

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

2015 EXECUTIVE BUDGET HEARING

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE,
COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE

And

COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S ISSUES

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May 19, 2014
Start: 10:15 a.m.
Recess: 4:40 p.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E:

JULISSA FERRERAS
Chairperson
STEPHEN LEVIN
Co-Chairperson
LAURIE CUMBO
Co-Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Vanessa L. Gibson
Mark Levine
Corey D. Johnson
I. Daneek Miller
Helen K. Rosenthal
Ydanis A. Rodriguez
Elizabeth Crowley
Ritchie Torres
Ben Kallos
Donovan Richards

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

Brad Lander
Jumaane Williams
Chaim Deutsch

Steve Banks
Commissioner
NYC Human Resources Administration

Letitia James
Madam Public Advocate

Gladys Carrion
Commissioner
NYC Administration for Children's
Services

Susan Nuccio
Deputy Commissioner for Financial Services
NYC Administration for Children's Services

Gilbert Taylor
Commissioner
NYC Department of Homeless Services

Lula Eckerd
Deputy Commissioner of Fiscal and
Procurement

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[Gavel]

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Quiet please.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Good morning and welcome to the third day of the City Council's hearing on the Mayor's Executive Budget of FY 2015. My name is Julissa Ferreras and I chair the Finance Committee. Today we are joined by the Committee on General Welfare, Chaired by my colleague Council Member Steve Levin, to hear from the Human Resource Administration Department of Social Services, the Administration of Children's Services and the Department of Homeless Services. We've been joined by my colleagues Council Member Gibson and Council Member Cumbo. Members will be joining us shortly.

On Monday we heard from CUNY, the Department of Youth and Community Development and the Department of Consumer Affairs. These hearings are a lot of work and I want to thank the finance staff for all their dedication putting these hearings together. I want to thank Acting Director, Latonya McKinney (phonetic), the Division and Committee Counsel, Tanisha Edwards, Legislative Financial Analyst, Dohini Sompura who covers HRHRA and DHS, Legislative Financial Analyst, Norah Yahya who covers ACS and the

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2 finance superstars Nichole Anderson and Maria Pagan,
3 who pull everything together. Thank you for your
4 hard work.

5 Before we get started I wanted to remind
6 everyone that the public will be allowed to testify
7 on the last day of the budget hearings on June 6th,
8 beginning at approximately 4:00 pm. The public
9 session will be held in these council chambers. For
10 the members of the public who wish to testify, but
11 cannot make the hearing, you can email your testimony
12 to Nicole Anderson and she will make it a part of the
13 official record. Her email is

14 nanderson@council.nyc.gov. Today's Executive Budget

15 Hearing kicks off with the Human Resources
16 Administration. HRAs fiscal 2015 budget total \$9.7
17 billion which reflects a \$278 million increase from
18 the fiscal 2014 adopted budget. The fiscal 2015
19 budget includes \$102 million in new needs for the
20 Working Families Rental Assistance Program, the
21 Municipal ID Card Program, the Retroactive Cash
22 Assistance Benefit Payment, the Client Benefits
23 Reengineering Delay and an increase in funding for
24 the HIV and AID Services Administration 30% Rent Cap
25 and the Homeless Rental Assistance Program for

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2 Vulnerable and Homeless Populations. The State
3 Executive Budget eliminated the restrictive language
4 that explicitly prohibited New York City from being
5 reimbursed for shelter supplements other than those
6 to prevent eviction. Through collaboration with the
7 administration we were able to get this language
8 removed. So I am very happy to see that the Mayor's
9 Executive Budget includes \$60.1 million for the
10 Homeless Rental Assistance Program. I am looking
11 forward to hearing from HRA to learn more about the
12 ways the executive budget affects HRA and its
13 operation particularly since there is \$57.3 million
14 in new needs, \$25 million in PEG restorations and
15 \$48.1 million in technical adjustments. Before we
16 hear from the HRA Commissioner, Steve Banks, I will
17 turn the mike over to my co-chair Council Member
18 Steve Levin, Chair of the Council's General Welfare
19 Committee.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVE LEVIN: Thank you very
21 much Chair Ferreras and good morning everybody, I'm
22 Council Member Steve Levin, Chair of the General
23 Welfare Committee and I want to thank you for joining
24 me at the Fiscal 2015 Executive Budget Hearing today.
25 As Chair Ferreras said, today we will be hearing from

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2 three agencies, the Human Resources Administration
3 Department of Social Services, the Administration for
4 Children's Services and the Department for Homeless
5 Services.

6 The city's Fiscal 2015 Executive Budget
7 total \$73.9 billion of which \$13.3 billion funds,
8 HRA, ACS and DHS or roughly 18% of the city's total
9 expense budget for FY15. With each social services
10 agency here today we will be asking how new various
11 funding adjustments and new policies will impact and
12 enhance each agency's ability to serve the most
13 vulnerable populations in our city. I will like to
14 first welcome Commissioner Steve Banks to his first
15 council hearing as Commission of HRA. His
16 appointment by the mayor signals a new and welcome
17 change for the agency and I am excited to hear about
18 his priorities for the agency going forward. I have
19 had the opportunity to work with Commissioner Banks
20 in his previous capacity and I think I speak for many
21 New Yorker's who care deeply about social services
22 policy when I say that I am thrilled to see him lead
23 one of the most complex, vital and important agencies
24 in the city. Now that does not mean however
25 Commissioner that this committee won't be doing tough

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2 oversight of HRA moving forward as we have done in
3 the past. In today's hearing, we will first examine
4 the Fiscal 2015 Executive Budget for the Human
5 Resources Administration Department of Social
6 Services. HRA provides cash assistance, SNAP
7 benefit, HIV/AIDS Support Services and many other
8 public assistance programs to aid low income New
9 Yorkers. It is clear from the Fiscal 2015 Executive
10 Budget that HRA and the Department of Homeless
11 Services are making great strides to address the
12 homeless crisis that has been plaguing our city. I
13 am happy to see that HRA and DHS are collaborating to
14 create two new rental assistance programs, one
15 targeting vulnerable populations and the other for
16 working families that are homeless and I am keen to
17 hear more details about these two programs and the
18 impact that they will have. I also hope going
19 forward that both HRA and DHS will work with this
20 committee and the council in the formulation and
21 implementation of these two rental programs.

22 In addition HRA is working with the state
23 to expand the Family Eviction Prevention Supplement
24 Program in order to prevent additional families from
25 becoming homeless. As we all know, FEPS is an

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2 effective program but with this expansion it can be
3 even more impactful. I would like to hear more about
4 how HRA is working with the State on the FEPS
5 expansion and when we can expect to see changes in
6 the program. The agency's budget also reflects the
7 consolidation of legal services contracts that were
8 administered by the Department of Homeless Services,
9 Department of Youth and Community Development and the
10 Department for the Aging. While I understand that
11 consolidating these contracts will insure a more
12 effective use of resources, I am concerned if the
13 number of legal contracts now housed in HRA is
14 sufficient to meet the demand especially when it
15 comes to anti-eviction and other housing services.
16 So I am eager to hear how HRA believes that this
17 consolidation will achieve better outcomes than we
18 have seen in the past.

19 In addition, I will be asking Commission
20 Banks to day to address the numerous concerns that we
21 have heard from advocates and clients for many years
22 about the work programs in HRAs portfolio, from WEP
23 to We Care to Back to Work. These programs at their
24 worst have been inhumane in their conception and
25 implementation and failures to be candid in achieving

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2 their stated goals. I look forward to working with
3 Commissioner Banks and his staff at HRA to implement
4 some of the most needed reforms of any programs in
5 any agency in our city. And I also very interested
6 to hear how Commissioner Banks plans to reform the
7 process of applying and certifying for benefits so
8 that we move away from the past set of policies which
9 all too often punished people who are seeking help
10 from the city.

11 Lastly, I would like to say how pleased I
12 am that the agency is overturning the former
13 administration's policy to collect reimbursements
14 from sponsors of undocumented immigrants and
15 reimbursing those who that the agency collected money
16 from. I think that we can all agree that this was a
17 misguided and unwarranted policy that should never
18 have been in place. And finally, I would like to
19 commend HRA Commissioner Banks and the administration
20 on working with the state to establish a 30% rent cap
21 for the HASA Program which will provide vital
22 resources to thousands of individuals who really
23 truly deserve our assistance.

24 I'd like to thank the committee staff for
25 their work, Dohini Sompura, Finance Analyst and

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2 Andreas Vasquez, Counsel to the committee in
3 preparing for this hearing and I now welcome
4 Commission Steve Banks.

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Thanks you very much
6 and I greatly appreciate your introduction. Good
7 morning chairpersons, Ferreras and Levin. Good
8 morning Public Advocate. Good morning council
9 members, members of the committee, Council Member
10 Ignizio, Council Member Cumbo and Council Member
11 Gibson. With me today are Jill Berry to my right who
12 is the Executive Deputy Commissioner of Financial
13 Operations and to my left is Ellen Levine who is the
14 Chief Financial Officers of HRA and to my far left is
15 Jennifer Yeaw who's the Chief of Staff at HRA and
16 will also be helping with the presentation today.

17 You have before you written testimony for
18 the record but we also thought it would be a clearer
19 way to present it from a power point presentation.
20 As a matter of just introductory remarks, I want to
21 thank the members of the committee, and in
22 particularly the committee chair for working with us
23 to try to address some of the problems that we have
24 inherited. I particularly want to acknowledge as
25 well the assistance from the Public Advocate who is

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2 working with us to help us move forward with the
3 reforms. A number of New Yorkers call the Public
4 Advocate for assistance, as well they should and in
5 addition to trying to resolve those individual
6 matters together with the Public Advocate we are also
7 using some of those cases to help us look at some of
8 the systemic problems that we have.

9 I was honored to be appointed by Mayor de
10 Blasio. I began serving on April 1. We are going to
11 review with you everything we have been doing over
12 the last seven weeks and I think that these are a
13 good start to try to address a number of the problems
14 that you all are so familiar with. We have been
15 reviewing all of our policies and procedures to
16 insure that they are aligned with the vision of the
17 Mayor and the vision of the First Deputy Mayor and
18 the Deputy Mayor of Health and Human Service.

19 Since I began, on April 1, I spent time
20 meeting with front line staff in all five boroughs,
21 meeting with advocates, meeting with community,
22 organizations to get input in terms of the most
23 pressing problems and we have proceeded to address
24 the most immediate problems. There is much more to
25 be done, but I think again you'll see the highlights

1
2 of what we have been doing to fulfill our mission
3 which is fighting poverty and income inequality and
4 preventing homelessness. I also want to announce a
5 new appointment today, Dan Tietz who some of you know
6 has been appointed as our Chief Special Services
7 Officer. He will have responsibility for overseeing
8 HASA, Adult Protective Services, Customized
9 Assistance, Disaster Services and also our Emergency
10 Intervention Services which includes domestic
11 violence services. Mr. Teitz has a long history of
12 managing social services programs and as a social
13 justice representative of the community, he's a
14 nurse, he's a lawyer, he's currently the Executive
15 Director of ACRIA, an AIDS services and research
16 organization. Previously he held senior management
17 positions at the Coalition for the Homeless and
18 Housing Works at the Post Graduate Center for
19 programs involving the housing opportunities for
20 persons with Aids and prior to his coming to New
21 York, he was an official in the Massachusetts
22 Department of Health, focusing on programs for low
23 income people. So I think that he'll be an important
24 addition to our team in addressing some of the reform
25 needs that we have at the agency.

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2 So let me start with an overview of the
3 agency. We serve three million people a year. For
4 those of you in the audience you can see from the
5 power point right there we have more than 14,000
6 staff, we have an operating budget of \$9.7 billion
7 proposed for FY15. We have a broad range of programs
8 to address poverty and income inequality. The
9 programs include education and training and job
10 placement services to assist low income New Yorkers
11 obtain employment. Cash assistance to meet basic
12 human needs, rental assistance to prevent
13 homelessness, federal supplemental assistance,
14 nutrition assistance, formerly known as food stamps
15 to fight hunger. Also emergency food assistance for
16 food pantries and community kitchens. Access to
17 healthcare financed through the Medicaid Programs,
18 services for survivors of domestic violence, services
19 for New Yorkers living with HIV/AIDS. Services for
20 children including child support and child care.
21 Protective services for adults who are unable to care
22 for themselves. Homecare for seniors and individuals
23 with disability and home energy assistance. So as
24 you can see, critically important services for the
25 most vulnerable New Yorkers.

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2 Table 1 is basic data that gives you the
3 numbers of recipients for the various programs.
4 Nearly 340,000 recipients of cash assistance, that's
5 children and adults. Nearly 1.8 million recipients
6 of supplemental nutrition assistance, food stamp
7 programs, the federal assistance. HRA administered
8 Medicaid to nearly 3 million, emergency food
9 assistance 1.1 million last year. 700,000, just
10 north of 700,000 home energy assistance recipients.
11 Nearly 300,000 child support assistance provided.
12 Adult Protective Services we handled nearly 4,000
13 cases. Home care 115,000 cases as of March.
14 HIV/AIDS 31,000, domestic violence an average of
15 nearly 1,000 served per day in our shelters and 3,500
16 receiving other services and 7,300 receiving our teen
17 relationship and abuse services.

18 Let me give you an overview of the HRA
19 staff. As I said it's a budgeted head count of
20 14,250 paid for with a combination of city, state and
21 federal funds. Two-thirds work on the front lines,
22 others are in the back offices providing the support
23 that's necessary for those front line services. HRA
24 staff are public servants who chose to work at HRA to
25 help New Yorkers in need. Many dedicating their

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2 entire public service career to working at HRA. It's
3 a very diverse workforce. 70% Women, 59% African
4 American, 18% Hispanic, 15% White, 8% Asian. And the
5 overview of the staff representation, many of the
6 staff are represented by DC 37 Locals, Local 1549,
7 SEU Local 371, Locals 2627, 1407 and 1904 at DC 37
8 and then a range of other Locals, CWA, 1180, the
9 Teamsters, 237, and so on and so forth.

10 The next two charts show you the
11 allocation of our budget that runs directly through
12 HRA. Most of the budget as you can see is medical
13 assistance, cash assistance and person services. The
14 funds that some through food stamps and Medicaid
15 Services are not run directly through the budget.
16 This is really the \$9.5 billion in the operating
17 funds that you're familiar with, city funds of \$7.4
18 billion and \$126 million in capital funds. There's a
19 total of \$3.3 billion in SNAP Benefits and \$23
20 billion in State and Federal Medicaid money outside
21 of the HRA budget that was in FY14 and they're
22 comparable numbers in FY15 total funds as the chair
23 indicated is \$9.7 billion in city funds. \$9.7
24 billion in overall funds and \$7.5 billion in city
25 funds.

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2 Meeting with staff on the front lines,
3 meeting with client groups, meeting with community
4 advocates really have helped us identify a series of
5 key challenges. First and foremost, fighting poverty
6 and inequality by insuring that our employment
7 related services effectively connect New Yorkers to
8 the workforce. Reforming our current one size fits
9 all employment program so that more New Yorkers can
10 obtain and retain jobs. Of critical importance is
11 addressing the fact that 25% of New Yorkers who are
12 connected to the workforce by HRA or who leave cash
13 assistance for a job return to HRA within 12 months.
14 25% returning within 12 months.

15 Insuring that New Yorkers who qualify for
16 federal, state and local assistance and services
17 receive them expeditiously and are not harmed by
18 HRA's policies and procedures. Ending
19 counterproductive policies and duplicative or
20 unnecessary administrative transactions that increase
21 staff workloads and could lead to punitive actions
22 that are linked to negative outcomes for clients.
23 That's a very high priority for us to address the
24 concerns of front line staff and clients resulting
25 from some of the same counterproductive policies. We

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2 have to reduce unnecessary state fair hearings which
3 now subject the city to financial penalties. Of the
4 disputes that actually end up going to fair hearing,
5 HRA is upheld 10% of the time. Let me repeat, of the
6 dispute that actually end up going to fair hearings,
7 HRA is upheld 10% of the time. And we have to
8 provide front line staff with support and the tools
9 they need to serve clients effectively. Over the
10 past seven weeks, in order to develop proposals and
11 new policy changes, we have analyzed the data in our
12 case load and the next series of slides provide to
13 you information about the dynamics of cash
14 assistance.

15 In calendar year 2013 there were nearly
16 400,000 duplicated applications for cash assistance,
17 an average of 33,000 a month, of which about half of
18 the applications were rejected. 75% of the
19 rejections are related to HRA taking the position
20 that the applicant failed to comply with the
21 employment or eligibility investigation processes.
22 We sampled our clients who became eligible and
23 received benefits during 2013 and the results showed
24 us that of the clients that became eligible one-third
25 had their first application rejected and had to apply

1
2 again. Two-thirds had the first application accepted
3 and of those 86% became eligible by the second
4 application of all of the people that became
5 eligible. So may I repeat, one-third had a rejection
6 and had to apply a second time, 86% became eligible
7 by the second application. For those who applied two
8 or three times, it took nearly twice as long on
9 average for those who were not previously known to
10 HRA to open a case. The rejection and reapplication
11 cycle is one reason why the caseload has remained
12 relatively low for some time, notwithstanding the
13 impact of the great recession. There are about
14 19,000 closings and similar number of openings each
15 month and this has led to a static case load for the
16 past five years. The monthly average of 356,000
17 recipients in 2013 was only 3% higher than it was in
18 2009 as the great recession was beginning. While the
19 monthly average was 356,000, the number of unique
20 individuals who received assistance over the course
21 of the year was almost 1.7 times higher than the
22 number in any given month. 600,000 to 700,000,
23 500,000 of these 83% received recurring benefits and
24 at least 10% of them received emergency rental or
25 utility assistance.

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2 Now, policy reforms that we'll be
3 undertaking to address inappropriate denials, case
4 closings and sanctions may lead to a monthly caseload
5 "growth" as a result of fewer interruptions or delays
6 in eligibility among children or adults who
7 previously would have been turned on or off the
8 caseload during the year. However, effective
9 employment programs mean that over time this growth
10 will be addressed with stable jobs. Remembering that
11 25% of the people who are leaving for jobs are coming
12 back to us.

13 The next slide shows you the application
14 rejection rate from July through December 2013 and
15 the following slide, Chart 4 shows you the annual
16 cash assistance recipients between 2009 and 2013 and
17 you can see the averages paired against the annual
18 numbers and it goes back over time. It's not a new
19 phenomenon it's a phenomenon that goes back over the
20 course of several years.

21 Now we also looked at the impact of HRA
22 policies and approximately 12% of the caseload,
23 20,000 out of 170,000 adults receiving ongoing
24 benefits in the month of March 2014 is in sanction or
25 in the sanction process at any point in time. 12% of

1
2 the caseload is in sanction or in the sanction
3 process at any point in time. A sanction as you know
4 is a benefit reduction where HRA believes that there
5 has been non-compliance with administrative
6 requirement such as attending an employer vendor
7 appointment. An average of nearly 19,000 cases close
8 each month and over 40% of the closings are related
9 to HRA taking the position that there has been non-
10 compliance primarily related to appointments.

11 We also looked at HRA policies and the
12 link with homelessness. We looked at all of the cash
13 assistance recipients who had a case closed for non-
14 compliance and who were sanctioned in 2012 and the
15 first six months of 2013. We found that 9.7% of the
16 recipients who were sanctioned or had a case closing,
17 applied for DHA shelter after HRA took the adverse
18 action. One in ten, nearly one in ten of the
19 recipients who were sanctioned and had a case
20 closing, applied for DHS shelter after we took an
21 adverse action. Study found that there was a
22 connection between the adverse action taken by HRA
23 and the application for shelter. This means that
24 there's a link between the two but further analysis
25 is being conducted to determine the exact

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2 characteristics of that relationship. While
3 combining all of the individuals with a case closing
4 for non-compliance or a sanction, shows that nearly 1
5 in 10 applied for shelter after the adverse action.
6 Separate data on closings and sanctions shows the
7 following. Of the 113,606 cash assistance case
8 closings for non-compliance during 2012-2013 some of
9 whom also had a sanction, 6.7% included an individual
10 who applied for DHS shelter after the adverse action.
11 73.3% of these cases had children on the shelter
12 application. Looking at sanctions. Of the 50,045
13 individuals who were sanctioned during 2012-2013 some
14 of whom also had a case closing for non-compliance,
15 13.8% of the total sanctioned individual applied for
16 DHS shelter after the adverse action. 96.3% of these
17 cases had children on the shelter application. And
18 if you look down at the note, you'll see that 28,672
19 experienced both a closing for non-compliance and a
20 sanction during this period. While nearly 1 in 10 of
21 all HRA clients experiencing adverse action applied
22 for shelter, we also analyzed information about all
23 of the children and adults in families and all of the
24 single individuals applying for DHS shelter during
25 the first six months of 2013. And we found of all

1
2 the children and adults on DHS applications, that's
3 whether the family had a prior case with us or not,
4 whether the family had an interim case or not, 23% of
5 all the children and adults on DHS shelter
6 applications for families and singles had a cash
7 assistance case closing or sanction related to non-
8 compliance in the previous 12 months. 43% of DHS
9 applicants were cash assistance recipients without an
10 adverse action in the past 12 months and 34% had not
11 had an interaction with HRA in the past 12 months.

12 If you look at all of the children and
13 adults on DHS shelter applications, 66% had an
14 involvement with HRA in the past 12 months and nearly
15 40%, 39.3% of them had an adverse action that
16 preceded their shelter application and our regression
17 analysis found a link between an adverse action and
18 applying for shelter. We also looked at our
19 employment and training programs. And as you know
20 federal and state law require HRA to insure that all
21 adult cash assistance clients with ongoing benefits
22 work or be in work activity unless they're exempt due
23 to disability illness or age. Approximately 67% of
24 the cash assistance households receiving ongoing
25 benefits are exempt from work activities because

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2 they're already employed but are still eligible for
3 cash assistance, 13.4% or are not participating due
4 to disability, illness or age, that's 53%. So two-
5 thirds of the cash assistance recipients are not
6 subject to any of these work programs. The remaining
7 33% of cash assistance clients receiving ongoing
8 benefits are engaged in employment or training
9 programs. HRA spends nearly \$200 million annually on
10 employment programs, including contracts for job
11 placements, subsidized employment, the Work
12 Experience Program, vocational training,
13 rehabilitation and education. Of the approximately
14 33% of adults able to be engaged in employment or
15 training programs, at any point in time one-third of
16 these adults are subject to HRA administrative
17 sanction process. And the next chart table 3 shows
18 you the various percentages that I just explained in
19 terms of two-thirds not being subject to the work
20 programs and a third being subject to the work
21 programs.

22 Lastly we looked at our job placement
23 assistance over the last seven weeks. HRA has set
24 annual goals for job placement assistance and has
25 typically met the goal each year with a reported

1 assistance for job placement averaging over 85,000
2 for the past several years. For the most recent year
3 for which placement assistance data is available, 37%
4 of these placements reported by HRA's employment
5 vendors, 37% of these placements reported by HRA's
6 employment vendors or among clients and training and
7 education programs and 5% were placements in
8 subsidized jobs. 29% of the reported placement
9 assistance consisted of self-reporting by clients or
10 data matches that showed clients were employed
11 subsequent to a case closing. 13% of the reported
12 placement assistance, consisted of New Yorkers whose
13 applications for HRA assistance were rejected and
14 subsequent employment data matches shows that they
15 were employed at the time of the match. 16% of the
16 reported placement assistance consisted of New
17 Yorkers who are already employed when they applied
18 for and received one-time cash assistance grant
19 typically in the form of rental assistance to prevent
20 evictions. The next chart shows you a breakdown of
21 the various placements based upon the analysis that
22 we just presented to you that we've looked at over
23 the last seven weeks.
24
25

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2 Obviously the data that we presented to
3 you on the dynamics of our caseload on the link with
4 homelessness, on the effectiveness of the employment
5 programs, provide a roadmap for substantial reforms
6 that are needed in the agency. And over the last
7 seven weeks we've begun down that road with the input
8 of our staff of client groups and community
9 organizations. We have been looking at our policies
10 as I said to see if they're aligned with the mayor's
11 vision, to see if they're designed to prevent
12 homelessness, to see if they're designed to provide
13 access to federal, state and local assistance and
14 services for eligible children and adults, to
15 eliminate duplication and inefficiency, to avert
16 financial penalties for unnecessary New York state
17 fair hearings and to see whether they promote
18 employment programs that are effective in fighting
19 poverty and income inequality. So over the last
20 seven weeks we have taken a number of actions to
21 gather the information. We've been holding ongoing
22 meetings with front line workers in all five
23 boroughs, staff focus groups, survey to staff to
24 solicit input, reorganization of senior level
25 management to move the reform process forward, a

1
2 client survey will be going out, engagement of
3 advocates, community based organizations, legal
4 representative and other clients to seek input.

5 The immediate reforms that we've taken
6 are designed to address HRA policies that have harmed
7 clients, have had an adverse impact on staff workload
8 and moral and subject the city of financial penalties
9 relating to unnecessary fair hearings. The actions
10 that we have taken in the last seven weeks are as
11 follows. We've joined every other social service
12 district in New York State and most other states by
13 accepting the federal food stamp waiver for able
14 bodied adults without dependents who are unemployed
15 or under-employed. We have changed HRA's position
16 and supported the provision recently enacted in the
17 State budget that offers four years of college as an
18 option for HRA clients as part of HRAs training and
19 employment initiatives. We disbanded the
20 counterproductive Center 71 Program that resulted in
21 unnecessary case sanctions and closings. We
22 discontinued the Immigrant Sponsor Recovery Program
23 that harmed sponsors of low income legal immigrants
24 and we've implemented a process to return all
25 payments that have been collected, \$996,000. We've

1
2 been working with the office of temporary and
3 disability assistance in the state to resolve
4 substantial numbers of pending fair hearings. We've
5 been phasing out the requirement that all homeless
6 New Yorkers seek services at a single center on
7 Northern Boulevard in Queens. We're working on a
8 plan to increase access to services for homeless New
9 Yorkers by working with DHS to accept application for
10 cash assistance at DHS intake centers to process re-
11 certifications for assistance at DHS shelters and to
12 provide rent arrears assistance directly at DHS home
13 base locations. We're creating a centralized HRA
14 rent check processing unit to improve the timely
15 processing of rent arrears payments to prevent
16 evictions and homelessness. We're working with the
17 mayor's office, the Office of Management and Budget
18 and DHS to develop a new rental assistance
19 initiatives to prevent and alleviate homelessness
20 including initiatives targeted for survivors of
21 domestic violence who seek shelter from HRA. We're
22 developing and expediting an implementation plan for
23 the new 30% Rent Cap for HASA clients living with
24 HIV/AIDS pursuant to the requirements of the recently
25 enacted state budget. We're developing and

1
2 implementing a letter..., we have developed and
3 implemented a letter for landlords specifying rental
4 assistance levels for which HASA clients are eligible
5 to maximize access to permanent housing. We've
6 implemented a system of appointment reminder calls to
7 food stamp recipients with a rescheduling option in
8 order to reduce missed appointments and potential
9 unnecessary fair hearings and maximize the receipt of
10 federal assistance to address hunger. Developing a
11 system for appointment reminder calls and text
12 messages for cash assistance recipients with a
13 rescheduling option that will be in effect in June.

14 I should pose for the picture, but I know
15 Council Member Lander is taking.

16 [Laughing]

17 [Background talk]

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Somebody said now,
19 that pigs do fly.

20 [Laughing]

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We've been
22 developing a system of missed appointment reminder
23 calls for both SNAP and food stamp recipients and
24 cash assistance recipients to reduce missed
25 appointments and potential unnecessary fair hearings

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2 and maximize the receipt of federal assistance to
3 address hunger and other subsistence benefits. We
4 are developing the HRA biennial employment plan for
5 submission to New York State following a required
6 public comment period. We expect to have it released
7 at some point next month, which will address the need
8 to streamline and to raise the administrative
9 procedures to maximize participation in employment
10 and training services and to make sure that these
11 services are effective. We're developing a new
12 initiative with Robin Hood to maximize access to food
13 stamps for senior citizens who are in receipt of
14 Medicaid or HEAP but not food stamps. And we're
15 developing a pilot program to reduce unnecessary case
16 sanctions and resulting fair hearings by providing
17 participants in employment programs with five excused
18 absences for illness or family emergency prior to
19 implementation of a sanction. Just like the standard
20 in the recently enacted Local Law requiring the
21 provision of five paid sick days. We're maximizing
22 access to federal food stamp benefits by seeking a
23 waiver from USDA to allow applicants to self-attest
24 to their housing expenses as other states have done.
25 We're seeking additional waivers for food stamps to

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2 allow applicants and recipients to schedule telephone
3 interviews at a time of their own choosing and we're
4 extending the time cash assistance applicants have to
5 find appropriate childcare arrangements from five
6 days to fifteen days with an additional five day
7 extension. We are consolidating legal services
8 programs at HRA to enhance the provision of legal
9 assistance to fight poverty and income inequality and
10 prevent homelessness and we're evaluating the need
11 for additional legal services initiatives. We're
12 working with OMB and DHS to make sure that adequate
13 broker's fees are in place to alleviate homelessness
14 and we're working with HRO on a new initiative to
15 address inadequate housing in conditions in buildings
16 where substantial numbers of cash assistance
17 recipients live. And we're working NYCHA to insure
18 that HRA makes timely rent payments to avert eviction
19 of NYCHA tenants. And we're working with the Mayor's
20 Criminal Justice Coordinator to develop a new
21 initiative to out station HRA staff on Riker's Island
22 to make sure that necessary HRA assistance and
23 services are available upon discharge. And we're
24 expanding HRAs plan for an online portal for
25 applicants and recipients of food stamps by using the

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2 system's existing capacity to include an online
3 portal for cash assistance applicants and recipients.
4 And finally, we're developing a new client advocacy
5 unit for clients, community members and elected
6 officials, including an ADA Coordinator, a language
7 access coordinator and an LGBTQ Services Coordinator
8 to expedite inquiries about client service needs and
9 a resolution of client concerns about cases.

10 While we have done an awful lot in the
11 last seven weeks we are mindful that much more
12 remains to be done. I've worked with many of you on
13 this committee and in the council in my prior
14 capacity at the Legal Aid Society and I look forward
15 to working with all of you as we continue these very
16 significant reform efforts at HRA along with our
17 front line staff who are committed to insuring that
18 the services we provide are the very best that we can
19 provide.

20 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you very
21 much for your testimony. I was speaking to my co-
22 chair about how refreshing it is, usually we are
23 giving that side of the table the data that you're
24 giving us. Umm, and probably not as explicit or
25 clear because we are kind of just doing

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2 guesstimations on our end, so it's very informative,
3 and I really appreciate you sharing this.

4 I'd like to acknowledge that we've been
5 joined by Council Member Ignizio, Public Advocate,
6 Tish James, Council Member Cornegy, Council Member
7 Miller, Council Member Levine, Council Member
8 Johnson, Council Member Rosenthal and Council Member
9 Lander. I want to remind members that for the
10 Executive Budget our first rounds will be five
11 minutes. We'll have follow-up rounds with three
12 minutes for questioning. I'm just going to ask a few
13 questions and then we're going to turn it over to the
14 co-chair and open it up to the colleagues.

15 As you so, very effectively, have
16 explained, this is a very complex agency with a very
17 large portion of the budget dedicated to it.
18 Currently the Human Resources Administration has one
19 unit of appropriation that includes funding for
20 Public Assistance Grant UA103 totaling \$1.3 billion.
21 This UA also includes funding for employment services
22 administration, employment services contracts, food
23 stamp operations, general administration, home energy
24 assistance, office of child support enforcement,
25 public assistance and employment administration,

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2 public assistance support grants, subsidized
3 employment and job related training and substance
4 abuse services. The only separation between funding
5 and programming is the other than personal services
6 funding stream. Given the amount of funding
7 allocated towards to public assistance grants within
8 HRA's budget, would HRA consider working with OMB to
9 create a new unit of appropriation for public
10 assistance grants to be better..., so that we can
11 better understand how funding is spent?

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I mean as you saw
13 from our testimony we're obviously committed to
14 transparency and so going forward it's certainly
15 something that we'd be interested in working with OMB
16 and the council to provide the information that's
17 helpful. There is disaggregated information that's
18 available and we're happy to work with you going
19 forward.

20 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: We appreciate it
21 and just from the perspective of the council be vote,
22 based on units of appropriation and it takes us some
23 time to hash everything out and I think in many ways
24 it should be as transparent and public as possible.
25 So I thank you for your testimony on that.

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2 You mentioned several opportunities about
3 coordination of cross city agencies and one
4 specifically in our hearing about two weeks ago with
5 the Department of Finance we spoke specifically about
6 SCRIE and the committee had a hearing and in
7 preparing for that hearing we learned that the
8 Department of Finance and Department of Aging entered
9 into an MOU in 2009 to insure that DOF would continue
10 many of these assistance policies regarding outreach
11 to seniors. One of those policies included food
12 stamp enrollment. Have you worked with the
13 Department of Finance or have they consulted
14 regarding assisting seniors in the SCRIE programs
15 with enrollment of food stamps.

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: In the past HRA has
17 coordinated with DFTA to focus on the match between
18 people that have services from DFTA and people that
19 aren't getting food stamps. As you can see the
20 initiative that we have with Robin Hood, Robin Hood's
21 assistance is to do a match within our own system to
22 look at people that are receiving Medicaid and HEAP
23 but not food stamps and on our agenda for the next
24 seven weeks is to look at some of the other possible
25 areas in which we could maximize receipt of this very

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2 important federal benefit and one of those areas is
3 housing authority tenants. We've had a conversation
4 with the Housing Authority about that and in other
5 areas clearly, ultimately going to be DFTA seniors
6 who are receiving SCRIE through the Department of
7 Finance or DFTA seniors receiving other services form
8 DFTA. So we are committed to continuing an effort to
9 maximize the receipt of these federal benefits which
10 both fight hunger and also provide an economic
11 stimulus to our communities since for every dollar of
12 federal benefits that we bring in, USDA has found
13 that that brings about \$1.80 to the community in
14 economic activity which is a plus.

15 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: And in the spirit
16 of coordination with agencies which is something that
17 I found some, there's a thread within this committee
18 is the coordination and hopefully finding more
19 effective ways to deal with the coordination but also
20 saving. I know that in your testimony you mentioned
21 that HRA spends about \$200 million annually on
22 employment programs including contracts for job
23 placement. And I wanted to know, is there any
24 coordination between Small Business Services with
25 their workforce development program.

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2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well we've begun
3 conversations with them and other about trying to
4 maximize the access of HRA clients to the other
5 various economic opportunities that are available
6 through other initiatives in the City and we think
7 this is an administration committed to that kind of
8 coordination. In the past our clients were not given
9 the kind of access to those programs that we would
10 have liked, and it's certainly a high priority for us
11 to be able to get that kind of access for our
12 clients.

13 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: I think you're
14 numbers were startling when we talked about the
15 denial rate and how New Yorkers end up in homeless...,
16 using homeless services. SO these are great
17 opportunities and something that the city greatly
18 invest in on various levels, so you leading that or
19 helping coordinate that with the other commissioners
20 I think will make a very big difference in our city.

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Thank you and
22 clearly as an initial step to get to our employment
23 plan that we'll be issuing for public comment next
24 month and then it has to be submitted to the state
25 after that, we wanted to do this kind of research on

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2 our own data to show what the effectiveness is or is
3 not of our various programs and that will help inform
4 the kinds of changes that we need to make in that
5 employment plan.

6 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Perfect. And I'm
7 going to ask my two wrap-up questions before we go
8 into the first round and the second round for myself.

9 HRA's fiscal 2015 budget includes \$8.2
10 million to provide office support for the mayor's
11 office and other city agencies to coordinate the
12 launch of the Municipal ID Program by end of 2014.
13 Specifically how will funding be used to support the
14 mayor's office and other agencies and for fiscal
15 2015, what role will HRA play in terms of
16 coordination or oversight of this program?

17 COMMISSIONER BANK: Well we are the back
18 office operation for the mayor's office. We have the
19 ability to process materials. We have the ability to
20 do the procurements that are needed. I know that the
21 mayor's office of operation conducted a survey or an
22 analysis of all the various city agencies and found
23 that HRA had the best..., was best situated to provide
24 the kind of procurement support for the program and
25 to provide the kind of back office support for the

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2 program. Clearly, we want our clients to be able to
3 get municipal IDs from our own facilities, but this
4 is a program that's going to serve not just HRA
5 clients, but all New Yorkers and so we're the back
6 office function when people come into other offices
7 around the city and we're taking our direction from
8 the Mayor's Office of Operations and we're looking
9 forward to being a support for this effort and the
10 funding is related to the personnel needed to
11 implement the services that the Mayor's Office of
12 Operations asked us to provide to it.

13 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: So in the \$8.2
14 million, do you have a better understanding or
15 breakdown of what that investment is for?

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: It's essentially for
17 personnel.

18 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Just personnel?

19 COMMISSIONER BANKS: And again for back
20 office function.

21 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Okay, so there's
22 no marketing component or outreach.

23 COMMISSIONER BANK: There is some
24 marketing and outreach component built into that, but
25 that's in support of the mayor's office of operations

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2 effort. Again our role is a back office
3 administrative one, to support the mayor's office.

4 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Can you get to the
5 committee, if you don't have that before you now,
6 just the breakdown of what's going to what, I'd
7 appreciate it, if you don't have that now.

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Sure.

9 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: So I want to open
10 it up to my Co-Chair and then we'll have follow-up
11 questions with my colleagues. Thank you
12 Commissioner.

13 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you Madam
14 Chair, thank you Commissioner. You know I'm not
15 normally one to you know, heap praise upon
16 Commissioners who are testifying in front of the
17 committee but, really honestly, this is a remarkable
18 document that you just shared with us on a number of
19 levels. First, it was very refreshing to see data,
20 some data that we have been asking for, for some time
21 and that we know that it's there, we know that it's
22 usable, we know that it can help direct policy in the
23 right direction and so I first want to thank you for
24 that and for providing us and the public with the
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2 information that is going to be valuable to all of us
3 moving forward.

4 I do have to say that a lot of my
5 questions were answered by your testimony, umm, which
6 is a very good thing, and I thank you for that. But
7 I wanted to talk, maybe a little bit about some of
8 the immediate reforms that are taking place. Maybe
9 if you could just give us a little bit more
10 background on how some of these things are happening.
11 Can you share with us in a little bit more detail how
12 the pilot program for reducing unnecessary case
13 sanctions is moving forward and the implementation of
14 that and you know, how long that may take depending
15 on how it goes, whether that could be scaled up or
16 expanded in any way?

17 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, there's
18 clearly an urgency for acting given the data that we
19 provided to you. You know, the link between one out
20 of every ten persons who suffers a case closing or a
21 sanction and homelessness, creates a certain amount
22 of urgency and then the potential for state penalties
23 for unnecessary fair hearings creates a substantial
24 amount of urgency. The creation of the reminder
25 calls for food stamp appointments and then by June,

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2 reminder calls from food stamp appointments and cash
3 assistance appointments as well as the follow-up
4 calls that will start in June for people who might
5 have missed an appointment are all designed at
6 addressing the problem of closing cases because of
7 missed appointments. With all the vagaries of how
8 these things sometimes happen, we wanted to be sure
9 that we have in place a process that is designed to
10 try to avoid missing appointments. A lot of this is
11 just common sense. I don't really like to go to the
12 dentist, and I bet you don't either, but the dentist
13 does call and remind us that we have to have an
14 appointment, and then if we miss it they call us.
15 And so, just a very basic system like that is
16 designed to try to have some reduction. The shift to
17 applying the paid sick days to people who are in an
18 employment type situation makes sense, its common
19 sense, and we're going to be piloting that very
20 shortly in a couple of center and assuming it works,
21 we will then take that to scale and that will have an
22 impact of reducing a number of these problems. But
23 the employment plan will also in a more granular
24 fashion look at all of the various appointments that
25 are being required, again for a relatively small

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2 percentage of the caseload, but with a tremendous
3 impact in terms of potential sanctions on the agency
4 for penalties for unnecessary fair hearings and also
5 the relationship with homelessness. So, that plan is
6 going to be looking at streamlining the kinds of
7 appointments and requirements that we have that have
8 proven to be unnecessary and, you know as we've said
9 for every additional appointment that may not be
10 necessary that has an impact on worker workload and
11 it has an impact..., a potential adverse impact on
12 clients. And so to the extent that we can address
13 worker workload that has a positive impact as well
14 for clients, and that's the way we're approaching it
15 and if there's a great urgency to do it in the short
16 term, we couldn't obviously do everything in the last
17 seven weeks, but we've done a lot of things. The
18 rent payment process to centralize that, is really
19 aimed at streamlining and reducing traffic in the
20 centers which impacts worker workload and which
21 ultimately has an impact on clients and to address
22 the thing that judges, and the landlords, and the
23 tenants all said, when I first came in, that we have
24 to do something about the fact that we're not
25 providing rent payments in a timely fashion.

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2 Similarly developing a system with NYCHA to insure
3 that we pay HRA rent in a more timely fashion is
4 designed to do that same type of thing. So there's a
5 lot happening in the short run, and I think we're
6 going to start to see the kinds of results, you want
7 and we want very soon.

8 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: What was the
9 impediment in paying to private landlords and NYCHA,
10 was it a computer issue or on a technical side, do
11 you know what was causing those delays?

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I think again, it's
13 a common sense look at how we deliver services and if
14 we deliver services in a way which has an adverse
15 impact on worker or staff workload, by having people
16 get checks issued in the centers rather than in a
17 centralized fashion. That didn't take any great
18 analysis to do. I also want to say that the senior
19 management of HRA has played a major role in making
20 these kinds of changes. There's been a real desire to
21 make the kinds of reforms that you want and that the
22 new administration wants to make and we couldn't have
23 been doing without the front line staff and without
24 the senior management currently in place at HRA.

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2 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: With regard to the
3 employment plan and as we're looking towards
4 reforming our employment programs through HRA, from a
5 budgetary perspective I believe, and I know many
6 others believe, and I think you believe that the WEP
7 Program is really not the best use of our resources
8 but in order to phase out that program, it would
9 require some budgetary considerations, there are
10 thousands of positions..., unpaid position in city
11 agencies that are through the WEP program and so that
12 would..., in order to eliminate those positions, those
13 city agencies would presumably have to pay for
14 somebody to be in that position and it would also
15 require for them to be transitioning over to
16 transitional jobs, additional budgetary resources or
17 moving it over, in developing a new program
18 allocating it in a different way. Are we looking at
19 doing that within FY15 and what would be that
20 process?

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well I think as you
22 know there's a piece of legislation in the senate
23 assembly that is aimed at ending the WEP Program and
24 we've communicated support for that goal. We...,
25 obviously the transitional jobs in the subsidized

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2 employment programs that we run with the Parks
3 Department and in other locations, those kinds of
4 programs show great promise and we're going to be
5 addressing all of these issues in terms of timing and
6 terms of the dollars, in terms of what's going to be
7 most effective most immediately in the employment
8 plan, but one of the pieces of data that I reported
9 on earlier is really a huge motivation for us, which
10 is the 25% of the people that are connected to
11 employment or leave HRA case loads for work are
12 returning to HRA within 12 months and we can do
13 better than that. And that's a tremendous driver in
14 relooking at our employment programs do to better at
15 the efforts of connecting people to the workforce.

16 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I want to ask a
17 couple of questions around the efforts that HRA is
18 making with the Department of Homeless Service around
19 rental subsidy and expanding existing programs and
20 it's my understanding that the new programs being
21 proposed would be..., are going to be in HRAs purview
22 and budget. Can you speak a little bit as to how
23 that decision was made and how you see the
24 implementation and why HRA was seen as the most
25 effective agency for that?

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2 COMMISSIONER BANK: Well, our mission is
3 to fight poverty and income inequality and prevent
4 homelessness and I understand it's not always been
5 the mission that's been embraced previously, but it
6 certainly the mayor's vision for this agency and
7 therefore we should be on the front lines of
8 preventing homelessness whether its providing
9 eviction prevention services or providing rental
10 assistance in order to prevent and alleviate
11 homelessness. The kinds of benefits that are
12 potentially available, the tools that are available
13 to do so are classically part of the kinds of
14 assistance that HRA can and should be providing. As
15 you can see in the budget there are certain amounts
16 of money that are allocated and this now is subject
17 to the ultimate outcome of discussions that will take
18 place with the state, mindful of the oversight
19 obligations that we have with this committee, but
20 also mindful of our obligations that we have with
21 respect to the state which is our supervisory agency.
22 But, you can see the outlines in the budget of trying
23 to focus on the needs of working families in the
24 shelter system, the needs of domestic violence
25 survivors, and the needs of other vulnerable

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2 populations and at the same time to be more effective
3 in preventing homelessness when people are
4 potentially going to lose their home in eviction
5 proceedings.

6 CO-CHAIRPERSON: With regard to the
7 expansion of the FEPS programs, how many families, so
8 that I know that is a subject of discussions with the
9 state and, so I'm sensitive to that reality, but how
10 many families ideally would be like to serve through
11 that expansion, additional families? From my
12 perspective, trying to get a picture of how
13 everything..., how all of the programs and expansion of
14 FEPS fit together to meet the need that is currently
15 there, if we have however many families, and I'll be
16 asking the Commissioner of DHS how many families were
17 entering into the shelter system annually, we need
18 our programs together to be commensurate with that
19 and so I'm trying to get a picture of how many
20 families we think we can serve through a FEPS
21 expansion.

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well as you know
23 from my prior role, as much as we can would be the
24 answer that I would have given you at prior times,
25 and it's still the same answer that I would give you

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2 as Commissioner of HRA, but I think you're right, the
3 details and some of the numbers, those are clearly
4 going to be subject of discussions with our state
5 supervisory agency and as we proceed we certainly
6 want to keep you advised of how we're proceeding and
7 I have committed previously to do that, and we will,
8 but at this point in the budget process, the most
9 effective thing we could do which was to provide
10 certain funding streams that the city would have to
11 be able to bring to the table in those discussions
12 with the state and that's what we've done and the
13 outlines that I know DHS has provided and we are
14 providing today in the budget are highlighting what
15 are priorities are, which is dealing with vulnerable
16 populations, people who are working, survivors of
17 domestic violence, people with disabilities, and also
18 to be more effective in preventing evictions. Those
19 are our priorities and you can see the dollars that
20 we have put in to the budget relating to those
21 priorities. But exactly how, and the mechanics and
22 the numbers, those are things that are going to be
23 subject to the city and state discussions as they
24 unfold.

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2 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Great. Thank you
3 commissioner. I'm going to turn it over to my
4 colleagues for questions, thanks.

5 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you Co-
6 Chair. We've been joined by Council Members Torres
7 and Rodriguez. We will now have questions from
8 Public Advocate James followed by Council Member
9 Gibson. Just a reminder we're technically supposed
10 to be started our ACS hearing at 11:30, granted I
11 want to give everyone an opportunity to ask your
12 questions, just keep that in mind. Thank you.
13 Public Advocate

14 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you Madam
15 Chair and it's really less of a question but more of
16 a comment. First let me thank the Chairs for
17 allowing me to say a few words. I want to
18 congratulate and thank Commissioner Banks for your
19 acknowledgement of the partnership between the Office
20 of Public Advocate and your office. The partnership
21 grew out of a large number of complaints that my
22 office has received within the last five months.
23 Most of those complaints relate to sanctions, case
24 closures, evictions, related to late payment and I
25 particularly want to thank you for working with my

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2 office on some of these reforms, but I particularly
3 want to thank you for all that you have done to
4 create greater access to assistance in the City of
5 New York. I specifically note that in the reforms
6 you increased access to services for homeless New
7 Yorkers by working with DHS on a new system with
8 respect to intake. I want to thank you for that. I
9 want to thank you for phasing out the requirement
10 that all homeless New Yorkers seek service at a
11 single center in Queens. We heard a number of
12 complaints with respect to that. We heard complaints
13 particularly from senior citizens regarding having
14 difficulty accessing services. I want to
15 congratulate you on consolidating Civil Legal
16 Services programs at HRA. I particularly want to
17 thank you again for extending the time cash
18 assistance applicants have to find appropriate child
19 care. We heard from a number of constituents in the
20 City of New York with respect to difficulties finding
21 child care and you extended it. I want to thank you
22 for that. I want to thank you for the pilot program
23 to reduce unnecessary case sanctions and resulting
24 fair hearings. My office had to work with your
25 office to resolve all of these case sanctions to the

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2 point where we were calling HRA on a regular basis
3 and so I want to thank you for that. But I
4 particularly want to thank you for something that
5 we've noted and something that you highlighted in
6 your testimony and I think it should not go..., it
7 should not go by without greater recognition, and
8 that is, is that 67% of the adult cash assistance
9 clients receiving benefits are exempt from work
10 activity because they are already employed at low
11 wage jobs. Let me say that again, because I don't
12 think the media picks up on that. 67% of cash
13 assistance clients, who are receiving benefits are
14 exempt from work activity because they are already
15 employed as low wage workers. Not because they're
16 lazy, not because they like living on the dole, not
17 because they like government bureaucracy but because
18 they're working at low wage jobs and so it goes to
19 two points and that is, I've heard from a number of
20 individuals who are on cash assistance who say to me,
21 that when they go to the..., under the previous
22 administration, when they went to the one-stop
23 centers, they were often recommended for low wage
24 jobs, fast foods, fast food jobs and/or jobs working
25 as a home attendant. In most of them, those

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2 positions are low wage jobs and that's why they have
3 to continue to rely upon cash assistance from the
4 City of New York because it's a cycle of poverty
5 that's perpetuated in this city, where we subsidize
6 these low wage jobs and we refer cash assistance
7 recipients to these low wage jobs and then ultimately
8 because they cannot sustain a living in the City of
9 New York given the high cost of living in the City of
10 New York they end up at HRA. We are not, as a result
11 of the waiver, allowing them to go to college and
12 that, I think is a game changer and I want to applaud
13 you for that, because that's what we heard over and
14 over again. If only I had the opportunity to walk
15 through the door of a college it would close the door
16 of public assistance. Commissioner, thank you for
17 that, my only question to you is what we are doing
18 with respect to language access, because we also
19 heard about the difficulty of individuals who speak
20 another language having a problem accessing public
21 assistance in the City of New York or assistance
22 period in the City of New York. And again I thank
23 you.

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Thank you very much,
25 I appreciate your very kind words. I think that the

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2 provision permitting four year college is very
3 important to us because it provides a pathway to a
4 career which gives an opportunity to escape from
5 poverty and income inequality which is what our
6 mission is. And for the 13.4% of our caseload that
7 is employed, we have to do better for them to get
8 them off of public assistance and into jobs that pay
9 enough to not have to be public assistance recipients
10 and I think you make the very important though that
11 all of our apparatus is focused to the 33% of our
12 caseload. 67% of the caseload is either employed,
13 13.4% or not participating or are required to
14 participate for various reasons including disability,
15 illness, or age and this isn't as a result of new
16 policies that the administration has put in place or
17 that we have put in place since April 1, this is the
18 data that we inherited from the prior administration
19 that had already concluded that 67% of the caseload
20 was either employed or not participating due to
21 disability, age or illness.

22 As to language access, by having a
23 language access coordinator in our new clients
24 services office we hope to raise the profile of the
25 importance of enhancing access to our services for

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2 people who have language barriers. We also have
3 dollars in the budget that are aimed at providing
4 more extensive training and back-up support and so
5 forth, regarding language, access to benefits for
6 immigrants and this is certainly something that we're
7 going to be looking at very closely as we proceed
8 with our next round of reforms. Thank you.

9 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you and we
10 look forward to working with you. Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you Madam
12 Public Advocate. We will have Council Member Gibson
13 followed by Council Member Levine.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you very
15 much Madam Chairwoman and Mr. Chairman and you know
16 the one challenge that I always have to follow our
17 distinguished Public Advocate.

18 Good morning to all of you and
19 Commissioner Banks congratulations on your position.
20 As someone who's worked with you when I was in Albany
21 I certain know the work you've done and your
22 commitment and this lengthy power point that you've
23 provided really gives a lot of information. I too
24 share the sentiments of my colleagues in expressing
25 my support, in terms of a lot of the reforms that you

1
2 are now implementing, as someone who tried to fight
3 for advantage in Albany I recognize a rental subsidy
4 program we must and really streamlining the process
5 by which we serve to the best of our ability to help
6 all New Yorkers and the Public Advocate really shared
7 my same sentiments in the fact that although we've
8 done all this incredible work, we have lots of
9 reforms, we still have 25% of a population of PA
10 recipients that still return to the system in a year
11 and that to me is a striking number. I am someone
12 who's worked very closely with all of the clients
13 that come to my office for assistance and I guess
14 just two things that I wanted to touch upon that I
15 think are very important. The job training and the
16 education. Many clients that are required to go to
17 job training programs have expressed concern about
18 the quality of these job training programs in terms
19 of them going to centers and sitting behind a desk or
20 behind a computer and not really being that
21 productive, so I guess I'm asking in terms of any
22 changes to some of these programs. What are they and
23 can they really provide sustainable jobs? Many of
24 the WEP workers that are currently working at city
25 agencies like parks and housing, once that assignment

1
2 is over, I would love for the opportunity for many of
3 those workers to be offered any type of employment.
4 They are seasonal workers and they sometimes get
5 those same assignments every single year and it's
6 disturbing that many of them are only offered minimum
7 wage service jobs. In addition, many of the PA
8 clients that have the workforce and other
9 requirements to fulfill, you indicated in you report
10 that a lot of times it's really sanctions on the
11 clients themselves. I would like to know are they
12 any instances where there could be errors on the part
13 of the workers at the centers where there's missing
14 paperwork and documentation and clients that are
15 really making an effort to comply but they are not
16 able to find child care for their children and
17 they're still being sanctioned. So I really applaud
18 the effort of reforming the fair hearing process
19 which is a great one, but I'm trying to get some more
20 information in terms of the cases where you have
21 clients that are really trying but something is wrong
22 in the system or at that particular job center where
23 they're not being given the full service that they
24 need.

1
2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Thank you very much.
3 I appreciate your kind words and I do remember
4 working closely with you in Albany.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Absolutely.

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Although it's better
7 to be here in New York City together also. So, a
8 number of the points that you made are points that
9 are very much to the afore in our analysis of what's
10 needed for an employment..., a better and more
11 effective employment program and we do think that the
12 programs in which we've had subsidized employment and
13 transitional jobs show great promise. We will be
14 addressing our reforms in that area in the employment
15 plan and you're absolutely right to zero in on that
16 25% return to our caseload statistic, that's a very
17 troubling statistic. That's the statistic we're very
18 much focused on. We..., you know my first day on the
19 job, April 1, I went to centers in all five boroughs
20 and met somebody along the way, I think my second
21 stop in Brooklyn who had her unemployment benefits
22 had run out, she was now coming to us for help and we
23 were sending her to resume writing and she didn't
24 need that, and that's where I think one of our most
25

1
2 important reforms is to get away from a one-size fits
3 all approach and we're going to do that.

4 In terms of the concerns that you raised
5 with respect to documents and centers and so forth,
6 one of the things that's very important for us to
7 focus on and we do which is the policies and
8 procedures, not our front line staff and to the
9 extent the policies and procedures cause our front
10 line staff to have workload challenges they'll be
11 problems that clients are going to experience as well
12 and that's why we're so focused on, is that
13 appointment needed? Is that extra contact needed or
14 not? And to the extent that we can address worker
15 and staff workload, we think we'll have better
16 outcomes for clients. At the same time the system,
17 as I said before, in which, of the cases that
18 actually to hearings, we only prevail in 10% of them,
19 that's a system that we need to reform very
20 substantially.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Absolutely. And
22 I truly believe and applaud your efforts to recognize
23 that we have to address the caseload of our staff.
24 They do an incredible job under very difficult
25 conditions and the caseload is obviously one

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2 component and also boosting the moral for many of the
3 workers and recognizing that if we provide lower case
4 work many of them would be in an environment where
5 there's much more positive action and they simply can
6 do a better job at what they're doing. SO obviously
7 this is a long issue, I also want to applaud the HASA
8 30% Rent Cap. Something that we fought so hard for
9 in Albany and I appreciate that this is a priority
10 and thank you for your testimony. I look forward to
11 working with you.

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Thank you.

13 COUNCL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you Madam
14 Chairwoman.

15 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you Council
16 Member Gibson. Council Member Levine followed by
17 Council Member Johnson.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Thank you to both
19 our chairs. Thank you Commissioner Banks for your
20 testimony. The fact that you describe the clients of
21 the agency not as people who've done something wrong,
22 but as fellow New Yorkers who deserve a hand in times
23 of need is just an incredible and refreshing shift in
24 rhetoric and the fact that you describe your

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2 workforce as an asset not a liability I think
3 similarly deserves applause. So thank you for that.

4 One of your key missions of your agency
5 is to prevent homelessness. You put that right up
6 front. And of course you know eviction is one of the
7 main causes of homelessness. I've seen a stat that a
8 quarter of the people going into our shelter system
9 are coming directly off an eviction. Higher than
10 that if you look back a few months. So I want to ask
11 you about your agency's approach to this. I note
12 that you are now consolidating your Civil Legal
13 Services, the Public Advocate mentioned this into a
14 unified line that will be managed by your agency,
15 considering your background, is clearly the perfect
16 place to house this and that line's priced at \$15
17 million but I believe that includes support for
18 people in immigration cases, not only those who need
19 help preventing eviction. Could you explain a little
20 bit about the funding that going to go specifically
21 to eviction prevention and how this will work under
22 the new regime.

23 COMMISSIONER BANK: Thank you very much,
24 I appreciate your comments as well and the eviction
25 prevention programs are only one component of that

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2 \$15 million as you point out. We wanted to have all
3 of these base line legal services program
4 consolidated at HRA because in some sense..., some way
5 or other each of them is a piece of trying to address
6 poverty and income inequality and preventing
7 homelessness and so the programs for seniors that
8 have been at DFTA or the programs at DYCD that are
9 aimed at immigrants and some of the other programs
10 that have been in place historically through the
11 council are all aimed at addressing the kinds of
12 problems that HRA is by its mission serving as well.
13 The anti-eviction programs that are consolidated at
14 HRA are the programs that were at DHS previously with
15 an additional million dollars added to be able to
16 expand those programs. Our management approach..., or
17 our service approach was to get all the programs in
18 one place so that they can work more effectively
19 together. Certainly as a provider, a world in which
20 one contract requires you to measure this and another
21 contract requires you to measure that, is one in
22 which as a city we're not being as effective as we
23 could be in insuring that the services are getting to
24 the clients as they should. As I indicated, we are
25 continuing to evaluate the need for additional legal

1
2 services, and this is going to be an important
3 component of our efforts to improve services for
4 clients including preventing homelessness.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Just so I get the
6 numbers right, so, it's an additional million
7 dedicated to eviction prevention.

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Correct.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Which will bring
10 the total up to what?

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: That's how we get to
12 the \$15..., total number of \$15 million.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: But a portion of
14 that again is immigration?

15 COMMISSIONER BANKS: It was \$6.5 million,
16 so that's another \$7.5 million approximately is DHS...,
17 was DHS funding that's come to HRA.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: \$7.5, and how
19 many tenants a year would be serviced by that \$7.5
20 million?

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I mean the existing
22 \$6.5 million provides a range of services from actual
23 court representation to advice and counseling and one
24 of the things we want to look at with these contracts
25 is what's the balance of that? What are the kinds of

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2 services that are needed? Also the additional
3 million dollars is going to be allocated based upon a
4 process that we will certainly consult with the
5 providers to try to have it be the most effective
6 possible. I think as you know there's a gap between
7 available legal services and the need and I think
8 what our goal here has to be is to make sure that its
9 target to those who are at most greatest risk of
10 coming into the shelter system and losing their homes
11 and research has shown that there's a lot of...
12 there's a high number of shelter entry in particular
13 districts in the city and we want to make sure our
14 services are maximized where the need is the
15 greatest.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Right. If I'm
17 doing my estimation right it seems like that \$7.5
18 million would be about 2,000 tenants or so. I'm just
19 assuming about 3,500 per case understanding there is
20 some variation there and I'll just note that there
21 are over 200,000 New Yorkers who enter the housing
22 court system every year leading to ultimately last
23 year 30,000 evictions. And that if we're spending
24 \$3,000 per tenant to prevent an eviction, and that
25 saves us \$30,000 on a homeless shelter, then this

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2 actually might be a money maker for the city. I'm
3 sure if that calculus as well understood but can you
4 comment on whether my numbers are roughly correct?

5 COMMISSION BANK: The one reason why I
6 wanted to be careful and not just say yes, is because
7 I think there's a balance between those in which
8 representation is provided and those in which a
9 counselor or advice is provided and so it's going to
10 require some further analysis on our part to see
11 what's actually feasible based upon the dollars that
12 have been allocated for representation versus advice,
13 versus counseling. I think you do make the very good
14 point about the importance of preventing homelessness
15 and there are other ways that we're endeavoring to do
16 that in the budget including our focus on rental
17 assistance as a way of averting eviction, to try to
18 reduce the numbers of cases that may ultimately
19 require legal representation in court and as we also
20 indicated we are focusing on some of the systems and
21 processes we have in place between HRA and the
22 Housing Authority in which we haven't been paying the
23 rent in a timely fashion and we want to insure that
24 we are able to work that our directly with the
25 Housing Authority as opposed to leaving the tenant to

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2 fend for themselves and that's an important step that
3 we've taken forward and as well as working with HPD
4 in terms of addressing conditions in various
5 buildings in which our clients, HRA clients are
6 residing and are paying public dollars for that rent.

7 COUNCL MEMBER LEVINE: Thank you
8 Commissioner and I'll just note that I think myself
9 and many of our colleagues will be pushing for an
10 increase in this kind of legal assistance for the
11 reasons I outlined.

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: As you know, I'm
13 very familiar with the relations between the
14 administration and the council in the budget process
15 and certain will aim to participate in any of those
16 discussions as we go forward.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: I look forward to
18 that. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you Council
20 Member Levine. Council Member Johnson followed by
21 Council Member Miller. Again it is now 11:30, we are
22 trying to stick to the schedule so I appreciate your
23 concise questions. Thank you so much.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Good morning.
25 Good to see you Commissioner. It's great to have you

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2 in front of us and as the Chair said I think the
3 testimony today and the immediate progress that's
4 been made in the short time that you've been at HRA
5 is really remarkable and I applaud you and the
6 administration for taking the lead on this. I also
7 want to again thank the city and this administration
8 for its commitment to the 30% Rent Cap, the
9 additional monies that were come up with for the
10 Executive Budget for the additional folks that will
11 be covered by that. I have a bunch of questions, so
12 I'm going to be quick because I want to be within my
13 time. Federal guidelines say that people who are
14 living with HIV should begin anti-retroviral therapy
15 as soon as they are diagnosed as someone who is HIV
16 positive and who is on anti-retroviral therapy, I
17 know how important it is to have access to your
18 medicine and be getting the healthcare that you need.
19 HASA right now strangely only covers people who have
20 a diagnosis, if they're healthy or considered healthy
21 and living with HIV or AIDS they're not covered in
22 many ways. I wanted to hear your thoughts on whether
23 you support expanding the eligibility for HASA
24 housing assistance to all homeless and low income
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2 people living with HIV regardless of their t-cell
3 count.

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Great and very
5 targeted question. It's an important question and
6 honestly I've been much focused in the last seven
7 weeks on trying to deal with other processes at the
8 agency, along with our new Chief of Special Services
9 Officer, Dan Tietz who's going to have responsibility
10 over the HASA program and other programs. We are
11 looking forward to sitting down with you and talking
12 further about this issue and what the implications
13 are for the agency and the implications for the
14 services. It's certainly a serious issue and am
15 happy to sit down with Dan Tietz with you as soon as
16 he's aboard.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: I'm very excited
18 about Dan. It was a great hire and I think it really
19 tells us the direction that HRA is heading and the
20 sensitivity around these issues. SO thank you for
21 that, I think it's an exciting announcement. I'm
22 seeing him later today, so I get to congratulate him
23 in person. I wanted to ask a question about broker's
24 fees. I know we've had this conversation in the
25 past, but I wanted to hear if there was any update on

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2 broker fee payments by HRA for its clients. We know
3 that a reduced number..., you know there is a small
4 number of people that are willing to work with HASA
5 clients and if broker's fees aren't covered it
6 impacts these people in a real way. The bottom line
7 is that HASA clients are reporting that it's harder
8 for them to get out of emergency housing and into
9 permanent housing. As a result of the broker's fees
10 not being covered by HRA. I was wondering if you had
11 any update on broker's fees.

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Sure, as I indicated
13 in the testimony we're working with OMB and DHS to
14 address the needs for broker's fees. If you look
15 historically, at the city's payment of broker's fees,
16 not just for HASA clients but for clients in all of
17 the various programs there was a significant decrease
18 in the payment of brokers fees following the phasing
19 out of the Advantage Program and as we begin our
20 efforts to implement a more effective city, state
21 rent supplement we're looking very closely at how to
22 fund and what's needed to fund the brokers fees and
23 obviously the HASA clients would be part of that...,
24 part of that discussion and part of that focus but
25 again if you look historically there was less money

1
2 being spent on brokers fees once there was fewer
3 relocations from the shelters just from taking place
4 and so part of the discussion has to be what's the
5 amount that's needed in order to accomplish what you
6 have appropriately highlighted which is the goal of
7 preventing and alleviating homelessness for HASA
8 clients and for all our clients.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: In New York
10 City's housing for opportunities of people living
11 with AIDS allocation has been cut by approximately \$5
12 million this year and although the Department of
13 Health and Mental Hygiene administers the City's
14 Hopple Grant a majority of that funding is channeled
15 into HRA through HASA for support of housing programs
16 which we know how important that is and I know you're
17 a big supporter of..., I wanted to understand what the
18 considerations are around how that cut could
19 potentially affect HASA's budget and whether or not
20 you are trying to figure out if carry over funds
21 could be used, umm, or what could be done on that.

22 [Pause]

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Because we want to
24 avoid any cuts to contracts.

25 [Background talk]

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2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: At this point
3 there's no cut that's been applied to HRA. As you
4 can see in the executive budget the million dollar
5 cut was absorbed by the Department of Health and
6 Mental Hygiene and we're grateful that it hasn't been
7 applied to HRA at this point.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: And lastly,
9 quickly, will there be a moratorium on HASA clients
10 losing their apartments with regard to one shot
11 request for arrears as the rent cap is being
12 implemented. Right now people are saying that there
13 one shot payment for rental arrears are being denied.
14 If you could just look at that and how that is
15 affecting clients of HRA.

16 COMMISSIONER BANK: I'll certainly look
17 into that. That should not be happening. We are in
18 discussions with the state about the implementation
19 on an expedited basis with HRA agreeing to pay
20 arrears back to April 1 and we'll certainly look into
21 any issues that may be occurring that shouldn't be
22 occurring. But I appreciate you calling it to my
23 attention.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you
3 Commissioner. I'm very excited about Dan Tietz.
4 Thank you very much.

5 COMMISSIONER BANK: Thanks.

6 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you Council
7 Member Johnson. We've been joined by Majority Leader
8 Van Bramer and Council Member Crowley. I just wanted
9 to acknowledge that we have Commission Carrion
10 waiting in attendance so I appreciate her patience.
11 Council Member Miller, followed by Council Member
12 Rosenthal.

13 COUNCL MEMBER MILLER: Good morning and
14 thank you Madam Chair, Co-Chair, Public Advocate,
15 thank you for your participation and your input in
16 this hearing and to you Commission Banks. Thank you
17 so much for what you've offered in particular in the
18 area of reform and transparency. I appreciate that.
19 So, umm, there's a lot that's been said and my
20 colleagues are often very much prepared. There's
21 great questions. So I wanted to speak to those
22 delivering some of these services which are the
23 employees and you have a staff overview and it talks
24 about some of the folks that delivering the employees
25 the various bargaining units involved. One of my

1
2 questions is, what it doesn't speak to are the folks
3 that are non-represented in there and how many folks
4 are non-represented exist within HRA now? Umm, and
5 then, umm, so..., you can begin with that.

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I'm sorry and the
7 questions is how many are not members of the...

8 [Interpose]

9 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Non-represented
10 members of HRA.

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I apologize..., one
12 fact and figure I don't have in my head is the answer
13 to that, but I will certainly get it for you.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Because as we
15 spoke about the work reform I think that would...,
16 there would be a great opportunity in there for that
17 to happen considering that some of the skill sets
18 involved are equal to those as some of the entry
19 level employees and I know myself in Civil Service
20 and Labor along with DKS and other agencies would be
21 willing to kind of facilitate conversation that would
22 allow for real transitional and to real employment
23 opportunities.

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2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: That's great. I'm
3 certainly going to take you up on that offer. That's
4 a very..., we really appreciate that.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: I will catch you
6 on the second go around. What I would like to ask
7 though, I think that we have somewhere around \$725
8 million and 1,200 outstanding contracts for FY15.
9 Could we somewhere, obviously they're not listed in
10 the report, but we'd like to see some of those
11 contracts there and oversight on some of the
12 contracts. I know it was mentioned earlier about
13 some of the services that were being delivered in the
14 past and how it was being done and we want to make
15 sure that umm, there's oversight on those services
16 that's being delivered in terms of the human services
17 that they're being properly done and umm, what do we
18 do in the future about it? Or do you anticipate that
19 all those contracts will go through and are you
20 satisfied with...

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well on the
22 employment front there are..., there is a challenge for
23 us which is that we have to go through the process of
24 preparing and seeking comment on our employment plan
25 and a number of the services that you're speaking

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2 about are through contractors. At the same time, we
3 have the obligation to comply with federal and state
4 requirements with respect to employment for the
5 portion of the caseload that's required to
6 participate in employment. So one of the challenges
7 for us would be..., is going to be to make reforms even
8 as in some cases we're going to have to extend
9 existing contracts because we won't have an
10 alternative in place quick enough in order to deal
11 with some of the issues because many of these
12 contracts are July 1 contracts and so on and so
13 forth. So, we're in a place where the car is going
14 60 miles an hour, 100 miles an hour and we're trying
15 to change the tire and we have to be able to
16 accommodate, both making the changes that we need to
17 make and keeping the programs running and complying
18 with federal and state law.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Okay, as long as
20 we're conscious of it I know we're working on it and
21 one final question, in terms of the reform, are any
22 of these represented employees and unions involved in
23 some of the reforms that you're talking about. Are
24 you sitting down and having conversations with those
25 who are actually providing services.

1
2 COMMISSION BANKS: Absolutely. In
3 multiple ways. One is, since I began I've been
4 holding meetings with front line staff around the
5 city, we've sent out a survey to our front line staff
6 to ask them specifically for their ideas about
7 various reforms. We've conducted focus groups with
8 various employees, our front line staff about to seek
9 their input about reforms that are needed and
10 directly to the leadership of the various unions.
11 We've had those conversations. The first day of my
12 appointment I reached out to all of the leader of the
13 major locals that represent large numbers of workers
14 and we've had an ongoing series of discussions with
15 them about the kinds of reforms. I guess a classic
16 one to highlight is when we took down Center 71,
17 which had been resulting in substantial numbers of
18 unnecessary fair hearings because of case closings
19 and sanctions. The thing that could have happened
20 was to simply disperse the workers around the city,
21 but instead what we did, we came up with a different
22 program to operate there and that's where we're
23 running our centralized rent check processing unit.
24 So, the workers are going to remain in place where
25 they are, where they have been working and provide a

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2 new service that's going to be more effective for
3 clients than the one that had previously been
4 provided. So it's a win, win for the staff and a win
5 for the clients.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you so
7 much. I look forward to continuing to work with you
8 in the future.

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Great. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you Council
11 Member Miller. Council Member Rosenthal followed by
12 Council Member Rodriguez.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you
14 Chairs and thank you Commissioner. How long have you
15 been in..., how long have you been working now, three
16 months, four month?

17 COMMISSIONER BANKS: April 1.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Wow. So...

19 COMMISSIONER BANK: Seven weeks.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So, you're
21 really jumping right in and your obviously going at
22 it. Umm, and of course everyone appreciates it. So
23 with that in mind, two of the areas that I'm
24 interested in, are job placement and contracts in
25 general. I'm Chair of the Contracts Committee. So,

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2 umm, I'm interested if you could provide either now
3 or at another time, could you provide a list of all
4 your job placement programs, so you've got Workforce
5 One and then..., I forget the names of the other ones...,
6 Amercorp, I literally forget the names, you know them
7 better than I do. But if you could provide sort of
8 what they, where they are, how many people they
9 serve, you know as a beginning, how much money you're
10 spending at each one. And I don't know if you
11 track..., you're starting to shake your head no. I had
12 a yes...

13 COMMISSIONER BANKS: No, no, we're happy
14 to do that.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: How much money
16 is spent at each one? And then if you have a sense
17 of length of employment or recidivism, I don't know
18 what the right word is.

19 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We're happy to do
20 that, but I want to just emphasize what I said at the
21 beginning, which is that we're not satisfied that 25%
22 of the people that are either connected to work or
23 leave our caseload for work, return to us, so
24 therefore that's part of why we want to reform these
25

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2 programs overall, but we're certainly happy to give
3 you the information on the past programs.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Absolutely.
5 Because it strikes as of April 1, that's our
6 baseline. Right. Because now you're starting. I
7 mean I think that what's been going on in the last
8 few years we read in the paper about you know,
9 falsified achievement, you know, levels where there
10 are centers that have said that they're forced to hit
11 certain numbers and so they show on paper that they
12 do, but they don't really, so I more think of April 1
13 as a baseline and not in terms of numbers achieved
14 but in terms of quality achieved. And then we're
15 going to go forward on tenure, on your watch and my
16 expectation is that the numbers, while maybe will be
17 lower, they'll be cleaner numbers and more accurate
18 indicators. So that's my hope.

19 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Great. It's our aim
20 as well.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Right. In
22 addition to that there are some..., I wondering, CEO is
23 now housed in HRA? Is that accurate?

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yes.
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2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So that's sort
3 of the research arm, right, in a way?

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, it's housed in
5 HRA in a sense that it's within our, you know, within
6 our budget to do, but it's an independent initiative.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yes. But
8 you'll be using sort of their analysis to help with
9 what you're doing.

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, they're very
11 helpful in what..., in their analysis but also let me
12 emphasize that all of the data that we presented
13 today came from HRAs in-house research staff who have
14 done a terrific job of helping us with these reforms
15 to show what are the consequences of the policies
16 with the data that you've got, and I think that's
17 going to be something we're going to keep presenting
18 to you as our baseline as you said, for what we found
19 on April 1 and what we're going to do to be able to
20 improve things. Although I want to caution us all
21 that it is going to take some time to make some of
22 these changes.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Absolutely. I
24 mean, so I was Board Chair of a small not-for-profit
25 called Parent Job Net where we helped public school

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2 parents find work once their kids started coming into
3 the public school system and what I found in the
4 years of working with them is that the success
5 numbers are small if you're doing it right. Umm, but
6 for those people who you're doing it right for,
7 you're really doing a good job.

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I appreciate that.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: And I'm
10 wondering if you're thinking about looking at smaller
11 and more localized, micro-targeted job centers.

12 COMMISSIONER BANK: We want to have more
13 options for people. That's clearly part of it, and
14 as we continue to develop the plan..., and expect to
15 have it out for comment next month, we think you'll
16 see changes and if you don't see the changes that you
17 like we're certainly open to comment, which is the
18 reason while we want to put it out for public
19 comment.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: No problem.
21 So in 24 seconds, could you get back to me about the
22 IT work that you're doing. I know you're setting up
23 these virtual client centers for job placement, which
24 is great, but I'd love some detail information on the
25 IT consultants, I see \$15 million of contracts or

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2 payments and \$18 million in data processing and
3 equipment. If you could get back to us with some
4 details on that and I know this is a different topic,
5 but the \$63 million for your new headquarters at 4
6 World Trade Center, if you could get back to us with
7 some details that's on the capital side and it's such
8 a big number I'd love to see some details. Thank
9 you.

10 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you Council
11 Member Rosenthal. And just as a reminder, for
12 members, we're going to have a follow-up letter to
13 the questions that are not asked today in this
14 committee, we just ask that you respond to us quickly
15 so that we are able to effectively add them to our
16 budget negotiations.

17 COMMISSION BANKS: We'll absolutely do
18 that. I just wanted to make two quick points. One
19 is, and we'll disaggregate it for you, but some of
20 that IT expenses is for the re-engineering to create
21 a portal for people to be able to apply online and
22 see what's happening with their case online and some
23 of that is also related to expanding it to cover cash
24 assistance as well..., will be available to cover cash
25 assistance as well as food stamps. And the move to

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2 the World Trade Center, as you know, predates the
3 administration and it relates back to the original
4 agreement that was made for the redevelopment of that
5 site that results in a city agency like HRA moving
6 there, so I think that the dollars are the dollars
7 that are related to decisions that were made many
8 years ago.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you so
11 Commissioner and thank you Council Member Rosenthal.
12 Council Member Rodriguez followed by Council Member
13 Crowley, then followed by Council Member Torres and
14 that will be the end of our first round and we will
15 continue with our second round.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Thank you
17 Chair, I mean what a great day to be in city council
18 with commissions such as you that we have no doubt
19 that have your heart to serve everyone, especially
20 the working class and middle class. So this is like
21 a new day for those of us that live many time in
22 nightmare in the previous four years. Many
23 commissioners to who we didn't have any access,
24 commissioner that all answers were none. Definitely
25 it's a different day.

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2 I love the reform that you are..., will
3 introduce allowing the student to go to senior
4 colleges to also have the opportunity to apply and be
5 part of the..., being allowed to get public assistance.
6 What about the two year college. And I bring up the
7 two year college, because my concern is that you
8 know, the senior colleges is getting the best
9 students, the students that they are more prepared.
10 The students who go to senior college, they don't
11 need remedial courses and someone that used to get
12 public assistance when I was at City College I know
13 that importance it makes for a student to say I can
14 focus on my study and that the public assistance the
15 community college. That's where close to 80% of the
16 students, they need remedial courses. So how can we
17 also include student at community college to be part
18 of this reform.

19 COMMISSIONER BANK: Well in advocating
20 for and ultimately being part of the process in which
21 the option was extended to include four year college,
22 nothing that we're doing is eliminating the option to
23 do two year college. The funds that we have in our
24 budget for work study placements for CUNY are related
25 to the fact that the state law requires there to be

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2 certain participation while you're taking advantage
3 of the four year..., or availing yourself of the four
4 year college requirements, so we had to put in some
5 dollars to make it possible to take advantage of the
6 four year option but nothing that we're doing is
7 intended to diminish the ability to...

8 [Interpose]

9 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: So will two
10 year be included?

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well two years
12 always was something that would be permissible, the
13 additional focus that we've had is to deal with the
14 fact that there were specific requirements put in
15 place to permit someone to do the four year.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: I just want to
17 be sure that we include all the students at CUNY
18 because previous of the first day when you became a
19 commissioner, students at CUNY were not able to get
20 public assistance.

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Correct.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: And in the two
23 and four year. And the two year in that population,
24 that they need to focus more time because they are
25 the ones that are the 65 and 70 average and they are

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2 the one that have to put more time on the writing and
3 reading. So I just hope that we also can include two
4 year.

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We'll focus on that.
6 I mean, clearly one of the important things that
7 we're going to focus on in the employment plan is to
8 address the fact that 25% of the people are coming
9 back to us. We want to reduce that percentage to
10 zero or as close to zero as possible. But in the
11 meantime we don't want to minimize the options for
12 education as a way of getting jobs that would keep
13 you off of returning to our caseload.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Great. So and
15 my number two question is about the one shot deal.
16 What reform are you also looking to introduce on the
17 one shot deals since many New Yorkers who are in the
18 need to get supported upon public assistance, they've
19 been rejected when they apply to the one shot deal.
20 In many cases we have all the reasons why they should
21 be considered getting the one shot deal. And my
22 second one is on the job placement. In page 25 when
23 we talk about the 85,000 placement averaging for the
24 past several years. In your administration, when
25 someone is looking for a job but he or she is not

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2 necessarily interested in getting public assistance,
3 all they need is help to get a job. Will those
4 individuals get the support to be placed in a job
5 training without necessarily getting public
6 assistance?

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I mean one of the
8 goals that we have for anybody that comes and seeks
9 our help, is to connect them to the workforce. Our
10 mission is focused on people who would otherwise be
11 eligible for public assistance, who either are
12 entitled to receive it or with employment assistance
13 can obtain employment and not have to receive public
14 assistance. So all of the points that you're making
15 are going to be things that we're going to be looking
16 at very closely in the employment plan. We want
17 there to be services that we provide that essentially
18 make it possible for people to have a pathway to a
19 career.

20 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you very
21 much for your testimony Commissioner. Thank you
22 Council Member Rodriguez. We will have Council
23 Member Crowley followed by Council Member Torres,
24 then a two minute second round followed by Council
25 Member Gibson and Miller.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Thank you to our
3 Chairs. Good morning Commissioner, Mr. Banks, it's
4 good to see you in this role.

5 COMMISSIONER BANK: Thank you.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Congratulations
7 on your new position. I have questions about the
8 various different rental assistance programs. Do you
9 have a number that you believe, a number of homeless
10 people, who are currently homeless, that will no
11 longer be homeless because of these programs. Is
12 there 3,000 families, how many people do you believe
13 will be helped over the next 12 months.

14 COMMISSIONER BANK: Well in the budget,
15 we have provided dollars that we need to bring to the
16 table in discussions with the state about three
17 different kinds of initiatives. One is a working
18 families' rental assistance program and another is
19 rental help for particularly vulnerable populations
20 including survivors of domestic violence, persons
21 with disabilities and then there's also the focus on
22 rental assistance to prevent evictions and entry into
23 the shelter system to begin with. And our purpose in
24 the budget was to present dollars that could be used
25 for these programs but then we have our city/state

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2 obligations to try to work this out with the state
3 office of temporary assistance, disability
4 assistance.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Absolutely. So
6 right now that amount is a total \$60 million through
7 the three different various programs for Fiscal Year
8 2015.

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: That's an amount for
10 the rental assistance programs but not for the
11 eviction prevention programs. Historically, people
12 have looked at the eviction prevention rental
13 assistance in the way that common sense would tell
14 you that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of
15 cure. So, we're looking and we expect to when we
16 speak with the state to work through the cost savings
17 that are going to be available for actually all three
18 of these programs, but particularly the FEPS programs
19 to prevent evictions.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: And do you have
21 an estimate of what an average monthly voucher would
22 be.

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Again these are all
24 going to have to be discussions that we need to work
25 through. We have oversight responsibilities to you

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2 but we also have oversight responsibilities to our
3 supervisory agency, the State Office of Temporary
4 Assistance and Disability Assistance. So all of
5 these issues are details that we have to address with
6 the state, but we wanted to in this budget
7 presentation show that the dollars are there to be
8 able to have program.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Right. But,
10 look I believe in rental subsidies and I think that
11 we need to look to put more money in the budget to
12 support programs like this. When the advantage
13 program was in full swing I believe it was helping
14 thousands of families. I don't have the numbers but
15 you must have an idea of what it costs the city and
16 the state three years ago, four years ago, when we
17 were utilizing this program.

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right, I mean I
19 think the dollars that were put in are responsive to
20 that but one of the problems with the advantage
21 program was that over time substantial numbers of
22 families actually returned to the shelter system
23 because of various factors including the amount that
24 was provided and the time limit
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2 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: That may be, but
3 today there are more homeless families than ever
4 since the great recession. This is the biggest
5 crisis facing the City of New York. So whether those
6 families that were receiving the vouchers were going
7 to enter the homeless system or not, the numbers
8 don't lie. Since that program ended a few years ago,
9 the number of homeless families have skyrocketed.

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: That's absolutely
11 right. Because families haven't been able to move
12 out and the families that were previously relocated
13 to advantage apartments returned. Those two factors
14 really are driving the numbers that we currently
15 have.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: When look at the
17 vouchers and the cost of the vouchers in comparison
18 to the cost of building new homeless shelters,
19 there's a cost savings. The City of New York must
20 have an idea of the average assistance check versus
21 the average cost in a shelter. I bet the number is
22 at least 50% more affordable. That the city would
23 save an average of 50% on each family. I mean this
24 is a significant number when you have the Department
25 of Homeless Services budget at only a billion dollars

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2 but it's already this fiscal year spent \$150 million
3 more than what was in this budget to begin with.

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: That's exactly why
5 we put those dollars into the budget, so that we
6 could have those discussions with the state which
7 ultimately has to approve of what we're going to do
8 with the dollars and how we're going to spend them.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Were only weeks
10 away from passing a budget. There's an amount of
11 money that's asked, we should have an idea of knowing
12 whether that's enough money. We need to know how
13 many families are estimated to be helped from the
14 amount allocated. We want to reach out to our state
15 representatives and work with them and our colleagues
16 in government to make sure that the state is putting
17 in their share and that we're actually this fiscal
18 year going to make a difference.

19 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well I think that
20 with the dollars we have on the table, it will make a
21 difference. As you know I've represented homeless
22 people for many years and that was why I was very
23 happy to see that in our Executive Budget we're able
24 to provide the dollars in the budget to give us the
25 basis to have negotiations with the state, which the

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2 prior administrations had not done. So, we have the
3 basis to actually do exactly what I think that you
4 and your colleagues want us to do, which is to have
5 the dollars on the table, to call to the table and
6 negotiate with the state. And the state's been a
7 great partner and we expect them to be. But also I
8 think you could understand that they would want to
9 have the discussion in the way that it should happen.
10 Which is we are..., they're our supervisory agency and
11 we need to develop our plans in discussions with
12 them. As we do we'll certainly keep the chair
13 mindful of the directions we're going in. I
14 understand the questions that you're asking..

15 [Interpose]

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: I know the Chair
17 is also mindful of the time that we have, so I do
18 appreciate the answers that you've provided Mr.
19 Banks. And what I would just ask is if since we are
20 looking to pass a fiscally responsible budget, as
21 fiscally responsible as could possibly be..

22 [Interpose]

23 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you Council
24 Member Crowley..

25 [Interpose]

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: I'm finishing my
3 comment. Then we need to know what the cost savings
4 will be if we put this money into your budget that
5 wasn't there and take it out of DHS. We need to
6 know...

7 [Interpose]

8 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you Council
9 Member, you have to be considerate of the members
10 that are after you. Thank you Council Member
11 Crowley. Council Member Torres.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: Thank you Madam
13 Chairwoman. I see the ACS Commissioner in the
14 audience so I'm going to shorten my questioning.
15 Thank you commissioner for your testimony. Obviously
16 homeless prevention is core to the mission of HRA and
17 I think we've spoken extensively about rental
18 subsidies. I guess a second tool, a cost effective
19 tool, is setting aside public housing units for
20 homeless families. And I'm wondering how many public
21 housing units are going to be..., I don't know if
22 you're aware of how many units are going to be
23 available for priority referrals by HRA and DHS.

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I mean that's a...,
25 also a discussion that's ongoing. I know that

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2 there's a Housing Authority Process that they're
3 going to go through in order to make that a
4 transparent process. This had been a priority in
5 prior administrations. It was dispensed with as you
6 know sort of midway through the last administration,
7 with the impact that it had on homelessness and we're
8 hopeful that the number is going to be a number that
9 will help us in operating our domestic violence
10 shelters and help DHS in terms of the obligations
11 that they have to provide shelter as well. I think
12 that..., I certainly understand what you're asking me
13 and I understand the interest in knowing what the
14 numbers are, but I think it's all part of the
15 discussion that's still going on to try to get to a
16 number that makes sense for the Housing Authority and
17 for DHS and for HRA.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: I mean one
19 concern is we want to set aside enough units to leave
20 a dent in the problem.

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Understood.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: It's worth noting
23 that you know, there are 54,000 people living...,
24 sleeping in the shelters and there's been a 75%
25 increase in the homeless population since 2001 and so

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2 we're hoping at a minimum that we will have the same
3 number of set asides as we did under Koch, under
4 Dinkins and even Giuliani. But you have no sense of
5 the numbers under consideration or...

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I remember all those
7 numbers well. From my time, not at the table...

8 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: Even Giuliani.

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I do remember
10 testifying to that fact in another role but this is
11 certainly an issue that's a high priority for our
12 agency and for DHS and the Housing Authority to get
13 to a number so that in combination with that number
14 and the numbers of subsidies that we're able to get
15 at the state are a number that's ultimately going to
16 make the difference that needs to be made in the
17 children and adults in the shelter system. But I
18 think that one thing that's important to emphasize is
19 we're looking for a broad range of tools. Multiple
20 potential subsidy approaches, housing authority, the
21 eviction prevention subsidies. So there's a range of
22 tools that we're trying to bring to the table so that
23 no single one of them will be able to do all that....

24 [Interpose]

25

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: Arguably this one
3 of your best tools because it will cost you nothing.
4 Right, these are units that are currently available.

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: That's an important
6 tool but equally important is keeping people in their
7 homes so that they don't even enter the shelter
8 system, there's a huge savings there as well. But
9 you're absolutely right, I understand the question
10 and we're going to do our best to get to a number
11 that makes sense.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: And I'll conclude
13 my questioning, but my concern is that with the
14 dramatic rise in the homeless population, if we're
15 setting aside substantially fewer units than we did
16 under Koch, under Dinkins, under Giuliani, I'm
17 concerned we're going to have a negligible impact on
18 the problem of homelessness in our city.

19 COMMISSIONER BANK: I hear what you're
20 saying and that's why I think it's important to look
21 at the overall combination of numbers that are going
22 to come from all of these tools to see whether..., what
23 the impact is then. Then the aim is to have a
24 substantial impact by a combination of approaches,
25 not any one single approach.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: I thank you for
3 your answer and I told you I was going to be brief,
4 so.

5 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you.
6 Council Member Gibson. A two minute second round,
7 and followed by Council Member Miller. We've been
8 joined by the former chair Annabel Palma who did a
9 lot of work and worked very diligently to identify a
10 lot of the things that were answered. So, thank you
11 Council Member Palma for being here.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you
13 Commissioner, just two quick questions. I know the
14 HRA is currently working with Ultada [phonetic] in
15 reference to expanding FEPS. In those conversations,
16 I want to make sure that you acknowledge and
17 understand the arduous process of getting eligibility
18 for the FEPS program and the fact that in the City of
19 New York we have very few providers that can handle
20 FEPS cases and they're very lengthy in terms of going
21 through the process. So while I don't know the
22 details of the conversations you're having with
23 Ultada. I know these are their rules, but you are a
24 part of a conversation so whatever changes we make I
25 want you to please be mindful that we need changes

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2 that are realistic where we can get more families
3 eligible for FEPS in an expeditious fashion.

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I agree with your
5 point that part of the issue is as people have
6 asked..., as Council Members have asked, what are the
7 numbers, what are the criteria going to be..., but
8 another important factor is what's the process going
9 to be? I agree with you.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: And then my other
11 question I wanted to bring up and it wasn't provided
12 in your testimony. The EVR, the Eligibility Review
13 Verification Office that's currently in Brooklyn.
14 Are there any changes for that and how does an
15 applicant travel to Brooklyn and under what
16 circumstances do they have to go to determine
17 eligibility for a PA?

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: All of these kinds
19 of things are going to be dealt with in our..., in
20 relationship to our employment plan, because as I
21 know, you know to the extent that we have fewer
22 appointments that may be unnecessary that has an
23 impact on workload and an impact that's positive for
24 the clients and that's really what we're looking at
25 now, is that appointment required, it is necessary,

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2 and more importantly, over time has it actually
3 proved to be useful for any reason and to the extent
4 that we can very precisely analyze that that you're
5 going to see those changes.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: I'm glad to hear
7 that. While I have so much love and respect for my
8 Brooklyn colleagues I would really like to avoid my
9 constituents traveling to Brooklyn, so that would be
10 great if that is a part of the reform. Thank you.

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We're going to look
12 closely at that process.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you. Now we
15 will have Council Member Crowley.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: I'm going to be
17 brief. Mr. Banks I do believe these programs are
18 well intentioned and I support the 110%, but what I
19 didn't..., I'm not sure if I had enough time before to
20 be able to really explain the position that we have
21 as council members when we're looking at a \$74 plus
22 billion dollar budget and we want to see, well, if
23 you're spending this much money in a certain area,
24 how far is it going to go and since it will save DHS
25 \$60 million will it be reflected in DHS's budget. It

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2 will be helpful for us also to..., you know, when we
3 work with our colleagues in Albany saying this is a
4 program that's made sense in the past, look it saved
5 city money, it's going to save the city money again
6 in the future, this is why it's so important for us
7 to be working together to make sure this happens. So
8 what I would like before we vote on the Executive
9 Budget is to have an idea on exactly or somewhere
10 near the figure of how many families will be helped.
11 How many of the 53 plus thousand people that are
12 living in the shelter system, will move out of the
13 system, will have an opportunity to live in permanent
14 housing because of this program.

15 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I think it's a fair
16 question, certainly the mayor's office and OMB and
17 DHS and HRA are all working very urgently to try to
18 conclude all of these issues that are outstanding so
19 that we can have the programs in place and use the
20 dollars that are on the table and in a transparent
21 way you will have the information that you're looking
22 for, which our aim is to resolve all of these things
23 as quickly as we can.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Thank you.

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2 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you Council
3 Member Crowley. Commission, I'm going to in the
4 interest of time withhold any further questions and
5 we'll send them to you in a follow-up letter. But I
6 just wanted to say at the conclusion of the hearing
7 today that this has been a real breath of fresh air
8 and we thank you very much for your testimony and for
9 your team's preparation. It has also demonstrated I
10 think to this committee that when it comes to reforms
11 at HRA, when there's a will there's a way and umm,
12 I'm trying to count the number of pages in your
13 testimony and your power point of immediate reforms.
14 Immediate reforms that you have undertaken in just
15 seven weeks and all I can say is that this document
16 that you have shown to us today when it comes to the
17 transparency and the reforms that are enacted now and
18 will be enacted this year represent profound and
19 systemic change at HRA and is some of the most
20 sweeping changes, probably the most sweeping changes
21 that we've ever seen since this agency began and I
22 want to thank you. I look forward to working with
23 you and your team. You've been forthright and candid
24 with us in this committee and we appreciate that
25 every much and I'll turn it over to my Co-Chair.

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2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you Chair
3 Levin. I just wanted to disclose that my mom just
4 retired from 1549. Having worked at HRA, so it was
5 the means by which my family put food on the table
6 for many years and the fact that you acknowledge the
7 workforce of HRA speaks huge volumes to the
8 importance of, it's not only a lifeline for the
9 clients, but it's sustainability for the workforce.
10 So I appreciate you acknowledging that and that you
11 will continue to work understanding the importance of
12 the workforce but also that you've acknowledged that
13 this agency is not supposed to be expediting clients
14 getting into another agency, called Homeless
15 Services. That you are able to actively work on and
16 insuring that we're making New Yorkers better is
17 something that is..., that I'm looking forward to
18 seeing how we make this happen. You have a lot of
19 commitments. I'm looking forward to looking at...,
20 speaking about a lot more results next year, at the
21 next Executive Budget briefings. But also
22 acknowledging that when the public advocate mentioned
23 our language barrier issues, those are something that
24 really need to be addressed representing a very
25 diverse community. It is a challenge. So I thank

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2 you very much today for your testimony and thank you
3 for staying a little longer to answer our questions.

4 COMMISSIONER BANK: Thank you for your
5 very kind words and I appreciate the opportunity to
6 explain what we've been doing and I'd also be remiss
7 if I didn't say, you know nothing happens because a
8 single person, there are people on the front row here
9 who have been working very, very hard to make all of
10 these things happen as well as the people at the
11 table with me and then as the Chair said, back at the
12 agency there's 14,000 people who are working every
13 day to help make these reforms real for people. It
14 took a long time to get to where we are today and
15 it's going to take some time to get to where we
16 should be and I know that the people at the agency
17 are dedicated to doing that. Thank you very much.

18 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you
19 Commissioner. We have a lot of faith in you. Now we
20 will close this portion of the budget hearings and we
21 will start our next ACS. We're going to be asking
22 for a three minute break, so that we can transition.
23 Thank you.

24 [Pause]

25 [Background talk]

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2 [Pause]

3 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: We will now resume
4 the council's hearing on the Mayor's Executive
5 Budget, FY2015. The Finance Committee and the
6 General Welfare Committee has now been joined by the
7 Committee on Women's Issues chaired by my colleague,
8 Council Member Laurie Cumbo, to hear from the
9 Administration of Children Services. I'd like to
10 also acknowledge that we were running a little late
11 and I appreciate your patience. Very interesting
12 topics obviously today and all have very..., a lot of
13 members asking questions. I know my co-chairs are
14 very anxious to get started so I will turn the mike
15 over to them for a statement. Chair Levin.

16 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very
17 much Chair Ferreras. Good afternoon I am Council
18 Member Stephen Levin Chair of the City Council
19 General Welfare Committee. I am excited to hear
20 today from Commissioner Gladys Carrion and learn
21 about the new efforts from ACS since our last
22 preliminary budget hearing. ACS's Fiscal 2015
23 Executive Budget is \$2.89 billion which is a \$106
24 million increase when compared to last years adopted
25 budget. This increase is largely attributed to UPK

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2 Funding and stage Child Care Block Grant Funding.
3 Last fiscal year the city council allocated \$64.1
4 million to ACS with \$62.5 million directed to child
5 care. In the November plan, the \$62.5 million was
6 baseline and we are pleased to see the executive
7 budget has maintained this baseline. As we prepare
8 for summer programming and the next school year, we
9 can all agree that child care must be at the
10 forefront of educational discourse. Research shows
11 that providing high quality education for children
12 before they turn five, yields significant long term
13 benefits. We are proud that the administration
14 alongside the council can continue to provide high
15 quality instruction and child care services.

16 We are also pleased with the strides made
17 in Universal Pre-Kindergarten Access and Quality. At
18 the preliminary budget hearing we discussed teacher
19 parity in regard to salary and professional
20 development and since then the mayor has announced
21 salary increases for UPK instructors and child care
22 and Head Start Centers and I want to acknowledge
23 obviously the great work that Mayor de Blasio and his
24 team put into expanding access to full-day UPK this
25 spring. We stand in support of UPK but we must also

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2 acknowledge the full spectrum of child care workers
3 and the services that they provide. There has to be
4 a larger conversation about the long term investment
5 in early childhood education. Specifically, we need
6 to insure that for early childhood education programs
7 to work successfully and effectively and for our
8 programs to be able to attract and retain teachers
9 for our two and three year old students, we need to
10 create compensation equity within our CVO providers
11 for our teachers who are in two and three year old
12 classrooms. My office looks forward to working with
13 the commissioner and the new task force led by Deputy
14 Mayor Richard Buery to not just create
15 recommendations but to implement them as well.

16 I'm also glad to see additional funding
17 in ACS's Executive Budget for new needs in the
18 Division of Youth and Family Justice and in the
19 Division of Protection. There's \$1.5 million in
20 fiscal year 2015 for Juvenile Detention, Health and
21 Mental Services and an additional \$780,000 for
22 detention facility repairs and we hope to gain more
23 insight on how this funding will impact the agency
24 and the health of young people.

1
2 On May 8th, we held an oversight hearing
3 to address the tragic and unfortunate deaths of
4 children and the necessary child welfare policy
5 reforms at ACS and I want to thank Commissioner
6 Carrion for being there and testifying and having a
7 productive dialogue with us throughout that hearing.
8 As a direct response ACS has begun to implement
9 reforms, not to the hearing, but to the recent
10 deaths, ACS has agreed to..., has begun to implement
11 reforms across the division.

12 Furthermore, ACS has included \$25.3
13 million in the executive budget to hire 362
14 additional positions under the reform title Operation
15 Safe. However, this funding is not reflected until
16 fiscal year 2016. We have several follow-up
17 questions regarding the new reforms and what efforts
18 will be made in the interim. And lastly I would like
19 to make sure that this committee is updated on the
20 latest revelations on the Close to Home Initiative.
21 At the preliminary budget hearing we were informed
22 that there were plans to begin Phase 2 in late fall
23 of this calendar year, which would be implementation
24 of limited secured placement. We have read in the
25 mayor's message that the date has not been pushed

1
2 back to even further, to 2015. It is important that
3 we open the limited secure placement facilities
4 sooner rather than later so we can bring those
5 children closer to their families. The council needs
6 more insight on the challenges behind this delay and
7 how the state is responding.

8 Finally, I would like to thank ACS for
9 their work with City Council Finance and I am
10 interested in hearing how ACS plans to work closely
11 with stake holders and the council and raise the age
12 reforms UPK changes and in continuing the work to
13 insure that we all do all that we can to prevent
14 unfortunate and reckless child deaths. I would like
15 the committee staff who worked on this hearing.
16 Particularly, Norah Yahya the finance analyst and
17 Counsel Andrea Vasquez to the Committee. Thank you
18 very much and I welcome testimony from Commissioner
19 Gladys Carrion. Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Wait, Council
21 Member..., Co-Chair Laurie Cumbo.

22 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I'm sorry Council
23 Member Cumbo.

24 CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: No problem
25 colleague. Good morning, I'm Laurie Cumbo, I'm chair

1
2 of the Women's Issues Committee. I'd like to thank
3 our finance chair Julissa Ferreras and my co-chair
4 Stephen Levin. And I want to thank them for their
5 support and collaboration with the committee. I also
6 want to thank all of your for being here today
7 because I know that your presence here demonstrates
8 you interest in this issue. And with the future of
9 the agency I'd also like to thank our commissioner
10 for her time today because I know that we got started
11 a little bit later than anticipated. I'd also like
12 to thank my committee staff, my finance analyst Norah
13 Yahya and my policy analyst Joan Paulvony (phonetic)
14 for their work in preparing this hearing.

15 As we gather today to discuss ACS's
16 Fiscal 2015 Executive Budget we want to acknowledge
17 the positive steps we have taken as a city towards
18 parity for UPK teachers across the five boroughs. We
19 must continue to highlight the strides and progress
20 we have made as a state in the equal pay movement as
21 well. As we all know, nationally women on average
22 are paid 77 cents to a dollar that a man makes. This
23 issue is even timelier considering the actions taken
24 across the state to close the pay gap of much needed
25 earnings. On average New York women lose over \$8,500

1
2 per year and, between \$450,000 to \$1 million over the
3 course of a career. Unfortunately, although not
4 surprising, the disparity is even worse for women and
5 color as well as for our immigrant populations. The
6 pay gap especially hurts single mothers who make up
7 one-third of the workforce. As we continue these
8 conversations regarding child care workers and UPK
9 teachers which our workforce is heavily dominated by
10 women of color we must address the need to eliminate
11 the pay gap. One approach to that is to insure
12 minority and women business enterprises get a fair
13 share of government contracts. I look forward to
14 hearing how the administration is working towards
15 achieving that goal.

16 As Chair Levin highlighted, the Fiscal
17 2015 ACS Executive Budget has maintained baseline
18 funds to support the city's child care system and has
19 increased funding for UPK. And this is very exciting
20 because this is the one agency during a very tight
21 budget cycle that has received substantial increases
22 in their budget. Both of which are essential to the
23 healthy development of children. Considering 90% of
24 brain development occurs between the ages of 0 and 5
25 years old. It is critical that we fully invest in

1
2 early childhood education which does not only happen
3 in four year olds. While we applaud the mayor and
4 ACS and DOE for taking steps in the right direction
5 as it relates to parity and equality for UPK
6 instructors, we must do everything we can to insure
7 that we keep highly qualified and dedicated 0 to 3
8 year old teachers in the classrooms.

9 I look forward to hearing how you all are
10 working closely with providers to directly address
11 this pressing matter as we get closer and closer to
12 September. Finally I would like to reiterate Chair
13 Levin's earlier point surrounding the child welfare
14 reform plan. As a legislative body, as city agencies
15 and as gate keepers of this city we are obligated to
16 do everything in our power to protect the children of
17 this city and to provide them with security and
18 safety when they cannot protect themselves. The
19 Commissioner asked as the last hearing, where were
20 the neighbors? Where were the people that should
21 have been reporting the maltreatment of young Miles
22 Dobson? Our hearts break for the children that do
23 not have protection they deserve. While we hope
24 these reforms and efforts to hire additional
25 employees begin the much needed discourse we need to

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2 make sure the unnecessary and senseless deaths of our
3 most vulnerable are not forgotten. The council looks
4 forward to continuing the work to strengthen the
5 Division of Child Protection. Thank you again Chair
6 Ferreras and Chair Levin. The Women's Committee
7 welcomes the Commissioner's testimony.

8 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you Chair
9 Cumbo. Commissioner you may begin your testimony.

10 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Good morning, oh,
11 good afternoon Chairs Levin, Cumbo and Ferreras and
12 members of the General Welfare, Juvenile Justice
13 Women's Issues and Finance Committee and our Public
14 Advocate. I am Gladys Carrion the Commissioner of
15 the Administration for Children's Services and with
16 me today Susan Nuccio our Deputy Commissioner for
17 Financial Services. I am pleased to be back before
18 the council to continue discussing our ongoing work
19 to protect and support New York City's children,
20 young people and families.

21 Thank you for the opportunity to update
22 on our 2015 Executive Budget and to share our
23 progress that we have made on behalf of our children,
24 our child welfare reforms and our participation in
25 New York City's Universal Pre-K Programming.

1
2 Children Services budget for fiscal year 2015
3 provides for operating expenses of \$2.9 billion of
4 which approximately \$876 million is city tax levy.

5 We are thankful that we have not had to make any cuts
6 to our agency budget in this cycle as we've had to do
7 in previous years. In fact I am very pleased to
8 announce the significant investments that this
9 executive budget is allowing ACS to make in
10 protecting children and assisting New York City's
11 neediest families.

12 The primary mission of the Administration
13 for Children Services is to keep New York City's
14 children safe and well. As I testified earlier this
15 month before the General Welfare Committee, New York
16 City has been saddened by the tragic deaths of young
17 children this winter and spring. After reviewing
18 those cases in depth, Mayor de Blasio, Deputy Mayor
19 Barrios-Paoli and I announced recommendations related
20 to child welfare case practice and citywide
21 partnerships, including bolstering our approach to
22 the highest risk cases. Improving collaboration with
23 our provider partners in other city and state
24 agencies in creating a public awareness campaign. To
25 implement some of these recommendations, our

1
2 executive budget would allow us to add a total of 362
3 new positions at cost of \$25.3 million to the four
4 ACS divisions that handle child welfare cases. Child
5 Protection, Preventive Services, Foster Care and
6 Family Court Legal Services. Central to our reform
7 efforts is strengthening our overall practice with a
8 heightened focus of our highest risk cases, some of
9 which include cases where children remain in their
10 homes under ACS supervision by order of the Family
11 Court. The ACS staff that monitors the safety and
12 risk of the children involved in these cases is
13 called, the Family Services Unit. Which is comprised
14 of child protective specialists who monitor children
15 in the context of their families and assess safety
16 and risk. Where appropriate family services unit
17 staff link families to services and programs
18 including preventive services, public assistance and
19 other benefits, education, prenatal assistance,
20 substance abuse, mental health, domestic violence,
21 vocational services and child care and head start
22 programs. A significant portion of our increase
23 funding will be allocated to expanding and
24 redesigning family services unit within our
25 Protective Services Division. We're adding 229

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2 positions at a cost of \$12.5 million. These
3 positions will allow us to reduce the average family
4 services unit caseloads from 12 to 8 cases per CPS
5 worker. We're also reorganizing the management
6 structure of our child protective field offices in
7 the two largest boroughs, in the Bronx and Brooklyn.
8 Given the size of those boroughs the number of state
9 central register reports received from these two
10 boroughs as well as the nature of the cases, we've
11 decided to split Brooklyn and the Bronx so that both
12 boroughs have two distinct ACS management teams, each
13 with their own leadership. The goal of the split is
14 to allow us to enhance our ability to engage and
15 assess families and permit closer oversight, coaching
16 and supervision of the staff, particularly in complex
17 cases. In addition to supporting improved outcomes
18 for our families and children, additional management
19 units in both boroughs will also lead to a better
20 supported workforce. To enhance our ability to
21 manage our high risk preventive and foster care
22 cases, ACS will allocate approximately \$6.5 million
23 to create new internal case monitoring and compliance
24 units that will work with our contracted providers on
25 high risk cases. These units will include a team of

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2 investigative consultants, former NYPD detectives who
3 assist with investigations. The monitoring
4 compliance units will monitor providers approach to
5 safety and risk issues and assess their progress in
6 reducing risk as well as the need for additional
7 action. The unit will also apply appropriate
8 standards for case closing. We are also enhancing
9 case monitoring compliance within our Family Court
10 Legal Services Division. To that end we're adding 35
11 positions totaling \$2.3 million. The additional
12 lawyers will assist FCLS capacity to counsel child
13 protective staff and staff within the case monitoring
14 compliance units. The increase in staffing will also
15 allow us to reduce our attorney caseloads from
16 approximately 75 to 65 cases per attorney.

17 Finally as I had testified last week to
18 oversee our child welfare reform efforts I've
19 appointed Ginny Millstein, the former Connecticut
20 Child Advocacy and former Deputy Commissioner for the
21 Office of Children and Family Service of their
22 strategic planning and policy office. She will
23 report directly to me and has coordinated the
24 improvement of policies and practices across the
25 child welfare system and revamping our response to

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2 child fatalities and critical incidents. In addition
3 to these new hires and structural changes, ACS
4 continues to implement the reforms that the mayor
5 announced in January. We are reevaluating our
6 communication with, and the oversight we provide to
7 our preventive and foster care agencies to insure
8 that we're all making child welfare decisions in the
9 most well informed timely and flexible manner
10 possible. The preliminary review of our system
11 indicates that it's based on a solid foundation but
12 can be executed better. As a first step, I've been
13 meeting with the Executive Directors of all of our
14 agencies to underscore that safety is paramount and
15 that our providers in ACS must work together to
16 address risk assessment and practice challenges. We
17 are also improving our collaboration with other city
18 agencies.

19 Mayor de Blasio has made inter-agency
20 collaboration a priority of his administration. On
21 April 7th, he announced the creation of the New York
22 City Children's Cabinet with the goal of promoting
23 ongoing, consistent and meaningful communication
24 among city agencies to insure child safety and well-
25 being. The City's Children's Cabinet which includes

1
2 over 20 city agencies, met for the first time at the
3 end of April. The Department of Health and Mental
4 Health Commissioner, Dr. Mary Bassett, Deputy Mayor
5 Richard Buery and I outlined a public health approach
6 to child welfare which includes a wide continuum of
7 preventive activities that extend beyond providing
8 direct services to individual families.

9 Let me move on to early care and
10 education. As we testified in March, ACS and the
11 Department of Education will implement the city's
12 commitment to provide high quality full day free
13 Universal Pre-Kindergarten to all four year olds in
14 New York City beginning this September 2014. ACS
15 aims to serve over 12,000 four year old through early
16 learning in New York City. Our goal really is to
17 reach 12,600 if possible. For fiscal year 2015, \$44
18 million were added to our budget to insure free
19 services of consistent quality and support for
20 teachers including a full day of standards based UPK
21 programming, increased support for children whose
22 primary language is not English, increased access to
23 professional development for teachers and increase
24 investments to recruit and retain high quality pre-k
25 lead teachers with early childhood certifications.

1
2 UPK seats will comprise only a portion of the seats
3 in our contracted system, Early Learn in New York
4 City. Currently 137 ACS contracted providers served
5 over 32,000 children in 364 centers and in 1,633
6 family child care provider's homes across the five
7 boroughs. I'm happy to share that our center based
8 enrollment is up to 90%. ACS continues to work with
9 our providers to insure that they have the support
10 they need and that families are aware of the nearest
11 early learning New York City Center in their
12 neighborhoods.

13 Given some of the concerns that were
14 raised when Early Learn New York City was launched in
15 2012, many of our providers, parents and council
16 members understandably are eager to know the future
17 of Early Learn New York City recognizing the need for
18 an integrated and quality child care system. The
19 Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services in
20 partnership with ACS is leading a task force of key
21 stake holders to review the current early care and
22 education system and identify ways to support quality
23 across the system. We are eager to share the
24 recommendations as set forth by the task force and
25

1
2 next steps for our subsidized early care and
3 education system in the coming months.

4 Now moving to Juvenile Justice.

5 Approximately 8,000 young people under the age of 16
6 are arrested in New York City each year. Almost all
7 of them have suffered some kind of trauma in their
8 lives. The 2015 Executive Budget adds \$2.2 million
9 to improve the quality of existing health and mental
10 health services for youth in detention and to repair
11 and to maintain the city's detention facilities. The
12 funding will help to stabilize our juvenile justice
13 psychiatric services by making the resources for
14 contracts competitive in today's market, improving
15 the availability of hours for onsite coverage and
16 expanding the scope of mental health services by
17 working with healthcare providers to include more
18 extensive psychological testing and clinical
19 assessments. As we have testified previously, many
20 young people who have engaged in delinquent behavior
21 have a history that involves abuse and neglect. We
22 continue to prioritize our work with cross over
23 youth. Those who are involved in both our child
24 welfare and juvenile justice systems. ACS is
25 implementing a cross-over youth practice model which

1
2 recognizes that we must build on individual and
3 family strengths in order to help young people
4 overcome challenges. We collaborated closely with
5 family court partners to launch a pilot program
6 designed to improve ongoing work between juvenile
7 justice and child welfare partners and family members
8 in the Bronx in April of this year. We anticipate
9 launching the model in Brooklyn in the fall of this
10 year. And all of the other boroughs will begin
11 implementation in 2015. In addition, in partnership
12 with the Department of Citywide Administrative
13 Services, ACS has begun a targeted campaign to
14 recruit qualified compassionate and dedicated
15 juvenile counselors. Juvenile counselors are front
16 line staff who work directly with detained young
17 people to provide structure, guidance, supervision
18 and counseling while they're in detention.

19 DCAS has scheduled numerous testing dates
20 for those qualified to take the Juvenile Counselor
21 Civil Service Exam and ACS is disseminating
22 information directing applicants to the ACS and DCAS
23 websites for registration. If you have any
24 constituents who might be interested please let them
25 know of the opportunity to work with our youth. IN

1
2 conclusion I want to thank you again for the
3 opportunity to update you on our efforts to
4 strengthen the work of ACS so that we can insure the
5 safety and well-being for New York City's children.

6 Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you

8 Commissioner for our testimony we've been joined by
9 Public Advocate Tish James and Council Member Ben
10 Kallos. I'm going to ask a few questions, very
11 specific to the budget in reference to units of
12 appropriation which has been a very big challenge for
13 us here in the council. ACS currently has two units
14 of appropriation that include funding for the voucher
15 which is UA003 and UA004 totaling \$1.1 billion.

16 These U of A's also include funding for Head Start,
17 Early Learn NYC and all other childcare programming.
18 The only separation between funding and programming
19 in the delineation of other than personal services
20 and personal services funding. ACS anticipates an
21 \$80 million deficit in the Division of Early Care and
22 Education in fiscal 2015. The bulk of this deficit
23 can be attributed to mandated vouchers. Funds are
24 often moved across program areas which make it
25 difficult to assess how funding sources are used to

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2 support vouchers and how spending on vouchers impact
3 the overall ACS budget. When can we expect to see
4 more U of A's to address this issue and would you be
5 willing to reach out to OMB for clarity from our
6 perspective on the use of the U of A's? You know,
7 and we understand that loss of the federal stimulus
8 in 2012 also impacted the great deficit. But if you
9 can speak to from our perspective, we look at the
10 budget and I know that you break them down
11 internally, but only when we have these opportunities
12 can we see the actual breakdown and if we can't be
13 aggressive in insuring that these programs are
14 working and whether you need more or less money as we
15 move forward. So a U of A for clarity would
16 definitely help the council members pass an effective
17 budget.

18 COMMISSIONER CARRION: We certain can
19 speak to OMB on your behalf and share your concerns.

20 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: I'd greatly
21 appreciate that. I'm going to quickly switch over
22 and I want my colleagues to have the opportunity to
23 ask question, clearly my chairs and then I'll come
24 back on the second round to ask some other big
25 program questions. This one is specific to UPK. So

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2 we understand that we want quality programming and
3 teachers providing services. What UPK does is create
4 kind of this division amongst the 0 to 3 workers.
5 Those that provide services to 0 to 3 as opposed to
6 the group that included in the UPK. So if we talk
7 about equal pay for equal work, this creates a divide
8 for those that are serving 4 and 5 year olds. It
9 would be as if we would pay fourth grade teachers
10 less than those that are providing services for fifth
11 grade teachers and as you can see as we have a vision
12 for the future and improving our system, our child
13 care system, this is becoming a challenge. So how do
14 you see ACS addressing this with child care
15 providers?

16 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Council Member,
17 you know that has always been a challenge. I think
18 that this budget and the initiative by the mayor goes
19 a long way to bridge that gap that we've seen
20 historically. So for instance, there was a gap
21 between what was paid to lead teachers in the
22 Department of Education sponsored community based
23 organizations and now the funding we'll receive will
24 bridge that gap for the four year old teachers. So,
25 we view this an incrementally trying to approach this

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2 problem and we understand the challenges the
3 providers have. We certainly support and encourage
4 quality staff that meet all of the requirements and
5 certification to come into the system. One of the
6 approaches that we're looking at given that we
7 received..., you know while we have this tremendous
8 opportunity to create Universal Pre-K we're not able
9 to fix every single problem. We're cognizant of the
10 problem and in fact we will be launching..., Deputy
11 Mayor Lilliam Paoli will be launching a task force
12 for us to be looking at these issues. And how do we
13 create a quality integrated coordinated system? So
14 we're cognizant of that and we're really looking to
15 see how we can address those issues moving forward.

16 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: And I appreciate
17 that. As you can imagine many of the early child
18 care providers are partners with us in our community.
19 They help address an issue of need and this program
20 is very..., something that we all kind of..., well most
21 of campaigned on and wanted to make sure that we were
22 able to deliver for our community. So we worked side
23 by side with the mayor on this, but it has
24 inadvertently has caused now this issue within the
25 child care providers where before when it was in DOE

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2 it was still DOE and the child care providers. But
3 within their structure they were still kind of making
4 the same. Now we're bringing in a new budget line
5 that's going to create some issues, so I appreciate
6 that you keep this committee abreast of what the
7 developments are and how we can engage. One of the
8 things with Early Learn is also asking a lot of the
9 child care providers to raise their own funding to
10 help address some of these needs and as you can
11 imagine it's a challenge depending on where the child
12 care provided agency is or how large they are or
13 there's a whole host of technical support that I
14 believe that a lot of our child care providing
15 organizations need. So I would love to work with you
16 to follow-up on that.

17 I have several questions but I'll ask
18 them in the second round. I'd like to pass it over
19 to Chair Levin.

20 [Background talk]

21 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: I'm sorry Chair
22 Cumbo.

23 CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Good afternoon
24 Commissioner Carrion. I'm very happy to welcome you
25 back. Just as you were reading your testimony I had

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2 question very quickly in terms of when you talked
3 about the juvenile counselors. I wanted to know was
4 there any thought, I have so many young men that I
5 work with in my office and also those that are
6 returning from being formerly incarcerated who want
7 to devote their life to this type of work
8 specifically for young people. Has there ever been
9 any opportunity for those that have been formerly
10 incarcerated to work with young people who can really
11 understand many of the challenges that they're facing
12 on a day to day basis.

13 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So many of them
14 would be eligible. There isn't an exclusion.

15 CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: You said they
16 would be?

17 COMMISSIONER CARRION: They would be
18 eligible. There's a case by case review based on
19 their prior record, but most are eligible. So I
20 would encourage you to encourage them to apply.

21 CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Thank you that's
22 very good news. I know that this is a very important
23 opportunity for many who want to change their lives
24 around and with the hiring of so many that would be
25 great. I wanted to ask you, so approximately 8,000

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2 youth are arrested annually and more than 3,000 are
3 admitted to detention centers. What I wanted to know
4 is has this number increased or decreased over the
5 years?

6 COMMISSIONER CARRION: It's decreased
7 dramatically over the years.

8 CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Can you tell me a
9 little bit about where it kind of..., as best as you
10 can remember where it's been and where it is now? Do
11 you know that figure?

12 COMMISSIONER CARRION: I really don't
13 know that figure off my head, but we certainly can
14 get that information to you. I think there's almost
15 a 50% reduction in detention and it continues to
16 decline.

17 CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Thank you. The
18 other thing that I wanted to ask you about is, in the
19 budget, when I looked at the alternatives to
20 detention which I feel is really where a lot of
21 energy and resources should be put. I didn't see any
22 significant increases of resources placed within the
23 alternatives to detention. Can you elaborate on that
24 or how the decision was made in that way?

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2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: You know if we
3 look at my agency ACS and we look at the Department
4 of Probation and we look at the state, there is over
5 \$37 million invested to serve programs that are
6 involved in alternatives to detention and placement.
7 In fact also DYCD, if we look at the array of youth
8 programs. So we'll be working with the Director of
9 Criminal Justice Office who also by the way funds
10 alternatives to detention in placement. So we need
11 to look at the entire universe of program that are
12 available and the different agencies that are
13 involved in providing those services. We're going to
14 be working with Liz Glazer who's the new director to
15 see how we coordinate and leverage and see whether
16 there are any gaps in services and whether or not
17 there is an opportunity to reallocate some of those
18 resources where we see a need. In fact, some of the
19 programs particularly those programs funded by the
20 state have some empty slots and there's over
21 capacity. So we need to better coordinate and align
22 the services that we do have to divert young people
23 from coming into the system.

24 CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Are there align
25 items or any type of resources that were allocated in

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2 terms of programs such as programming in the yards,
3 programming for different things, programs that would
4 enlighten them, writing programs, travel programs,
5 educational program, things that are not just
6 deterrents but things that also would support them.
7 And I asked at the last hearing, but I didn't
8 understand the clarity on this and not that is this
9 an alternative to detention, but just another program
10 that came out of your agency, Cool Culture, which it
11 would be amazing and fantastic with such an increase
12 in your budget to reinstate that particular program
13 within your budget so that everything is not only
14 preventative but that it's also expanding one's
15 intellectual capacity as well.

16 COMMISSIONER CARRON: So, we do have an
17 array of art and community based programming in our
18 detention facilities. In fact, Carnegie Hall is a
19 partners with us. So there are those types of
20 programs that are very important. I agree with you
21 that I don't think we need to solely focus on the
22 pathology that a young person might present, but
23 really how we build their capacity and their sense of
24 self efficacy.

1
2 The additional dollars that we have as
3 you look at our budget are pretty prescribed. But we
4 do have an opportunity..., we do have some funding,
5 prior year funding to be able to do some more
6 community based programming and we'll be looking to
7 issuing an RFP or working collaboratively with other
8 city agencies to really leverage more resources to
9 invest in communities to do these kings of
10 programming. I think that's also a purpose of the
11 Children's Cabinet to be able to leverage each
12 other's resources which is why we would like to bring
13 the Department of Cultural Affairs into the
14 Children's Cabinet.

15 CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: I think that's an
16 excellent idea and I support that 100% and would just
17 continue to stress the importance of rethinking how
18 you can incorporate Cool Culture back into your
19 portfolio so that we get young children at a very
20 early age into our cultural institutions which could
21 be the greatest resource that they could have. I
22 wanted to get right into UPK because that is very
23 exciting. I wanted to talk to you about, that the
24 mayor has announced a \$44,000 salary will be given to
25 Bachelor Degree Certified Teachers in UPO CBO's and

1
2 \$50,000 salary to Master Degree Certified teachers.

3 Will salary steadily increase when years of
4 experience is included?

5 COMMISSIONER CARRION: I think that the
6 intent right now is that that's the salary. I really
7 don't know moving forward how that would look.

8 CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Has that come up
9 in questioning?

10 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Umm, you know, I
11 think that there were discussions around what the
12 salary would be this year. I really don't know if
13 there were discussions on how it would look on the
14 out years.

15 CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: I'm sure you know
16 that that will eventually start to come up as more
17 individuals are asking more questions and we also
18 want to be empowered to be able to answer those kinds
19 of questions as well. I wanted to know too, is ACS
20 concerned about the impact of raising the salaries of
21 Lead Teachers for four year olds but not Lead
22 Teachers of other classroom 0 through 3 on the impact
23 of having quality teachers to serve younger children
24 particularly three year olds. So we're concerned
25 about the exodus that might happen in terms of those

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2 providers for 0 and 3 wanting to be a part of this
3 initiative because of the salary differences as well
4 as what will happen to those 0 through 3 teachers in
5 terms of the disparity that they're very clearly
6 going to see for similar work in that way.

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: We understand the
8 concern. You know there are certain certification
9 requirements for four year old teachers. We will be
10 providing with the Department of Education a lead
11 agency training professional development to be able
12 to support all of our teachers, all of our four
13 teachers and teachers in the classroom. As I said
14 earlier we really are looking and focusing on how we
15 strengthen the system. This is certainly a concern.
16 We want highly qualified teachers to be teaching our
17 youngest citizens. An approach that we're taking
18 because we do have limited dollars, is a task force
19 that is going to be launched by the Deputy Mayor for
20 Health and Human Services to look at the impact of
21 UPK on early learn and see how we move forward and
22 what changes if any we need to make in our Early
23 Learn system.

24 CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Okay, I wanted to
25 talk about Operation Safe. I understand that ACS

1
2 receives roughly 55,000 allegations of abuse or
3 neglect, 40% prove to be credible as issues of
4 neglect. An additional \$25.2 million has been put
5 into the budget to hire 362 new positions. My
6 questions is because I understand that this money
7 will come not in this fiscal year but in the outer
8 fiscal year, right. So your testimony sounds
9 fantastic and amazing but it seems like it's going to
10 require the professional resources in order to do
11 that. What is the plan for this year if this
12 extensive ramping up won't happen or come until the
13 next budget cycle?

14 [Background talk]

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: Hi, Susan
16 Nuccio. The plans are to begin hiring of the 362 to
17 start right now and...

18 [Interpose]

19 CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: It is to start
20 right now.

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: And we
22 usually have an accruals in our PS budget due to
23 attrition to use those as fund up and if during the
24 year next year we need to find additional funds we'll
25 work with OMB to do that.

1
2 CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: So you're saying
3 that the 362 new positions will be hired all within
4 this fiscal year 14-15.

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: That's
6 correct. Of course we're phasing it in.

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: We're phasing it
8 in so I don't know if we'll be able to hire all of
9 them.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: We're
11 starting..., every division has worked on hiring plans
12 of what they can do and we're starting to begin in
13 every division now.

14 CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: That's incredible.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: But of
16 course it takes a couple of months.

17 CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: I thank you for
18 your clarity of that. I wanted to ask you as well,
19 that's an extensive..., a huge increase to your staff
20 capabilities in that way. Where are you actually
21 hiring the majority of these individuals from? Do
22 they often come from particular universities,
23 particular programs. How do you manage in this time
24 to be able to hire so many qualified individuals who
25 understand the dynamics of ACS who are going to be

1
2 properly qualified and prepared in order to be hired
3 and work within your agency so quickly?

4 COMMISSIONER CARRION: As you know, we
5 have..., there's civil service workers and there's a
6 list, so we hire from the list. There's recruitment
7 to all the universities, schools of social work, all
8 the colleges in the city, but we hire from the list.

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Would institutions
10 such as Medgar Evers be a part of that so that way
11 we're starting to make sure that there is a high
12 level of diversity. Are many of those types of
13 institutions that have predominantly African American
14 and Latino, Hostos Community College and others, are
15 those previously and is there a real direct plan to
16 make sure that institutions such as those are
17 included in the hiring and recruiting efforts?

18 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Certainly CUNY is
19 a partner with us and we recruit through all the CUNY
20 colleges. But our staff is very diverse. That has
21 not been a challenge to hire a diverse staff at that
22 level.

23 CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: That's fantastic.
24 When you say recruit, what does that mean? Do you
25 attend college fairs, do you go directly to these

1
2 campuses or are you sending emails to potentially
3 their employment centers?

4 COMMISSIONER CARRION: In terms of
5 recruiting we use the list but certainly our
6 department of personnel sends out flyers to all the
7 colleges. And we work closely with the city's
8 department of personnel.

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Before I turn it
10 over to my co-chair I just wanted to ask you
11 questions in terms of Early Learn which is a big
12 point in terms of questions at this time. What is
13 the current capacity of Early Learn and what is the
14 number of children that are currently enrolled in the
15 program?

16 COMMISSIONER CARROIN: its capacity is
17 35,651 children.

18 CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: You must dream
19 that number at night.

20 Are there particular neighborhoods or
21 boroughs that have significantly greater levels of
22 under enrollment?

23 COMMISSIONER CARRION: No there isn't.

24 CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: What is the plan
25 to increase enrollment for the Early Learn Centers

1
2 and what support and training are you giving
3 providers to increase enrollment

4 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So we work very
5 closely with the centers that are under enrolled,
6 substantially under rolled and have an individual
7 plan for those centers that are 75% or under in their
8 enrollment and there are about 34 of those and those
9 have individual plans that we work with closely to
10 help them. But generally overall with all of our
11 providers, we hold meetings, borough wide meetings,
12 with the directors to discuss recruitment strategies
13 and the challenges they face. All agencies rely on
14 us and submit requests for marketing materials that
15 we provide so they can publicize and brand. And they
16 brand the materials so we have the material and we
17 make sure that it's branded with each individual
18 provider. We have in the past and continue to do
19 targeted mailings on their behalf. To NYCHA, we
20 identified families that are eligible and we target
21 and also for TANF families that are eligible. We
22 also hold and work with the agencies, with the
23 providers to do individual re-groupment and help them
24 to do that in their communities. And also we're
25 promoting a collaboration among providers in

1
2 particular neighborhoods so that they can do joint
3 recruitment in their communities. You know, whenever
4 we see that there's a particular pattern or challenge
5 with a particular provider we provide one on one
6 technical assistance.

7 CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Thank you. My
8 final question goes back to UPK. In fiscal year
9 2015, the Department of Education as you know is
10 converting 11,760 half-day seats to full day add
11 11,880 new few day seats and bring all existing
12 32,164 DOE and ACS full day seats to the new UPK
13 quality standards. How do you feel at this moment,
14 do you feel that you are prepared to fulfill this
15 goal? What are the gaps? What are the challenges?
16 What are the things that you're concerned about? And
17 as a full day ends at 2:20 how will you continue to
18 provide wrap around services potentially for such a
19 larger increase of young people that will be
20 experiencing UPK for the first time.

21 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So our target at
22 ACS is 12,600 UPK seats. That's our target. That's
23 the challenge before us. We're working very hard
24 with all of our partners to get to that number.

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2 CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Where are you
3 right now would you say?

4 COMMISSIONER CARRION: We're at 12,000.
5 As you know, Early Learn is a full day program.

6 CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Right. Full day
7 ending at 2:20 or full day ending at 6:00?

8 COMMISSIONER CARRION: At 6.

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Okay.

10 COMMISSIONER CARRION: And it will
11 continue to be a full day program.

12 CO-CHAIRPERSON CARRION: How do you
13 reconcile with UPK because as best as I understand
14 it, UPK's full day ends at 2:20. Am I correct or...?

15 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes. UPK ends at
16 2:20. But children that are eligible, umm, you know,
17 our direct programs, they will receive the wrap
18 around services.

19 CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: So the 12,000 or
20 so that is your target goal through ACS, you're going
21 to be looking to also provide if the opportunity is
22 needed to be able to provide wrap around services for
23 those 12,000 specifically.

24 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes.
25

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2 CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: What about
3 children that will not be going through the ACS for
4 UPK? What will their wrap around after services be?

5 COMMISSIONER CARRION: That really..., if
6 they're not in our system, that really is a DOE
7 issue. Children that are eligible for subsidized
8 care will receive a full day with wrap around
9 services.

10 CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Thank you.

11 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you Chair
12 Cumbo and we have been joined by Council Member
13 Donovan Richards as well. I have a few questions
14 Commissioner and then I will turn it over to my
15 colleagues. I wanted to ask specifically a couple of
16 budgetary issues. On..., going back to the new
17 positions, the 362 new positions in Operation Safe,
18 help me get some clarity as we saw in the budget the
19 Executive Budget, those positions are not slated to
20 be budget until FY16. So, if you could explain a
21 little bit further how those positions will be hired
22 in FY15 without a budgetary allocation for them?

23 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Sure. We are
24 going to begin hiring and it's going to be a phased
25 in approach that will take several months using our

1
2 existing PS budget we usually have about 8% to 9%
3 attrition anyway so we're going to be using our own
4 funds to ramp up and we believe that we'll need the
5 full allocation of the \$25 million by fiscal year 16.

6 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: But if there are
7 positions there that are attritting, then those
8 wouldn't be new positions, because if you're
9 filling..., if it's 362 new positions, those that are
10 attritting couldn't count against those. I know that
11 there are a hundred..., currently a hundred child
12 protective worker positions that are currently
13 unfilled but those would also not be new positions
14 right?

15 COMMISSIONER CARRION: It takes for us
16 when..., to backfill, which I'll use the word backfill
17 for our regular attrition, it takes months before...,
18 when a person leaves to go and get a new person in
19 that position. So those are the accruals. This year
20 we have a \$20 million worth of those accruals. That
21 is why we think we can do it and if we get to a point
22 where we're fully at our PS full budget, we will then
23 work with OMB to get the funds added.

24 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So these are..., in
25 terms of head count, these are 362 new positions, not

1
2 in any way displacing positions that are attritting
3 out.

4 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Absolutely.
5 Correct.

6 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay and so in the
7 instance in which the PS budget is fully you know
8 filled in FY15 that would be through a budget mod
9 later on in the year.

10 COMMISSIONER CARRION: That's correct.

11 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: It will be helpful
12 to know, keeping track throughout the course of the
13 year, how that's going and so we can keep a sense of
14 whether or not we're going to need to allocate more
15 funds throughout the course of the year.

16 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Sure.

17 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: With a..., moving
18 over to Close to Home. So in the mayor's..., in the
19 message from the mayor on the executive budget it
20 says that in the second phase of Close to Home
21 beginning in 2015 ACS will assume legal
22 responsibility for the placement of juvenile
23 delinquents placed in limited secure placement
24 settings. That was on page 107 of the message of the
25 mayor. Is that..., I mean..., you know I alluded to this

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2 in my opening statement of, you know, the original
3 target date was fall of 2013, then spring of 2014,
4 then fall of 2014 and now we're looking at 2015. Is
5 that accurate, are we still on track for fall of 2014
6 or are we now looking into 2015.

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: We're on track for
8 fall of 2014 so maybe I'd have to talk to the mayor,
9 because that's news to me. We're on track for 2014.

10 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, okay, so
11 maybe that was typo or some, or other disparity....

12 [Interpose]

13 COMMISSIONER CARRION: We are looking to
14 see.

15 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Page 107. Message
16 from the mayor.

17 COMMISSIONER CARRION: No we have fall.

18 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay sorry, I
19 apologize for jumping around. I'm shifting back now
20 to those 362 positions. How is that going to be
21 broken down in terms, that you mentioned, child
22 protection, preventive services, foster care, family
23 court, legal services? You went on Commission in
24 your testimony to talk about the various breakdowns,
25

1
2 but is that how those positions are going to be
3 broken down for example, 229 positions in...

4 COMMISSION CARRION: In FSU.

5 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So that would be
6 part of the 362 positions.

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: That's correct.

8 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. And can you
9 speak a little bit more about reforms at FSU. That
10 was something that we didn't..., unfortunately I didn't
11 get..., we didn't touch upon too much in our hearing,
12 and I believe it was last week, it seems like a
13 longer time ago. But, with regard to how the reforms
14 are going to be taking place in the coming months
15 there.

16 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So the major
17 effort will be to reduce caseloads. So we will
18 reduce caseloads from 12 to 1 to 8 to 1. So it's
19 substantially reducing the caseloads. We are
20 restructuring both the Brooklyn and Bronx office and
21 so to be able to enhance the supervision and also
22 both on having an associate commissioner be
23 responsible for less units than is the case now. And
24 being able to enhance the supervisory staffing.

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2 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And they're going
3 to be both in the Bronx and Brooklyn, that's going to
4 be..., they're going to be two separate offices.

5 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Well we're going
6 to create additional units.

7 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

8 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So we'll reduce
9 the size of the units.

10 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Is that going to
11 carry with it additional costs in terms of capital
12 build out and things like that.

13 COMMISSIONER CARRION: No not capital...
14 not that we anticipate having any capital build out.

15 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Umm, let's
16 see. You mentioned as well..., umm the part of this I
17 suppose is the \$6.5 million to create a new internal
18 case monitoring compliance unit. So the unit will
19 also apply appropriate standards for case closings.
20 IS that in accordance with the reforms initiated
21 earlier this year in terms of closing cases going
22 back into family court, federal court, and mandated
23 supervision cases?

24 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So it..., yes, in
25 part. I mean it's consistent in that we want to make

1
2 sure that we have the proper monitoring and oversight
3 over these cases before they're closed and we're
4 talking about all of our cases. And, we're really
5 wanting to have more oversight over that process and
6 working closer with the providers, so that they
7 understand what our requirements are, for closing of
8 cases. And what needs to be done in each case before
9 a case is closed.

10 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So this is for all
11 child protective cases or all self-preventive as
12 well.

13 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Also preventive
14 cases.

15 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: In terms of the
16 cases that the court mandated supervision cases going
17 back into court, I know I had asked about it at the
18 previous hearing. If you could just tell us again,
19 how is that working so far? I've spoken to a couple
20 of people that are in the family court system and you
21 know, they have expressed to me concerns on how
22 family court judges themselves might be able to
23 handle it. Is there..., often times referees play a
24 role in this as well, are referees going to be
25

1
2 playing a role or does every case have to be closed
3 out by a judge?

4 COMMISSIONER CARRION: It depends on how
5 the judge manages their own courtroom, so we don't
6 really have a say in that.

7 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

8 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So we are
9 requesting and have requested starting in January...,
10 when a case is calendared that it also be calendared
11 to have end of supervision hearing. So we have been
12 doing that. And so..., two things, one was we
13 supported and very happy that the legislature has
14 increased the number of family court judges. We are
15 eager to see how many judges the city will get. And
16 I think that will go a long way to address some of
17 the concerns that the judges have expressed about
18 workload. Which is really a workload issue for them.
19 We have over 4,000 cases a year, throughout the city
20 of New York and so that is a considerable increase in
21 the request for hearings for the judges to have to
22 adjudicate.

23 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: But it's their
24 discretion whether they do it themselves or whether
25 they designate a referee to do that.

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2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: It is their
3 discretion. It is also the discretion to allow for a
4 hearing.

5 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right. Okay, so
6 they can say no.

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes.

8 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Have they
9 been saying no?

10 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes.

11 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Are they saying no
12 a lot?

13 COMMISSIONER CARRION: About 50% of the
14 time they're saying no.

15 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Is there...,
16 is there a legislative opportunity there, an
17 opportunity for legislation on a state level to say
18 that..., I mean could that be mandated in the court
19 system a state legislature.

20 COMMISSIONER CARRION: There's always an
21 opportunity for legislation, so possibly yes.

22 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I'd be happy to
23 work with you and the administration and our
24 colleagues in the state legislature on how we can
25

1
2 look towards achieving that and also obviously with
3 OCA is a major.

4 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Also with the
5 family court judges, we're stilling waiting for
6 legislation to enact and designate the number of
7 where the judges will be allocated.

8 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So that requires
9 additional legislation?

10 COMMISSIONER CARROIN: Yes it does.
11 Enabling legislation.

12 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Got it. Hopefully
13 that will be done before the end of this budget..., you
14 know this session here.

15 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes. We're
16 hopeful.

17 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Again, I'd
18 be happy to work with you on that. Sorry, jumping
19 over to foster care for a moment. We are excited to
20 see that there's been a steady decline in the number
21 of foster care cases and we..., at the preliminary
22 budget hearing we asked of ACS was working closer
23 with other agencies to track youth and assist with
24 their permanent residency outcomes. You mentioned
25 some of that in your testimony that the new

1
2 initiative that you spoke of with Cross Over cases,
3 where there's going to be a new effort to track that.

4 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes.

5 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And has that been
6 implemented yet or, is it...

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: We just started.
8 In April.

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Any feedback so
10 far or is it too early to tell?

11 COMMISSIONER CARRION: It's too early.

12 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Umm, and
13 then, I'm sorry, the question I had around Early
14 Learn and Early Childhood as well and this will be my
15 last set of questions and then I'll turn it over to
16 my colleagues.

17 So Early Learn is now, you said in your
18 testimony, at 90% capacity in contracted care.

19 COMMISSIONER CARROIN: Overall it's 88%.

20 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

21 COMMISSIONER CARRION: In contracted, its
22 90%. Center base is 90%.

23 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Center base,
24 right. When Early Learn was first constructed was
25

1
2 there a target enrollment level. I mean, a realistic
3 target enrollment level other than 100%.

4 COMMISSIONER CARRION: It's always a 100%
5 for us.

6 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right. But in
7 terms of..., just because we're still running a big
8 deficit here, right. A big structural deficit of...

9 COMMISSIONER CARRION: \$80 million.

10 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: \$80 million. That
11 cannot be umm, filled with even 100% enrollment,
12 correct? So even if we were..., even if we got to that
13 you know, 100% or right at the limit, we still face a
14 structural deficit, right?

15 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So if we were able
16 to do a better job of advising of families who opt
17 for vouchers from the HRA system, I think we would go
18 a very long way to addressing our deficit. SO that's
19 an area that Commissioner Banks and I will work
20 closely to address.

21 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: But there's..., and
22 I've heard very consistently is that there's...,
23 families have a legal right to every option
24 available, right, so...

25 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Parental choice.

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CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: You're right. There's choice, that's protected by law so we can't be directing families into one option versus another. But even if we were at 100% capacity for contracted seats, you know presumably families would... those families that don't opt for that would be opting for a voucher program that they're legally entitled to. Under that scenario we're still facing a massive deficit. I'm wondering how would like..., or how are we looking towards filling that deficit in a structural fashion so that we're not relying on windfalls or we had in the state. I know the Childhood Block Grant which ACS is going to use some of that. I think \$11 million to go towards that deficit, I think is my understanding. And, but that's, as far as I know, that's a one-time thing, unless it's a recurring thing every year. But, either way that accounts for less than 15% or so of the deficit, so how are we approaching the structural issue?

COMMISSIONER CARRION: So I think that certainly if we'd dealt with the voucher problem that we have we'd do a long. But you're right that we would continue to probably have some deficit. So

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2 there are two approaches. One is ongoing
3 conversations with OMB about that and also the task
4 force that's going to be launched shortly by the
5 Deputy Mayor Lilliam Barrios-Paoli to really..., and
6 that's one of the issues that we're delve into. What
7 is it that we need to have a solvent system that also
8 meets the needs of children and families to meet
9 their child care and early education needs?

10 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right. And
11 providers as well.

12 COMMISSIONER CARRION: And providers as
13 well.

14 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right now the
15 issue around health care is a concern for many, so if
16 we're going to reform that and make it..., then it
17 might even perhaps be more expensive to the city.

18 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Well actually,
19 yes. Because the providers, and I've been meeting
20 with many, many, many of them. Have many asked and
21 so if we act..., were to quantify the dollar value of
22 the many issues that they've raised it would probably
23 be around \$400 to \$500 million, additional dollars
24 that would have to be invested in our system.

1
2 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right, because
3 honestly I've heard from providers, and you know
4 there are many people that say that there are lots of
5 problems with Early Learn. I've heard that. I've
6 also heard from people that say that Early Learn
7 itself isn't broken, it's just underfunded. And so,
8 you know...

9 COMMISSIONER CARRION: I think that
10 that's..., you know but I've heard and I've met with
11 many, many provides is that they think that Early
12 Learn philosophically, it was a good approach but
13 they raised the issue of funding and..., proper funding
14 and implementation challenges that ACS had. I think
15 that those are issues that will be reviewed in part
16 of the conversation at the task force.

17 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you. And
18 then my last set of questions I want to ask about
19 vouchers particularly the low income vouchers and so
20 it's my understanding that the administration in the
21 executive budget put \$1.7 million dollars into DYCD
22 to address quote unquote Priority 7 Issue. And I was
23 little bit concerned about that because over the
24 years as you're aware we've..., during the previous
25 administration we fought back against cuts to non-

1
2 mandated vouchers, and the way that it went was that
3 we had in the first couple of years it was Priority 7
4 Vouchers and those eventually got totally cut. I
5 think FY12 was when the final ax fell Priority 7.
6 And then it started to move into Priority 5 Non-
7 Mandated Vouchers, low income vouchers and that
8 started to be whittled down as well. Last year we
9 saw a change in policy around transitional vouchers.
10 These are families that have been transitioned out of
11 public assistance for a year or more. They used to
12 be able to maintain their child care vouchers. ACS
13 changed the rule on that and said that they were
14 going to revoke that voucher after a year off of PA.
15 They could still qualify but there were no vouchers
16 available. And so, my question is why not start kind
17 of, last out first back in. You know if we're going
18 to start restoring. Making restorations to the child
19 care voucher system, the non-mandated child care
20 system, why not start with Priority 5s that had been
21 pegged over the years. The transitional issue that
22 was pegged last year. Why not start working back
23 through the system that way as opposed to putting
24 something in DYCD, which I don't know if DYCD even
25

1
2 has a framework in place that would allow for
3 vouchers out of DYCD.

4 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So let me bring it
5 right back to the prior question of an \$80 million
6 deficit. So let's use that framework. But as you
7 know, child care is clearly a priority for this
8 administration. Past needs assessments have
9 indicated that we serve less than a quarter of the
10 families who would otherwise qualify so there's a
11 tremendous unmet need? The mayor's historic and
12 unprecedented commitment to Universal Pre-K and
13 expansion of middle school after school programs,
14 will make a significant dent in the need and we're
15 all cognizant of that. We have supported expanding
16 child care through every possible venue. And we
17 spend, and I can say this as the former State
18 Commissioner for the Office of Children and Family
19 Services, we spend more local funds in New York City
20 than any other county in the state and we serve about
21 100,000 children. Unprecedented. Not only in this
22 state but across the country. But despite these
23 efforts we currently have an active wait list of
24 1,700 children in priorities one through six and
25 another 11,000 who applied and were wait listed more

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2 than 12 months ago and who could reapply. So it's a
3 large universe. State law requires that we first
4 meet the needs of these children and any others in
5 these priorities who apply before issuing any new
6 Priority 7 vouchers. So even with a significant
7 infusion of new funding, it's difficult to predict
8 unmet needs in these priorities. And we first have
9 to meet the unmet need in one through four.

10 As the council is aware, ACS has a
11 significant child care deficit. I'd like to remind
12 everyone of that, often. It is my understanding as
13 you have said that DYCD is receiving a dedicated pot
14 of money that could be used to address the needs of
15 families that might have been eligible for Priority 7
16 vouchers and the efforts to fund that, is my
17 understanding is ongoing. I know that the issue is
18 important to the mayor and that we'll continue to
19 work on this with the council partners. Given what
20 the unmet need is and the state requirements, federal
21 requirements, it's unlikely that the ACS system,
22 without significant infusions of new dollars after we
23 meet my structural deficit needs, would be able to
24 reissue Priority 5 or 7 vouchers.

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2 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I'm sorry. So
3 there's a current waiting list of 1,700 plus 11,000
4 that may qualify for the low income vouchers.

5 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Who have applied,
6 were waitlisted.

7 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Do we
8 have..., do we know the number of children who, of that
9 universe are priorities one through four which are
10 mandated vouchers. So how many of those are one
11 through fours?

12 COMMISSIONER CARRION: They all are.

13 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: They're all one
14 through fours.

15 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes.

16 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: But every child
17 that is entitled to a one through four...

18 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Let me clarify
19 that.

20 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: should be getting
21 a one through four right. There shouldn't be any
22 child that's not receiving a mandated voucher.

23 COMMISSIONER CARROIN: We're checking.

24 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

25 [Background talk]

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2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: So of the
3 1,700 that the commissioner talked about, some of
4 those folks want a different spot. They might be
5 enrolled but waiting for another spot to open up. So
6 when I break it down, you'll see some in the Priority
7 1s and 2s, we have 89 in 1, 151 in 2 and then the
8 balance of them are in Priority 5.

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Priority 5, right.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: Because
11 Priority 3 gets served.

12 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right, right, so
13 that's what I'm saying. So if we're talking 250, 240
14 Priorities 1 through 4 and then the rest so, 1,500
15 Priority 5s. Priority 5s being a non-mandated
16 voucher. So what I'm saying is that instead of
17 creating a new system within DYCD that I don't know
18 if that's an OST system. I don't know if it's going
19 to go out for an RFP, who knows. The need, and I
20 represent a community that relies on these vouchers
21 heaving for school aged children and the need that I
22 hear most often is for families that have vouchers
23 that provide the flexibility. For instance, in
24 Williamsburg there are no OST providers, there's one
25 OST provider in Williamsburg. And so OST is not

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2 really a viable option and actually, if you remember
3 in 2011 when some of the negotiations with the
4 Bloomberg administration around Priority 7s, they
5 floated the idea of converting them all to OSTs and
6 that just didn't seem like a viable option at the
7 time and so again, what I'm saying is might it make
8 more sense being that there's only those 250 out of
9 the 1,700 that are mandated vouchers, that we start
10 going back in from the priorities that have been cut.
11 I'm sensitive to the deficit for sure, but if we're
12 going to be adding new resources into the system,
13 might it not make sense to add the resources that had
14 previously been pegged than go around and create a
15 new system in total.

16 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So I understand
17 what you're saying but we still have to deal with the
18 11,000 that I mentioned that are also, would qualify
19 for vouchers. So it's a larger...

20 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right, eventually
21 I would like to see all 11,000 children that are
22 qualifying for Priority 5s, to receive vouchers that
23 they qualify for, as low income vouchers. I realize
24 that the cost to just fulfill the 1 through 4s which
25 is just 250 vouchers is not the lion's share of the

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2 costs. The lion's share of the cost is the low
3 income vouchers that have been pegged over the years.
4 And so if we're trying to restore what's been pegged,
5 that would be I think the advisable way, in my
6 opinion to go about doing it.

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: That will be the
8 10,000 additional. But you know we understand your
9 point. The mayor is committed to finding solution
10 and it's certainly up to the mayor and OMB to come up
11 with a solution

12 CO-CHAIRPERSON CARRION: Great. Thank
13 you Commissioner. Now I'll turn it over to my
14 colleagues. First we have Council Member Ben Kallos
15 and we have five minutes, and then Public Advocate
16 James.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you
18 Commissioner for joining us. It's always pleasant to
19 have you here. I'd like to thank my Chairwoman,
20 Laurie Cumbo, the chair of the Women's Issues
21 Committee for having this joint hearing as well as
22 Chair Steve Levin and Julissa Ferreras who's larger
23 bodies we are having this hearing under. I also
24 chair the Governmental Operations Committee, so I
25 will follow-up on something that Chair Cumbo had

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2 brought up, which is the juvenile counselors. My
3 understanding is that the agency that I have
4 oversight over is turning around people who pass the
5 test at 340 days. Is that the experience that you're
6 having with juvenile counselors where it takes 340
7 days from the date of them taking the test to
8 actually come back to a list? Because I would hate
9 to work with my colleagues to get so many people to
10 sign up and take the test and then have to wait until
11 next year's budget hearings to even fathom whether or
12 not they could be hired yet.

13 COMMISSIONER CARRION: That's an
14 excellent point. I really don't know the answer to
15 that but I will find out and get back to you.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: To the extent you
17 provide that in writing so that I can address it at
18 oversight over Department of Citywide Administrative
19 Services it would be a pleasure. The other piece I'd
20 like to bring up is that many of our civil service
21 exams are free. Depending on the people sitting for
22 it. So I'd love to work closer with your agency as
23 well as our chair who is very enthusiastic about
24 making sure more people are sitting for these exams
25 by making sure that people know that depending on

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2 what social services they may already be qualifying
3 for or whether or not they're unemployed that they
4 are entitled to a waiver. So, I'd love to work
5 closely with you on that.

6 I had to say it but my goal is to
7 eliminate as much of the funding in the penal system
8 and on the juvenile justice side as possible in order
9 to avoid the schools to prison pipeline. We are
10 going to be spending \$2.3 million dollars on two
11 secured detention facilities, Horizons and
12 Crossroads. And at the same time we're spending \$2.8
13 million which is laudable on health and mental health
14 to serve the 8,000 young people under the ages of 16.
15 How can we see a reduction in spending on juvenile
16 justice by investing more into mental health? What
17 will we see from that \$2.2 million investment in
18 terms of reducing the cost we're spending on secured
19 detention? Which are the most expensive part of the
20 system as far as I understand.

21 COMMISSION CARRION: So I share your
22 goal. And I would love to be out of business, so to
23 speak, in running the city's juvenile system. I
24 think that the investment that we're making in our
25 juvenile justice system to improve our psychiatric

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2 and psychological services really to be able to serve
3 young people better that come into our system and
4 understand what kinds of supports and services that
5 they will need. And hopefully that intervention will
6 reduce the recidivism and likelihood of either coming
7 back into the system or further penetration, deeper
8 penetration into not only juvenile system, but the
9 adult criminal justice system. So it's about really
10 identifying what they're issues are now and how we
11 can intervene early and how we can divert them from
12 the system or how we can better serve them so we
13 reduce the length of stay, further penetration or
14 into the adult system.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Assume for a
16 moment that we had a budget of over \$70 billion,
17 could you come back to us with a proposal on X number
18 of dollars will actually effectively allow us to
19 close down one of the secured detention facilities at
20 some point in the future.

21 COMMISSIONER CARRION: I welcome the
22 challenge.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you. I'd
24 love to work with you. In your testimony you
25 indicate that juvenile justice and child welfare

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2 partners, you're rolling out..., you've already rolled
3 out something in the Bronx in April of this year,
4 you're rolling out something in Brooklyn in the fall
5 of 2014 and that you're expecting the implementation
6 for all five boroughs to happen in 2015. That's
7 within the 2014-2015 fiscal year that you're hoping?

8 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Perfect. If you
10 could share more details either now or in writing
11 later about what the implementation will be in
12 Manhattan which is where I represent and I do have a
13 lot of juvenile justice issues within my own
14 district.

15 COMMISSIONER CARRION: We'll provide you
16 with the information on the Crossover youth model.
17 It's a partnership with Georgetown University and
18 their juvenile reform center. And really the aim is
19 to reduce the penetration of child welfare youth into
20 the juvenile justice system. And if we better
21 coordinate our work with our family court partners
22 and we're aware of that prior system involvement in
23 the child welfare system and we coordinate everyone
24 that is working with this young person and we flag
25 that, we can do a better job of diverting that case

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2 from the juvenile justice system. But I certainly
3 can get you a lot more detail for you and do a
4 briefing for. You certainly can come to the Bronx
5 and see how it's working right now.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: I would love to
7 do that with the Women's Issues Committee should our
8 chair wish to make it so and thank you so very much
9 for all of your hard work and being up to the
10 challenge.

11 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you Council
13 Member Kallos. We will have Public Advocate James,
14 followed by Council Member Richards.

15 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you. First
16 I want to thank all of the Chairs for allowing me to
17 say a few words and Commissioner Carrion, I share
18 your mission to protecting and promoting the safety
19 and well-being of New York City's children. The
20 young people, families and communities and I want to
21 comment and support the recent child welfare reforms
22 proposed by Mayor de Blasio as well as yourself. My
23 objective today is to insure that these
24 recommendations are implemented and that they're
25 fully funded. As you know, as a former member of the

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2 City Council, even though I'm an ex-officio member of
3 the city council, I've been involved on child welfare
4 issues for a very, very long time. And it's my
5 objective primarily to integrate city agencies and to
6 provide services to children in the City of New York.
7 I would hope that one day we could have an integrated
8 system that works..., an integrated system that
9 includes ACS, DOE, HRA, SBS as well as DOE as opposed
10 to everyone operating in their separate silos. I
11 thank that would go a long way. And really speak to
12 some of the issues and questions that I'm going to
13 raise this afternoon.

14 First, everyone has been talking about
15 Bring Our Children Back, the young girls in Nigeria,
16 but I do know that in the budget..., that in the city
17 we have young people, who unfortunately are sexually
18 exploited as well. I do know that on the state, they
19 passed the state harbor act. \$622,000 I believe, was
20 allocated to ACS to focus on young people who are
21 sexually exploited. What are your plans for those
22 resources?

23 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So we do have a
24 plan. And we work with DYCD collaboratively with
25 them, so I want you to know that there is alignment

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2 and collaboration between the two systems. We
3 actually.., we've expanded our investigatory capacity
4 to identify cases of sexual exploitation. So that is
5 really important. To be able to identify the young
6 people who come into our systems. We release an
7 eight page comprehensive policy regarding assessment
8 and safety planning for commercially exploited
9 children and we also have a desk aid for our workers.
10 We collocated sexual youth counselors that will work
11 with sexually exploited youth at our children's
12 center and detention facilities to provide services.
13 We contracted with JCCA, Jewish Child Care to
14 implement specialized foster care and juvenile
15 placements. We also have a contract with Mt. Sinai
16 and St. Luke's Roosevelt for a clinical program
17 designed to maintain sexually exploited youth safely
18 in their home and provide them with services and
19 supports. We also work with DYCD and their summer
20 youth employment program and we have a set aside for
21 summer youth employment jobs for sexually exploited
22 youth. We have held trainings across all divisions
23 in our agency, to have a better understanding of
24 these young people and what their needs are. We fund
25 an outreach..., street outreach team, which is really

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2 important, targeting youth who have AWOLed,
3 particularly from foster care, who are vulnerable and
4 targets. We funded three providers for dedicated
5 service in outreach to LGBTQ population of young
6 people, because we know that they're very vulnerable.
7 We've engaged with local, state and national stake
8 holders to share information, to provide trainings
9 and to raise awareness. And we have a very good
10 collaboration with our state partner, OCFS. So we're
11 doing a lot of work in this area and we do it in
12 collaboration with many of the providers and
13 advocates. You know, but it's a big challenge, as
14 you know.

15 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: So I hope..., I
16 know that you are going to be working with the city
17 council as well as my office. I think city council
18 members basically have a better understanding of
19 their districts than anyone else and they know where
20 the problems are and the hot spots in their
21 respective districts and clearly if we could provide
22 services to those young people who are sexually
23 exploited would go a long way. I have received a
24 number of complaints from individuals in the borough
25 of Brooklyn and in parts of Queens, where massage

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2 parlors are popping up all over the place and we
3 believe that it might be a haven for sexually
4 exploited young people. And so I look forward to
5 working with you.

6 COMMISSIONER CARRION: We welcome that.

7 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: I was remiss in
8 my opening comments not to acknowledge all of the
9 legal interns that are now working in the Office of
10 Public Advocate. They're in the balcony. They are
11 all on staff and we are looking to investigate and
12 perhaps initiate some litigation against some
13 individuals in the city of New York.

14 I want to move onto UPK. So in ACS there
15 are going to be..., there's closely 13,000 slots for
16 ACS UPK and these slots will be converted to full-
17 time UPK. In DOE there's about 73,000 UPK slots. My
18 question is the teachers and their salary. Will
19 their salaries be comparable? Will it be the same...,
20 will benefits be the same for teachers in ACS and
21 teachers in DOE? Are their salaries the same?

22 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Parity between the
23 four teachers for the four year olds in DOE community
24 based organizations and teachers in ACS community
25 based organizations and benefits will be the same.

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2 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Excellent. Will
3 there be..., is there capital fund that has been set
4 aside for these community based organizations if they
5 have any space needs to accommodate those children in
6 UPK?

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: There are no
8 capital dollars from my understanding assigned to
9 address those space issues. I do know that there are
10 dollars to be able to do enhancements to classrooms
11 and that would probably entail very small
12 modifications that would be necessary, but I don't
13 think they envision any major capital needs being
14 addressed.

15 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you. I
16 want to move onto Early Learn. With Council Member
17 Palmer and others in the city council, we were very
18 critical of Early Learn. I was a vocal critic of
19 Early Learn because I describe it as an early
20 disaster. Part of it has to do with what you
21 mentioned earlier, and that is the underfunding of
22 Early Learn. But also, Early Learn missed areas
23 throughout the city of New York including my former
24 district, now represented by Council Member Cumbo,
25 rapidly gentrifying neighborhoods where there's

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2 pockets of poverty that were overlooked as part of
3 the Early Learn application process. And so within
4 the 35th Councilmanic District in Public Housing,
5 Early Learn was not implemented. And there were
6 parts in Bedford-Stuyvesant where Early Learn was not
7 implemented. It was primarily implemented in
8 Brownsville and in East New York. What can we do to
9 make up for the inadequacies of the Early Lean RFP
10 which overlooked parts of Fort Green, parts of
11 Bedford-Stuyvesant and all throughout the City of New
12 York and rapidly gentrifying neighborhoods where
13 there are pockets of poverty and where this is great
14 need for child care.

15 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So, let me address
16 that a couple of ways, Public Advocate. One is that
17 unfortunately we know that Early Learn only meets
18 about a quarter of the need that is out there for
19 early care and education. So that's a challenge that
20 we have. Also, you know that Early Learn's contract
21 is up in two years. And there's an opportunity to
22 renew and there's an opportunity to re-RFP. There
23 will be a task force that will be launched that will
24 be headed by the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human
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2 Services and I think that that will be an issue
3 before that task force.

4 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Excellent. And
5 is the Office of Public Advocate part of that task
6 force?

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: I really don't
8 know whose part of the task force just yet. It has
9 not been launched. So I don't know the answer to
10 that question.

11 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: If you would make
12 that recommendation or communicate my recommendation
13 that the Office of Public Advocate should be included
14 otherwise those legal interns will get to work.

15 COMMISSIONER CARRION: I will convey
16 that. I'd like to make one correction. And that is
17 that when I said that there would be parity with
18 salaries and benefits, I misspoke. There will be
19 parity with salaries but not benefits. Because there
20 are two separate systems.

21 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: So under ACS they
22 will not receive the same benefits as those teachers
23 in DOE?
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2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: That's correct,
3 because in part the answer to that is that they're
4 separate unions that are representing those workers.

5 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: I see. And is
6 there..., are the benefits within the ACS system
7 significantly different from that of the DOE?

8 COMMISSIONER CARRION: I really don't
9 know how to answer that question.

10 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Okay. And do you
11 know if there's some benefits that are provided to
12 DOE teachers that are not provided to ACS workers?

13 COMMISSIONER CARRION: I would imagine
14 and I'm speculating now that the DOE benefits are
15 probably more comprehensive. But that's something
16 that we would have to get back to you, because I
17 really don't know what DOE benefits look like.

18 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And the
19 administration is not prepared to provide parity, to
20 provide the same level of benefits to the workers...,
21 to the teachers in the ACS system.

22 COMMISSIONER CARRION: I imagine that
23 that's part of a bargaining process.

24 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you.
25 Public housing. Are we addressing the needs of

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2 residents of public housing? Providing them with
3 child care.

4 COMMISSIONER CARRION: You know, we
5 actually have a meeting with Commission from NYCHA.
6 I think that we work very hard to try to address and
7 provide child care for as many families as we can
8 that are eligible for subsidized care. Once again,
9 the challenge we have is that there is such huge
10 unmet need.

11 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you. And
12 Commissioner this is an issue that I've been focusing
13 on for a very long time is that parents who work in
14 non-traditional hours, you know, we need to look at
15 child care beyond 9 to 5. We need to provide child
16 care for those workers who work you know, five to
17 midnight and midnight to nine. What is the
18 administration doing to provide for universal child
19 care looking at childcare from a different angle?

20 COMMISSIONER CARRION: You know, you're
21 absolutely right that we need to have more diversity
22 in the services and the hours and the types of
23 programs that are provided to match the needs of
24 parents. In fact, I visited a day care center
25 recently and they were actually expanding for more

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2 non-traditional hours. I think that's something we
3 have to encourage to do more and it's something that
4 we certainly can discuss in the work group as we look
5 at how re-imagine Early Learn.

6 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Excellent. The
7 work group that hopefully I'll be involved in. Let
8 me move onto Child Protective Services. Miles
9 Dobson, as you know, a young child who died at the
10 hands of a caretaker. The stories seem are more
11 often than not that a child unfortunately dies at the
12 hands of a child caretaker in the City of New York.
13 Part of it I believe has to do with the lack of child
14 care available to working families in the City of New
15 York. I know in the previous administration I had
16 worked with ACS with respect to a public information
17 campaign to educate individuals about the need to
18 train..., make sure that their children are in the
19 hands of professionals, what child care was available
20 and that certain child care workers and any child
21 care provider that is caring for their child should
22 be someone who is qualified and someone who receives
23 the proper training. Is there any resources in the
24 budget with respect to a public information campaign?

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2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: I will certainly
3 look. I remember the campaign that you're talking
4 about and it's certainly an important campaign and I
5 think a challenge that I'm seeing is that, you know,
6 we can't do this one shot, I think, you know, it has
7 to be continuous. We have to remind. These messages
8 have to be played over and over again in our
9 communities. So I will look to see whether or not we
10 have any resources to be able to re-issue, so to
11 speak, that campaign. It was very well done.

12 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Yes it was. And
13 I know that the family services unit provides
14 families to services and programs including
15 preventive services, public assistance, prenatal
16 assistance, substance abuse, mental health, domestic
17 violence, vocational services and child. But the
18 family services unit only provides those services to
19 families that are in the "system". Can families
20 receive any services when they are not in the system,
21 to divert them from going into the system, or prevent
22 them from going into the system? Where can families
23 get these types of services, or does one have to be
24 part of the system?

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2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Unfortunately,
3 families have to be part of the system.

4 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Okay.

5 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So, let me
6 clarify. So, we have preventive programs that are
7 available in communities. Those programs, when a
8 family comes in and asks for help, if they have
9 capacity, they are able to serve families. I think
10 that's something that we're looking at. We actually
11 do provide a directory on our website that lists all
12 of our preventive services. And we have them
13 throughout the city of New York and there situated in
14 the communities of highest need. I do think that
15 what one of the issues that your addressing is to
16 have available more community based programs where
17 families don't have to necessarily present issues
18 where there child is at imminent risk of going into
19 out of home placement, but where we can support
20 families and provide family support services that
21 don't have the stigma of being attached to a child
22 welfare system. I understand that and I think that
23 it's something that, not only ACS has to do, but it's
24 something that a children's cabinet should be looking
25 at and there are other agencies that need to be

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2 providing services along with us, in communities.

3 And I know that services are funded but we still have
4 a tremendous unmet need.

5 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you. My
6 last question is I want to congratulate you for the
7 \$6.5 million to create new internal case monitoring
8 and compliance unit as well as the \$2.3 million to
9 reduce attorney caseloads from approximately 75 to
10 65. The questions is are we going to increase the
11 number of supervisors, because again, in the Office
12 of Public Advocate since we've taken office, we've
13 received close to almost 3,000 complaints, covering a
14 wide range of issues and we identified some reforms
15 that were needed in HRA, working with HRA, NYCHA,
16 etc. My question is I see that there's a need for
17 more supervisory attention to divert families from
18 the court system. Families that have called our
19 office because their child was removed because they
20 didn't have food in their refrigerator. Their child
21 was removed for housing issues. So, we need to
22 divert these families from the system, but there
23 needs to be a supervisor who can monitor the number
24 of neglect and abuse cases that are being filed in
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2 the system. Are any of these resources being
3 directed towards..., to the issue?

4 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes, resources are
5 available in this plan to increase the number of
6 supervisors. I think that what you're speaking of is
7 a little different than what is in the plan. But I
8 will share with you an initiative that we have that
9 might begin to address some of the concerns that
10 you've expressed and that is the family assessment
11 response which we're piloting in Queens and it's a
12 state initiative that's in about 20 other counties in
13 the State of New York and that really is an approach
14 that allows us to focus. After we make a safety
15 assessment and we say, this child is safe, too really
16 focus, rather than looking at it through the lens of
17 an enforcement or investigation, is how we respond to
18 the needs that the families are presenting. And it's
19 a short term type of intervention that says, why are
20 you struggling? What is it that you need and helping
21 you identify those needs and then bring in those
22 services there and really working with social workers
23 and the way that social workers have been trained to
24 work to support families?

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2 Our preliminary evaluation that we just
3 received has been very positive. We're doing a
4 really good job there in the small pilot and now we
5 have to look to see how we expand that to other parts
6 of the city. It is, you know, really very hopeful
7 that that different approach would allow us to reach
8 more families in a way that they would be receptive
9 and that really does address the concerns that they
10 have and challenges that they are facing in a
11 different way.

12 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And I thank you
13 Commissioner. It also includes a program that we
14 launched, again in my former council district, and
15 that was Grandmother Who Are Mothers Again. We saw a
16 number of grandmothers who happen to be as a result
17 of some circumstance in their family life became
18 mothers again and they were overwhelmed and they
19 needed special services as opposed to, you know, a
20 case of neglect being filed against them. All they
21 needed was some support and some help.

22 COMMISSIONER CARROIN: Exactly.

23 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And some respite.
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2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: And that's what
3 this program does. It's not about indicating a case,
4 it's about providing those services a family needs.

5 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you
6 Commissioner.

7 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you Public
8 Advocate James. We will now have Council Member
9 Richards.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Thank you
11 Chairs. You guys are doing a fantastic job and thank
12 you Commission Carrion for testifying today. Just
13 had a few questions. I want to go back to Close to
14 Home. I just wanted to know. What were your
15 challenges in Phase 1 of Close to Home, because I
16 thin, in the Exec Budget highlights you guys
17 mentioned, that before you implement Phase 2 you need
18 to deal with some of the challenges in Phase 1? So I
19 just wanted to know, what were some of those
20 challenges?

21 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So I think that
22 one of the challenges was really the very aggressive
23 timeline for implementation. Which in my opinion
24 didn't allow for sufficient time for the providers to
25 really gear up. To be able to hire staff, to train

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2 staff, to have their facilities online. For ACS as
3 an agency to staff up and have the employees that
4 they needed with the skill set, that we had our
5 internal monitoring procedures in place. Our
6 policies in place. That we had effective after care
7 in place. That we identified the mental health
8 supports that young people needed. I think that...,
9 and there are challenges that when you start up new
10 programs you have, but in my opinion, we could have
11 with more time, done a better job. And I would like
12 to have that time as we implement Phase 2 of Close to
13 Home.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Okay, great.
15 Just I think two more questions relating to, Close to
16 Home. So, umm it's my understanding that juveniles
17 are sent to emergency services after 5:00 pm or on
18 the weekends and they are placed with much more
19 vulnerable children who are basically a threat to not
20 only the children being placed there on the weekend
21 but the workers. And I was wondering in your budget,
22 is there additional funding begin put in place in
23 particular just for training and safety for these
24 workers and for the other children. Because I know I
25 have a Close to Home in Rockaway. Which has done

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2 fairly well. But I remember a worker last year, not
3 under your watch, who went through some immense
4 challenges, and in particular in terms of being
5 injured on the job. I wanted to know what things are
6 being put in place to protect the workers.

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So we are working
8 very closely with Phase 1 of Close to Home and those
9 agencies to really strengthen their capacity to be
10 able to better manage behavior and address behavior.
11 So that work is ongoing and I actually..., you know
12 while I always welcome additional resources, we can
13 do that and are doing that with the resources that we
14 have. And we're certainly looking at closer working
15 relationship with our providers to be better able to
16 address the needs that they identify.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: And is non-
18 secure placement an ECS as well as emergency services
19 and are workers equipped to handle them?

20 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So you know we're
21 taking a very close look at detention. Secured
22 detention and our non-secured detention. The
23 additional funding we're getting is to enhance our
24 mental health supports in our secured detention
25 facilities and we have brought in a number of experts

1
2 to work with our staff. To look at how we train our
3 staff and to look at our policies. And more
4 importantly to bring in more services and supports
5 into our facilities.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: So, more
7 support in terms of your workers, more support for
8 additional workers your saying?

9 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So we're looking
10 at whether we need additional workers or not and
11 we're actually looking at how to recruit additional
12 works. Our attrition rate is very high. So we're
13 taking a very close look on how we're structured.
14 We've seen a pretty good decline in the use of
15 detention. I think we need to do more. When I talk
16 about supports, is I think we need to have more
17 activities in our facilities to engage young people
18 so that they're busy all day long. And make sure
19 that there's better engagement and that we give our
20 staff the tools to be able to better engage young
21 people. And to engage them in non-punitive ways.
22 So, it's a work in progress. And there's a lot that
23 we're doing to enhance our detention work and to be
24 able to better address the needs that we've
25 identified both by the workers and our young people.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Thank you so
3 much for that. I just want to underscore that, you
4 know, it's critical that we have resources in place.
5 In particular to really protect these workers and I
6 know I had, like I said, a person in my district who
7 was really beat up pretty badly last year. Not under
8 your watch. And I just want to make sure that
9 there's a special emphasis on that.

10 Last question, I promise, and I'm off the
11 mike. I know the buzzer has hit me. No last
12 question? Come on guys. Just wanted to speak in
13 particular of the centers that were effected by
14 Hurricane Sandy and I know I always bring these
15 particular issues. Other colleagues are not here who
16 were hit by Sandy. Just wanted to know are there any
17 additional resources being put into particular
18 centers in affected areas. In particular, in
19 represent the Rockaways of course, so I'm interested
20 in hearing that and in know that we lost a few
21 centers and wanted to know if there are any plan to
22 bring those centers back.

23 COMMISSIONER CARRION: To our knowledge
24 all the centers except one are up and running. And
25 the only one that is an alternate site at the YMCA in

1
2 Isla. Do you know where that is? In Coney Island.
3 All other centers are up and at capacity that they
4 were prior to the storm.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: So we're
6 positive that they're at capacity and I just say that
7 because, in particular we had two centers in the
8 Redfern area and Far Rockaway. And I know that
9 that's an area that has a major need in the middle of
10 one of my housing developments and we have one center
11 in particular down there now. So just wanted to know
12 if there are any additional plans to make up those
13 slots that we lost there.

14 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Let me take a look
15 at that, because my information is that we pretty
16 much...

17 [Background talk]

18 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Oh. Those are
19 discretionary sites. Yes. They're not part of the
20 Early Learn system.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Okay. That
22 particular site. Alright. Thank you so much.

23 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you Council
24 Member Richards. So I'd like to follow-up on Raise
25 the Age and the impact that it will have. So as we

1
2 all know New York State currently sets its age of
3 criminal responsibility at 16. We are one of only
4 two states that treat all 16 and 17 year defendants
5 as adults. Data shows that vast majority of 16 and
6 17 year old defendants are arrested for misdemeanor
7 and non-violent offenses. Governor Cuomo has
8 established a commission of youth, public safety and
9 justice to provide concrete accountable
10 recommendations on the Raise the Age issue by the end
11 of 2014. Given the broad and growing coalition in
12 support of raising the age of criminal
13 responsibility, the administration should assess what
14 steps the city can make to take the limit of 16 and
15 17 year olds entry into adult prior to our
16 legislative change. So in speaking about planning
17 for the future, is there anywhere in your budget
18 current where you speak to that, that we may have
19 missed? In particular with the focus on sexually
20 exploited children, I know a lot of work that I did
21 as former chair and that Laurie will..., Chair Cumbo
22 will do as we move forward is in cases where young
23 girls are picked up for prostitution and they're
24 processed at a very early age and they have a
25 criminal record. Adding onto all the other issues

1
2 that a lot of young people have. So at the
3 preliminary budget hearing and in the council budget
4 response we've suggested that the administration
5 develop a strategic plan. Do you have a strategic
6 plan? We didn't see a response to it. And how will
7 the impact..., and how will this impact ACS and family
8 court system? Is there capacity and funding issues
9 that you see as we move forward and where do you see
10 the change?

11 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So it really is
12 too early to be able to have a strategic plan because
13 we don't really know what the proposal is going to be
14 and whether or not..., you know what form that would
15 take. I don't think the task force, the commission,
16 the governor's commission has yet to have its first
17 meeting. So, we are, you know..., we actually in the
18 state the governor did appoint the Criminal Justice
19 Coordinator, Liz Glazer to serve on the Commission.
20 She has convened a group of city commissioners to
21 start conversation about the different possibilities
22 of how a proposal to Raise the Age would look and
23 what issues would we raise of concern or how that
24 would impact our ability our capacity. And so we had
25 our first meeting and so we are doing that.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Okay. So you did
3 have your first meeting?

4 COMMISSIONER CARRION: We did have our
5 first meeting of an internal group that was brought
6 together by Liz Glazer. Yes.

7 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: So we're just
8 hoping that you can keep this committee abreast,
9 because obviously this is going to have budgetary
10 impact, pretty significantly. We're talking about a
11 very large population. And I wanted to follow-up now
12 on foster care and coordination across the agencies.
13 As of January 2014, there will only be 11,695
14 children in foster care. This represents almost a
15 50% decrease since 2002. Right now, how many
16 foster..., former foster youth are residing in DHS or
17 the Department of Youth and Community, DYCD shelters,
18 do you know?

19 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So, we don't track
20 every former foster care youth. What we do is,
21 foster care youth that are 16 years old that have,
22 when we look at their one year out of being in care,
23 so it's 16 and up that we look at. And our data
24 shows that 14% of young people who have a..., who leave
25 our system with another family arrangement, go into

1
2 the shelter system. Six percent that come out..., I'm
3 trying to remember..., 6% of youth that were reunited
4 with their families come back. Go into a shelter
5 system and then 3% of all other who were discharged
6 from our system either to mental health or were able
7 or went into the criminal justice system, go into the
8 homeless shelters.

9 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: So, 14% as..., and
10 you tracked them to the year after.

11 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So the total is
12 8% overall and those are the breakdown that I gave
13 you by category.

14 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: So 14% of the 8%?

15 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes.

16 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Okay. And it has
17 been brought to my attention and specifically I
18 wanted to talk about School Stability for Children in
19 Foster Care and obviously this was a legislative
20 remedy on creating educational stability plans for
21 young people while entering foster care 60 days
22 after. Can you walk me through that process? Is
23 this happening for every case? Are the courts aware
24 of this? What's the process in advocating for young
25 people on the education stability plan?

1
2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So are you talking
3 about the federal legislation that requires us to
4 insure the educational stability of a young person
5 and certainly the courts are very aware of that. And
6 that is something that's looked into every single
7 case of a child that comes into our system. Every
8 effort is made to keep the child, where appropriate,
9 into their school of origin. That is the goal. I
10 think there are challenges to implementing that in
11 every single case.

12 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Can you speak to
13 me about some of challenges?

14 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Well, it the
15 transportation and the cost and who..., which system
16 pays for the transportation. And so, is it DOE or is
17 it ACS.

18 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Is there a change
19 in the budget? Is there something that's reflected
20 in the budget on change for transportation costs?
21 Because if it is a challenge, is there a budget in
22 line that speaks to addressing your challenge?

23 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Well there isn't a
24 budget line and this is federal funds that come to us

25

1
2 from our Title 4E funding from the federal
3 government. So there isn't...

4 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Okay. What I'm
5 trying to understand is that we're getting
6 complaints..., not complaints, we're getting issues
7 from constituents from our respective districts,
8 saying that the plan isn't happening in some cases.
9 So I need you to walk me through, when do you choose
10 whether you're paying for it or not, and I understand
11 that there's plenty of things, unfunded mandates,
12 right, that happens in our city all the time. So I'm
13 trying to identify that if you find..., if this is an
14 obstacle and it's a budgetary issue, we fund things
15 all the time that we don't get reimbursed from the
16 federal government. This one is one that is probably
17 a challenge for young people to be able to get back
18 to their schools. So where do you see..., in which
19 cases do you decide who gets the plan effectively and
20 who doesn't?

21 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So you know the
22 goal is every child, right, every child, I mean there
23 isn't a cohort of children that get it and others
24 don't, right. So the goal always and the orientation
25 is where possible, to keep the child in the school of

1
2 origin, where it is appropriate. Okay. So I think
3 that where we have the greatest challenge is where
4 the child is with a kinship that lives in another
5 part of the city. So going from one borough to
6 another borough, for instance, is challenging. Or
7 where there's siblings and some are in care, you
8 know, in different places. So that might meet a
9 challenge. I think that working collaboratively with
10 the Department of Education, I do think that we would
11 be able to address many of the challenges. I think
12 in the past there were challenges around who pays. I
13 think that we've gotten better about that. I think
14 that when the..., there is challenges because of who
15 pays, that's done on a case by case basis by the
16 borough office. Many, many a time until the
17 transportation can be arranged with the Department of
18 Education, we take a cab and we take the child to
19 school. I mean we have those kinds of instances. We
20 reimburse providers to be able to provide the
21 transportation until those issues are resolved. Are
22 some children not staying in the school of origin?
23 There might be a variety of reasons why. It should
24 not be based on the cost of transportation and who's
25 going to provide it.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Okay. Thank you
3 very much. And tied to this and I know that
4 legislation doesn't speak specifically to this. Can
5 you speak to me on the component or wrap around
6 service to insure that a foster care child is getting
7 the education support that they need. So is there
8 any interaction between DOE and looking at whether
9 attendance is an issue, or whether educational
10 attainment is an issue? Kind of what a parent would
11 do. When you go home and check homework and you make
12 sure that your kid is healthy and all these things.
13 Obviously these are children that are in a very
14 challenging time, so when we can step in and probably
15 facilitate some conversations that weren't happening
16 with the parent or whoever they were with originally.
17 What is your interaction with DOE in helping get this
18 child to graduation and insuring that they have a
19 successful experience in our educational system?

20 COMMISSION CARRION: I'm getting notes
21 passed here. I know the feeling. You know we do
22 have a project school success and we look at the
23 school attendance records and those records are
24 shared with the foster care agencies who work with
25 the foster parents who are responsible for making

1
2 sure that a child goes to school and is doing well in
3 school and it's the providers responsibility to make
4 sure that that foster parent has the supports they
5 need, whether it's tutoring, being responsible in
6 attending the school meetings and talking to the
7 teacher and we're able to access attendance records
8 to see. They're also responsible for getting report
9 cards and looking at the performance. We've have had
10 a meeting already with the school chancellor and
11 we're working to deepen that partnership to make sure
12 that these transitions, that children don't lose time
13 from school, that it doesn't impact on their
14 educational attainment or their educational success.
15 So it's always a work in progress to make sure that
16 we're being vigilant about children that are in care
17 are getting the best quality education and are going
18 to school and are doing well.

19 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you and I
20 know that this is a transition in administration, you
21 can only imagine how frustrating it is from our
22 perspective, but we're very excited to be able to
23 engage with you in helping, I don't know if its
24 remediate, but helping a lot of the processes that
25 have been established, former policies that weren't

1
2 making sense and helping us get more information to
3 our constituents would be greatly appreciate. I am
4 going to pass it over to Chair Cumbo.

5 CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Thank you. I
6 wanted to..., it's been brought up quite a bit today in
7 terms of the Deputy Mayor's task force. So, when
8 Public Advocate Letitia James brought it up and asked
9 that she would very much like to be part of it, or
10 has she been reached out to, you responded by saying
11 no and you didn't know who exactly was going to be on
12 it. So, where are we with the process of coming
13 together to make sure that this task force is
14 happening? Is it an idea, because we've kind of
15 gotten information that it's more than an idea? Is
16 it just an idea, has there been any movement in terms
17 of deciding who's going to be on that particular task
18 force, because I know that the Public Advocate didn't
19 know about it, the UFT didn't know about it, other
20 advocates and allies also did not know about it. So
21 now that it's out there and people know about it what
22 is the timeline? Because if it's geared at
23 streamlining, it would seem that streamlining would
24 happen on the front end of any process that's going
25 to be happening with ACS.

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2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Well, it was
3 announced in the budget, in my budget. The mayor
4 announced it in the budget that he was going to
5 charge the Deputy Mayor for helping Human Services to
6 create a task force to look at the Early Childhood
7 continuum. And I, from my understanding is that the
8 Deputy Mayor will be convening a task force. As you
9 know the budget was recently released and so this is
10 one of the items on her agenda to move forward. The
11 timeline is my understanding and it's in my budget
12 that it is the hope that he task force will have
13 recommendations by the end of the summer.

14 CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: I see. Will you
15 have any role in selecting who will be a part of that
16 task force and it is just generally understood that
17 parents as well as families will have a key and
18 instrumental role in this task force or is that just
19 given that that is going to be a part of it.

20 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Well I certainly
21 hope, you know, this administration is very
22 collaborative and we work together and so that I
23 expect to have a role in that. But also, the task
24 force, I don't know what the size of the task force
25 is, but I'd probably like to have a smaller task

1
2 force so the timeline is a short timeline. So if
3 parents and providers or parents are not part of the
4 task force, they certainly will be consulted and
5 there will be focus groups and opportunities to be
6 able to engage with all constituents that might be
7 interested in Early Childhood Care and Education.
8 There's always an effort to outreach and to be as
9 inclusive as possible but understanding that it's a
10 short timeline and we want to be able to expedite
11 recommendations before the end of the summer.

12 CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Because, I just
13 wanted to add with that, it's going to be critical
14 that the partners that are working with you be part
15 of that task force and I'm hoping that your
16 recommendations will be taken very seriously.
17 Because it will be important for us to have our UFT
18 representatives that are also working with you as
19 well as labor and all other advocates. I wanted to
20 ask you a question about the..., what is the amount of
21 the ACS \$80 million operating deficit and mandated
22 vouchers. So what part of ACS's operating budget is
23 a result of vouchers from a deficit?

24 COMMISSIONER CARRION: What..., where is
25 our deficit?

1
2 CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Correct. When
3 you've talking about ACS its \$80 million operating
4 deficit, is it in mandated vouchers?

5 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes.

6 [Background talk]

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: And low income. I
8 think the majority is in vouchers and low income.

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: And what are you
10 doing to address that?

11 COMMISSIONER CARRION: We beg OMB for
12 money.

13 [Laughing]

14 COMMISSIONER CARRION: We are certainly
15 in conversations with OMB and everyone else to look
16 at this deficit. It's a structural deficit. And
17 certainly something that the task force will have to
18 review and discuss.

19 CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Okay. I wanted to
20 talk about the Early Childhood as well. So what is
21 the cost to have parity across the entire Early
22 Childhood Education System including 0 to 3 year old
23 instructors? So we want to know, what would the cost
24 be if we included the 0 through 3 instructors so we
25 have an opportunity to know where we're going in the

1
2 budget moving forward? What would that calculated
3 cost be, given the administration's strong stance on
4 early childhood education?

5 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So we estimate to
6 bring the teachers for the three year olds up to
7 parity with the four year old teachers to cost about
8 \$12 million. But this is just the lead teacher in
9 the classroom.

10 CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Just the lead
11 teacher in the classroom for 0 through 3?

12 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Just for the 3s.

13 CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Just for the 3
14 year olds?

15 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes.

16 CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Has there been a
17 calculation done for 0 through 2 as of yet?

18 COMMISSIONER CARRION: No.

19 CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Okay. So right
20 now the calculation that you have made would be that
21 for ACS your cost would be \$12 million in order to
22 provide early childhood education for 3 year olds in
23 addition, just with the lead teachers?

24
25

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2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: To bring the 3
3 year old teacher to parity with the 4 year old
4 teacher would be \$12 million, about.

5 CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Okay. And then
6 finally, one of the questions that I had goes to,
7 it's incredible that there is so much investment that
8 is being made on the part of the administration. I
9 guess my first question goes when we talk about the
10 deficit from vouchers, will any of this increased
11 funding be able to make a dent in that deficit,
12 number one? And then two, what ways, because it's
13 such a great amount of money, it's fantastic that
14 this investment is being made to our youth. What
15 form of evaluation are you utilizing across the board
16 to show that there has been impact as a result of
17 this investment and the services that you are
18 providing? What is that form of evaluation?

19 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So let me answer
20 the first part of your question. This year, first
21 time in many years, that we received an increase in
22 our allocation for the Childcare Block Grant from the
23 state. So, the money that is in excess of what we
24 need for a market rate increase will go toward the
25 deficit. About \$9 to \$10 million dollars on a good

1
2 day. Your second question about the kinds of
3 assessments, how do we assess quality, which is what
4 we should all be concerned about in our system, how
5 we are getting children ready to learn. How we are
6 preparing them to go into kindergarten and now how
7 we're preparing them to go into UPK. So we do a
8 number of assessments throughout the year and I want
9 you to know that our work is very much in
10 collaboration with the Department of Education, so
11 our standards are the same. So we do assessments
12 throughout the course of a year where teachers assess
13 how the children are doing. And we look at a number
14 of domains in that review. So we look at the social,
15 emotional learning of children. We look at the
16 physical. We look at their literacy. We look at
17 math. And those are..., and there are a couple of
18 other domains. And they're assessed. And then there
19 is a national standard that we look at to see how are
20 children compare to that national standard. And so,
21 for the most part, interesting, the four year olds
22 are doing really well and in fact exceed the federal
23 standard, the national standard. Except in math this
24 year, so we have to do more work in math. It's my
25 recollection. And so, we have it for the three's and

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2 we have it for the two's. It's a very formalized,
3 it's standardized, it validated and it's a tool
4 that's used by us and the Department of Education.

5 CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Has there been a
6 way to evaluate, as you say we've done so well in
7 this division, is it that you're just evaluating the
8 children's academic performance that year. Or are
9 you able to track, in any way, I just want to know,
10 has there been any way to track how well they are
11 doing after they transcend in their other academic
12 institutions of learning. Like what difference is it
13 making that they have now had this incredible early
14 childhood education program. Has there been anything
15 to show that it's doing anything on any other levels?

16 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So, what I'm
17 hearing is yes, that we work for DOE and I really
18 don't have the details of that, but I certainly can
19 get back to you. That certainly is very challenging.
20 Those are a longitudinal look and I understand that we
21 do some of that in collaboration with the Department
22 of Education. I can get that information to you.

23 CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Okay. And just in
24 closing, not a question, but just a remark. Just
25 wanted to reiterate the importance to me to making

1
2 sure that organizations like the Department of
3 Cultural Affairs are truly explored on so many levels
4 in terms of the most intense collaborations that
5 could possibly happen would be phenomenal. Again,
6 stressing the importance of bringing back
7 organizations like Cool Culture in to your portfolio.
8 And would also very much like to see that there are
9 efforts made to see that the counselors and the
10 juvenile justice program actually come from those who
11 have wanted to turn their lives around as a result of
12 having been formerly incarcerated. I believe that
13 such an untapped resource of so many individuals that
14 come out and want to change their lives. In our
15 districts we have organizations like SOS and Man-Up
16 who could be very effective in making sure that their
17 constituents are made aware of these opportunities
18 and I would stress upon you to reach out to those
19 types of organizations to make sure that they are
20 qualified and gotten through the process so that they
21 can actually be participants.

22 Thank you for your testimony today and
23 thank you for answering our questions.

24 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Thank you.
25

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2 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you Chair
3 Cumbo. Commissioner you're going to kill me but I
4 just have a couple of more questions around the
5 voucher issue. So I just wanted to just to get some
6 clarity, it would be helpful for us to know how many
7 families are currently using vouchers system wide?

8 COMMISSIONER CARRION: 65,000, a little
9 plus.

10 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. 65,000
11 plus. Of those vouchers, how many are mandated,
12 Priorities 1 through 4 versus low income priorities
13 other?

14 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So we're looking.
15 That's a hard question.

16 [Background talk]

17 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So Susan do you
18 want to...?

19 [Background talk]

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: So, of the...
21 it's actually 65,791.

22 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So rounding up it
23 would be 66.

24 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes.
25

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2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: Okay. Of
3 those, 81% are mandated and 19% are low income.

4 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So 90% are low
5 income.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: 19%.

7 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So the 19% then
8 are all Priority 5s?

9 [Background talk]

10 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Somebody in the
11 audience chimed in.

12 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Who said yes,
13 raise your hand?

14 DEPUTY COMMISSOINER NUCCIO: Is that our
15 team that said yes?

16 We're checking on that. I don't think
17 they're all Priority 5s.

18 COMMISSIONER CARRION: We're off to find
19 out. We're looking.

20 [Background talk]

21 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Take your
22 time.

23 [Pause]

24
25

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2 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: While you're
3 looking, another question on that would be what's the
4 breakdown for school age versus 0 to 4?

5 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So 30% are school
6 age.

7 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Got it, okay, and
8 the rest would be 0 to 4.

9 [Background talk]

10 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Actually 46% are
11 school age.

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: If we add
13 the informals, it's 46%.

14 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: 46% school aged,
15 and the rest 0 to 4.

16 [Background talk]

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: With 10,506
18 of those school ages are informal.

19 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Say that again, I'
20 sorry.

21 DEPUT COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: Of the 46% or
22 30,231 that are school aged, 10,506 are in informal
23 settings, home based.

24 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Umm, and so
25 those are the vouchers that are currently out there

1
2 being used. Do we know..., so there are thousands of
3 children who are receiving non-mandated Priority 5
4 vouchers or...?

5 [Interpose]

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: I can break
7 down the priorities for you now if that would be
8 helpful.

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Sure, yes, that
10 would be fine.

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: In the
12 65,791 vouchers, 47 are protective, 1,084 are
13 preventive or Priority 2, 53,585 are cash assistance
14 employed, 2 are cash assistance in tap, 10,990 are
15 employed, 83 are training, which is Priority 6.

16 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Got it. Okay. So
17 11,000 are Priority 5.

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: Right.

19 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And how many
20 families qualify for Priority 5 that are not
21 currently receiving it? Families that have applied,
22 qualify, not receiving the voucher.

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: We would
24 have to go back to our wait list numbers that we gave
25 you earlier.

1
2 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. So that's
3 the wait list number.

4 Right. The reason that I'm asking these
5 question, is that I want to know, how many..., if these
6 are pegs that we've made over..., the city's made over
7 the years. If we're looking at calling back those
8 pegs, in some gradual process. I mean, I'm not
9 saying everything needs to be done immediately. But,
10 I'm wondering what the challenge would look like in
11 terms of slots and in terms of dollars. So each... and
12 each...

13 [Interpose]

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: Well, it's
15 about \$12,000 if it's a full day and \$5,000 if it's
16 school age.

17 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Got it. Okay.

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: Just
19 roughly.

20 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Plus \$80 million.

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: Plus \$80
22 million that we're starting from. So on the waiting
23 list, the numbers that had to do with Priority 5 is
24 what you're asking. So, of the 1,700 that the
25 Commissioner spoke about first, 1,445 are Priority 5

1
2 and then in the 11,000, 9,497 are Priority 5 and 298
3 are Priority 6. So you'd have to add those all up.

4 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So that's
5 majority. That's very helpful to know. Thank you
6 for..., okay somebody put me on the clock. Okay and
7 then last question on this, and this is just on the
8 transitional side. Are we tracking whether families
9 that lose their child care voucher are going back on
10 PA. So these are families that are off of PA for a
11 year have that transitional voucher. After a year
12 transitional voucher is revoked. Do we know how many
13 of those families are going back on Public Assistance
14 in order to potentially get a mandated voucher? Not
15 necessarily in order to but you know, it creates a
16 set of circumstances that make is more..

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: Where
18 tracking is, of those who move into the post, we call
19 that the post transitional status, how many apply to
20 continue, because they don't all to that.

21 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: And then of
23 those, how many were found eligible, those numbers we
24 have.

1
2 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And how many of
3 those?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: Now we have
5 to find it.

6 [Background talk]

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: I'm getting
8 them.

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

10 [Background talk]

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: I think I
12 have it. Since February 2013, which is when we
13 started that new policy, 1929 families' submitted re-
14 certifications.

15 [Background talk]

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: Families.
17 And 1,082 were found eligible.

18 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. So a little
19 over half. But then we don't track..., of those 1929...

20 [Interpose]

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: Whether or
22 not they went into Early Learn or the wait list.
23 That would be the choice that they had at that time.
24 And that I do not have numbers on.

25

1
2 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I just want to
3 track how many families have gone back onto PA.

4 [Background talk]

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: No. We
6 would have to do a match on that.

7 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right a match with
8 HRA.

9 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Would don't have
10 the ability to do that.

11 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: That would be
12 tough to do. Okay. Thank you very much
13 Commissioner. I appreciate your time. I know that
14 the previous hearing was kind of a love fest with
15 Commissioner Bank, but that was just because it was
16 his first hearing. We're old pals now.

17 COMMISSIONER CARRION: It's not personal,
18 I understand that. Thank you.

19 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Now that this is
20 your third hearing with us, we appreciate you being
21 here and we appreciate all the work that you and your
22 staff have done in not only preparing for this
23 hearing, in preparing for this really remarkable
24 Executive Budget, but and all the good work that you
25 protecting and providing for New York City's most

1
2 vulnerable. So I want to thank you very much for all
3 your help.

4 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Well thank you
5 very much and I want to thank all the members of the
6 council for their support and interest in our work
7 and thank my great staff for being here and providing
8 the support that I need to be able to do my job.
9 Thank you.

10 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you
11 Commissioner.

12 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you. And
13 again thank you for testifying today. We're going to
14 be following up with you with a letter on the
15 questions that were not asked today. So I would ask
16 that you get back to us expeditiously so we can
17 appropriately include them in the budget negotiating
18 that we will be beginning the process of.

19 Okay, thank you very much Commissioner.
20 We are going to have a three minute break before we
21 transition to Homeless Services.

22 [Background talk]

23 [Pause]

24 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: First I'd like to
25 acknowledge Sergeant at Arms Cayasso (phonetic) and

1
2 Molina (phonetic) for their dedication. We always
3 talk about how long these days are, but the Sergeant
4 at Arms put in a lot of hours and are lock in step
5 with us. So I just wanted to take this opportunity
6 to thank them for their work.

7 We will now resume the city council's
8 hearing on the Mayor's Executive Budget of FY2015.
9 The Finance Committee and the General Welfare
10 Committee just heard from the Administration of
11 Children's Services. We will now hear from the
12 Department of Homeless Services. In the interest of
13 time I will forego an opening statement and turn the
14 mike over to my co-chair for his statement.

15 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very
16 much Madam Chair. I am going to say my statement if
17 that's okay with you. As we worked on it over the
18 weekend. So, I think it's important.

19 Good afternoon, I'm Council Member
20 Stephen Levin, Chair of the General Welfare Committee
21 and this is the third and final of our executive
22 budget hearings for the General Welfare Committee
23 today. At this point we will hear testimony from the
24 Department of Homeless Services, also referred to as
25 DHS, regarding its FY15 Executive Budget. DHS

1 provides emergency shelter, rehousing support and
2 services to single adults and families with little to
3 no alternative housing option. Once again this year
4 the department's shelter census hit historic highs of
5 over 53,000 homeless individuals of which over 22,000
6 are children. For the first time in years, DHS's
7 executive budget today reflects a concerted effort by
8 the administration to reduce the homeless population
9 living in shelters by creating two new rental
10 assistance programs. The rental assistance program
11 for working families and the rental assistance
12 program for vulnerable homeless populations are
13 collaborative efforts between DHS, HRA and the state
14 to address the homeless crisis here in New York City.
15 It is encouraging to see DHS and HRA joining forces
16 and working on homeless issues together and I am
17 excited to hear more about these two rental
18 assistance programs and what the administrations
19 overall vision is to address homelessness in New York
20 City. In addition, DHS's budget includes additional
21 funding for homeless prevention expansion. This
22 influx of funding is much needed, much welcomed and I
23 am curious to know more about how the agency plans to
24 target those areas of the city that have had the
25

1
2 highest densities of homeless populations. And I
3 commend Commissioner Taylor and his team for that
4 influx of funding.

5 Earlier this month, the mayor released
6 his 10 year housing plan as part of the
7 administration's efforts to address the homelessness
8 crisis and it is our understanding that the city and
9 New York City Housing Authority, NYCHA, will
10 prioritize homeless families who are already on the
11 NYCHA waiting list and for Section 8 units. In
12 addition, for the NYCHA units, DHS will prioritize
13 families with children who have already been in the
14 New York City shelter system for a year. While this
15 plan is a step in the right direction, I have several
16 concerns. We have heard that approximately 3,000
17 NYCHA units will be available over four years for the
18 homeless. I believe that this number is not
19 sufficient and more units need to be made available
20 in order to effectively reduce the number of homeless
21 families residing in shelter.

22 One important point to make at the outset
23 is that NYCHA units are the only placement or subsidy
24 resource on the table, being discussed today, that
25 are entirely within the city's control to distribute.

1
2 Or as both proposed rental subsidy program proposed
3 today, would as I understand it, require state
4 approval prioritizing homeless families for NYCHA is
5 something that the city can begin to do today. And
6 it needs to be a significant component to any
7 collective plan moving forward. Just to put this
8 issue into context. In 2000, the year 2000, during
9 the final year of the Giuliani administration, the
10 city placed 3,418 homeless families into NYCHA units
11 in just that one year. In 2005, the final year
12 before the Bloomberg administration stopped the
13 practice almost entirely. Over 3,600 homeless
14 families were placed into NYCHA units. So it is
15 clear that many more homeless families can
16 realistically be placed into NYCHA as has happened in
17 the not too distant past. What is most needed is the
18 will to do so. I have several questions about the
19 mayor's plan and I hope that DHS will be able to
20 alleviate many of my concerns during today's hearing.

21 Now that being said, I am very happy to
22 see that the de Blasio administration, Commissioner
23 Taylor is showing in real and meaningful ways, their
24 commitment to changing the status quo here and now in
25 their very first budget. However, we must keep in

1
2 mind that the stakes have literally never been higher
3 and that the measure of success here is whether we
4 through these programs are able to effectuate a
5 decrease in the number of homeless families in New
6 York City. It is my hope that these models will be
7 successful, but even if they are successful models, I
8 encourage the administration to recognize that more
9 resources, more funding, more NYCHA units will be
10 required to insure that these measure are successful.
11 One option that is unacceptable to this committee,
12 this council and to the people of New York City, is
13 failure.

14 Before introducing Commissioner Taylor,
15 I'd like to thank my committee staff for their hard
16 work Dohini Sompura, finance analyst and Andrea
17 Vasquez, Counsel to committee in preparing this
18 hearing. I now welcome Commissioner Taylor's
19 testimony. Thank you.

20 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Good afternoon
21 Chair Levin, Chair Ferreras and members of the
22 General Welfare and Finance Committees. I am Gilbert
23 Taylor, Commissioner of the Department of Homeless
24 Services. Joining me this afternoon are Lula Eckerd
25 (phonetic), Deputy Commission for Fiscal, Procurement

1
2 Operations and Audits to my left and Erin Valari
3 (phonetic), Assistant Commissioner for Budget and
4 Revenue to my right. Today I'll outline Mayor de
5 Blasio's Fiscal Year 2015 Executive Budget for DHS
6 and report on efforts underway at the agency to
7 further prevent homelessness.

8 DHS is fortunate to have resources
9 available to better serve the families and
10 individuals while they are in shelter and to
11 strategically plan for census reduction. However, we
12 also cannot lose sight of the agency's core mission,
13 preventing homelessness whenever possible, providing
14 short-term emergency shelter and rehousing support
15 whenever needed and increase transparency. In an
16 effort to implement some of the suggestions that I've
17 heard from many of you since my appointment earlier
18 this year, DHS has issued a new addendum to our open-
19 ended RFP for shelter development. Addendum 10
20 requires all shelter proposers to now submit written
21 notification of their intent to operate a facility,
22 not only for the applicable community board, clear
23 and district manager, but also to each of the elected
24 officials representing the district in which the
25 proposed facility is located. The notification

1
2 letter must now provide highly relevant information
3 such as the facility's address, the population the
4 organization intends to serve, for example, families
5 with children, single adults or adult families with
6 no minor children. The proposed capacity of the
7 shelter. The timeframe for occupancy and pertinent
8 background information about the organizations
9 qualifications. Additionally, DHS is also now
10 requiring the provider to offer to meet with the
11 effected community board within 30 days of receipt of
12 the letter to discuss their proposed program.

13 With a new administration a new approach
14 to transparency and better relations with our
15 neighbors, DHS will strive to regularly keep our
16 community leaders and elected officials fully abreast
17 of relevant issues and concerns. While this
18 administration is committed to improving the shelter
19 experience for homeless New Yorkers and expanding
20 opportunities for our clients to obtain permanent
21 housing. The very best outcome for any family would
22 be to prevent homelessness from beginning in the
23 first place. With this in mind, this administration
24 is increasing funding for prevention by \$12 million
25 in fiscal year 2015. These funds include a 50%

1
2 increase in a number of families served by Homebase.
3 That means over 5,000 new families will be able to
4 access homeless prevention services. Based on the
5 program's previous success. 90% of those who've
6 received these prevention services will avoid
7 entering shelter and will remain stably housed in
8 their community. Homebase providers will open at
9 least nine more service center in the highest need
10 communities across the city, making it easier for
11 community members to access services and to be
12 connected to prevention services in their
13 neighborhood. We will also provide enhanced after
14 care services to families exiting shelter and going
15 into public housing or other housing subsidy programs
16 insuring that families will remain stably housed and
17 that they will not re-enter shelter. Homebase will
18 continue to provide an array of services including
19 financial empowerment, employment and training,
20 benefits advocacy and other services that are
21 critical to a family's transition plan.

22 The mayor's budget also allows the city
23 to provide \$1 million in additional anti-eviction
24 legal services, including funds for at risk single
25 individuals. Finally, with these services in place,

1
2 DHS will insure that families in the community know
3 where to go for help by re-launching our highly
4 successful public awareness campaign that generated
5 tens of thousands of contacts in 2012. The campaign
6 will be featured on subways, busses and bus shelters
7 and will also include a public service announcement
8 on local television stations. The administration's
9 package for prevention services and strategies
10 amounts to the greatest increase in Homebase funding
11 since the program began ten years ago and indicates
12 Mayor de Blasio's firm commitment to insuring that
13 prevention programs are available as the city's first
14 line of defense in preventing homelessness and as an
15 essential tool in insuring that families who return
16 to the community do not enter shelter again.

17 When I testified earlier this year, I
18 asked for the council's support to advocate in Albany
19 to remove budgetary language that restricted the
20 city's ability to utilize state funds to provide
21 rental assistance to homeless shelter clients. I am
22 proud to report that Chair Levin joined us at the
23 state capital alongside homeless advocates in the
24 successful effort that resulted in the city having
25 the ability to develop a rental assistance program.

1
2 Today I can share that we are working on
3 a multi-pronged approach to assist families with
4 varying needs to exit shelter. As part of the
5 strategy we are seeking to partner with the state in
6 developing a joint initiative to allow families that
7 are currently in shelter and working full time to be
8 targeted for new working family rental subsidy. The
9 city has proposed to provide a rental subsidy and
10 aftercare to help families transition to community
11 and maintain independent living after the subsidy
12 ends. The city is also exploring ways to achieve
13 shelter savings which we will work with the state to
14 reinvest towards helping families receive permanent
15 housing. We are also looking at how to leverage the
16 Family Eviction Prevention Supplement, FEPS program
17 to prevent more eviction and to help families who end
18 up in shelter.

19 The de Blasio administration is committed
20 to reducing the number of families in homeless
21 shelters and will leverage as many city resources as
22 possible to address this effort. DHS's rental
23 assistance proposals are part of a larger housing
24 strategy that includes Mayor de Blasio's commitment
25 to building or preserving 200,000 units of affordable

1
2 housing over the next ten year. The housing plan
3 includes the commitment to create new supportive
4 housing dedicated to homeless persons. The mayor's
5 housing plan also recognizes the important role that
6 public housing can have in addressing homelessness.
7 As part of this administration's commitment, DHS and
8 the New York City Housing Authority will use
9 resources in a targeted way to help address
10 homelessness. The city will also re-connect families
11 previously eligible for Section 8 to available NYCHA
12 Section 8 project based LLC units, where DHS referred
13 homeless families already, have the highest priority
14 for housing.

15 Homebase will provide after care services
16 to support the families after they move into their
17 apartments. Public housing is a critical resource
18 that will continue to be available to those on the
19 wait list. This is one of the many strategies we are
20 fortunate to be able to access to help homeless
21 families transition from shelter to a home of their
22 won. The city's plan aligns with the national
23 emphasis on using mainstream housing assistance
24 programs as an essential part of achieving the
25 President's goal of the 2010 Federal Strategic Plan

1
2 to End Homelessness. The HUD secretary has strongly
3 encouraged public housing authorities to make special
4 efforts to serve homeless households including
5 establishing limited preferences. Currently 60% of
6 the city's unsheltered population resides in the
7 subway system. But less than 10% of the overall
8 outreach resources or \$800,000 is dedicated to
9 serving this population.

10 In contrast, the city spends over \$10
11 million in outreach services dedicated to individuals
12 living on the streets. As part of our efforts to
13 bridge the gap, DHS is restructuring our funding
14 associated with street outreach services to all 468
15 subway stations. Starting in FY15 and working with
16 the MTA we'll enhance our subway outreach program
17 with the goal of significantly reducing the number of
18 homeless living in the transit system by linking them
19 to housing. The MTA will now fund \$3 million of a \$6
20 million contract for subway outreach services that
21 DHS will manage as part of its portfolio of outreach
22 services. In administering the contract, DHS will
23 implement best practices established through the work
24 with the street homeless population and eliminate any
25

1
2 duplication of services between street and subway
3 teams.

4 DHS's current FY14 expense budget is
5 \$1.047 billion. For next year FY15, the budget will
6 \$953.55 million dollars. Of the \$953.5 million, \$476
7 million are city funds, \$112.7 million are state
8 funds, \$369 million are federal funds, \$4 million are
9 community development grant funding and \$851,000 are
10 intra-city funding. The \$953.5 million budget
11 allocates \$393.8 million to services for single
12 adults. \$497.3 million to services for families.
13 And \$62.4 million to support services.

14 The DHS capital plan for the five year
15 period fiscal year 2014 through fiscal year 2018 is
16 currently \$112 million. Capital projects for
17 homeless families \$39 million. Projects for single
18 adults total \$52 million. \$11 million has been
19 allocated for supportive services. And \$10 million
20 is designated for city council funded projects.

21 The mayor's budget charts a new course.
22 One that invests in better outcomes for homeless
23 households as they achieve independence. Moving
24 forward DHS will embrace opportunities for solutions
25 as we continue to meet our demands for shelter. We

1
2 will be creative and develop higher quality shelters
3 that better target programs throughout our system.
4 We'll reduce our reliance on shelter models that do
5 not encourage supportive environments. We'll work
6 with communities to demystify the work that DHS does
7 as a social service agency. We will change the
8 narrative surrounding the theories and stigma about
9 homelessness. We'll be better neighbors and we will
10 engage our communities and stake holders to leverage
11 support for our work. As part of this
12 administration, it is my goal to redefine homeless
13 services. Because every homeless shelter client
14 deserves better.

15 My staff and I will now answer any
16 questions that you may have.

17 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you
18 Commissioner Taylor and it's very refreshing to hear
19 the new commitments. And I know that it's a tough...,
20 it's a big challenge and a hurdle that you have to
21 cross, but I'm sure that you'll be able to shepherd
22 your way through this with the council.

23 So I wanted to speak very specifically to
24 something from the perspective of the budget and I'm
25 going to ask my unit of appropriation question that

1
2 I've asked all of your colleagues about. Currently
3 DHS's budget only consists of two units of
4 appropriation. One is UA100 and the other one is
5 UA200. Do you feel that breaking down the agency's
6 only two units of appropriation provides an adequate
7 transparency?

8 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Do you want to take
9 that?

10 [Background talk]

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ECKARD: Hello, Lula
12 Eckerd, Deputy Commissioner of Fiscal and
13 Procurement. We believe that the UA200 represents
14 transparency because we have the budget codes and we
15 have our budget codes, then we have sub-object codes
16 and object codes. So, it may..., 100 is the PS budget,
17 so we have it separated by, other than personal
18 services and personal services and we believe that at
19 this point that it represents transparency, but we
20 would be open to conversations on that.

21 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: So I'm really
22 excited by your last part of that answer. So what I
23 was hoping for was no. But I'll work with what you
24 gave me. Understanding that it is a challenge from
25 our perspective. You have your categories and of

1
2 course you have to make your systems work within the
3 agency. From our perspective, we approve a budget
4 based on units of appropriation. And currently we
5 just see these two huge numbers and then have to kind
6 of figure out what they mean. And much of the
7 figuring out is our finance team dealing with your...,
8 it's just a lot of hours and dedication to get a
9 number that could be made transparent early on. So
10 from this committee's perspective, I urge you to
11 speak with OMB to figure out ways where we can have
12 units of appropriation that reflect the programming
13 more effectively from our perspective.

14 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: We will do that
15 Council Member.

16 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: So I'm going to
17 take that last part of your answer. Okay. Currently
18 DHS Homebase budge is within the agency's prevention
19 and aftercare program area. Given how much money is
20 allocated towards this program yearly, would DHS be
21 willing to work with OMB so that the Homebase could
22 have its own unit of appropriation to better
23 understand how funding is allocated in more detail.

24 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Council Member if
25 that was a possibility of course, we'll have that

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2 conversation with OMB. Homelessness prevention
3 efforts are critical at this point in time in order
4 for us to really tackle the very large shelter census
5 that was spoken to in my testimony as well as in the
6 opening remarks by Chair Levin, we have to find a way
7 in which to stem the tide of new shelter entries and
8 using Homebase is one of the ways in which we are
9 trying to make sure that we are vigilant in that
10 effort.

11 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: And I want to talk
12 about, we had just heard from ACS in reference to
13 specifically to foster care. We're trying to grasp
14 the impact of how DHS is coordinating with other city
15 agencies to address the issues of former foster youth
16 ending up in shelters after aging out of the system.

17 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So we're working
18 closely with ACS, we're working with all of our
19 partner agencies. The Health and Human Service
20 Agency to understand how our system is being fed,
21 either by what you just mentioned, children who are
22 aging out of foster care, who are not yet prepared
23 for independent living and then who find themselves
24 entering the shelter system. So there too, we have
25 to find a way in which we can collaborate to identify

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2 who those children are before they exit from foster
3 care status and really target our resources and our
4 efforts to insure that they are exited to permanency
5 that can be long standing. Every effort in that
6 regard is something that we're really hoping to
7 pursue because it's such a critical thing to do for
8 very young people who are now becoming adults and who
9 should not be in shelter.

10 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Agreed. And I
11 think in many ways it probably should be a multi-
12 agency effort where it's ACS and DOE in helping. One
13 thing that I found startling in the Commissioner from
14 ACS's testimony is only tracked for a year. So if
15 that foster care adult, that adult that came from
16 foster care ends up in homeless shelters a year
17 later, you know the system still failed that person
18 even if it just was after twelve months. So we have
19 to do more to wrap ourselves around these children
20 that are often targeted and aren't necessarily...,
21 don't have the support to succeed. So I'm looking
22 forward to hearing more of your coordination with
23 other agencies on this specific effort.

24 I'm going to talk now before I open up
25 the questions to my co-chair. Rental assistance

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2 program for the working homeless. DHS and HRA will
3 work collaboratively with the OTDA to develop a
4 rental assistance program for working families.
5 Funding for this program will total \$80 million over
6 the four years with the city and the state each
7 contributing 50% of the total. This funding is
8 reflected in HRA's budget and total \$6 million in
9 fiscal 2015 and then you have the ramp-up of \$16.5
10 and \$25.9 and \$31.6. So this only..., this raises a
11 flag for me. Why so few dollars in this year?
12 Obviously your reflecting a need, why isn't it equal
13 across the board. What happens to the people that
14 fall within this category, now that we need it right
15 now? This is the fiscal year we're looking at. I am
16 excited to hear about the commitment, but we're in
17 FY15 and it's actually the one that's appropriated
18 the least amount of money. So can you walk me
19 through that because I don't understand?

20 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So I'll start
21 behind the intention in looking at the population of
22 families who are in shelter and who are working. We
23 have some, I would say, almost 25, about 25% of our
24 shelter clients, in which one member of the household
25 is working, right. And we all believe as an agency

1
2 that if a person is in shelter and they're working,
3 whether it be full time or part time, that they are
4 demonstrating some effort to try to exit shelter.
5 And trying to make ends meet. Now, there's always a
6 question of how much money they're earning from their
7 work. But we were able to identify a population of
8 clients who were working full time. One person
9 working at least 35 hours per week. Who could
10 benefit from some assistance? And I would say that
11 this is a place to begin because only a month ago, I
12 think it was a month ago, maybe a little over a month
13 ago, I was here in this chamber and I was testifying
14 before the General Welfare Committee and I was saying
15 that our first step towards approaching rental
16 assistance would be to have language in the state
17 budget modified. That was successfully modified and
18 I thank the council for your assistance and for your
19 participation in that effort and all the advocates
20 who are in the room who help us get to a place so
21 that we could have this discussion. But that being
22 said, you know, the mayor's commitment to rental
23 assistance was reflected by the fact that he put
24 money into the budget for the same. And we had to
25 consider how many people we could subsidize and I

1
2 will say, it's not the largest number, but we are
3 still at a place where we were discussing it with the
4 state to get a sense of how we could have it come to
5 fruition and if we demonstrate some success and
6 perhaps expanded in the future. So it's a graduated
7 figure. What you're referencing in terms of what's
8 in the budget now. But the intention behind it was
9 to get us started in terms of identifying a plan that
10 we could then share with the state and engage them in
11 a dialogue round for a population that we feel
12 deserve it. You know, absolutely deserve any
13 assistance that we can provide them to help them to
14 exit shelters sooner than later.

15 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Right. And you
16 know..., I mean we're in total agreement with you that
17 no family..., everyone wants to exit shelters. When
18 you need them you want to be able to get in because
19 you need them, you need a roof over your head. But
20 expediting a plan to get out of them is also probably
21 what most families and adults would want out of this
22 process. It just concerns me that out of the \$80
23 million, our number is so low when I think there's a
24 lot of people that are eager and listening to this
25 program and understanding that they may be able to

1
2 benefit. That, you know, that we're going to be
3 excluding some families because we didn't put the
4 appropriate amount of dollars behind the concept or
5 initiative or new program, concerns me. So we will
6 keep in touch on this right? Okay.

7 So I'm going to hand it over to my co-
8 chair, Co-Chair Levin.

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you Chair
10 Ferreras. Thank you Commissioner. Welcome back to
11 city hall, to the council chamber for I think your
12 third hearing now with us.

13 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Yes.

14 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Good to see you.
15 So, I wanted to..., I am thrilled to see the efforts
16 that DHS under your leadership have made in the past
17 few weeks in getting these programs in the budget, in
18 the Executive Budget. A framework in place and I
19 think a real..., if we're taking the framework..., taking
20 aside the issues of how much is in which resource and
21 when, the framework, I think is a good one. I hope,
22 knock on wood. And I think has..., lays some of the
23 ground work for success in the future. But what I
24 wanted to do at this point was to just get a sense of
25 how we're..., how exactly this is going to address the

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2 problem that we have and so I'm going to ask for kind
3 of some numbers on how it is all fitting together
4 here. SO how many families came into the shelter
5 system in calendar year 2013? Just as the most
6 recent calendar year, that's why I'm...

7 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: 10,357 families
8 entered shelter in calendar year 2013.

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Some of them were
10 new families, some of them were returning families.

11 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Unduplicated is
12 what I'm being told. Meaning...

13 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Not within the
14 same year.

15 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Mr. Chair, I'm
16 sorry I'm having a hard time hearing.

17 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Can you say the
18 number again.

19 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: The number was
20 10,357 families entered shelter in 2013, calendar
21 year 2013.

22 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So then if we're
23 looking at the issue and we want to figure out how we
24 can get more than 10,357 families either out of the
25 shelter system in a given year or prevent from coming

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2 into the shelter system in the first place. If we're
3 looking at a number to shoot for in terms of how all
4 the programs fit together, if we're looking to reduce
5 the shelter census, which is what we want to do, I
6 think, as a collective goal, everybody wants that.
7 That's kind of... that maybe is a number, say 10,000 is
8 what we could try to shoot for in any given year,
9 right?

10 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So Council Member I
11 can't predict. I can't tell you that there's a hard
12 and fast number that we're targeting. I can't
13 unfortunately tell you that within x date make you a
14 bold promise today that we're going to reduce our
15 shelter centers by x amount. I can tell you that
16 since I have been appointed to this position, there
17 are a few things that have put us in a place so that
18 we can strive to reduce our census. And the few
19 things include one, really thinking about the need
20 for rental assistance and advocating to the state to
21 change what had been a prescription to allow us to
22 pursue it.

23 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right.

24 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Two, thinking about
25 ways in which we could fortify our homelessness

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2 prevention efforts and asking for more funding in
3 order to expand what we know works. Which is the
4 Homebase model for prevention in order to have fewer
5 people enter shelter.

6 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So we're at 50%
7 more in FY15 than we have been in the past, right.

8 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: For Homebase, yes.

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: For Homebase.

10 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: And then thinking
11 about ways in which we can be strategic to get the
12 word out to all of those in the city who may be
13 threatened with any type of housing instability. So
14 that they know where to go. Because I will tell you,
15 as I've told my staff and as I've made mention
16 before, by the time a family packs up all of their
17 belongings and they leave their house in Jamaica,
18 Queens, and you they..., they're either threatened with
19 eviction or they're having to go and get in a car, or
20 get on public transportation, and go all the way to
21 the Bronx with everything that they own and their
22 children and seek to enter shelter. It's a little
23 too late. Because by then, they're there and for all
24 intents and purposes we will conditionally shelter
25 them. So we need to figure out how as a system we

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2 can target that family in their community. How we
3 can do our work using Homebase interventions to
4 insure that such drastic measures don't have to be
5 pursued by families who are crisis. I also will say
6 that it's important to kind of just line up all of
7 the pieces that the mayor has set forth, so there's
8 also the firm commitment that we will be working with
9 NYCHA to pursue public housing as an option for
10 shelter clients. Which was not the case last year.

11 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And for the last
12 eight or nine years.

13 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: And so that also is
14 another demonstration on the part of the
15 administration that we're trying to bring to bear, as
16 many resources as we possibly we can to take on the
17 census and to reduce shelter entries.

18 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right. And I very
19 much appreciate all of that. I want to zero in for a
20 second on the NYCHA option here. Because that is one
21 where it doesn't cost the city dollars in the same
22 way that the others do. So, if we're expanding
23 Homebase at 50%, that comes with a \$12 million price
24 tag. If we're going to be doing a rental subsidy
25 program for vulnerable populations, that's coming

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2 with a \$60 million price tag which we could go into a
3 little bit more and how that's going to be achieved
4 with offsetting the cost.

5 The other program, the Working Families,
6 \$80 million over four years. \$6 million this year.
7 You know, \$12 million some other year. They all come
8 with a price tag. The NYCHA option is one that if we
9 were to get back to the level that we were at
10 during..., you know I mean, Bloomberg was still a
11 Republican, you know, during his first term and
12 Giuliani certainly was. So during Republican
13 mayoralities we had that as a significant resource.
14 In fact, I think that if you look at the numbers in
15 2004 was over 5,000. And then went back down to over
16 3,600, I think, in that last year. So, if we..., that
17 is an option that we have within our arsenal. I know
18 it's not entirely at your discretion. But, certainly
19 it is something that we have heard a lot from
20 advocates. I have spoken to NYCHA resident leaders
21 in my district. They're open to it. They think that
22 it's a positive thing and I think that we can all
23 collectively do our part here. But I think that it
24 is something that we're going to push on and we're
25 going to continue to push on. Because that is a

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2 resource that's within our control and if we could
3 get back to a level that if we're able to do 2,500
4 units per year. You know that's 10,000 units over
5 four year. It really makes a real dent. Because if
6 we're putting all our resources into play, that is
7 one that's a) it's within our discretion and b) it
8 doesn't actually cost the same dollars in the same
9 way the other ones do.

10 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Chair Levin, I will
11 say that the mayor has gone on record by way of his
12 housing plan, by saying that we will be targeting
13 public housing resources for clients and for families
14 who are in shelter. That, as I just mentioned is
15 something that had not been the case in just five
16 short months ago. We've committed to that. I don't
17 have a number. I can't tell you that we're going to
18 get x number of units, by x time. But what I can
19 tell you is that we as a city system, the NYCHA chair
20 and myself, city hall, various players, we have all
21 been talking about this. We have all been sitting
22 down and having meetings that are really meaningful
23 to get us to fulfilling what the mayor has stated
24 would be, are targeting public housing resources for
25 clients who are in shelter. That conversation has

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2 begun. It is ongoing. It is a commitment that we
3 all share and it's something that we will pursue to
4 fruition. So again, it wasn't something that was
5 available, I'd say, five and half months ago, but
6 it's something that we have now committed to pursuing
7 and we're actively working towards determining what
8 that number will be. As soon as we know what it is,
9 and we've heard feedback from all of the players who
10 are interested in forming that decision, related to a
11 specific number. But as soon as we've decided on it.
12 We'll take into consideration all of the feedback
13 that we can get in deciding it, we will let you know.
14 I don't have that number today and I know..., I came
15 here prepared knowing that I'd be asked for a number,
16 but I can tell you definitively that we are at a
17 place where we are working to get that number
18 solidified and to actively move families who are in
19 shelter into public housing units.

20 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. What I
21 would, and you don't have to respond to this. But
22 what I would say is that..., what I will say is that if
23 Giuliani can do 2,500 placements in a year then we
24 can certainly do 2,500 placements in a year.

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2 With regard to the savings that we're
3 looking to achieve in order to initiate a subsidy
4 program for vulnerable populations. It's my
5 understanding that DHS is going to cap the amount per
6 unit for cluster sites. I've heard that number of
7 \$1,500 a unit. I imagine there's going to be some
8 flexibility in that perhaps, because of market forces
9 or what have you. I think that that's a very welcome
10 thing. That's something that we've obviously been
11 advocating for, for a long time. We're very glad
12 that you've decided to do that and send a message
13 across the board that that's going to be the rule.
14 In order to initiate a program, though, you're going
15 to have to put dollars up front. And there are
16 savings that could be achieved on the back end. So
17 how are you calculating, if \$60 million would be
18 great in savings per year, how did you calculate the
19 \$60 million and what do we do if we can't quite get
20 to \$60 million but we're already spending maybe
21 something close to that in a subsidy program?

22 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So at the outset,
23 the reinvestment of the funds, the \$60 million, would
24 be predicated upon the state approving their
25 participation in the rental assistance plan as you

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2 had mentioned, for vulnerable populations. As we're
3 defining vulnerable populations, there are episodic
4 homeless families who have been in shelter on more
5 than one occasion. So there are a few things that we
6 have to consider. In terms of deciding on the
7 number, it was an exercise in which we took the value
8 of \$1,500 across what our full portfolio was of the
9 rent rate for those shelters, those clusters that we
10 were using, that gave us that amount of money. So a
11 part of that is city funds, but the majority of that
12 money is actually state and federal funds. So that
13 was the first step. The second step is really
14 working with our providers and working with the
15 building owners to understand how to operationalize
16 what would be that cut. So, I will share with you a
17 fact that I don't know if many people know. In two-
18 thirds of our clusters, we are sheltering..., two-
19 thirds of all of our clusters, we are sheltering
20 families with children who have household
21 compositions of five or more people. So one of the
22 reasons why we've been using these apartments is
23 because the families that are coming into shelter are
24 large families. And there are many purpose built
25 tier two shelters which is really our preference.

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2 Where there are ample social services that exist, but
3 because of size, family size, it's sometimes hard to
4 find a unit that can accommodate a very, very large
5 family grouping. So we have some families who are in
6 shelter with eight or nine people in a household. So
7 in thinking about a rent reduction for a unit that
8 may be a four bedroom unit. As opposed to a one
9 bedroom unit. There has to be some consideration and
10 thought about, should we be paying more for the four
11 bedroom than we are for the one bedroom because of
12 the size of the unit.

13 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Otherwise you'll
14 have a hard time getting a four bedroom unit.

15 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Which is the
16 reality. Then there's also..., we have to factor in
17 the second part of subsidizing exits for this
18 population. It would not just be subsidizing their
19 rent, but it would also include a robust aftercare
20 service on the back end of their shelter entry and
21 we're contemplating using what's called Critical Time
22 Intervention. Which is a model that we've used in
23 some of our shelters where the intervention begins
24 while the family is still in shelter. So it starts
25 three months before they exit and then continues for

1
2 at least six months after they've been placed into
3 permanent housing. And there is cost associated with
4 having a social service provider deliver that
5 aftercare service. And again, there to, it's not a
6 one-size fits all. So there are families that may
7 have many, many social service needs and they array
8 of social services they we would provide for them may
9 cost more than a family that has a lesser need.
10 Which they could perhaps have an intervention that is
11 not as expensive as the family who has more needs.
12 So we're looking at all of those variables to try to
13 make our best estimate in terms of what will come to
14 fruition with respect to the vulnerable population's
15 rental subsidy but it first begins with the
16 conversation with the state. With the decision
17 around what will the rent rates be. And then we can
18 try to operationalize it in a way that makes sense
19 and that wouldn't undermine or wouldn't subvert the
20 needs of our clients who are in shelter.

21 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Just
22 speaking to the structure of it for a moment. What
23 went into the decision to have both subsidy programs
24 in the HRA as opposed to DHS? The Advantage Program
25 when it existed was a DHS program, correct.

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2 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So do you mean
3 administering the program?

4 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yes administrating
5 the program and budget.

6 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So just
7 structurally, you know the infrastructure in HRA in
8 terms of their mechanisms for payment of a subsidy,
9 are far more robust than ours. Just size and scope
10 we're an agency of 2,000 people.

11 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: That was a
12 concern, honestly, I think with Advantage, right, was
13 that checks weren't always getting cut.

14 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Well I know that we
15 made best efforts.

16 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Absolutely. It
17 was a quick question of resources.

18 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Just in terms of
19 having a partner such as Steve Banks and having HRA
20 want to work with us towards the end of helping us
21 with that administrative process. It's something
22 that makes sense.

23 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Absolutely. Makes
24 the most sense. And that's the same that goes for
25 the legal services..., and no resources are going to be

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2 lost in terms of legal services for homeless
3 families. Correct?

4 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: No they won't. The
5 consolidation of the anti-eviction contracts with HRA
6 will hopefully kind of bring to bear the full wealth
7 of what those services can provide. And I guess by
8 having a single point of contact, you know, there's
9 clarity for all those who may benefit from anti-
10 eviction interventions as to where they should go.
11 We also added \$1.1 million to that portfolio
12 services, so it's larger than it had been before when
13 it was separate in different agencies.

14 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Back to the
15 vulnerable population programs. Just to help me
16 envision the structure of how it's going to ramp-up.
17 In terms of budgeting for it in an FY15 for example,
18 that would..., it would..., the budget would be
19 determined as savings are achieved. How does it
20 work? Or how does it ramp up in terms of how..., we
21 know that it's got to be offset by saving. So how is
22 it then, ramped-up? Just the mechanics of it.

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ECKARD: Currently
24 the funding is in our budget in FY14. So a part of
25 it for FY15 would be that the full \$60 million would

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2 be taken out of the budget at the beginning of the
3 fiscal year. So it wouldn't depend on whether we
4 were saving to that point. The \$60 million would be
5 taken out initially.

6 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. So July 1st
7 it will be taken out and moved over to HRA?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ECKARD: Yes.

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Alright. Sounds
10 good.

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ECKARD: Whatever
12 number that we're going to use.

13 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. I'm down
14 with that. I like that.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ECKARD: Okay.

16 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I'm going to turn
17 it over to my colleagues for questions and I might
18 come back on second round.

19 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you, we've
20 been joined by Council Member Miller. We will have
21 Council Member Gibson, followed by Council Member
22 Lander. I'd just like to remind my colleagues that
23 we'll be on a five minute clock and we'll have a
24 second round of three minutes.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you. Thank
3 you very much Madam Chair and Mr. Chairman and good
4 afternoon Commissioner and Deputy Commissioners.
5 Welcome back again. All was appreciated the chance
6 to speak to you. You know, homelessness services and
7 prevention and this continuous cycle of poverty that
8 many New Yorkers find themselves in is something
9 that's very near and dear to my heart so you know
10 that it's always an issue that I want to talk about.
11 So first I applaud you for the advocacy in getting
12 the prohibitive language removed out of state law.
13 It's a great day to have this opportunity now to come
14 together working with multi-agencies to really come
15 and put forth a plan that really has a realistic
16 understanding of what every day New Yorkers go
17 through and simply does not put stringent rules that
18 simply cannot be met. I look forward to hearing the
19 specific details on the rollout and as far as the
20 cluster scatter site, whatever topic we use. I want
21 to find an opportunity where we come to a cluster
22 scatter site vision zero. Where we no longer have to
23 focus on the number of families that are living in
24 these types of units. Tenants that are living in
25 traditional apartments complain all the time. I've

1
2 never been a fan of them. So I want us to come to a
3 point where we can actually say, we're meeting,
4 getting as close to zero as possible. I do
5 acknowledge and want to make sure that you recognize
6 that with this 50% cut in the cap, 3,000 to 1,500
7 there will be a number of landlords that possibly no
8 longer take in these families. So we have to have an
9 alternative plan especially since you said that these
10 types of units serve large families. I have large
11 families with multiple children. So we have to have
12 a plan of action for where those families would
13 ultimately go.

14 I guess I had a question about how we're
15 working with OTDA. How we're working with ACS in
16 terms of putting together this rental subsidy unit in
17 terms of how the agencies are going to work together.
18 And I also want to bring up, and unfortunately we had
19 a case in the Bronx of a four year old, Juan Sanchez,
20 who allegedly was to have inhaled rat poisoning and
21 subsequently passed away. So, I guess revolving
22 around that and a bigger issue are the conditions
23 within some of these sites. That are not operated by
24 DHS but by a provider. What types of oversight do we
25 have and accountability do they have to you to focus

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2 on quality of life? Because in many of these
3 instances that don't necessarily lead to a fatality,
4 we have people that are reaching out to the agency
5 asking for help and assistance and they're not
6 getting that support at the ground level. So that's
7 one concern.

8 In addition, I am very happy to hear
9 about the increased transparency in terms of what we
10 attempt to call sufficient notification to
11 communities when there is a proposal coming forth. I
12 was never happy at just the notification to the
13 community board because then I had to rely on my CB
14 to notify me as an assembly member, and now as a
15 council member. So there has to be more
16 notification. What we have done in the Bronx is we
17 have suggested that these providers that come to us
18 formulate community advisory boards that can have
19 residents of the community where there is an impact
20 get together each and every month to meet and talk
21 about how we fit this particular project into the
22 community. And since I'm on that same topic, I
23 always have to say that representing the Bronx,
24 representing the Path Center that is the home to all
25 homeless intake in the City of New York. The Bronx

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2 has shouldered a citywide burden. And I have said it
3 many times and I will continue to urge this agency to
4 work with the council, if we are looking to site
5 locations, we have to be fair to communities that
6 have been saturated. My constituents deserve better.
7 They have come to me too often because we shoulder
8 the burden. Next to Council Member Arroyo, I have
9 the most family, adult single, adult women, men, I
10 have everyone. And we have welcomed these sites,
11 sometimes. But we recognize they're here because
12 there's a need. But every community must share in
13 this burden as we are dealing with this crisis. So I
14 guess just a couple of things that I just wanted to
15 focus on. The scatter site. Major problems. Some
16 of the conditions in terms of exterminating and
17 rodent infestation is a major problem and just being
18 able to communicate better with the local communities
19 that are living around us. We recognize that people
20 need help, but we're just trying to do the best we
21 can with some of the resources.

22 One final question that I had. The state
23 match that we're looking to get the \$40 million, is
24 that going to be over four years, four fiscal years
25 in Albany. And if so, what has been the conversation

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2 with the state in terms of getting a commitment to
3 insure that the state will allow us to draw down on
4 those funds?

5 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So... ,

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: I know, you know,
7 I always have a lot to say.

8 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Why don't I start
9 with your last question and then I will back into
10 just a few of the other questions.

11 [Background talk]

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ECKARD: The
13 structure for the working family funding, it will
14 be... , the state has agreed to give \$10 million each
15 year and the city will give \$10 million each year.

16 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Council Member as
17 to the other points that you made, they're all things
18 that we are looking at very closely. You know just
19 to highlight to say very, very briefly, that the
20 death of any child is something that the city takes
21 very seriously. We are members of the Children's
22 Cabinet that I know Commissioner Carrion had
23 testified to. But even separate and apart from that
24 membership, that tragic event led us as a sheltering
25 system to review all of the points that you made in

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2 terms of the quality of our shelter conditions which
3 I had testified to at my first General Welfare
4 Committee hearing in this position, several months
5 ago. And also the social service programming that's
6 available to our clients who are in shelters. So, I
7 have directed a review, a safety and health
8 inspection of all cluster units in our system, all of
9 them. I have asked that that review be done. It's
10 being led by staff within our agency. We're
11 physically going out and inspecting every unit to get
12 a sense of how our families are in the units and to
13 understand that there needs are being attended to and
14 met and the children are safe.

15 With respect to our planning, as we think
16 about, going to what you called vision zero, as to
17 clusters.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Yes, no more
19 clusters.

20 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: A sort of parallel
21 process would require us to bring on more purpose
22 build tier 2 service rich shelters, which is
23 something that we're looking to do, again in a
24 transparent way, with appropriate community
25 notifications. Really thinking about ways in which

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2 we can make sure that we are developing capacity that
3 can replace the apartments that we've had to rely
4 upon for so very long. That's a process that's going
5 to take some time. It is underway. There are very
6 few developments that are actually actively being
7 brought up. Very few tier 2s that are being brought
8 up. I think there are only two in development in the
9 city. So, we've not thought about ways in which we
10 can really reduce our reliance on cluster capacity
11 and at the same time until we shrink our census, make
12 sure that we have the capacity that we need in order
13 to fulfill our mandates pursuant to the right to
14 shelter in New York City. And I will also just
15 finally say, looking at social service delivery
16 across our entire portfolio and what does it mean for
17 there to be social service interventions for our
18 clients who are in shelter is high on my priority
19 list. So I'm really interested in pursuing and
20 developing what I'm calling a model of practice. It
21 does exist in the child welfare world from where I
22 had come. Really wanting to work with our providers,
23 wanting to work with our advocates, wanting to work
24 with our clients and our constituents to get us into
25 what is working and what can we pull together as a

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2 government agency who is tasked with this
3 responsibility to best serve our clients. So that's
4 right up there at the very top and I think that that
5 will also yield significant strides in terms of our
6 efforts as a system to take on the census and to
7 reduce the census which is our goal.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay. I thank
9 you very much and certainly we've been working
10 together in your short tenure and I do appreciate all
11 of the attempts and even by this testimony there is a
12 great concerted effort to make a lot of changes and I
13 appreciate the dialogue and the cooperation and
14 certainly look forward to making a lot of this
15 happen. Because the reality is all the work we've
16 done, we still have a crisis now. Too many families
17 are living in shelters each and every night. So we
18 know that our work is never done, but I appreciate
19 you and your team for the work and certainly will
20 continue to work with you as I get more details on
21 this program.

22 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very
23 much Council Member Gibson. Council Member Lander.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Thank you Mr.
25 Chairman. Commissioner it's good to see you here.

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2 Thank you for your testimony. And I too want to
3 thank you for the new approach you've brought, the
4 energy that you're bringing to the job, the clear
5 commitment that we've got to take these new steps in
6 terms of getting a rental..., that was fast. Getting
7 that rental subsidy back on the table. Getting the
8 priority reestablished for NYCHA in order to drive
9 homelessness down. I appreciate the new Addendum 10.
10 The information in the RFP which was a very big issue
11 in my district last year as Lisa Black knows. And
12 actually I also appreciate that the recent expansion
13 of The Perks of Women Shelter actually was handled in
14 a very smooth and collaborative way with the
15 community. It went very positively.

16 I want to ask a little more and push for
17 some additional details on the plan for placements
18 and I'll follow-up in particular on the NYCHA
19 question. But this really more broadly goes to the
20 question of placements into subsidized housing,
21 permanent housing and the rental subsidy. And I hear
22 you that you guys have offered a good new framework
23 and that it's an early moment in the administration,
24 but I hope you'll appreciate that this is our budget
25 process, this is the one chance that we get to ask

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2 these questions and I am concerned from what I've
3 heard so far that the resource commitment being made
4 is not yet sufficient to the crisis that we face.
5 And this is our window to get it sufficient. We have
6 to by the time we adopt this budget feel that we are
7 going to be bringing resources to solve the
8 homelessness crisis to the table in a manner that's
9 sufficient to solve the crisis. And it's a big one
10 and it's been growing. So you answered to the
11 chair's question that something over 10,000 nearly
12 11,000 families came into shelter last year. How
13 many left? How many were placed and how many were
14 placed into permanent or subsidized housing.

15 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So I can get you
16 that number Council Member. I don't have it readily
17 available, but I will tell you it's something that we
18 track with great frequency. I just..., I also..., I'm
19 glad that you asked that question because I have to
20 acknowledge the efforts of the staff at our agency as
21 well as at our providers because, absent having a
22 subsidy, absent having a rental assistance plan in
23 place. Because I had asked the question when I
24 arrived. There have been a number of families and
25 individuals who have been placed from shelter into

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2 other housing resources. And they've used whatever
3 was available in order to find ways to target exiting
4 shelter for those who could leave. So there's been
5 some, but certainly our entries into shelter still
6 outpace and outnumber our exits from shelter, every
7 week. And it is for that reason that we have to do
8 something that is more substantial.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: So this my
10 question about the target. Because you're right, and
11 I think even at the height of placement into
12 subsidized permanent and rental assistant housing,
13 something like 50% of family placements..., of families
14 leaving shelter were finding places on their own.
15 Now unfortunately, a lot of those are in unstable
16 places and they wind up coming back into shelter.
17 But I guess my question is, what's the target? How
18 many units a year do you think we need to achieve in
19 subsidized, whether that's NYCHA, Section 8 or this
20 new rental subsidy. How many units a year do we
21 need..., what's our target got to be for us to bring
22 down homelessness in New York City.

23 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So are goal is to
24 reduce the shelter census. That's our fundamental
25 goal. I don't have a numeric target to share with

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2 you today. I can tell you and I was just passed a
3 note and this is exactly what I thought the number
4 would be, but I didn't know if off the top of my
5 head. Every week, we're placing outside of shelters,
6 over 100 families with children, every week. We're
7 placing outside of shelter over 100 families.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: So that if it was
9 being extrapolated by 5,000, we have 10,000 families
10 coming in a year, we've got about 5,000 families that
11 we're placing into housing a year.

12 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: The number that I'm
13 being given is 7,800 is the number that I'm being
14 given now.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: From what year,
16 from what time period?

17 [Background talk]

18 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: For one year. For
19 a one year period.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Which one year
21 period.

22 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So in the past
23 year, the numbers that I'm being told, we have placed
24 to housing outside of shelter. There have been 7,800
25 families with children which have exited shelter.

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COUNCL MEMBER LANDER: So it would be real help. Now I've looked in the MMR, the MMR doesn't make it possible for us to find this numbers on singles it does and on families it's hidden. Obviously you didn't make all the decisions about what's being given to us and hidden from us in the MMR. But if you want help turn over that new transparent leaf, we would love to see those numbers. So what I've heard a goal of advocates say, is from past experience, from their analysis, we need 5,000 subsidized placements for families per year in order to achieve the reductions that we want to see and drive homelessness down. I understand, you know, that you're not ready to commit to a number today, but if we're going to really evaluate obviously overtime what we're going to see is whether homelessness goes down. But we've got to have a target for how many subsidized units we're seeking to achieve.

COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So I want to be clear. These are not all subsidized exits.

COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: I understand. Almost none of those are subsidized exits.

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2 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: I just wanted to be
3 clear and not have it be out there that I was saying
4 these were all subsidized, that is not the case.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: No I appreciate
6 that. None of those were subsidized. What I'm
7 asking for is a target. You know, I've heard from
8 advocates the target of 5,000. I've looked back at
9 the numbers of what we were placing into both NYCHA
10 and Section and Advantage back in the day, just the
11 NYCHA units were at 2,500 or 3,000 on average that
12 got as high as 6,000. Advantage was far higher. The
13 numbers that have been floated so far, both for the
14 rental subsidy program and for NYCHA placements. And
15 I know some of this is rumor and innuendo, but in the
16 absence of the numbers you'll give us it's hard for
17 us to know, have been far lower than that on the
18 order of 500 a year and I just..., we've got... this is
19 our budget process and I understand you need the time
20 to develop your homelessness plan. But I guess I
21 believe that we do need something like, to the
22 targets, got to be something like 5,000 a year and if
23 NYCHA placements are all we have right now, without
24 the rental subsidy program. Then in my mind it would
25 have to be at least half of those or maybe 2,500

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2 units of NYCHA placements. Conveniently that's about
3 a third of NYCHA vacancies. And back in the day when
4 Mayors Dinkins, Giuliani, I've got a mental block on
5 it, I apologize, and first term Bloomberg were using
6 public housing. About a third of NYCHA vacancies
7 were going for families coming out of the shelter
8 system. SO that's the order of magnitude that I
9 think we should be aiming for and I hear you're not
10 ready to commit today, but we'd like to understand
11 how we're going to get where we need to get.

12 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: I would love if I
13 were able to tell you hard and fast numbers. But I
14 don't want to tell you information that is not
15 accurate. I can tell you this. More is better than
16 less in terms of everything that you delineated.
17 More NYCHA units, more Section 8 vouchers, more
18 rental assistance. It's better to have more than it
19 is to have less in terms of us approaching this and
20 my goal is to get as much as we can possibly get.
21 You know, I wanted to really begin the foundational
22 work over the past four months since I've been in
23 this seat to really think about, well what do I have
24 to undo in order for us to have access to NYCHA? In
25 order for us to be able to reinvest state funds to a

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2 rental assistance plan. Like what foundational
3 structure could I put in place and then build upon to
4 get me to a place to where I can come back to this
5 council and say our target is x. And our target is x
6 because we've been able to reinstate a priority for
7 NYCHA housing and we've been able to move families
8 from shelter. Not just talk about it prospectively
9 but actually do it. I welcome the day when I can
10 come back to you sooner than later hopefully. When I
11 can come back and say we have exited x number of
12 families to NYCHA.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: And I really
14 appreciate that. And I hope so. My impatience is
15 that we've been waiting so long to have an
16 administration we could work with to drive
17 homelessness down. So you've done a nice job in your
18 first few months. And I'm not..., I'm eager for us to
19 work to get there.

20 My last comment that I'll make, is of the
21 three resources that we've been discussing, that you
22 just described. You know, Section 8, boy we need
23 more, but getting more from Washington is, you know,
24 I think, requires bigger change. I'm glad that
25 you're pushing the city and state resources for the

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2 rental subsidy program and we need to keep pushing
3 and try to get more obviously, more dollars is hard
4 to come by. The public housing units in particular
5 therefore for this year in my opinion are our first
6 best bet because they don't cost us more money,
7 that's to resource those 7,500 or 8,000 NYCHA
8 vacancies a year. And I do hope that through this
9 budget process we can achieve more of them to
10 confront this crisis and get families out of
11 homelessness. I appreciate your time and the work
12 that you've done so far. Thank you. Mr. Chair.

13 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you Council
14 Member Lander. I want to acknowledge Council Member
15 Chaim Deutsch and next we'll hear from Council Member
16 Elizabeth Crowley.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: That you to our
18 Chairs. Good afternoon Commissioner. You said just
19 minutes ago, more is better than less. And I agree
20 that permanent housing is better and less need for
21 shelter beds is best. It's difficult to understand
22 you numbers because I've heard a few sets of them. I
23 heard that in 2013, 10,357 people or families, I'm
24 not sure?

25 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Families.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Families. And
3 that was two years ago. Things may have changed.
4 Have you seen any change since two years ago? Two
5 fiscal years ago, anyway. Is that calendar year?

6 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: It was calendar
7 year 2013.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Have you seen a
9 difference so far in the first couple of months of
10 this year?

11 [Background talk]

12 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Hold on, I need to
13 see.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Is there any
15 indication that these numbers are declining.

16 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: I..., no...

17 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: It doesn't look
18 like it.

19 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: No. The numbers
20 are flat. For all intents and purposes, the numbers
21 are flat.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: It looks like...,
23 I think that you have a progressive council here in
24 the city for the first time that could work with a
25 progressive mayor to bring down the need for shelter

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2 beds and to get families into permanent housing. No
3 family wants to live in a homeless shelter. In you
4 testimony you said there are a significant number of
5 people living in our subway system, because they do
6 not want to live in the shelter system. You have
7 \$120 million in your capital budget to be spent over
8 the next four fiscal years. Can you tell me how much
9 of that is for new shelter beds or how much of that
10 is to help improve the conditions in the shelters you
11 currently have.

12 [Background talk]

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: In the
14 capital budget, it's mainly for city owned buildings
15 and we are doing work in those buildings. The new...,
16 bringing on new shelters would be in our expense
17 budget and..., I would have to get back to you with the
18 number.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Your expense
20 budget, you're looking to spend \$50 million less than
21 you spent last year. However, this year you're in
22 line to spent \$150 million that we agreed upon
23 spending last year in our fiscal budget. Your
24 department is in line to spend over \$1.05 billion and
25 last year, when we agreed to a budget I understand

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2 half your year was spent in the Bloomberg
3 administration but it seems like the spending is not
4 line with the estimates. I agree that, you know,
5 we've got to do whatever we can to get this voucher
6 system serving as many families as possible. But
7 it's frustrating being here today, looking at the
8 amount of money you need to run your agency, when we
9 don't even know how much money, be it in HRA, or in
10 DHS, that will serve families. You know, \$60
11 million, \$80 million, be it for the worker family
12 service assistance, or rental assistance program, I
13 like Council Member Brad Lander, believe that you
14 need to put a number on the need. You need 5,000
15 vouchers to make a difference. Then we have to go to
16 Albany and get enough money to pay for the 5,000
17 vouchers. We need to be putting a plan together to
18 not build more shelter beds, but put families in
19 permanent housing and this is the best way. It seems
20 like four years ago when the Bloomberg administration
21 was spending a significant amount of money on the
22 voucher program, there was a significant..., there was
23 significantly less families living in shelters.

24 At the height of that Advantage Program,
25 how many families were benefiting from the vouchers?

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2 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: At the height of
3 Advantage?

4 [Background talk]

5 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: 5,000 families per
6 year.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: And the state
8 said we could spend money on this program. Something
9 similar to it. We've already gotten the approval
10 that we needed from the state.

11 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So Council Member,
12 as I testified to, we just that approval in April.
13 With that approval in place, now we are in a
14 position..., we're at a place to begin discussion with
15 the state about size and scope, right. And to your
16 point, if we were able to reduce our shelter census,
17 we would need fewer shelter beds. We would need
18 fewer units. Unfortunately, not having access to the
19 tools that I've delineated as part of testimony. So
20 not having full and complete access to a rental
21 assistance plan that's up and running and being
22 delivered to clients in shelter, puts us in a
23 position where we are still predicting what the need
24 for shelter would be.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: How much do you
3 believe that 5,000 family voucher system would cost?
4 What did it cost at the end of the Bloomberg run of
5 the Advantage Program?

6 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So the value of
7 Advantage at the end of..., when it ended?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: When it was
9 serving at its height. The 5,000 families that it
10 served.

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: The value
12 was approximately \$210 million.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: And your rental
14 assistance you asked for fiscal year 2015 is what?

15 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So the place holder
16 in the Executive Budget for the Working Families plan
17 is...

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: It is \$60.1
19 million in the expense budget. With the vulnerable
20 families and with working with the state, we're
21 hoping that there will be an additional \$20 million
22 for working families per year.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: It seems like
24 it's only 20% or less than what the Bloomberg
25 assistance program was.

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2 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So it is less than
3 what the Advantage Program had been funded at.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: But it's a
5 fraction.

6 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: It is less, you're
7 correct.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Significantly
9 less. I think I heard the Deputy Commissioner say
10 \$290 million. How much was it at the height of the
11 Bloomberg Advantage program?

12 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: \$210 million. Which
13 is more than what we've put in our budget.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: So it looks like
15 your only aiming to do about 35% to 40% of what that
16 Advantage Program was.

17 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So again Council
18 Member it's..., right now we don't have a rental
19 assistance..., as we sit here a speak right this
20 second, we don't have a rental assistance plan in
21 place. We are actively working to negotiate with the
22 state and to work with the state to get us a place
23 where we can pursue rental assistance plans that
24 we've described as well as all of the other tools
25 that we're looking to put in our chest.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: I understand
3 that. Earlier the chair said failure is
4 unacceptable. So if we meet again next year and
5 there are more families in the shelter system, we did
6 not meet the needs. And we know that it seems if
7 history repeats itself, if more families are coming
8 are coming into the system than are exiting and a
9 voucher plan that only helps a fraction is not the
10 voucher plan that the city needs. We need to be
11 working together with the state to ask for the real
12 amount of money that will serve the families that
13 need the help.

14 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: And the voucher is
15 not the only part of the plan.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: I get that. But
17 it's a big part of the plan. Thank you.

18 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Thank you.

19 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you Council
20 Member Crowley. Next we have Council Member Helen
21 Rosenthal.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you.
23 Commissioner, I... this is a laudable plan. So thank
24 you for bringing it in. It's ambitious. And I wish
25 us all well in getting it done. I want to talk

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2 specifically about the \$1,500 cap for monthly
3 reimbursements and I understand that's an average.
4 But, for SROs in particular.

5 [Background talk]

6 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So, just
7 focusing in, not on the cluster sites, not on Tier 1
8 but just for the SRO rental buildings. If we could
9 just focus in on those.

10 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So are you asking
11 Council Member what the value is of those cuts, or
12 just generally...

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I'm just
14 setting the stage saying that that's all I want to
15 talk about. I don't want to talk about the other
16 ones. I really just want to focus on the SROs for a
17 moment. Only because that's what's in my district.
18 So do you have a sense..., if we're going to say on
19 average, the \$1,500 talking about the SROs, would it
20 be fair to say that that rent would have to cover
21 that amount, sorry, would have to cover rent,
22 security and the social services? Although security
23 might be negotiated separately, but the social
24 services and the rent piece.

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2 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So the social
3 service piece was actually pulled out from the \$1,500
4 number. The \$1,500 number was solely rent. And we
5 had excluded from the equation. We did not..., we
6 would not decrease social services across any of our
7 portfolio knowing that it's so important in order to
8 help our families and individual who are in shelter
9 to overcome the barriers that they have to shelter.
10 So that being said, the \$1,500 number was the rent
11 portion of the expenses relating to providing
12 shelter. To you question Council Member, security
13 could be included in that number, or it could be
14 separate from that number. And, you know, as we've
15 engaged upon this dialogue with our providers, we've
16 come to find that some have it as part of that number
17 and some have it as a separate expense item.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Alright. So
19 that makes it hard to..., makes it a little bit harder
20 to understand what we're doing here. I mean, in the
21 sense that I have a landlord who's getting \$3,700 per
22 month for social services and for the rent. I don't
23 know how to make sense of the \$1,500 cap. So which
24 component..., so you're going to keep social services
25 at the same level. It's just hard to pull out what

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2 the impact of that would be on these particular
3 landlords, on the Upper West Side. Just, perhaps we
4 could follow-up in particular..., your Deputy
5 Commissioner said she'd be happy to meet with me
6 separately and maybe we can follow-up on
7 understanding how that will impact the sites in my
8 district. I'm wondering, does that mean, for
9 example, do you have to open up contracts that
10 currently exist and would you be planning to do that?

11 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So I don't know if
12 I fully understand the question, Council Member.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So, if you're
14 currently paying a certain amount of money for rent
15 in your contracts, and now you want to limit the
16 amount of money you're paying for rent, would that
17 mean you would have to open up contracts that you
18 currently have? Right, because you want to get to
19 the point where you're achieving the \$60 million in
20 savings.

21 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So we would modify
22 the contracts in order to reduce the rent portion of
23 the contracts. So the way that it's written, it
24 does, you know it does have a clause in it, that
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2 would allow us to revisit the amount of funding for
3 the contact voucher.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Can I find out
5 for my district, and I guess citywide, other people
6 would want to know this, which contracts you're
7 contemplating modifying?

8 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So once we've
9 decided and we know exactly which contracts would be
10 affected, you know that's information that, you know,
11 we can share.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: That would be
13 great.

14 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: But right now we're
15 still in the process of actually making that
16 decision.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Of course.
18 I'd appreciate that. And then, are you..., have you
19 committed to not contracting with any more SRO
20 landlords than you currently do?

21 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: No, not that I
22 know. I mean, just to frame it. We still have a
23 demand for shelter. Right. We still have a demand
24 for shelter for individuals, for adult families that
25 don't have minor children, for families with

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2 children. We have to be responsive to that. That
3 demand for shelter and you know, we have to meet our
4 responsibilities and our mandate pursuant to the Rent
5 a Shelter in New York. So I cannot say that I'm not
6 going..

7 [Interpose]

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Not the answer
9 I wanted but I total get it. I'm going to move on,
10 only because I have 44 seconds. I apologize. I hear
11 your answer.

12 I'm concerned about the increased funding
13 for shelters for security, specifically. I mean I
14 sort of look at that, and again thinking about the
15 SRO contracts in my district and how much money we
16 pay for security. I would much rather have a
17 mindset.., I would much rather see a mindset on your
18 part, where you're adding money for caseworkers and
19 not security. In the shelter that I've been working
20 on very closely with, Lisa Black, who is helping me
21 get more concrete information about what's going on
22 there. But, you know, while the community is really
23 concerned about security and one might take the next
24 step and say, oh, we need more security there. Once
25 you start going into the weeds of what's going on in

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2 this shelter, in particular, what we really need is
3 better outcomes for the people who are there. And
4 that takes caseworkers, not more security. So I'm
5 wondering if..., what made you decide, I know it's a
6 longer issue and I need to wrap up. But I'm really
7 concerned that the funding need that you're
8 addressing here is security and that you're not
9 adding another, you know, \$8 million or, I see here
10 is \$2.7 million toward contract and shelter security.
11 If any of that money is going to my district, I would
12 ask that you instead put the money into caseworkers,
13 because providing the service would yield a better
14 outcome than just..., it's sort of like treating the
15 wound with a band-aide, versus trying to get in there
16 and actually solve the problem.

17 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So Council Member,
18 I would say, I totally agree with you in terms of the
19 need for social service programming to be as robust
20 as it can be across our shelter system and as I had
21 made reference to Council Member Gibson in her
22 questions, it's one of my top priorities. The
23 allocation of resources for the additional security,
24 is being targeted for shelter sites where we felt
25 there was a need for the same. I'm equally as

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2 committed to insuring the safety of all of our
3 clients, insuring the safety of all of our staff and
4 wanting to really make sure that security presence is
5 available. You know, we have access points of entry
6 where folks come into our shelters and just making
7 sure that we are responsible as a sheltering system
8 and security is one of the components that would keep
9 us responsible.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yes, it's
11 frustrating. Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you Council
13 Member Rosenthal. Council Member Williams.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you.
15 Good afternoon Mr. Chair, Mr. Commissioner. You're
16 probably very surprised but I have one project in
17 mind that I'd like to talk to you about. Shocked and
18 amazed.

19 [Laughing]

20 COUNCL MEMBER WILLIAMS: So first, I just
21 want to make sure we are clear in what we are talking
22 about. This is..., will be a wind shelter. Over here
23 actually on Glennon Road, some manufacturing but
24 there is..., so we're aware, there's going to be no
25 manufacturing entity that will have 600 to 700 people

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2 on it, 24 hours a day. Over here we have 156 units.
3 One or two family homes. And right here we have 198
4 units. Now that's where it is and there are where
5 the homes are. And my contention has been and always
6 will be that 200 units of anything, whether it's
7 affordable housing or whether it's an apartment
8 building. It's just too large and dense for this
9 space, even if you include the manufacturing, because
10 there is nothing there that will be as massive in
11 terms of density except for this wind shelter. And
12 obviously, we've spoken about it before, I'd wished
13 in our talks we could have gotten a little further.
14 It was put together under the past administration. I
15 think they did a terrible job in siting it. My hope
16 was that this administration might be able to fix
17 some of the problems and while we're negotiating the
18 building went up and my hope is that we can repurpose
19 some of the units. My question is there any way that
20 you gauge the density around a shelter before you
21 site it or in your mind any amount of units are good
22 to put any place in the city.

23 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So we certainly do
24 consider the zoning ordinances and we consider the
25 demographics of the area in which were siting

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2 shelter, Council Member. You know, as you stated
3 this is a project that began in 2010 and at the time
4 I know there was a real thinking that there was a
5 need then and there is a need now for capacity that
6 can shelter families of minor children. What I've
7 been referencing throughout my testimony is a purpose
8 built capacity that would allow us to reduce our
9 reliance on cluster units and on service models that
10 don't have as robust social services as this project
11 will have. I know that you and I have spoken and
12 you've spoken with other members of my staff before I
13 was appointed to this position and since. And we are
14 at a place where, you know, I can tell you today,
15 Council Member Williams that there is a definite
16 need. A real need for us to have shelter units
17 available for families with children who continue to
18 come into our system. I look at the numbers every
19 day. And I'm struck by the level of need and I have
20 to be committed, as I kept saying throughout my
21 testimony to make sure that we meet the demands to
22 shelter in New York City and...

23 [Interpose]

24 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: I'm on a time
25 limit I'm sorry. I agree 100%. We have a need.

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2 There is a housing shortage, there is a homeless
3 emergency, and I actually welcome the homeless
4 services in the district. So it's not about the need
5 and it's not about whether we need it or not. It's
6 about how we site it. And I think about this
7 globally, even as the mayor is going to be up-zoning
8 places and if we don't do these things in context
9 with the community, then we have a problem. So there
10 could have been discussions about where else we can
11 site other places. Do you think that siting this at
12 this location with 200 units, it started at 180, is
13 going up to 198, is that the type of siting the
14 department is going to do in the future?

15 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So we are looking
16 at..., well the first task that we took on as an
17 administration was really to expand transparency
18 associated with siting, which is why we made the
19 amendment to Addendum 10, as I had begun my testimony
20 by speaking to. So that we can have these
21 conversations as soon as possible. To answer your
22 question very directly, we have to consider what is
23 the kind of size and scope of the proposed facility
24 and how does it fit within the community in which
25 it's being proposed. As well as the population

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2 that's going to be sheltered in that facility. With
3 respect to this location, because it is so far along,
4 we want to work with you in terms of having it be
5 more community facing. We can have a conversation
6 about the populations being sheltered at the site.
7 And whether there will be some opportunity to perhaps
8 diversify amongst the family with children portfolio
9 who's there, so we have families with children have
10 household members and parents who are up in age, who
11 are older, right. And we had talked about this in
12 terms of perhaps identifying some units for older
13 clients to be placed in addition to the other
14 households that would be placed at the site. We're
15 also very, very invested and committed in community
16 based placements, so to the extent that there are
17 families that may emanate or come into shelter from
18 your district, we would want to certainly target
19 their placement at this shelter in order to keep them
20 connected to their community in order to make sure
21 that the children who are in those families can
22 attend the same schools that they had been attending.
23 And in order to make sure that any community
24 resources that can be used and brought to bear to
25 help those families who are coming into shelter, will

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2 help them to exit. So, we want to have a
3 conversation about, you know, how do we really
4 maximize the use of all of our shelters and how do we
5 insure that they're serving the needs of our clients
6 with you and will all of the community stakeholders
7 who would be effected by this new building.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: So just in my
9 last few seconds, one, just so we're clear, it's not
10 about the type of people that you are putting in
11 there, so it's not about whether the homeless or what
12 have you. It's about the density, it could have been
13 a department building. It's just too dense there and
14 so, when we had started talking, something that
15 frustrated me as well, was the building wasn't up and
16 I withheld a lot of things that I would have done
17 because we were talking. Now the building is up and
18 I'm being told because the building is up, there's
19 nothing we can do. I don't think that's a good way
20 to have the conversations. I want to make sure we're
21 talking in good faith and all the units haven't been
22 purposed inside of the building. And my hope is
23 still that we can repurpose it. Obviously you have a
24 letter about some other things, infrastructure wise
25 that we will have. There's a letter that I'll be

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2 presenting you from the Flatlands Flatbush Civic
3 Association. There are some things here that I agree
4 with, some I don't. But it is from the community.
5 And of course we had a protest and we're going to
6 have a silent one now. So I'm going to ask the
7 people who were here, some of the people who took
8 their time off of work, on very short notice and the
9 only thing that we want to ask you, is that during
10 these negotiations to not turn your back on us when
11 we're having the discussion. Please, because we have
12 to do this in conjunction with the community. Thank
13 you very much.

14 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you very
15 much Commissioner. Chair Levin wanted to have some
16 wrap-up questions for you. Oh, Council Member Miller
17 actually. And then followed by Council Member Levin.
18 Sorry Council Member.

19 COUNCL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you Madam
20 Chair. Good afternoon Commissioner. Thank you for
21 being here and sharing in such a transparent way. We
22 really appreciate it and one, to kind of piggyback on
23 what Council Member Williams had talked about. I
24 represent a district in South East Queens, in
25 particular Community Board 12 that has 12 of the 17

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2 shelters in the borough, in my district and wanted to
3 talk about the resource support for those transient
4 shelter people that are within the district, and
5 whether it's the schools and other infrastructure and
6 resources that are being used, as it applies to
7 budget. Number one.

8 Two, I kind of want to speak to those who
9 are delivering the services and which means the
10 overview of staff considering the amount of people
11 who are actually employed by..., directly or indirectly
12 to the agency. And most particularly I'd like to
13 talk about the contract. Considering that there are
14 a number of contracts, I believe 538 contracts, that
15 are out and who's delivering these services.

16 Obviously there's some question about the services
17 being delivered particularly within my community and
18 district that I represent and speak to oversight.
19 Before you begin to answer, I just wanted to talk
20 about a few locations that exist that have basically
21 taken most of the affordable housing and rent
22 stabilized apartments off of the market and, which is
23 not bad, but it's kind of creating another quagmire
24 with those who are looking for housing, but also is
25 kind of lending itself to these landlords who are not

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2 necessarily good neighbors and have I've gone in and
3 toured, and the conditions that these apartments are
4 in are an abomination. And so whoever is responsible
5 for that has been irresponsible and so I would like
6 to see certainly more oversight as we move forward.
7 But I would really like to take a look at these
8 contracts and make sure that they're doing what they
9 are supposed to do, because that's a lot of money and
10 they should be employing people that really care
11 about those clients. And so, if you could speak to
12 any of that, I'd appreciate it.

13 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So Council Member,
14 I'll begin by telling you that I share your interest
15 in wanting to insure that the services that we're
16 delivering to clients who are in shelter are as
17 comprehensive and as, I'm going to use the word
18 tailored to their specific and individual needs. It
19 goes to what I had testified to earlier about wanting
20 to pursue a model of practice in which we could bring
21 to the shelter system here in New York City. Where
22 we could perhaps use interventions that have
23 demonstrated success in terms of helping those who
24 are in shelter to exit shelter. TO overcome whatever
25 barriers they have that keep them in shelter. I know

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2 we have a number of providers who have had some real
3 success in working with our families who are in
4 shelter and I know that our staff, we have a lot of
5 knowledge within the agency of, and an understanding
6 of what should be part of that model of practice.
7 And we want to make sure that we're delivering that
8 sooner than later, to all of the locations in your
9 district and all the locations in the City of New
10 York. As it pertains to deciding who we'll be in
11 business with as it pertains, if I got your question
12 correct, in terms of selecting providers and really
13 monitoring the quality intervention and service of
14 our providers. So, right now, our focus is on
15 placements. The agency has focused on the success of
16 our providers to effectively place clients from
17 shelter into permanent housing. And while that's one
18 measure of success that I think is of great value,
19 there are other measures of success that we can also
20 have as part of the equation. And those measures can
21 include, like what has the qualitative impact of our
22 intervention on life of this person been? Have we
23 been able to reduce trauma? I've talked about his
24 before in terms of clients who come into shelters as
25 traumatic. If you don't have a place to live and you

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2 have to rely upon the government to house you for a
3 temporary period of time, how are we able to actually
4 affect and have an impact on the life of the client
5 and children who are in those households to make sure
6 that we're reducing the trauma effects of being in
7 shelter as much as we possibly can. And how are we
8 able also to connect our families and our individuals
9 who are in shelter to community, right. And so I say
10 everyone comes from a community, so we have to start
11 there. And that means, how do we leverage what
12 community resources are out there and how do we
13 insure that the linkages that our providers have with
14 those community resources make a difference in the
15 life of clients who are in shelters.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: And that is
17 probably it. The biggest emphasis is that the
18 transition and impact on community, but also that
19 those agencies responsible for those services have a
20 relationship with the community. That the community
21 can really have an impact and not just what comes in,
22 but, you know, how the services are delivered and how
23 they ultimately impact..., interact with the
24 communities themselves has been a major issue. And
25 we're looking for some agency oversight to insure

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2 that communities have a say so in doing so. Because
3 we want to make sure that often times that the client
4 are from the community, but they're getting, what we
5 collectively as tax payers are paying for.

6 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So it's a value and
7 a priority that I bring to the work..., that the
8 leadership of the agency brings to the work, in terms
9 of really wanting to make sure that our efforts are
10 supported by the communities in which our clients
11 come from, are being sheltered in and ultimately will
12 live in beyond their shelter stay.

13 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you Council
14 Member Miller and again we're going to have Council
15 Member Deutsch followed by Chair. I just want to
16 acknowledge Commissioner that it is now 4:20 and
17 you've been here well past the scheduled time, so I
18 appreciate you staying and answering our members'
19 questions. Council Member Deutsch.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Thank you very
21 much Chair. I'll be very brief because we're running
22 late. First of all I'm looking forward to working
23 with you in regard to the betterment of the entire
24 City of New York on homelessness. When a homeless
25 person is out in the street, people call 911, they

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2 call 311 or they may call Common Grounds. And most
3 of the time there's really nothing that you can do if
4 a homeless person refuses to go to a hospital or to a
5 shelter. So what happens is, they're moved from one
6 location to the next location and then they come back
7 to the first location. So what I have is a
8 recommendation. You're four months into office since
9 January. I think you came in a little before
10 January. You were appointed, I think, December, end
11 of December.

12 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: December 31st. But
13 I started January 13th.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Yes. I'm more
15 than you are. My recommendation is, is that when you
16 have..., when the police department has initiatives on
17 drug deals, they put in decoys. They may put them
18 into buildings, they may put them into different
19 corner locations. But my question is..., my
20 recommendation is actually is if we could have
21 homeless decoys in the future. This way they could
22 spend time out with the homeless and then after a
23 while they can convince them that it's better for
24 your safety and for your health, to go to a shelter
25 or to a hospital. Because most of the time when you

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2 go down and speak to them, they want to be out on the
3 street. And when you send social workers out there,
4 they still refuse. So sometimes it takes a little
5 more time before they're convinced to go into a
6 better place. So the decoys, we use it for
7 everything else, many city agencies have decoys and
8 different initiatives. So this is something that I
9 feel very strong about. To have homeless decoys, I
10 would volunteer for a couple of weeks. And, I think
11 that at the end of the day, we'll get results. Thank
12 you so much.

13 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So thank you for
14 that recommendation Council Member. I just want to
15 briefly respond by saying that our homeless outreach
16 efforts are supported by staff who try to do what you
17 just described and you know, they're first efforts
18 are to really work with clients who street homeless
19 and to try to have them come into shelter. If not
20 into a regular single program shelter, then certainly
21 into a Safe Haven shelter so that we can engage them
22 more and build that rapport that you were describing
23 in order to have them come in and off of the street.
24 So if any..., we'll welcome recommendations and all
25 feedback that everyone has with respect to how we can

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2 continue our work. But we have a model of practice
3 on the outreach side that has been pretty successful.
4 And that we would welcome, giving you a tour of. Or
5 letting you see, if you wanted to, to see it in
6 action.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Well I have
8 three locations as of now, I have three locations
9 where I have homeless people sleeping out and 911 was
10 called, 311 was called, Common Ground was called and
11 there still at the same location. So how do I get
12 the people to come out to do this type of outreach,
13 because this is happening every day? Tomorrow, which
14 is..., tomorrow we have the police department coming
15 back to one location, last week, the sanitation and
16 the police department responded to a second location
17 and the homeless, they keep on coming back to these
18 street corners and they refuse to go to shelters. So
19 how do I get someone from your agency to come out
20 there and work on these three locations? Who do I
21 call?

22 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So I have the
23 experts in the room with me. I have our leads for
24 homeless outreach who are actually seated in the
25 audience and I can connect you with them today, as

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2 soon this hearing is concluded. But continuous
3 engagement with the client, to try to have them come
4 in, is what we really focus on and Jody Ruden
5 (phonetic) and Iris Rodriguez who are both in the
6 audience, Associate and Assistant Commissioner over
7 Outreach can really have a conversation with you
8 about how we can connect to serve these clients.

9 COUNCL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Great. Thank you
10 so much. Greatly appreciated.

11 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you Council
12 Member Deutsch. Commissioner, I just have a couple
13 of questions and then we'll wrap up here.

14 I wanted to ask specifically, this has
15 come up at prior hearings and we've had conversations
16 about it but, I've heard from providers of Tier 2
17 shelters about issue around their capital needs, over
18 the past year or so. The issue being that, with the
19 family shelter being as large as it is..., the family
20 shelter population being as large as it is and the
21 number of vacancies being as low as they are, there's
22 not a lot of time to do, just basic maintenance, to a
23 unit, before it has to get turned over. The span of
24 time is 12 hours or 24 hours. And that's just not
25 enough time to do enough work to keep maintenance

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2 going and that it gets exacerbated over time and
3 we're looking at significant capital, and in addition
4 to that, providers have had a hard time getting their
5 capital needs approved or reflected in the DHS
6 capital budget. And so I was wondering if you might
7 be able to speak to that because obviously our
8 providers are an essential partner in providing
9 quality service to our constituents, or clients, and
10 without their ability to maintain their programs,
11 their facilities, it puts all of us in a bad
12 position. So can you speak a little bit to that and
13 how you've been able to address it differently from
14 before you arrived.

15 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So I can, Chair, I
16 will say that your point is well made and completely
17 accurate, in that our provider network, they're how
18 we do this work. The vast majority of our shelters
19 are contracted out to private providers and hearing
20 from them what their needs are with respect to making
21 sure that they can provide high quality, safe,
22 shelter is something that we're very committed to
23 doing and to inspecting. Umm, you had raised the
24 question the last time that I had testified and I did
25 ask my leadership to go back and let me know, at what

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2 level of investment are we providing for them.
3 Financial and other investments. And I know that we
4 did get that number in terms of what the annual
5 maintenance funding is for our provider network.
6 I'll turn it over to my Deputy to talk about it.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: We fund
8 providers on one level, directly through their annual
9 review budgets. And indirectly for those providers
10 who are in city owned buildings, we have our capital
11 budget for those. For the providers that we serve
12 directly in their other than personnel maintenance
13 budget, our annual amount is \$16.2 million. For
14 those, the capital work for FY14 for families its \$8
15 million.

16 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: FY14 or FY15?

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: FY14 is \$8
18 million. For FY15 it's \$18.5 million.

19 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay so it's been
20 increased.

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: Yes. And in
22 addition to that we are also working with OMB to look
23 at, for some our smaller shelters, ways that we can
24 do repairs to those buildings also. So we're working
25 on getting other solutions to some of the issues.

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2 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: That \$18 million,
3 that's for capital..., DHS capital budget for DHS owned
4 buildings...

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: City-owned
6 family buildings.

7 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right. So, now
8 what percentage of family buildings are city owned?
9 Do we know? Versus privately owned.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: I'm not
11 certain about that number. Probably about..., it's a
12 smaller percentage, about 20%.

13 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So for those, if
14 the majority of providers are not in city-owned
15 facilities can't have capital repairs reflected in
16 the DHS capital budget but are just reflected in
17 their contracted maintenance budget. Then how do
18 they get, because I'm sure that a lot of them are
19 facing..., because they get so much use obviously, you
20 know a backlog of..., something goes from being a
21 maintenance problem to being a major capital problem
22 if it's neglected. So how do they have major capital
23 needs addressed?

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: For major
25 capital issues, we will go to OMB and request a new

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2 need for that purpose. In addition, we are working
3 to see if we can put a plan in place where for some
4 of the smaller shelters, based on the need, the work
5 that needs to be done. OMB will fund our expense
6 budget to do that work. We also gave \$1 million
7 for..., during fiscal year 14 so far, for new needs for
8 capital work for some of those buildings.

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So they come to
10 you and say, my boiler is broken, and that's how..., or
11 some such.

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: Yes. They
13 may come and say, my roof needs to be repaired.

14 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: Those are
16 the kind of things that we request needs for.

17 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. So that's a
18 process between you, the provider and OMB?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: Yes.

20 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Is that
21 changing at all? Are we looking at ways to
22 streamline or make it more effective? Or make it
23 more open for providers? Because I've heard from
24 providers that it's tough to get through process. Is
25 there a way to make it easier?

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2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: We're
3 working on that.

4 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: We want to make
5 sure that we're responsive to our provider needs and
6 to the extent that we're able to support them in the
7 very important work that they do for us. We want to
8 do that.

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Great. Umm, okay.
10 I just wanted to ask for a moment about targeted
11 support of housing units. So this is..., you know we
12 have framework in place in the city and state and in
13 the NYNY III program for supportive housing for high
14 needs population. And I know its part of the plan
15 going forward, to make that available for families in
16 shelter. Can you speak a little bit as to the plan
17 for new supportive housing units? How many are still
18 left to be achieved in NYNY III? How we're working
19 to achieve those and what can we expect in this
20 coming fiscal year in that regard?

21 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So I can say that,
22 you know, the city will continue its commitment to
23 finish out the NYNY III, New York New York the
24 agreement, which will create 9,000 units serving
25 people at risk of becoming homeless, or are already

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2 homeless who suffer severe mental illnesses. We will
3 get back to you on..., in terms of more specifics
4 beyond that. But right now, it had been spoken to in
5 the mayor's housing plan. In terms of what the
6 allocation for those units would be, what the request
7 would be. But they're being shared across different
8 populations. So, I know that there's a preference
9 for homeless, there's also targets for youth aging
10 out of foster care, there are a number of different
11 groups that are actively seeking access to those
12 units.

13 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So there are 9,000
14 units left to go, or that's still to be built, as
15 part of the plan.

16 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So what I have is,
17 finishing out the agreement will create 9,000 units
18 that will serve that population that I just spoke
19 to..., those populations that I just spoke to. But we
20 can get you more specific details after this hearing.

21 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, I mean,
22 those are obviously units that don't get built
23 overnight, because they have to be sited and they
24 have to have partnerships in place and providers that
25 build them and it's..., I represent a supportive

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2 housing development as part of Common Ground, the
3 Schermerhorn Building in downtown Brooklyn which is a
4 very successful project that is a collaboration
5 between Common Ground and the Actors Fund and it's
6 supportive housings has been..., is a major component
7 of that supportive housing that I was involved. And
8 so, we know it can be a successful model. We know
9 that it can be a positive impact on the community and
10 so we would love to see kind of a plan as to where
11 there are going to be new supportive housing
12 developments slated for the next year or two years,
13 would be very helpful to know.

14 So, lastly, so I just wanted to reiterate
15 what I had said earlier and what my colleagues have
16 said about making sure that the permanent housing
17 solutions are commensurate with the need and if its...,
18 if we looking..., if the number is what we've been
19 hearing from analysts all along, is 5,000 units are
20 needed. We really need to start working towards to
21 getting some hard numbers. But I think this is a
22 fantastic start.

23 With regard to HPD sponsored
24 developments. The mayor's housing plan is very
25 ambitious for 200,000 units over..., new units over...,

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2 or both new and preserved units over the next ten
3 years. What role would that have in meeting the
4 needs of homeless population in New York City?

5 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So there were set
6 asides that were going to be allocated for homeless
7 clients from that number. And again, with some
8 support, some additional assistance, we'd be able to
9 move them into those units once they're constructed
10 and once they're renovated.

11 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Do we know, like
12 what's..., is that going to go through a unit process,
13 is that an HPD thing, how, like..., when HPD builds,
14 say, a new..., you know, I got like a new building,
15 that's 110 units going up in my district. It's an
16 HPD..., it's through the LAMP Program, for example.
17 Are there going to be units as part of that, which
18 will be set aside for homeless families?

19 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: It is my
20 understanding that some portion of the new units in
21 new developments will be set aside and targeted for
22 homeless families.

23 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I'll bring that up
24 at HPDs hearing, whenever that is. We'll go back to
25 Chair Ferreras and find out when that is. But that's

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2 certainly something that could be a major part of
3 this. If we're talking about bringing that number of
4 units online over the next ten year, that could be a
5 major component as well.

6 But I thank you very much for bringing to
7 this committee, significant steps forward in this
8 discussion. It's been a very positive process thus
9 far. I think you've heard our concerns. We want to
10 see more resources, more dollars allocated, more
11 NYCHA units, a lot more NYCHA units. Did I say NYCHA
12 units?

13 [Laughing]

14 CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I'll make sure
15 that there's more NYCHA units as part of this plan.
16 Umm, and I think that we can have a real shot at
17 success here. But it's going to take all hands on
18 deck. And with that I'll turn it back over to my Co-
19 Chair.

20 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you Chair
21 Levin. Again one of the themes of this and probably
22 why you took on this role, is to help families get
23 into shelters when they need them. And get out of
24 them as soon as possible, into stable housing. So I
25 just want to say that we've concluded our hearings

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2 for today. The Finance Committee will continue its
3 Executive Budget hearings tomorrow, May 20th at 10:00
4 a.m. The hearing will be held in this room.
5 Tomorrow we will be joined by the Committee on Public
6 Safety chaired by my colleague Council Member Vanessa
7 Gibson, to hear from the NYPD, the District
8 Attorneys, the Special Narcotics Prosecutor, the
9 Civilian Complaint Review Board and the Criminal
10 Justice Coordinator.

11 As a reminder the public will be allowed
12 to testify on the last day of the budget hearings on
13 June 6th, beginning at approximately 4:00 p.m. The
14 public session will be held in these Council
15 Chambers. For members of the public who wish to
16 testify but cannot make the hearing, you can email
17 your testimony to Nicole Anderson and she will make
18 it a part of the official record. Her email address
19 is nanderson@council.nyc.gov. Thank you, this
20 hearing is now adjourned.

21 [Gavel]
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C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date 05/28/2014