the precise point that they are able to handle serious and complex cases. Our counterparts in NYC Federal Defender Offices' starting salary is \$105,000 and doubles over the course of 10 years. The salary we provide to our staff with the current budget is 25% less at the bottom of the pay scale and about 50% less than the top pay, but the representation, experience, and dedication are the same.

Flat Funding and Rising Costs

For years, our offices have had to absorb rising costs for healthcare, utilities, and office space without additional funding. This has forced a choice between reducing staff below legally required caseload limits to maintain adequate healthcare and other benefits for staff, as well as sufficient

¹ Please note that this figure is to cover our criminal practice work which includes representing people who are arrested in the five boroughs as well as the related services required under the right to counsel. However, it would not cover the other practice areas that our offices contain, such as family and housing, which we would need to match in order to finalize union negotiations.

space for them to do their work or cutting these benefits and living with reduced space which does not allow for the full staff to work in the office at the same time.

City agencies and District Attorneys automatically receive cost-of-living increases, yet public defenders must negotiate for every dollar to be added to our budgets in order to cover salary increases and basic expenses. The lack of consistent funding for salary adjustments, fringe benefits, and operational costs also prevents us from offering opportunities for growth and promotion, making retention even more challenging.

Ever Increasing Police Budgets

When police budgets are increased and additional officers are hired, this increases the number of arrests. Likewise, when police work overtime, what they do with that extra time is make more arrests. We recently have seen an increase in arrests, and our staffing needs to remain stable and potentially increase to meet the increased need over the next year. While it is difficult to predict what that might look like in the future, we do know that Police Commissioner Tisch recently testified that the NYPD is budgeting over a billion dollars for overtime alone. We would oppose the city investing in the least effective and most destructive solution for the issues that are being addressed through arrest and police intervention, such as mental illness, houselessness and poverty. However, for the purposes of this budget testimony, this request by the Commissioner makes clear that many more arrests in the coming year are planned. More importantly, however, it highlights the fact that a mere 10% of that budget would bring our New York City staff to a living wage that allows them to continue their important work and ensure the court system is not bogged down when the numbers of arrests go up.

Failing to invest in public defense undermines the integrity of our justice system and jeopardizes the rights of the people we serve and the communities of New York City. We ask the Council to act now to support the defenders who fight daily to uphold justice for New Yorkers.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to your support in the FY26 budget.

Dismantling Racism Team
Congregation Beth Elohim

274 Garfield Place, Brooklyn, New York 11215

cbedismantlingracismteam@cbebk.org

Testimony of Congregation Beth Elohim's Dismantling Racism Team
New York City Council Committee on Public Safety
Executive Budget Hearing, May 29, 2025

Congregation Beth Elohim's Dismantling Racism Team engages in advocacy to reform the criminal legal system, in alliance with directly impacted groups. Congregation Beth Elohim, with locations in Park Slope and Prospect Heights, is the largest Reform synagogue in Brooklyn, with over 1,200 households.

In Genesis 1:27, we read that all human beings are created *b'tzelem Elohim*, in the image of God. This foundational text guides us, as a Jewish community, to advocate for policies that will protect people who are incarcerated and increase public safety.

Mayor Adams' proposed budget perpetuates the crisis on Rikers Island instead of investing in programs desperately needed to improve public safety and keep people from cycling in and out of Rikers, such as re-entry services and alternatives to incarceration.

We need a budget that follows through on the legal and moral obligations to close Rikers by 2027. We urge you to do all you can to secure a budget that will improve community safety and reduce our City's overreliance on incarceration, **by increasing investment in Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) and Reentry Services:**

- While the Executive Budget fully restores ATI and Reentry programs to their FY2025 funding levels, **the budget should go further, and increase discretionary funding for these programs by \$2.4 million** to enhance and support the scaling of ATIs citywide as requested by the ATI/Reentry Coalition.
- **We strongly support the ATI/Reentry Coalition's proposals in regard to these community-based alternatives to punitive systems**, which are essential to the City's efforts to incarcerate fewer Black and brown individuals from communities that have been disproportionately harmed by mass incarceration by providing them with pathways to healing and prosperity. Just as critically, we view these measures as morally and legally urgent means to reduce unnecessary and tragically high levels of incarceration, thereby directly furthering the City's efforts to close Rikers.

Thank you for hearing us.



**Written Testimony from EAC Network
Submitted to the New York City Council**

May 2025

Presented by

Tania Peterson Chandler

Chief Operating Officer

EAC Network is a proud member of the New York City Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) and Reentry Coalition, composed of 12 service provider organizations with decades of experience in a broad range of alternative to detention and incarceration programs as well as reentry services. The Coalition operates as a supportive ecosystem to ensure participants receive robust, individually tailored services that promote treatment, long-term stability, and public safety. Collectively, we serve upwards of 30,000 justice-involved individuals each year.

EAC Network operates citywide TASC (Treatment Alternatives for Safer Communities) programs that serve as critical diversion pathways for individuals with mental health and substance use needs. Through our Mental Health Diversion and Substance Use Case Management programs, we conduct clinical assessments, coordinate treatment, monitor compliance, and provide court reporting. These services ensure individuals are connected to care instead of incarceration. Our programs are a proven strategy to reduce jail populations, support recovery, and improve long-term public safety outcomes.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the needs of our clients have changed significantly. Referrals have increased, and individuals now present with more severe and complex challenges, including co-occurring disorders, trauma, cognitive impairments, and chronic housing instability. Meeting these needs requires intensive, coordinated support. At the same time, our caseloads are at capacity and, in some boroughs, beyond what staff can reasonably manage.

Despite the growing demand, program funding has not increased. As a result, we now face waitlists for clinical evaluations that delay court decisions and access to treatment. Judges across the city have expressed concern about these delays, but without new investment, we cannot expand our capacity or reduce backlogs. Additional staffing is urgently needed, particularly licensed clinicians, forensic evaluators, and case managers who can meet the scale and complexity of the work.

If the City is serious about closing Rikers, it must create new investments in ATI and reentry services. These programs are not supplemental. They are essential to a functioning public safety system. Our work reduces incarceration, promotes stability, and provides courts with meaningful alternatives that are effective and cost-efficient.

The New York City Alternatives to Incarceration and Reentry Coalition respectfully requests an increase in funding through the Council's ATI Discretionary Fund of \$2.4 million, or \$200,000 per organization. This investment will expand clinical and case management capacity, reduce wait times, and ensure that more New Yorkers can be safely diverted from jail into care.

We thank the Council for its continued support and urge you to prioritize funding for community-based programs that improve public safety and create the conditions necessary to close Rikers responsibly.

Respectfully,

Tania Peterson Chandler, Esq., MPA, SHRM-CP
Chief Operating Officer
EAC Network
Email: TChandler@eac-network.org



Freedom
Agenda

Testimony to the City Council Committee on Public Safety

Submitted May 29, 2025 by Sarita Daftary, Co-Director, Freedom Agenda

Chair Brannan, Chair Salaam, and Council Members,

I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Freedom Agenda. We're one of the organizations leading the [Campaign to Close Rikers](#).

Our members have both experienced Rikers and been impacted by crime, and they know what works to create real public safety. It's things like housing, healthcare, work opportunities, mentorship, and safe community spaces. Unfortunately, Mayor Adams proposed budget would continue to over-invest in incarceration while failing to scale up funding for the evidence-based programs that have been proven much more effective than Rikers in addressing the root causes of crime and preventing it in the future. We're calling on the City Council to ensure that the adopted budget paves the way for New York City to close Rikers Island. **Instead of allocating \$150M to hire 1,100 more correction officers, as the Mayor has proposed, we should invest in helping New Yorkers thrive, including allocating an additional \$2.4M to the Office of Criminal Justice for alternatives to incarceration and reentry services.**

While we are relieved to see that the Executive Budget restores what would have been devastating cuts to ATI and reentry programs, these programs need and deserve substantially more investment. While New York City has an incredible network of ATI and reentry providers with [documented successes](#), the failures of Rikers are also well documented. The Independent Rikers Commission recently reported that 33% of people released from Rikers are readmitted to DOC custody within a year. That represents a shocking failure, especially considering that it costs more than a half a million dollars to incarcerate someone on Rikers for a year. When considering whether to increase spending for Rikers or increase investment in ATI and reentry programs, the choice should be easy.

So why is Mayor Adams so committed to increasing DOC's headcount, when it should be shrinking in alignment with the plan to Close Rikers? It could be lack of vision, or it could be a giveaway to a corrupt union that has supported him, but it isn't for the benefit of New Yorkers.

The plan to close Rikers Island approved by the City Council in 2019 marked a commitment to take a more effective approach to public safety. That shift requires spending our money differently. The Mayor and Police Commissioner may use the language of "recidivism" and "repeat offenders" to stoke fear, but we should all understand the truth - administration is choosing to budget for more harm and incarceration instead of making the investments that could prevent it.

We are grateful that the City Council, in your budget response, is aligned with us, and so many New Yorkers, in calling for investments in greater investments in prevention and diversion to deliver on the legal and moral obligation to close Rikers. And yet we know OMB is going to tell you "There's no money for that." The Council can and should point to the \$150 million the mayor plans to spend to hire 1,100 more correction officers and tell them to get their priorities straight. We cannot allow this

administration to continue budgeting for more harm and incarceration, instead of making investments that could prevent it.

We will submit along with this testimony a [full budget analysis](#) that outlines the amendments needed in the FY26 budget to pave the way to closing Rikers and passing a People's Budget.

Thank you for your partnership.

Sarita Daftary

Co-Director, Freedom Agenda

Sdaftary@urbanjustice.org

[attached – FY2026 Campaign to Close Rikers Budget Analysis]



FY2026 Budget Analysis & Priorities

At a cost of over half a million dollars per person per year, Rikers Island is the most expensive and least effective tool our City has to create safety. In addition to exposing people to rampant abuse and violence, Rikers Island wastes resources that are desperately needed for housing, treatment, education, and other investments. It's time to use our precious resources to fund the things that work.

Priorities for this year's budget to advance the closure of Rikers:

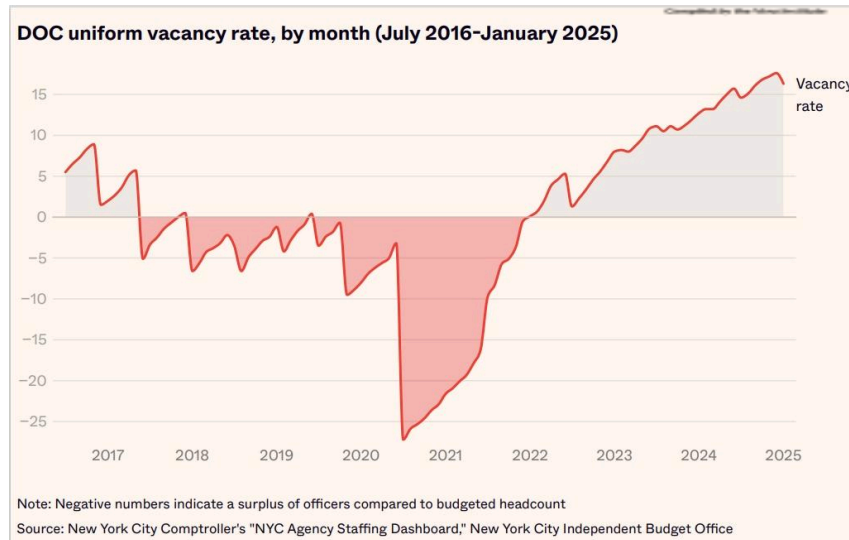
- **Allocate at least an additional \$70.6M to meet housing and mental health needs**, and fulfill commitments in the Close Rikers plan, including:
 - Building on the City Council's investment last year, the administration must **appropriate \$26.6 million more in annual funding for [Justice Involved Supportive Housing](#)**, and reissue the RFP for 380 new units with service funding levels in line with those of similar supportive housing programs. This will enable the City to deliver on the Close Rikers Points of Agreement to expand JISH to 500 units.
 - **Allocate \$24.7M more to create 15 more [Intensive Mobile Treatment](#) (IMT) teams, and pilot step-down teams.** The waitlist to access this evidence-based program is over 400 people. Resources are needed for both full-service teams, and to pilot a step-down version. The Executive Budget allocates \$5.3M for IMT, but far more is needed to eliminate the waitlist.
 - **Allocate \$7M more to create more [Forensic Assertive Community Treatment](#) (FACT) teams**, and to pilot ACT step-down teams in order to cut the long wait times (average of 6 to 12 months) to access this service.
 - **Allocate \$6M more to open four new crisis respite centers**, in compliance with Local Law 118-2023.
 - **Allocate \$6.3M to open 250 more residential treatment beds** for people with serious mental illness and with co-occurring addictions
- **Increase investments in Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) and Reentry Services.** While the Executive Budget fully restores ATI and reentry programs to their FY2025 funding levels, the budget should also go further, and increase discretionary funding for these programs by \$2.4 million to enhance and support the scaling of ATIs citywide as requested by the [ATI/Reentry Coalition](#).
- **Increase the Board of Correction budget to at least 1% of DOC's budget.**¹ While the Executive Budget restores proposed cuts to BOC's budget, their capacity still falls far short of what's needed to provide sufficient oversight for the City's jails. Establishing a minimum

¹ Other oversight agencies like CCRB and IBO have minimum budgets linked to the size of the agency they oversee. [Further outlined here.](#)

budget would increase BOC's headcount from about 33 currently to approximately 100, but would add only \$8.1M to the overall expense budget.²

- **Eliminate vacancies for DOC uniformed staff.**

- The Department of Correction is budgeted for 7,060 uniformed officers, but as of January 1, 2025 they employed [5,908](#) and [1,152 positions were vacant](#).³ OMB has not made a plan to rightsize this agency in alignment with reducing the number of people in jail and closing Rikers. By eliminating uniformed vacancies (which have been growing since 2022 - see chart below), DOC could realize cost **savings of \$149.6M annually**.⁴



- **Reduce overtime spending** by consolidating operations and permanently closing jails on Rikers, starting with the vacant Anna M. Kross Center, where 109 officers are still assigned.⁵

Preliminary Budget Analysis

Mayor Adams' proposed budget continues to misappropriate funds that are needed for real public safety investments, by maintaining DOC budget bloat while cutting funds to alternative to incarceration and reentry programs, and failing to adequately fund supportive housing and community-based mental health treatment. In order to follow through on the legal and moral obligation to Close Rikers, City Council must secure a budget that will improve community safety and reduce our City's overreliance on incarceration.

DOC's budget is still bloated:

- The Mayor has proposed spending **\$2.87 billion**⁶ on jail operations in FY2026.
- The administration is budgeting for [7,060 uniformed DOC officers through FY2029](#).⁷ By that time, New York City is required to close Rikers Island and shift to a borough jails system, which the Independent Rikers Commission has estimated will require [only 3,240 uniformed staff](#). Uniform headcount reductions are consistent with and necessary for a lower jail population and

² The FY2026 Executive Budget allocated \$4M to BOC. One percent of DOC's \$1.2B budget would give BOC a budget of approximately \$12M.

³ Per Independent Budget Office

⁴ Based on \$129,897 per officer, as [calculated by the Vera Institute](#).

⁵ The City of New York. Departmental Estimates. January 2025. p 1368

⁶ Including expenses, associated fringe benefits, pensions, and debt service. ["A Look Inside the NYC FY 2026 Preliminary Budget."](#) Vera Institute of Justice. February 2025.

⁷ Financial Plan of the City of New York. Fiscal Years 2024 - 2028. Full time and full time equivalent staffing levels.

closing Rikers - in fact, these reductions should have started years ago [when the jail population started to decline](#).

- DOC is on track to spend roughly \$300 million on overtime for uniform staff in FY25, 136% above [their adopted budget](#).
- [An analysis by the New York City Comptroller](#) showed that the **cost of incarcerating a person at a Rikers on an annual basis reached \$507,317** in FY 2023.
- Most of DOC's costs are driven by overstaffing. The FY2026 budget projects that [87% of DOC expenses](#) will be staff salaries, overtime and benefits.
- **The administration is planning either to continue overusing incarceration or to employ almost twice as many correction officers as people in custody by FY2028.** Neither option makes sense, morally or financially.

Commitments in the Close Rikers plan are still inadequately funded:

- In the [Points of Agreement on Closing Rikers](#), the administration agreed to establish 380 more units of [Justice Involved Supportive Housing](#), a model that has been hugely successful in reducing jail, shelter, and hospital stays, and generating substantial cost savings. But funding rates proposed in the RFP issued were so low that [qualified providers have not applied](#), and operators of the existing 120 units have been struggling to provide the quality services they are committed to because of funding rates that were drastically lower than other similar supportive housing programs. In FY2025, the City Council included \$6.4M in their discretionary budget to increase funding rates, but without a commitment from the administration to scale up this investment, these funds could only be applied to increase funding rates for the 120 existing units for 3 years.
- [The Close Rikers Plan](#) also promised "A new community-based mental health safety net." This administration has clearly fallen short of that goal - the number of people in Rikers diagnosed with a serious mental illness has [increased by more than 60% since January 2022](#) without sufficient investments in community-based interventions and care.
- The preliminary budget includes increased investments in the Supervised Release Program, which will be greatly beneficial if applied to expand the Intensive Case Management pilot program. The budget also includes increased investments in transitional housing, which must be brought online immediately, must have the lowest possible barriers to entry, and must be paired with an increased investment in permanent housing (like JISH, 15/15 supportive housing, and other deeply affordable housing).

Jail oversight cuts are proposed:

- DOC continues to [violate minimum standards](#) established by the Board of Correction, including [continued illegal use of solitary confinement](#); revelations of [sexual abuse claims on Rikers spanning decades](#); and recent disclosure of [DOC officers "deadlocking" people with severe mental health needs](#). Strong oversight is crucial. BOC needs more staff to fulfill its mandate, but the Mayor's Executive Budget proposes [reducing their staff from 35 to 33 positions](#).

Frequently Asked Questions

Does the Department of Correction have a staff shortage?

No. In fact, they are overstaffed. In "[A Shrinking System with Similar Spending](#)," the Independent Budget Office reported that between 2014 and 2023 "DOC staffing declined by 24%, while the jail population fell by 45%." In her [contempt order](#) issued in November 2024, Judge Laura Swain noted that "*enormous resources—that the City devotes to a system that is at the same time overstaffed and underserved—are not being deployed effectively.*" Reducing their headcount now is an important first step to [rightsizing](#) the department.

If they are not understaffed, why is there a shortage of officers to cover posts and provide services?

Multiple investigations and reports from the Nunez federal monitor have documented widespread mismanagement of DOC's enormous workforce, including officers [failing to fulfill their duties and falsifying tour records](#), [improper assignment of officers to non-jail posts](#) (including over [700 uniformed officers assigned to civilian posts](#)), and likely abuse of medical and personal leave (as reported [in November 2024](#)).

Does DOC need to replace officers who are retiring?

Eliminating vacancies would not prevent DOC from replacing officers who quit, retire, or are terminated. It could push DOC to more effectively supervise and manage their very large staff. In 2024, over 500 uniformed staff left, but DOC was able to hire only 290 officers, despite launching a broad recruitment campaign and lowering eligibility requirements.

How does NYC's jail spending compare to other cities?

DOC's budgeted headcount of more than one uniformed officer for each incarcerated person is more than [4 times higher than the national average](#). NYC's is the only jail system among the nation's 50 largest cities that has nearly as many officers as people in custody.

What will we do about those jobs? Aren't a lot of correction officers people of color, and women?

The choice to invest so much of New York City's budget in incarceration has meant that DOC has become a path to the middle class, including for many women and people of color.⁸ New York City could and should make a different choice - to invest in and raise salaries, for example, for [EMS workers](#), [green jobs](#) that can help us meet our goals for a vibrant and climate resilient city, and [human services jobs](#) that address community needs. Black and Brown workers deserve jobs with good wages and benefits that aren't dependent on the incarceration of their neighbors and families. We must invest in a [just transition](#) to expand and better compensate jobs outside of law enforcement - for example, in sectors like human services, where more than 80% of workers are women of color, and where constant budget cuts currently result in lost jobs and depressed wages.

⁸ New York City correction officers are paid \$92,000/year after 5.5 years on the job, and receive generous benefits. <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/jointheboldest/officer/salary-benefits.page>



Testimony before the Joint Hearing of the Committee on Finance and Public Safety

May 29, 2025

Thank you to Chair Brannan and Chair Salaam and the Committees on Public Safety and Finance for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Hana Jang, and I serve as a Community Outreach Advocate for the Korean American Family Service Center (KAFSC). For over 35 years, KAFSC has supported immigrant survivors of gender-based violence, offering safety, healing, and hope through culturally and linguistically accessible services.

At KAFSC, we see firsthand how domestic violence, sexual violence, child abuse, and AAPI hate harms physical and mental health in our community. Our clients, primarily Korean and other Asian immigrant women, often face violence, isolation, shame, and fear when seeking help.

As a leader in seeking to end violence of all kinds, KAFSC has joined the Partners Against the Hate Forward Initiative to keep New Yorkers safe. I'm testifying today to both acknowledge the current investment the City has made in hate violence prevention, and to also ask for increased investment in public safety. The PATH program has allowed us to create safety programming responsive to community needs, respond quickly to crises with wraparound case management and connections to long-term mental health services, offer community workshops to educate community members on how to keep themselves safe during times of violence and more. We provided hundreds of safety resources to community members, engaged nearly 100 volunteers in trainings and safety events, and conducted 15 in-person events through this program.

KAFSC respectfully urges the City Council to invest in community-based organizations that deliver culturally and linguistically competent services for immigrant families, and to increase funding for initiatives that directly support AAPI communities and broader community safety. Specifically, we ask that you:

- Invest in the **Hate Crime Prevention Initiative**, which supports community-led efforts to address trauma and bias-fueled violence, and restore full funding for PATH.
- Sustain and expand funding for the **Immigrant Mental Health Initiative**, to help reduce stigma and promote access to care in immigrant communities.
- Continue supporting the **AAPI Community Support Fund**, which has been critical to reaching survivors who are often overlooked.
- Strengthen the **Mental Health Services for Vulnerable Populations Initiative**, with a focus on culturally grounded service models.



At KAFSC, we are committed to ensuring that every survivor of violence can access mental health care and services that speak their language, understand their culture, and honor their resilience. We urge you to stand with us to help build a city that truly includes and supports all New Yorkers.

Thank you for your leadership and for the opportunity to testify today.



**TESTIMONY OF DR. MEGAN FRENCH-MARCELIN, SENIOR DIRECTOR OF NEW YORK STATE POLICY
AT LEGAL ACTION CENTER
Committee on Public Safety Budget Hearing
May 29, 2025**

Thank you to Chairman Salaam, Chairman Brannon, and the esteemed members of the committees for this opportunity to testify. My name is Megan French-Marcelin, I am the Senior Director of Policy at the Legal Action Center. Today, I am testifying on behalf of the New York City Alternatives to Incarceration and Reentry Coalition, a network of 12 service organizations with decades of experience in providing holistic, community-based supports to justice-involved New Yorkers. Collectively, our programs serve more than 30,000 New York City residents each year.

New York City is at a crossroads: are we going to continue to detain marginalized New Yorkers and leave them to languish on Rikers Island; or are we going to finish paving a pathway to safety where care, supportive services, and essential resources are available for all community members? If we are striving for a City that is both safe and equitable, we must address the decades of disinvestment and simultaneous over-policing of communities of color and rethink how we facilitate our system of justice.

To do that, Alternatives to Incarceration must not be the 'alternative,' but rather the default. Not only are ATIs more humane, they are more effective than incarceration at boosting employment and desistance from crime – and their price point is far lower. To usher in real, long-lasting public safety across the five boroughs, the City Council must invest in the scaling of these transformative programs, so that all New Yorkers can thrive in their communities

Fortunately, this city has an ecosystem of providers - who work in front-end Alternatives to Detention/Incarceration as well as back-end reentry services - who can help. These programs are some of the most meaningful mechanisms we have available to envision and scale a more comprehensive, holistic approach to public safety - one that ends our overreliance on mass incarceration and instead, invests in the human potential of our city's most marginalized residents.

These programs are not, however, simply about an ideal, they are effective, evidence-based interventions supported by decades of research. And that research clearly demonstrates that these programs are more successful than incarceration at improving public safety outcomes, decreasing the chance of future convictions, reducing homelessness and psychiatric hospitalizations, increasing connections to services, and inspiring civic engagement.

While we were heartened to see proposed cuts of nearly \$17 million to our programs restored in the Executive budget, our budgets have remained largely static as the city's overall corrections budget has grown exponentially. We cannot begin to ensure that our programs touch every eligible New Yorker or are responsive to new and changing conditions if we cannot pay staff adequately, expand services to meet those new needs, or pilot new approaches.

I want to stress that when we invest in community-based programs, we not only invest in safer neighborhoods, we also save New Yorkers money. These programs build thriving communities at a fraction of the cost of city incarceration. In fact, a recent report from New York City's Comptroller estimates the cost of incarcerating one person on Rikers for one year is \$507,317. In contrast, ATIs *create* cost savings: studies estimate that for every \$1 spent on community-based ATIs, between \$3.46-\$5.54 in benefits are generated.¹

It is why this year, the NYC ATI and Reentry Coalition is requesting an additional \$2.4 million in ATI Discretionary funds. These funds have been critical for our programs and the communities we serve because of their flexibility and responsiveness. With Council funds, our organizations are able to fill critical gaps and enhance services (and even pilot new programs) outside the bounds of restrictive contracts and RFPS that often leave both staff and services underfunded.

If we truly want to turn the tide of mass incarceration, we must invest in the scaling of these critical services.

The New York City Council ATI Discretionary Fund currently provides funding for:

- For Fortune Society, discretionary dollars have supported intake and assessment for approximately 230 people, connecting them to all appropriate services across all of Fortune's service domains with specific support for 30 people in our ATI program in Education and Employment Services.
- CASES uses discretionary dollars to add ATI services to our mental health programs. Current funding supports 36 different staff positions, including fully funding two court intake coordinators to screen and enroll clients in our ATI ACT program and serves 90 people annually. NYCC dollars also allows CASES to hold mental health appointments for people leaving incarceration.
- Defender-based mitigation services to reduce lengths of stay in detention and provide alternatives to detention and incarceration.
 - In FY24, Osborne's Court Advocacy Services enrolled 796 people. 98% of those served with court-imposed conditions met all conditions. 93% of dispositions were successful. Through this work, CAS prevented 1,411 years of incarceration, with an estimated taxpayer savings of \$162 million.

¹Brinson, C., Gardener, T.M., Keegan, A., Klapholz, G. & Nikolic, S. (2022, January). *Transforming Criminal Legal System Outcomes in New York City: A Blueprint for NYC's Next Generation of Political Leaders*. Legal Action Center.

With additional dollars, the Coalition could operationalize many new initiatives while ensuring some of the ongoing programs that have been bolstered throughout the years with Council dollars. This includes:

- New funding would allow CASES to staff a new Manhattan misdemeanor part. CASES staff already carry caseloads of 100 or more participants, thus new funding would be essential to alleviate staff capacity and ensure high quality services.
- For exalt youth, new investments would allow for the organization to serve approximately 15 additional justice-involved young people including providing access to education, mental health services, stipends, etc. This will save at least \$13.4 million in incarceration costs for the City.
- As one of the only programs serving primarily women, the Women's Prison Association would be able to serve 100 additional participants each year.
- Urban Youth Alliance would be able to expand their successful ATI programming for young people to Staten Island.
- The Bronx-Osborne Gun Avoidance and Prevention (BOGAP) program, launched in 2021 in partnership with the Bronx District Attorney's Office, is the first program in New York City to offer young people (ages 16–30) facing first-time gun possession charges a rigorous, yearlong alternative to incarceration. *BOGAP is urgently seeking funding following the recent termination of a federal contract* which puts 25 annual program slots in jeopardy. Funding in the amount of \$200,000 would allow us to restore this important and life-changing service to salvage 8 of these program slots.

These are examples of the meaningful and impactful work the Coalition does every day. We look forward to working with the NYC Council to scale these programs and create a new and more holistic system of public safety.

Thank you.

For further questions, please email Dr. Megan French-Marcelin at mfrenchmarcelin@lac.org or call at 617-869-1194



May 15, 2025

Councilman Yusef Salaam
New York City Council, 9th District
250 Broadway, Suite 1776
New York, NY 10007

Dear Councilman Salaam,

I hope this message finds you in good health and high spirits.

As a passionate advocate for child safety and community collaboration, I am reaching out to reintroduce myself. I am a Life Member of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE) and Chair of NOBLE's Correction Reform Committee, where you were a guest speaker during a webinar a few years ago. Additionally, I serve as Vice President of Tribal and Law Enforcement Affairs for the National Child Identification Program (NCIDP), and I'm proud to call Harlem home.

I'm excited to share how NCIDP has joined forces with NOBLE, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), and NFL Alumni Hall of Famers through the NFL Alumni's *Caring for Kids* initiative. (Learn more at childidprogram.com).

About the National Child Identification Program (NCIDP)

NCIDP was founded in 1997 after the tragic abduction of Amber Hagerman, whose story inspired the creation of the AMBER Alert. The program's mission is to equip families with a powerful, accessible tool to help safeguard their children—especially in emergencies.

Key Features of the NCIDP Kit:

1. **Comprehensive Information** – The kit includes space for a recent photo, physical description, and measurements to provide first responders with immediate, vital data. Families keep the completed kits—nothing is entered into a database.
2. **Decentralized, Safe Fingerprinting** – The inkless kit allows parents to collect fingerprints easily at home without the mess or need for centralized storage.

Partnerships with NOBLE and NCAI

NOBLE and NCAI are long-standing champions of community safety and justice. Our collaboration aims to ensure every child, especially in historically underserved communities, has access to this lifesaving resource. Black and Native American children, particularly girls aged 11–21, are disproportionately represented among missing and runaway cases. This initiative helps close that gap.

NFL Alumni Support

The NCIDP has strong roots in professional sports, having launched more than 25 years ago through partnerships with college and NFL teams. Today, it is a central pillar of the NFL Alumni Association's *Caring for Kids* campaign and is supported by the Pro Football Hall of Fame. To date, more than 90 million kits have been distributed globally.

Call to Action – Matching Grant Opportunity

We are seeking your help to raise **\$1 million** for a manufacturing grant. If this amount is secured, the NCIDP will **match it dollar for dollar**, allowing us to provide **600,000 free Child ID Kits** for students across New York City.

We envision working with NYC law enforcement agencies, schools, and community organizations to distribute the kits and raise awareness. Your leadership and advocacy could help us make a significant impact.

Next Steps

Our Executive Director, Mr. Kenny Hansmire, and I would be honored to meet with you via Zoom at your earliest convenience to discuss this opportunity further. You may reach me at:

- **Email:** CaptCRLewis@gmail.com or NCIDP.CL@gmail.com
- **Phone:** (917) 561-6884

Thank you for your time and consideration of this critical effort. Together, we can make New York City safer for our children, seniors, and all who call it home.

Warm regards,

Carolyn Lewis

Vice President, Tribal and Law Enforcement Affairs

National Child Identification Program





New York City Anti-Violence Project
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Testimony from the New York City Anti-Violence Project (AVP)

To the Committee on Public Safety

At the Executive Budget Review Hearing

Submitted May 29, 2025

Good afternoon, Chair Salaam and the Members of the Committee on Public Safety. My name is Jonnie Gillam, I use she/they pronouns, and I work as a paralegal in the legal department of the New York City Anti-Violence Project (AVP). We deeply appreciate the Council's and this Committee's past support of our work on behalf of LGBTQ and HIV-affected survivors of violence. Our organization provides critical support for at-risk communities we serve as they navigate the criminal justice system, a service which is more vital than ever as our city's TGNC, immigrant, and sex worker communities face attacks from the Trump administration. In this time of crisis, we humbly ask that the Committee support our vital work.

In addition to free legal services for survivors, AVP provides free counseling, community organizing, advocacy, and the country's only 24/7 LGBTQ crisis hotline. We are the city's only LGBTQ-specific victim services agency, and the community ties we have built serving that role for the last 45 years are irreplaceable. Our community organizers are on the front lines of the movement to push back against the racist, transphobic, and discriminatory policies of the Trump administration, and our direct service providers get daily first-hand experience of the harms being suffered by the communities we serve. We ourselves are survivors; I come before you as a trans woman, no longer legally able to apply for a passport or serve in my country's military. Our staff includes immigrants, Black, Latine, Muslim, and Jewish folk, people of trans, nonbinary, and queer experience, and survivors of all kinds. We stand with our siblings, and will continue to do so, come what may.



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Our work is deeply embedded in the criminal justice system. This is particularly true here at Legal, though our client services and advocacy departments also do much work with survivors navigating the legal, carceral, and immigration systems. Many survivors occupy the role of both “victim” and “perpetrator”, and our legal team represents folks operating on all levels of the criminal justice system, from complaining witnesses to defendants. We find that these roles can often switch, and survivors’ access to free legal support can vary widely throughout that process. For that reason, organizations like ours which can provide holistic legal services are critical for underserved and at-risk communities like the ones we serve. Many of our clients are current or former sex workers, who have frequently been denied access to “traditional” work on the basis of their gender presentation. These clients are in particular need of our legal assistance, as their interactions with the criminal justice system are complex and they often cannot find culturally competent help at other legal aid organizations. We offer victim’s rights advocacy, criminal defendant advocacy, affirmative and defensive representation in immigration court, assistance interfacing with the police, representation in family and housing court, support reporting human rights violations to the City Commission and State Division of Human Rights, and more. These are confusing systems, not designed with the needs of survivors from marginalized communities in mind. Our trauma-informed approach and expertise in LGBTQ issues allows us to provide critical aid to survivors that would not or could not access support from other kinds of organizations.

The Trump administration has made no bones about its hatred for the communities we serve and belong to, especially trans and queer folks and immigrants. Nearly all our clients belong to one of these communities, frequently both, and we’re seeing firsthand the effect that direct federal discrimination is having on their lives. Our trans asylum seekers, survivors who have experienced unspeakable suffering and are in this city searching for a safe haven from transphobic violence, have found that the federal immigration system now discriminates against



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them as a matter of course. At best, they're being forced to misgender and deadname themselves on official documents, or else face rejection; at worse, they're being denied relief, on the basis that they "lied" on their application by giving the government their preferred gender. This mistreatment is not limited to the immigration space. We're seeing reports of trans folks in the federal criminal justice system facing harassment, and worse, in courts and in custody. Our organization is not immune, either. We have already lost over \$400,000 in federal grants for daring to proudly serve queer and immigrant communities, which is a significant amount for a small community organization like ours, and we expect to lose more. With the constant risk of ICE raids, IRS audits, and other intentional federal attacks on our office, our organization is at profound risk even as our frontline work is more vital than ever.

In my oral testimony I told you about our client Isabella, who is a trans immigrant facing deportation. Isabella fled Perú after a lifetime of sexual assault and brutal transphobic violence. Her time in New York has not been easy – Isabella is a victim of sex trafficking and was arrested for prostitution, though she was not detained. She has also been stopped by federal immigration agents and is in deportation proceedings, a process which takes years. Because of her arrest she is subject to the newly signed "Laken Riley Act", a racist act of Congress that makes immigrants subject to summary deportation without the opportunity for defense on the basis of merely having been *arrested* for certain crimes, even if no charges were filed. If she were picked up again now, under the new Trump paradigm, she could be deported within the week. As we worked with her to combat her deportation and ensure her rights as a criminal defendant, she came to trust us sufficiently to confide in us about her ongoing trafficking. We are now working together to bring her to safety, assist city law enforcement in bringing her abusers to justice, and file for humanitarian immigration relief to allow her to remain in safety with her family. AVP's particular cultural competence and holistic legal service have allowed for us to provide lifesaving service in her case that other organizations simply would not have been equipped to provide.



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Isabella is only one of hundreds of such clients that our legal office serves, not to mention countless others who receive support from our clinicians and hotline staff. These populations need us now more than ever, and our expertise could not be replaced by another organization if the administration were to successfully strongarm us into closing our doors. In this time of heightened risk for our clients and for ourselves, we ask that the members of the Committee on Public Safety of the City Council of New York allocate us as much funding as can be spared. Trans, immigrant, queer, and BIPOC communities in this city are under attack, and we need your support to stand up for them. Thank you for your time today.



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Testimony from the New York City Anti-Violence Project (AVP)

To the Committee on Public Safety at the Executive Budget Hearing

Good afternoon - my name is Reem, and I am the Director of Community Organizing & Public Advocacy at the New York City Anti-Violence Project (AVP). AVP is a direct-services and advocacy organization serving LGBTQ survivors of violence, we have a 24-hour bilingual hotline where survivors can access our free counseling and legal services, and we also engage members in Community Organizing and leadership development trainings. AVP envisions a world where LGBTQ and HIV-affected people are safe and live free from violence, and we are the only LGBTQ-specific victim services agency in the city.

It was in this very city that the Stonewall Uprising happened in 1969, where LGBTQ people have had enough and made it known that we deserve to have the same level of safety as everyone else. While that sounds like a distant time, it is unfortunate that the fight must still go on. To this day, LGBTQ experience hate violence at a higher rate than our straight and cis-gender counterparts. And because LGBTQ identity lives at the intersection, imagine the compounded violence a person experiences if they are also BIPOC, an immigrant, someone who is houseless or formerly incarcerated.

Especially now, with the current federal administration, LGBTQ people are a target of harmful policies; the rollback of federal protections against discrimination in healthcare and education, targeting Trans people and their access to gender-affirming care, and even legislation that bans LGBTQ-inclusive curricula in schools. If there is any respite in this, it's that we're in New York. The very place that the Stonewall Uprising started, and we must honor that legacy.

We call on you, members of the City Council, for your support. Let's make it known that New York City doesn't have a place for hate or harmful policies. And let us put those words into practice.

- Increase the PATH Forward Initiative funding, and the Hate Violence Prevention Initiative to support the organizations working with the communities most vulnerable to violence
- Reallocate funding from law enforcement agencies to Community Based Organizations that offer culturally competent, language-accessible, and life-saving services.
- Invest in community safety, education, healthcare and housing for all.

Thank you,

Reem

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**Testimony of
Ruth Lowenkron
Director of the Disability Justice Program
at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest
before the Council of the City of New York
Committee on Public Safety
and Committee on Finance
May 29, 2025**

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today regarding public safety in New York City. On April 14, 2025, New York Police Department (“NYPD”) officers fatally shot King Wong while he was experiencing a mental health crisis in Queens. How many more individuals must die by the hands of police before we finally adopt a more humane, peer-led, and person-centric approach to mental health crises?

New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (“NYLPI”) is deeply concerned about the City’s dangerous and illegal practices relating to the involuntary removal of individuals perceived to have mental illness diagnoses for psychiatric evaluation. We also oppose the Behavioral Health Emergency Assistance Response Division (“B-HEARD”) pilot in its current guise as it is deeply flawed and diverts resources desperately needed for a true non-police response to mental health crisis into a program that continues the criminalization of disability. NYLPI urges the City Council to mandate significant changes to B-HEARD so that it dispatches teams of peers—individuals with lived mental health experience—and emergency medical technicians (EMTs) who are not City employees, operates 24/7, routes calls through 988, and above all, prioritizes the self-determination of people with mental disabilities.

THE MAYOR MUST IMMEDIATELY RESCIND HIS POLICY OF FORCIBLY REMOVING INDIVIDUALS PERCEIVED TO HAVE A MENTAL ILLNESS DIAGNOSIS AND PERCEIVED TO BE “UNABLE TO CARE FOR THEIR BASIC NEEDS,” BUT WHO DO NOT PRESENT A DANGER TO THEMSELVES OR OTHERS

The Mayor’s Involuntary Removal Policy launched in November 2022, allows a police officer to detain an individual by force, and remove the individual to a psychiatric hospital, solely because the officer believes the individual has a mental disability and is unable to meet “basic needs” -- without any indication that the individual is a danger to themselves or others.

The Policy is both illegal and immoral. By failing to mandate that an individual is “conducting himself or herself in a manner which is likely to result in serious harm to the person or others,” the Involuntary Removal Policy runs afoul of Section 9.41 of New York’s Mental Hygiene Law, as well as myriad other federal and state constitutional and statutory provisions, including the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and New York City Human Rights Law.

Mayor Adams’ statements, as well as the City’s November 28, 2022 press release, entitled “Mental Health Involuntary Removals,” make clear that city agencies have aggressively instituted involuntary removals by police officers who have little to no expertise in dealing with individuals with mental disabilities and who will be required to determine whether an individual should be forcefully detained against their will. The examples cited by Mayor Adams at his press conference illustrate how difficult it is for police officers to make these sorts of determinations and how likely it is that the rights of New Yorkers will be violated by the Involuntary Removal Policy. Mayor Adams’ example of “the shadow boxer on the street corner in Midtown, mumbling to himself as he jabs at an invisible adversary,” does not describe someone who is unable to care for their basic needs, let alone describe someone who meets the standard of serious danger to themselves or others. The City’s Involuntary Removal Policy also contains no information about how an officer would even go about determining whether such shadow boxers are unable to take care of their basic needs or are merely exercising. Even though the City touted the success of the policy one

year after its launch, the City offered no data on its implementation, including whether people of color are being disproportionately targeted.

The City must rescind the Involuntary Removal Policy to ensure that no New Yorkers are subjected to unlawful detention and involuntary hospitalization just for exhibiting behavior perceived by a police officer to be unusual—whether the individual has a mental disability or not.

To be clear, we do not in any way support the failed policies of our broken mental health care system that leave at-risk individuals in unacceptable states of distress and deterioration. But forced treatment – if it even can be called treatment – is not responsive to the issue of public safety to which the Mayor consistently ties it. In fact, people with mental health diagnoses are no more likely to be violent than individuals without such a diagnoses.¹ Inpatient hospitalization provides short-term care that, at best, temporarily stabilizes an individual. It does not connect them to, or provide, the mental health services and housing that are necessary for the individual to succeed in the community. In fact, all too often, involuntary inpatient and outpatient services traumatize individuals, erode trust in the system, and divert critical resources away from solutions that actually work. In- and out-patient commitment must not be the default services for individuals with serious mental illness.

In addition to harm caused by forced commitment, the City Council must take note of the ignoble fact that people of color are subject to highly disproportionate numbers of involuntary treatment measures. Most notably, the New York State Office of Mental Health’s statistics demonstrate that over three out of five Involuntary Outpatient Commitment orders statewide, and over four out of five Involuntary Outpatient Commitment orders in New York City, involve people of color.² There is no clearer evidence of the failure of our public mental health system to

¹ U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, “Mental Health: Get the Facts,” <https://www.samhsa.gov/mental-health/myths-and-facts#:~:text=Myth%3A%20People%20with%20mental%20health,with%20a%20serious%20mental%20illness.>

² N.Y.S. Office of Mental Health, “Characteristics of Recipients: Demographics,” https://my.omh.ny.gov/analytics/saw.dll?PortalPages&PortalPath=%2Fshared%2FAOTLP%2F_portal%2FAssisted

successfully serve people of color. Addressing this failure must be a priority for the government and our provider systems. The surest way of preventing risk to individuals with serious mental illness is through expansion of the evidence-based and community-based mental health services identified below, which will improve the care of thousands of people going forward.

THE CITY MUST WHOLLY TRANSFORM ITS RESPONSE TO MENTAL HEALTH CRISES BY ELIMINATING POLICE AND REPLACING THEM WITH A PEER-LED HEALTH RESPONSE

The City must join other cities across the country – including Los Angeles, San Francisco, Albuquerque, Denver, New Haven and many more – to **remove police** entirely from the equation, and **ensure that *healthcare workers respond to healthcare crises***. According to [joint-research](#) by NYLPI and Human Rights Watch, there are at least 160+ emergency response programs nationwide that engage in crisis response activities without police as the initial responders or as automatic co-responders.

Closer to home, New York State is already taking action. The state legislators are working to pass a bill known as Daniel’s Law (S3670/ A4617), which would establish a statewide emergency and crisis response system where police are no longer the default first responders to health emergencies. Under Daniel’s Law, the state will only fund emergency response plans where EMTs and peers control the response to a health emergency, and the role of police would be strictly limited to situations involving imminent risk of serious physical harm. The bill currently has over 50 sponsors in the Assembly and the Senate.

Likewise, the City must establish a system whereby individuals who experience a mental health crisis receive appropriate services which will de-escalate the crisis and which will ensure their wellbeing and the wellbeing of all other New Yorkers. Only those who are trained in de-escalation practices should respond to a mental health crisis, and the most appropriate individuals

to receive such training are health care providers and peers.³ Police officers, who are trained to uphold law and order, are not suited to deal with individuals experiencing mental health crises, and New York's history of its police killing 20 individuals who were experiencing crises in the last nine years alone, is sad testament to that. Eliminating the police as mental health crisis responders has been shown to result in quicker recovery from crises, greater connections with long-term healthcare services and other community resources, and averting future crises.⁴

The scores of people experiencing mental health crises who have died at the hands of the police over the years is a microcosm of the police brutality around the world. Disability is disproportionately prevalent in the Black community and other communities of color,⁵ and individuals who are shot and killed by the police when experiencing mental health crises are disproportionately Black and other people of color. Of the 21 individuals killed by police in the last ten years, 18 – or greater than 85% -- were Black or other people of color. The City Council simply cannot stand by while the killings continue. Now is the time to remove the police as responders to mental health crises – and certainly we must all oppose the Mayor's efforts to increase the role and funding of the NYPD as it relates to people with mental disabilities. Lives are literally at stake.

[Correct Crisis Intervention Today – NYC](#) has developed the needed antidote. Modeled on the [CAHOOTS](#) program in Oregon, which has successfully operated for over 35 years without any serious injuries to respondents or responders – let alone deaths -- the CCIT-NYC proposal is

³ See Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, “When There’s a Crisis, Call a Peer: How People With Lived Experience Make Mental Health Crisis Services More Effective,” (2024), <https://www.bazelon.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Bazelon-When-Theres-a-Crisis-Call-A-Peer-full-01-03-24.pdf>; Martha Williams Deane, *et al.*, “Emerging Partnerships between Mental Health and Law Enforcement,” *Psychiatric Services* (1999), http://ps.psychiatryonline.org/doi/abs/10.1176/ps.50.1.99?url_ver=Z39.88-2003&rft_id=ori%3Arid%3Acrossref.org&rft_dat=cr_pub%3Dpubmed&#/doi/abs/10.1176/ps.50.1.99?url_ver=Z39.88-2003&rft_id=ori%3Arid%3Acrossref.org&rft_dat=cr_pub%3Dpubmed.

⁴ Henry J. Steadman, *et al.*, “A Specialized Crisis Response Site as a Core Element of Police-Based Diversion Programs,” *Psychiatric Services* (2001), http://ps.psychiatryonline.org/doi/10.1176/appi.ps.52.2.219?utm_source=TrendMD&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=Psychiatric_Services_TrendMD_0.

⁵ Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities, “Accessible NYC” (2016), https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/mopd/downloads/pdf/accessiblenyc_2016.pdf.

positioned to make non-police responses available to those experiencing mental health crises in New York City. The proposal avoids the enormous pitfalls of the City's B-HEARD pilot, which the City inaccurately refers to as a non-police model. The full text of the CCIT-NYC proposal can be found at <https://www.ccitnyc.org/ourproposal>.

THE CITY MUST ENTIRELY REVAMP THE B-HEARD PILOT AS THE PILOT AUTHORIZES EXTENSIVE POLICE INVOLVEMENT AND IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE OR EVEN INCREASE THE RATE OF VIOLENT RESPONSES BY THE NYPD

The City, via its Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health (formerly ThriveNYC), introduced a pilot program in 2021 that it contends is responsive to the need to cease the killings at the hands of the police of individuals experiencing mental health crises. Unfortunately, that is simply not the case, despite the City's glowing description of the program. Among B-HEARD's grim statistics are the following:

- In Fiscal Year 2024 (July 2023 through June 2024), over **70% of all mental health calls** in B-HEARD precincts were still **directed to the NYPD**, and B-Heard responded to only about **29% of total mental health calls** in the pilot area.
- Even when all kinks are ironed out, the City anticipates continuing to have about **50% of all mental health calls directed to the NYPD**.
- Moreover, **all mental health calls continue to go through 911**, which is under the NYPD's jurisdiction.
- The entire **program is run by the NYPD, the Fire Department and other City agencies**, with **NO role whatsoever for community organizations**. And there is not even any delineation of the lines of authority and communication among the various city agencies.
- **The crisis response teams are composed of EMTs who are City employees** (from the Fire Department) **who are deeply enmeshed in the current police-led response system**.

Peers do not trust these EMTs. The other team members are *licensed clinical* social

workers. The licensure and clinical orientation requirements are unnecessary and they also preclude a vast array of potential candidates who have excellent skills and a long history of working with people experiencing crises.

- B-HEARD has ***NO*** requirement to hire peers.
- The training of the teams does ***NOT*** require a trauma-informed framework, need ***NOT*** be experiential, and need ***NOT*** use skilled instructors who are peers or even care providers.
- The anticipated response time for crisis calls could be as long as half an hour, and when last reported averaged over **fifteen minutes**,⁶ which is not even remotely comparable to the City's response times for other emergencies of 8 to 11 minutes.
- The pilot operates only sixteen hours a day.
- There are no outcome/effectiveness metrics.
- There is no oversight mechanism.

A comparison of the CCIT-NYC proposal, which is based on the CAHOOTS model with a stellar track record, and the B-HEARD program, which is not aligned with any best practices, is illustrated in the following chart:

⁶ Regrettably, the average response time was not even collected for the last reporting period.

Critical Attributes of a Mental Health Crisis Response System	CCIT-NYC's Proposal	NYC's B-HEARD Proposal
Removal of police responders	YES	NO (currently, around 79% of calls are still responded to by police, and even when all kinks are removed, 50% of calls will still be responded to by police)
Three-digit phone number such as 988, in lieu of 911.	YES	NO
Response team to consist of an independent EMT and a trained peer who has lived experience of mental health crises and know best how to engage people in need of support	YES	NO (licensed clinical social worker and EMT employed by the New York City Bureau of Emergency Medical Services)
Crisis response program run by community-based entity/ies which will provide culturally competent care and will more likely have a history with the person in need and can intervene prior to a crisis	YES	NO (run by New York City Police Department and other City agencies)
Peer involvement in all aspects of planning/implementation/oversight	YES	NO
Oversight board consisting of 51% peers from low-income communities, especially Black, Latinx, and other communities of color	YES	NO
Creation/funding of non-coercive mental health services ("safety net"), including respite centers and 24/7 mental health care to minimize crises in the first place and to serve those for whom crisis de-escalation is insufficient	YES	NO
Response times comparable to those of other emergencies	YES	NO (Most recently reported response time of over 15 minutes -- compared with average response time of 8

		to 11 minutes for non-mental health emergencies)
Response available 24/7	YES	NO (Response only available 16 hours/day)
Training of the teams to use a trauma-informed framework, be experiential, and use skilled instructors who are peers	YES	NO

NYLPI urges the City Council to ensure that the money previously allocated for a non-police mental health crisis response be utilized solely for a truly non-police response, and to mandate substantial modifications to the B-HEARD program by including the critical components of the CCIT-NYC proposal.

THE CITY COUNCIL MUST ENSURE THAT NEW YORKERS HAVE ACCESS TO A WIDE RANGE OF VOLUNTARY NON-HOSPITAL, COMMUNITY-BASED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES THAT PROMOTE RECOVERY AND WELLNESS, AS WELL AS A FULL PANOPLY OF COMMUNITY SERVICES, INCLUDING HOUSING, EMPLOYMENT, AND EDUCATION, BY ALLOCATING FUNDING FOR SUCH PROGRAMS

Since NYLPI was established nearly 50 years ago, we have prioritized advocating on behalf of individuals with mental health conditions, and we have consistently fought to ensure that the rights of individuals with mental health conditions are protected by every aspect of New York's service delivery system. Core to our work is the principle of self-determination for all individuals with disabilities, along with the right to access a robust healthcare system that is available on a *voluntary, non-coercive* basis.

We have long been on record opposing mandatory outpatient and inpatient treatment for failing to offer appropriate healthcare and insufficiently safeguarding the rights of persons with mental disabilities. In line with our continued advocacy for comprehensive mental health treatment

in New York, NYLPI has released our latest report: Implementation of Kendra’s Law Continues to be Severely Biased⁷. The report outlines that there is no proof that Involuntary Outpatient Commitment is more effective than voluntary treatment. We make key, urgent recommendations for New York to discontinue use of Kendra’s Law and in no event expand its scope or reach, and in the interim, take proactive measures to eliminate racial bias from Involuntary Outpatient Commitment.

Quite simply, there is no place for coercion. Forced “treatment” is not treatment at all, and it has long been rejected by health practitioners -- to say nothing of the disability community – in favor of numerous best practices strategies that offer assistance even to those who have previously resisted offers of care.⁸ There are multiple less invasive models of care that New York City must invest in to avoid the tragedy and enormous cost of forced treatment. At the heart of these models are trained peers, who are ideally suited to implement effective harm reduction and de-escalation techniques, especially during crises.

We know how to help those with the most severe mental illness, but we fail to do so, instead providing services that are insufficient or not held to the highest accountability. We face complete system failure, yet we have done little to correct the failure and even point our fingers at those most affected by the system failure. We must stop the finger pointing and fix the system. We must invest in innovative, voluntary health programs. And we must invest in supportive housing, rather than cart people off to a psychiatric ward or to jail.

Any proposal that facilitates the ability to force people into in-patient or out-patient “treatment” must be seen in the context of whom we’re entrusting to “remove” these individuals.

⁷ NYLPI, “Implementation of Kendra’s Law Continues to be Severely Biased” (2025), <https://www.nylpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Implementation-of-Kendras-Law-Continues-to-be-Severely-Biased-Report-1.pdf>

⁸ See, e.g., de Bruijn-Wezeman, Reina “Ending Coercion in Mental Health: The Need for a Human Rights-Based Approach,” Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, Council of Europe, Parliamentary Assembly, Doc. 14895 (May 22, 2019), <https://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=27701&lang=en>.

As we now surely know all too well, the police, who are steeped in law and order, are not well-suited to deal with individuals with mental health concerns. The Mayor's policy includes an outsized role for the police, and the City Council must halt it immediately.

Forced "treatment" must also be seen in the context of existing racial disparities. Of the 20 individuals killed at the hands of New York City police in recent years, 17 were people of color. This systemic racism also underlies the disproportionate prevalence of disability in the Black community and other communities of color.⁹ The racial disparities in the application of Involuntary Outpatient Commitment are also vast¹⁰.

While there is extensive literature supporting voluntary treatment, there is no support for the success of forced evaluation and treatment.

CONCLUSION

NYLPI respectfully requests that the City Council:

- Halt the Mayor's policy of forcibly removing individuals perceived to have a mental illness diagnosis and perceived to be "unable to care for their basic needs," but who do not present a danger to themselves or others.
- Mandate changes to the B-HEARD program to align it with the truly non-police, peer-led CCIT-NYC model.
- Include a baseline allocation of \$4.5 million to ensure competitive compensation for Peer Specialists to staff the City's mental health crisis response teams, including B-HEARD.
- Authorize \$30 million (increased from \$22 million) in baselined funds to create additional Intensive Mobile Treatment (IMT) teams and an IMT step-down program within the New York City's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Single Point of Access system.

⁹Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities, "Accessible NYC" (2016), https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/mopd/downloads/pdf/accessiblenyc_2016.pdf.

¹⁰ NYLPI, *supra* note 5 at 13.

IMT funding is currently stagnant at \$42 million with a long waitlist. This would bring the total to \$72 million.

- Authorize an additional \$26 million (increased from \$4.8 million) in annual funding for Justice Involved Supportive Housing (JISH) to be delivered through a reissued Request for Proposals (RFP) for 500 units of a JISH Plus model, with service funding levels in line with those for other higher need groups, like 15/15 Young Adult Supportive Housing.
- Ensure that New Yorkers have access to a wide range of non-hospital, community-based mental health services that promote recovery and wellness, as well as a full panoply of community services, including housing, employment, and education, by allocating funding for such programs.

Thank you for your consideration. I can be reached at (212) 244-4664 or wjuhn@nylpi.org, and I look forward to the opportunity to discuss how best to respond to the needs of individuals experiencing mental health crises in New York City.

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About New York Lawyers for the Public Interest

For nearly 50 years, New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYLPI) has been a leading civil rights advocate for New Yorkers marginalized by race, poverty, disability, and immigration status. Through our community lawyering model, we bridge the gap between traditional civil legal services and civil rights, building strength and capacity for both individual solutions and long-term impact. Our work integrates the power of individual representation, impact litigation, and comprehensive organizing and policy campaigns. Guided by the priorities of our communities, we strive to achieve equality of opportunity and self-determination for people with disabilities, create equal access to health care, ensure immigrant opportunity, strengthen local nonprofits, and secure environmental justice for low-income communities of color.

NYLPI's Disability Justice Program works to advance the civil rights of New Yorkers with disabilities. In the past five years alone, NYLPI disability advocates have represented thousands of individuals and won campaigns improving the lives of hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers. Our landmark victories include integration into the community for people with mental illness, access to medical care and government services, and increased accessibility of New York City's public hospitals. We prioritize the reform of New York City's response to individuals experiencing mental health crises, and have successfully litigated to obtain the body-worn camera footage from the NYPD officers who shot and killed individuals experiencing mental health crises. In late 2021,

NYLPI and co-counsel filed a class action lawsuit which seeks to halt New York's practice of dispatching police to respond to mental health crises, and in the context of that lawsuit, seeks relief on behalf of individuals affected by the Mayor's Involuntary Removal Policy. We filed a companion lawsuit in 2024 on behalf of an individual shot within an inch of his life when experiencing a mental health crisis.

Community Voluntary Long-Term Innovations for At-Risk Individuals

Residential

Crisis Respite – Intensive Crisis Residential Program: OMH program: “a safe place for the stabilization of psychiatric symptoms and a range of services from support to treatment services for children and adults. are intended to be located in the community and provide a home-like setting.” <https://omh.ny.gov/omhweb/bho/docs/crisis-residence-program-guidance.pdf>.

Crisis Respite (shorter term and less intensive): OMH Program: “Crisis Respite Centers provide an alternative to hospitalization for people experiencing emotional crises. They are warm, safe and supportive home-like places to rest and recover when more support is needed than can be provided at home. The Crisis Respite Centers offer stays for up to one week and provide an open-door setting where people can continue their daily activities. Trained peers and non-peers work with individuals to help them successfully overcome emotional crises. <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/crisis-emergency-services-respite-centers.page>.

Peer Crisis Respite programs: OMH funded; Peer operated short-term crisis respites that are home-like alternatives to hospital psychiatric ERs and inpatient units. Guests can stay up to seven nights, and they can come-and-go for appointments, jobs, and other essential needs. Offers a “full, customizable menu of services designed to help them understand what happened that caused their crisis, educate them about skills and resources that can help in times of emotional distress, explore the relationship between their current situation and their overall well-being, resolve the issues that brought them to the house, learn simple and effective ways to feel better, connect with other useful services and supports in the community, and feel comfortable returning home after their stay.” <https://people-usa.org/program/rose-houses/>.

Housing First: a housing approach that prioritizes permanent housing for people experiencing homelessness and frequently serious mental illness and substance use issues. Supportive services including substance use counseling and treatment are part of the model, but abstinence or even engagement in services is not required. <https://endhomelessness.org/resource/housing-first/>.

Soteria: a Therapeutic Community Residence for the prevention of hospitalization for individuals experiencing a distressing extreme state, commonly referred to as psychosis. We believe that psychosis can be a temporary experience that one works through rather than a chronic mental illness that needs to be managed. We practice the approach of “being with” – this is a process of actively staying present with people and learning about their experiences. <https://www.pathwaysvermont.org/what-we-do/our-programs/soteria-house/>.

Safe Haven: provides transitional housing for vulnerable street homeless individuals, primarily women. “low-threshold” resources: they have fewer requirements, making them attractive to those who are resistant to emergency shelter. Safe Havens offer intensive case management, along with mental health and substance abuse assistance, with the ultimate goal of moving each client into permanent housing. <https://breakingground.org/our-housing/midwood>.

Family Crisis Respite: trained and paid community members with extra space in their homes provide respite for individuals who can thereby avoid hospitalization.

Living Room model: a community crisis center that offers people experiencing a mental health crisis an alternative to hospitalization. health crises a calm and safe environment. The community outpatient centers are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and people receive care immediately. Services include: crisis intervention, a safe place in which to rest and relax, support from peer counselors; intervention from professional counselors including teaching de-escalation skills and developing safety plans, Linkage with referrals for emergency housing, healthcare, food, and mental health services. https://smiadviser.org/knowledge_post/what-is-the-living-room-model-for-people-experiencing-a-mental-health-crisis.

Crisis Stabilization Centers: 24/7 community crisis response hub where people of all ages can connect immediately with an integrated team of clinical counselors, peer specialists, and behavioral health professionals, as well as to our local community's health & human service providers, to address any mental health, addiction, or social determinant of health needs. People use the Stabilization Center when they're experiencing emotional distress, acute psychiatric symptoms, addiction challenges, intoxication, family issues, and other life stressors. <https://people-usa.org/program/crisis-stabilization-center/>.

Parachute NYC / Open Dialogue: provides a non-threatening environment where people who are coming undone can take a break from their turbulent lives and think through their problems before they reach a crisis point. Many who shun hospitals and crisis stabilization units will voluntarily seek help at respite centers. Parachute NYC includes mobile treatment units and phone counseling in addition to the four brick-and-mortar respite centers. <https://www.nyaprs.org/e-news-bulletins/2015/parachute-nyc-highlights-success-of-peer-crisis-model-impact-of-community-access>.

Non-residential

Safe Options Support teams: consisting of direct outreach workers as well as clinicians to help more New Yorkers come off of streets and into shelters and/or housing. SOS CTI Teams will be comprised of licensed clinicians, care managers, peers, and registered nurses. Services will be provided for up to 12 months, pre- and post-housing placement, with an intensive initial outreach and engagement period that includes multiple visits per week, each for several hours. Participants will learn self-management skills and master activities of daily living on the road to self-efficacy and recovery. The teams' outreach will facilitate connection to treatment and support services. The SOS CTI Teams will follow the CTI model – a time-limited, evidence-based service that helps vulnerable individuals during periods of transitions. The teams will be serving individuals as they transition from street homelessness to housing. https://omh.ny.gov/omhweb/rfp/2022/sos/sos_cti_rfp.pdf.

Intensive and Sustained Engagement Team (INSET): a model of integrated peer and professional services provides rapid, intensive, flexible and sustained interventions to help individuals who have experienced frequent periods of acute states of distress, frequent emergency room visits, hospitalizations and criminal justice involvement and for whom prior programs of care and support have been ineffective. MHA has found that participants, previously labeled “non-adherent,” “resistant to treatment” or “in need of a higher level of care” and “mandated services,” become voluntarily engaged and motivated to work toward

recovery once offered peer connection, hope and opportunities to collaborate, share in decisions and exercise more control over their lives and their services and supports. their treatment plans. Engaged 80% of people either AOT eligible or AOT involved. <https://www.mhwestchester.org/our-services/treatment-support>.

NYAPRS Peer Bridger™ program: a peer-run and staffed model providing transitional support for people being discharged from state and local hospitals, with the goal of helping people to live successfully in the community, breaking cycles of frequent relapses and readmissions. The program include inpatient and community based intensive one on one peer support groups, discharge planning, connection to community resources; provides access to emergency housing, wrap around dollars and free cell phones and minutes. <https://www.nyaprs.org/peer-bridger>.

NYC Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health Intensive Mobile Treatment teams: provide intensive and continuous support and treatment to individuals right in their communities, where and when they need it. Clients have had recent and frequent contact with the mental health, criminal justice, and homeless services systems, recent behavior that is unsafe and escalating, and who were poorly served by traditional treatment models. IMT teams include mental health, substance use, and peer specialists who provide support and treatment including medication, and facilitate connections to housing and additional supportive services. <https://mentalhealth.cityofnewyork.us/program/intensive-mobile-treatment-imt>.

Pathway Home™: a community-based care transition/management intervention offering intensive, mobile, time-limited services to individuals transitioning from an institutional setting back to the community. CBC acts as a single point of referral to multidisciplinary teams at ten care management agencies (CMAs) in CBC's broader IPA network. These teams maintain small caseloads and offer flexible interventions where frequency, duration and intensity is tailored to match the individual's community needs and have the capacity to respond rapidly to crisis. <https://cbcare.org/innovative-programs/pathway-home/>.

**Testimony to the New York City Council
Committee on Public Safety**

Executive Budget Hearing

May 29, 2025

Allison Hollihan, Director
NY Initiative for Children of Incarcerated Parents



Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Allison Hollihan, and I am the Director of the New York Initiative for Children of Incarcerated Parents at the Osborne Association. As many of you know, Osborne is one of the oldest and largest criminal justice service organizations in the state. Our services reach over 14,000 individuals each year, assisting them and their families in navigating arrest, courts, incarceration on Rikers and in state prisons, and reentry. Through advocacy, direct service, and policy reform, Osborne works to create opportunities for people to heal, grow, and thrive. We are grateful for the Council's ongoing support and look forward to continued collaboration.

In March, I testified about our work with the NYPD to safeguard children when a parent is arrested. Tens of thousands of children experience a parent's arrest each year in NYC and our work with NYPD is critical to ensuring the Patrol Guide changes of 2019 are complied with and that Officers have the tools they need to consider and attend to children's needs during often stressful situations. The City Council is the sole funder of this groundbreaking work, and we are very grateful for the past support, and have submitted a discretionary funding request for continued support. My testimony also includes a letter of support for this work to continue from NYPD Commissioner Tisch.

The City Council funding has allowed us to train over 6,000 NYPD officers and sergeants and to take unprecedented steps toward safeguarding children, but we have much more to accomplish. For example, in January, NYPD hired over 1,000 new recruits and we are scheduled to facilitate three trainings in July 2025 that would only be possible with continued City Council funding. In our submitted discretionary funding request, we also seek to expand our work to the NYC Department of Correction to safeguard and improve interactions with children who visit Rikers, and who are present in situations where their caregiver/parent is arrested as a visitor (which happens quite frequently according to DOC). We hope that the Public Safety Committee and members of the Budget Negotiating Team will support this unique and important work continuing.

The work we are doing to safeguard children of arrested parents in New York City has also had a statewide impact. In large part as a result of our work, the Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) passed an accreditation standard in June 2023 requiring all accredited NYS police departments to have a written protocol and provide training to ensure children are safeguarded and trauma is minimized. Then in December 2024, Governor Hochul signed the Child-Sensitive Arrest bill [into law](#). Osborne is a member of the Municipal Police Training Council (MPTC) advisory panel tasked with creating a model Safeguarding Children of Arrested Parents protocol. These significant steps forward would not have been possible without the City Council passing a local law to Safeguard Children of Arrested Parents and supporting efforts to successfully implement the law.

Our current work with NYPD includes providing training regarding the Patrol Guide sections on safeguarding children, child development, trauma, and interacting with children to all new recruits; the Department's goal is to hire 3,500 new Officers in the coming year, with large classes of 1,000 underway and forthcoming. We are also providing training to promotional classes of newly promoted Sergeants. In the upcoming fiscal year, it is critical for the NYPD Training Bureau to become equipped to fully facilitate the training developed by Osborne and to develop a plan that integrates this into routine training for all staffing levels. We have urged the NYPD to develop a sustainable plan for training all uniformed members of service (UMOS) on the new safeguarding protocols, but substantive planning has yet to begin and has been hindered by staffing changes in the Training Academy and the Department.

Currently, there is no data on how many children are present when a parent or caregiver is arrested in NYC. We provided the NYPD with data collection recommendations, including updating their "aided card" to collect this data, but were told that adding a check box to the aided card would be a lengthy process that the NYPD was not willing to undertake. Knowing how many children are affected is critical to identifying trends, monitoring implementation of the law, and informing funding allocations to ensure community-based support is available for children post-arrest. For several years, the only source for this data was the New York City Criminal Justice Agency (CJA), when it included supplementary questions (not included in its bail

assessment) in interviews of people in New York City awaiting arraignment.¹ Those interviewed by CJA in 2019 indicated they provided care or support to more than **60,347** children in New York City, making it clear that this work is critical for safeguarding many of New York City's children. However, CJA is no longer collecting this robust data, nor did they ever collect data on how many children witness a parent's arrest. Documenting how many children are present at a parent's or caregiver's arrest was not included in the 2019 law and **we urge the Council to consider introducing a bill requiring NYPD to collect this data.**

To expand on our success collaborating with NYPD and to better support the children who visit Rikers, our funding request this year includes expanding our Safeguarding Children work to DOC to provide training to Officers interacting with children, to examine ways the Department can support children's positive visiting experiences, and to work with DOC and ACS to ensure the protocol for visitor arrests when children are present reflects model policies and includes concrete training for Officers. This work builds on our longstanding collaboration with DOC to improve visiting and build consideration of children into their directives and training. We were initial members of the DOC Visiting Workgroup, created back in 2014, and provided visit training to 200 Officers in 2019. We again developed a two-hour training that was provided to all visiting officers back in November 2024 (funded through a grant that no longer funds this work). The current work proposed has great potential to not only support the well-being of children who visit Rikers, but also the well-being of Officers who deserve these tools, clarity, and skills-building. During the November training, we heard from many Officers their desire to have a better protocol in place when visitors with children are arrested. We also receive requests from DOC for background materials and resources such as book lists and toys for children that are permissible in a jail. Our knowledge of visiting and arrests in the context of jails and prisons extends back decades to when Osborne first launched its first Family Center inside of Sing Sing men's prison about 30 years ago. We are eager to continue and expand this work with DOC.

¹ This data reveals that 4,286 (4.3%) of the 98,675 respondents awaiting arraignment provided full-time care to children, and 31,203 (31.6%) respondents provided financial support to one or more children.

Work that is still needed:

- Collaborating with the NYPD Training Bureau to develop a sustainable training plan;
- Reviewing existing NYPD curricula to identify areas where safeguarding children material can be infused;
- Collaborating on an NYPD-produced refresher training video for roll call and in-service training;
- Engaging NYC Department of Correction (DOC) to develop a Safeguarding Children of Arrested Parents protocol that reflects best practices, when visitors with children are arrested;
- Engaging the NYC DOC to develop and facilitate training for Visiting Processing and Room Officers; and
- Engaging the NYC DOC to further develop and implement child-friendly visiting processes.

With 36,000 UMOS, a complex network of community providers in NYC, and many elements to implement, achieving a truly comprehensive, citywide approach to safeguarding children will take time. Therefore, it is imperative that NYPD develop and enact a sustainable training plan that can be carried out by the NYPD Training Bureau without the assistance of Osborne.

Bronx Osborne Gun Accountability and Prevention (BOGAP) Program

In February, Osborne submitted a discretionary funding request for \$20,000 to cover specific program components for our Bronx Osborne Gun Accountability and Prevention (BOGAP) Program. On April 22, we learned our federal funding was immediately terminated by the U.S. Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) resulting in a sudden loss of \$666,000 and more than half of BOGAP's annual operating budget. This has created a dire situation as we scramble to save this incredibly effective program.

At this time, we have 43 young people currently enrolled and more awaiting entry. The abrupt

funding cut by BJA threatens to dismantle the very supports that are helping young people see a brighter future for themselves and change their lives—and our communities—for the better. We urgently need City Council’s support to ensure continuity of care and preserve the full impact of this program, which serves 75 participants annually.

We respectfully request City Council funding to help address the unexpected shortfall in BOGAP funding, specifically an additional \$366,000 to fully restore the program. Your support will help preserve a nationally recognized, evidence-based program at a critical time in our shared mission to prevent violence, promote healing, and create real alternatives to incarceration.

Launched in 2021 in partnership with the Bronx District Attorney’s Office, BOGAP is the first initiative of its kind in New York City. It offers young people ages 16–30 facing first-time gun possession charges a yearlong alternative to incarceration. Rather than simply punishing behavior, BOGAP addresses its root causes—trauma, systemic disinvestment, and lack of opportunity—through trauma-informed treatment, cognitive behavioral therapy, credible messenger mentorship, and career training.

It costs about \$110,000 per year for one person to be incarcerated in a NY State prison, and about \$507,000 per year per person detained on Rikers. BOGAP successfully keeps young people out of jail and prison, saving millions of dollars and achieving positive outcomes and brighter futures for young adults, as demonstrated by our extraordinarily high retention rate (98%) and described last year in this feature article by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. BOGAP not only reduces recidivism, but actively promotes public safety and equity in communities most impacted by gun violence.

In 2024:

- 65 BOGAP participants were served;
- 24 out of 29 exits were successful, or an 83% success rate, preventing 84 years of incarceration (saving millions of dollars);

- Of participants enrolled who were eligible to reach their 3-month-retention rate, 23 out of 24 participants, or 96% did so; and
- Staff facilitated 824 unique group sessions

Ending Surveillance of Children and Families Receiving Calls from an Incarcerated Loved One on Rikers Island

In 2019, New York City became the first jurisdiction in the country to provide free phone calls in its jails, but it has become apparent that even free calls from New York City jails come at a steep cost. DOC and its jail telecom vendor, Securus, constructed a vast, high-tech surveillance network that primarily targets Black and brown New Yorkers. **Without court oversight or a warrant, DOC records every call and collects biometric, financial, and other personal information from all participants, including the roughly 20,000 people admitted to NYC jails each year, as well as their family, children, and friends.**

Securus conducts network analyses on this data and packages it to sell to other law enforcement agencies, meaning that the personal data of impacted New Yorkers can circulate forever. Under Securus' surveillance apparatus, being denied or unable to afford bail means that a detained New Yorker, and their entire community, has fewer rights, less privacy, and diminished dignity. We are concerned that children with incarcerated parents and their family members are being criminalized simply for speaking with their loved ones on the telephone. We are concerned that the information collected on those speaking with their incarcerated loved ones is also being shared with the NYPD's Criminal Group Database and ICE.

We urge the City Council to hold a public hearing on this egregious practice to closely scrutinize the RFP process currently underway to secure a new communications vendor, and to pass the End Correctional Community Surveillance ("ECCoS") Act introduced by Gale Brewer (Int 0963-2024). This Act would achieve the following:

- Ban the recording of phone calls and other digital communications as well as the collection of

any related biometric and location data without a warrant

- Force the destruction of data that has already been collected
- Create a private right of action for anyone whose communications are unlawfully surveilled or whose personal information was unlawfully collected, retained, or disclosed

In closing, the City and State must continue to invest in community-based solutions and implement pre-trial reforms and measures to expedite court processes. Increasing numbers of people are on Rikers and are spending unprecedented amounts of time there, with dire consequences to their health, families, and long-term wellbeing. The plan to Close Rikers by August 2027 must proceed as required by law. Reducing the number of people detained in our City jails and the length of time they spend there must be a priority for the Council and the City, for our shared humanity and for smarter investments that improve on the dismal return we currently receive for spending more than \$507,000 per person per year on Rikers.

Osborne has submitted seven discretionary funding requests, all of which promote public safety for New York City, and these are summarized in an attachment to my testimony.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Contact: Allison Hollihan

Director, New York Initiative for Children of Incarcerated Parents (NYCIP)

ahollihan@osborneny.org

**The Osborne Association
New York City Council
FY26 Discretionary Funding Requests**

Program	Description	FY26 Request	FY25 Funding
Alternatives to Incarceration and Reentry Services (Ref. 194457)	Osborne’s portion of the ATI coalition request, which will support multiple programs: (1) court advocacy and mitigation services; (2) video visiting and family strengthening activities; (3) expansion of job training and placement; (4) elder reentry services; and (5) the Osborne Center for Justice Across Generations.	\$2,052,074	\$1,852,074
Bronx Osborne Gun Accountability and Prevention Program - BOGAP (Ref: 193844)	To support BOGAP—an innovative diversion program developed with the Bronx DA—to serve approximately 75 participants annually. Funds will be used to provide hot meals to program participants, stipends for internships, and additional support services to participants to increase their chances of success in the program.	\$20,000	\$20,000
Elder Reentry Initiative Services and Advocacy (Ref: 194063)	To support two related program areas: (1) The Elder Reentry Initiative’s participant screening, intake and assessment, reentry service plans, community case management, and technical assistance; and (2) Osborne’s advocacy and public education on behalf of older adults.	\$125,000	\$90,000

Health and Wellness – Ending the Epidemic (Ref. 193984)	To support formerly incarcerated people who are living with or at high risk of contracting HIV and come from low-income communities of color, with a focus on LGBTQIA+ people. Osborne will provide sexual health education, prevention/treatment, trauma support, and other supportive services.	\$110,000	\$104,325
Safeguarding Children Initiative (Ref: 193568)	To support the work of Local Law 1349-A, enacted to reduce trauma to children when NYPD arrests the parent of a child. Osborne will provide necessary training and administrative support to the NYPD, and engage and train a network of CBOs that can provide post-arrest support to children.	\$300,000	\$265,000
Improving Behavioral Health and Wellbeing for Youth (Ref: 194209)	For assessing and addressing mental health and trauma in youth impacted by the criminal legal system through treatment options that alleviate stress, improve functioning, and reduce trauma symptoms. Targets: 60 assessments; 120 referrals.	\$158,000	\$158,000
Kinship Reentry Housing Initiative (Ref. 194304)	To sustain and expand the <i>Kinship Reentry Housing Program</i> , which provides financial assistance, case management, and peer support to families housing a loved one returning from incarceration. By addressing economic and logistical barriers to stable reentry housing, the program reduces reliance on the shelter system, strengthens family reunification, and lowers the risk of recidivism.	\$250,000	N/A



THE POLICE COMMISSIONER
CITY OF NEW YORK

April 25, 2025

Speaker Adrienne Adams
New York City Council
250 Broadway Ste. 1880
New York, NY 10007

Dear Speaker Adams:

I have been informed that the Osborne Association has applied for continued New York City Council discretionary funding for its work with the New York City Police Department ("NYPD") on implementing practices and developing training regarding the Child-Sensitive Arrest protocol delineated in New York City Administrative Code section 14-181.

This law was enacted in 2020, specifically to reduce the trauma children and families may face when NYPD officers arrest the caregiver of a minor child. Last year, Osborne received City Council funding which allowed it to assist the NYPD with the implementation of this protocol, which requires training and follow-up support. The law specified that the NYPD should include a nonprofit partner to participate in the process, however, no funding was allocated to accomplish this. I understand that the City Council provided funding to Osborne through which Osborne was able to hire a full-time staff. Further, Osborne was able to make additional staff available to NYPD to develop training materials and establish a network of partner referral organizations, as required in the above mentioned law.

We are in the process of working with Osborne to tailor training to a wide variety of personnel, including recruits, police officers and various ranks of supervisors. We welcome Osborne's role in educating uniformed members of the service about the impact of parental arrest, along with practical ideas for implementing policies designed to lessen trauma at, and following, an arrest including providing and connecting children to safe settings when caregivers are taken into custody.

We would request that you give the Osborne Association's funding application all due consideration for inclusion in the Fiscal Year 2026 budget as it supports a significant City interest.

Sincerely,


Jessica Tisch
Police Commissioner

1 Police Plaza, New York, NY 10038 • 646-610-5410 • Fax: 646-610-5865
Website: <http://nyc.gov/nypd>



**The Arab American
Association of
New York**

City Council Hearing: Committee on Public Safety & Committee on Finance

5/29/2025

Good afternoon, my name is Maryam Khaldi, and I'm the Advocacy & Civic Engagement Manager at the Arab American Association of New York. AAANY was founded not even a month before the attacks of September 11th, 2001, to respond to the needs of low-income, recent Arab immigrants in NYC. After 9/11, AAANY stepped into an advocacy role, recognizing that the onslaught of surveillance tactics by NYPD and federal agencies, hate crimes, and community isolation would not be solved by direct services alone.

Thank you to the Committee on Public Safety and the Committee on Finance for holding this critical hearing and giving us the opportunity to testify. Since 2001, AAANY has been on the frontlines fighting against the continued rise of hate crimes against our communities. In 2021, AAANY joined the Partners Against the Hate Forward Initiative, also known as the PATH program, under the Office of the Prevention of Hate Crimes (OPHC). I'm testifying today with other PATH anchor organizations to acknowledge the impact of this funding on hate violence prevention efforts and to ask for increased investment in community-led public safety initiatives.

As a PATH anchor organization, we offer critical services, including direct services, victim services, mental health services, and more, to address hate violence in conjunction with our sub-anchor organizations. We were chosen to be an anchor organization because we're trusted in the community, and we deliver culturally competent, language-accessible services that government institutions often cannot. While the City was experiencing a rise in hate violence, we stepped up to fill life-saving gaps.



**The Arab American
Association of
New York**

Our sub-anchor organizations have provided 10s of self-defense trainings, trained hundreds of community members on bystander intervention, de-escalation, provided hate crimes prevention workshops and know your rights resources, and advocated both on the local and statewide level for legislation that protects our communities from hate violence.

Our grantee, Council on American Islamic Relations NY (CAIR NY), reported that from 2023-February 2025, as a result of the ongoing genocide in Palestine, received 290 reports of hate crimes or bias incidents against community members on the basis of their identity as Palestinian, Arab, or Muslim. 134 out of 290 reports were made by students in the K-12 and University level, on the basis of their identity as Palestinian, Arab, or Muslim, or for showing pro-Palestine solidarity. So far, in 2025, CAIR NY has received 21 reports of bias incidents in the community.

At AAANY, we've worked with clients who had their hijabs ripped off, clients who were physically assaulted, mosques that were vandalized with hateful words, and more. Our organization has also faced countless hate crimes, including threats of physical violence, and our staff has experienced harassment, stalking, and threats, merely because of our identities and the work we do. I share this with you all today to highlight the urgent need for our organizations' hate violence prevention work to continue, and that our communities continue to fall victim to hate.

The PATH funding has allowed us and our sub-anchor organizations to serve thousands of clients and victims of hate crimes. Despite the program's success, each PATH anchor's funding was cut by \$30,000 for FY2026, by OPHC, limiting our organizations' and sub-anchors' ability to serve victims of hate. At a time of hate, rising fear, and violence, and with a federal administration



**The Arab American
Association of
New York**

spewing anti-immigrant hate, our communities continue to be under attack, and these services are needed now more than ever.

And so today, we ask the New York City Council to increase investment in our community safety work to meet the needs of the communities we serve, and that funding be restored for the PATH initiative. We ask that you support our organizations in providing culturally competent and responsive programming and invest in culturally sensitive and linguistically accessible services to help victims recover. The Arab American Association of New York has been, and will continue to be on the frontlines working to combat hate violence, promote community safety, and ensure that our community members feel safe enough to live their daily lives, without fear of looking over their shoulder, and we hope that the NYC Council will support us in doing so.



**The Arab American
Association of
New York**

City Council Hearing: Community Safety

5/29/2025

Good afternoon, my name is Maryam, and I'm here on behalf of the Arab American Association of New York. Since 2001, AAANY has fought against the continued rise of hate crimes against our communities. In 2021, we joined the Partners Against the Hate Forward Initiative (PATH). AAANY and our grantees have led hundreds of self defense trainings; trained thousands of community members in bystander intervention and de-escalation tactics; provided hate crimes prevention workshops and resources to thousands of New Yorkers, and advocated both on the local and statewide level for legislation that protects our communities from hate violence. One of our grantees, Council on American Islamic Relations NY (CAIR NY), has been collecting data on hate crimes against Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim New Yorkers, many of which go unreported to NYPD and city offices. Since October 2023, they've received 290 reports of hate crimes or bias incidents against community members on the basis of their identity as Palestinian, Arab, or Muslim, or for showing pro-Palestine solidarity, including 134 from students in the K-12 and university levels.

At AAANY, we've seen firsthand the scope and trauma of this hate violence. We've worked with clients whose hijabs were ripped off, mosques that were vandalized with hateful words, and more. Our organization has also faced hate crimes, including threats of physical violence, and our staff has experienced harassment, stalking, and threats, because of our identities and the work we do.



**The Arab American
Association of
New York**

The PATH program allowed us to serve thousands of clients and provide support to hundreds of victims of hate. Despite the program's success, each PATH anchor's funding was cut by \$30,000 for FY26 by OPHC. At a time of hate, rising fear, and with a federal administration spewing anti-immigrant hate, our services are needed more than ever.

We ask the NYC Council to increase investment in our safety work to meet the needs of the communities we serve, and the funding be restored for the PATH initiative. AAANY has been and will continue to be on the frontlines working to combat hate violence, promote community safety, and we hope that the NYC Council will continue to support us in doing so.

**New York City Council Executive Budget Hearing
Committee on Public Safety
Committee on Finance
May 29, 2025**

Testimony submitted by the Drug Policy Alliance

The Drug Policy Alliance (DPA) respectfully submits this testimony to the Committee on Public Safety and the Committee on Finance. DPA addresses the harms of drug use and drug criminalization through policy solutions, organizing, and public education. We advocate for a holistic approach to drugs that prioritizes health, social supports, and community wellbeing. DPA opposes punitive approaches that destabilize people, block access to care, and drain communities of resources. We believe that the regulation of drugs should be grounded in evidence, health, equity, and human rights. In collaboration with other movements, we change laws, advance justice, and save lives.

Across the state, there is a downward trend in overdose deaths. Preliminary figures released this week by the State indicate a 32 percent drop in deaths in 2024, compared to 2023.¹ However, deaths in New York City are not dropping at the same pace as the rest of the state. Last summer, when the State announced a nine percent reduction in deaths outside of New York City, the City's overdose death rate decreased by just 3 percent.² New York City's share of statewide overdose deaths is steadily increasing, now accounting for half of all statewide deaths.³

This latest data doesn't yet include a demographic breakdown, but the most recent complete data shows that as the state has been trending downward, for Black, Latine/Hispanic, and Indigenous New Yorkers the crisis is still growing.⁴ This is acutely true in New York City where, as deaths continued to climb among these populations, deaths among White residents dropped by 14 percent.⁵

The drop in deaths overall is supported by increased access to the overdose reversal medication, naloxone, medications for opioid use disorder, such as methadone and buprenorphine, drug checking tools, and education, including on how to use more safely. But significant gaps remain in equitably serving all New Yorkers. Critical to reducing overdose deaths are access to non-stigmatizing health care and social services, appropriate spaces for people who are unhoused and in active drug use, and connections to community to reduce the prevalence of people using alone. Being forced into hiding due to stigma increases the risk of overdose death. Being unhoused and experiencing criminalization also increase the risk of overdose death.

Homelessness and arrests across the city have both increased in recent years. New York City accounted for 93 percent of the increase in the state's total unhoused population, which doubled between 2022-2024.⁶ Drug arrests have been increasing over the past three years. The increase has

been greatest in the Bronx, where drug arrests have doubled since 2023. The Bronx is also where overdose deaths remain the highest.⁷

The first quarter of 2025 marked an approximate 30 percent jump in overall drug arrests compared to the same period last year.⁸ Enforcement of low-level drug possession accounted for most of this increase. This category alone saw a nearly 50 percent increase compared to the first quarter of 2024. The April 2025 launch of the NYPD's new Quality of Life division concerningly includes policing low-level drug behavior, which threatens to further escalate enforcement of low-level drug possession. This doubling down on criminalization risks increasing the instability of people who are struggling with substance use and at risk of overdose death.

We oppose these increased investments in policing people struggling with substance use. Public drug use is a result of a lack of housing and other appropriate spaces. Instead of arresting people, the city must increase access to appropriate spaces, such as harm reduction focused drop in spaces, for people in active drug use.

We support existing investments in harm reduction programs to keep people alive in the highest need neighborhoods while also increasing opportunities to engage people in stabilizing care related to health, nutrition, hygiene, housing, and employment.

We are happy to see the launch of the community syringe redemption program and we support the Council's demand for additional investments to increase the capacity of syringe service programs to do outreach and litter cleanup in neighborhoods that are not currently served. We also support expanding sanitation services to safely clean up drug litter. We urge the Council to ensure these resources are focused on litter cleanup and not increasing enforcement personnel.

We welcome opportunities to continue to be in conversation with the Council about these concerns and investments. Please contact Toni Smith, tsmith@drugpolicy.org, for questions and further discussion related to these comments.

Thank you.

¹ <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-announces-dramatic-decline-overdose-deaths-new-york-state>

² <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-announces-progress-addressing-opioid-and-overdose-epidemic-across-new-york>

³ <https://oasas.ny.gov/overdose-death-dashboard>

⁴ *ibid*

⁵ <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/epi/databrief142.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.osc.ny.gov/files/reports/pdf/new-yorkers-in-need-homelessness-nys.pdf>

⁷ <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/epi/databrief142.pdf>

⁸ https://data.cityofnewyork.us/Public-Safety/NYPD-Arrest-Data-Year-to-Date-/uip8-fykc/about_data



**TESTIMONY OF
THE FORTUNE SOCIETY**

**THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC SAFETY
AND FINANCE**

City Hall,
New York, NY

Thursday, May 29, 2025

SUBJECT: Executive Budget Hearing

PURPOSE: To highlight the need to invest more in
Alternative to Incarceration and Reentry Services.

Submitted by

Ronald F. Day
Senior Vice President

The Fortune Society
29-76 Northern Blvd.
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212-691-7554

<http://www.fortunesociety.com>

Thank you Chairs Salaam and Brannan and members of the Committees on Public Safety and Finance for the opportunity to submit testimony. My name is Ronald F. Day, and I am the Senior Vice President at The Fortune Society. I have been with the Fortune Society for over ten years managing various units, including discharge planning, other jail-based services, Employment Services, our Center for Research, Inquiry, and Social Justice, and the David Rothenberg Center for Public Policy. My professional experiences, as well as my personal experience serving one year on Rikers Island and 15 years in state prison, inform my understanding of the critical role that Alternatives to Incarceration (ATIs) and reentry services play in encouraging public safety, promoting desistance, and supporting individuals in successfully rebuilding their lives.

For 57 years, The Fortune Society has been committed to supporting people returning from incarceration and providing meaningful alternatives to incarceration. Our work is rooted in the belief that people can change when given the right support and that a just, humane, and rehabilitative criminal legal system is not only possible but necessary. In Fiscal Year 2024, Fortune served over 13,000 individuals through our broad array of programs, including ATI and reentry programming: employment services, mental health and substance use treatment, and across our continuum of housing programs. This year, we are on track to serve over 15,000 people. We house approximately 800 people every night in our emergency, transitional, and permanent supportive housing. We have seen firsthand how comprehensive, community-based interventions change lives, break cycles of incarceration, and create safer communities.

Fortune is proud to be a member of the New York City Alternative to Incarceration (ATI) and Reentry Coalition, a twelve-member organization that functions as a true ecosystem to provide comprehensive, holistic, and life-changing supports to our collective participants, who total approximately 30,000 annually. We are grateful to the City Council for standing with us in the face of the cuts to ATI and reentry services set forth in the Administration's preliminary budget. We are also grateful to all parties involved that those nearly \$17 million in cuts have been fully restored and, finally, baselined. Baselining this funding is a clear and long overdue historic acknowledgement of the efficacy and impact of ATI and reentry services. During this time of looming federal budgetary uncertainty, however, we urge the Council to provide additional funding to shore up our proven and critical programs. As history shows us, cuts to social services and safety nets fall hardest on the most vulnerable groups, including the people that we serve, who are disproportionately Black and brown and extremely low income. In

addition, as the population on Rikers rises unnecessarily even as the deadline for its long overdue closure draws near, we must invest in the kinds of solutions that keep people out of, or from returning to, our city jails. Therefore, we request that the Council provides the Coalition with \$2.4 million in additional funding through the ATI discretionary fund, or an additional \$200,000 per organization, so that each organization can fill potential gaps in our programs, as well as innovate and enhance our services to be fully responsive to our participants' needs.

I encourage Council Members to read the Coalition's report [*Expanding Alternatives to Incarceration in NYC: A Pathway to Safely Closing Rikers Island*](#). I am immensely proud that one of the successful Fortune ATI participants featured in that report is now a colleague, Corinthian Black, whose relationship with Fortune started when he was a participant in our ATI gun diversion program. Corinthian regularly carried a firearm because he felt that was the only way to keep himself safe. Once arrested on a gun charge, he faced either a felony conviction, with its lifetime stigma and imprisonment upstate, or mandated participation in our gun diversion program. Reluctant and skeptical at first, Corinthian learned life-saving de-escalation and communication strategies through cognitive behavioral therapy and sessions with a credible messenger mentor. As he recounts in the report, "That alone has saved me more than once...It made me realize how much my first reaction didn't have to be my only reaction." Due to his exemplary participation and hard work, Corinthian earned himself a job as a Community Navigator in our Atlas Hope partnership in the South Bronx. He is only twenty-three years old and has unlimited potential, striving to give back to his community through his own example of transformation. While Corinthian is certainly exceptional, he is not the exception; there are countless more people who participate in ATI programs offered by Fortune and our sister organizations and quite literally turn their lives around, becoming true pillars of our communities. That is how we create public safety.

ATI and reentry programs go beyond fulfilling court and supervision mandates; they are entry points to a network of services that empower people to rebuild their lives. At Fortune, we make a lifetime commitment to every single person that we serve. People whose court or parole mandates have ended routinely remain engaged in our services. Some people return weekly to see a therapist, or to participate in our creative writing workshop, or to take another employment services workshop to boost their employability. Other people come back to us years later when they hit a bump in the road, such as the loss of a job that triggers a relapse; that means they are

not instead making bad choices out of desperation. Again, this is what true public safety looks like.

The people we serve at Fortune undergo transformations that should serve as inspiration to us all and proof that given access to opportunities, people can and do succeed. A participant in one of our other programs funded by the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ), whom I will call Mr. S, exemplifies this: he was caught in a relentless cycle of addiction and incarceration that spanned years. Each time he was released, he struggled to stay sober and found himself returning to court and to jail, until he came to Fortune. With the support of his case manager and the structure of the program, Mr. S was finally able to address the root causes of his addiction. He enrolled in employment workshops, built a support network, and committed himself to change. Today, Mr. S is employed full-time, sober, and working toward securing his own apartment. Similarly, Ms. H participated in numerous workshops and courses with us after coming home from incarceration. She is now working on an art project that will be displayed at a local gallery, looking for full-time employment, and collaborating with community organizations on policy proposals to improve the justice system.

The successes of the people described above are testament to the power of comprehensive ATI and reentry services funded by MOCJ. Increased investment is essential to maintaining and expanding the services that keep New Yorkers out of jail and on pathways to success, and to creating true public safety in our city.

For far too long, we have relied on mass incarceration as a crime control strategy, despite clear evidence that it has negative impacts on families and communities and is not a recipe for public safety. We must not continue to waste resources on the punitive and ineffective strategy of increasing mass incarceration in our own backyard, which continues to cause worsening disproportionate harm to Black and brown families and communities.¹ Investing in proven strategies is not only a moral necessity, it also aligns with public safety and fiscal wisdom and fosters economic justice, advances racial equity, and upholds our collective humanity. City Council support for ATI and reentry services enables individuals who have had system involvement to move forward, contribute to their communities, and build the futures they deserve, which has the additional tremendous benefit of making us all safer.

¹ Blau, R. (2023, March 2). "Racial Gap in City Jails Has Only Gotten Worse, John Jay Study Finds." The City. <https://www.thecity.nyc/2023/03/02/racial-gap-nyc-jails-got-worse/>.



Testimonial Letter to New York City Council Committee on Public Safety
Hon. Yusef Salaam, Chair
5/29/2025

Good afternoon to Chair Yusef Salaam and members of the Committee. My name is Tashoy Miller, and I serve as the Director of Administrative & Member Affairs at the Women's Community Justice Association, home of the Justice 4 Women Taskforce and BeyondRosie's Campaign. Thank you to Chair Salaam and the City Council for your support for the safety of the people across New York City. I'm writing to call on our city to prioritize funding for Public Safety.

Today, I want to be clear that public safety begins behind bars and right now what's happening inside jails like Rikers and in the community when people reach out for help is the opposite of safety. Did you know that B-HEARD, the city's urgent response to a mental health crisis, has a 3-hour wait time for a mental health emergency? Imagine calling 911 for a heart attack and being told to wait three hours. That's not a response that's neglect.

Over 52% of people at Rikers have mental health concerns. At the Rose M. Singer Center, that number climbs to over 80% of the women. Yet the resources and planning needed to support these individuals before, during, and after incarceration are deeply inadequate. Discharge planning is often an afterthought, and when people return home, they do so without the necessary support for housing, care, or healing. That's not public safety either, it's a setup for failure. Now, with men being moved into the women's facility, there is even less space, fewer resources, and disrupted programming for a population already underserved. The few programs available for women are being squeezed or erased altogether.

Public safety means having systems that prevent harm and support healing. That starts with real investment in mental health infrastructure, both in and outside jail walls, fully funded, gender-responsive programming, not reductions disguised as reforms and discharge plans that actually prepare people to succeed, not just survive. If we want a safer New York, we need to stop relying on jails as default mental health institutions and start building community-based systems that care.

Thank you,

Tashoy Miller



Testimony of the Worker's Justice Project (WJP)
Proyecto Justicia Laboral

Presented to:
New York City Council
Committee on Public Safety and Committee on Finance

Chairs:
Hon. Yusef Salaam, Chair, Committee on Public Safety
Hon. Justin Brannan, Chair, Committee on Finance

Date:
May 29, 2025

Prepared By: William Medina

Members of Worker's Justice Project

Worker's Justice Project (WJP)
365 Broadway Brooklyn NY 11211 * 132 32nd St. Ofc 101 Brooklyn NY 11232



Thank you, Chairs Yusef Salaam and Justin Brannan, for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is William Medina. I am a proud leader of Los Deliveristas Unidos and an organizer with Worker's Justice Project (WJP). I come before you today not only as an advocate, but as a delivery worker—representing the voices, struggles, and hopes of more than 65,000 app-based delivery workers across New York City.

We are here today because a new NYPD policy, quietly implemented at the beginning of May, has made delivery workers the main target of criminal enforcement for minor traffic violations. In just the first two weeks, over 1,000 criminal summonses were issued—nearly all to Black, Brown, and immigrant delivery workers. This isn't about public safety—it's about criminalizing survival.

Let me be clear: this policy applies only to cyclists, not to drivers. If a delivery cyclist crosses a red light—often while navigating unrealistic delivery timeframes—they receive a criminal court summons, forcing them into a complex legal system many are unfamiliar with. There's no legal guidance, no language access, and a deep fear—especially for undocumented workers—of immigration enforcement and raids.

We are being pushed into the criminal justice system, often for the first time, with no support. Many workers don't show up to court out of fear or confusion. Others attend, only to be told due to administrative errors they must return multiple times—losing critical income each day. Even worse, criminal summonses can trigger background checks by the apps, leading to sudden deactivations and the loss of our only source of income.

I speak to you today angry, frustrated, and heartbroken. During the pandemic, we were hailed as essential heroes. Now, under this administration's policy, we are treated like criminals. ↴

This enforcement doesn't solve the real issues of street safety—it only deepens inequality. It subjects some of the hardest-working people in our city to harassment, surveillance, and economic devastation. It prioritizes policing over protection and punishment over progress.

Meanwhile, app companies push us to deliver faster and take more risks. Their algorithms penalize us for being late—often based on impossible delivery times—forcing workers to choose between their safety and their job.

Instead of criminalizing us, the City should be investing in us.



We call on the Council to:

- End this harmful criminal summons policy targeting cyclists.
- Invest in the programs that protect and uplift immigrant and app-based workers.

Specifically, we urge you to fund:

- \$200,000 for Protect NYC Immigrant Families, which provides vital legal support against enforcement threats.
- \$100,000 for citywide Deliverista outreach and safety training, giving workers the knowledge to defend their rights.
- \$4.97 million for the Day Laborer Workforce Initiative, connecting workers to living-wage jobs and workforce training.
- \$150,000 for OSHA-30 Construction Safety Training, ensuring workers can work safely and legally.
- \$10,000 in discretionary funding, supporting job training, healthcare access, and critical community services.

These are not just numbers. They are lifelines. They represent dignity, safety, and a fair shot at a better life for thousands of workers who keep New York City running every day—rain or shine.

Today, I ask you to stand with us. End policies that criminalize the working poor. Invest in programs that protect immigrant workers. And build a city that values the lives, labor, and humanity of all its workers.

Thank you for listening—and for standing on the side of justice.



**Testimony of Merlyn Mejia, Case Manager at the Women's Prison Association
Committee on Public Safety Executive Budget Hearing
May 29, 2025**

Good afternoon, my name is Merlyn Mejia, and I am thankful and honored to represent WPA's mission and impact at today's hearing. Chair Salaam and the rest of the members of the Public Safety Committee, I want to thank you for the opportunity to provide this written testimony.

Throughout its 180-year history WPA is a force for change, challenging the systemic inequities that criminalize and marginalize women, particularly Black and brown women, at disproportionate rates. For these women, incarceration is not merely a consequence of a single event but the result of compounding systemic failures: poverty, housing instability, trauma, and lack of opportunity.

I have seen this firsthand, as a participant and now as a Case Manager. I support our clients through our home-based alternatives to incarceration program, JusticeHome. We work with the courts to allow our participants to remain within their communities and with their loved ones. We want our JusticeHome participants to maintain their everyday lives, without getting summoned away from their kids, their job, or their home.

That means less women are incarcerated. Less mothers separated from their children. And more opportunities, more chances to invest in community instead of the carceral system.

I discovered JusticeHome's impact for the first time when I was a program participant. I was a single mom in need of a second chance, an ATI program that could help me care for my child, and I found that through JusticeHome. The program changed my life, my daughter's life, and set me up for success. I was able to find gainful employment, and now I work at WPA as a case manager for the very same program that gave me a second chance. Instead of investing in my punishment, the city invested in my prosperity. In keeping a mother home with her daughter. In an alternative to Rikers that prioritized my safety and security.

JusticeHome, like all ATI and reentry programs, is a public safety response. Our work is in the community, developing the infrastructure to meaningfully address structural barriers that have harmed women—particularly women of color—for far too long.

Community-based initiatives lead to lower incarceration rates in New York City, and create pathways forward for individuals and communities that have been disproportionately harmed by incarceration. The investments we have made are a start but only a start.



347 EAST 10TH STREET NEW YORK, NY 10009 | 646-292-7710 | info@wpaonline.org

When we divest from incarceration and distribute funds into communities and programs like Justice Home, we build safer communities and a safer city. There are over 500 women held on Rikers Island right now. That is more than 500 women like me. While holding a woman on Rikers Island costs the city \$500,000 a year each time she is there, it costs the city about 1/10th of that to invest in our work, and the ripple of effects of our success is outsized and generational.

At WPA, we believe that together with our partners, we can develop the services and support to make the community the public safety-minded default, rather than Rikers Island. This requires greater investment in our work, centering on the following priorities to develop the infrastructure of services to meaningfully address the compounding system failures that diminish safety.

Alternatives to Detention and Incarceration

WPA is working to expand diversion programs like JusticeHome. These interventions target women before incarceration, addressing the systemic factors—poverty, housing instability, and trauma—that disproportionately affect women of color.

Reentry Ecosystems

For women returning to their communities, WPA offers holistic support: safe housing, clinical care, and employment programs that foster independence and stability. This ecosystem approach reduces recidivism and strengthens communities.

Policy Advocacy for Systemic Reform

Drawing from decades of frontline experience, WPA champions policy changes to reduce the criminalization of poverty and expand access to community-based support. By embedding equity in the justice system, these reforms create scalable, systemic change.

To accomplish these goals, we are seeking funding in the following areas:

1. ATI/Reentry Coalition Funding - \$1,095,200

The Coalition's community-based alternatives to punitive systems lead to lower incarceration rates in New York City and provide individuals and communities that have been disproportionately harmed by mass incarceration in New York with pathways to healing and prosperity. This funding and this work provide WPA with the foundation upon which we can build our holistic approach to expand these ATI/Reentry services.

2. Speaker's Initiative Funding - \$200,000

WPA is seeking funding to layout a clear, practical pathway to making incarceration obsolete in New York City. Shifting the system's default response to meaningful, responsive support in the community, rather than Rikers Island. This funding will allow us to strengthen our partnerships while identifying gaps and developing pilot services to address those gaps.



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3. Mental Health for Vulnerable Populations Funding - \$200,000

We are seeking funding to provide robust clinical care to our clients. We see clinical, behavioral health care as essential service for our clients regardless of where they are in the criminal legal process. These services will improve outcomes and public safety.

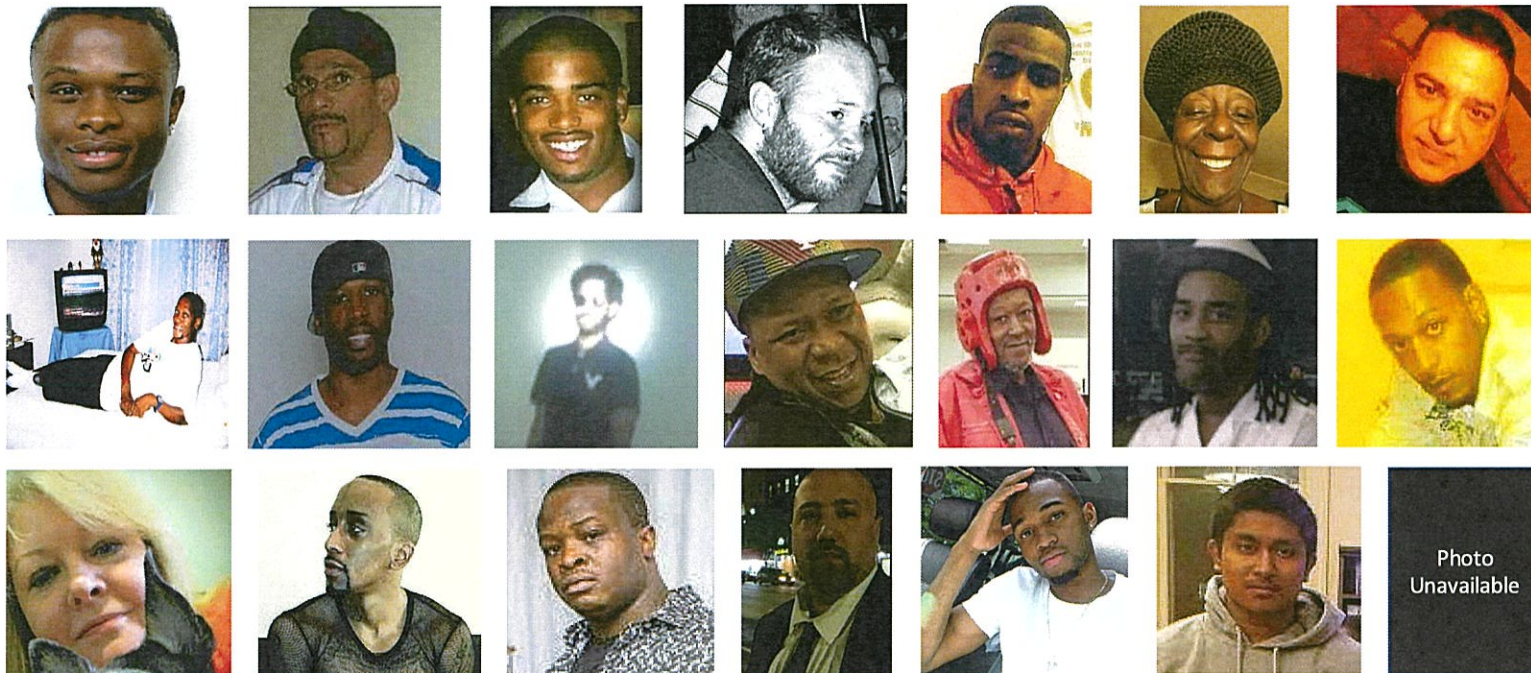
4. Discharge Planning Funding - \$1,000,000

With this funding WPA will develop a robust discharge planning infrastructure to ensure that planning begins the moment a person sets foot on Rikers Island. That initial work can support long-term planning. It can also support, where appropriate, a short-term plan for a motion to reconsider bail and a release into an alternative to detention or incarceration program.

Our vision is to more systematically shift resources from punishment to prevention, addressing the root causes of incarceration. In doing so, WPA will break barriers, shatter systems, and reshape societal norms to significantly reduce the number of women incarcerated in New York City. We will also significantly increase the opportunity, financial security, and stability for the women, their families, their communities and our city. At WPA we believe that the women we serve, like me, are more than a number and more than their past—we are unique individuals with immense potential to help shape our community for a better tomorrow.

Please contact our CEO, Meg Egan, by email, megan@wpaonline.org or by phone at 646.292.7710 with any questions.

See their faces. Say their names.



Left to right, twenty-one individuals killed by the NYPD while experiencing a mental health crisis:

David Felix (April 2015), Mario Ocasio (June 2015), Anthony Paul (July 2015), Garry Conrad (May 2016), Rashaun Lloyd (June 2016), Deborah Danner (October 2016), Ariel Galarza (November 2016), James Owens (January 2017), Dwayne Jeune (July 2017), Miguel Richards (September 2017), Cornell Lockhart (November 2017), Dwayne Pritchett (January 2018), Michael Hansford (January 2018), Saheed Vassell (April 2018), Susan Muller (September 2018), Kawaski Trawick (April 2019), Kwesi Ashun (October 2019), George Zapantis (June 2020), Eudes Pierre (December 2021), Win Rozario (March 2024), King Wong (April 2025)

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

26

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: David Cook

Address: [REDACTED] Staten Island

I represent: NY 10706 EMSpac/FDNY

Address: All the People

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ADRIANNA RIVERA

Address: [REDACTED] DOBBS FERRY NY

I represent: EMSPAC

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/24/05

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lynne Gualpa

Address: _____

I represent: Workers Justice Project

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5-20-25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Xarello Leonardo

Address: _____

I represent: 201st Dist 24th Precinct

Address: 201st Dist 24th Precinct

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

22

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Michael Green

Address: _____

I represent: Local 2507

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

21

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: LISA SCHREIBERDORF

Address: _____

I represent: Brooklyn 20th Precinct

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

20

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Reem Ramadan

Address: _____

I represent: NYC Anti-Violence Project

Address: 116 Nassau St, FL 3

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/29/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Hana Tariq

Address: [REDACTED] Bayside, NY 11361

I represent: Korean American Family Service Center

Address: 154-08 Northern Blvd 2G Flushing, NY 11354

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/29/2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Mariam Khalidi

Address: [REDACTED] Brooklyn, NY 11220

I represent: Arab American Association of NY

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Daphne Thammalika

Address: _____

I represent: Asian American Federation

Address: 120 Wall St.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Hailey Nolasco

Address: 520 8th Avenue

I represent: Center for Justice Innovation

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Juval Scott

Address: The Bronx Defenders

I represent: 300 161st Bronx 10457

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

14

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/29/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kevin Mestrich

Address: [redacted] 124th Street

I represent: Getting Out and Staying Out

Address: [redacted] 124th Street

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/29

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ryali Basal

Address: Neighborhood Defender Council of Harlem

I represent: " "

Address: 317 Lenox Ave

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

12

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5-29-25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jesse Stephen

Address: 107-48 93rd

I represent: EMS PAC

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/29/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Megan French-Marcello

Address: 225 Varick

I represent: ATI Coalition

Address: _____

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: May 29, 2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Mary Kramer

Address: _____

I represent: Getting Out and Staying Out (GOSO)

Address: _____

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: May 29, 2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Constance Lesold

Address: _____ BRUYN, NY 11225

I represent: _____

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

8

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/29/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jane Fox

Address: 60 Broadway NYC

I represent: UAW Local 2325

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 05-29-2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: William Medina

Address: 365 Broadway

I represent: Workers Justice Project

Address: 365 Broadway

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

6

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Y. JENNINS

Address: [REDACTED] 21124

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

5

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5-29-2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: RICHARD William FLORES

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

4

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Christopher Leon Phinsey

Address: _____

I represent: Self

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/29/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ruth Lowenkron

Address: _____

I represent: NY Lawyers for the Public Interest

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Cardyn Lewis

Address: 2541- 7th Ave, NYC NY

I represent: Nat'l Child ID Pgm

Address: _____

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/29/2020

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Aristyda Skinner

Address: 125 Broadway St NY NY 10007

I represent: President Local 5911 DC 37

Address: (911 operators)

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/29/20

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JOSEPH KENNEDY MDD

Address: 1 Police Plaza

I represent: MDD

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/29/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Deputy Chief Gregory Clifford

Address: 1 Police Plaza Park

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/29/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Deputy Commissioner of Legal Affairs

Address: Michael Grotto

I represent: 1 Police Plaza Park

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/29/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Deputy Commissioner of Management

Address: 1 Building Kristine RYA

I represent: 1 Police Plaza Park

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/29/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: First Deputy Commissioner

Address: Tania Kinsella

I represent: 1 Police Plaza Path

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/29/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Police Commissioner

Address: Jessie A Tisch

I represent: 1 Police Plaza Path

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Robert F. ...

Address: 1 ...

I represent: MOC

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/29/28

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nora Danie

Address: 1 Centre Street

I represent: Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice

Address: 1 Centre Street

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Deanna Logan

Address: 1 Centre Street

I represent: Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Candice Tihen

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms