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COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

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CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

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September 15, 2021
Start: 11:01 a.m.
Recess: 12:50 p.m.

HELD AT: REMOTE HEARING - VIRTUAL ROOM 1

B E F O R E: Deborah L. Rose,
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Margaret S. Chin
Mathieu Eugene
Oswald Feliz
Farah N. Louis
Bill Perkins
Kevin C. Riley

COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

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A P P E A R A N C E S

Randy A Scott
Assistant Commissioner for Vulnerable and Special
Needs Youth at the Department of Youth and
Community Development

Tracey Thorne
RHY Director

Jamie Powlovich
Executive Director of Coalition for Homeless
Youth

Jayne Bigelsen
Vice President of Advocacy at Covenant House New
York

Anthony George
Project Hospitality

Maddox Guerilla
Youth Action Board Director

Ramon Leclerc
Alternatives

SERGEANT LUGO: PC Recording done.

SERGEANT KOTOWSKI: Okay, good morning and welcome to today's Remote New York City Council Hearing of the Committee on Youth Service. At this time, would Council Staff please turn on their video. Please place electronic devices on vibrate or silent. If you wish to submit testimony, you may do so at testimony@council.nyc.gov. That is testimony@council.nyc.gov. Thank you. Chair, we are ready to begin.

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you. [GAVEL] Thank you for joining our virtual hearing today on this very important issue. Good morning, my name is Deborah Rose and I am the Chair of New York City Council's Committee on Youth Services.

I'd like to acknowledge and recognize the members of the Council who have joined us of the Committee and I see Council Member Chin. Thank you for joining us this morning.

Today, the Committee on Youth Services is conducting an Oversight Hearing on the Youth Count. The Youth Count which is administered annually by the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development, DYCD. Every year the city conducts a

point and time count of homeless adults, youth and families in New York City based on the guidelines issued by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development or HUD.

This count is comprised of three parts. The first part is the Homeless Outreach Population Estimate or the HOPE Count. Which counts the number of unsheltered individuals. Unsheltered individuals are individuals is narrowly defined as those individuals residing in a place not meant for human habitation.

Number Two, is a census of individuals and families in transitional homes and emergency shelters and Number Three, the subject of today's hearing, the Youth Count. The Youth Count supplements the HOPE Count by capturing unsheltered youth. Individuals 24 years and under not included in the HOPE Count. The resulting data is then used to determine how much funding will be allocated towards Runaway and Homeless Youth Services. A social service sector that advocates have described as starved.

The Youth Count plays a crucial role in determining what services are available to our city's extremely vulnerable unsheltered homeless youth

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2 population. As such, it is imperative that its
3 results are as accurate as possible. This is
4 especially crucial in the midst of the ongoing COVID-
5 19 pandemic. Which has exacerbated poverty and
6 homelessness in New York City, drained financial
7 resources and created additional barriers to service.

8 Despite the critical need for an accurate youth
9 count, concerns of undercounting have been a
10 recurrent theme in previous hearings. Since 2015,
11 when the United States Interagency Council on
12 Homelessness mandated youth count. The citywide
13 numbers of identified unsheltered homeless youth
14 ranged from a low of 152 in 2016, to the high of 265
15 in 2017. These estimates stand in stark contrast to
16 the many hundreds of unsheltered homeless youth that
17 providers encountered in the course of their work.

18 While the resulting low numbers are partially due
19 to HUD's narrow definition of the term unsheltered.
20 Advocates and providers have regularly raised
21 credible concerns that the Youth Count is
22 underfunded, understaffed, methodically weak, and
23 lacks critical youth participation. With each Youth
24 Count and related hearings, it has become
25 increasingly clear that the methodologies used need

1
2 to be expanded to ensure that every effort is made to
3 get an accurate count, which is crucial to runaway
4 and homeless youth having access to needed resources
5 and services.

6 Number One, it is imperative both that DYCD and
7 the next administration establish a Youth Count and
8 runaway and homeless youth in general as their
9 highest priorities. These services must be
10 adequately funded because when we invest in our
11 youth, we invest in our collective future.

12 Number Two, accordingly DYCD should reevaluate
13 the resources allocated towards Youth Count and
14 ensure that the program is adequately staffed with
15 individuals with homeless youth specific trauma
16 informed training.

17 Three, DYCD should work to strengthen its
18 partnerships with the Department of Education. There
19 is evidence that strong collaboration with
20 educational systems is a common factor in successful
21 youth counts across the nation.

22 DYCD should incentivize the participation of
23 youth as both Youth Count surveyors and respondents.
24 Advocates and providers and most crucially, youth
25 with lived experiences of homelessness, should have

an increased role in all stages of the Youth Count. The planning, the decision making and the implementation process.

And lastly, since the Youth Count and the HOPE Count are conducted in January, on one of the coldest nights of the year, DYCD should work to gain greater access to Youth Count respondents, particularly in indoor spaces, such as abandoned buildings, 24 hour retail establishments and hospital emergency rooms. None of which are being accessed now.

At today's hearing, we shall consider to what extent these recommendations are reflected in the latest Youth Count results and preparations for the upcoming count. In addition, the Committee will examine the Youth Counts methodology, planning process, resources and ways to capture a more accurate estimate of unsheltered homeless youth in New York City.

We will also explore how the Youth Count has adapted to the pandemic and we will elicit feedback and experiences of the youth, providers, advocates and community members.

In closing, we are here today to work cooperatively to ensure that our most vulnerable

youth have adequate access to critical resources and services during not only one of the darkest moments in their lives, but also particularly challenging times in our city's history.

I would like to thank the staff behind the scenes for making sure that our online hearing runs smoothly. I would also like to thank the Youth Committee Staff for their work on this issue. Committee Counsel Emi Briggs, Committee Policy Analyst Anastasssia Zimina, and Financial Analyst Michele Peregrin.

And a big thank you to my staff as well, Legislative and Budget Director Isa Cortez and Legislative Aide Christian Revello. And with that, I'd like to begin.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chair. I'm Emi Briggs, Counsel to the Committee on Youth Services for the New York City Council. I will be moderating today's hearing and calling panelists to testify.

Before we begin, I would like to remind everyone that you will be on mute until I call on you to testify. After you are called, you will be unmuted by the host. Please listen for your name; I will periodically announce who the next panelists will be.

Council Member questions will be limited to five minutes and Council Members, please note that this includes both your questions and the witnesses answers. Please also note that we will allow a second round of questions at today's hearing. These will be limited to two minutes. Again, including both your question and the witnesses answers.

For public testimony, I will call up individuals in panels. Council Members who have questions for a particular panelist should use the raise hand function in Zoom. You will be called on after everyone on that panel has completed their testimony.

For public panelists, once I call your name, a member of our staff will unmute you and the Sergeant at Arms will give you the go ahead to begin speaking after setting the timer. All public testimony will be limited to three minutes. After I call your name, please wait a brief moment for the Sergeant at Arms to announce that you may begin before starting your testimony.

I will now call on the following members of the administration to testify: Randy Scott, the DYCD Assistant Commissioner for Vulnerable and Special Needs Youths Division and Tracey Thorne, the RHY

Director. I will administer the oath to both of you and after reading the oath, I will call upon each of you individually by name to respond to the oath one at a time.

So, if you will both please raise your right hand. Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth before these Committees and to respond honestly to Council Member questions? Assistant Commissioner Randy Scott?

RANDY SCOTT: I do. I will.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and RHY Director Tracey Thorne?

TRACEY THORNE: I will.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Assistant Commissioner Scott, you may begin your testimony when ready.

RANDY SCOTT: Thank you very much. Good morning, Chair Rose and members of the Youth Services Committee. I am Randy A Scott, Assistant Commissioner for Vulnerable and Special Needs Youth at the Department of Youth and Community Development. I am joined by Tracey Thorne, Director of Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs.

On behalf of Commissioner Chong, thank you for this opportunity to discuss the City's Youth Count. The Youth Count is New York City's point in time count of homeless and unstably housed youth and those accessing services at DYCD funded programs citywide. For almost ten years, the Youth Count has supplemented the federally mandated HOPE Count conducted by the New York City Department of Homeless Services and offered additional demographic and housing information to help inform policy for runaway and homeless youth.

These efforts have been in partnership with the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness and Departments of Housing and Urban Development, Health and Human Services, and Education. An effective Youth Count utilizes the knowledge and expertise of those who understand where homeless young people are most likely to be, and who are on the frontlines supporting runaway and homeless youth, our strong cadre of RHY providers and advocates.

Their expertise has been critical in refining and improving the count every year. In the months leading up to the count, DYCD hosts a series of stakeholder planning and feedback meetings and

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2 training sessions. This year, despite our
3 stakeholders' focus on the immediate need to keep
4 young people safe and healthy during the pandemic, we
5 were able to plan and implement a 2021 count, which
6 took place on January 27 through 29.

7 Since 2014, through the strong commitment of the
8 de Blasio Administration and the City Council, we
9 have strengthened the Runaway and Homeless Youth
10 system. We have more than tripled the number of
11 residential beds, increased the age for service
12 eligibility up to 24, and opened additional drop-in
13 centers. There are currently eight DYCD-funded
14 centers with at least one 24/7 center operating in
15 each of the five boroughs. In addition, young people
16 have access to high quality mental health services
17 across the portfolio. Finally, through the NYC Unity
18 Project, we are able to expand services to address
19 the unique and often unmet needs of LGBTQ youth.

20 Over the past few years, with feedback from the
21 Youth Count stakeholders, we have worked to refine
22 our approach in determining how we should contact,
23 and where we should go to meet young people. In
24 addition to phone calls and online surveys, we now
25 cover areas that include drop-in centers, residential

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2 programs, community centers, transportation hubs, and
3 public schools and coordinate with street outreach
4 representatives from the Youth Count to ask young
5 people to complete a short survey. Our questions ask
6 about current housing situation, age, gender
7 identity, sexual orientation, and race.

8 For the past several years, our Youth Count has
9 taken place over the course of four days. This
10 approach recognizes that young people who are
11 homeless may not be out on the street on a cold
12 winter night. By meeting youth where they are in the
13 following days, we can assess their housing status on
14 the night of the City's Hope Count to include those
15 who are reported to HUD as part of the street
16 homeless count, and also those who may be staying
17 with a friend or relative due to unstable housing.

18 We have found youth in unsafe conditions such as
19 riding on the public transportation, in abandoned
20 buildings, local businesses, parks and on the street.
21 We also expanded our social media campaign and
22 strengthened outreach in our drop-in centers. To
23 maximize participation, we provide drop-in centers
24 with additional funding to offer incentives for young
25 people to complete the survey.

We would like to offer some highlights of the 2020 Youth Count. Our planning began with a stakeholder meeting on October 17, 2019. We included all DYCD-funded operators of residential programs, drop-in centers, and street outreach programs. City agency partners involved included ACS, DOP, DOE, the Youth Action Board, and the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services. Other nonprofit and advocacy organizations included the Hetrick Martin Institute, FIERCE, the Coalition for Homeless Youth and the Legal Aid Society. These efforts are supported by all members of the RHY staff who work year around to assist in the planning and execution of the count.

In total, 34 organizations participated in the count and its planning. We were pleased to see that these efforts resulted in an increase in the total surveys at drop-in centers by 441. Youth Action Board members surveyed 141 young people and were integral to increasing the total number of surveys. A promising practice emerged as one of the Youth Action Board members traveled in the street outreach van.

The 2020 Youth Count reported responses from a total of 1,184 young people. The survey asked questions about where youth had spent the night on Monday January 28, 2020. 631 youth about 53 percent, reported being in stable housing, including their parents' or relatives' home or their own place. 498, 42 percent reported unstable housing such as a shelter or couch surfing. 47 reported being unsheltered, and representatives offered them shelter at the time of the survey. And 8 were from outside of the city.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, planning for 2021 Youth Count started in the spring of 2020. DYCD worked closely with advocates, Youth Action Board members, providers, and other stakeholders to update survey questions and to discuss what worked and what additional steps should be taken to ensure an accurate count. These efforts were ongoing through January 2021 until the Youth Count began. Preliminary results from the 2021 New York City Youth Count are based on a total of 459 surveys. The surveys asked questions about where youth had spent the night on Tuesday, January 26, 2021. Seven youth reported staying at a location that HUD defines as

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2 unsheltered, for example, spent the night in the
3 street or in an abandoned building. 210 youth
4 reported staying in unstable living conditions such
5 as residential programs shelter, drop in centers, or
6 with friends and relatives. 231 youth reported
7 staying in a stable location, with parents, in their
8 own room or apartment, or being with friends and
9 relatives for social reasons. And 11 young people
10 were not in New York City on the night of the count.

11 We have already begun our efforts for the 2022
12 count with a feedback session held on June 1st with
13 our stakeholders. We look forward to your
14 partnership with the Council and others toward
15 continual improvement, and to maximize connection
16 with homeless and unstably housed youth in those
17 efforts.

18 Thank you once again for giving us this
19 opportunity to discuss the Youth Count and we welcome
20 any questions you may have.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Assistant
22 Commissioner. Director Thorne, did you have, would
23 you care to testify or should we go straight to Chair
24 questions?
25

TRACEY THORNE: You can go straight to Chair questions. Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Chair, I will now turn it to you for questions.

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you so much Emi. Thank you so much for your testimony Deputy Commissioner. And I'm always glad to speak to you about Youth Services and how we can you know maximize the resources that we have.

And so, my questions are basically going to be -- to determine what resources we have now and what we can do to increase them in the future. What is the current level of staffing and funding that is dedicated to the Youth Count and what is the specific budget that is dedicated to the Youth Count? I'm sorry, I repeated myself. What is the current staffing and the funding that's dedicated to the Youth Count?

RANDY SCOTT: Okay, thank you for your question Councilwoman Rose. So, currently we have 14 runaway and homeless youth staff dedicated to the Youth Count. And we have numerous DYCD divisions that assist us in kind to make sure that the Youth Count is successful. Some of those divisions are uhm,

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2 staffed from our AKO department, our fiscal
3 department, our legal department and definitely from
4 our team RIT department who helps with the survey.

5 As you know, the de Blasio Administration
6 virtually transformed the system of runaway and
7 homeless youth. Since 2014, we have had more than
8 triple the number of residential beds as mentioned to
9 the 813. We've increased the age of service of
10 eligibility and we open up additional drop-in
11 centers. There are currently eight, as I mentioned
12 in my testimony and with five of them being 24/7.
13 Young people have access to high quality mental
14 health services within the borough and a total of all
15 of the services and contracts that we have the budget
16 for Runaway and Homeless Youth is approximately \$46
17 million. So, via that funding, we are able to put
18 forth the Youth Count on a yearly basis.

19 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: And what is the specific
20 budget that's dedicated to the Youth Count and
21 present?

22 RANDY SCOTT: Well, the specific budget varies
23 year to year, depending on what has come out of the
24 discussions that we've had with our partners,
25 stakeholders, as well as various incentives, micro

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2 purchases, food and metro cards that's identified in
3 those stakeholder meetings that I mentioned.

4 So, right now, we look at, from those meetings,
5 we identify what the needs are for the Youth Count of
6 that given year. So, there is no specific dollar
7 amount right now but however, via the \$46 million
8 that I mentioned, we identify what the needs are and
9 we use the funding to make sure that the Youth Count
10 is successful.

11 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Are you uhm, are you able to
12 meet whatever that amount is since it varies, it
13 fluctuates from year to year? Are you able to meet
14 that you know that financial need?

15 RANDY SCOTT: Yes, we are. Uhm, you know since
16 the Youth Count has happened, we've been able to
17 manage effectively to make sure that the micro
18 purchases are given to the drop-in centers in order
19 for them to operate the way they are. We've been
20 able to hire the Youth Count Coordinators. We've
21 been able to identify incentives that are given to
22 those that participate in the Youth Count. So, we
23 have not had a year where we were not able to meet the
24 needs.

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: So, uhm, are there any measures that you take to ensure that the count is adequately staffed and resourced?

RANDY SCOTT: Well, again, as I mentioned, we have 14 staff dedicated to the Youth Count. You know, so we always make sure that we've had enough staff to guarantee that every area of the Youth Count is attended to. And that it's successful when we've done it.

As you may recall, the first Youth Count that we did, we only did it on one day. You know, started the second Youth Count going to current, we do it on four days. So, we had to make sure that we had the adequate number of individuals to assist us, knowing that we've increased the number of days that we do a Youth Count. And each year we've been successful in doing that.

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay, so, you feel that this is adequate? That 14 dedicated staff members is adequate? Or do you feel there is a need for additional staffing and resources?

RANDY SCOTT: One of the things that the stakeholder meetings and all of the discussions that happen internally allow for us to do is to look at

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2 the trends. Look at how things evolve and are
3 changing, especially in our city, right? So, based
4 on those discussions, is how we're able to assess if
5 needs need to be improved or increased.

6 Currently, based on the way the count is done
7 now, we have adequate staffing for that.

8 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: So, your assessment is
9 ongoing?

10 RANDY SCOTT: Yes, it's ongoing because of the
11 way the city is and I know that over time with
12 changes to the city, we're going to have to change
13 how we do certain services and those are the things
14 that we look at on a regular basis when we meet about
15 the services that are being delivered.

16 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: And what youth, homeless youth
17 specific training do you provide to the Youth Count
18 staff? And is there trauma informed training
19 included in that?

20 RANDY SCOTT: Well, DYCD is very high on mental
21 health in regards to its services. As you know it's
22 imbedded in all of our Runaway, Homeless Youth
23 Programs via an investment from the Office of
24 Community and Mental Health.

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2 So, we guarantee that our providers have the
3 needed training as well as experience in working with
4 not only the youth within their programs but
5 themselves. We also have – well, we didn't have it
6 last year due to the pandemic but I'm sure you're
7 aware we have our Healing the Hurt conference, which
8 allows for our providers to come in and learn from
9 experts in the field around mental health. Which is,
10 they can take home you know various skills and
11 training to use in their daily lives as well as at
12 their professional workplaces. So, we guarantee that
13 our providers have those resources with respect to
14 mental health. And we recently just got a new
15 investment where from the Office of Community and
16 Mental Health where our drop-in centers will now
17 become mental health wellness hubs. Where they will
18 be able to hire LMSW or LMSW staff members to work on
19 those mental health issues that are more serious.

20 So, we're definitely aware and we're putting in
21 the efforts and the resources to make it available
22 for our providers, as well as the young people who
23 are receiving services to get those assistance.

24 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: When is this training you know
25 provided and it is mandated?

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2 RANDY SCOTT: Yeah, well training uhm, we
3 basically have a calendar of when Youth Count is.
4 Youth Count usually starts in October, the planning,
5 right? And from that first meeting in October, we
6 have various stakeholder meetings and then from those
7 stakeholder meetings, training typically starts in
8 January. Like the first and second week of January
9 is when the training occurs about Youth Count.

10 If there is anything specific where folks
11 identify a specific training need, then we make sure
12 that that happens around that time. So, we can say
13 maybe between December and the second week of January
14 is when the full training happens of all the
15 stakeholders involved and if we identify any
16 volunteers from various divisions within our agency,
17 they will receive that training at that time as well.

18 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: What efforts have been made to
19 meaningfully and consistently engage the youth who
20 have lived experiences of homelessness in the
21 planning design and implementation process of the
22 Youth Count?

23 RANDY SCOTT: Repeat that question one more time
24 please.

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Sure, sure. What efforts have been made to meaningfully and consistently engage youth who have lived experiences of homelessness in the planning design and implementation process of the Youth Count?

RANDY SCOTT: Hmm, thank you for repeating it. Well, as I mentioned in my testimony, we have worked with, collaborated with the Youth Action Board and you know having them to help in terms of how we evolve the Youth Count. The testimony spoke to the great efforts and work that they assisted in making sure that the Youth Count was done. The survey was done right that we had the adequate questions to ask of youth around housing and so on for the Youth Count.

So, we guarantee that part of our stakeholder meetings, the Youth Action Board, the various stakeholders who work with New York City youth on a daily basis. So, we make sure that in those meetings, they offer their best opinion and it's always reviewed and it's implemented in the Youth Count.

So, that's an ongoing process. We had them in our recently meeting that we had in June. So, we're

1 continuing that and we are also working with you know
2 the coalition on homeless youth and other initiatives
3 that they have going forward. So, we're continuing
4 to make sure that we have that youth representation
5 and that advocacy representation when we are making
6 policy decisions.
7

8 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay, so they are at the table
9 when the other stakeholders are at the table planning
10 the Youth Count?

11 RANDY SCOTT: Yes.

12 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: And how many, how many of
13 these young people are involved in that process?

14 RANDY SCOTT: Well, it's open to all but
15 recently, during the time of the Youth Count, I think
16 that the Youth Action Board had two representatives
17 at the meeting. I believe they've added some more
18 members to their board. So, we welcome all of them
19 to the table. We don't put a number on how many can
20 participate.

21 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: And the night, the days of the
22 count, how many of the YAB or the Youth Board Members
23 participated in the actual count?

24 RANDY SCOTT: I would have to get back to you on
25 the specific numbers but I know that the two members

1
2 that attended the meetings on a consistent basis
3 participated, so but again, Youth Count is open to
4 all Youth Action Board Members or youth in a city
5 that have a stake with Runaway Homeless Youth.

6 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Are the runaway, the RHY
7 providers contractually obligated to participate in
8 the Youth Count and you know to what extent and/or
9 are they given the option to opt out amid their
10 support and participation?

11 RANDY SCOTT: Well, our current contracted
12 providers understand the importance of the Youth
13 Count within their work. So, they are dedicated to
14 guaranteeing that youth are surveyed and services are
15 provided to youth in the city. It's not currently
16 embedded in their contracts with respect to them
17 being required to do it, knowing that this is a
18 federally you know initiative and not a city
19 initiative. But it's something that is being
20 discussed internally with respect to how that can
21 come to fruition but for right now, you know our
22 contracted providers are season professionals who
23 have uhm, you know, the upmost respect and importance
24 of runaway homeless youth and they want to do
25 everything that they can possible do to make sure

1
2 that youth receive the services. So, it's not –
3 there's no pulling. You know, we got to pull
4 somebody's arm to get them to participate in the
5 Youth Count. They are ready and they are willing and
6 they are sitting at the table with us to make sure
7 that this happens and it's done in the best way.

8 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: How many of our providers
9 actually participate?

10 RANDY SCOTT: All providers participate. Uhm,
11 you know we have 15 contracted providers but that
12 makes up you know those 15 distinct providers you
13 know make up the 50 residential programs that we have
14 across New York City. Eight drop centers, as well as
15 the two outreach contracts. So, all of them are
16 involved.

17 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay, have any of the uhm –
18 none have opted out or limited their participation?

19 RANDY SCOTT: No.

20 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: What efforts have been made to
21 ensure timely publication of the annual Youth Count
22 reports?

23 Currently, neither the Youth Count 2019 results,
24 nor Youth Count 2020 results are posted on our DYCD's
25 websites.

1
2 RANDY SCOTT: I'm going to correct there. It is
3 posted.

4 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay.

5 RANDY SCOTT: So, you should be able to go and
6 see it.

7 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay, is that recently then it
8 was posted?

9 RANDY SCOTT: Yeah, it was recently about last
10 week, so.

11 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay. Okay, alright. In
12 anticipation of this question, this week.

13 RANDY SCOTT: Hey, you know we got to be one step
14 ahead right.

15 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Uh, huh okay. So, uhm, so uh,
16 are we making, putting you know some measures in
17 place to make sure that they are posted you know in a
18 more timely manner?

19 RANDY SCOTT: Yes, yes we are.

20 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Yeah, okay.

21 RANDY SCOTT: I think with the pandemic and us
22 being remote and all the different things that we've
23 been working on, the new investments that runaway
24 homeless youth have been working on, actually no, we
25 have the emergency housing vouchers, City FHEP

1
2 vouchers and we now have the mental health wellness
3 hubs. Things sometimes get overlooked and that was
4 one of the things, so we apologize for the delay and
5 we'll definitely make sure that it's posted in time.

6 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Alright, uhm, because it is
7 important.

8 RANDY SCOTT: Yes.

9 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: And it also gives us something
10 to work with you know since we have oversight.

11 RANDY SCOTT: Yes, correct. One thing I do want
12 to just make you aware of is that, that report, our
13 report is attached to the bigger HOPE Count report.
14 So, in regards to that report being posted, we still
15 have to wait for DHS to post their report so that all
16 of it can be understood and not just a portion of it
17 is put on the site.

18 So, that also causes some of the delay in terms
19 of waiting for our sister agency to post their
20 numbers and so that we can make sure the report is
21 accurate. But we will work with you know our
22 counterparts at DHS as well as the folks internally
23 to make sure that it's posted in a timely manner.
24
25

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Yeah because they have to post it annually and usually there's a particular time that they have to post it, so.

RANDY SCOTT: Exactly and we don't have to wait around. It's a similar time but I definitely understand what you're saying and we will work on it.

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay, okay. What efforts have been you know, I know that uhm, some of our participating partners in this effort is DOE. So, uhm, what efforts have been made to strengthen you know our DYCD partnership with the Department of Education to increase the Youth Count effectiveness and accuracy?

I think that they would be you know, uhm, a great source of – a great resource and have access to numbers of young people that you know, greater number of young people. So, what are we doing to strengthen that relationship?

RANDY SCOTT: It definitely is an ongoing relationship where we talk more now than ever with our counterparts over at DOE, especially the students in temporary housing division. We worked with them recently to create a housing navigator system where youth and young adults can go to the website and

1 identify needs around housing and other services.

2 And there was a collaboration between DYCD, HRA, ACS,
3 DOE and others. So, that is currently active, which
4 DOE maintains that system. So that was one way that
5 we made sure that information was out there and
6 relevant to all that needed the service.
7

8 Another thing that we did is during the pandemic,
9 we worked with them to guarantee that youth had the
10 necessary tablets you know for them to continue their
11 education and uhm, the needs that were important.
12 So, we got those devices to the individuals within
13 our contracted programs.

14 There are also participants in the Youth Count
15 where they – we work with them to identify how the
16 survey can be delivered. Uhm, it's an ongoing
17 process because it deals with a lot of IRB stuff and
18 you know, we got to make sure that we have the
19 necessary individuals who can deliver the survey.
20 So, we're having ongoing discussions with them of how
21 we can do that. And that's one of things that we're
22 talking about currently for the upcoming Youth Count
23 and we hope that we can be able to manage that.
24
25

1
2 But there is always continuous conversations that
3 are being had with DOE on Youth Count, as well as
4 other relevant needs of runaway and homeless youth.

5 So, we're in a good place you know where we can
6 have those contacts. We know who we can call and we
7 can have those discussions.

8 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Yeah, that's my concern. Are
9 there actually -- is there actual individuals or
10 dedicated staff that uhm, you know, who are
11 responsible for working with you on the Youth Count?
12 You know, I have experience with SYEP. We send the
13 applications to the guidance counselor. As some of
14 them are very good and it gets distributed and it
15 works well and then there are other schools where you
16 would think there was no young people interested in
17 SYEP. So, uhm, how coordinated is it you know?

18 RANDY SCOTT: It's on our end as well coordinated
19 because we keep in contact with them. For DOE we
20 work with Michael Hickey who oversees the students in
21 temporary housing division. We also for District 79,
22 we work with Stacey Olinger from DOE. So, we have
23 primary contacts who we can pick up the phone, shoot
24 an email to, to ask a question or to invite them a
25

meeting or to get their opinion on how things can work more collaboratively between the two agencies.

So, I think we're in a good place. Uhm, we will have to keep having those conversations in case things change with the new administration and people go out and new people come in to make sure that nothing falls in regards to the systems that are currently in place and how we can improve those systems.

So, this is, right now, it's probably a heightened time for us based on the fact that we're moving into a new administration, where we want to make sure that we keep contact with individuals, so that they understand where we are and what we want to try to do in the new administration. So, those are things that we continuously do here. Commissioner Chang was great in terms of you know integration. You know, breaking down silos and working together. And we're trying to make sure we do it greatly and internal and we're going to make sure that we can do the same thing externally. So, we'll keep those channels open.

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: And with your relationship with DOE, it is only certain uhm, schools that you

work with or is it all of the schools that you work with?

RANDY SCOTT: I want to say all the schools but I will ask Tracey to come off mute and uhm, share her knowledge of with schools that we work with. I think it's the community schools that we work with but can you confirm that Tracey? Can, I think she needs to come off of mute.

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Tracey, you're muted.

RANDY SCOTT: She can't unmute herself she said. Oh, there she goes.

TRACEY THORNE: Hey, hello.

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Hi.

TRACEY THORNE: I'm just, I'm confirming, well first, I just want to say that this is - I'm glad that you are bringing attention to this really important issue, so I just want to thank you for that. But Randy is right, yes, the community schools are the ones that we're focusing on right now.

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay. Do you see a need to expand that to the schools that are not community schools?

TRACEY THORNE: Yeah, definitely there is a need to strengthen our partnership with the Department of

1
2 Education. It's really important and a really high
3 priority. But as I said, it's you know, we're
4 starting with the community schools and we're hoping
5 to take that success and kind of move out into the
6 high schools beyond the community schools. But for
7 now, for this upcoming county, we will be focusing on
8 the community schools.

9 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Uhm, okay, so uhm, so then in
10 the planning of not this years but the next cycle,
11 are you now planning to expand that?

12 TRACEY THORNE: Yeah, yes, we'll yes.

13 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Because not all communities
14 have community schools. I know the Mayor is working
15 hard to expand that but uhm, I think it's really
16 important that we touch all of our schools.

17 TRACEY THORNE: I completely agree. Yes.

18 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: The homeless youth population
19 is very broad.

20 RANDY SCOTT: Yeah, agreed. We're trying to uhm,
21 you know knowing that the school system is so big,
22 we're trying to take it piece by piece so that we
23 can, almost like deputize people after we've gotten
24 into their system. So, that they can speak on our
25

1
2 behalf, so that we can now become even more bigger
3 within the system.

4 So, that's been our approach where we start with
5 the community schools and then from the community
6 schools, have them also help us get to the other
7 areas that we need to go to.

8 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: I was really pleased to hear
9 that you know, you're utilizing you know technology
10 but can you know, based on the information that you
11 learned in the past year, do you think that you're
12 going — that the use of technology increased the
13 accuracy of your count? And are you making
14 provisions to actually expand the use of technology
15 or how many people have access to the technology to
16 do the count?

17 RANDY SCOTT: Yes. Well, one thing that the
18 pandemic taught us was that technology is important
19 right. So, we definitely want to learn and grow from
20 what we were able to put forth during the pandemic.
21 We're not going to go back to pre-pandemic Youth
22 Count. We're going to use what we did during last
23 years count. Bring it into the overall picture and
24 see how we can improve it and go forward with having
25 a bigger and better count that can include

1
2 technology. Can include foot traffic once we're back
3 into the communities. Uhm, can include all type of
4 situations where we can make sure that everyone is
5 aware of the Youth Count. They participate in the
6 Youth Count and they receive services that they
7 identify for themselves going forward. So, yes, we
8 will be improving it.

9 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Uhm, and my last question
10 because I know my colleagues have some questions and
11 then I'll circle back. But what efforts have been
12 made to strengthen DYCD's partnership with the New
13 York City Department of Ed to you know increase the
14 efficacy and accuracy? I think we've kind of talked
15 about that but does DYCD plan to have an MOU to use
16 DOE staff since you know they already have dedicated
17 staff to engage this population?

18 RANDY SCOTT: That is part of the — that will be
19 part of the discussions that we will have. If we can
20 do it without an MOU, I'd probably like to go that
21 route. You know, if it's easier to be done but if an
22 MOU was required to have the relationship where they
23 are more active in the Youth Count, than we will go
24 that route with them.

1
2 But if we can do it without an MOU, where we –
3 there is dedicated collaboration, then that's fine.
4 But we will identify uhm, discuss and identify all
5 avenues in order to improve services for Youth Count
6 as well as other RHY services.

7 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Hmm, hmm. Don't you think
8 that an MOU sort of codifies the relationship and
9 ensures that there really are dedicated individuals
10 to do this?

11 RANDY SCOTT: Uhm, yes it does.

12 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Because right now, it's kind
13 of like up to the principals discretion right?

14 RANDY SCOTT: Yeah, it's up to the principals
15 discretion. The MOU, however, will probably not only
16 be for dedicated staff time, it also will include
17 data and things of that nature where you would have
18 to have a more you know flushed out discussion of how
19 that can be. It's not easy. But if the
20 confidentiality requirements from the state on
21 information, you got to make sure that it's something
22 that all stakeholders are at the table and discuss,
23 understand so that when the MOU, if an MOU is decided
24 upon, it is fully understood by each party. With
25 respect to what will be needed for the Youth Count.

1
2 And I wouldn't you know, if you are going to do
3 an MOU, you might not want to only do it for Youth
4 Count, you might want to do it for other areas as
5 well. You know, because runaway homeless is not just
6 Youth Count, it's a whole bunch of other areas that
7 you need to focus on and DOE can be very uhm, helpful
8 and fruitful for those others areas.

9 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Right.

10 RANDY SCOTT: So, you want to make sure that when
11 we think about an MOU, we are uhm, we're thinking
12 about all those possibilities, so that we only do one
13 MOU versus having 20 MOU's. So, that's what I was
14 saying in regards to the MOU. I just want to make
15 sure that we flush out what the need is. Identify
16 who the individuals need to be at the table to
17 discuss what the needs are and then put together that
18 MOU with the legal divisions of both city agencies.

19 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Yeah, I think it helps in
20 terms of the access, the accuracy, uhm, you know and
21 the data collection.

22 RANDY SCOTT: Correct.

23 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Uhm, so, uhm, I'll be looking
24 forward to hear how that kind of you know evolves.
25 Uhm, I'd like to now uhm -

RANDY SCOTT: I hope you will continue to be a vital part of our services after January.

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: I hope so too. I hope so too.

RANDY SCOTT: If I have your email, I'll probably be emailing you.

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: I'm applying for the Commissioner Youth job.

RANDY SCOTT: Okay, come on.

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: I'm only kidding. I'm only kidding. I'll now open the floor or give the floor back to my Counsel to open the floor for questions from my colleagues.

RANDY SCOTT: Okay.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chair. I would like to begin just by recognizing Council Member Feliz, Louis and Riley for joining us today. And I will begin with I believe Council Member Chin had her hand raised. So, Council Member if you still have any questions, please feel free to begin.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Yes, thank you. Thank you Chair. I have a couple of questions. First, is yes, Assistant Commissioner, in your testimony uhm, in terms of the survey, in 2020 you had 1,184 and in

2021, from the preliminary result was only 459. So, I wanted to know like what was such a big drop off?

Secondly, are there any efforts to really increase public awareness about the importance of the Youth Count? Like, are there any public awareness campaigns, so people know you know how they can refer people, refer young people that they know that might be homeless to do the survey? And then my other question is, is the importance of immigrant youth. And some of it is with DOE, in terms of some of the schools that serve immigrant population, especially the older population? I know that they have a list of schools and I have some of them in my district and I have heard from counselors that there are youth you know, who are in homeless situations.

So, I want to make sure they're included in the Youth Count and also, our faith-based organization and also, you know, food pantries and other youth programs that DYCD has contracts with. Like a cornerstone program, because even though we have you know like drop-in centers in every borough, the drop-in center might not be an easy place for youth to access. You got to you know pay for transportation or it's too far away but they often times, they might

1
2 go to a cornerstone program in the neighborhood or
3 drop by a food pantry or a church. So, those are
4 some of my questions in terms of how you are working
5 with these populations.

6 RANDY SCOTT: Great, thank you Councilwoman Chin
7 for your questions. Uhm, in regards to the numbers,
8 the 1,184 was done before the pandemic and the 459
9 was during the pandemic year where we didn't have as
10 much access to the city because of the fact that
11 people were — businesses were closed, people were
12 working remote and the city was you know going
13 through this terrible pandemic.

14 So, that's the reason why there is a dip in the
15 numbers and we weren't — we had to — HUD didn't allow
16 for us to do certain efforts to get at people due to
17 the fact that they have a certain way of how they
18 want results to happen. So, we were only able to get
19 the 459 surveys based on what we were able to do from
20 tabling from the workshops where the staff had to be
21 in front of the youth when they distributed the
22 surveys. So, youth couldn't take the survey without
23 an individual actually being there with them. So,
24 that caused a drop. We're hoping now that the city
25 is moving back to opening up fully. We can have a

1
2 better 2022 count and the numbers will go back up and
3 so, we'll see how that goes.

4 To the second question, okay, because I know you
5 gave me three questions. Let me answer the immigrant
6 question uhm first. We definitely uhm, provide
7 services to immigrants and we try to communicate as
8 best as possible. We work with MOIA to come in and
9 provide the necessary training and information to our
10 providers so that they can use that in their
11 respective communities to make sure that they make
12 services aware of what's going on.

13 For the way we socialize this information, we
14 have many different avenues that we do this. We have
15 the Link NYC where we promote the Youth Count and
16 make sure information is there. We have our
17 downloadable Pom Card that we distribute to the
18 masses to make sure that folks are aware of what's
19 happening. We have the young people who are experts
20 in sharing the information and they did that for us
21 with respect to Youth Count. Street Outreach does
22 their different efforts to make sure that this is
23 known. The providers themselves use their social
24 media accounts to share information and DYCD has a
25 huge social media campaign that I'm sure you're aware

of with Discover DYCD. And we work with NYPD where they have discovered DYCD on their phones.

So, we have not branched out to many different places, so that we can get our information out to the communities on the different efforts that are happening. One thing that we're also doing internally, is we're working to identify more ways we can advertise and promote services of runaway and homeless youth. So, I'm working with my colleagues –

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

RANDY SCOTT: I'm working with my colleagues internally to make sure that that happens. So, this is an ongoing effort. You know, we're going to improve on what we already have existing, so that we can make sure information gets to all communities that you have discussed, especially immigrant communities.

I hope I answered all your questions.

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Yeah, definitely, I mean the immigrant community should also include with your DOE conversation –

RANDY SCOTT: Oh, yeah.

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Because there are schools that have you know immigrant youth and especially the

1
2 older age one. And they have special schools that
3 service that population. Like in my district is Emma
4 Lazarus High School.

5 RANDY SCOTT: Okay.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: And uh, so I mean DOE has
7 to listen and these are the schools that we should
8 pay some special attention to.

9 RANDY SCOTT: Okay, we will definitely put that
10 on the uhm, the topics to discuss with DOE so that we
11 can make sure that they're included and not excluded.

12 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you.

13 RANDY SCOTT: Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you Chair.

15 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: You're welcome. Great, do we
16 have any other Council Members Counsel that would
17 like to ask questions?

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: It does not appear that we
19 have any other raised hands. So, we can now begin
20 our second round of questioning Chair.

21 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay, thank you. Uhm, yeah, I
22 really want to emphasize Council Member Chin's point
23 about access to immigrant populations. Uhm, and so,
24 I know that in our Public Awareness Campaigns that we
25

are disseminating information in all of our languages, right?

RANDY SCOTT: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Yeah.

RANDY SCOTT: Yes, we are hmm, hmm.

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay, okay. Uhm, and I look forward to you having that conversation with DOE.

RANDY SCOTT: Hmm, hmm.

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Hmm, hmm. Hmm, hmm. So, uhm, you did mention COVID you know and the pandemic. Uhm, can you tell me what you did do to uhm adapt to the environment? You know to the Youth Count during the COVID-19 outbreak?

RANDY SCOTT: Sure, uhm, hold on for one second, let me just to get to my specific notes. Let me pass that to – Tracey, you want to share the steps that we took to monitor or plan for Youth Count during the pandemic?

TRACEY THORNE: Sure, yes. Hello. So, during COVID, we weren't able to have large gatherings. Social distancing was really important and so, the usual way that we uhm, do the Youth Count in congregate settings bring the young people into the drop-in center, give out the incentives. We had to

1
2 rethink that due to the need to social distance. And
3 so, we came up with virtual tabling sessions with
4 Zoom for about six hours a day, every day. And we
5 widely distributed those Zoom links to the social
6 media. We had some young people participate in the
7 tabling, so they were surveying young people. We
8 also had feedback from My Brothers and Sisters
9 Keepers. Part of a Youth Council here at DYCD, so
10 they were able to participate in the survey and then
11 give feedback to us afterwards as part of a learning
12 session on the virtual tabling.

13 I think as a concept, uhm, it was good. We
14 didn't have as much traffic as we would have liked
15 but we definitely had tons of volunteers from the
16 Youth Count community. We had volunteers from all of
17 our stakeholder groups, federal government,
18 nonprofits, and like I said, young people. So, it
19 was a pivot. We did it and you now, if possible, we
20 may do it again this year as well to see if that's
21 another way of increasing the number of people who
22 have access to the Youth Count.

23 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Where were these tabling
24 events like held? How did you — how did you actually
25 do that?

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2 TRACEY THORNE: Yeah, there were links posted
3 online on our website and we used social media to
4 attract young people to the Zoom links. And then, it
5 was myself and several other volunteers. We would go
6 into breakout rooms and survey young people. We
7 needed to do it with the cameras on and face to face,
8 so it was one on one virtual face to face interviews
9 for the surveys.

10 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: You were able to maintain
11 confidentiality?

12 TRACEY THORNE: Yes, it was one surveyor and one
13 youth in each breakout room.

14 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Hmm, hmm, okay. And uhm, how
15 many surveys do you think you were able to complete
16 by that method?

17 TRACEY THORNE: We were able to count 19 surveys.
18 So, uhm, we also had a chance to talk to young people
19 in the waiting room about services, about you know
20 considerations for the future. So, it was definitely
21 a very excellent learning opportunity for all of us.

22 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Hmm, hmm. And the information
23 was sent to the schools who were doing remote
24 learning anyway right about the events?
25

TRACEY THORNE: The schools participated in all of the planning and all of the feedback sessions but we did not do surveying with the schools. So, yeah, we didn't do surveying with the schools this year in that way.

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Yeah, I wanted to ask about you know incentives. You know how are we incentivizing more young people to you know, participate in the surveys but also to respond to them? Uhm, are we, how are we incentivizing them?

TRACEY THORNE: So, for young people, this year, we're planning to offer incentives through micro-purchases through our providers at the drop-ins. So that when young people come, they can receive uhm, items. They can receive clothing items, hats, metro cards, food cards. They also get uhm, the providers also get a lot of donated cards and to give out to the young people as well. Like food cards, uhm, to specific restaurants. And so, we're able to get people to come in.

Last year we weren't offering incentives as much because we couldn't have loud crowds congregating. So, we're really hoping this year like, Assistant Commissioner Scott said, that we'll be able to

1
2 proceed in a more — I don't want to use the work
3 normal but in a more you know congregated setting.

4 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: A new normal.

5 TRACEY THORNE: Yeah, yeah, a new normal, exactly
6 whatever that is. So, you know, we want to
7 definitely have incentives again. We definitely want
8 to be able to help young people.

9 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: So, the incentives aren't sort
10 of uniform across the city. It's sort of whatever
11 the providers, the stakeholders can sort of make to
12 use to incentivize the young people?

13 TRACEY THORNE: Yes. Usually, it's similar types
14 of incentives. Definitely metro cards like I said,
15 definitely like, uhm, food cards for different
16 restaurants, maybe cash cards and uhm, metro cards.
17 I think I said that already and clothing items. And
18 things that young people may need, hand sanitizer,
19 gift bags like gift bags like that.

20 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: So, DYCD doesn't provide these
21 incentives?

22 TRACEY THORNE: We provide the funding for the
23 incentives.

24 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Provide the funding.
25

TRACEY THORNE: It's actually a quicker route to the end than going through procurement in the city, yeah.

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Hmm, hmm. And so, do you have an idea of sort of how much money you dedicate for incentives?

TRACEY THORNE: That is being discussed right now.

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: And uhm, is that one of the budget items that kind of vary that Commissioner Scott spoke about earlier?

TRACEY THORNE: Exactly, yeah.

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: And are we giving adequate amount of money to the providers so that they can incentivize young people to participate?

TRACEY THORNE: Uhm, can Assistant Commissioner Scott would like to be unmuted.

RANDY SCOTT: Okay, thank you. You know you got to get used to this on mute.

But in regards to the funding, you know the providers have the discretion to use the funding within their budget. You know, identifying how they will disburse each budget item line for Youth Count. So, they can add additional dollars to that.

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2 What we tried to do is supplement it with the
3 cards and things that are donated so that they can
4 use that for the youth that participate in the
5 survey. We actually just got some cards for the
6 providers now. So, the thing is, we let them
7 identify what they will do. Whether they give out
8 food, whether they'll give out gift cards. However
9 that may be and the drop ins get the additional
10 micro-purchases on top of that. So, that's how we're
11 doing that.

12 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: So, but that's based on their
13 discretion and their budget. So, say my budget is
14 kind of tight, maybe I won't offer incentives for the
15 count. I mean, it could work that way right?

16 RANDY SCOTT: Well, if it comes to that, that's
17 where one, we give the micro-purchase and two, we
18 identify additional ways of incentivizing. Uhm, you
19 know getting incentives for the providers. So, we
20 look at all of the avenues because we know that the
21 budgets could be tight and ways that we can get
22 things to the youth. Whether it's like Tracey said,
23 through the clothing that we may give, whether a - T-
24 shirt, a hat. Knowing that it's that type of - the
25

1
2 weather is cold during that time. Whether it's gift
3 cards from food places or other types of things.

4 So, we look at all avenues of how we can continue
5 to supplement on top of what is able to be done but
6 so far, all providers have been able to -

7 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Is there any thought or
8 consideration to sort of a dedicated budget line for
9 incentives?

10 RANDY SCOTT: In terms - well, we have a
11 dedicated budget line in terms of the micro-
12 purchases. We have that consistently. Are you
13 saying at the agency?

14 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: For each of the you know, each
15 of the facilities, each of the stakeholders. Like,
16 just sort of a line item amount for the count.

17 RANDY SCOTT: And that goes back to uhm, my
18 earlier point where through discussion, through
19 looking at trends, through looking at what is
20 happening currently in the city is how things evolve
21 in terms of what is needed.

22 So, those are things that we look at to see how
23 we can improve from a year before. So, and because
24 when we first started, we didn't have anything that
25 was given out except for food. But now, we've

1
2 increased it to where we have micro-purchases. Now,
3 we've increased it to where we have donations of gift
4 cards.

5 So, we are continuing to look at how we can you
6 know get more youth in. Incentivize them to come in.
7 So, we'll see how that grows over time.

8 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Alright and that's part of the
9 discussion that you're having uhm, in the planning of
10 the 2022 Count, yes?

11 RANDY SCOTT: Yeah, yes. In 2022 and going
12 forward, yeah.

13 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay, and uhm, and you are
14 beginning the planning for 2022 in October?

15 RANDY SCOTT: The planning already started. We
16 had a stakeholders meeting on June 1st.

17 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay.

18 RANDY SCOTT: So, the next meetings will yes,
19 occur in October. Right now, we're working on uhm,
20 bringing, onboarding the staff. The two Youth Count
21 Coordinators.

22 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay and you're including
23 additional young people in that?

24 RANDY SCOTT: Well, the young people, we hope
25 will be through our collaboration and work with the

1
2 Youth Action Board and the Coalition for Homeless
3 Youth and other stakeholders that identify youth
4 because it's open to them, yes.

5 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: I just want to ask this last
6 question of you. How much input do the stakeholders
7 really have? Uhm, you know they've been concerned.
8 They've been you know sort of bringing up certain
9 issues for several years now that I've been the
10 Chair.

11 And you know, we've asked you about these issues.
12 Uhm, how much, really, how much influence do the
13 stakeholders have and how close are we moving to uhm,
14 to getting to addressing their issues?

15 RANDY SCOTT: I think they have a lot of
16 influence and I think over the years, they can say
17 and I hope they will say that you know the
18 relationship between them and us has improved
19 tremendously. You know through partnerships, through
20 communications, through being on different work
21 groups together where we are able to speak openly and
22 candidly about what is needed and make sure that
23 happens.

24 One, a great example of that is a direct cash
25 transfer, right? We were a part of that conversation

1
2 with Youth Action Board, with government and now, we
3 have that actively coming to New York City right.
4 With one of the RHY providers being identified as the
5 engine to move that, right?

6 So, the thing is that we have these
7 conversations. We speak regularly through emails.
8 We invite them to our workgroups. We allow for them
9 to see things that are happening policy-wise or so
10 that they can offer their insight and opinion and we
11 can move things forward.

12 So, I think and I would love – to be honest with
13 you, I think the relationship is good. I think
14 there's always room for improvement, which and those
15 are the things that we're looking at doing now. But
16 uhm, to be honest with you, I think we've done some,
17 we've made some great strides with respect to their
18 opinion being appreciated at the table.

19 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: And just, I know one of their
20 recurring you know, uhm, concerns, is of the trauma
21 informed training. Is there somehow that we can look
22 at sort of formalizing that so that that happens, not
23 sort of matter of factly but that it happens uh
24 regularly is almost like an ongoing class or
25 something that can be offered?

1
2 RANDY SCOTT: Are you saying this for the
3 providers to receive the training?

4 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Well, yes, yes. Well, the
5 providers and anyone who is giving – anyone who is
6 participating in the Youth Count because they feel
7 that you know there should be some specialized
8 training because of you know, the vulnerability of
9 the population we're working with.

10 RANDY SCOTT: I'd definitely love to hear more
11 about that but I can tell you what's happening now.

12 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay.

13 RANDY SCOTT: What is happening now with
14 agencywide is that we have our capacity building who
15 look to identify many different trainings for not
16 only staff but provider agencies to participate in.
17 We have a technical advisory, Vibrant, I'm hoping for
18 sure you may have heard of them or know them who does
19 a lot of our mental health trainings and you know,
20 they work with us on the Healing and the Hurt
21 conference that we had yearly prior to the pandemic,
22 in which we hope to bring back now that we're getting
23 back to some normalcy.

24 We have our tips program, which is our trauma
25 informed perspective practice series where we train

1
2 provider agencies and staff on how to manage trauma.
3 How to deal with it. How to recognize it. So, we
4 have these things in place, so I really would like to
5 hear more in terms of what is being asked of.

6 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Yeah, they were specifically
7 talking about the people who participate in the
8 count, should be trained.

9 RANDY SCOTT: Okay, okay.

10 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Trauma informed.

11 RANDY SCOTT: Okay, so I would love to hear us at
12 the stakeholder meetings, we can definitely talk more
13 about that and see what could be done yeah.

14 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: And uhm, I'd like to get
15 invited to one of those planning meetings.

16 RANDY SCOTT: I thought you were already invited
17 because I believe some of your staff have attended in
18 the past.

19 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Because Michelle comes right?

20 RANDY SCOTT: Oh, okay, yeah, yeah because some
21 of your staff have come in the past.

22 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Yeah, I'm going to have to
23 tell her to let me know when the meeting is.

24 RANDY SCOTT: Okay, great, great.
25

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Alright, well, thank you for your responses and your time but I have no other questions Counsel.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chair. It looks like we don't have any raised hands from other Council Members, so at this time, we have concluded the second round of questions. I will now turn to the Chair if you have any closing remarks before the Administration is excused.

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Uhm, again, I just want to thank you. I want to thank you for coming. I know you know how important the Youth Count is in terms of making sure that we can provide the services and the resources that you know our very vulnerable and traumatized you know segment of our population. I, you know, I appreciate your efforts on behalf of the Youth Count. I just want to make sure that we're bringing everyone to the table, so that their input can be you know recorded and valued and utilized in terms of getting an effective and accurate Youth Count.

So, uhm, again, thank you. I know we're all working under difficult circumstance during the pan—you know, through this pandemic. Uhm, and I just

1
2 hope that we can get our message out. You know,
3 farther and wider. But other than that, I thank you
4 for coming. Thank you for your time.

5 RANDY SCOTT: Thank you.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chair. We'll now
7 be turning to the public testimony portion of this
8 hearing. For public testimony, I will call up
9 individuals in panels. Council Members who have
10 questions for a particular panelist should use the
11 raise hand function in Zoom. You will be called on
12 after everyone in that panel has completed their
13 testimony.

14 For public panelists, once I call your name, a
15 member of the staff will unmute you and the Sergeant
16 at Arms will give you the go ahead to begin speaking
17 after setting the timer. All public testimony will
18 be limited to three minutes. After I call your name,
19 please wait a brief moment for the Sergeant at Arms
20 to announce that you may begin before starting your
21 testimony.

22 The next panelist will be in the following order.
23 Jamie Powlovich, the Executive Director of Coalition
24 for Homeless Youth, Anthony George from Project
25 Hospitality, Beth Hofmeister from the Legal Aid

Society and Jayne Bigelsen of Covenant House. Jamie Powlovich, you may begin your testimony.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

JAMIE POWLOVICH: Good morning, my name is Jamie Powlovich and I'm the Executive Director of the Coalition for Homeless Youth. Thank you to Chair Rose for holding today's hearing and for the Council's ongoing support of youth experiencing homelessness in New York City. I will be submitting longer testimony outlining the history of the Youth Count and our full recommendations, while I'll keep my verbal testimony focused on a few specific points.

During the testimony of the Administration, there are many things stated that we would categorize as not true or extremely misleading. Which we find extremely concerning. However, their testimony does continue to highlight how there is an unfortunate disconnect between what is happening on the ground and what DYCD wants to portray as happening regarding services for youth experiencing homelessness in this city.

Before I talk about our ongoing recommendations, I would like to highlight some of the more concerning statements that were made. It was said that at least

two of the members participated in the actual count. This is untrue and as the AB testified at the Youth Count hearing in April, they issued a letter to DYCD in January stating that they would not participate until aspects of the Count were improved.

This letter was not addressed and therefore they did not participate. It was also said that there are 14 staff at DYCD dedicated to the count and that there is a budget of approximately \$48 million. This again is extremely misleading. The entire DYCD Runaway and Homeless Youth unit is not dedicated to the Youth Count, nor have they ever been.

This past count, the 2021 count, was run by one individual, Ms. Tracey Thorne. Who tried her hardest given the impossible task she was given but the count is too large to be the responsibility of a single individual. Similarly, the entire Runaway and Homeless Youth budget is not accessible to the Count. This past year, there was a budget of zero, which is a fact that DYCD stated on public documents about the Count. Neither programs nor youth received any financial support.

There are other issues but due to time, I will add to my written testimony. Regarding our

1
2 recommendations, I would like to highlight our top
3 four. Again, the rest will be in our written
4 testimony.

5 As we testified in April, it is imperative that
6 we have an accurate estimate of homeless youth in New
7 York City given the power such numbers play and the
8 resources provided for those extremely vulnerable and
9 often invisible population.

10 Systematic under Council, street homeless youth
11 only supports systematic under resourcing to
12 providers and a lack of needed services to youth.
13 Therefore, we are concerned that the community
14 planning for the 2022 count has still not officially
15 begun and that despite providers, youth and advocates
16 echoing the same recommendations year after year,
17 they remain largely unaddressed.

18 Our top recommendations are as follows: Number
19 one, the city must provide adequate funding for the
20 Youth Count.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

22 JAMIE PAWLOVICH: Oh. Can I briefly say the
23 other three?

24 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Uhm, finish your statement.
25 Just finish your sentence.

JAMIE PAWLOVICH: Okay, the city must provide adequate funding for the Youth Count. The last funded Youth Count was conducted in New York City was funded by City Council in 2017. It was championed by the late Councilman Lewis Fidler.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony Ms. Jamie. I will now call on Anthony George to testify.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Is Anthony available? It looks like Anthony is no longer available. So, I will now call on Beth Hofmeister to testify.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Oh, unfortunately we have lost Beth as well. We still have Jayne Bigelsen. I will now call on Jayne to testify.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

JAYNE BIGELSEN: Hello everybody. My name is Jayne Bigelsen, and I am the Vice President of Advocacy at Covenant House New York, where we serve young adults experiencing homelessness between the ages of 16 to 24. I would like to thank you Chair Rose, the entire Committee and the Committee Staff

1
2 for the opportunity to testify today. I refer you to
3 my written testimony for more about Covenant House.

4 As we all know, young adults experiencing
5 homelessness are often invisible among us. And
6 locating and counting them is extremely difficult
7 because being hidden is often a survival strategy. A
8 majority of young people experiencing homelessness
9 have histories of repeated trauma, and abuse, and
10 feeling disrespected by adults and systems that were
11 supposed to care for them.

12 Therefore, they often avoid service providers and
13 do everything in their power to not look homeless and
14 to blend into their peers to avoid further
15 stigmatization. On particularly cold nights, youth
16 avoid the streets and instead find shelter in
17 abandoned buildings, fast food restaurants and with
18 strangers who offer them shelter in exchange for sex.

19 These young people are almost always missed in
20 the City's annual Youth Count, which is often during
21 the coldest days of the year. That results in a
22 significant undercount that is far out of alignment
23 from reality. We know that DYCD is experimenting
24 with different methodologies and we appreciate that
25 and we appreciate the City Council's oversight and

1
2 helping in getting more accurate numbers but we do
3 have some recommendations.

4 The first is for the Youth Count to succeed, it
5 must be adequate funded. Yes, DYCD mentioned that
6 they had 14 staff people working on the Youth Count,
7 but we need at least one or two where the Youth Count
8 is one of their main responsibilities because with
9 repeated or differing responsibilities, attentions
10 often get distracted away from the Youth Count. And
11 although I do believe DYCD seems eager to implement
12 many of the providers recommendations, limits in
13 staffing and resources often delay and redirect
14 effort. So, it's often too late to implement the
15 ideas that we have.

16 Also important, as we all know, is that youth
17 with lived experience must be involved in the count
18 and they must be compensated. In the past, there
19 have also been entire sections of the city that were
20 not represented and we need to make sure they're
21 represented in the future.

22 Youth must be involved in every aspect of the
23 Count. They are in the best position to know how to
24 find their peers. They should be in multiple focus
25 groups; they should be encouraged to participate in

the count themselves and it's essential that they be compensated. There should also be a PSA Campaign that youth advise with.

And as mentioned previously, it is so important that we collaborate more with the DOE. We mentioned some collaboration but there needs to be more because many young people will have contact with the public school system before they reach out to the RHY system. I thank you again for the opportunity to testify today.

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Jayne. It looks like Anthony has joined us. Anthony George, you may now begin your testimony.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

ANTHONY GEORGE: Hi, good afternoon. I was curious about -- I heard him talking about uhm, the mental health at the drop-in centers right with licensed mental health counselors or LMSW's. I was curious to find out if there is any plan to increase psychiatrists or a nurse practitioner in the future to help out in this capacity. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Anthony. We will now hear from our second group of panelists.

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Wait, I would like to ask a few questions of the panel. I'm sorry.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Go ahead Chair. Go ahead.

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: I hope Jamie is still on also. Uhm, you know Jamie, I was interested in hearing you finish your statement but I also wanted to ask you know, what homeless youth engagement approaches would you recommend given that this populations tendency is to kind of stay hidden for survival? You know as a survival strategy?

JAMIE POWLOVICH: Well, I think one, we also need to acknowledge that the numbers that we're looking to increase are primarily for unsheltered homeless youth. And so, the fact that DYCD relies primarily on resourcing and outreaching and doing surveys in the actual shelter and drop-in centers is not necessarily the most effective method.

And unfortunately there is only one agency that does youth specific street outreach. So, obviously that's a huge task for an entire city. And so, I think that one of the top things that really needs to happen is an intentional increase of street outreach

1
2 period. All the time, all year to engage young
3 people but specially for the Youth Count, right? To
4 be reaching the young people that aren't already
5 connected to the Runaway and Homeless Youth Services.
6 So, that one, they can be counted but two, so that we
7 can let them know what's available.

8 And one of the stats that came out of the 2020
9 report that I thought was alarming uhm and is
10 something where I think we need to dive a little
11 deeper is that out of the number of young people that
12 were found unsheltered during the 2020 Youth Count,
13 32 percent of them had reported that they had been
14 without a permanent place to stay for more than two
15 years. So, that means that two whole years right,
16 where opportunities were missed for someone to engage
17 that young person and bring them into services.

18 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you. Jayne, did you
19 want to weigh in on you know, uhm any of approaches
20 that we could use that you would recommend to try to
21 you know access or provide access to those young
22 people who you know are hidden?

23 JAYNE BIGELSEN: Yeah, I think we need young
24 people to lead the way on that right. Because a lot
25 of those young youth avoid service professionals,

1
2 right? So, we need young people to let us know where
3 they think their peers are and I think they are often
4 in fast food restaurants right? They are often in
5 hospitals. They are often in libraries and those are
6 places that we're not looking for in the count.

7 So, I think we need more, like more that street
8 outreach component where we're actually you know,
9 Covenant House doesn't have this anymore because we
10 lost funding for it. But we used to have outreach
11 stands and our outreach drivers knew where young
12 people were living. Right, they knew where in the
13 parks. The knew what abandoned buildings they were
14 in. So, people like that need to be brought in in
15 advance with focus groups of where to look. Because
16 I don't believe any of those people, like staying in
17 fast food restaurants or hospitals or libraries are
18 being counted.

19 And then also more of a PSA. I mean, DYCD
20 mentioned that they are doing outreach, which they
21 are but I don't think the outreach - I could be wrong
22 but my understanding is not specifically for the
23 count. And a lot of their numbers, they gave their
24 budget numbers and their staffing numbers which are
25

1
2 all great but it's not dedicated specifically to the
3 Count.

4 So, there's you know 14 people working on the
5 count but I don't and someone can correct me if I'm
6 wrong, but I don't think there is like anyone who
7 that's their main job responsibility.

8 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay, thank you and you also
9 mentioned compensation for the youth working. What
10 do you think would be adequate compensation?

11 JAYNE BIGESEN: Okay, sorry, I wasn't unmuted.
12 I think you know I think we can discuss the dollar
13 amount. In general though, we at Covenant House, we
14 always compensate our youth leaders. Sometimes it's
15 \$25 an hour. Sometimes it's you know minimum wage
16 but we make sure that every single hour they spent is
17 compensated because their services are as valuable as
18 staff and I honestly think in this situation, they
19 are more so.

20 So, I actually have youth interns that we pay
21 \$250 every other week for helping me run an advocacy
22 program but I think there should be some leaders who
23 are paid like that type of almost a salary thing and
24 then other youth who are encouraged to participate on
25

the night of the count could be paid on more of an hourly wage.

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: And of the three of you, Jayne, Jamie and Anthony, uhm, are any of you active participants in the planning meetings for the Youth Count?

JAMIE POWLOVICH: The Coalition for Homeless Youth is not an active participant in the Youth Count. Since we've taken over the support contract for the New York City Youth Action Board, we've attended meetings in our support role with the group of young people that have been directly impacted by homelessness. But the Coalition for Homeless Youth as an individual entity does not participate in the Count.

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Mr. George?

ANTHONY GEORGE: Yes, one of my program directors usually participates but she is on maternity leave right now. I'm going to have to be the one that steps in that role.

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay, okay. I'm glad to see your giving her maternity leave. Uhm, uh, Ms. Bigelsen?

1
2 JAYNE BIGELSEN: Yeah, so I'm going to be honest.
3 You know it's important to just be completely honest.
4 I believe we are invited to planning meetings but on
5 the other hand, we are also so stretched so thin
6 particularly in COVID. So, a lot of this falls on
7 our intake workers and our case managers and the
8 upticks in caseloads and what we're doing. Again,
9 it's people with multiple responsibilities right.
10 There needs to be people where this can be a primary
11 responsibility for. So, yes, we'll invite, you know
12 people are invited to a meeting but it's one of one
13 hundred other things that they have to do.

14 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Right and I didn't ask that
15 question to call any of you out. I actually wanted
16 to now if you had been a part of the planning and if
17 you felt that your voices, your suggestions and
18 recommendations were you know, were being listened to
19 and that efforts were being made to try to
20 accommodate what you know, you are the point people.
21 You are the hands on folks and so, I was just trying
22 to see you know if there's something we need to do to
23 improve you know the communication. You know the
24 fact that when we give input that you know it's
25 actually being taken into consideration and we see

1
2 you know some movement toward improving or changing
3 the methodology.

4 So, I wasn't trying to call you out. I'm just
5 really trying to find out how -- because I'm a process
6 oriented person and I'm looking for solutions. And
7 I've heard these recommendations a number of times
8 now at this hearing regarding the Youth Count and I'm
9 just trying to figure out, how do we move from them
10 being recurring topics, themes or suggestions to
11 where, you know, it becomes implemented.

12 And sort of where you know and trying to figure
13 out how we make that happen. You know and uhm, I'm
14 really glad to see the Administration is still on the
15 line. You know, so I know Mr. Miller is listening to
16 this so that we can try to make it where the efficacy
17 is what's important. And that we get an accurate
18 count.

19 So, I want to thank you. I want to thank you for
20 all your efforts and you are doing a really difficult
21 job with not enough resources and I thank you. And I
22 had hoped that during my tenure I could change that.
23 I had hoped that we could make sure that all of our
24 youth programs are appropriately resourced, so that
25 we would be really serving our youth well in the

1
2 city. I think you know as you know I think they
3 should be a priority every year. It's not just one
4 specific budget year or one specific budget program.
5 I think, I know we have to make them a priority and
6 so, I hope before I leave I can have some impact on
7 how we change the efficacy of the Youth Count.

8 So, thank you for your remarks. And that goes
9 for any of the other panelists who are working really
10 diligently and hard you know with our youth
11 population. So, with that, my Counsel, you can call
12 the next panel.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chair.

14 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Oh, oh, oh and maybe some of
15 my colleagues might have questions for this panel.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yeah, yeah, thank you Chair.
17 No, that's a good point. I would like to remind
18 Council Members who have questions for a particular
19 panelist to use the raise hand function in Zoom.

20 It does not appear as if we have any additional
21 questions. So, we will now, the next panelists will
22 be in the following -- op, Council Member Chin.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Yeah.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.
25

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Yeah, Chair I just want to
3 thank this panel on the advocacy and I just you know,
4 listening to your suggestion and also from the
5 administration, I do agree with you that that's got
6 to be you know, special personnel's and budget
7 designated for this. And it shouldn't be just
8 focused on the few days. That one day or now they
9 increase it to three days. It really should be all
10 year around. And the outreach effort, you know all
11 these programs that DYCD have, they could easily do
12 the survey. It's reaching the youth that are
13 invisible. You know and I think that really getting
14 the homeless youth who have experienced this to
15 participate to be the one leading this effort,
16 because we know they are out there and we just have
17 to bring them in. And all the advocacy that we have
18 done, I think in our tenure Council Member Rose,
19 right? And also with the former Council Member Lewis
20 Fidler you know that we have increased you know best
21 for homeless and runaway youth and that was you know
22 his top priority and we managed to you know continue
23 to do that. But we know there's still a lot of them
24 out there.

1
2 So, we really need to continue to advocate to
3 make sure that there are resources available, so that
4 we can reach this vulnerable population. I mean,
5 they really deserve you know much more support from
6 our city and I really want to thank you for all the
7 great work that you have been doing. Thank you
8 Chair.

9 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member.
11 The next panelists will be in the following order:
12 Rose Yasonia from SCO Family Services, Maddox
13 Guerilla Youth Action Board Director, and Ramon
14 Leclerc. Rose Yasonia, you may now begin your
15 testimony.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: It looks like Rose is no
18 longer available and we will then turn to Maddox
19 Guerilla, you may now begin your testimony.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

21 MADDOX GUERILLA: Uhm, everyone I first want -
22 I'm disappointed DYCD have left because they are not
23 going to hear this. I don't maybe in the future, not
24 having them go first so they can actually hear
25 feedback from people and I also want to clarify some

1
2 of the statements that were made that just are not
3 true. People are not adequately compensated from
4 staff to young people like he mentioned, staff are
5 given discretionary money. They get to decide to
6 most staff to fund other positions. You know give
7 workers, like the employees more time. While people,
8 young people added to the Youth Count are on the
9 count on their own.

10 Also, the engagement DYCD has with the [INAUDIBLE
11 1:39:07], it's not engagement. It's totally — they
12 do not you know the fact that we gave 2017 was just
13 implemented in 2020, so they literally tell us three
14 years late. Obviously this has led to people not
15 wanting to invest their time there anymore. And I
16 want to clarify that just because we happen to work
17 together, that does not mean collaboration. Just
18 because I'm in a meeting with Council Member Chin, we
19 don't talk, we don't email, interchangeably. We
20 don't have a relationship then you can't say we are
21 collaborators. Just because we have been in a room
22 together by another agency, I just want to clarify
23 that that isn't collaboration.

24 And I will go on to testify the letter, because I
25 am representing the YAB and my name is Maddox

1
2 Guerilla as the Coordinator of YAB. I will continue
3 to reiterate some of the points that we did already
4 testify in our April hearing.

5 We limited our involvement 2021 Count due to not
6 agreeing with the way the Count was being handled by
7 DYCD. Specifically the way that we're collaborating
8 with you. Our recommendations still stand. They
9 have not been addressed from DYCD. They are as
10 follows: The Count is being run by single staff.
11 You know we already went over all this today. It's
12 really just for the people. DYCD isn't - approach
13 isn't working with the lived experience of
14 homelessness. [INAUDIBLE 1:40:32]. DYCD needs to
15 engage in professional development to understand what
16 it means to work with youth with lived experience in
17 a leadership capacity.

18 Second, DYCD needs to work collaboratively with
19 the YAB to make sure that there is a clear
20 understanding of the YAB's role in the Count. What
21 power we have on how DYCD will implement equitable
22 planning and the process.

23 As we see this year, DYCD has not started
24 planning for the count. The plan is four months
25 away. I haven't been invited to a meeting.

Providers have not been invited to a planning meeting yet. So, they fail to this – a year long effort. As somebody mentioned early, DYCD sees the Youth Count like just another thing and they put way more effort into their townhalls, things that they do for their community.

So, what message are they putting out when they are –

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

MADDOX GUERILLA: This youth and they are the one's not showing up for them and they should do more for youth and the education system. So, yeah, I just want to say that that's what I want to say. I'm not, every time I come on here, it's baffling. It's honestly disgusting because all they do is lie and it's not reflective of what's going on on the ground and we're here because we do want to make a change. And also, if people are not honest, we can't make change. Part of growth is being honest and unfortunately, that's not what occurs.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony. I will now call on Ramon Leclerc to testify.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

RAMON LECLERC: Good afternoon Council Members.

Uhm, I am extremely perplexed and appalled by Mr. Scott's testimony of seven street homeless youth at the time of the Youth Count. At New Alternatives we see between 10 and 20 street homeless youth on a weekly basis. Every week of the year. I would also like to bring some other issues to the Council's attention with people who are living in DYCD shelters. Their discharge policy and we've received complaints of unsafe environments. Their discharge policy, there are clients who are participating in survival sex you know who are trying to make money to survive, are being discharged for missing curfew. Which I feel, if a client is trying to survive by any means necessary because their needs are not being met in the shelter, excuse me. And they have to participate in survival sex, they are being discharged for curfew violations. And also, we still hear of allegations of verbal and physical abuse within the DYCD system. And uhm, I was also appalled that Mr. Scott found questioning amusing at points of his questions of his testimony.

1
2 I'm sorry, I don't want to rial myself up too
3 much. I think I've made my points. I really respect
4 my time.

5 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you. Thank you.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.
7 Chair, if you have any questions, feel free.

8 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Uhm, you know, I am really
9 taken back by the — I guess the pain that I'm seeing
10 and hearing that DYCD is not meeting the needs of our
11 young people. I am going to definitely address with
12 them your concerns and uhm, I hope to be able to get
13 back to you with some kind of responses to the
14 concerns that you've brought forward.

15 I also, I would like to ask you to attend the
16 meeting, the planning meeting, so that you know, we
17 can really get to you know to the next steps where we
18 are really serving our unsheltered young people. Our
19 invisible young people. Our young people who are out
20 there just trying to survive. Uhm, that's the goal
21 and —

22 RAMON LECLERC: I'd be happy to — I'm sorry, I
23 would be happy to be invited and participate.

24 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay. Alright, I'm going to
25 work on that. I'm going to work on that. I know

1
2 that you've given your information to you know to
3 sign in to be a participant, so I'm asking my
4 Legislative Staff to make a note that I'd like to
5 invite Mr. Leclerc and Mr. Guerilla to a meeting
6 where we can discuss the issues that they brought up.

7 And with that, I again, I want to thank you. I
8 want to thank you for your interest and for your
9 efforts that you are making for your RHY population
10 and our unsheltered young people.

11 I have no other questions. Does Council Member
12 Chin, would you like to ask any questions?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Yeah, uhm, Chair Rose, I
14 just think that you know maybe after this hearing,
15 that it might be good to really set up a meeting with
16 DYCD.

17 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Yeah.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: And with some of the
19 advocates who testified today to really go over some
20 of those issues.

21 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Absolutely.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Yeah, I think that that is
23 unfortunate they have left and they didn't hear all
24 this because if they are not telling us, giving us
25

the accurate information, which they swore to it, we got to challenge them.

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Yeah, absolutely and that's what I was alluding to Council Member Chin. We're on the same page that we definitely have to have a meeting because I don't like to hear the discrepancies and the contradictions of the testimony.

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Yeah, we should do it before you and I are terminated.

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Oh yes, absolutely before we ride off into the sunset.

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: And we've been on this Committee, this is our 12th year. We got to make sure that we set some good foundation before we move on.

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Absolutely. Absolutely.

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: And you can count on me when you set up the meeting, okay.

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: And for the advocates and those who have participated, who testified today. We

1
2 will be getting in touch with you and we'll set up
3 that meeting.

4 With that, I'm finished. I have no other
5 questions.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chair. At this
7 point, we have concluded public testimony, however,
8 if we inadvertently missed anyone that would like to
9 testify, please use the Zoom raise hand function and
10 we will call on you in the order in which your hand
11 was raised. And to give everyone a moment to see if
12 anyone would like to raise their hand.

13 Alright, we are confirming that we do not have
14 any additional registrants. So, Chair Rose, we have
15 concluded public testimony for this hearing.

16 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay, I have - I lost my video
17 but I can hear you. Can you hear me.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We're still here. Yes, and
19 we can still see you.

20 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Oh, and you can? Oh, I just
21 can't see you. Okay, well, with that, I think I've
22 made my closing remarks that I am really - I want to
23 thank everyone who testified today. We are going to
24 have a follow-up meeting and again, thank you for all
25 of your efforts on behalf of New York Youth.

1
2 And with that, this meeting is adjourned and it
3 is 12:50. Thank you for attending. [GAVEL]

4 UNIDENTIFIED: We're off of live. Take Care
5 Chair Rose.

6 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay, I still can't see you.
7 I don't know what I did but -

8 UNIDENTIFIED: I'm not showing video. I actually
9 have an issue with my video but I promise to call you
10 later.

11 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay. Alright, thanks. Have
12 a good day everybody. Thank you. As always, thank
13 you Council Member Chin.
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C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date October 25, 2021