

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

[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

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

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

[nanderson@council.nyc.gov](mailto:nanderson@council.nyc.gov). Today's Executive Budget Hearing kicks off with the Human Resources Administration. HRAs fiscal 2015 budget total \$9.7 billion which reflects a \$278 million increase from the fiscal 2014 adopted budget. The fiscal 2015 budget includes \$102 million in new needs for the Working Families Rental Assistance Program, the Municipal ID Card Program, the Retroactive Cash Assistance Benefit Payment, the Client Benefits Reengineering Delay and an increase in funding for the HIV and AID Services Administration 30% Rent Cap and the Homeless Rental Assistance Program for

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

1  
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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



1  
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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

The immediate reforms that we've taken are designed to address HRA policies that have harmed clients, have had an adverse impact on staff workload and moral and subject the city of financial penalties relating to unnecessary fair hearings. The actions that we have taken in the last seven weeks are as follows. We've joined every other social service district in New York State and most other states by accepting the federal food stamp waiver for able bodied adults without dependents who are unemployed or under-employed. We have changed HRA's position and supported the provision recently enacted in the State budget that offers four years of college as an option for HRA clients as part of HRAs training and employment initiatives. We disbanded the counterproductive Center 71 Program that resulted in unnecessary case sanctions and closings. We discontinued the Immigrant Sponsor Recovery Program that harmed sponsors of low income legal immigrants and we've implemented a process to return all 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 implementing a letter..., we have developed and  
2 implemented a letter for landlords specifying rental  
3 assistance levels for which HASA clients are eligible  
4 to maximize access to permanent housing. We've  
5 implemented a system of appointment reminder calls to  
6 food stamp recipients with a rescheduling option in  
7 order to reduce missed appointments and potential  
8 unnecessary fair hearings and maximize the receipt of  
9 federal assistance to address hunger. Developing a  
10 system for appointment reminder calls and text  
11 messages for cash assistance recipients with a  
12 rescheduling option that will be in effect in June.

13  
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

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

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

1  
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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1  
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

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

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

COMMISSIONER BANKS: Sure.

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

CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you Madam Chair, thank you Commissioner. You know I'm not normally one to you know, heap praise upon Commissioners who are testifying in front of the committee but, really honestly, this is a remarkable document that you just shared with us on a number of levels. First, it was very refreshing to see data, some data that we have been asking for, for some time and that we know that it's there, we know that it's usable, we know that it can help direct policy in the right direction and so I first want to thank you for that and for providing us and the public with the

information that is going to be valuable to all of us moving forward.

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

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



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

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

1  
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.  
25

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

COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well I think as you know there's a piece of legislation in the senate assembly that is aimed at ending the WEP Program and we've communicated support for that goal. We..., 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?

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Absolutely.

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

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

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

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

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

COMMISSIONER BANKS: Thank you.

COUNCL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you Madam Chairwoman.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

COMMISSIONER BANKS: Correct.

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

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

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

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

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

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

1  
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

1  
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



1  
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

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

people living with HIV regardless of their t-cell count.

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

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

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

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

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

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

[Pause]

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

[Background talk]

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

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

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

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

COMMISSIONER BANK: Thanks.

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

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

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

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

[Interpose]

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Non-represented members of HRA.

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

COMMISSIONER BANKS: Great. Thank you.

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

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

COMMISSIONER BANKS: April 1.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Wow. So...

COMMISSIONER BANK: Seven weeks.

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

1  
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

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

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

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

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

COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So that's sort of the research arm, right, in a way?

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

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

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

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

1  
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



1  
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

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

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you.

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

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

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

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

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

[Interpose]

COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: So will two year be included?

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

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

COMMISSIONER BANKS: Correct.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

COMMISSIONER BANK: Thank you.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



1  
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  
25

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: That may be, but today there are more homeless families than ever since the great recession. This is the biggest crisis facing the City of New York. So whether those families that were receiving the vouchers were going to enter the homeless system or not, the numbers don't lie. Since that program ended a few years ago, the number of homeless families have skyrocketed.

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

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

1  
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 different.

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

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

14 [Interpose]

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

21 [Interpose]

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

24 [Interpose]

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

[Interpose]

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

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

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

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

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

COMMISSIONER BANKS: Understood.

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

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

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

COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: Even Giuliani.

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

[Interpose]

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1  
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

1  
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.  
25

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

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

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

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

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

[Pause]

[Background talk]

[Pause]

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

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



Funding and stage Child Care Block Grant Funding.

Last fiscal year the city council allocated \$64.1 million to ACS with \$62.5 million directed to child care. In the November plan, the \$62.5 million was baseline and we are pleased to see the executive budget has maintained this baseline. As we prepare for summer programming and the next school year, we can all agree that child care must be at the forefront of educational discourse. Research shows that providing high quality education for children before they turn five, yields significant long term benefits. We are proud that the administration alongside the council can continue to provide high quality instruction and child care services.

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

1  
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.  
25

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

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

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

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

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

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

CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: No problem 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 you for being here today  
7 because I know that your presence here demonstrates  
8 your 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

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

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

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

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

1  
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.



Children Services budget for fiscal year 2015 provides for operating expenses of \$2.9 billion of which approximately \$876 million is city tax levy. We are thankful that we have not had to make any cuts to our agency budget in this cycle as we've had to do in previous years. In fact I am very pleased to announce the significant investments that this executive budget is allowing ACS to make in protecting children and assisting New York City's neediest families.

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

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

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

1  
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

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

19 Mayor de Blasio has made inter-agency  
20 collaboration a priority of his administration. On  
21 April 7<sup>th</sup>, 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

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

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

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

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

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

Now moving to Juvenile Justice.

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



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

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

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you Commissioner for our testimony we've been joined by Public Advocate Tish James and Council Member Ben Kallos. I'm going to ask a few questions, very specific to the budget in reference to units of appropriation which has been a very big challenge for us here in the council. ACS currently has two units of appropriation that include funding for the voucher which is UA003 and UA004 totaling \$1.1 billion. These U of A's also include funding for Head Start, Early Learn NYC and all other childcare programming. The only separation between funding and programming in the delineation of other than personal services and personal services funding. ACS anticipates an \$80 million deficit in the Division of Early Care and Education in fiscal 2015. The bulk of this deficit can be attributed to mandated vouchers. Funds are often moved across program areas which make it difficult to assess how funding sources are used to

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

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

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

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

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

1  
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

1  
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

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

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

CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: You said they would be?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

1  
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.

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

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

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

Will salary steadily increase when years of  
experience is included?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: That's incredible.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

COMMISSIONER CARROIN: its capacity is  
35,651 children.

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

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

COMMISSIONER CARRION: No there isn't.

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

and what support and training are you giving  
providers to increase enrollment

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

COMMISSIONER CARRION: At 6.

CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Okay.

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

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

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

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

COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes.

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

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

CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Thank you.

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

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

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

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

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

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

in any way displacing positions that are attritting out.

COMMISSIONER CARRION: Absolutely.  
Correct.

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

COMMISSIONER CARRION: That's correct.

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

COMMISSIONER CARRION: Sure.

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

1  
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



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

COMMISSION CARRION: In FSU.

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

COMMISSIONER CARRION: That's correct.

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

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

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

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

CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

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

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

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

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

COMMISSIONER CARRION: So it..., yes, in 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.

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

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

COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes.

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

COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So that requires  
additional legislation?

COMMISSIONER CARROIN: Yes it does.  
Enabling legislation.

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

COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes. We're  
hopeful.

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

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

COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes.

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

COMMISSIONER CARRION: We just started.  
In April.

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

COMMISSIONER CARRION: It's too early.

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

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

COMMISSIONER CARROIN: Overall it's 88%.

CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

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

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

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

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

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

COMMISSIONER CARRION: \$80 million.

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

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

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

COMMISSIONER CARRION: Parental choice.



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

1  
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.  
25

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

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

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

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

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

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

1  
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.

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

COMMISSIONER CARRION: Who have applied, were waitlisted.

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

COMMISSIONER CARRION: They all are.

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

COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes.

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

COMMISSIONER CARRION: Let me clarify that.

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

COMMISSIONER CARROIN: We're checking.

CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

[Background talk]

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

CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Priority 5, right.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: Because Priority 3 gets served.

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

12  
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

1  
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 \$2.2  
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

1  
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

1  
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

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

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

COMMISSIONER CARRION: Thank you.

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

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

1  
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



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

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

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

1  
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.

1  
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

1  
2 pockets of poverty that were overlooked as part of  
3 the Early Learn application process. And so within  
4 the 35<sup>th</sup> 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  
25

Services and I think that that will be an issue before that task force.

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

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

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

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

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: So under ACS they will not receive the same benefits as those teachers in DOE?

COMMISSIONER CARRION: That's correct, because in part the answer to that is that they're separate unions that are representing those workers.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

residents of public housing? Providing them with  
child care.

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

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

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



1  
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?

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

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

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

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Okay.

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

providing services along with us, in communities.

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

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

the system. Are any of these resources being directed towards..., to the issue?

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

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

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

COMMISSIONER CARROIN: Exactly.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And some respite.

COMMISSIONER CARRION: And that's what this program does. It's not about indicating a case, it's about providing those services a family needs.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you Commissioner.

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

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

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

1  
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



1  
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

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

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

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

[Background talk]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: So 14% of the 8%?

COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes.

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

COMMISSION CARRION: I'm getting notes passed here. I know the feeling. You know we do have a project school success and we look at the school attendance records and those records are shared with the foster care agencies who work with 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

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

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

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

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

COMMISSIONER CARRION: Well I certainly hope, you know, this administration is very collaborative and we work together and so that I expect to have a role in that. But also, the task force, I don't know what the size of the task force 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?



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

COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes.

[Background talk]

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

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

COMMISSIONER CARRION: We beg OMB for money.

[Laughing]

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

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

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

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

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

COMMISSIONER CARRION: Just for the 3s.

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

COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes.

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

COMMISSIONER CARRION: No.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CO-CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Okay. And just in closing, not a question, but just a remark. Just 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

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

COMMISSIONER CARRION: 65,000, a little plus.

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

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

[Background talk]

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

[Background talk]

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

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

COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes.

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

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

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: 19%.

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

[Background talk]

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

COMMISSIONER CARRION: Who said yes, raise your hand?

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

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

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

[Background talk]

CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Take your time.

[Pause]



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

COMMISSIONER CARRION: So 30% are school age.

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

[Background talk]

COMMISSIONER CARRION: Actually 46% are school age.

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

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

[Background talk]

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

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

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

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

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

[Interpose]

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

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

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

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

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: Right.

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

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

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

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

[Interpose]

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

CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Got it. Okay.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: Just roughly.

COMMISSIONER CARRION: Plus \$80 million.

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

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

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

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

CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

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

CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And how many of those?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: Now we have to find it.

[Background talk]

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: I'm getting them.

CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

[Background talk]

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: I think I have it. Since February 2013, which is when we started that new policy, 1929 families' submitted recertifications.

[Background talk]

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

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

[Interpose]

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

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

[Background talk]

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

CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right a match with HRA.

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

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

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

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

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

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

CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you Commissioner.

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

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

[Background talk]

[Pause]

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: First I'd like to 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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Homebase will provide after care services to support the families after they move into their apartments. Public housing is a critical resource that will continue to be available to those on the wait list. This is one of the many strategies we are fortunate to be able to access to help homeless families transition from shelter to a home of their won. The city's plan aligns with the national emphasis on using mainstream housing assistance programs as an essential part of achieving the 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

duplication of services between street and subway teams.

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

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

The mayor's budget charts a new course. One that invests in better outcomes for homeless households as they achieve independence. Moving forward DHS will embrace opportunities for solutions 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

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

COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Do you want to take that?

[Background talk]

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

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: So I'm really excited by your last part of that answer. So what I was hoping for was no. But I'll work with what you gave me. Understanding that it is a challenge from 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

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

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



1  
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

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

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

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

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

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

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

COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Yes.

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

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

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

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

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

CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Not within the same year.

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

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

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

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

1  
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

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

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

COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: For Homebase, yes.

CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: For Homebase.

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



1  
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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

at least six months after they've been placed into permanent housing. And there is cost associated with having a social service provider deliver that aftercare service. And again, there to, it's not a one-size fits all. So there are families that may have many, many social service needs and they array of social services they we would provide for them may cost more than a family that has a lesser need.

Which they could perhaps have an intervention that is not as expensive as the family who has more needs.

So we're looking at all of those variables to try to make our best estimate in terms of what will come to fruition with respect to the vulnerable population's rental subsidy but it first begins with the conversation with the state. With the decision around what will the rent rates be. And then we can try to operationalize it in a way that makes sense and that wouldn't undermine or wouldn't subvert the needs of our clients who are in shelter.

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



COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So do you mean  
administering the program?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. So July 1<sup>st</sup> it will be taken out and moved over to HRA?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ECKARD: Yes.

CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Alright. Sounds good.

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

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

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ECKARD: Okay.

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

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

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

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

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

1  
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

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

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

COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So....,

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

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

[Background talk]

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

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



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

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

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Yes, no more clusters.

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

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

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

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay. I thank you very much and certainly we've been working together in your short tenure and I do appreciate all of the attempts and even by this testimony there is a great concerted effort to make a lot of changes and I appreciate the dialogue and the cooperation and certainly look forward to making a lot of this happen. Because the reality is all the work we've done, we still have a crisis now. Too many families are living in shelters each and every night. So we know that our work is never done, but I appreciate you and your team for the work and certainly will continue to work with you as I get more details on this program.

CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much Council Member Gibson. Council Member Lander.

COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Commissioner it's good to see you here.

1  
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

these questions and I am concerned from what I've heard so far that the resource commitment being made is not yet sufficient to the crisis that we face. And this is our window to get it sufficient. We have to by the time we adopt this budget feel that we are going to be bringing resources to solve the homelessness crisis to the table in a manner that's sufficient to solve the crisis. And it's a big one and it's been growing. So you answered to the chair's question that something over 10,000 nearly 11,000 families came into shelter last year. How many left? How many were placed and how many were placed into permanent or subsidized housing.

COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So I can get you that number Council Member. I don't have it readily available, but I will tell you it's something that we track with great frequency. I just..., I also..., I'm glad that you asked that question because I have to acknowledge the efforts of the staff at our agency as well as at our providers because, absent having a subsidy, absent having a rental assistance plan in place. Because I had asked the question when I arrived. There have been a number of families and individuals who have been placed from shelter into

1  
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

1  
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.

1  
2 COUNCL MEMBER LANDER: So it would be  
3 real help. Now I've looked in the MMR, the MMR  
4 doesn't make it possible for us to find this numbers  
5 on singles it does and on families it's hidden.  
6 Obviously you didn't make all the decisions about  
7 what's being given to us and hidden from us in the  
8 MMR. But if you want help turn over that new  
9 transparent leaf, we would love to see those numbers.  
10 So what I've heard a goal of advocates say, is from  
11 past experience, from their analysis, we need 5,000  
12 subsidized placements for families per year in order  
13 to achieve the reductions that we want to see and  
14 drive homelessness down. I understand, you know,  
15 that you're not ready to commit to a number today,  
16 but if we're going to really evaluate obviously  
17 overtime what we're going to see is whether  
18 homelessness goes down. But we've got to have a  
19 target for how many subsidized units we're seeking to  
20 achieve.

21 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So I want to be  
22 clear. These are not all subsidized exits.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: I understand.  
24 Almost none of those are subsidized exits.  
25



COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: I just wanted to be clear and not have it be out there that I was saying these were all subsidized, that is not the case.

COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: No I appreciate that. None of those were subsidized. What I'm asking for is a target. You know, I've heard from advocates the target of 5,000. I've looked back at the numbers of what we were placing into both NYCHA and Section and Advantage back in the day, just the NYCHA units were at 2,500 or 3,000 on average that got as high as 6,000. Advantage was far higher. The numbers that have been floated so far, both for the rental subsidy program and for NYCHA placements. And I know some of this is rumor and innuendo, but in the absence of the numbers you'll give us it's hard for us to know, have been far lower than that on the order of 500 a year and I just..., we've got... this is our budget process and I understand you need the time to develop your homelessness plan. But I guess I believe that we do need something like, to the targets, got to be something like 5,000 a year and if NYCHA placements are all we have right now, without the rental subsidy program. Then in my mind it would have to be at least half of those or maybe 2,500

units of NYCHA placements. Conveniently that's about a third of NYCHA vacancies. And back in the day when Mayors Dinkins, Giuliani, I've got a mental block on it, I apologize, and first term Bloomberg were using public housing. About a third of NYCHA vacancies were going for families coming out of the shelter system. SO that's the order of magnitude that I think we should be aiming for and I hear you're not ready to commit today, but we'd like to understand how we're going to get where we need to get.

COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: I would love if I were able to tell you hard and fast numbers. But I don't want to tell you information that is not accurate. I can tell you this. More is better than less in terms of everything that you delineated. More NYCHA units, more Section 8 vouchers, more rental assistance. It's better to have more than it is to have less in terms of us approaching this and my goal is to get as much as we can possibly get. You know, I wanted to really begin the foundational work over the past four months since I've been in this seat to really think about, well what do I have to undo in order for us to have access to NYCHA? In order for us to be able to reinvest state funds to a

rental assistance plan. Like what foundational structure could I put in place and then build upon to get me to a place to where I can come back to this council and say our target is x. And our target is x because we've been able to reinstate a priority for NYCHA housing and we've been able to move families from shelter. Not just talk about it prospectively but actually do it. I welcome the day when I can come back to you sooner than later hopefully. When I can come back and say we have exited x number of families to NYCHA.

COUNCL MEMBER LANDER: And I really appreciate that. And I hope so. My impatience is that we've been waiting so long to have an administration we could work with to drive homelessness down. So you've done a nice job in your first few months. And I'm not..., I'm eager for us to work to get there.

My last comment that I'll make, is of the three resources that we've been discussing, that you just described. You know, Section 8, boy we need more, but getting more from Washington is, you know, I think, requires bigger change. I'm glad that you're pushing the city and state resources for the

rental subsidy program and we need to keep pushing and try to get more obviously, more dollars is hard to come by. The public housing units in particular therefore for this year in my opinion are our first best bet because they don't cost us more money, that's to resource those 7,500 or 8,000 NYCHA vacancies a year. And I do hope that through this budget process we can achieve more of them to confront this crisis and get families out of homelessness. I appreciate your time and the work that you've done so far. Thank you. Mr. Chair.

CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you Council Member Lander. I want to acknowledge Council Member Chaim Deutsch and next we'll hear from Council Member Elizabeth Crowley.

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Thank you to our Chairs. Good afternoon Commissioner. You said just minutes ago, more is better than less. And I agree that permanent housing is better and less need for shelter beds is best. It's difficult to understand you numbers because I've heard a few sets of them. I heard that in 2013, 10,357 people or families, I'm not sure?

COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Families.

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Families. And that was two years ago. Things may have changed. Have you seen any change since two years ago? Two fiscal years ago, anyway. Is that calendar year?

COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: It was calendar year 2013.

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Have you seen a difference so far in the first couple of months of this year?

[Background talk]

COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Hold on, I need to see.

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Is there any indication that these numbers are declining.

COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: I..., no...

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: It doesn't look like it.

COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: No. The numbers are flat. For all intents and purposes, the numbers are flat.

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: It looks like..., I think that you have a progressive council here in the city for the first time that could work with a progressive mayor to bring down the need for shelter

1  
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

half your year was spent in the Bloomberg administration but it seems like the spending is not line with the estimates. I agree that, you know, we've got to do whatever we can to get this voucher system serving as many families as possible. But it's frustrating being here today, looking at the amount of money you need to run your agency, when we don't even know how much money, be it in HRA, or in DHS, that will serve families. You know, \$60 million, \$80 million, be it for the worker family service assistance, or rental assistance program, I like Council Member Brad Lander, believe that you need to put a number on the need. You need 5,000 vouchers to make a difference. Then we have to go to Albany and get enough money to pay for the 5,000 vouchers. We need to be putting a plan together to not build more shelter beds, but put families in permanent housing and this is the best way. It seems like four years ago when the Bloomberg administration was spending a significant amount of money on the voucher program, there was a significant..., there was significantly less families living in shelters.

At the height of that Advantage Program, how many families were benefiting from the vouchers?

COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: At the height of  
Advantage?

[Background talk]

COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: 5,000 families per  
year.

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: And the state  
said we could spend money on this program. Something  
similar to it. We've already gotten the approval  
that we needed from the state.

COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So Council Member,  
as I testified to, we just that approval in April.  
With that approval in place, now we are in a  
position..., we're at a place to begin discussion with  
the state about size and scope, right. And to your  
point, if we were able to reduce our shelter census,  
we would need fewer shelter beds. We would need  
fewer units. Unfortunately, not having access to the  
tools that I've delineated as part of testimony. So  
not having full and complete access to a rental  
assistance plan that's up and running and being  
delivered to clients in shelter, puts us in a  
position where we are still predicting what the need  
for shelter would be.



COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: How much do you believe that 5,000 family voucher system would cost? What did it cost at the end of the Bloomberg run of the Advantage Program?

COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So the value of Advantage at the end of..., when it ended?

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: When it was serving at its height. The 5,000 families that it served.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: The value was approximately \$210 million.

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: And your rental assistance you asked for fiscal year 2015 is what?

COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So the place holder in the Executive Budget for the Working Families plan is...

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: It is \$60.1 million in the expense budget. With the vulnerable families and with working with the state, we're hoping that there will be an additional \$20 million for working families per year.

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: It seems like it's only 20% or less than what the Bloomberg assistance program was.

COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So it is less than what the Advantage Program had been funded at.

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: But it's a fraction.

COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: It is less, you're correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Significantly less. I think I heard the Deputy Commissioner say \$290 million. How much was it at the height of the Bloomberg Advantage program?

COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: \$210 million. Which is more than what we've put in our budget.

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: So it looks like your only aiming to do about 35% to 40% of what that Advantage Program was.

COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So again Council Member it's..., right now we don't have a rental assistance..., as we sit here a speak right this second, we don't have a rental assistance plan in place. We are actively working to negotiate with the state and to work with the state to get us a place where we can pursue rental assistance plans that we've described as well as all of the other tools that we're looking to put in our chest.

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: I understand that. Earlier the chair said failure is unacceptable. So if we meet again next year and there are more families in the shelter system, we did not meet the needs. And we know that it seems if history repeats itself, if more families are coming are coming into the system than are exiting and a voucher plan that only helps a fraction is not the voucher plan that the city needs. We need to be working together with the state to ask for the real amount of money that will serve the families that need the help.

COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: And the voucher is not the only part of the plan.

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: I get that. But it's a big part of the plan. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Thank you.

CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you Council Member Crowley. Next we have Council Member Helen Rosenthal.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you. Commissioner, I... this is a laudable plan. So thank you for bringing it in. It's ambitious. And I wish us all well in getting it done. I want to talk

specifically about the \$1,500 cap for monthly reimbursements and I understand that's an average. But, for SROs in particular.

[Background talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So, just focusing in, not on the cluster sites, not on Tier 1 but just for the SRO rental buildings. If we could just focus in on those.

COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So are you asking Council Member what the value is of those cuts, or just generally...

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I'm just setting the stage saying that that's all I want to talk about. I don't want to talk about the other ones. I really just want to focus on the SROs for a moment. Only because that's what's in my district. So do you have a sense..., if we're going to say on average, the \$1,500 talking about the SROs, would it be fair to say that that rent would have to cover that amount, sorry, would have to cover rent, security and the social services? Although security might be negotiated separately, but the social services and the rent piece.

COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So the social service piece was actually pulled out from the \$1,500 number. The \$1,500 number was solely rent. And we had excluded from the equation. We did not..., we would not decrease social services across any of our portfolio knowing that it's so important in order to help our families and individual who are in shelter to overcome the barriers that they have to shelter. So that being said, the \$1,500 number was the rent portion of the expenses relating to providing shelter. To you question Council Member, security could be included in that number, or it could be separate from that number. And, you know, as we've engaged upon this dialogue with our providers, we've come to find that some have it as part of that number and some have it as a separate expense item.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Alright. So that makes it hard to..., makes it a little bit harder to understand what we're doing here. I mean, in the sense that I have a landlord who's getting \$3,700 per month for social services and for the rent. I don't know how to make sense of the \$1,500 cap. So which component..., so you're going to keep social services at the same level. It's just hard to pull out what

1  
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  
25

would allow us to revisit the amount of funding for  
the contact voucher.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Can I find out  
for my district, and I guess citywide, other people  
would want to know this, which contracts you're  
contemplating modifying?

COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So once we've  
decided and we know exactly which contracts would be  
affected, you know that's information that, you know,  
we can share.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: That would be  
great.

COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: But right now we're  
still in the process of actually making that  
decision.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Of course.  
I'd appreciate that. And then, are you..., have you  
committed to not contracting with any more SRO  
landlords than you currently do?

COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: No, not that I  
know. I mean, just to frame it. We still have a  
demand for shelter. Right. We still have a demand  
for shelter for individuals, for adult families that  
don't have minor children, for families with

1  
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



1  
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

committed to insuring the safety of all of our clients, insuring the safety of all of our staff and wanting to really make sure that security presence is available. You know, we have access points of entry where folks come into our shelters and just making sure that we are responsible as a sheltering system and security is one of the components that would keep us responsible.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yes, it's frustrating. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you Council Member Rosenthal. Council Member Williams.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you. Good afternoon Mr. Chair, Mr. Commissioner. You're probably very surprised but I have one project in mind that I'd like to talk to you about. Shocked and amazed.

[Laughing]

COUNCL MEMBER WILLIAMS: So first, I just want to make sure we are clear in what we are talking about. This is..., will be a wind shelter. Over here actually on Glennon Road, some manufacturing but there is..., so we're aware, there's going to be no manufacturing entity that will have 600 to 700 people

on it, 24 hours a day. Over here we have 156 units. One or two family homes. And right here we have 198 units. Now that's where it is and there are where the homes are. And my contention has been and always will be that 200 units of anything, whether it's affordable housing or whether it's an apartment building. It's just too large and dense for this space, even if you include the manufacturing, because there is nothing there that will be as massive in terms of density except for this wind shelter. And obviously, we've spoken about it before, I'd wished in our talks we could have gotten a little further. It was put together under the past administration. I think they did a terrible job in siting it. My hope was that this administration might be able to fix some of the problems and while we're negotiating the building went up and my hope is that we can repurpose some of the units. My question is there any way that you gauge the density around a shelter before you site it or in your mind any amount of units are good to put any place in the city.

COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So we certainly do consider the zoning ordinances and we consider the demographics of the area in which were siting

shelter, Council Member. You know, as you stated this is a project that began in 2010 and at the time I know there was a real thinking that there was a need then and there is a need now for capacity that can shelter families of minor children. What I've been referencing throughout my testimony is a purpose built capacity that would allow us to reduce our reliance on cluster units and on service models that don't have as robust social services as this project will have. I know that you and I have spoken and you've spoken with other members of my staff before I was appointed to this position and since. And we are at a place where, you know, I can tell you today, Council Member Williams that there is a definite need. A real need for us to have shelter units available for families with children who continue to come into our system. I look at the numbers every day. And I'm struck by the level of need and I have to be committed, as I kept saying throughout my testimony to make sure that we meet the demands to shelter in New York City and...

[Interpose]

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: I'm on a time limit I'm sorry. I agree 100%. We have a need.

1  
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

that's going to be sheltered in that facility. With respect to this location, because it is so far along, we want to work with you in terms of having it be more community facing. We can have a conversation about the populations being sheltered at the site. And whether there will be some opportunity to perhaps diversify amongst the family with children portfolio who's there, so we have families with children have household members and parents who are up in age, who are older, right. And we had talked about this in terms of perhaps identifying some units for older clients to be placed in addition to the other households that would be placed at the site. We're also very, very invested and committed in community based placements, so to the extent that there are families that may emanate or come into shelter from your district, we would want to certainly target their placement at this shelter in order to keep them connected to their community in order to make sure that the children who are in those families can attend the same schools that they had been attending. And in order to make sure that any community resources that can be used and brought to bear to help those families who are coming into shelter, will

1  
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

presenting you from the Flatlands Flatbush Civic Association. There are some things here that I agree with, some I don't. But it is from the community. And of course we had a protest and we're going to have a silent one now. So I'm going to ask the people who were here, some of the people who took their time off of work, on very short notice and the only thing that we want to ask you, is that during these negotiations to not turn your back on us when we're having the discussion. Please, because we have to do this in conjunction with the community. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you very much Commissioner. Chair Levin wanted to have some wrap-up questions for you. Oh, Council Member Miller actually. And then followed by Council Member Levin. Sorry Council Member.

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you Madam Chair. Good afternoon Commissioner. Thank you for being here and sharing in such a transparent way. We really appreciate it and one, to kind of piggyback on what Council Member Williams had talked about. I represent a district in South East Queens, in particular Community Board 12 that has 12 of the 17



shelters in the borough, in my district and wanted to talk about the resource support for those transient shelter people that are within the district, and whether it's the schools and other infrastructure and resources that are being used, as it applies to budget. Number one.

Two, I kind of want to speak to those who are delivering the services and which means the overview of staff considering the amount of people who are actually employed by..., directly or indirectly to the agency. And most particularly I'd like to talk about the contract. Considering that there are a number of contracts, I believe 538 contracts, that are out and who's delivering these services.

Obviously there's some question about the services being delivered particularly within my community and district that I represent and speak to oversight. Before you begin to answer, I just wanted to talk about a few locations that exist that have basically taken most of the affordable housing and rent stabilized apartments off of the market and, which is not bad, but it's kind of creating another quagmire with those who are looking for housing, but also is kind of lending itself to these landlords who are not

necessarily good neighbors and have I've gone in and toured, and the conditions that these apartments are in are an abomination. And so whoever is responsible for that has been irresponsible and so I would like to see certainly more oversight as we move forward. But I would really like to take a look at these contracts and make sure that they're doing what they are supposed to do, because that's a lot of money and they should be employing people that really care about those clients. And so, if you could speak to any of that, I'd appreciate it.

COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So Council Member, I'll begin by telling you that I share your interest in wanting to insure that the services that we're delivering to clients who are in shelter are as comprehensive and as, I'm going to use the word tailored to their specific and individual needs. It goes to what I had testified to earlier about wanting to pursue a model of practice in which we could bring to the shelter system here in New York City. Where we could perhaps use interventions that have demonstrated success in terms of helping those who are in shelter to exit shelter. TO overcome whatever barriers they have that keep them in shelter. I know

1 we have a number of providers who have had some real  
2 success in working with our families who are in  
3 shelter and I know that our staff, we have a lot of  
4 knowledge within the agency of, and an understanding  
5 of what should be part of that model of practice.  
6 And we want to make sure that we're delivering that  
7 sooner than later, to all of the locations in your  
8 district and all the locations in the City of New  
9 York. As it pertains to deciding who we'll be in  
10 business with as it pertains, if I got your question  
11 correct, in terms of selecting providers and really  
12 monitoring the quality intervention and service of  
13 our providers. So, right now, our focus is on  
14 placements. The agency has focused on the success of  
15 our providers to effectively place clients from  
16 shelter into permanent housing. And while that's one  
17 measure of success that I think is of great value,  
18 there are other measures of success that we can also  
19 have as part of the equation. And those measures can  
20 include, like what has the qualitative impact of our  
21 intervention on life of this person been? Have we  
22 been able to reduce trauma? I've talked about his  
23 before in terms of clients who come into shelters as  
24 traumatic. If you don't have a place to live and you

1  
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

1  
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

1  
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 31<sup>st</sup>. But  
13 I started January 13<sup>th</sup>.

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

1  
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

1  
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



1 soon this hearing is concluded. But continuous  
2 engagement with the client, to try to have them come  
3 in, is what we really focus on and Jody Ruden  
4 (phonetic) and Iris Rodriguez who are both in the  
5 audience, Associate and Assistant Commissioner over  
6 Outreach can really have a conversation with you  
7 about how we can connect to serve these clients.  
8

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

1  
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

level of investment are we providing for them.  
Financial and other investments. And I know that we  
did get that number in terms of what the annual  
maintenance funding is for our provider network.  
I'll turn it over to my Deputy to talk about it.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: We fund  
providers on one level, directly through their annual  
review budgets. And indirectly for those providers  
who are in city owned buildings, we have our capital  
budget for those. For the providers that we serve  
directly in their other than personnel maintenance  
budget, our annual amount is \$16.2 million. For  
those, the capital work for FY14 for families its \$8  
million.

CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: FY14 or FY15?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: FY14 is \$8  
million. For FY15 it's \$18.5 million.

CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay so it's been  
increased.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: Yes. And in  
addition to that we are also working with OMB to look  
at, for some our smaller shelters, ways that we can  
do repairs to those buildings also. So we're working  
on getting other solutions to some of the issues.

CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: That \$18 million, that's for capital..., DHS capital budget for DHS owned buildings...

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: City-owned family buildings.

CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right. So, now what percentage of family buildings are city owned? Do we know? Versus privately owned.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: I'm not certain about that number. Probably about..., it's a smaller percentage, about 20%.

CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So for those, if the majority of providers are not in city-owned facilities can't have capital repairs reflected in the DHS capital budget but are just reflected in their contracted maintenance budget. Then how do they get, because I'm sure that a lot of them are facing..., because they get so much use obviously, you know a backlog of..., something goes from being a maintenance problem to being a major capital problem if it's neglected. So how do they have major capital needs addressed?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: For major capital issues, we will go to OMB and request a new

1  
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?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NUCCIO: We're working on that.

COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: We want to make sure that we're responsive to our provider needs and to the extent that we're able to support them in the very important work that they do for us. We want to do that.

CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Great. Umm, okay. I just wanted to ask for a moment about targeted support of housing units. So this is..., you know we have framework in place in the city and state and in the NYNY III program for supportive housing for high needs population. And I know its part of the plan going forward, to make that available for families in shelter. Can you speak a little bit as to the plan for new supportive housing units? How many are still left to be achieved in NYNY III? How we're working to achieve those and what can we expect in this coming fiscal year in that regard?

COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So I can say that, you know, the city will continue its commitment to finish out the NYNY III, New York New York the agreement, which will create 9,000 units serving people at risk of becoming homeless, or are already

homeless who suffer severe mental illnesses. We will get back to you on..., in terms of more specifics beyond that. But right now, it had been spoken to in the mayor's housing plan. In terms of what the allocation for those units would be, what the request would be. But they're being shared across different populations. So, I know that there's a preference for homeless, there's also targets for youth aging out of foster care, there are a number of different groups that are actively seeking access to those units.

CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So there are 9,000 units left to go, or that's still to be built, as part of the plan.

COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So what I have is, finishing out the agreement will create 9,000 units that will serve that population that I just spoke to..., those populations that I just spoke to. But we can get you more specific details after this hearing.

CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, I mean, those are obviously units that don't get built overnight, because they have to be sited and they have to have partnerships in place and providers that build them and it's..., I represent a supportive

1  
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...,



or both new and preserved units over the next ten years. What role would that have in meeting the needs of homeless population in New York City?

COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So there were set asides that were going to be allocated for homeless clients from that number. And again, with some support, some additional assistance, we'd be able to move them into those units once they're constructed and once they're renovated.

CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Do we know, like what's..., is that going to go through a unit process, is that an HPD thing, how, like..., when HPD builds, say, a new..., you know, I got like a new building, that's 110 units going up in my district. It's an HPD..., it's through the LAMP Program, for example. Are there going to be units as part of that, which will be set aside for homeless families?

COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: It is my understanding that some portion of the new units in new developments will be set aside and targeted for homeless families.

CO-CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I'll bring that up at HPDs hearing, whenever that is. We'll go back to Chair Ferreras and find out when that is. But that's

1  
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

for today. The Finance Committee will continue its Executive Budget hearings tomorrow, May 20<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. The hearing will be held in this room.

Tomorrow we will be joined by the Committee on Public Safety chaired by my colleague Council Member Vanessa Gibson, to hear from the NYPD, the District Attorneys, the Special Narcotics Prosecutor, the Civilian Complaint Review Board and the Criminal Justice Coordinator.

As a reminder the public will be allowed to testify on the last day of the budget hearings on June 6<sup>th</sup>, beginning at approximately 4:00 p.m. The public session will be held in these Council Chambers. For members of the public who wish to testify but cannot make the hearing, you can email your testimony to Nicole Anderson and she will make it a part of the official record. Her email address is [nanderson@council.nyc.gov](mailto:nanderson@council.nyc.gov). Thank you, this hearing is now adjourned.

[Gavel]

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