

TESTIMONY

**Before the Council of the City of New York
Committees on Finance and Children and Youth
Hearing on
The Executive Budget for
Fiscal Year 2027**

Presented by

Commissioner Sandra Escamilla-Davies

May 28, 2026



The Department of Youth & Community Development

Good afternoon, Chairs Lee and Stevens and members of the Finance and Children and Youth Committees.

I am Commissioner Sandra Escamilla-Davies. I am joined by Chief Financial Officer Nevita Bailey and other DYCD staff who are here and available to answer your questions. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss DYCD's Fiscal Year 2027 Executive Budget.

Since becoming Commissioner, I have spent the past several months listening and learning from staff, providers, and partners across the city. What has become clear is that DYCD is powered by an extraordinarily dedicated workforce and provider network that continues to deliver critical services for children, youth, families, and communities every day.

As the agency has grown significantly over the years, both in scale and complexity, my team and I are taking a thoughtful look at how our internal infrastructure, staffing, and operational systems support that work. This includes examining areas such as procurement, contracting, payments, program operations, and performance management so that DYCD can continue to operate in a way that is responsive, effective, and aligned with the evolving needs of New Yorkers.

At the same time, we are engaging providers and community partners to better understand both operational challenges and opportunities for innovation across our programs and services. These conversations are helping to inform how we strengthen the broader ecosystem that supports young people and families across the city.

The Executive Budget presented today reflects Mayor Mamdani's vision for a more affordable, equitable, and safer New York City and demonstrates a continued commitment to the children, youth, families, and communities that DYCD serves every day. Despite broader fiscal pressures facing the city, the budget protects DYCD's core programming and continues to invest in services and opportunities that support young people and strengthen communities across all five boroughs.

DYCD proposed a series of savings totaling \$10.9 million in the current Fiscal year, \$34.8 million next year and \$32.7 million in the outyears. This includes savings from conducting audit functions in house, along with savings from readjustments to cost estimates.

The budget stands at \$1.619 billion, compared to \$1.633 billion in the Fiscal 2027 Preliminary Budget.

- \$1.5 billion or about 92% is city tax levy funds;
- \$105.4 million, or 6.51%, in federal funds;
- \$18.4 million, or about 1.13%, in state funding; and
- \$5.2 million, or 0.32%, in intracity funds.

These resources support a wide range of investments across the agency's portfolio. While not an exhaustive list, I want to highlight several key initiatives that reflect how these funds strengthen services for young people, families, and communities across the city.

COMPASS Request for Proposals

The Comprehensive Afterschool System of NYC (COMPASS) is the nation's largest afterschool system, serving elementary and middle school students across New York City through COMPASS Elementary and School's Out New York City (SONYC).



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The release of the COMPASS Center-Based and School-Based awards marks the first major re-procurement and modernization of afterschool contracts in more than a decade. This investment reflects what families, schools, and providers have consistently called for: expanded access, stronger program quality, workforce stability, and greater equity across the afterschool system.

For Fiscal Year 2027, the City committed \$727 million in COMPASS funding. This investment supports the addition of 20,000 new elementary school seats over three school years and increases the price per participant rate to better support provider sustainability, staffing, and high-quality programming for children and families.

DYCD announced:

- 121 center-based awards representing 7,840 seats on April 6
- 806 school-based awards representing 95,841 seats on May 14
- Expansion into 71 new elementary schools across 32 high need Community Districts
- 8,621 additional seats citywide
- 52 new community-based organizations joining the COMPASS portfolio, including at least one in every borough

This RFP also introduced an updated program model designed to better reflect the evolving needs of young people and families, including:

- Stronger expectations around social emotional learning
- Career exploration and future readiness
- Expanded inclusion supports
- Enhanced program quality standards
- Greater alignment between afterschool programming and broader youth development goals

The increased investment in COMPASS represents an investment in stability for the sector by supporting stronger staffing structures, better wages, more sustainable programming models, and expanded access for children and families across New York City.

We are proud of the expanded access, strengthened program model, and new investments reflected in these awards. At the same time, we also recognize that there were providers who were not awarded contracts through this process. For some organizations, this transition may have significant financial and operational impacts, particularly for providers that have served children, families, and school communities for many years. We do not take that lightly. Those contributions, relationships, and years of service are meaningful and worthy of recognition and respect.

This was a competitive procurement process guided by clearly defined evaluation criteria, including program quality, organizational capacity, and operational readiness. In partnership with New York City Public Schools, the process also incorporated principal input for school-based programs.

As implementation moves forward, DYCD's focus is on supporting thoughtful transitions, maintaining continuity for young people and families, and working closely with schools, outgoing providers, incoming providers, and communities to help programs open strong in the fall.



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Summer Rising

The Summer Rising 2026 application portal opened on March 3 and closed on March 27, during which time more than 150,000 applications were submitted by families across New York City.

Using a data driven understanding of enrollment patterns and demand, the City extended approximately 127,000 offers to families, an increase of 3,500 offers compared to last summer. Available seats will continue to be offered to families throughout the summer.

To support expanded access, New York City Public Schools opened 19 additional buildings, bringing the total number of Summer Rising sites citywide to 379.

DYCD and New York City Public Schools continue to work closely together to strengthen and expand high quality summer enrichment opportunities for young people. This includes deeper collaboration between principals and community-based organizations, strengthened supports for students with disabilities, and enhanced programming opportunities such as field trips, enrichment activities, and career exploration.

Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY)

We are thankful for the earlier Mayoral commitment to continue the critical roles of Housing Navigators, Peer Navigators, and Financial Coaches as part of the services offered youth in our RHY Drop-In Centers in FY27. The budget process is ongoing, but we are pleased that the City recognizes the importance of these supports for runaway and homeless youth and providers have the opportunity to better plan the delivery of services for the upcoming fiscal year.

Summer Youth Employment Program

Mayor Mamdani officially launched the 2026 Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) on January 20, marking the earliest application opening in the program's history. The program received a record 230,000 applications from young people across New York City.

Funded at \$246 million, SYEP will once again serve more than 100,000 youth this summer through paid work experiences, career exposure, skill building, and supportive opportunities. As one of the nation's largest youth employment programs, SYEP continues to be a critical pathway to economic opportunity and future readiness for young New Yorkers.

This year, DYCD is expanding CareerReady programming to 260 schools, up from 230 in 2025, while continuing High School Credit and CareerReady CUNY Reach so more students can earn high school or college credit through participation.

The program also continues to prioritize young people facing barriers to employment, including NYCHA residents and youth living in Priority Precinct communities. In addition, DYCD is continuing initiatives launched in previous years, including SYEP Pride, in partnership with the Mayor's Office of Equity and Racial Justice and the NYC Commission on Human Rights, which provides provider and employer training, supportive work experiences, and professional development opportunities for participants.



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Fatherhood Program

To date, DYCD's Fatherhood programs have engaged more than 500 fathers, supporting them as they navigate co-parenting, custody, and other complex family challenges while strengthening parenting skills, family stability, and long-term father engagement. Through workshops, training, and supportive resources, these programs help fathers build stronger connections with their children, families, and communities.

Last month, DYCD hosted its second annual Fatherhood Policy Symposium, convening more than 100 leaders from government, academia, and community organizations to highlight the critical role fathers play in the well-being of children and families and to advance father friendly policies and practices across the city.

On June 25, DYCD will host its fifth annual Affirming Fatherhood convening at John Jay College of Criminal Justice to further elevate the importance of father engagement, leadership, and community connection, while continuing conversations about how systems and institutions can better support fathers and families across New York City.

Thank you again for the opportunity to discuss the Fiscal 2027 Executive Budget. We look forward to answering your questions.