

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE

Jointly with

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE,

COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S ISSUES &

COMMITTEE ON JUVENILE JUSTICE

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May 19, 2015

Start: 10:24 p.m.

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HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: Stephen T. Levin  
Chairperson

Laurie A. Cumbo  
Chairperson

Julissa Ferreras  
Chairperson

Fernando Cabrera  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Annabel Palma

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

## Council Members:

Fernando Cabrera  
Ruben Wills  
Donovan J. Ritchards  
Vanessa L. Gibson  
Corey D. Johnson  
Carlos Menchaca  
Ritchie J. Torres  
Ydanis Rodriguez  
James G. Van Bramer  
Robert Cornegy, Jr.  
Mark Levine  
I Daneek Miller  
Helen K. Rosenthal  
Vincent M. Ignizio  
Darlene Mealy  
Elizabeth S. Crowley  
Karen Koslowitz  
Ben Kallos  
Maria Del Carmen Arroyo  
James Vacca  
Inez D. Barron  
Rory I. Lancman

Steven Banks  
Human Resources Administration Commissioner

Jennifer Yeaw  
Chief of Staff at HRA

Erin Villari  
Executive Deputy Commissioner for Finance HRA

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

Ellen Levine  
Chief Program Planning and Financial Management  
Officer at HRA

Gladys Carrion  
Commissioner of Administration of Child Services

Susan Nuccio  
Deputy Commissioner for Financial Services

Jill Krauss  
Deputy Commissioner for Communications

Lorelei Vargas  
Deputy Commissioner for Early Care and Education

Gilbert Taylor  
DHS Commissioner

Diana Rodela  
Assistant Commissioner for Budget and Revenue  
DHS

Lula Urquhart  
Deputy Commissioner for Fiscal Procurement  
Operations and Audits



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2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Good morning and  
3 welcome to the second day of the City Council's  
4 hearing on the Mayor's Executive Budget for Fiscal  
5 Year 2016. My name is Julissa Ferreras Copeland and  
6 I am the Chair of the Finance Committee. We are  
7 joined by the Committee on General Welfare chaired by  
8 my colleague Council Member Steve Levin who will be  
9 joining us shortly. We've been joined by Council  
10 Member Gibson, Palma and Menchaca. Today, we will  
11 hear from the Human Resources Administration, the  
12 Administration of Children's Services and the  
13 Department of Homeless Services. Before we begin, I  
14 would like to thank the Finance Division staff for  
15 putting this hearing together, including Director  
16 Latonya Mckinney [sp?], Chief Counsel Tenisha Edwards  
17 [sp?], Assistant Counsel Rebecca Chaisson [sp?],  
18 Deputy Director Regina Perada Ryan [sp?], and Nathan  
19 Toth [sp?], Senior Finance Analyst Doheni Sampora  
20 [sp?] who covers HRA and DHS, and Finance Analyst  
21 Brittany Moressi [sp?] who covers ACS, on the Finance  
22 Division Administrative Support Unit, Nicole  
23 Anderson, Maria Pagodna [sp?], Roberto Caterano [sp?]  
24 who pull everything together. Thank you for all your  
25 efforts. I'd also like to remind everyone that the

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2 public will be invited to testify on the last day of  
3 budget hearings on June 9<sup>th</sup> beginning at  
4 approximately 1:30 p.m. in this room. For members of  
5 the public who wish to testify but cannot attend the  
6 hearing, you can email your testimony to the Finance  
7 Division at [financetestimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:financetestimony@council.nyc.gov), and the  
8 staff will make it a part of the official record.

9 Excuse me. Today's Executive Budget hearings kicks  
10 off with the Human Resources Administration. HRA's  
11 Fiscal 2016 Executive Budget totals 98.86 billion  
12 dollars, which reflects a 166.4 million dollar  
13 increase from the Fiscal 2015 adopted budget. The  
14 Fiscal 2016 budget includes 131.6 million dollars in  
15 new needs for the Tenants Based Rental Assistance  
16 Program, a newly created family eviction prevention  
17 subsidy, anti-eviction legal services, IDNYC, mental  
18 health services at Family Justice Centers, and three  
19 new initiatives related to domestic violence  
20 services. I'm disappointed that the Administration  
21 did not include any of the five budget response  
22 proposals relating to HRA in the Executive Budget.  
23 These requests include creating a new unit of  
24 appropriation for public assistance grants, which is  
25 currently lumped into a unit of appropriation

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2 containing 1.3 billion dollars in various spending,  
3 re-establishing a central insurance program,  
4 expanding the Teen Relationship Abuse Prevention  
5 Program, increasing the budget for the Emergency Food  
6 Assistance Program, and supporting the Homelessness  
7 Prevention Project. Never the less, I am pleased  
8 that HRA's budget places such a large emphasis on  
9 anti-eviction services, legal services, the living  
10 and communities rent program, and other homeless  
11 prevention programs, since we all know the city is  
12 facing a crisis regarding the overwhelming increase  
13 in the number of homeless individuals and families.  
14 I'm looking forward to hearing from HRA to learn  
15 about the ways that this Executive Budget affects the  
16 agencies and its operations. Before we begin, I  
17 would like to remind my colleagues that the first  
18 round of questions for the agencies will be limited  
19 to five minutes per Council Member, and if Council  
20 Members have additional questions, we will have a  
21 second round of questions at three minutes per  
22 Council Member. Before we hear from the HRA  
23 Commissioner, I wanted to try--well, Council Member  
24 Levin will be joining us in a little bit. So, what  
25

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2 we will do is we will swear in Commission Steve  
3 Banks, and then we will begin with your testimony.

4 COUNSEL: Do you affirm that your  
5 testimony will be truthful to the best of your  
6 knowledge, information and belief?

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I do.

8 COUNSEL: Thank you.

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I'd like to thank  
10 the City Council Finance Committee and the General  
11 Welfare Committee as well as Chairs Julissa Ferreras  
12 and Steven Levin for giving us this opportunity to  
13 testify today about HRA's budget and our continued  
14 progress towards reform of our policies and  
15 procedures. My name is Steven Banks and I'm the  
16 Commissioner of the New York City Human Resources  
17 Administration. Joining me today are HRA's Chief  
18 Program Planning and Financial Management Officer,  
19 Ellen Levine, HRA's Executive Deputy Commissioner for  
20 Finance, Erin Villari, and HRA's Chief of Staff,  
21 Jennifer Yeaw. HRA's proud to be in the forefront of  
22 the de Blasio Administration's efforts to address  
23 poverty and income inequality, and the Fiscal Year  
24 2016 budget reflects these priorities as we reaffirm  
25 our commitment to reforming our policies and



2 procedures to enhance the effectiveness and  
3 efficiency of our programs as we work to better serve  
4 low income and vulnerable New Yorkers. HRA serves  
5 approximately three million low income New Yorkers  
6 through a broad range of programs. We've spent this  
7 past year reforming key areas within the agency to  
8 ensure that we are helping working families stay in  
9 the workforce when their jobs do not pay enough to  
10 live on by providing supports such as food aid and  
11 cash [sic] assistance, public health insurance, and  
12 emergency cash assistance, and eviction prevention  
13 services, aiding those struggling to return to or  
14 enter the workforce by providing a variety of  
15 employment related services including access to  
16 education and job skills training, help with job  
17 search and placement, and temporary cash assistance,  
18 and providing a safety net for those permanently or  
19 temporarily unable to work. Today, rather than go  
20 through all of the reforms that are under way, we're  
21 going to highlight some of the key reforms,  
22 especially milestones since our last testimony at the  
23 Preliminary Budget hearing in March, and we think  
24 that it would be clear if we can just present from  
25 our Power Point. You've got our testimony for the

2 record. So, first, we wanted to just give you an  
3 overview of some key accomplishments that are going  
4 on at the agency. First, we're issuing concept  
5 papers to begin the RFP process for new employment  
6 and training programs. We've already converted 500  
7 CUNY WEP slots into work study, and currently there  
8 are 4,085 people in WEP, substantially reduced from  
9 prior higher levels, and 4,200 of those are in city  
10 agencies, that's 40--just short of 4,800 WEP  
11 placements with 4,200 of them in city agencies. And  
12 as I've said, we've already converted 500 of those  
13 slots to CUNY WEP slots--CUNY work study slots.  
14 We're developing an RFP to enhance employment  
15 services for people with HIV who are eligible for our  
16 HASA program or our new employment plan, and  
17 currently there are 1,271 clients enrolled in four-  
18 year college as we've implemented the state law  
19 permitting that as an option for clients. With  
20 respect to access to food stamps, we've launched a  
21 new version of Access NYC. You can now apply for and  
22 recertify for food stamps online. We've made it  
23 easier to submit documents using scanners in our  
24 offices and at community organizations, and beginning  
25 later this month, it'll be possible to submit

2 documents using your smart phone. We've partnered  
3 with NYCHA at 15 targeted NYCHA developments to  
4 identify residents qualify for but are not using food  
5 stamps, and we've initiated a major outreach campaign  
6 to increase access to food stamps, and you've seen  
7 probably on buses and elsewhere the ads that we put  
8 up to really encourage people to use food stamps. We  
9 have a 97 percent penetration with children, but we  
10 don't have as full a penetration as we would like to  
11 for seniors and for immigrants and particularly  
12 targeting those groups, and that's what the ads are  
13 aimed at. In the area of homelessness, between  
14 December 2014 and April 2015 in partnership with DHS,  
15 we've provided rental assistance to some 2,000  
16 households, including almost 5,000 children and  
17 adults to enable them to move from shelter to  
18 housing, including Section 8 and NYCHA referrals, a  
19 total of more than 4,000 households with more than  
20 12,000 children and adults were moved into homes  
21 during the first 10 months of Fiscal 15. And we've  
22 implemented a new program for judges to immediately  
23 refer at-risk tenants to legal services providers in  
24 the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Queens Housing  
25 Courts, and we're in the process of rolling out the

2 Staten Island component shortly. We've also been  
3 focused on program accountability and integrity.  
4 Recently, the Brooklyn District Attorney arrested  
5 participants in a massive fraud scheme that offered  
6 free sneakers to Medicaid clients in return for  
7 submitting to unnecessary treatment, and HRA staff  
8 with the main undercover operatives gathering  
9 evidence to bring down this operation, and we also  
10 staffed the phone taps and provided translations of  
11 conversations that exposed this cruel and unlawful  
12 treatment in which our clients were referred to by  
13 the perpetrators as "guinea pigs." The New York  
14 Times reported on HRA's use of sophisticated data  
15 mining to root out fraud. Using this approach, HRA's  
16 been able to focus its efforts on cases that were  
17 most likely to be fraudulent instead of cases without  
18 merit. Overall, as indicated in prior testimony, we  
19 serve approximately three million low income New  
20 Yorkers through a broad range of programs to address  
21 poverty and income inequality and prevent  
22 homelessness. As of the Executive Budget, HRA has a  
23 Fiscal Year 2016 operating budget of 9.9 billion, 7.7  
24 billion in city funds. Seventy-eight percent is for  
25 Medicaid payments and cash assistance benefits. The

2 balance supports employment programs, homelessness  
3 prevention, legal services, rental assistance, and  
4 other services for low income New Yorkers. HRA  
5 continues to be responsible for much of the Medicaid  
6 program, which totals 29 billion in New York City,  
7 although only 20 percent of these costs are part of  
8 the HRA budget. HRA also administers three million  
9 dollars in federal food stamp benefits that do not  
10 pass through the city budget. This means that  
11 overall HRA's responsible for a total of 35 billion  
12 dollars in programs and services. HRA is about more  
13 than cash assistance. We help low income workers  
14 stay on the job. Annually, HRA provides critical  
15 support that helps many low income New Yorkers remain  
16 in the workforce. Five hundred thousand New Yorkers  
17 receive ongoing cash assistance annually. On any  
18 given month 360,000 are receiving cash assistance.  
19 2.455 million are receiving Medicaid. 1.716 million  
20 are receiving federally funded food stamps and food  
21 assistance. Seven hundred thousand are receiving  
22 home energy assistance. A hundred thousand are  
23 receiving one-time cash assistance annually to  
24 prevent evictions and utility shut-offs and assist  
25 with other emergencies, and 190,000 children are

2 assisted through child support income enforcement  
3 efforts. Efforts aimed at keeping low income workers  
4 in the workforce are much less expensive and more  
5 efficient than providing assistance to New Yorkers  
6 after they're out of the workforce, especially after  
7 an extended absence. Table one shows the benefits  
8 and services and the numbers that we've gone through  
9 for cash assistance, food stamps, Medicaid. In  
10 addition, Emergency Food Assistance Program serves  
11 1.120031 average monthly meals and people served  
12 during Fiscal Year 2014. Through the HEAP [sic]  
13 Program we served 796,145 recipients in year 2014,  
14 which runs from November to October. And in child  
15 support there were 282,190 cases with orders as of  
16 February 2015. That's--and we resulted in over 742  
17 million in collections in Calendar Year 2014. Over  
18 90 percent of the collections go directly to  
19 families. Through Adult Protective Services there  
20 were 3,884 cases being assessed for services as of  
21 March, and there are 6,213 under care cases as of  
22 March. Home care, there are 123,005 total home care  
23 enrollees as of March 2015. And through our HARSA  
24 [sic] Program we provide case services in 32,309  
25 cases as of March. Through our Domestic Violence

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2 Services, over 1,000 families are served per day in  
3 emergency and transitional shelters as of February,  
4 and there were 3,492 residential cases served as of  
5 February 2015. Through our Teen Relationship Abuse  
6 Prevention Program, 7,428 students received  
7 counseling in 2014, and I am happy to report that  
8 we've been able to increase it to three million  
9 dollars, which was one of the issues that I know was  
10 of great concern to the chairs of this committee and  
11 to the Council. In terms of the HRA staff, we have a  
12 budgeted head count of 14,439 in FY 16 paid through a  
13 combination of city, state and federal funds. Our  
14 staff our public servants who choose to work at HRA  
15 to help New Yorkers in need, many dedicating their  
16 entire careers to public service. We have a diverse  
17 workforce, 70 percent are women, 59 percent are  
18 African-American, 18 percent are Hispanic, 15 percent  
19 are white, and eight percent are Asian, and it's a  
20 unionized workforce, and the slide 10 shows you the  
21 various unions represented in our workforce. Slides  
22 11 and 12 show you what's in the written testimony,  
23 which is essentially the proportions of the different  
24 services that we provide? We're happy to provide  
25 more information if you have questions on that. In

2 terms of a budget overview, in the Executive Budget  
3 there's 2.86 million, and 56 positions were added in  
4 2015. In 2016, the increase was 162.8 million. Its  
5 131 million in city tax levy, and that was 328  
6 positions that were added. The HRA budget as of the  
7 Executive Plan as I indicated totals 9.9 billion in  
8 2015. It's virtually unchanged in 2016, with an  
9 increase of 33 million dollars in city tax levy funds  
10 from the 7.66 billion in FY 15. The tax levy  
11 increase is due to rental assistance increases for  
12 additional placements of 2016 compared to 2015.  
13 Additional legal services including expansion of the  
14 Anti-harassment Initiative, new staff in 2016 to  
15 implement reasonable accommodation requirements for  
16 our clients, growth in the IDNYC Program to manage  
17 additional applications. The total headcount of 14,  
18 535 in 2015, and it's 14,439 in 2016. The city  
19 funded headcount is 10,601 in 15, increasing to  
20 10,689 in 16. HRA has a ten year capital budget at  
21 191.8 million of which 137.5 million are city funds,  
22 78.6 million are for technology to streamline  
23 operations including key investments in our client  
24 benefits re-engineering which is allowing the online  
25 re-certification, for example, for SNAP benefits.



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2 76.1 million for facilities maintenance and equipment  
3 improvements and improvements, 33.9 million for the  
4 installation of telecommunications equipment, and 3.2  
5 million dollars related to vehicles. There are major  
6 initiatives and reforms that are funded in the  
7 Executive Budget, 32 million dollars, 18 million in  
8 city tax levy for LINC rental assistance, increased  
9 LINC rent levels, federally funded tenant based  
10 rental assistance, city FEPS, and related programs.  
11 All of this allows for a combined total of 8,480  
12 move-outs in FY 16 through funding for LINC, City  
13 FEPS and tenant based rental assistance. Twenty  
14 million dollars increasing to 36 million in FY 17 as  
15 providers ramp up for anti-harassment legal services  
16 and 4.3 million for related outreach. This is an  
17 increase from the prior Administration which funded  
18 an anti-eviction initiative at 6.4 million that is  
19 also increasing to 13.5 million in Fiscal 16. Fifty-  
20 one million dollars for cash assistance and 21.9  
21 million dollars for additional rent arrears, 58.9  
22 million of which was city funds to support an average  
23 of 360,000 receiving ongoing benefits, and 8,600  
24 receiving one-time cash grants while maintaining the  
25 flat annual case load of 500,000. The total cash

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2 assistance budget is 1.48 billion, 651 million in  
3 city funds. There's 5.6 million for additional  
4 immigration legal assistance and services to address  
5 executive action, 4.8 million declining to 7.5  
6 million in 2016 for additional staff in OTPS for  
7 IDNYC. The projected decline is based on projected  
8 future demand following the extraordinary ramping up  
9 process this year to meet the current demand.  
10 However, if the level of demand remains higher than  
11 projected, adjustments can be made on an expedited  
12 basis as evidence by the expedited response to the  
13 unprecedented demand this year. Thirteen million  
14 dollars, nine million dollars in city funds for  
15 reasonable accommodations for clients with  
16 disabilities including 74 baseline staff and one time  
17 contractor and consultant costs. 12.3 million  
18 dollars, 4.8 million in city funds, for 252 reform  
19 positions including additional call takers,  
20 homelessness prevention and legal services staff and  
21 HASA case managers. There are also savings in  
22 efficiencies in the budget, savings of 21.3 million,  
23 9.6 million in city funds grown to 28.5 million in  
24 FY--in 2017, which includes 12.7 million in city  
25 funds. From reductions in unnecessary and

2 duplicative administrative functions and positions,  
3 which are being repurposed to support HRA's reform  
4 staffing and other important operational changes.

5 Administrative savings of 380,000, 249,000 city funds  
6 in HASA as a result of a new contract to manage the  
7 emergency housing portfolio for homeless clients with  
8 HIV/AIDS. Improved claiming in 2015 is providing  
9 additional one-time revenue from federal fringe  
10 benefits producing city savings of 72 million. We  
11 want to give you an update on re-engineering. HRA's  
12 Re-engineering Initiative is about making it easier  
13 for clients to access benefits and reducing the  
14 burden of things like data entry on staff so they can  
15 focus on helping people in need. To do this, we are  
16 using the latest technology to give clients greater  
17 access in making our internal processes more  
18 efficient. Clients can apply and recertify for food  
19 stamps online through Access NYC and will be able to  
20 conduct interviews by phone based upon a waiver that  
21 we requested from the federal government. Clients  
22 can fax documents and scan them at HRA electronic  
23 document submission centers, and later this year,  
24 clients will also be able to view information online  
25 about their cases and update their information

2 remotely without coming to the centers. We're  
3 launching a new initiative that will allow clients to  
4 submit documents via their smart phones, and later  
5 this month we'll begin to roll that out at selected  
6 locations. In terms of SNAP access, this is federal  
7 food stamp benefits, there are 1.7 million New  
8 Yorkers currently receiving federal food stamps from  
9 HRA, but the data suggests that more qualify but do  
10 not receive benefits, particularly seniors and  
11 immigrants. So, we've made enrollment for federal  
12 benefits easier. Funding in FY 16 restores the head  
13 cut by the prior administration thereby improving  
14 services. Clients can now use PC's to submit  
15 applications and designated staff have been assisting  
16 clients with accessing services online. On demand  
17 interviews are being implemented so clients can call  
18 at their convenience rather than waiting to be called  
19 by a worker. This is, as again, pursuant to that  
20 federal waiver request. We're improving Access NYC  
21 so clients can recertify online as well as applying  
22 online, and we're launching the smart phone  
23 initiative that I described earlier. We're also  
24 launching a major outreach campaign, targeted ads on  
25 subways, buses, bus shelters, and in neighborhood

2 locations such as check cashing stores, bodega's,  
3 hair and nail salons, barber shops, and laundry  
4 marts. And we're partnering with dozens of community  
5 organizations, food pantries and advocates to  
6 generate a strong social media presence effort and  
7 gain support for the campaign by leveraging the  
8 digital presence for our community partners with  
9 specially designed posters and brochures at  
10 #Snaphelps. Materials are available in English and  
11 six local law [sic] languages, Spanish, Russian,  
12 Chinese, Korean, Arabic, and Haitian-Creole. We also  
13 would like to update you on our employment plan  
14 implementation. We have a recurring annual  
15 assistance in any given year at 500,000 clients.  
16 About half of these are children. Many more are  
17 seniors and have permanent or temporary disabilities  
18 and for that reason are not subject to work  
19 requirements under federal and state law. But of the  
20 approximately 90,000 who are subject to work  
21 requirements, 25,000 have jobs. However, they earn  
22 so little that they still qualify for public  
23 assistance, which is why it's so important to address  
24 the minimum wage. HRA is changing the way it  
25 provides employment services moving from a one size

2 fits all approach to improved and individualized  
3 assessments, emphasis on education, training and  
4 employment related services, and a long term  
5 sustainability in eliminated unnecessary punitive and  
6 duplicative actions. HRA's past approach was to  
7 track job placements for only six months, but 25 to  
8 30 percent of HRA's reported placements and  
9 assistance ending up with clients returning to  
10 reoccurring assistance again within 12 months.  
11 Reforms to HRA's employment programs are based on  
12 these principles, maximizing education training and  
13 employment related services. Sixty percent of  
14 employable clients lack a high school diploma. We  
15 want to allow recipients up to age 24 to participate  
16 in full time basic education. We want to increase  
17 access to targeted training for jobs in high growth  
18 industries and utilize available career pathway  
19 programs, and we want to allow participation in a  
20 four year college degree programs based up on the new  
21 state law permitting that. And we're replacing our  
22 one size fits all approach with improved assessments  
23 and programs that address specific client needs. The  
24 concept papers seeking proposals for new vendor  
25 contracts to implement these reforms are being

2 released by the beginning of next month. As I  
3 indicated before, we've also reduced the WEP  
4 placements down to 4,195 in city agencies and 590 not  
5 for profits, and we're going to continue our progress  
6 to phasing out WEP over this two year time frame that  
7 the state has given us with our new employment plan.  
8 In terms of homeless prevention, there's been a  
9 substantial investment in homelessness prevention  
10 services. Within HRA we created a Homelessness  
11 Prevention Administration which oversees new and  
12 expanded programs to enhance prevention and early  
13 intervention streamline services. These include  
14 homelessness diversions units located in our job  
15 centers and at DHS's Path facility and utilizing new  
16 tools including short time financial support to help  
17 with prevention. HRA has been deploying staff at  
18 home based offices around the city and at NYCHA  
19 Administrative Hearing Office at 250 Broadway in  
20 addition to staff in the Housing Courts. We've  
21 created an Early Intervention Team to conduct  
22 outreach to families and individuals in need of legal  
23 services or emergency rental assistance based upon  
24 early warning referrals in the Housing Court. We  
25 created a Landlord Abutment [sic] Services Unit to

2 address the needs and concerns of landlords and  
3 management companies that provide permanent housing  
4 to our clients. We created Rental Assistance Program  
5 to oversee and implement the LINC initiatives and  
6 city FEPS, and we have a legal services initiative  
7 program to manage HRA's consolidated legal services  
8 programs. And we have a new central rent processing  
9 unit that we created that centrally processes issues  
10 and delivers emergency rental assistance payments. In  
11 the area of legal services there's an unprecedented  
12 commitment in FY 16 of 49.2 million dollars in legal  
13 services growing to 65.2 million in 2017. This is  
14 unprecedented in the city. It's unprecedented across  
15 the country in terms of this kind of investment. And  
16 in particular the new programs in FY 16 are the Anti-  
17 harassment Protection Program. This is the program  
18 that we received five million dollars in the February  
19 plan to begin the initiative, and we've already begun  
20 to implement it. There's 20 million dollars in the  
21 2016 budget and 36 million dollars in the baseline in  
22 FY 17 as providers fully implement the services with  
23 an additional 4.3 million dollars for outreach to  
24 inform residents of upcoming changes to ensure  
25 they're aware of their legal rights. For residents



2 currently living in the six neighborhoods identified  
3 for rezoning in 13 zip codes in and around those  
4 areas to prevent tenant harassment and displacement,  
5 keep families and individuals in their homes,  
6 maintain affordable housing, and stabilize  
7 neighborhoods. We're preparing an RFP and we'll have  
8 the full contracts in place by the fall of 2016--  
9 2015. The Executive Budget also adds 5.6 million  
10 dollars for legal assistance and related services for  
11 immigrants focused on executive action for New  
12 Yorkers seeking to adjust their immigration status.  
13 This anti-harassment immigration funding is an  
14 addition to 23.6 million dollars in the 2016  
15 baseline. That includes 13.5 million dollars for  
16 anti-eviction services, including programs that were  
17 consolidated at HRA during 2015 and funds added in  
18 the November plan to increase the prior  
19 Administration's program from 6.4 million to 13.5  
20 million, 5.4 million for immigration related legal  
21 services, 2.1 million for civil legal services for  
22 seniors, and 2.6 million for legal services to secure  
23 federal disability benefits. As we know in 2015, HRA  
24 also oversees 18.2 million in legal services funding  
25 added by the Council during the budget process.

2 Rental assistance to prevent and alleviate  
3 homelessness is also a major initiative that's funded  
4 in this budget. LINC Rental Assistance adds funding  
5 for increased rent levels and to fully fund the LINC  
6 programs going forward. In 17--7.2 million in total  
7 in city funds in FY 16 and 13.1 million in total in  
8 city funds in FY 17 is to fund rental assistance at  
9 HUD Fair Market Rents. 2.1 million city funds  
10 beginning in 2016 increasing to 18.5 million in 2017,  
11 and 52.9 million in 2018 for a continuation of the  
12 existing LINC programs and for the new LINC 6  
13 program. The Executive Budget supports a projected  
14 6,355 new LINC placements in 2016 in addition to the  
15 nearly 2,000 move-outs already in 2015. LINC after  
16 Care, 1.6 million in total funds, 1.3 million in city  
17 funds for additional LINC after care services 2016  
18 and beyond. The LINC Landlord Campaign, one million  
19 in total in city funds in FY 15 and 2.7 million in  
20 total in city funds in FY 16 to implement the  
21 grassroots campaign to grow access to affordable  
22 housing for homeless families and adults. There now  
23 exists six unique LINC programs for homeless New  
24 Yorkers. LINC 1 is rental assistance for working  
25 families. LINC 2 is rental assistance for families

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2 with multiple shelter stays over a period of years.

3 LINC 3 is rental assistance for domestic violence

4 survivors. LINC 4 is rental assistance for seniors

5 and adults receiving supplemental security income,

6 social security disability or veteran's disability

7 benefits. LINC 5 is rental assistance for working

8 adults, and LINC 6 is rental assistance for families

9 with children already in the shelter system now who

10 can exit to live with relatives or families. Slide

11 17 shows you what has been accomplished so far.

12 Slide 27, I'm sorry, shows you what's been

13 accomplished so far in terms of the progress to date,

14 in terms of the relocations. It shows in total in FY

15 15 there have been 4,000 relocations with 12,030

16 children and adults benefitting to date in this

17 Fiscal Year. In particular, the city FEPS program is

18 a new program that HRA and DHS have implemented to

19 enhance efforts to prevent homelessness and provide

20 rental assistance. It's modeled on the State Family

21 Eviction Prevention Supplement program, but the rent

22 levels are increased to Section 8 range that

23 landlords will accept in the current market. There's

24 578,000 in total funds in FY 15 and 8.475 million in

25 total funds in FY 16, and 12 million dollars in total

2 funds and 13.6 million city funds in FY 17. City  
3 FEPS funds a single cohort of a thousand families and  
4 assumes 125 families will move into housing in this  
5 fiscal year, and the remaining 875 will move into  
6 housing FY 16. There's also the Federal Home Tenant  
7 Based Rental Assistance Program, our new home funded  
8 tenant rent based assistance program will provide  
9 assistance to 1,250 households that are either  
10 currently residing in shelter or are chronically  
11 street homeless. Eligible households will have at  
12 least one child or adults and receive a federal  
13 supplement or security income or social security  
14 benefits. This is funded at 10.8 million in total  
15 funds, including 590,000 in city funds for  
16 inspections in FY 16 and increased to 18.5 million in  
17 FY 17. Two more areas we want to cover. Three more  
18 areas we want to cover, HASA, IDNYC and Reasonable  
19 Accommodations. In the HASA area, as of March 2015  
20 we've been serving 32,309 medically eligible  
21 individuals through our programs and services. To  
22 enhance services for clients, we're implementing a  
23 HASA master lease contract to administer housing  
24 placements at a cost of 1.7 million in FY 16 and 2.3  
25 million in the baseline. We're developing an RFP for

2 a program within our existing budget to enhance  
3 employment services for people with HIV who are  
4 eligible through HASA or through our employment plan.  
5 For IDNYC, through a collaboration with the Mayor's  
6 Office of Immigrant Affairs and the Mayor's Office of  
7 Operation, HRA serves as the back office for IDNYC.  
8 The infrastructure for this program including the  
9 front facing enrollment staff as well as the back end  
10 review staff and all of the equipment sits within  
11 HRA. That's why the whole of the budget is in HRA.  
12 HRA support includes back end application processing,  
13 hiring of personnel, procurement, and space  
14 renovation. There's 6.5 million in FY 15 and 14.8  
15 million in FY 16 that's been added for a total  
16 funding of 20 million and 25 million respectively.  
17 And as I indicated earlier, if the level of demand  
18 remains higher than projected, adjustments can be  
19 made on an expedited basis as occurred this year for  
20 the unprecedented ramp up. We're currently  
21 processing 20,000 applications a week. Currently,  
22 operating at 26 locations including revolving pop-up  
23 sites. Lastly, we want to highlight the reasonable  
24 accommodations that we're providing in conjunction  
25 with the Lovely H. Litigation Settlement. As

2 discussed in the preliminary budget testimony, we'll  
3 be implementing significant reforms to provide  
4 greater access, accessibility to clients with  
5 disabilities as part of the proposed settlement that  
6 would end nine years of litigation in the Lovely H.  
7 case. Funding has been provided for 74 HRA staff,  
8 increased vendor services due to volume, onetime cost  
9 of infrastructure needs, and SSI federal appeal  
10 services in the new RFP to enhance reasonable  
11 accommodations for clients with disabilities.  
12 Related reforms involving We Care, the reasonable  
13 accommodations related to Lovely H. include clients  
14 can submit documents by mail, fax and email.  
15 Receipts are provided for submissions. Clients are  
16 offered copies of their bio psycho socials, and  
17 clients are offered assistance in obtaining needed  
18 medical documentation for We Care or reasonable  
19 accommodation requests. These are all changes in  
20 procedures. As we've done at prior hearings, we've  
21 included for you some examples of some of the reforms  
22 that are underway. Given the extensive testimony  
23 we've provided, we leave this for you. It's provided  
24 just to show you since February these are just the  
25 new things that we've been doing in addition to what

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2 we've previously reported on. So we appreciate the  
3 opportunity to provide to you an overview of all the  
4 things that are going on at the agency, and we  
5 welcome your questions, and we appreciate your  
6 support.

7 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you, and  
8 good morning. As you can see, we've been joined by  
9 Council Member Steve Levin. Do you want to read your  
10 opening statement? You're okay? Okay. So I'm going  
11 to ask a few questions, and then Chair Levin will  
12 continue. We've been joined by Council Members  
13 Richard, Minority Leader Ignizio, Council Member  
14 Levin, Chair Levin, Levine, Cornegy, and Rodriguez.  
15 So I wanted to talk about something that is very  
16 important to this Council, especially when we talk  
17 about transparency and this was part of our budget  
18 response, and it was the unit of appropriation.  
19 Given the amount of funding allocated towards public  
20 assistance grants within HRA's budget, would HRA  
21 consider working with OMB to create a new unit of  
22 appropriation for public assistance grants to better  
23 understand how funding is spent? Again, like I said,  
24 this was part of our response, and it just allows us  
25

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2 to be able to follow and see when there's ebbs and  
3 flows in funding.

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We're certainly  
5 interested in working with you to ensure  
6 transparency. In the past there was a process that  
7 the Council and a prior Administration developed for  
8 budget function tables, and one of the things that I  
9 think our testimony highlights is a number of the  
10 programs that we've created are new programs, and so  
11 they operate across different parts of the agency. So  
12 given, just using the traditional U of A is not going  
13 to give the kind of transparency that the budget  
14 function table will give you, and we're prepared to  
15 give that kind of detail. For example, the Rental  
16 Assistance Programs and some of the prevention  
17 programs are across multiple areas of the agency. So  
18 in order to be able to see, for example, what exactly  
19 we're doing the rental assistance or what exactly  
20 we're doing with legal services we think that the  
21 budget function table for these kind of new programs  
22 will give you the kinds of transparency that you're  
23 interested in, and we're very interested in sitting  
24 down at the staff level to show you the kinds of  
25 things that we think we can provide to you to give



2 you a sense of where--how much is being spent on  
3 rental assistance will be more clearly presented, for  
4 example, in a budget function table based upon that  
5 prior agreement between the institution. So we're  
6 very interested in working with you to give you what  
7 you need.

8 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Excellent. So  
9 we're going to follow up. We'll have the Finance  
10 Division follow up on that. I know that at your  
11 request, all legal service contracts have been  
12 consolidated into HRA beginning--well, it began  
13 Fiscal 15. Given that HRA now has oversight of all  
14 legal services contracts across the city for  
15 transparency purposes, has HRA considered creating a  
16 separate program area for legal services to better  
17 understand funding sources, spending and budgeting  
18 positions for legal services? And that might also  
19 speak to what you just mentioned, but--yes?

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Again, I think the  
21 budget function table will give you that assistance.  
22 The SSI Legal Services Program that's new give a good  
23 example of why simply creating the unit of  
24 appropriation may not give you the transparency that  
25 would be helpful, because it's part of our direct

2 delivery of services to provide a reasonable  
3 accommodation assistance through the We Care program  
4 and services for clients with disabilities, yet it's  
5 also a legal services program. So being able to give  
6 you a budget functions laid out will give you greater  
7 transparency. For example, that program would not be  
8 provided as clearly in the more traditional way than  
9 it would in a budget function table.

10 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: So what we will do  
11 is we'll follow up with the ones that we feel--

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] Okay.

13 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: we need more  
14 clarity on after the hearing. And then we're going  
15 to talk about effectiveness of the LINC Program.  
16 With the city spending millions of dollars to reduce  
17 the shelter population through the LINC Programs and  
18 other rental assistance programs for homeless  
19 clients, how is HRA measuring if these programs are  
20 successful? What additional reports or metrics will  
21 HRA make public to show the impact of the LINC  
22 program?

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, clearly, the  
24 most important outcome is the outcome for the  
25 children and adults that are involved, which is being

2 able to move out of shelter into a home. And so  
3 focusing on the numbers of move-outs has been a  
4 primary priority over these last four months as we've  
5 previously testified. When the programs were  
6 initially implemented at the state approved levels,  
7 they weren't sufficient in the marketplace to obtain  
8 apartments, and so essentially the program has been  
9 operating at its most effective level between only  
10 December and April, and in that period of time to,  
11 you know, in the excess of 2,000 households, nearly  
12 4,000 children and adults have been moved out. So  
13 we're going to continue to focus on the numerical  
14 impact as the metrics to keep focus.

15 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Is there a step  
16 before the move-out that we might be able to measure  
17 and say, "Okay, this is moving in the right  
18 direction," or-- because I got to believe that in  
19 many cases, the move-out, although we would all hope  
20 and really focus on having it done as quickly as  
21 possible, is there a stage that you can say these are  
22 things we measure?

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, I think the  
24 key determinate of the move-out, once the agencies  
25 become involved, DHS in terms of working with the

2 family and HRA in terms of issuing the benefits, it's  
3 a several day process.

4 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Okay.

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: So it's very  
6 expedited. The key factor in the move-out process is  
7 obtaining the apartment from the landlord.

8 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Right.

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: So once the  
10 apartment is obtained from the landlord, it's  
11 inspected through the inspection process. It's  
12 provided expeditiously to the family. The key is  
13 finding the apartments. It's one of the reasons why  
14 there's an investment in the--an outreach campaign,  
15 particularly to small landlords, and the Commissioner  
16 Taylor [sic] and I have certainly spent time meeting  
17 with landlords and meeting with brokers, and the  
18 outreach campaign to small landlords is really  
19 intended to bring those landlords to the programs and  
20 not relying upon waiting for people to find out about  
21 them. We want to make sure they know about them and  
22 come and participate.

23 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: And you know, the  
24 Council has a very powerful tool. Many members have  
25 their own e-blasts and own ways to be able to reach

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2 out to constituents and landlords in our districts,  
3 but I'm sure we would gladly engage in being able to  
4 spread the message within the--from the Council's  
5 perspective on how we can engage landlords, but also  
6 besides our constituents that may need help, but also  
7 the landlords that may be able to benefit from  
8 supporting the program.

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: That's a terrific  
10 offer. We're certainly going to take advantage of  
11 that. We really appreciate the partnership with the  
12 Council.

13 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: I know I just  
14 offered up everybody's e-blast, but I'm sure they  
15 would gladly do it.

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We really appreciate  
17 that, and again, we appreciate the support of the  
18 Council in the development of these programs. The  
19 General Welfare Committee in particular has had  
20 oversight over them, and we appreciate the Finance  
21 Committee's support as well for the dollars that are  
22 in the budget for these programs.

23 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Absolutely. So, I  
24 have two more questions and then we'll give it over  
25 to the Chair. So, this is about the transitional

2 jobs, and I know that you talked about the reform and  
3 a lot of the new approach of not just one size fits  
4 all, but I wanted to talk specifically about a  
5 population that may not need the college readiness,  
6 but have the job experience. So, how does HRA plan  
7 to address the subset of public assistance population  
8 when transitional jobs are more appropriate than  
9 college?

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, I think the  
11 employment plan that we presented that was approved  
12 by the state on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2014. So we've been  
13 operating under it now for four months. The  
14 employment plan provides for even within the kinds of  
15 approaches with education, not a one size fits all.  
16 So, the first key is to have appropriate assessments,  
17 and we're developing a new assessment tool to be able  
18 to assess what people's skills and abilities and  
19 interests are, and we're developing programs to match  
20 against what people's skills and abilities and  
21 interests are. College is an option. It's not a  
22 requirement for everybody. Although, what we do  
23 know, and we testified about this previously is that  
24 without a high school diploma or equivalency, you're  
25 going to earn about 20,000 dollars. With a high

2 school diploma or equivalency, you're going to earn  
3 about 30,000 dollars, and with two or more years of  
4 college, you're going to earn about 40,000 dollars.  
5 So education and training is a key part of moving out  
6 of poverty, and we want to really try to give those  
7 kinds of tools to our clients. The concept papers  
8 that are going to be released over the next couple of  
9 weeks will provide an opportunity for the vendor  
10 community to respond to what our vision is to adjust  
11 a whole range of clients, including exactly the kinds  
12 of clients that you're describing.

13 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Great. And then I  
14 want to talk as former Chair of Women's Issues, I'm  
15 about the--and I was really excited to see the DV  
16 advocates placed in police precincts. One of the  
17 domestic violence initiatives being funded in HRA's  
18 budget is placing domestic violence advocates in 25  
19 NYPD precincts. Where will the advocates physically  
20 be located within the precincts? Are you engaged in  
21 those conversations? And I also know that there's an  
22 RFP going out. Can you walk me through that?  
23 Because it seems that one of the things that we  
24 worked really diligently, which the Family Justice  
25 Center seemed to do is there's cultural

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2 sensitivities. So if we're RPF-ing this, is this--is  
3 it going to be one organization that hires all 25  
4 advocates, or what are you envisioning in this RFP  
5 process?

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, that's  
7 important here is that there's a partnership between  
8 HRA and the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic  
9 Violence, and the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic  
10 Violence runs the Family Justice Centers, and they're  
11 also going to be operationally running this program.  
12 So, in terms of how it'll be approached, all the  
13 values and learning and experience and proven track  
14 record from the Family Justice Centers will be  
15 brought to bear on this new initiative, and as it's  
16 being developed I'm sure that Commissioner Rose  
17 Pierre will be open to input, but the approach is  
18 going to be very similar to the approach that her  
19 agency has taken with respect to the Family Justice  
20 Centers.

21 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: So when you talk  
22 about the RFP, because I know a lot of the nonprofits  
23 at the Family Justice Center don't necessarily have  
24 to RFP to get in, so are you envisioning--what are  
25 you envisioning with that RFP process?



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2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I think that that's  
3 a process that the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic  
4 Violence is going to be developing.

5 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Okay.

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: And as I said, I'm  
7 sure that input's going to be welcomed from the  
8 advocacy community.

9 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Right.

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: The advocacy  
11 community has been extremely supportive of what we're  
12 doing at HRA and what the Mayor's Office to Combat  
13 Domestic Violence has been doing in domestic violence  
14 areas. So we welcome their input.

15 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Great. So I'm sure  
16 Council Member Gibson will also engage. One of the  
17 challenges that we have here is we're consistently  
18 trying to advocate for additional capital dollars to  
19 improve our local precincts, and I would hate to see  
20 the advocate kind of located in the closet in the  
21 basement to the left, which is unfortunately  
22 sometimes the only space that these precincts have,  
23 but I would hope that there is some sensitivity to  
24 privacy, but also the actual location sometimes can  
25 be burdensome in some of these local precincts. So,

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2 if those things could be taken--I'm in the weeds now,  
3 but it's something that often is--sometimes is  
4 overlooked and good intentions, this is the grey  
5 areas where often times advocates get placed in local  
6 precincts.

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I appreciate  
8 questions in the weeds. As you can see from our  
9 reforms, we know that sometimes that our clients have  
10 dramatically impacted by things in the weeds.

11 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Yes.

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: And larger policies  
13 are not as impactful as what actually happens day to  
14 day. So, I know that in moving forward that  
15 Commissioner Rose Pierre that we will be focused on  
16 these kinds of things, and we'll certainly take back  
17 your concerns to her.

18 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Great. And now  
19 we'll hear from Chair Levin.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, Chair  
21 Ferreras Copeland.

22 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you,  
24 Commissioner, for your testimony. My apologies for  
25 being late and my apologies to everybody here as

2 well. I wanted to ask if--and we greatly appreciate  
3 all the efforts that HRA has put into supporting  
4 individuals in the shelter system, those that are at  
5 risk of becoming homeless through the various  
6 programs that you've undertaken. I wanted to ask,  
7 with regard to the LINC programs, if you could take  
8 us through each program, each LINC individually to  
9 identify how much funding is going to be allocated in  
10 FY 16, and which LINC programs preside where. If  
11 it's in HRA or in DHS, that could be kind of laid out  
12 and delineated by program.

13 COMMISSIONER BANKS: All of the funding  
14 resides in the HRA budget, because its rental  
15 assistance, so it's ongoing assistances provides and  
16 in terms of the division of labor between the two  
17 agencies, that's in the area of responsibility of  
18 HRA. I want to walk you through the numbers program  
19 by program. Just one second. So, we can certainly  
20 provide you with this information, but let me go  
21 through it for you in the sense of the hearing. So,  
22 starting with LINC 1, which is for working families,  
23 the total gross expenditure in 2015 is 2.5 million,  
24 1.5 million city. In FY 16, the gross expenditure is  
25 16.4 million, 10.4 million city. For LINC 2, its 4.4

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2 million gross in FY 15, two million city in FY 15,  
3 18.2 million gross in FY 16, 7.6 million city in FY  
4 16. For LINC 3 it's 7.1 million gross in FY 15, 4.4  
5 million city, 31.2 million gross in FY 16, 22.3--I'm  
6 sorry, 23.5 million city. LINC 4 is 1.6 gross in 15,  
7 1.6 in city. In FY 16 it's 9.6 gross, 9.6 city.  
8 LINC 5 is 1.7 gross 15, 1.7 city in 15. In 16, it's  
9 9.2 gross, 9.2 city. LINC 6 is 0.4 gross 15, 0.4  
10 city, and 3.6 gross in 16, 3.6 gross--I'm sorry, 3.6  
11 city. You didn't ask, but I know we're going to get  
12 it, tenant based rental assistance program, its 10.8  
13 million gross in 16, 0.6 city.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right.

15 COMMISSIONER BANKS: For FEPS is 0.6  
16 gross in 15, 0.2 city, and in 16 it's 8.5 gross, 2.5  
17 city.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Just on the--so  
19 that's on the city FEPS, so that's able to draw down  
20 federal dollars is that right? That makes up the  
21 difference between city and the gross expenditure?

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Our hope is that  
23 it'll be able to draw down state money.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: State money?

25 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yep.

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2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: With regard to the  
3 LINC programs, the funding that--the difference  
4 between how much is city tax levy and the gross  
5 expenditures, that's all made up by state funding in  
6 those various programs?

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yes, and for some of  
8 them you can see that there isn't yet a state  
9 commitment. Our hope is that there would be, but  
10 there isn't as of yet.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Which ones have state  
12 commitments up to this point for out, like, for 16  
13 and out?

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: LINC 1 and 2.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: One and 2, okay. So  
16 3 would require an additional eight million dollars  
17 for in state funding for 16--

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing]  
19 Correct.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: and then the other  
21 three are at this point fully funded by city tax  
22 levy?

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Currently, and then  
24 you have the city FEPS numbers and can see what the  
25 hope is in terms of state funding. I mean, we

2 certainly have a--you know, we work in partnership  
3 with the state and we appreciate the support that we  
4 got and we look forward to continuing to partner with  
5 the state and are hopeful that these programs will be  
6 supported by the state as well as the city.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So far, how are you--  
8 how are you measuring the success? I think Chair  
9 Ferreras Copeland asked that, but I just wanted to  
10 follow up a little bit. In terms of--well, the  
11 numbers that we've seen so far which are impressive  
12 and obviously they've been concentrated in the second  
13 half of this Fiscal Year of FY 15. What are we  
14 seeing on the ground in terms of our shelter  
15 population, the overall numbers, the shelter census?  
16 How that--how is the success so far of LINC reflected  
17 in the objective numbers?

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I think that, you  
19 know, as the Mayor presented when the budget was--the  
20 Executive Budget was presented, you could see the  
21 impact of the years in which there was no rental  
22 assistance post-advantage. So from 2011 to 2014 you  
23 could see the growth in the shelter system was quite  
24 dramatic in those years where there was no rental  
25 assistance, and then you can begin to see the

2 beginning of a stabilizing of the census and coming  
3 down, and that's related to the beginnings of these  
4 rental assistance programs. As you have pointed out,  
5 and we appreciate your support on this, and we  
6 described it at the prior hearings on this, to re-  
7 create rental assistance was not an overnight thing,  
8 given the fact that the prior Administration had  
9 dramatically ended rental assistance, which was  
10 harmful to both the families that were affected and  
11 the landlords that were left without the continuation  
12 of that rental assistance, and so there certainly was  
13 a period of outreach to describe and present  
14 information about why these were better programs and  
15 were going to be more effective and that they would  
16 be not a repeat of what had happened under the prior  
17 Administration with Advantage. But as you see, you  
18 know, in terms of a metric between December and  
19 through April, there's been the substantial numbers  
20 of children and adults moving out of the shelter  
21 system because of these programs.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Actually, I had  
23 another question about the implementation of LINC.  
24 There's been some concerns expressed that landlords  
25 are charging the legal rent for--that they're

2 charging higher than the legal rent for LINC  
3 apartments, in other words, higher than a rent  
4 stabilized rent level. How is HRA ensuring that no  
5 landlord is actually gaming the system and getting  
6 more money in than they would otherwise get from a  
7 rent stabilized tenant?

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right. We have not  
9 seen that, and I would encourage if there's any  
10 information that you or anyone else has about it to  
11 provide it to us right away so that we can follow up  
12 on it. We have our own tools for enforcement in  
13 those situation with respect to charging unlawful  
14 rent levels. We also have an array of legal  
15 providers that we contract with who have the tools  
16 and skills and abilities to enforce the rights of  
17 tenants who are being overcharged. So, any  
18 information on that we would want right away so we  
19 can respond. I would also just add that the Rent  
20 Stabilization Association has been supportive of  
21 these programs and gave us multiple opportunities to  
22 present to their members about the programs, as in  
23 have included information about it in mailings to  
24 their members and also included, you know, frankly an  
25 account from the landlord about how the program is



2 working well. And so we appreciate our partnership  
3 with the Rent Stabilization Association in moving  
4 forward. So I think it's everybody's interest if  
5 there are nay instances of improper conduct for us to  
6 respond immediately. So, any information on that  
7 would be happy to follow up on and advise you of what  
8 we find.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Does HRA have access  
10 to DHCR legal rent levels? I know this came up in  
11 the previous Administration when we were talking  
12 about the kind of explosion in cluster sites where  
13 there's concern that cluster sites were in rent  
14 stabilized apartments and obviously that they're  
15 charging more than the rent stabilized rent level.  
16 And the previous Administration said, "Well, we have  
17 no legal ability to go in to DHCR and get those  
18 levels, because that's only accessible by the tenant  
19 themselves and since city wasn't the tenant really."  
20 We went around in circles a little bit on that.

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: well, here it is  
22 true that the tenant has access to the information,  
23 but that's why it's so important if there's any  
24 concerns about it that we will work with the tenant  
25 in a unit where there's any concern about over

2 charging to address that. So, if there's any  
3 information on it we would want it and we would  
4 follow up with a tenant and available legal providers  
5 that are our contractors to address it. But again,  
6 at this point we have not seen it, but--and we've not  
7 had any complaints about it made to us by any clients  
8 or anyone representing them, but we'd be happy to  
9 follow up if there are such complaints.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: In terms of the legal  
11 services, I just wanted to ask a little bit about  
12 this. So, there's obviously a ramping up of  
13 allocation of funds over the next year for the  
14 targeted zip codes that are--those zip codes, the 13  
15 zip codes I think that are targeted for rezoning. As  
16 you're aware, I represent the neighborhood  
17 Williamsburg Greenpoint that got rezoned 10 years ago  
18 but is still facing the pressures. In fact, it kind  
19 of took--it was a bit of a lull maybe during the  
20 recession, but it's really amped up again, and we  
21 have, you know, my office and Assemblyman Lentol's  
22 office and the State Senator's office are always  
23 inundated with calls of people that are either being  
24 harassed by their landlord or are seeing their rent  
25 increased by, you know, egregious amounts. In fact,

2 the Brooklyn DA just arrested a landlord who  
3 represents or who owns a number of buildings in that  
4 swath from Greenpoint through Williamsburg and into  
5 Bushwick, areas of really serious gentrification over  
6 the last 10 years, and that's just kind of an  
7 indication that it's still happening in that  
8 neighborhood, and I haven't given up hope, you know,  
9 or lost hope that longtime residents and rent  
10 stabilized residents are able to stay in that  
11 neighborhood. What can we do for a neighborhood like  
12 Williamsburg/Greenpoint that still needs legal  
13 representation as well?

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We doubled the size  
15 of the existing anti-eviction program which can  
16 certainly handle harassment type cases as well from  
17 6.4 million to 13.5 million. It was 6.4 under the  
18 prior Administration. We increased it this year to  
19 13.5 million. That program is available and there's  
20 also the other program that you described that's  
21 focused on particular neighborhoods. As we go along,  
22 we are very much focused on what the needs are. As  
23 we testify in the preliminary budget and it's in our  
24 testimony here, we're going to be conducting an  
25 analysis of what the needs really are in Housing

2 Court. As you know, I spent a lot of time during my  
3 career involved with housing court issues, and I know  
4 well what the problems are, but there are--there's a  
5 substantial amount of resources now that the Chief  
6 Judge and HRA are together putting into the delivery  
7 of legal services in the city, and we want to go back  
8 and look at what the needs are so we can target  
9 resources even more effectively. So we're going to  
10 keep focusing on this, and we'll continue to work  
11 with you and I see Council Member Levine is here as  
12 well, and we'll continue to work with the Council on  
13 targeting services for where they need to be  
14 targeted.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Just maybe a couple  
16 more questions and I want to turn it over to my  
17 colleagues and maybe we could return. With the city  
18 FEPS program that HRA is rolling out, how did HRA go  
19 about calculating the budget for this both in terms  
20 of the level of subsidy and the overall budget of the  
21 program?

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: The budget was  
23 calculated based upon the numbers of rental  
24 assistance of families that could be assisted with  
25 rental assistance within the amount that was put in

2 the state budget for a demonstration or pilot program  
3 to provide higher FEPS levels, and so that's how we  
4 calculated the number.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And how is HRA going  
6 to decide which families receive city FEPS versus a  
7 LINC subsidy? How is that determined?

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, the LINC  
9 subsidy is focused on very specific groups of  
10 families, also similar to the employment program. It  
11 gets away from the one size fits all of Advantage  
12 that wasn't successful, and there are families on the  
13 other hand who aren't eligible for rental assistance  
14 that we hope that city FEPS will help. It is  
15 available as well for facilities in which HRA--in  
16 which DHS has targeted to phase out the use of. So,  
17 city FEPS could be used to relocate families from  
18 those types of locations. City FEPS can also be used  
19 for families who are in the system as a result of  
20 eviction who might not fit the criteria for LINC 1, 2  
21 or 3. It could also be used for families that have  
22 come into the DHS system who are survivors of  
23 domestic violence for whom we couldn't accommodate  
24 them in the HRA system, and it could also be used to  
25 restore people to possession of apartments who have

2 been evicted or people who are on the verge of  
3 eviction who would certainly enter the shelter  
4 system. So we have a limited number based upon the  
5 state, what ultimately is in the state budget that  
6 are available to us, but we're trying to target it  
7 very effectively for people that are not covered by  
8 LINC.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Does somebody have to  
10 have received an eviction notice or be in the process  
11 of being evicted to qualify for city FEPS?

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: No.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So they can--they just  
14 have to be at risk of losing their apartment?

15 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Or already in the  
16 shelter system, but again, it's not an entitlement  
17 funding stream. It's a capped funding stream that  
18 was allocated in the state budget, and we've gone  
19 ahead and implemented the program and we're hopeful  
20 that it'll be supported with those funds.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Has HRA--have you seen  
22 going back to the existing FEPS program, the state  
23 FEPS program. I've heard just kind of from providers  
24 that there's a concern that landlords are not taking  
25 the state FEPS program because the subsidy level is

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2 lower than the LINC subsidy. So six months ago we  
3 were having a--we were cornered about landlords not  
4 taking the LINC program. Now, they're taking the  
5 LINC program, and there seems to be a concern that  
6 they're not taking the state FEPS program. Is that  
7 a--is that something that HRA has identified, or?

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Again, if there are  
9 any such complaints, I'd be very interested in  
10 following up on them. We haven't seen that  
11 considering that the city FEPS program was only three  
12 weeks old.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right.

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: It's not something  
15 we've seen. In terms of the state PEPS--

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] But I  
17 mean, yeah, right.

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: however, we've  
19 certainly raised concerns about the level of the  
20 state FEPS amount. It was set in the 2004/2005  
21 period, and we created city FEPS because we see that  
22 there's a gap in what the rent levels are.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. And then my  
24 final question for the time being, about the  
25 efficiencies that HRA has identified, how did you

2 identify those efficiencies? With the cost savings  
3 that you've been able to find, what are you doing  
4 with them? Are you reinvesting them in the agency?  
5 Are you giving them back to the general fund? How's  
6 that working?

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We're identifying  
8 positons that are unnecessary and duplicative and  
9 then repurposing those positions for the reform  
10 efforts. So, a number of effs [sic] that were  
11 testified about in the prior hearings and at this  
12 hearing require redeployment of staff and a  
13 traditional approach might have been, "Well, we just  
14 need more staff." And we've taken the approach that  
15 we could be more efficient with the dollars and the  
16 positions that we have, and so we redeploy them. As  
17 you recall, when I became the head of the Legal Aid  
18 Society when it was about a few seconds from  
19 bankruptcy, one of the ways that we were able to turn  
20 the organization around was to look at the central  
21 administration and to make determinations about  
22 whether or not all the positions that were there were  
23 needed for that operation, and then we repurposed  
24 those kinds of staff lines. And so here it seemed a  
25 natural thing to look at the central administration



2 of the agency to see where there might be the ability  
3 to repurpose positions out to be more client facing  
4 and to be involved with the kind of delivery of  
5 services. So we've been looking at administrative  
6 positions and making those judgements as we go on.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Have you had to in FY  
8 15 give any money back to the general fund?

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I mean, it's a  
10 process with OMB in the sense that we have made  
11 efficiencies and generated savings, and those savings  
12 have been repurposed to be able to help us implement  
13 our reforms.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Within the agency,  
15 though? You're not just giving it back to the general  
16 fund of the city?

17 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yes, but again, I  
18 want to make it clear, these are substantial changes  
19 in our delivery of services to clients that we're  
20 making and we're making them in concert with OMB's  
21 determinations about what makes sense in terms of  
22 efficiency and effectiveness. So, although, you  
23 know, we're making these decisions that are being  
24 made in a partnership with OMB looking at does that  
25

2 make sense, will there be savings, and then can be  
3 they repurposed for that purpose.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: We're all for it. We  
5 think that that's the wise--I believe it's the wise  
6 course of action to be able to repurpose savings for  
7 reforms within the agency. That's good. That's a  
8 good thing. I just want to make sure that that's  
9 what's going on at HRA because I want to make sure  
10 that that's consistent across agencies as well.

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I can speak to HRA,  
12 it's definitely the partnership we're having with  
13 OMB, and we appreciate their support. We couldn't be  
14 doing this without their efforts.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Great. Thank you,  
16 Commissioner.

17 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you, Chair.  
18 I just wanted to--before we go on to Council Member  
19 Gibson followed by Council Member Rodriguez. We  
20 worked very closely and very well when it comes to  
21 our immigration initiatives, and HRA has a new need  
22 in the executive action. I'm sorry, a new need in  
23 the executive action for 5.6 million fiscal 2016,  
24 which I understand is for DOCCA [sic] and DOPPA [sic]  
25 funding. Could you break down the funding for these

2 executive actions, and why wasn't this transparent in  
3 the budget or listed as DOCCA, DOPPA funding for us  
4 to be able to follow? And also, if you can clarify  
5 for me, why isn't NYIFUP included in the baseline?  
6 Is there plans to include it, and what would the  
7 accompanied--and what about the Accompanied Minor  
8 Initiative?

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right. I think it's  
10 important, that those are all important programs. I  
11 think it's important to see HRA's legal services  
12 funding in the context of a year ago there was no  
13 money in the HRA budget for legal services, and  
14 there'll be 49.2 million dollars in legal services  
15 funding in the budget in FY 16, growing to 65.2  
16 million in FY 17. And part of that was consolidation  
17 of existing programs, but what was consolidated at  
18 HRA was about 10 million dollars of different  
19 programs. So there's been a substantial growth of the  
20 funding, and there have been prioritization in terms  
21 of moving forward with funding and the prioritization  
22 was in the housing area first and that's where we put  
23 substantial resources, and then we put substantial  
24 resources relatively speaking to help clients with  
25 disabilities attain federal disability benefits and

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2 now additional dollars to help with executive action.

3 So, the question about the Family Unification

4 Initiative and other initiatives, it's not a value

5 judgement about whether something's good or bad. It's

6 more an approach of we've made substantial and

7 unprecedented investment in this area, and it's a

8 process of evaluating programs and seeing how they

9 operate. We've had that Family Unification Program

10 in our budget for less than a year, and we certainly

11 are interested in working with the Council in terms

12 of what should happen going forward. In terms of the

13 executive action dollars--

14 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: [interposing] So I

15 just want for clarity, I thought we had discussed

16 that this would be considered in the baseline for

17 this year because we had VERA [sic] who was

18 overseeing the project and then now we were hoping

19 that it would baseline so that it could then be under

20 your--so my understanding is that those conversations

21 happened last year and those commitments were made

22 last year, and we were hoping to see it in the

23 baseline this year.

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: As I have said on a

25 number of different occasions, HRA is happy to have

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2 any programs given to us, particularly in the legal  
3 services area. Our understanding was that there was  
4 not a commitment to baseline it. If that's a  
5 misunderstanding, we've got the budget process to  
6 have that discussion and--

7 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: [interposing] Well,  
8 we're going to continue to negotiate--

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] and  
10 discuss it.

11 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: and bring clarity  
12 to that part of the discussion.

13 COMMISSIONER BANKS: But clearly having  
14 all these programs in one place is good for clients  
15 and has been good for providers in terms of being  
16 able to try to standardize what they're being asked  
17 to do, and also from the perspective of calculating  
18 what the needs are. So I think the Family  
19 Reunification Project fits within that overall view  
20 of what we're trying to accomplish at HRA.

21 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: So it's more just  
22 priority as opposed to whether you feel one--you are  
23 in agreement that they're great programs. It's just  
24 about being able to convince you that you need to  
25 baseline.

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2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I think the issue is  
3 that we've invested a tremendous amount of city  
4 resources and legal services over the last year, and  
5 if we were sitting here, I think as I used to sit  
6 here, imaging that we went from basically city  
7 funding of 10 million dollars to 49.2--

8 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Right.

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: that's a pretty  
10 substantial trajectory of funding in the area. We  
11 haven't had an opportunity to look at everything.  
12 It's only been a year.

13 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Okay.

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: And we're continuing  
15 to evaluate and--

16 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: [interposing] So we  
17 just wanted to highlight that that is important to  
18 the Council--

19 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing]  
20 Understood.

21 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: in addition to  
22 what you're already doing. And then for transparency  
23 purposes with DOCCA and DOPPA.

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: So the dollars there  
25 had been at DYCD for a DOCCA legal services program

2 for whatever reason it wasn't consolidated last year  
3 with all the other programs. And so one objective  
4 from the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs was to  
5 consolidate that with the rest of the immigrant legal  
6 services programs that are being run at HRA through  
7 the old IOI initiative and through the Community  
8 Development Block Grant money. We have about 5.4  
9 million dollars in other immigration funding that's  
10 in the baseline at HRA. So, there was an objective  
11 to bring the rest of the immigration money to be  
12 consolidated. That's about two million dollars of  
13 the 5.4 million dollars, and--I'm sorry, the 5.6  
14 million dollars, and then there's approximately  
15 another two million dollars for executive action  
16 related services, and as we've said in the RFP for  
17 the IOI money, we're asking that all IOI providers be  
18 prepared to repurpose their services to ensure that  
19 we're ready when executive actions comes down, and  
20 there are a few responses that are due next week, and  
21 we're certain that the providers will be interested  
22 in that. There's also some amount of funding that  
23 had been for literacy services directly related to  
24 clients who are in the DOCCA process who need the  
25 literacy services to actually complete the process.

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2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Is that about the  
3 600,000--

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] that's  
5 about 1.3 million dollars.

6 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Okay. I guess  
7 you're taking it from different programs, is that  
8 what it is?

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: The total that came--

10 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: [interposing] Its  
11 two million for--two million for one, two million for  
12 the other, and the initiative or the new need was 5.6  
13 million.

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yeah, I think the  
15 exact numbers, now that I'm looking in front of me,  
16 is--it's about two million dollars for legal  
17 assistance related services, 1.3 million dollars for  
18 straightforward cases, about 900,000 dollars for  
19 community based organization navigators, and 1.3  
20 million dollars for literacy services. But where did  
21 it all come from, though, is what I'm focused on,  
22 that there was money for existing DOCCA related  
23 services that were consolidated back. There's some  
24 additional funding to deal with executive action, and  
25 some of the literacy services had to come because



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2 they were directly connected to the legal services.

3 But again, this is from our perspective at HRA, its  
4 part of the overall initiative of the Mayor's to  
5 consolidate the legal services in one place, and I  
6 know it's a concern for the Commissioner of  
7 Immigration Services to have all the immigration  
8 legal services programs in one place. So we were  
9 happy to receive them, and we got them, and I know  
10 that there's the concern about the one immigration  
11 program, legal services program that's currently  
12 discretionary money and not currently in our  
13 baseline.

14 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Right. Right. So  
15 we'll follow up. We will now hear from Council  
16 Member Gibson followed by Council Member Rodriguez.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you, Madam  
18 Chair, and good morning to you, Commissioner and your  
19 team. Thank you for your very, very detailed  
20 presentation. I always look forward to these Power  
21 Points. Very helpful. So, my two Chairs talked about  
22 a lot of what I wanted to say around the new city  
23 FEPS coming from Albany with the state FEPS and  
24 understanding a lot of the challenges. So I  
25 appreciate the one caveat that the state program has

2 that we don't have, and that's the pending eviction.

3 So, there will be a lot of people to me that will be

4 really eligible for the city FEP. So I appreciate

5 that. I wanted to ask about the Emergency Food

6 Assistance Program. I can't tell you how long my

7 lines are at my food pantries. Many of my food

8 pantries are recipients of the state program as well

9 as EFAP, and I noticed that there is no talk of an

10 increase in EFAP. So, I wanted to know your

11 thoughts, and are we looking to increase any funding

12 for EFAP.

13 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, as you know

14 from what you're hearing from the providers and also

15 I know from your prior state role, there are some

16 additional funds that have been put into the process

17 on the state level, approximately 2.2 million

18 dollars, and we're trying to evaluate what the

19 impact's going to be in the city.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay. So in

21 terms of any funds drawing from the city, we're not

22 looking at that? It's just state money?

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We want to evaluate

24 what that impact is, what--you know, there's a lot of

25 reports on what the gaps were.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay.

3 COMMISSIONER BANKS: And you know, we were  
4 involved with discussions with providers back in--or  
5 advocacy groups back in November/December period  
6 about how to fill those gaps.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay.

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: And the state and its  
9 budget came through with a proposal about how to fill  
10 some of those gaps, and we're trying to evaluate how  
11 well that is going to fill those gaps.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay. I wanted  
13 to know if you could expand a little bit. I'm very  
14 interested to hear there's been such a focus on  
15 mental and behavioral health. As you know, I'm  
16 Chairing Public Safety, working with the Police  
17 Department, but I see that we're looking to have a  
18 joint partnership with HHC and provide mental health  
19 services in our Family Justice Centers. So I  
20 represent the Bronx, FJC, and I just wanted to know--  
21 I know that there will be an increasing of staff and  
22 mental health providers, but what are you guys  
23 looking to do to really tackle those families,  
24 obviously victims of DV, and how we're tying the  
25 mental health to that as well?

2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Again, it's in  
3 partnership with the Mayor's Office of Domestic  
4 Violence--to Combat Domestic Violence, and as you  
5 know, from their operation of the FJC in the Bronx  
6 that there's been a concern about the need for  
7 enhanced services, particularly for mental health  
8 services. So I know that's part of the  
9 Commissioner's initiative there to really make those  
10 services available, and I think having the dollars in  
11 the budget is going to allow the Mayor's Office to  
12 Combat Domestic Violence to develop a program to do  
13 exactly what I know you've been concerned about and  
14 others have as well.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: So there's a  
16 joint partnership on the RFP which will come out,  
17 right?

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: The RFP will be  
19 coming through the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic  
20 Violence services.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay, MOCD, okay.  
22 Okay, got it.

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: And HRA plays a  
24 role, a partnership in term in terms of a back office  
25 support and so forth for their operations.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay. I wanted to  
3 ask about the Work Experience Program, the WEP  
4 Program, and I know OTDA [sic] is very involved in  
5 the language around phasing out the WEP program and  
6 looking at more client-based job skills and training,  
7 etcetera. So, I just wanted to know if there's any  
8 update on the phasing out as well as the existing  
9 back to work contracts, what's going to happen with  
10 those providers and how are we looking to the future  
11 to draw down on this client-based approach? So, what  
12 is the conversation you're having with the state  
13 around this?

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, the state did  
15 approve our employment plan--

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: [interposing] The  
17 two year plan, alright.

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yeah, to include the  
19 two-year plan, including the component to phase out  
20 WEP during the two years, and we've already gone  
21 about eliminating the 500 WEP placements at CUNY. So  
22 that's taking it down. And the current numbers are  
23 there are approximately 4,200 WEP placements in city  
24 agencies, which is substantially reduced from  
25 previous levels, and there are about 590 placements

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2 in not for profit providers. We are continuing to  
3 develop our alternatives, and we will be putting out  
4 concept papers. We've gotten input, and we're  
5 putting out concept papers for the new Back to Work  
6 Contracts that will be part of the effort to continue  
7 to phase out WEP. Those concept papers will come out  
8 beginning of next month.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay.

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: And that will be the  
11 beginning of the RFP process for new contracts. The  
12 model is not going to be a Back to Work model. It's  
13 going to be a model that's focused on training and  
14 placement.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Right, okay.

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Skills training and  
17 placement.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Great. And I  
19 guess my final question as my time runs down. Our  
20 Chair talked a little bit about the victim advocates  
21 that NYPD is working on with you guys around domestic  
22 violence services at the precinct level. I guess the  
23 one question I had and what I envisioned in this is  
24 that the clients would be--oh, sorry. The workers  
25 would be in the precinct and they may respond with

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2 the police as they go out to address a DV call. So,  
3 I agree with the Chair. I don't want any of these  
4 workers to be sitting in a precinct as well. I  
5 thought it would be more of a partnership to helping  
6 the police respond to DV calls. Is that your vision?

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: That certainly is  
8 something that we're going to have to follow up with  
9 the Commissioner at the Mayor's Office to Combat  
10 Domestic Violence. I know that she has concerns about  
11 making sure that what's done is effective. So--

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: [interposing]  
13 Right.

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: certainly follow up  
15 with here on that.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay. Thank you  
17 very much. Thank you, Commissioner. Thank you,  
18 Madam Chair.

19 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you, Council  
21 Member. We will hear from Council Member Rodriguez.  
22 We've been joined by Council Members Crowley,  
23 Rosenthal and Johnson.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Thank you,  
25 Chair, and thank you, Commissioner, for the great

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2 job. It's always great to have someone in charge of  
3 an important agency as HRA that has always been the  
4 advocator for working class and middle class. So, I  
5 know that you bring an important perspective to this  
6 agency.

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Thank you very much.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: My first  
9 question is about the Burial Allowance Program.  
10 Right now, the funeral cost cap ceiling for someone  
11 to qualify to that program is 1,700 dollars. I  
12 believe it doesn't make sense, because I can tell you  
13 that funeral [inaudible 01:20:36]. The price there  
14 is about 3,000 or 4,000 dollars. And as you have  
15 worked with us on bringing some reform. I believe it  
16 is important that even though someone that you keep  
17 the cap on 900 dollars of the maximum that someone  
18 can benefit through this program, that the cap should  
19 not be 1,700 dollars, because where in the city a  
20 funeral costs 1,700 dollars? So, can you--can we  
21 work and see how some changes are made that if  
22 someone that is in need to cover their expenses for  
23 their funeral is able to still qualify to get some  
24 help, even though the cost of the funeral is 4,000  
25 dollars, I think the average price in New York City?



2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: You know, one of the  
3 things that we've been involved in is a lot of  
4 outreach to our own staff, and so I spend a lot time  
5 meeting with the front line staff, and I have to say  
6 that they raised exactly the same concern that you  
7 raised, which I think is a tribute to their concerns  
8 for our clients. We have to operate within state  
9 regulation here, and there are some limitations on  
10 what we can do under state regulation, but we can  
11 certainly take a closer look with you at what's  
12 feasible in the context of state regulations, but I  
13 want to say we're not free to operate in this area  
14 without the overall construct of the state  
15 regulations.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Great. And I  
17 appreciate it, and I know that you all have been  
18 trying to do whatever you can. So, we hope that, you  
19 know, we can get some improvement. The second thing  
20 is the students at CUNY. As you know, like, you have  
21 made important progress to, but we are still of that  
22 reality where the students, the percent of the  
23 students that are full time at CUNY, in the past they  
24 were not able to--they were mandated to work in order  
25 to qualify for services through the HRA. I know that

2 you started making the changes in what's very  
3 important to the community college. Is that changes  
4 now covering all the students?

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yes. We've got 1,271  
6 CUNY students who are participating in college as an  
7 approved activity. The state law set forth what the  
8 terms are. We are permitted after the first year of  
9 college, we're permitted to count the activity as  
10 long as there are 20 hours for work activity in  
11 addition to school, and we're doing that, and that's  
12 why we've created the Work Study Program to replace  
13 those CUNY WEP slots so that we could give an  
14 opportunity for our clients at CUNY to be able to  
15 participate in the work activity under state law.  
16 So, state law set a requirement for continuing to be  
17 involved in work activity and we wanted to create a  
18 way for it to happen. We've been working very closely  
19 with CUNY on these issues and they've been extremely  
20 supportive of our efforts to try to encourage more of  
21 our clients to be able to participate in these  
22 programs.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Great. And in  
24 your role to reimburse or to pay for the Medicaid, do  
25 you have any role, or what is the level of

2 supervision of individuals that are rejected when  
3 they apply to the Medicaid? And this is coming from-  
4 -like, I had a particular case. Someone that has a  
5 disability check of 1,500 per month. He's two kidneys  
6 are not working. He need to do a transplant. He  
7 have applied for his Medicaid twice, and the reason  
8 why has still not been able to get Medicaid because  
9 he get 1,500 dollar monthly for benefit.

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right. The--we don't  
11 set the eligibility criteria, but having said that,  
12 if you could give us information after the hearing  
13 about that particular person, we would be happy to  
14 see if there's anything possible that could be done.  
15 We administer the program, but it's within the  
16 construct of eligibility criteria set for us. Some  
17 people now who are applying for Medicaid applied  
18 directly to the state and some people applied to us,  
19 and I would want to know more about that person, but  
20 as a basic matter, the criteria that would make  
21 someone ineligible for Medicaid because of those  
22 kinds of dollars are not within our control, but none  
23 the less, we look and see the person, who the person  
24 is, see if there's anything that could possibly be  
25 done for them.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Thank you to  
3 you and to your staff for always being there for us.

4 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you, Council  
5 Member Rodriguez. We will have Council Member Levine  
6 followed by Council Member Miller followed by Council  
7 Member Crowley.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Thank you, Madam  
9 Chair, and thank you, Commissioner. Great to see  
10 you. So much good news that you're reporting so far.  
11 You won't be surprised that I'm going to focus on  
12 one piece of that good news, which is the increase in  
13 funding for civil legal services. I'm so excited  
14 about this. I'm trying to add up the numbers. I  
15 want to just make sure I have the big picture right.  
16 The total amount of legal services in the civil arena  
17 all housing plus immigration plus, I guess, benefit  
18 assistance, everything combined, is that about 47  
19 million or would it be--

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] it's  
21 49.2 million.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: 49.2 million.

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Growing to 65.2 in  
24 FY 17.

25

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Excellent. And  
3 how much of that is specifically for Housing Court  
4 work of the 49.2?

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: The vast majority--  
6 I'm going to do something I would never recommend  
7 doing in a court which is add it up in my head. So,  
8 the Anti-Eviction Program that I talked about earlier  
9 with the Chair is 13.5 million and the Anti-  
10 Harassment Tenant Protection Program is, when fully  
11 implemented, 36 million. So, in FY 17 dollars it's  
12 nearly 50 million dollars in I think its 49.5 million  
13 dollars in housing related services. It's slightly  
14 less in 16 because of the ramping up of the housing  
15 program.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Maybe about 35  
17 million-ish in FY 16.

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yeah, yeah. It's  
19 about 34.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Excellent. As you  
21 know--

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing]  
23 33.688299.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Say that number  
25 again?

2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: So it's about 36  
3 million.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Got it, great. As  
5 you know, the Council's considering creating an  
6 Office of Civil Justice that would probably end up  
7 under your agency. We're anticipating a budget of  
8 about two million for that. Is there anywhere in the  
9 Mayor's proposed FY 16 budget that would provide for  
10 operating that office, even though the bill hasn't  
11 passed yet?

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, as--I think as  
13 we testified at the hearing, we have a substantial  
14 staff already administering this level of legal  
15 services, and I think at the point in time when the  
16 bill proceeds, I think it would be certainly a good  
17 conversation to have about what you actually think  
18 would be needed. It's more than what we're currently  
19 doing in terms of the amount of staff to have  
20 allocated. We've allocated enough staff to manage  
21 that level of contracts, and that's a substantial  
22 level of contracts.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: But presumably we  
24 could accommodate that within the next Fiscal Year  
25 just by repositioning existing resources?

2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, as I said,  
3 we've got the resources already deployed at the level  
4 you're looking for to run what we're already running.  
5 So, we believe that we'd be well-positioned to  
6 continue to run what we're already running at that  
7 level of staff.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: So, but--

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] And  
10 achieve what you're looking to achieve.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Right, additional  
12 work would require more resources, which might have  
13 to wait 'til FY 17?

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, for example,  
15 one of the big things that I know you and we are  
16 concerned about is evaluating the need in Housing  
17 Court, and we've committed to do that already with  
18 the staffing model that we put in place for  
19 ourselves. So, we feel confident that we've got the  
20 staff to do that analysis, and that would certainly  
21 be the--again, I don't want to anticipate what it is  
22 that you would want to have occur, but I think from  
23 all the dialogue that that would be a first order of  
24 business to evaluate what those kinds of needs really  
25 are. And so we're positioned to be doing that anyway

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2 with the staff that we've deployed to manage those  
3 contracts.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Got it. I'm  
5 trying to understand the difference between anti-  
6 eviction legal services and anti-harassment legal  
7 services. Is anti-harassment a more expansive  
8 definition that includes all eviction cases, but also  
9 instances where actually the tenant is proactively  
10 affirmatively taking action against the landlord?

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I think it--for our  
12 Anti-Eviction Program it encompasses harassment  
13 cases. The harassment tenant protection cases aren't  
14 necessarily a routine eviction case, but for example,  
15 a building that has no heat and hot water, a building  
16 where there's overcharges, a building where there's  
17 repeatedly eviction proceedings being brought as a  
18 way of trying to oust the tenants, eviction  
19 proceedings that are brought as a result of rent over  
20 charges, eviction proceedings that are brought after  
21 a tenant has brought a Housing Court action. I mean,  
22 all the kinds of cases that I know the council's been  
23 very concerned about are able to be funded through  
24 these mechanisms.

25



2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: For sure. So just  
3 to understand the up zoned neighborhoods, the  
4 services provided will be more limited focusing only  
5 on cases where there's harassment by the landlord.  
6 What portion of eviction cases generally is there  
7 harassment accusation against the landlord?

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I'm not sure saying  
9 it's more limited is right.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Okay.

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I think it's just a  
12 question a targeting the resources to different kinds  
13 of cases in those neighborhoods. The evaluation of  
14 what the work would be for both the eviction  
15 prevention programs that we doubled in size and the  
16 anti-harassment tenant protection programs was we  
17 looked at what the filings were in Housing Court.  
18 That was the level of analysis to make a projection  
19 about the work load would be. What is the volume of  
20 Housing Court were coming out of those neighborhoods  
21 currently, and therefore, what would the potential  
22 need be? So it wasn't an analysis that applied some  
23 other factors other than looking at what's the volume  
24 in Housing Court. That could be an area in which  
25

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2 substantial protections are going to be needed for  
3 tenants.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Okay. Thank you  
5 very much.

6 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you, Council  
7 Member. We'll have Council Member Miller followed by  
8 Council Member Crowley, followed by Council Member  
9 Rosenthal.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you, Madam  
11 Chair and Mr. Chair, and thank you Commissioner for  
12 being here again. This is obviously a pretty  
13 impressive budget and like my colleagues, I do want  
14 to focus on particular areas of it and I'd like to  
15 begin with the human capital portion of it, because  
16 obviously with such an impressive budget and all the  
17 new programming and initiatives involved within the  
18 budget, someone has to implement this. So, in  
19 implementing these programs, how do you determine the  
20 compliance with Local Law 63 to ensure that this work  
21 could first be done in house before contracting out?

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, the work that  
23 we're doing is primarily in house. I think the work  
24 that is in the new programs that we're talking about  
25 that HRA itself is running, they're primarily the

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2 legal services programs, and so they're--we're just  
3 drawing upon--I think the judgement's been made by  
4 multiple administrations that contracting with  
5 organizations like legal services and the Legal Aid  
6 Society and other groups like them that are unionized  
7 is an appropriate way to proceed. So I think the  
8 services that you're thinking about are ones that  
9 we're primarily providing by our own staff. Some of  
10 the services like job placements and job training  
11 have also been traditionally done by different  
12 providers that have that experience. There's also a  
13 tremendous expansions, we think, of the kinds of  
14 partnerships that we're working with DC 37 in house,  
15 and I know that Local 371 and Local 1180 and Local  
16 1549 we work very closely with on these reforms.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: So has this  
18 increased programming and increased your headcounts  
19 internally?

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yes. Yes.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Okay.

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: And repurposed it.  
23 In some places there are positions, you know, as I  
24 had referenced to Council Member Levin. There are  
25 some functions that we thought were not functions

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2 that the agency needed to continue, but rather than  
3 have, you know, eliminate the people, we're  
4 repurposing those positions within the constructs of  
5 the unionized workforce that we've got to be able to  
6 deliver services in a different way.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Of course, that  
8 makes sense. So, in the implementation of the  
9 employment plan where these obvious social services  
10 are contracted out, are those contracts and vendors  
11 responsible for living wages for their workers?

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, with the--I  
13 think there's the--all the contracts are going to  
14 have to be \$11.50 at this point. So, that was part  
15 of the budget to ensure that these human services  
16 contracts are at that rate.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: So this contract  
18 could support the \$11.50 an hour and the two, two and  
19 a half percent cost of living adjustment as well?

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: All the contracts  
21 that we are going to let out have to be within the  
22 same construct of the city budget. Now, the exact  
23 dollars that we're going to be able to provide to  
24 vendors to do the employment services, which is at  
25 the concept paper stage now, and so we'll be issuing-

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2 -that's the first stage of the procurement process.

3 So we're putting out those concept papers, and one of  
4 the things we'll certainly hear back from them is  
5 what the cost structure's going to be.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Here's kind of  
7 something that just popped up. At the rate of pay,  
8 at the current rate of pay for these program--these  
9 workers who are program providers, is it likely that  
10 they would qualify for subsidized services  
11 themselves? SNAP? Yeah, Medicaid?

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Not at \$11.50 they  
13 should not.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: If they're a  
15 family of two, three, four, have you did the  
16 calculations on that?

17 COMMISSIONER BANKS: That, I don't have  
18 the information for that, but I do know that we're  
19 able to pay the \$11.50, and what happens then within  
20 those entities, some of which are unionized and some  
21 of which are not are issues that we'll certainly want  
22 to--we'll certainly be willing to look at with you.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Okay, so quickly  
24 on--I want to digress and talk about WEP. You said  
25 it was city agencies about 4,500 and there was some

2 not for profits, could you tell me who those not for  
3 profit was and if there are any others currently  
4 working in agencies such as the MTA, and if so what  
5 are those numbers? And what do we plan to do about  
6 it?

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We can get you those  
8 numbers, but that's part of the two year phase out of  
9 all WEP placements, that the state approved our plan  
10 to phase them all out, and we have been making  
11 progress on phasing them out. We got approval of  
12 this plan on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2014, and over the last  
13 period of time we phased out the 500 placements at  
14 CUNY. So there--we're not putting any HRA clients in  
15 WEP placements at CUNY anymore. We replaced that  
16 with work study. We're in the process of phasing out  
17 the placements at HRA itself, and we have currently  
18 less than 5,000 total placements in a program that at  
19 one point had substantially more than that, and we  
20 can certainly provide the committees with the  
21 agencies that currently still have WEP placements and  
22 with the not for profits that currently still have  
23 WEP placements.

24

25

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Of those folk  
3 that have been phased out, are they currently  
4 gainfully employed?

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We have stopped  
6 providing--we've been reducing the numbers of  
7 placements we've been providing to agencies by  
8 permitting clients to participate in other  
9 activities. Remember, the Work Experience Program was  
10 created by the Giuliani Administration and carried  
11 out by the Bloomberg Administration in lieu of other  
12 activities being approved. So, since we now permit,  
13 for example, 1,271 of our clients to be in four year  
14 college, they're not being sent to WEP placements  
15 anymore.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: How many are  
17 gainfully employed?

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Those 1,271 clients  
19 are in four year college.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Oh.

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: They're college  
22 students.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: But you don't know  
24 how many are employed that were taken off the roll?

25

2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Those 1,271 students  
3 are on our case load. They're students. They're in  
4 work study placements. Under the prior model, those  
5 1,271 clients would have been WEP placements in city  
6 agencies. We stopped requiring that.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Okay, thank you.  
8 And the MTA, you don't know?

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: They're still--  
10 that'll be in the list we'll give you. There are  
11 still placements there.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Last year was  
13 about 3,000?

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We can give you that  
15 number. It's less than 3,000.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, Council  
17 Member Miller. Commissioner, I just wanted to ask a  
18 question about the COLA [sic] that is being offered  
19 to those that work in the human services field.  
20 First off, is that budgeted in your agency budget or  
21 is it someplace else?

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: It's not currently in  
23 our budget, and we'll be working with OMB in terms of  
24 how to implement it.



2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So it's not--it's not  
3 reflected in--my understanding is it's not reflected  
4 in agency budgets in the Executive Budget, right?

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: IT's not reflected in  
6 our budget and the Executive Budget--is in the  
7 Executive Budget, however.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So in the Executive  
9 Budget, just someplace else?

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Correct.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Just want to  
12 throw it out there because I've heard from those that  
13 are working in the human services field that two and  
14 a half percent is--they're underwhelmed by that  
15 number. As you're aware the DC 37 contract  
16 settlement was significantly more than that with some  
17 back raises, and so I just want to make it clear.  
18 You don't have to respond, but I think that--I just  
19 want to make sure it's on the record and that you  
20 know that what we've heard from not for profit  
21 providers and advocates is that two and a half  
22 percent, if that's a onetime thing, is really not  
23 sufficient. They're asking for 10 percent ultimately  
24 over some years, whether it's five and five or three,  
25 three and three and a half or whatever, but--or

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2 three, three and four, but just want to put it out  
3 there that two and a half as it like stands on its  
4 own one year is just not going to do it.

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Okay, I hear your  
6 message.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Cool, thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Council Member  
9 Crowley followed by Council Member Rosenthal.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Good morning,  
11 Commissioner.

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: How are you today?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: I'm doing well.  
14 Thank you for your presentation and for your detailed  
15 Power Point of the budget testimony. It's very user  
16 friendly. I want to focus on one area of your work  
17 and that has to do with helping the homelessness  
18 population. You have provided a lot of new vouchers,  
19 which I am 100 percent in support of and would like  
20 to see more be given to households. How many more  
21 households were helped through this Fiscal Year in  
22 comparison to last Fiscal Year, and how has that  
23 impacted the rate of homelessness?

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, comparing--  
25 prior to this last Fiscal Year, there wasn't a rental

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2 assistance program that this city had. The city had  
3 a rental assistance until 2011, the Advantage  
4 Program, and the prior Administration terminated it.  
5 The amount of--in the last 10 months of the year,  
6 approximately 4,000 families have moved out to all  
7 forms of permanent housing including through rental--  
8 I'm sorry, 4,000 households have moved out including  
9 families without children and single adults have  
10 moved out of the shelter system. That has brought  
11 some stability to the shelter system, and for the  
12 first time in a long time actually permitted a  
13 reduction in the census. We're projecting an  
14 increased amount of rental assistance next year to  
15 help even more families relocate. Nearly 85,000--

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: [interposing]

17 8,500 or?

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: House 85--I'm sorry,  
19 8,500 households are projected to be able to relocate  
20 in the next Fiscal Year.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: in addition to  
22 helping to sustain the current 4,000?

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Correct, correct.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: So a total of  
25 over 12,000?

2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yeah, some of those  
3 4,000 households went to the Housing Authority. Some  
4 of those 4,000 went to Section 8. So, I want to make  
5 sure we're comparing apples to apples. In the current  
6 Fiscal Year, 2,000 households have been moved out as  
7 result of the various LINC programs or city FEPS, and  
8 it's that 2,000 when combined with the 84--8,500 next  
9 year that would be sustained financially in the  
10 budget. I don't want to mix apples to apples.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Right.

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Apples to oranges.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: It'd be good to  
14 see some type of like bar graph showing the rate  
15 decreasing, and hopefully the need for shelters  
16 decreasing. Hopefully, we could be closing some of  
17 these really bad shelters. I know that's really DHS,  
18 but it's with the reduction of the population.  
19 Hopefully, we could work towards that. Do you think  
20 that you're going to have enough impact with these  
21 numbers to reduce the population and reduce the need  
22 for the current system?

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I know DHS has closed  
24 some shelters, and that's been reported by them, by  
25 the agency. We work very closely with DHS on these

2 matters, and the stability that the rental assistance  
3 has brought to the system is the first stability  
4 we've had in years, and so clearly the aim is to  
5 continue to that stability and move additional  
6 households out of the shelter system. I think that  
7 the chart that's in the Power Point that's up there  
8 now will show you, again, to go apples to apples, the  
9 top line shows you the rental assistance impact in  
10 the current Fiscal Year. The bottom line shows you  
11 that total impact of all housing resources in the  
12 current Fiscal Year. And if you wanted to then see  
13 what is next Fiscal Year looks like, so next Fiscal  
14 Year there's another nearly 8,500 households moving  
15 out. That would be on top of the 2,000 households  
16 that have been able to move out so far with rental  
17 assistance. So you can see a substantial commitment  
18 to rental assistance by the Administration compared  
19 to what was virtually no rental assistance through  
20 December 2013.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: And the state  
22 provides 50 percent of these vouchers, the cost of  
23 the vouchers?

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: No. The state is  
25 supporting currently two of the rental assistance

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2 programs, and we are looking for additional support.

3 The 1,250 home vouchers are federally financed and  
4 the city has allocated those to HRA to use in  
5 partnership with DHS to help relocate families from  
6 the DHS and HRA shelter systems.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: And how is it  
8 working out with NYCHA? How quickly are units  
9 becoming available to help the homelessness  
10 population?

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, I think as you  
12 can see, there's been nearly 1,786 households moved  
13 out so far between, during the current period of time  
14 we're looking at. So there's been a substantial  
15 relocation effort going on this year.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: And what is the  
17 number that we're looking at for next year? Is that  
18 the number underneath it?

19 COMMISSIONER BANKS: No, that's just--  
20 this just shows you what we've done so far in this  
21 Fiscal Year and for next Fiscal Year those plans are  
22 still being developed.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Okay, thank you.

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Okay.  
25

2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you, Council  
3 Member Crowley. We will hear from Council Member  
4 Rosenthal followed by Council Member Johnson.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you very  
6 much, Chair Ferreras. Commissioner, thank you for  
7 your help today in helping us try to unwind what's in  
8 the budget and understand it better. And you and I  
9 had a brief conversation, but I want to follow up on  
10 the issue of the contract increase, which as I heard  
11 you say is sitting in a different line in the  
12 Executive Budget, not in your line yet. So, what I'm  
13 wondering is of your roughly 600 contracts, if I have  
14 that number right, and I defer to your agency on it,  
15 do you know if all of those contracts will receive  
16 the increases? And some of the contracts for example  
17 are telecommunications maintenance. I'm just  
18 curious.

19 COMMISSIONER BANKS: No, only the--those  
20 kinds of contracts are not covered. So, in order to  
21 get a real, you know, a real analyst would have to  
22 together look at which of the contracts are covered  
23 and which are not.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: And so, when  
25 OM--you were working with OMB to prepare the number

2 that's sitting somewhere else. What kind of guidance  
3 or information were you able to give them? Were you  
4 able to tell them the types of contracts that it  
5 would apply to given what they were looking for? And  
6 I'm wondering how many contracts, what categories,  
7 and how many FTE's, full time and part time, are in  
8 each of those numbers, or did OMB just make up a  
9 number?

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Actually, they asked  
11 us to reach out to our providers and gather  
12 information along the lines of what you're asking,  
13 and we took that information and provided that to  
14 OMB, and it was information about salaries and other  
15 information from the not for profit providers.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Great. So how  
17 many workers were included in the number that you  
18 gave to OMB, full time and part time?

19 COMMISSIONER BANKS: That I can't give  
20 you because what we're asked to take a survey, which  
21 we did.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I'm sorry?

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We were asked to take  
24 a survey of a range of different providers which we  
25



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2 did, and we gathered that information. I'd have to  
3 offline get it for you.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I'm sorry, you  
5 have to--

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] We were  
7 asked to contact our providers.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Right, but you  
9 can't--

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] And ask  
11 them--

12 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: share that  
13 information with the Council?

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: No, I said I don't  
15 have it with me today.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Oh, okay.

17 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I'd be happy to talk  
18 to you about it. I just don't have it with me today.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Oh, okay. Could  
20 you send--could I ask that that be added to our list  
21 of questions that you guys could send over?

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Sure. As I said, we  
23 could retrace our steps, because we reached out to  
24 all the provider agencies.

25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Right. So one  
3 of the questions was range of salary, it sounds like.  
4 Was one of the questions how many workers do you  
5 contract with?

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I'm going to have  
7 to, honestly, I don't--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: [interposing]  
9 No problem.

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I'm under oath. I  
11 don't want to give you an answer that's wrong. We  
12 were asked to and we did reach out to a number of  
13 different providers, and we'll get the information  
14 for you.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thanks. I'd  
16 love to see the survey and then the survey results.  
17 Thank you very much. That's all I have.

18 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you, Council  
19 Member Rosenthal. We'll have Council Member Johnson  
20 and then we will have Council Member Miller after  
21 Johnson.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Good to see you,  
23 Commissioner Banks, as always. Thank you for all of  
24 your support and help in everything that I come to  
25 you on. You've been very responsive, as has your

2 agency. I wanted to talk a little bit about HASA and  
3 I wanted to ask you, you know that I have a bill in  
4 the Council that hopefully is going to be heard next  
5 month related to providing HASA services or  
6 eligibility for people, anyone who's HIV positive,  
7 not just folks with an AIDS diagnosis or anyone who's  
8 had two opportunistic infections, but anyone who's  
9 HIV positive who is income eligible. And I wanted to  
10 see if HRA has done any analysis to calculate how  
11 much it would cost to expand HASA services for all  
12 low income individuals that have an HIV or AIDS  
13 diagnosis.

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, one of the  
15 things that I think is important about your  
16 legislation is it focuses on the state's role, and  
17 you know, we were very pleased to see the release of  
18 the Governor's Taskforce Report to end the epidemic  
19 and Governor's embrace of important aspects of that.  
20 And so we're looking forward to working with the  
21 state to calculate what the kind of cost would be to  
22 carry out those recommendations and be happy to  
23 continue conversations with you as that process  
24 proceeds with the state.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: I appreciate  
3 that. I mean, I think it's going to be a pretty  
4 significant number, actually, and I think that the  
5 city should not bear the entire cost of that, and so  
6 I'm hopeful that if we pass my bill that we will, of  
7 course, include language that the city is not on the  
8 hook for all of the money, but as you said, given the  
9 Governor's embrace a couple of weeks ago after the  
10 ending the epidemic blueprint was released I feel  
11 pretty hopeful, as hopeful as anyone can feel, but  
12 anything in Albany that we will get a hopefully  
13 significant commitment next year, and it would be, I  
14 think, helpful to understand what that actual number  
15 is so we know what we're asking for.

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Agreed, and we're  
17 certainly going to continue to work with you and with  
18 Housing Works and Vocal and the other, you know,  
19 agent--other groups that have been involved in this  
20 process and with the state, and you know, as we know  
21 there are various people from the Department of  
22 Health and Mental Health and from HRA and Health and  
23 Hospital Corporation who have been very focused on  
24 trying to make sure the services are aligned with  
25 what's needed.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Do you know, I'm  
3 not remembering the number, Commissioner, the number  
4 of people who would qualify if eligibility was  
5 expanded, the number of new people who would qualify?

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Again, I think that's  
7 also a piece that everybody's trying to look at and  
8 make a judgement on that, because that would really  
9 drive what the cost is.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: And one other  
11 factor would be what the expansion, the eligibility  
12 expansion would do towards the case manager ratio  
13 related to folks that work with HASA clients at HRA.  
14 Is that a concern for you?

15 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, it's certainly  
16 a concern to understand what the case load would look  
17 like and what the responsibilities would be if the  
18 case load became bigger, because as you indicate, the  
19 Local Law specifies case load ratios that we're  
20 meeting in terms of our reform positions. That's one  
21 of the reasons why we wanted to do the kinds of  
22 reforms that other members of the committee have  
23 asked us about today, and understanding what would be  
24 asked of our staff with an expansion based upon any  
25

2 actions the state may take is an important  
3 consideration for us.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: I called you last  
5 week about a particular issue related to food at a  
6 particular site that serves HASA clients, and I  
7 appreciate the fact that I'm working with, you know,  
8 Den Tedes [sp?] and John Roshoa [sp?] and other folks  
9 from HRA looking into this issue, but if for some  
10 reason the provider who was giving the food, if it  
11 does actually meet the guidelines, the DOHMH  
12 guidelines, I think there's a problem with the  
13 guidelines, because I went and I tasted that food,  
14 and the food was basically inedible, literally, for  
15 HASA clients. And so I think that's another thing we  
16 need to look at because we've talked so much about  
17 how important food and nutrition is to get people  
18 healthy and to get them to be able to take their  
19 medicine. So, that's one thing that I would love to  
20 work with HRA on in seeing if this is an issue across  
21 the city for HASA clients.

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Happy to do that. As  
23 you can see, our approach to reform is one that says,  
24 "If the process is working, we should make sure it  
25 continues to work, and if it's not working we're

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2 going to take another look at it." So we're happy to  
3 do that with you.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you. As  
5 always, it's great to work with you. Thanks, Steve.

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yep.

7 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you, Council  
8 Member Johnson. We're going to hear from Chair, and  
9 then we will have Council Member Miller as a second  
10 round. So three minutes.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much,  
12 Madam Chair. Just a quick question on EFAP. The  
13 Council had recommended in its preliminary budget  
14 response an increase in the budget for EFAP and it's  
15 not as of yet reflected in the Executive Budget. Is  
16 there--how is HRA approaching this issue in light of  
17 the fact that there has been SNAP cuts on the federal  
18 level that are impacting families and will certainly  
19 increase the strain on our food pantries across the  
20 city?

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Alright. I mean, at  
22 this point certainly the cuts that were implemented  
23 last year we've testified in other hearings about the  
24 impact of them. There is additional funding in the  
25 state budget that will have a positive impact in the

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2 city, and we want to evaluate that and see what the  
3 impact is. If your concern is that will there be  
4 more federal cuts and what should we do, I think we  
5 want to keep all of us focusing on preventing that  
6 from happening and then take what action is needed at  
7 that point.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Is there a willingness  
9 to perhaps look at adding some funds to the FEP  
10 program in the budget at adoption?

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, you know, as  
12 both of us know, it's a dialogue in the budget  
13 process, and we're always receptive to conversations  
14 where the council feels that more should and can be  
15 done.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: One other question  
17 that I forgot to ask with regard to the COLA is I  
18 know that in the Mayor's Executive Budget it said it  
19 would affect 35,000 workers in the city. In talking  
20 to the Human Services Council they said that the  
21 number is more like 125,000 workers throughout the  
22 human services throughout the city. Do you have a  
23 sense of how many under HRA full time employees would  
24 be affected by the \$11.50 and the two and a half  
25 percent?



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2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right. At this point  
3 we're awaiting the conversations to help us work  
4 through how we're going to implement this. We're  
5 very happy that there are dollars in the Executive  
6 Budget to have something implement, and so the exact  
7 contours, we're still evaluating and finding out  
8 about it.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Thank you,  
10 Commissioner. So, I think for our second round,  
11 Council Member Miller do you have--we have three  
12 minutes. Okay, Council Member Miller is--so we  
13 really appreciate--oh, Council Member Levine, sorry.  
14 Thank you very much. Council Member Levine for a  
15 second round of questions.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: No problem. Thank  
17 you, Mr. Chair. Hello again, Commissioner. Just  
18 wanted to follow up on what's being done currently in  
19 the six up zoned neighborhoods where you've already,  
20 I believe, provided, begun providing anti-harassment  
21 legal services, is that correct?

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yep.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: You've got a  
24 companion piece, which is community outreach and  
25

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2 community organizing, I see that's in the budget.

3 Has that also begun in those neighborhoods?

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: At the beginning  
5 stage, the legal providers have gotten assistance  
6 from existing groups as part of their contract  
7 structure, and the dollars that you are seeing in the  
8 budget is new money that we're going to be using for  
9 the program as it goes forward. So, you know, as  
10 announced in the State of the City, we wanted to get  
11 going right away, and so we contracted or we expanded  
12 the contracts of the only two citywide providers that  
13 we had, pending an RFP, and working, we asked them to  
14 work with groups on the ground to give the kind of  
15 assistance that's needed for these kinds of cases,  
16 and then as we developed the budget it became evident  
17 that a greater effort was needed and so that's why  
18 there are additional dollars there.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: And the actual  
20 work is going door to door, is that right?

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, there's a  
22 combination of the kinds of work. Some of the work  
23 is as you know from your work organizing and being  
24 together with a group of tenants, it requires more  
25 than just lawyering. And so having the ability to

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2 have that kind of community outreach for groups of  
3 tenants to let them know what their rights are, to  
4 help them as matters proceed was something that we  
5 wanted to add to the program. So we've done that.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Is there an income  
7 screen for eligibility for these anti-harassment  
8 services?

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I mean, the services  
10 are targeted to New Yorkers below 200 percent of  
11 poverty, but we also know that--

12 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: [interposing] I'm  
13 sorry, below what percent?

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Two hundred percent.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Yep.

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: But we also know that  
17 people live in buildings in which there are people of  
18 different income levels. So, if there's a building  
19 that has some people who are below 200 percent and  
20 some people who are above 200 percent of poverty, we  
21 still want the services to be delivered to that  
22 building, and we think that will cover the kinds of  
23 issues that might arise throughout these district and  
24 any other districts around the city.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Got it.

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2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: If your hot water's  
3 off, your hot water's off.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Correct. But if  
5 you're in a small building where no one there is  
6 below 200 percent of poverty, then no one in the  
7 building is eligible?

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We'll clearly try to  
9 work with such households to connect them with other  
10 services, but we believe the bulk of the services  
11 will be needed by the people that we've targeted them  
12 to, which is below 200 percent of poverty.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: And if someone  
14 shows up at court on their own without having been  
15 encouraged to do by one of the organizers or outreach  
16 people, is there a mechanism there by which they can  
17 be directed to these services based on their zip code  
18 or other criteria?

19 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yes, part of the  
20 funding and part of our own staffing is to be able to  
21 deploy HRA staff and the courthouses to be able to  
22 focus on just that kind of situation that you're  
23 describing.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: And there is  
25 staff in place now?

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2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: There is not the  
3 expanded staff in place yet, but there are existing  
4 HRA staff who could direct you if you were to come to  
5 a provider who could help you.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Got it. Thank you  
7 very much.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, Council  
9 Member Levine. Commissioner, seeing no other  
10 questions, Chair Ferreras Copeland--I want to just  
11 put on the record here that four areas that you had  
12 said in this hearing that you would follow up with  
13 the Finance and General Welfare Committees on, I  
14 believe it's--let's see. There's details on domestic  
15 violence advocates and NYPD, finance meeting on  
16 budget structure, details on DOCCA, DOPPA and all  
17 immigrant services at HRA, and HRA survey and  
18 responses on vendor's staffing and pay rates.

19 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yeah, except I want  
20 to say the third area, my take away from that was  
21 that you were asking about putting funding in the  
22 budget and we're to be in a discussion about that as  
23 opposed to something that you wanted us to give you.  
24 I just wanted to be clear. The other three are  
25 things you wanted from us, although on the DV I think

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2 it's really we're going to follow up with the Mayor's  
3 Office to combat domestic violence and try to get you  
4 the additional information. So it's really the  
5 finance and the COLA information, which is hard  
6 information that I--that you asked for that we can  
7 get for you. I just want to make sure I'm not  
8 leaving--

9 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: [interposing] I  
10 just want to--

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: and not delivering  
12 on what I promised.

13 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Right. And just  
14 for clarity, I know that you had said some numbers,  
15 but it didn't all add up. It actually was more than  
16 the 5.6. So, if you can just get us back the numbers  
17 on DOCCA and DOPPA--

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] Fine,  
19 that we can do.

20 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: That's what was  
21 the focus.

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: That we can do. Got  
23 it.

24 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Okay.  
25

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2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Alright, thank you  
3 all very much.

4 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you very  
5 much for testifying. We are going to take a 15  
6 minute break, and then we will resume with ACS.

7 [break]

8 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: We will now resume  
9 the City Council's hearing on the Mayor's Executive  
10 Budget FY 16. We just heard from the Human Resource  
11 Administration and now we will hear from Gladys  
12 Carrión, Commissioner of the Administration of Child  
13 Services for this portion of the hearing. The Finance  
14 Committee will be joined by General Welfare  
15 Committee, the Women's Issues Committee and the  
16 Juvenile Justice Committee. Before we begin hearing  
17 testimony, I will open the mic to our Co-Chairs,  
18 Council Member Levin, Council Member Cumbo and  
19 Council Member Cabrera for their statements.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much,  
21 Chair Ferreras Copeland. Good morning. Good  
22 afternoon, excuse me. I am Council Member Stephen  
23 Levin, Chair of the New York City Council's Committee  
24 on General Welfare this afternoon with my Co-Chairs,  
25 Council Member Ferreras Copeland, Chair of the

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2 Committee on Finance, Council Member Laurie Cumbo,  
3 Chair of the Women's Issues Committee, and Council  
4 Member Fernando Cabrera, Chair of the Committee on  
5 Juvenile Justice. We are going to examine the  
6 Administration for Children Service's Fiscal 16  
7 Executive Budget. I'm excited to hear today from  
8 Commissioner Gladys Carrión and learn about the new  
9 efforts from ACS since the Preliminary Budget Hearing  
10 in this committee's recent oversight hearing on ACS  
11 funded Head Start programs. ACS's Fiscal 16  
12 Executive Budget is 2.93 billion dollars, a 26.8  
13 million dollar increase from Fiscal 15 adopted  
14 budget. This increase is largely attributed to  
15 funding for operation Safe Child Welfare Reform and  
16 Early Learn Oversight. The Fiscal 16 Preliminary  
17 Budget introduced 27.7 million dollars for child  
18 welfare reform, and we examined the components of  
19 this initiative in the Preliminary Budget hearing.  
20 Today, I would like to hear updates regarding the  
21 planning and the implementation of these reforms.  
22 Much of our discussing in the Preliminary Budget  
23 hearing revolved around the adoption of children in  
24 the foster care system. We know that the number of  
25 children eligible for adoption is decreasing, but as



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2 the PMMR noted, the number of adoptions decreased  
3 almost 22 percent in the first four months of Fiscal  
4 15. I'm curious to hear today why the Executive  
5 Budget reports a 37.2 million dollar decrease in  
6 funding for adoption services in light of this  
7 decrease that we are seeing as reflected in the PMMR.  
8 The Fiscal 16 Executive Budget includes some  
9 promising additions. Funds for low income childcare  
10 vouchers have been base lined at 12.6 million  
11 dollars. ACS has enhanced staffing at the Children's  
12 Center and also put forward 6.3 million dollars in  
13 Fiscal 16 for Early Learn oversight. I'm extremely  
14 pleased that ACS is enacting efforts to improve the  
15 delivery of management of our Early Learn System, but  
16 I am expecting that ACS will present today  
17 recommendations that have come out of the Deputy  
18 Mayor's taskforce on our Early Childhood Education.  
19 Before we hear from Chair Cabrera, Chair of the  
20 Council's Committee on Juvenile Justice, I would like  
21 to thank ACS for their work with the Council, with  
22 City Council Finance. In addition, I want to thank  
23 the Committee staff for working on this hearing,  
24 including Britany Moressi [sp?], the Finance Analyst,  
25 Counsel to the Committee, Andrea Vasquez [sp?] and

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2 Policy Analyst Tanya Cyrus [sp?]. Thank you very  
3 much. And Council Member Cabrera will now give his  
4 opening statement.

5 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much.

6 Good afternoon. I am Council Member Fernando  
7 Cabrera, Chair of the Juvenile Justice Committee. I  
8 would like to thank Chair Ferreras, Chair Levin,  
9 Chair Cumbo for their collaboration with the  
10 committee, and also I'd like to thank the staff, the  
11 committee staff. Last month, I had the opportunity  
12 to tour the Horizon Juvenile Detention Center, and I  
13 can say that I'm very pleased by what I saw. I was  
14 particularly impressed by the health and mental  
15 health services being provided. That being said, I  
16 am happy to see that the Fiscal 2016 Executive Budget  
17 includes additional funding for necessary renovations  
18 above Horizon and Crossroads Juvenile Detention  
19 Centers. I hope to learn of any developments  
20 regarding these projects and how we can expect to  
21 combine additional 16.6 million dollars will enable  
22 ACS to better serve juvenile involved youth. ACS has  
23 announced that it anticipates that limited secure  
24 facilities phase two of Close to Home will begin this  
25 summer. It has been a long wait for the

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2 implementation of phase two, and we are here today to  
3 examine how ACS has planned for this change. How has  
4 the--excuse me, the agency address anticipated  
5 challenges and what holistic services will be  
6 provided for juveniles. Close to Home aims to  
7 prepare juveniles to succeed in their communities and  
8 recognize the important role that families and  
9 neighborhoods play in this success. ACS must  
10 facilitate and advance this goal, and with that, let  
11 me pass it on to Chair Cumbo.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you. Good  
13 afternoon. I'm Laurie Cumbo, Chair of the Women's  
14 Issues Committee. I'd like to thank Chair Ferreras  
15 Copeland, Chair Levin, the two newlyweds, and Chair  
16 Cabrera for their support and collaboration with the  
17 Committee. Not together, separately. I'd also like  
18 to thank my Committee Staff, Finance Analyst,  
19 Britanis Morressi [sp?], Counsel Amenta Killawan  
20 [sp?], and Policy Analyst, Joan Pavolni [sp?] for  
21 their work in preparing this hearing. At the  
22 Preliminary Budget hearing, we focused a lot on Early  
23 Learn, and we can expect a lot of discussion about it  
24 today. Not only would I like to echo the concerns  
25 that Chair Levin has raised in the past regarding the

2 insufficient Early Learn rate, which includes  
3 everything from rent escalations and highly  
4 gentrifying communities to the inequities in funding  
5 between Early Learn as well as UPK, as well as the  
6 challenges that are faced with rising medical costs  
7 for those that are employed through the Early Learn  
8 Program. I would like to examine the process for  
9 which recent Early Learn contracts were awarded. I  
10 know that the latest Early Learn RFP was intended to  
11 consider our provider's experience with diversity, as  
12 well as cultural sensitivity practices, but I hope to  
13 have greater clarification of the evaluation criteria  
14 today. I look forward to having an open conversation  
15 regarding these matters. I hope that we can work  
16 together to ensure that we are doing the best we can  
17 to provide New York City's children with the care and  
18 the education possible, and I would like to thank all  
19 of you that are here today, especially those from  
20 Young Minds Daycare Center in the 35<sup>th</sup> Council  
21 District that are here today as well. Thank you so  
22 much.

23 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you very  
24 much, and Commissioner you may be--you'll be sworn in  
25

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2 by our counsel, and then you may begin your  
3 testimony.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Do you affirm that  
5 your testimony will be truthful to the best of your  
6 knowledge, information and belief? Thank you.

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Sorry. Good  
8 afternoon, Chair Ferreras, Cumbo, Levin, and Cabrera  
9 and members of the Finance, Women's Issues, General  
10 Welfare and the Juvenile Justice Committee. I am  
11 Gladys Carrion, the Commissioner of the  
12 Administration for Children services, and with me  
13 today are Susan Nuccio, our Deputy Commissioner for  
14 Financial Services and Jill Krauss, our Deputy  
15 Commissioner for Communications and Community  
16 Affairs, Lorelei Vargas who is our Deputy  
17 Commissioner for Early Care and Education. Thank you  
18 for the opportunity to update you on our 2016  
19 Executive Budget and to address the improvements that  
20 ACS is making to our systems, for our providers, and  
21 most important, for the children and families that we  
22 serve. Children Services' mission is to promote the  
23 safety, permanency and wellbeing of New York City's  
24 children and young people. Those who are served by  
25 the Child Welfare, Juvenile Justice and in subsidized

2 childcare systems deserve nothing less than what we  
3 provide for our own children, access to a good  
4 education, quality services to meet their physical  
5 and emotional needs, continuous support from and  
6 connections to stable adults and the ability to  
7 transition into young adulthood and maintain positive  
8 healthy relationships throughout their lives. With  
9 this in mind, the agency is increasingly focused on  
10 child wellbeing. This Administration's commitment to  
11 serving vulnerable New Yorkers allows ACS to focus on  
12 the wellbeing of young people in our care. Since  
13 Mayor de Blasio took office I'm proud, very proud, to  
14 report that ACS has committed nearly 700 new  
15 positions dedicated to supporting children and  
16 families, 10 of which are self-funded. The staff  
17 increases are a result of the form work [sic] on  
18 which I have previously briefed the Council,  
19 including Operation Safe, which dedicated 368, six of  
20 which are self-funded, positions to protect some of  
21 our most challenged families, as well as 83 positions  
22 to strengthen supervision and training and to develop  
23 new initiatives. Since the Preliminary Budget, and  
24 additional 225 positions will be funded to support  
25 our work. ACS's operating budget for Fiscal Year 16

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2 provides for operating expenses of 2.9 billion, 902  
3 million of which are city funds. In the Executive  
4 2016 Budget, ACS gained 28.7 million dollars in  
5 funding for new needs of which 21.3 million is tax  
6 levy dollars, which will be used to expand access to  
7 and oversight of our early care and education system  
8 to improve services at the Nicholas Scoppetta  
9 Children's Center and to increase the administrative  
10 functions of the agency, including additional  
11 information technology staff. The 2016 budget  
12 proposes adding over 19 million new dollars to  
13 bolster our Early Care and Education Services in  
14 several years. In order to improve the stability of  
15 the services in contract settings, when fully  
16 implemented, Fiscal Year 17, 5.9 million dollars will  
17 fund 63 new positions, four of which are self-funded.  
18 ACS will hire 23 staff to ensure compliance with  
19 Early Learn and Head Start contract requirements and  
20 provide technical assistance and training to  
21 contracted providers. We will also hire 24  
22 maintenance and building trade staff to allow a  
23 timelier and more cost efficient response to facility  
24 issues, seven staff to analyze data and maintain new  
25 software systems and nine overhead staff to support

this Early Education improvement plan. ACS will also expand access to services. The Administration has base lined 12.6 million dollars to fund low income vouchers. The Council and Administration jointly funded this effort last year in order to provide care to families who had been on the waiting list to receive a low income voucher. We expect the baseline of 12.6 million to fund approximately 1,700 children from low income families to receive a full year of subsidized care. Finally, ACS is using one million dollars to reduce the fee paid by parents whose children receive part time care in Early Learn settings. Most of our Early Learn programs are funded by UPK dollars. UPK, which is a free program, is now funding a larger portion of the day. So, ACS is decreasing parent fees correspondingly, which will provide some relief to our 5,500 families who pay a part time fee. In order to better meet the medical and programmatic needs of children newly placed in care, ACS is creating 117 new positions at the Nicholas Scoppetta Children's Center at the cost of 5.9 million dollars of which 2.4 is city tax levy dollars. The enhancement will enable ACS to replace nursing, childcare and support positions that are



2 currently contracted through a temporary employment  
3 agency with permanent city positions. Because the  
4 Children's Center serves significant numbers of  
5 medically fragile children as well as those who  
6 present behavioral challenges, we must be able to  
7 rely on permanent staff, especially on nights,  
8 weekends and holidays to maintain a safe and  
9 supportive environment. To achieve this stability,  
10 we are adding 18 nursing staff and 99 congregate care  
11 staff, childcare supervisors and managers,  
12 educational and recreational specialists, and play  
13 therapists, including a conversion of existing  
14 contracted temporary services into permanent  
15 positions. ACS's Office of Information Technology  
16 provides IT services including systems development,  
17 database management, network, and telecommunication  
18 services, and desktop support, each of which are  
19 integral to the work that we and our contracted  
20 agency's providers undertake. When fully implemented  
21 in 2017, a total of 3.7 million will be dedicated to  
22 support this office. With new funds, we will replace  
23 20 consultants with fulltime employees and add 13 new  
24 positions. These 33 key positions will bring in  
25 leadership level experience and maintain a consistent

2 knowledge base within the division to allow for a  
3 greater ability to plan and implement IT system's  
4 improvements that will benefit ACS's workforce of  
5 over 7,000 staff. During his Executive Budget  
6 address, Mayor de Blasio announced a 2.5 percent cost  
7 of living income adjustment, a COLA, for  
8 approximately 50,000 full time employees of  
9 nonprofits that contract with the city as well as an  
10 increase of the minimum hourly wage for these  
11 employees to 11 dollars and 50 cents. This workforce  
12 includes many of the women and men employed by the  
13 nonprofits with which ACS contracts to provide  
14 services. We appreciate the Mayor's recognition of  
15 our partner agencies frontline workforce in the  
16 city's budget and of the hard work they do every day  
17 on behalf of the youth and families our agency  
18 serves. This past December, ACS issued an Early  
19 Learn RFP which sought vendors to provide quality  
20 childcare services to approximately 4,800 children  
21 within 39 zip codes throughout all five boroughs.  
22 The proposals were reviewed by individuals with  
23 experience in childcare services operation and  
24 finance, and on May 12<sup>th</sup>, 41 contractors were  
25 recommended for awards to provide services at 60

2 centers and in five family childcare networks. Once  
3 they successfully complete the responsibility  
4 determination and contract registration process, we  
5 expect that new Early Learn services will begin on  
6 July 1<sup>st</sup>. On May 18<sup>th</sup>, ACS opened to procurement for  
7 222 seats in five zip codes that were not awarded in  
8 the RFP. The deadline for proposals to be submitted  
9 via HHS accelerator is June 8<sup>th</sup>. Now, research shows  
10 that early and meaningful exposure to career pathways  
11 significantly increases the likelihood of high school  
12 graduation improves future employment opportunities  
13 and increases earning potential. We know that access  
14 to employment and skills program is often limited for  
15 less advantaged youth, especially youth in foster  
16 care. One of my first missions when I joined ACS was  
17 to identify opportunities for us to prepare and equip  
18 young people in the skills necessary to obtain and  
19 maintain professional careers. The goal is to both  
20 strengthen the skill set of young people in our care  
21 and to build a skilled workforce of New York City  
22 youth from which all employers in the city can  
23 benefit. One of the ways which ACS is preparing  
24 youth in care for careers is through our summer  
25 college graduate internship program. ACS created a

roster of youth in care between the ages of 16 and 24 from which our hiring managers can interview and hire young people for available internships within the agency. In 2014, ACS hired 51 youth in care as a result of this targeted recruitment outreach and recruitment is underway for this summer's class of interns. As the largest local government in the United States, the city of New York offers a wide range of opportunities for job applicants for all kinds of interests and backgrounds. With the support of New Yorkers for Children, DCAS, and Local 371, ACS is launching an employment program, Civil Service Pathways for Youth, which will offer youth transitioning from foster care an opportunity to prepare for civil service employment and self-sufficiency. The program begins on July 6<sup>th</sup> and will allow 60 youth over the age of 17 to participate in workshops introducing them to civil service careers, mentorships and test preparation. The Mayor's fund to advance New York City has collaborated with city agencies including ACS and a host of private sector partners to launch the Center for Youth Employment which connects young New Yorkers ages 14 to 21 to summer jobs, mentorships and internships in order to

develop skills, connect them to supportive mentors, obtain guidance toward college and careers. One of the center's immediate goals for summer 2015 is to double the number of summer jobs for New York City's most vulnerable youth in foster care or shelters to 2,000. ACS's commitment to connecting young people with quality summer employment experiences also includes justice involved youth. Since 2013, both of our secure detention facilities, Crossroads in Brooklyn, Horizon in the Bronx, have hosted a summer youth employment program for youth detained. Youth are employed in various capacities within the detention center with our housekeeping, maintenance, food services, Department of Education educational program, and case management teams. These youth will begin employment while detained or released before the--and are released before the program ends or placed with employers in the community so they can continue working. We're excited to continue SYEP at our secure facilities this summer. A total of 35 young people will participate in the program and gain valuable experience as a member of the city's workforce. Creating positive educational outcomes for youth in foster care continues to be a priority for

ACs. I'm very pleased to announce that the Conrad  
Hilton [sic] Foundation has provided a four year, 2.5  
million dollar grant to City University of New York's  
Start Program. ACS and our foster care providers will  
partner with CUNY's Start Program to serve young  
people who are transitioning out of foster care and  
want to attend college. Under the grant, 325  
transition date youth will have the opportunity to  
enter CUNY Start where they will receive intensive  
preparation in academic writing, reading, math, and  
other skills necessary for college success. As they  
progress toward an Associate's Degree, students will  
receive financial, academic and personal supports,  
including career counseling, tutoring, tuition  
waivers, metro cards, text book vouchers. In order  
to better serve our youth, CUNY will also provide  
specialized training for their student advisors to  
help them develop an understanding of the child  
welfare system and the unique needs of students in  
foster care. The city's commitment to the creation  
and evacuation of academic opportunities for young  
people in foster care is also shared by our partners  
in New York State. The state's 2016 budget includes  
new funding to support a foster youth college success

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2 initiative which will fund SUNY and CUNY and other  
3 higher education institutions to provide supportive  
4 services for youth, foster youth, to apply for,  
5 enroll and succeed in college. Our provider  
6 partners, the Children's Aid Society and Good  
7 Shepherd Services are participating in a steering  
8 committee that's working with the State Education  
9 Department to implement the college success  
10 initiatives statewide. In closing, it is my sincere  
11 hope that as I endeavor to continue to strengthen the  
12 work of ACS I can also reframe our work to impact on  
13 wellbeing that speaks to the success of our young  
14 people. I'd also like to thank our dedicated  
15 workforce for their tireless efforts to support the  
16 children and families of New York City. I look  
17 forward to a continued, productive collaboration with  
18 the City Council. Thank you for your time this  
19 afternoon and I welcome your comments and questions.

20 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you for your  
21 testimony, Commissioner. I just want to remind my  
22 colleagues, we're going to have a five minute first  
23 round of questions followed by a three minutes second  
24 round of questions. I have a few questions and then  
25 I'll come back on the second round, Commissioner.

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2 ACS reported an adoption subsidy re-submit as part of  
3 the citywide savings program estimated to save 8.2  
4 million dollars annually. How much will ACS now  
5 spend on adoption subsidies? And 8.2 million  
6 annually is a significant savings. When was the last  
7 time ACS had evaluated its spending on adoption  
8 subsidies?

9 COMMISSIONER CARRION: As you know, as we  
10 advise the Council, as our foster care census  
11 continues to drop, the number of children that are  
12 available for adoption has also been reduced. And so  
13 as a result we have savings in adoption subsidies.  
14 And those savings have been used as part of the  
15 agency's efficiencies to meet the efficiency targets  
16 that were set for each agency. There is also a  
17 commitment that as those numbers increase, adoption  
18 numbers increase, if we need additional adoption  
19 subsidy dollars, we will be able to obtain those  
20 funds. Do you want to--

21 SUSAN NUCCIO: And the budget for  
22 adoption subsidy for Fiscal Year 16 is 281.5 million  
23 dollars.

24 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you. Can  
25 you just state your name for the record? I'm sorry.



2 SUSAN NUCCIO: Susan Nuccio.

3 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you. And  
4 then for FY 15, ACS reports approximately 8.7 million  
5 in underspending. Can you please explain where this  
6 surplus in funds comes from and why is the  
7 underspending used to readjust ACS baseline budget?

8 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So, the  
9 underfunding for the underspending for the most part  
10 is really accruals from a personnel. It takes a  
11 pretty long time to be able to hire people, and as  
12 people are transitioning out of city--out of ACS and  
13 city jobs, the rehiring process takes some time. And  
14 so primarily those are accruals.

15 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Okay. And I  
16 wanted to talk about Early Learn. We're all going to  
17 talk about Early Learn in one aspect or another, but  
18 I wanted to focus in. The Executive Budget failed to  
19 address issues surrounding Early Learn rate and staff  
20 wages. A survey of 310 Early Childhood Education  
21 workers at 11 New York City Early Learn programs  
22 showed that 17 percent of the workers receive food  
23 stamps and nearly 55 percent reported that they or  
24 their children received Medicaid. We know that the  
25 majority of these workers are women, particularly

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2 minority women. Does ACS see this as an issue? What  
3 is it doing to prevent--what is preventing the agency  
4 from addressing the situation?

5 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So, we certainly  
6 understand that it is an issue, and we are very happy  
7 that the fact that the Mayor and his budget has  
8 included a COLA increase. And so many of our workers  
9 will be eligible for that COLA increase.

10 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: While, yes, we are  
11 also very--we understand that the COLA increase was  
12 necessary. However, it still doesn't speak, and I  
13 know that Chair Cumbo will probably also address  
14 this, but it doesn't speak to the issues of having  
15 the different pays in our Early Learn program,  
16 whether it's zero to three, Early Learn, UPK. So, is  
17 there a conversation happening on the  
18 Administration's end where you're a part of that  
19 saying that we need to have equity or parity amongst  
20 these workers.

21 COMMISSIONER CARRION: There certainly is  
22 a conversation that is ongoing, and you know, the  
23 budget in that conversation will continue until the  
24 budget is adopted. We are very aware of what the  
25

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2 challenges are that the providers are experiencing as  
3 they run these programs.

4 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Okay, so I'm going  
5 to follow up with this, but I want to give our  
6 colleagues opportunity to ask their questions. Chair  
7 Levin?

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, Chair  
9 Ferreras, and thank you, Commissioner for your  
10 testimony. Commissioner, do we have this--just want  
11 to recap. We were promised recommendations out of  
12 the Deputy Mayor's taskforce on Early Childhood  
13 Education, including Early Learn months ago. I think  
14 we were actually--I think maybe in December,  
15 definitely January, definitely February. We're now  
16 at the end of May and we don't have those  
17 recommendations yet. As we prepare for another  
18 Fiscal Year's budget, we don't have a clear idea of  
19 how the Administration wants to approach these vital  
20 issues, and I want to be clear what they are.  
21 They're how to address the rate, which we hear  
22 unanimously from providers as being a major, major  
23 problem. An issue of pay parody, major, major  
24 problem. The fact that a very small percentage of  
25 employees in the Early Learn system at our centers

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2 are taking health insurance because they can't afford  
3 to pay for it, and that's an--and the providers have  
4 all told us that if employees were to take health  
5 insurance, they couldn't afford to pay for it,  
6 because they're on the hook for 85 percent of it.  
7 So, the issue of rent in high rent areas, mostly it's  
8 issues around reimbursement, and we've been waiting  
9 for months. Where are these recommendations?

10 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So, the  
11 recommendations, I understand, will be released this  
12 week, and I do apologize because last time I was here  
13 it was my understanding that the recommendations  
14 would be released. So the recommendations have taken  
15 much longer than originally anticipated, and as I  
16 said, I do apologize for that. However, the  
17 recommendations have indeed influenced the Executive  
18 Budget, and I know that we gave you a briefing  
19 recently on the recommendations. The--and they're  
20 really visible in the inclusion of the budget, the  
21 living wage and the COLA. Also, in our budget there  
22 are additional dollars for training, infrastructure  
23 for ACS to be able to provide the oversight and  
24 monitoring. There's substantial increase in our  
25 budget. These are items that are all within the

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2 recommendations of the taskforce, and if you'd like,  
3 I can review those recommendations in a summary  
4 fashion with you, but my understanding is that this  
5 week the recommendations will be released.

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, but just to be  
7 clear, the issues that we've identified from the  
8 providers as being the ones that are hurting their  
9 bottom line, their ability to provider services.  
10 Really, truly, it's the ability to be able to stay in  
11 business are the issues of rate, the issue of rent,  
12 the issue of healthcare. These are all issues of  
13 reimbursement. As far as I can tell, those issues  
14 are not addressed in the Executive Budget. The issue  
15 of oversight and perhaps capital repairs, no, those  
16 are issues that honestly to be totally frank, I mean,  
17 those were issues that came up as part of the Head  
18 Start review by the Administration of Children and  
19 Families. So, we--the issues that are, that we've  
20 brought up now that came up at our hearing that we  
21 had on Early Learn that have been clearly identified,  
22 they're costly. They're going to cost money, but  
23 those costs are not in any way reflected, as far as I  
24 can tell, in the Executive Budget.

25

2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Well, many of the  
3 items that I did discuss are part of the  
4 recommendations, but the recommendations are still  
5 being discussed. The budget hasn't been adopted yet,  
6 and I think there is an opportunity to maximize the  
7 impact of those recommendations, which include many  
8 of the items that you have pointed out.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, but I'm--I'd  
10 have a hard time believing that the recommendations  
11 would have any impact if they cost money and they're  
12 not included in the budget. So, we--you know, the  
13 Administration is responsible for the  
14 recommendations. The Administration is responsible  
15 for the Executive Budget. Did we--this is now months  
16 and months behind, putting it to the last three weeks  
17 before budget adoption doesn't really allow us much  
18 time to talk about how the recommendations are going  
19 to be reflected in an adopted budget, unless the  
20 Administration is going to come to us after our  
21 Executive Budget hearings and say, "You know what,  
22 we're going to put in an extra 30 million dollars to  
23 address pay parity between teachers, rent,  
24 healthcare, rate." So, unless the Administration,  
25 because you're--the Administration is in charge of

2 all of these things. We don't have--we don't even  
3 know what the recommendations are, and so this is why  
4 we have budget hearings so we can have a discussion  
5 about how our goals are going to be reflected in our  
6 budget. And so I just--I'm a little unclear why  
7 it's--I just don't understand why it's taken so long  
8 to come up with the list of recommendations when kind  
9 of all of us in this room know what the issues are.  
10 These are issues. And the reason I want to bring  
11 this up or one way to illustrate this is I just got--  
12 I spoke on the phone yesterday with an executive at  
13 Catholic Charities of Brooklyn and Queens. They're  
14 closing four. They're backing out of four Early  
15 Learn Centers, including one in my district that has  
16 been in operation for 40 years, and I talked to their  
17 executive who told me that they are--from those four  
18 centers they've run a cumulative deficit under Early  
19 Learn of 1.8 million dollars, that they can't afford  
20 to continue to run that type of deficit without any  
21 clarity from the Administration about how they plan,  
22 how the Administration plans to address that. And so  
23 I don't know how long--I think Charities has probably  
24 been, Brooklyn and Queens, has probably been involved  
25 in childcare for as long as New York City has had

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2 subsidized childcare. And they're not a fly by night  
3 organization, and they're backing out of their Early  
4 Learn programs. And that's just an illustration.  
5 Specifically to that point, though, is ACS going to  
6 replace those programs with another Early Learn  
7 provider?

8 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Lorelei, do you  
9 want to answer that?

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And Deputy  
11 Commissioner, if you could state your name for the  
12 record, please?

13 LORELEI VARGAS: Sure. Lorelei Vargas.  
14 So, Catholic Charities did come to us and let us know  
15 that they were interested in closing two of their  
16 sites and then partial closure of the other two  
17 sites. They have been struggling with enrollment and  
18 have been struggling financially, and those were the  
19 issues that they cited to us around the closure. To  
20 address the, you know, what's going to happen with  
21 those sites and with the seats, our first priority is  
22 to try to identify providers in the community that  
23 where the children can kind of resume services, and  
24 so--

25



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2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] By  
3 community you mean zip codes?

4 LORELEI VARGAS: Not necessarily zip  
5 codes, because some zip codes, you know, cover a much  
6 larger area than others, but--

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Because  
8 I don't have another Early Learn--sorry. Just I  
9 don't have another Early Learn provider in 11222--

10 LORELEI VARGAS: [interposing] So, what  
11 we look--

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: that could absorb  
13 those seats.

14 LORELEI VARGAS: What we look for is, you  
15 know, we look within--you know, there are some areas  
16 in the city where we have multiple providers in a  
17 three block radius, right, and then there are some  
18 areas in the city where we don't have enough supply  
19 to meet demand. That's one of the reasons why we are  
20 conducting a community needs assessment, which will  
21 be completed this fall, early this fall, and the goal  
22 is really to figure out where do we need to invest so  
23 that we can place our Early Learn seats in areas  
24 where our supply is not meeting demand.

25

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: But Deputy

3 Commissioner, the charities are saying they're going  
4 to pull out within a month or two, and the landlord  
5 needs to be able to make rent off of the space. The  
6 landlord came to me begging to have another program  
7 in that space. They invested capital money to outfit  
8 their bathrooms to be compliant with the Department  
9 of Health. I'm saying, there is--by saying we're  
10 going to wait until we do a needs assessment, I mean,  
11 honestly you told us that there was going to be rec--  
12 the Administration told us that there was going to be  
13 recommendations coming out of this taskforce six  
14 months ago. So, if you say that there's going to be  
15 a needs assessment done in the fall, I expect it in  
16 the spring. So, I mean, you know, it's just--to be  
17 honest with you. I mean, this is--

18 LORELEI VARGAS: [interposing] Okay, well  
19 we're pushing hard for the fall, and actually, you  
20 know, I'm personally pushing really hard to have that  
21 needs assessment completed sooner rather than later  
22 because I understand the need to be able to make  
23 informed decisions about where we need to face our  
24 childcare seats. That being said, with Catholic  
25 Charities, as with any program that would be closing,

2 we have a process that we go through, and again, our  
3 first priority is making sure that the children who  
4 are receiving services in those programs are actually  
5 able to be placed in other programs.

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: But you're saying  
7 there's a poss--sorry to interrupt. But you're  
8 saying that there's a possibility that the centers  
9 themselves will shutter. There won't be another  
10 provider taking over the program in that space?

11 LORELEI VARGAS: Yeah, that is a  
12 possibility.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So, I just want to--I  
14 want to read you a quote. This is from an  
15 individual, you might be able to guess who it is. It  
16 says, "My bottom line is the closing of one childcare  
17 center is one too many, and we have to look at these  
18 as absolute precious resources. We have to  
19 understand that when there's a closure it affects the  
20 children, it affects the parents, it affects the  
21 people who work at the center, and it affects the  
22 broader community, and when this precious resource is  
23 lost we don't get it back, and that's my theory." So  
24 we can't eliminate slots. We have to find a way to  
25

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2 preserve them and in fact build our capacity going  
3 forward.

4 LORELEI VARGAS: Agreed. So--

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] That was  
6 the former Chair of this committee, Bill de Blasio in  
7 2008.

8 LORELEI VARGAS: Yes, yes. So, agreed.  
9 We can't eliminate slots, and our goal is not to  
10 eliminate slots. Our goal is to understand what is  
11 the best community for these slots to exist. So, in  
12 some of our communities we've had some major  
13 gentrification that's happened. The communities--

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] So, we  
15 just give up on them? So we're saying that we don't  
16 have slots in those communities anymore because the  
17 poor people that still live in those communities,  
18 that are holding on--

19 LORELEI VARGAS: [interposing] Let me  
20 just--let me just finish.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

22 LORELEI VARGAS: So, you know, in areas  
23 where we've had some serious gentrification. I  
24 actually spoke with Monsignor Lepinto [sp?] yesterday  
25 and had a conversation with him, and you know, what

2 he said to me is, you know, "We really struggle to  
3 find children in this neighborhood that were eligible  
4 for Early Learn, and it's a sign that the community  
5 is changing." And so I'm not sure how responsible it  
6 is of us to put another provider there if one  
7 provider, as you said, which is so capable and has  
8 had very long roots, has really struggled to find--

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Well, I  
10 will--

11 LORELEI VARGAS: children who qualify for  
12 subsidized care.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I will identify one  
14 issues, which is that they couldn't recruit any four-  
15 year-olds because the four-year-olds were going to  
16 the UPK programs in the elementary schools. There  
17 are three elementary schools in the neighborhood that  
18 have free UPK, so why is a parent going to pay for an  
19 Early Learn program when they can go to UPK for free  
20 in the public school. So, instead of saying, "Okay,  
21 we're going to have a strategy of how to age down  
22 those seats and recruit two-year-olds, open it up to  
23 two-year olds." They weren't allowed to open it up  
24 to two-year-olds. Or--

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2 LORELEI VARGAS: [interposing] No,  
3 actually that's not true.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: They were able to age  
5 down to toddlers?

6 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Absolutely.

7 LORELEI VARGAS: Yes.

8 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Absolutely.

9 LORELEI VARGAS: Yes.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: The toddlers? I know  
11 they were able to age down to three-year-olds.

12 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Absolutely.

13 LORELEI VARGAS: Yes.

14 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Absolutely, yeah.  
15 And so we worked with, you know, Catholic Charity for  
16 some time trying to help them make it work.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: It's not really the  
18 picture that I got from the Program Director. So, my  
19 point is this, I haven't--I was never contacted by  
20 ACS about this, as the local elected representative  
21 and the Chair of the Committee to say, "What do we do  
22 about this? Let's come up with a collective  
23 strategy. Let's do some outreach. Let's do--let's  
24 try to make this effective." Instead, we're saying,  
25

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2 "Let it happen and then maybe we'll go back."

3 Otherwise, I have no--

4 LORELEI VARGAS: [interposing] I  
5 respectively disagree with you that we're saying--

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Who  
7 reached out to me? Nobody reached out to me.

8 LORELEI VARGAS: Let me just say, we've  
9 been working very closely with Catholic Charities.  
10 We've been working closely with other programs, other  
11 Early Learn programs, and so my goal is not to make a  
12 decision without the data and information that we  
13 need to make an informed decision. And so that's why  
14 I go back to the community needs assessment. It's  
15 going to help us really understand in the city, in  
16 communities that are rapidly changing, where do we  
17 need to put our seats. We have a sense of that.  
18 We're starting to get a sense of that, but I'd like  
19 to be able to have the data behind those decisions.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: But Commissioner, I  
21 live in that community. I know there are working  
22 class people in that community. They are my  
23 neighbors. I know that they can use the program. I  
24 know it for a fact. And so by saying that it's a  
25 gentrifying community because of all forces of

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2 economics and gentrification that we're just going to  
3 not have seats in that community, which I think is  
4 the message I'm getting is that if we allow it to--if  
5 we allow Charities to walk away without replacing  
6 those programmatic seats, those within the Early  
7 Learn system, then we are essentially saying because  
8 then we're not going to have a space. So, the  
9 landlord is going to rent out the space to somebody  
10 else because they have to make their rent or they  
11 have to make, you know, their mortgage, and so they  
12 need to collect rent, and so by the time we have a  
13 community needs assessment done in January, there's  
14 not going to be a space to put a new program. So,  
15 you know, let's be real. I mean, the program is  
16 gone. If we let Charities walk away from it, the  
17 program is gone.

18 LORELEI VARGAS: But Council Member, the  
19 reality is that those, many of the seats are vacant  
20 and that's a challenge, and that's a program that has  
21 not been able to fill seats. So, we're going to have  
22 another--

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] They're  
24 not--

25



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2 LORELEI VARGAS: [interposing] provider  
3 with empty seats.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: But, Commissioner,  
5 they're not zero enrollment. They're probably  
6 around--

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: They're not--to  
8 pay their rent.

9 LORELEI VARGAS: They're at 58 percent.

10 COMMISSIONER CARRION: They're at 58  
11 percent. They can't pay their rent. I mean, they  
12 have fiscal challenges. Another provider would have  
13 the same fiscal challenges.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: The landlord came to  
15 me and said they're willing to negotiate the rent. I  
16 mean, my point is this, let's figure out a way to fix  
17 the situation rather than walk away from it. Nobody  
18 even reached out to me. You don't think that I could  
19 put in my newsletter, "Hey, do you want childcare?  
20 You live in Greenpoint? Go over to John Arvac [sp?].  
21 They got seats." I could have done that. Nobody  
22 called me. I have a mailing list of thousands. I  
23 could just sent it out to people. Nobody reached out  
24 to me. Nobody--until we do that, I don't accept that  
25 no stone has been left unturned. I've taken up too

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2 much time here, so I do want to turn it over to my  
3 colleagues.

4 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much.  
5 Commissioner, I want to take a moment to thank you in  
6 the area of Juvenile Justice. You're doing a  
7 tremendous job. Your staff, your Deputy  
8 Commissioner, everyone has been literally right on  
9 point, and so I wanted to make that public. I wanted  
10 to ask you about 120 limited secure placement beds  
11 that will become operational this coming summer as  
12 part of the second phase of the Close to Home. Can  
13 you talk to us about how ACS is currently preparing  
14 for this transition?

15 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So we continue to  
16 work to be able to launch limited secure. We've had  
17 some challenges around construction and contracting.  
18 As you know, there have been a number of challenges  
19 to some of the sites where the Early Learn facilities  
20 are, and so we continue to work to try to resolve  
21 that, and we're hopeful that by late in the summer we  
22 will be able, working with the state, to launch  
23 Limited Secure. We have capacity for 120 beds. The  
24 number of young people that are now in state custody  
25 in Limited Secure has gone down, so there might be a

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2 need for less beds, and we're working closely with  
3 the state to be able to forecast that more  
4 accurately.

5 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Do you happen to  
6 have on hand how many juveniles are eligible for the  
7 Limited Secure Placement?

8 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So, right now the  
9 best estimate we have is the number of young people  
10 that are right now in Limited Secure facilities at  
11 the state, and that number right now is about 60  
12 young people from the city of New York are placed in  
13 limited secure facilities that are operated by OCFS.

14 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Do you happen to  
15 know how much of the funding is going to be dedicated  
16 towards like mental health versus the facilities?

17 COMMISSIONER CARRION: There is--the  
18 program model that was developed in the funding  
19 that's attached to the model is very robust. There  
20 is a very strong clinical component. Every program  
21 will have its own mental health services, and so  
22 there's been a lot of work done to create a very rich  
23 model that meets the needs of these much higher end  
24 needs young people that will be coming into the  
25 system, many with some mental health issues.

2 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: I wanted to talk to  
3 you about the capital improvement. Can you give us a  
4 little specific regarding Horizon and Crossroads?  
5 What is the funding going towards, especially now  
6 with Crossroads? Because this is new numbers. I'm  
7 really excited about 16.6 million dollars being  
8 added.

9 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So, there is a  
10 tremendous amount of work that has to be done in both  
11 facilities, but in Crossroads, we're going to have  
12 system upgrades that really looks at renovations of  
13 all the bathrooms, renovations of halls. We're going  
14 to harden the walls. There's been a lot of wear and  
15 tear there. We're replacing the HVAC system. We're  
16 redesigning the outdoor space, recreational space, so  
17 that it could be used in a more efficient and more  
18 young people could use it. We're going to be  
19 replacing the plexi glass. We're going to be doing  
20 the--making sure that we have psychiatric suites, the  
21 mental health suites, I think that you saw when you  
22 visited Horizon. So there's quite a few things that  
23 we will be doing in both sites. We're going to be  
24 making sure that once again we have the mental health  
25 facility and be able to have. We're looking at

2 replacing our transport vehicles, because they're  
3 very old. We want to make sure that our  
4 transportation vehicles are safe. We're looking at  
5 creating additional office space. We want to make  
6 sure that the clinicians can be in the suites with  
7 the young people on the halls. So, there's a major  
8 work that has to be done in each of the facilities,  
9 and I think that for many years we haven't made the  
10 investments that we needed to make in both of those  
11 facilities, and those investments are being made now.

12 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Commissioner, I just  
13 had one last question. Can you explain to us why the  
14 state cap, the amount billed to ACS for the Limited  
15 Secure placement of juveniles?

16 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So, you're  
17 addressing the Foster Block Grant, the Juvenile  
18 Justice for Limited Secure.

19 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Right.

20 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So, that was a  
21 negotiation with the state as there was a delegation  
22 of the authority to be able to have responsibility  
23 for juvenile delinquents coming from New York City.  
24 And so that was a negotiation between the city and  
25 the state, anticipating and forecasting what the cost

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2 was in the past, what the additional cost would be  
3 for the city to assume responsibility for the  
4 treatment and placement of young people and also that  
5 model also understood what kinds of services supports  
6 would need to put in place. So, it is higher than it  
7 was previously in terms of state investments in these  
8 young people. Susan, I don't know if you want to  
9 add.

10 SUSAN NUCCIO: This is a good thing in  
11 that they're capping how much the City of New York  
12 has to pay towards the cost of placement at the  
13 state. So they actually produced a savings for us.

14 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Okay. Thank you so  
15 much, and I'm going to pass it on now to Co-Chair  
16 Cumbo.

17 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: If I may, I want to  
18 acknowledge that we've been joined by Council Member  
19 Darlene Mealy, Council Member Kallos, Council Member  
20 Vacca, and Council Member Crowley as well as Council  
21 Member Gibson, as well as Council Member Barron. And  
22 if there's anyone that I have left out, please let me  
23 know. I didn't mention you earlier? I want to start  
24 off by asking questions particularly on Early Learn,  
25 and I have several questions, so I'll try and keep

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2 them as brief as possible. With the RFP and the  
3 evaluation process, can you please describe the  
4 process for reviewing and evaluating proposals for  
5 the recent Early Learn RFP?

6 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes. So, as you  
7 know, the RFP set the standards for review, and  
8 they're included in the actual RFP document. We had  
9 teams that included staff from ACS and staff from the  
10 Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. There were  
11 teams of three people that would review each of the  
12 proposals. If there was some discrepancy, there was  
13 a second tier review that was done to resolve any  
14 discrepancy in the rating. The staff members that  
15 reviewed the proposals were selected for their  
16 expertise, their knowledge in finance and program,  
17 health and safety.

18 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Okay. Can you  
19 describe in that process, and you touched on it in  
20 terms of who was involved on the panel process? So,  
21 who makes the decision in terms of how they are  
22 selected? Who makes the decision in terms of how many  
23 members are on that team, and who makes the decision  
24 in terms of--we discussed this at the last hearing.  
25 Is there any thought to ensuring that there is

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2 diversity on the panel so that in each of the panels  
3 and each of the discussions, through that, that there  
4 is some level of diversity? Is there also any  
5 thought or consideration given into making sure that  
6 there are community stakeholders or there are  
7 individuals from the perspective communities that  
8 could speak to the qualifications of a particular  
9 proposal, and also, are the people that are on the  
10 panels reviewing the applications or the proposals  
11 rather, do they have to sign any conflicts of  
12 interest per every organization that they review?

13 COMMISSIONER CARRION: The selection  
14 process is established in the city's procurement  
15 board rules. In this particular procurement there  
16 were 30 evaluators, 20 from ACS, 10 from DOHMH  
17 Childcare Bureau. Each panel per competition  
18 consisted of two ACS staff and one DOH staff person.  
19 After the proposals were submitted in January, the  
20 Office of Procurement at ACS reviewed the proposals  
21 for responsiveness and followed up with applicants  
22 for any additional information that they needed.  
23 Evaluators read the proposals in the order in which  
24 they were received. The results were entered into  
25 HHS Accelerator. If there were any discrepancies I



2 said in the scores, the Office of Procurement brought  
3 together the panels, and together read each proposal  
4 to make sure that everybody was on the same page.  
5 After the scores were finalized, the Office of  
6 Procurement reviewed and delivered the award  
7 recommendations to our office of Early Care and  
8 Learning. They reviewed to make sure the awards,  
9 everything was appropriate, signed, so to speak, and  
10 then the Mayor's Office of Contracts reviewed all the  
11 awards. HHS Accelerator also reviewed. OMB conducted  
12 every review. The panels were diverse, both ACS  
13 staff is diverse and so was DOHMH. There is no  
14 community participation in the procurement process.

15 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Is it possible for us  
16 as the Council to have a list of those that served on  
17 the panel review process?

18 COMMISSIONER CARRION: We would have to  
19 check with the procurement rules.

20 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Because that would be  
21 very important in order for us to have that, because  
22 we may define diversity differently, whereas the  
23 diversity on this side of the table may look  
24 different than the diversity on that side of the  
25 table. So we may have differences in terms of how we

2 see that. But we will follow up in terms of making  
3 sure that we have that. The other question that I had  
4 is in regard to communication that you've had with  
5 either DOE or DYCD. So, for example, when you  
6 terminate an Early Learn contract with a provider  
7 that has been in place for a very long time in a  
8 particularly building, but that same provider was  
9 also awarded a UPK contract and a compass contract,  
10 and they've already started to recruit and work on  
11 that in that particularly building, but because  
12 you've terminated their Early Learn contract are they  
13 going to be terminated out of all of their contracts  
14 because they would no longer have a space, or if  
15 they're a space available, would they be able to  
16 remain in their existing space and still provide UPK  
17 as well as their compass programming, or has there  
18 been no discussion in regards to that?

19 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So, an award, you  
20 know, a program that was not recommended for an award  
21 by ACS, that should not have any impact on a DCYCD  
22 award or a DOE award.

23 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Or a UPK award?  
24  
25

2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Or a UPK award,  
3 and that is, you know, something for DOE to be able  
4 to then determine where a program would be located.

5 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: The challenge with  
6 that is I believe and I could be wrong, please  
7 correct me if I'm wrong, is that for a UPK I  
8 understand that the city does not pay rent for UPK  
9 programming. So, if the Early Learn where rent is  
10 being paid and they are given a UPK contract where  
11 rent is not being paid, could they assume still have  
12 space within the space where the Early Learn  
13 programming is paying the rent in that space?

14 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Well, you know,  
15 we'll follow up because I really don't know what DOE  
16 would do in those circumstances. So we could follow  
17 up with you and get you that information.

18 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: I think that's very  
19 critical as we're coming to the close of the academic  
20 year, and families and children as well as providers  
21 are trying to determine what's going to happen next  
22 for them moving forward. So, getting more  
23 specifically what will happen to an organization, for  
24 example like in my district, Young Minds that has  
25 provided 33 years of community service in the way of

2 Early Childhood Education. So, they've been in  
3 existence for 33 years. Are they to understand at  
4 the end of this year or the end of this academic year  
5 that they would have to let go all of their staff,  
6 they would have to close their operations, and after  
7 33 years they would cease to exist, or do you have  
8 some other program or some other way to still make  
9 sure that a landmark or a staple in our community  
10 still has the ability to operate and provide jobs,  
11 particularly in communities where unemployment is  
12 still at record highs, particularly for communities  
13 of color?

14 COMMISSIONER CARRION: You know,  
15 Councilwoman, I wish I really had a better answer for  
16 you. As a person who ran community programs and  
17 participated in open competitive process and lost  
18 many of those and was forced to close programs  
19 because they were not funded through an RFP process,  
20 that unfortunately is the outcome of an open  
21 competitive process, and so there is no guarantee  
22 that any current provider will be funded. It's an  
23 open competitive process, and so no, we don't have a  
24 way to be able to provide funding for an organization  
25 that did not prevail in an open competitive process.

2 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Let me ask you  
3 another question. In your RFP process, did the  
4 Mayor's Office of Contract Services contract  
5 performance evaluation play into how you evaluated  
6 the organizations? So for example, in my district,  
7 Young Minds received an excellent from the Mayor's  
8 Office of Contract Services for the services that  
9 they had been providing for the last 33 years. So,  
10 if a document like that was a part of the RFP  
11 process, I'm confused as to how we as an  
12 Administration could allow a RFP on a regular basis  
13 to simply shut the door and lights out on an  
14 organization that has been doing excellent work. So,  
15 at the end of this year, an organization like this  
16 will have to say, "Yes, staff, yes, parents, we  
17 received an excellent from the Administration after  
18 33 years of the blood, sweat, toil, and tears that it  
19 takes to build an organization, but we have to shut  
20 down because we didn't perform at a level of an RFP  
21 process that we even internally are not thoroughly  
22 aware of in terms of how fair, accurate, transparent,  
23 or diverse it is. So, how does this Mayor's Office  
24 of Contract Services evaluation sheet fit into your  
25 criteria as an RFP and then moving forward?

2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: It does. It is  
3 considered as part of the organizational capacity in  
4 past experience. In many other organizations also  
5 receive an excellent rating, and so you know, as I  
6 said before, whoever writes the best proposal under  
7 the current city rules is who gets funded. We might  
8 disagree with that, but that is the procurement  
9 process in the city of New York.

10 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: What if the  
11 organization that won over the organization that  
12 received it never even got an evaluation from the  
13 Mayor's Office of Contract Services because they had  
14 never been awarded an ACS contract before?

15 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So, it is not just  
16 one factor, right? There is--

17 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: [interposing] There's  
18 also the cultural competency--

19 COMMISSIONER CARRION: [interposing]  
20 There's cultural competency. There are a number of  
21 factors--

22 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: [interposing] There's  
23 experience in the community.

24 COMMISSIONER CARRION: There's  
25 experience. There's finance, right? There's past

2 experience. There are fiscal standing. All of those  
3 things are evaluated, and the program that they wrote  
4 in the RFP, that gets scored. So, it's a totality of  
5 a cri--you know, of variables within a criteria. So,  
6 and you know, the way that procurement rules are in  
7 the evaluation of proposals, a proposal that receives  
8 a higher number, ranking, gets funded, and you could  
9 have 10 proposals that are ranked very high. The  
10 highest one gets funded.

11 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Let me ask you this  
12 question. I'm going to ask it as simplistically as I  
13 can because of the nature of how all of this plays  
14 out. You may have many different providers. Let's  
15 say you have 100 different providers, and let's say  
16 across the board there are 20 of them, all of  
17 different racial demographics, right, across the  
18 board five--each 20, 20, 20. We call them stars,  
19 heart, shapes, whatever you want to call them, right?  
20 AT the end of your evaluation process, let's say when  
21 that process is over, you may have had heart, stars,  
22 boxes, squares, but now at the end of this process,  
23 everybody's a square. All the providers are now  
24 squares. Will you look at that and say, "You know  
25 what? This is problematic. We had some diversity

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2 before, but now at the end of this process, because  
3 of how we're conducting this RFP, its all stars now.  
4 We've wiped out all the boxes, the hearts, the  
5 shapes, and now we've all got squares." Are we okay  
6 with that? Particularly in an environment where  
7 we're talking about equity and we're talking about we  
8 want to see, you know, more MWBE participation, we  
9 want to see the diversity in the mosaic of the city  
10 of New York. Are we okay with the process that we're  
11 putting forth in terms of the diversity that  
12 transcends in a process like this?

13 COMMISSIONER CARRION: You know, in this  
14 particular procurement, we made an effort to make  
15 sure that we created a category for diversity,  
16 cultural responsiveness, which in the past I think  
17 was criticized that the initial Early Learn RFP did  
18 not give that enough weight. So we set that forth as  
19 a separate category with its own weighting. So, we  
20 did take that into consideration. It is not the only  
21 factor that's considered, but we did, but as human  
22 services contracts are exempt from MWBE. So, because  
23 they're awarded to nonprofit organizations and most,  
24 and many of the nonprofit organizations are  
25 indigenous organizations, are small community based



2 organizations, so we're not subject to MWBE rules.

3 But this particular RFP did include a focus to ensure  
4 that they would be, that factor would be one--would  
5 be separately considered in the review of the  
6 proposal. So it's unfortunate that we can't fund  
7 everybody that's currently funded, but that's what  
8 happens in an open competitive process.

9 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: I just want to say,  
10 and I'm going to turn it over to my colleagues who  
11 have additional questions, I just want to say that  
12 I'm both baffled and disappointed in this process,  
13 because with all that was outlined I find it hard to  
14 believe with the only example that I can utilize in  
15 my own district that an organization with 33 years of  
16 providing culturally sensitive programing in a very  
17 diverse community where gentrification is taking over  
18 in many ways, that this organization has sustained  
19 itself through that particular time. It's got an  
20 excellent rating from the Administration. It has  
21 graduated over 6,000 children including the children  
22 of Council Member Robert Cornegy and many others.  
23 I'm baffled at how they through this process after  
24 that many years of service as well as an excellent  
25 rating, as well as all the cultural competency that

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2 they have put forward would not be considered or  
3 awarded for a grant in order to--a contract in order  
4 to continue their services. So, I'm not letting this  
5 go, and we're going to continue to talk about this,  
6 because I definitely do want that transparency. I do  
7 want to know who was on the panel review process,  
8 because often the diversity and the level of  
9 diversity that's apparent on a panel process will  
10 often determine too who will also be awarded. We  
11 have a tendency to fund what looks like us or what  
12 we're comfortable with or what our cultural  
13 sensibilities are as well. So, I look forward to  
14 working with you so that we can come to some resolve  
15 with this issue. Thank you.

16 [applause]

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: We're going to turn  
18 it over to Council Member Inez Barron for questions,  
19 five minutes.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you to the  
21 Chairs. To the panel, I echo the sentiments of my  
22 colleague Laurie Cumbo. I don't care how you can  
23 justify it. When you wind up with as the analogy  
24 that my colleague has used, all stars, there's a  
25 problem. There's a problem. I think it speaks to the

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2 institutionalized racism that exists in all of the  
3 systems of the government, not just here in New York  
4 City, and we need to look at that and we need to face  
5 that. Now, you talked about the panels being  
6 diverse. Did every panel have a black person on it?

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: I couldn't answer  
8 that.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay. I would  
10 like to know what the racial composition is of the  
11 panels. So, I think you said you would find out if  
12 you can give us that information. I would like to  
13 know that. And then as this process talked about you  
14 said that if there was a discrepancy that it was  
15 reviewed by a second panel, is that what you said, or  
16 went up the tier?

17 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So, if there was a  
18 discrepancy, the Office of Procurement would bring  
19 the panel together to review the proposals. I don't  
20 know if there was a discrepancy here. That's just  
21 the process.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So what  
23 constitutes a discrepancy? What do you mean when you  
24 say a discrepancy?

25

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2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So, I would say  
3 that if someone ranked a proposal 100 or 90 and  
4 someone ranked the proposal 50 that seems to be very  
5 divergent. What happened here?

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So what would  
7 happen? What--I mean, do you know what the  
8 difference was in rankings that would then  
9 necessitate it going--

10 COMMISSIONER CARRION: [interposing] No, I  
11 don't.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay. If you  
13 could find that out and let us know, I'd like to know  
14 that. I was--I had the privilege of being a reader  
15 for proposals that were submitted to Washington D.C.  
16 for the Women's Equity Act. So, I was a reader and I  
17 did an evaluation of several proposals that were  
18 written. I became a reader because I met the  
19 qualify--the stated written qualifications of what it  
20 is to review the proposal. Are there stated,  
21 objective criteria for the people who serve on this  
22 panel who are evaluating these proposals, or is it  
23 just some from here and some from there to make up  
24 the three?

25

2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Well, I know that  
3 we actually looked for the most qualified experienced  
4 people with--

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing] Are  
6 they stated as criteria to serve?

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: I would have to get  
8 back to you on that.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I think that  
10 that's a part of the problem. You know, we're picking  
11 people based on whatever we think is good or we think  
12 addresses a need, but I think it needs to be stated,  
13 because when you set it up with this kind of foggy  
14 kind of selection, it in fact can give you a result  
15 that comes with all stars or all squares. So I would  
16 like to suggest that we have specific stated  
17 objective criteria that addresses all of those  
18 aspects of what it is that we think will give us a  
19 great proposal reader, writer to review that. And  
20 the other thing is that the language of the--or the  
21 skill or proficiency of the writers has a lot to do  
22 with the influence that a reader interprets in the  
23 proposal. So, one proposal could have the same  
24 objective and goal as another, but stated in more of  
25 the King's English and would get an advantage if the

2 reader did not understand what the colloquial  
3 expression was written in a proposal. So that's  
4 another issue that we need to look at. I really  
5 think that there's still a lot that needs to be  
6 refined in this process. I know the first process of  
7 Early Learn had many problems. I know that there was  
8 a daycare center that was nationally recognized and  
9 had a very high score, and perhaps through this  
10 process that you're explaining of resolving  
11 discrepancies was told by another panel, "Listen,  
12 this is really high. You need to look at this." And  
13 as a result, they did not get a reward, an award for  
14 their proposal, a program that had 40 years of  
15 experience and was nationally recognized. So there  
16 is still lots of problems with this RFP process, and  
17 I look to work with my colleagues to iron them out,  
18 because when you get all the stars getting all the  
19 proposals and they don't look like the people that  
20 they're serving and they don't have a history and a  
21 record of success, that's a problem. Now, you said  
22 in your testimony that there were some zip codes that  
23 had not been awarded grants, could you tell me what  
24 happened with that situation?

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2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So, there were zip  
3 codes where we didn't receive proposals or the  
4 proposals did not meet the minimal standards. They  
5 were--didn't--were not responsive, did not provide  
6 all the documentation to qualify to submit or were  
7 ranked very low, below the cutoff point to be  
8 eligible for an award.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So, I believe  
10 that--can you let me know which--can you share the  
11 information as to who submitted proposals that  
12 received, that got low rankings? And when people are  
13 ranked low, is there an opportunity for them to  
14 review what happened when the--

15 COMMISSIONER CARRION: [interposing] Yes,  
16 they can review their individual proposal.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And they can  
18 review the comments from the--

19 COMMISSIONER CARRION: [interposing] Yes,  
20 they can review the proposals.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And they have  
22 comments that they can review and see where they fell  
23 short so that they--

24 COMMISSIONER CARRION: [interposing] I'd  
25 have to check to see whether or not, but I think so.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: That's another  
3 problem. If people don't know where they're not  
4 meeting the mark--

5 COMMISSIONER CARRION: [interposing] I  
6 think so, but we will check.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay.

8 COMMISSIONER CARRION: To confirm.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay, because--

10 COMMISSIONER CARRION: [interposing] I  
11 know that I reviewed proposals that I submitted in a  
12 prior life and been able to see the comments that  
13 were written to show where we were strong, where we  
14 were deficient.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I think that's  
16 very important. And I did hear the bell, but I just--  
17 -perhaps if we have a second round? Okay, thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Council Member  
19 Gibson.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you. Good  
21 afternoon, Commissioner and your staff and thank you  
22 for your presence in your work, commitment and all  
23 you're really doing. I guess because of so many of  
24 the challenges we still face for Early Learn, that's  
25 why you hear so much of our frustration, because we



2 hear it from our providers in the district. I guess  
3 the one thing I have to say, and I know we have the  
4 open competitive process and the procurement process,  
5 but what I don't want to see in this city is that we  
6 start to look more to quantity and not quality.

7 There are many long term long standing organizations,  
8 community based, in our communities that have been  
9 providing critical, you know, early education

10 services to many of our children, and so it's never a  
11 good instance when many of them are basically put out  
12 of business. So, I know to the extent that we have  
13 oversight over some of the procurement process

14 working with MOCS. I don't want to see an  
15 environment where we're saying to providers that all  
16 you need to do to get a contract is hire a well-paid  
17 grant writer, because that's the message that we're

18 sending to the public, and I don't want that to be  
19 the case. I care about quality more than I care about  
20 quantity, and that matters in my district in the

21 Bronx. So the one question I wanted to ask is on,  
22 and this is very relative to your partnership with

23 DHS who's coming up after you, and that is a

24 population in my district in the Bronx that is very

25 important to me and that is youth aging out of foster

2 care and the linkages to whether it's public housing,  
3 some other level of supportive housing, but also the  
4 critical services for many of these young people that  
5 need jobs and education. So, I'd like to know the  
6 options right now that we have for many of those  
7 youth that you know are aging out of the system and  
8 how you're working with DHS to really get them into  
9 permanent housing where they have sustainability and  
10 they can live an independent life.

11 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So we have a very  
12 good working partnership with DHA-- Department of  
13 Homeless Services. And the number of young people  
14 that are aging out of foster care coming into shelter  
15 has been reduced substantially and continues to be a  
16 much lower number, and we monitor that and we  
17 actually capture that information, and we have a data  
18 feed with the Department of Homeless Services. There  
19 is--we have priority with NYCHA, and so we have  
20 access to NYCHA housing for our young people. We  
21 also have access to supportive housing. We have, as  
22 I shared in my testimony, working to really create  
23 additional opportunities for young people aging out  
24 of foster care to have employment opportunities. So,  
25 for instance, our pathways to civil services jobs,

2 which is a new initiative that we're launching in  
3 July, to be able to--with DCAS as a partner and the  
4 local union, to be able to train young people and  
5 create awareness of the availability of good paying  
6 jobs in the city to be part of the city workforce and  
7 training them to be able to take that test and be job  
8 ready is an initiative that we're launching, but  
9 having said that, we have an internship program. We  
10 work very closely with DYCD. We have the CUNY  
11 partnership, but having said all of that, and we  
12 continue to do that and more, we need to do more for  
13 our young people so that they don't age out of foster  
14 care without having either a job that pays a livable  
15 wage, whether they are involved in career training or  
16 they have access to a college education. That needs  
17 to be our focus, and we've begun to do that work at  
18 earnest and have a number of initiatives underway to  
19 strengthen that work.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: So, you said that  
21 the numbers have decreased. So, do we know where  
22 these young people are going that are aging out? Are  
23 we still tracking them? If they're not going into  
24 public housing, supportive housing, are we tracking  
25

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2 where they're going and keeping, you know, the lines  
3 of communication open?

4 COMMISSIONER CARRION: We're tracking for  
5 young people from 18 to 21.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Right.

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: We are tracking.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: So the reason why  
9 I asked is because you said the numbers are  
10 decreasing. So I'm always of the mindset that these  
11 are young people that either are frustrated with the  
12 lack of opportunity, they can't get into public  
13 housing, they can't get into supportive housing, so  
14 literally they find a relative or someone's couch to  
15 sleep on, and then the challenge with that is that  
16 many of those young people end up in our shelter  
17 system. So, what I'm trying to understand is for that  
18 number that we're saying is decreasing, where are  
19 those young people? Where are they? Are they in  
20 shelters now? Do you work with DHS to track how many  
21 youth aging out end up in the shelter system?

22 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes, we are.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay. Do you know  
24 those numbers of how many are there?

25

2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Offhand, my  
3 recollection is that it's eight. There was--we  
4 actually have gone through the data and parceled the  
5 data of young people that came into the DHH [sic]  
6 system or attempted to enter, and according to the  
7 numbers we received from DHS, and I will confirm  
8 this, but I'm doing it from memory, is that a number,  
9 a think it was about 17 or 18 of those, only eight  
10 qualified. They had alternative housing that was  
11 available. Work was done to get them into housing,  
12 and so only eight that I--based on my best  
13 recollection actually went into the shelter system.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay, thank you. I  
15 certainly look forward to continuing to have those  
16 conversations around that very important issue. But I  
17 thank you for your presence and the work that you're  
18 doing. Thank you, Madam Chair.

19 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you, Council  
20 Member Gibson. We were joined by Council Member Van  
21 Bramer, Torres and Arroyo. We will now hear from  
22 Council Member Wills before we start the second  
23 round. I just wanted to add my voice to what was said  
24 earlier, and I'm expiring the same thing with a 40  
25 year old nonprofit organization in my district, which

2 is Malcolm X, and often times I think if we were to  
3 just stop the competitiveness and identify that we  
4 need to strengthen these nonprofits that have history  
5 in our neighborhoods and to find an opportunity of  
6 how we can strengthen them so they can continue to  
7 provide those services I think is where we should be  
8 focusing a lot more of our energy as opposed to the  
9 competitiveness of who's the best one to do this, and  
10 it's really guessing that they'll do a better job,  
11 because of course on paper you can say. You know, I  
12 filled out my own share of grants when I was in the  
13 nonprofit world. When you put everybody on paper, it  
14 may seem like it's fair and it's balanced, but when  
15 you add this, it's inumer--it's really not measurable  
16 the experience that these nonprofits have. When it  
17 wasn't great to have Early Learn and when UPK wasn't  
18 profitable, and when all these other programs didn't  
19 exist in our neighborhoods, when having a daycare  
20 program on Northern Boulevard wasn't the best thing  
21 to do, they did that through the tough times. And  
22 now there's nonprofit organizations that are making  
23 this a business. That's not what we want in our  
24 communities, and those are not the nonprofits that we  
25 want to necessarily bolster themselves on the back of

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2 the work that these other nonprofits that have  
3 invested when times were really tough. So, I would  
4 hope that you have an opportunity as an agency to  
5 look back at opportunities to strengthen those  
6 nonprofits and the employees that they've hired. SO  
7 whatever it is that they failed with or the amount of  
8 points in some cases is very minimal, that we should  
9 be finding either through other organizations or  
10 finding a way to strengthen them and say, "This is  
11 where we need you to get to." As opposed to, "Sorry,  
12 you know, we're no longer doing business with your  
13 nonprofit organization." Council Member Wills?

14 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Good afternoon.  
15 Thank you, Chairs. Commissioner, I just wanted to  
16 ask, is a requirement of the Early Learn contracts be  
17 that the providers are not for profit? Is that a  
18 factual requirement or is it--

19 COMMISSIONER CARRION: [interposing] Yes.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: It is? They have  
21 to be a not for profit?

22 COMMISSIONER CARRION: No. Oh, no?

23 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: No, they don't  
24 have to. I'm getting two--

25

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2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Oh, they can be  
3 for profit?

4 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: They can be for  
5 profit?

6 COMMISSIONER CARRION: They can be for  
7 profit.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Okay, thank you.

9 So, we've gone back and forth and my second round is  
10 going to be on the limited secure facilities, but on  
11 this round with the Early Learn, you've said that a  
12 lot of the centers or the centers that Council Member  
13 Levin has spoken on was struggling to find children,  
14 and you said that their seats in that particular,  
15 those catholic charities were at 50 something  
16 percent, that's why they couldn't pay their rent.  
17 But there are a lot of facilities that are at 70, 80  
18 or above, and they can't pay their rent either. Can  
19 you explain to me how that works?

20 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Because they need  
21 to be at 100 percent.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Right. So if we  
23 know that these centers are not at 100 percent, we,  
24 the Chair and I and 28 members of the Council have  
25 put forth a resolution--



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2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: [interposing] I'm  
3 sorry, Council Member, did you say that a for profit  
4 can apply for the--

5 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes, under the  
6 procurement rules and the city rules, a for profit  
7 can apply.

8 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Okay, thank you.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: That's what I  
10 wanted to--no, no. So, have you seen the language of  
11 Reso 656 asking the state to raise the state income  
12 standard so that we can expand how many people can  
13 have access, how many working families can have  
14 access to the Early Learn?

15 COMMISSIONER CARRION: No, I haven't.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: No? Sergeant at  
17 Arms, can you deliver these over? Here goes six  
18 copies or seven copies for everyone on the dais and  
19 your legal, because we really would like a answer if  
20 the Administration or ACS is going to support this  
21 resolution. We have a lot of support in the state  
22 for it. We believe that if we raise the income  
23 eligibility requirements it would allow access to a  
24 lot more working families to be come in. and if we  
25 have an expanded pool of eligible applicants, then we

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2 would be at 100 percent in all of our centers, they  
3 would be able to hopefully pay their rent, and that  
4 may begin to deal with the income disparity between  
5 those hybrid centers where ACS childcare and UPK  
6 workers are at. Knowing that as the gist of it,  
7 would you support something like that?

8 COMMISSIONER CARRION: I would have to  
9 review it.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Okay, and how long  
11 would that take?

12 COMMISSIONER CARRION: I will review it  
13 and get back to you.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: This is one page  
15 reso. You want to get back to--okay, no problem.  
16 You added a lot of money to the center for--it's the  
17 Nicholas Scoppetta--it was named after the  
18 Commissioner--Health Center.

19 COMMISSIONER CARRION: The Children's  
20 Center.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: The Children's  
22 Center, and that's for all children coming into ACS,  
23 foster children, to go there--

24 COMMISSIONER CARRION: [interposing]  
25 That's the--that's the--

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: [interposing] for  
3 medical needs?

4 COMMISSIONER CARRION: reception center.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Okay. And that's  
6 for medical treatment?

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: No.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: No? What is that  
9 for?

10 COMMISSIONER CARRION: It's the reception  
11 center for children that are waiting placement in the  
12 foster care system. Those are children or young  
13 people that are removed from their home or returned  
14 into care and they're waiting placement.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: I have to go back  
16 into that in a second, ma'am, because I could have  
17 sworn I saw that it was for medical also.

18 COMMISSIONER CARRION: It is also. I  
19 mean, children that are medically fragile, what we  
20 explain was in describing the population,  
21 increasingly more medically fragile children who are  
22 hard to place spend time in the Children's Center  
23 waiting for an appropriate placement.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Okay, that's what  
25 I was asking. It also states that ACS will hire 23

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2 staff to ensure compliance with Early Learn and Head  
3 Start contract requirements that provide technical  
4 assistance and training to contract the providers.  
5 Are we looking at the differences between the Head  
6 Start contracts and the Early Learn contracts such as  
7 Head Start, and their model requires a social worker  
8 to be there and Early Learn doesn't? Because in a  
9 lot of the communities, a social worker is something  
10 that would be pivotal to the actual roof [sic] of  
11 these young people and the wellbeing of these  
12 families as a whole.

13 COMMISSIONER CARRION: The Early Learn  
14 model doesn't support--

15 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: [interposing] I  
16 know it doesn't support it, that's why I asked are we  
17 looking at changing it.

18 COMMISSIONER CARRION: There are lots--it  
19 would be wonderful to be able to have social workers.  
20 There's a lot of competing needs and so we have to  
21 make choices.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Commissioner, I  
23 understand that and I understand the conversation  
24 that you spoke about, but in the beginning you spoke  
25 about a comprehensive conversation about placing

2 these mini-jails in our communities that are  
3 inappropriate. But I find it strange that there's no  
4 comprehensive conversation or there has been no  
5 required--the recommendations haven't been put forth  
6 and there's no conversation with the state about  
7 fixing this because we've spoken to Assembly people  
8 and Senators, and none of them understand what is  
9 going on with these Early Learn projects. So why are  
10 we having such a comprehensive conversation about  
11 mini-jails and not about our children that need to  
12 have a push?

13 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Your question is?

14 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: That is my  
15 question. You keep saying that we have to go into  
16 it, we have to figure out. There's conversations  
17 being held. I know I have like another 30 seconds,  
18 right? --being held about this, but we haven't  
19 gotten any answers? The only answer's we're getting  
20 are about mini-jails. Why aren't the things  
21 important to our young people being answered in a  
22 more timely fashion?

23 COMMISSIONER CARRION: I still don't know  
24 what your question is.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: You still don't  
3 know what my question is?

4 COMMISSIONER CARRION: I think there is  
5 lots of conversations about the work and the needs  
6 and our ability to be responsive.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: What I'm asking  
8 very simply is, your testimony, you said that you had  
9 conversations, comprehensive conversations with the  
10 state. When Council Member Fernando Cabrera asked  
11 you about the budget cap for the limited secure  
12 facilities, do you remember saying that?

13 COMMISSIONER CARRION: We were--he asked  
14 me a question about what the funding model was--

15 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: [interposing] And  
16 you said that you had comprehensive conversations  
17 back and forth with the state--

18 COMMISSIONER CARRION: [interposing] That  
19 was--

20 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: about projections  
21 and funding, correct?

22 COMMISSIONER CARRION: That was three  
23 years ago, yes.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Okay, so even three  
25 years ago you were having conversations. We had a

2 conversation with the State Senator, a significant  
3 Senator, three months ago about the problem that the  
4 Chair brought up with Catholic Charities, three  
5 months ago. We've been waiting for your  
6 recommendations about ACS. We've brought these  
7 issues up at two previous hearings, and we're not  
8 getting any answers concerning how to fix it. We  
9 come to you with a fix. I find it hard to believe  
10 that the Mayor's Office where he has  
11 intergovernmental people looking at our legislation  
12 every single day does not or has not gotten in touch  
13 with you about this legislation or anything else to  
14 fix these problems. You keep coming here. This is  
15 the third hearing and we're not getting any answers  
16 on something as basic as taking care of the young  
17 people in our communities. That is a problem. You  
18 also said that because of gentrification--and your  
19 Deputy, you guys do a good job, but on this I'm not  
20 happy. You said because of gentrification there's  
21 certain areas that are struggling to keep these  
22 seats. But in Queens we have whole Community Boards  
23 without Early Learn, and those Community Boards have  
24 19 percent of the parents live with children that  
25 would be acceptable for this program or eligible.

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2 The things you're saying are not lining up to what  
3 the reality is right now. Yes, I'm sorry. Okay, my  
4 second round. I'll yield.

5 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: We will have  
6 Council Member Barron followed by Council Member  
7 Wills.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [off mic] the  
9 Chair has some questions.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, Council  
11 Member Barron. Just wanted to follow up. On the  
12 issue of the gentrification, I just looked up the  
13 demographic data for 11222, which is the zip code  
14 that that pr--the Catholic Charities Program. Forty-  
15 four percent of the households earn less than 30,000  
16 dollars. So for almost half of the households they  
17 are not the gentrifiers [sic], they're the  
18 gentrified. And then another 41 percent earn between  
19 30,000 and 75,000. So that's leaves 13 percent that  
20 earn above 75,000 dollars a year in that zip code.  
21 So, again, it's the families that are there that have  
22 been there that are from the community that we want  
23 to be able to support. I don't know, in terms of  
24 looking at the data, I don't know how much more data  
25 we need to look at. What's the income, the income



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2 breakdown available by the census? You know, how  
3 many children? I mean, I'm looking at the number of  
4 children. There's 7,000 children under the age of  
5 six in that neighborhood. And so, I just, again, I'm  
6 not quite sure what we need to look at. But just  
7 wanted to ask a couple of questions here. With those  
8 issues that we identified before, and I want to go  
9 back to this list of recommendation from the  
10 taskforce. The Early Learn rate health insurance  
11 salary parody and capacity, overall capacity for  
12 children ages zero to three, are those issues going  
13 to be addressed in the taskforce recommendations, and  
14 are they going to be addressed in the FY 16 budget?

15 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So, in the  
16 recommendations, which Council Member Levin, I know  
17 my staff briefed you on those recommendations and  
18 spoke to you.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Very general, general  
20 recom--general.

21 COMMISSIONER CARRION: And the  
22 recommendations will be released this week is my  
23 understanding. Those concerns are expressed in the  
24 recommendations. The need to look at the rate, the  
25 need to better resource the system, those have been

2 outstanding problems for many years. This budget is  
3 responsive to some of those recommendations. The  
4 budget has not been adopted yet. I don't know what  
5 will go into the final budget. I am hopeful. I don't  
6 know what will go into the final budget. Everyone is  
7 aware of what the recommendations are within the  
8 Administration.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, and just to be  
10 fair, the recommendations that I was briefed on  
11 where--I mean, I have them in my briefcase over  
12 there. They're very, very broad. It was looking at  
13 compensation, fair and just compensation. I mean,  
14 that's not salary parody between three year old  
15 classroom teachers and four year old classroom  
16 teachers. That's a very nebulous thing. So without  
17 specific recommendations and a dollar amount attached  
18 to those recommendations, I mean, that's my question.  
19 Because the Executive Budget is--that's the  
20 Administration's document. That's the one that  
21 reflects the Administration's priorities. Therefore,  
22 if the Administration thought that those were  
23 priorities, they would have included those in the  
24 Executive Budget. Is that not correct?

2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: These  
3 recommendations were put together by a taskforce,  
4 presented as recommendations to the Administration.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, but it's the  
6 Administration coming up with the recommendations.

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: The Administration  
8 convened the taskforce. A lot of work was done by  
9 the taskforce. It has made recommendations to the  
10 Mayor.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Is there--is the--  
12 because the budget is a discussion, a negotiation  
13 between the Council and the Mayor from executive  
14 onward. Is the Administration going to come to the  
15 Council with actionable items based on those  
16 recommendations between now and the adopted budget?  
17 Is the Administration--because we don't have--we're  
18 not producing these lists of recommendations. Is the  
19 Administration going to come to us and say, "Hey,  
20 Council, these are our recommendations. This is how  
21 much it's going to cost, and we want to work with you  
22 and put this in the adopted budget." Is that going  
23 to happen?

24 COMMISSIONER CARRION: I don't know. I'm  
25 not in a position to answer that question.

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2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Who is?

3 COMMISSIONER CARRION: The Mayor.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Alright then. We're  
5 going to have to ask the Mayor. Before going over to  
6 Council Member Barron, I want to--actually, you know  
7 what, I'm going to turn it over to Council Member  
8 Barron and then I'm going to come back on my question  
9 about foster care and adoption services, but I want  
10 to turn it over to Council Member Barron. She's been  
11 waiting patiently.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you to the  
13 Chairs. I have some follow-up questions. The--what  
14 is the minimum score that's required in order to be  
15 granted to be successful in this grant?

16 COMMISSIONER CARRION: It was 70.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So if you didn't  
18 get a minimal score of 70, you didn't receive a  
19 grant?

20 COMMISSIONER CARRION: You were not  
21 eligible.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: You were not  
23 eligible. So a minimum of 70 to be eligible to  
24 receive. And when you say eligible, what does that  
25 mean?

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2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So that if you  
3 scored below 70 we did not consider that a viable  
4 proposal.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay.

6 COMMISSIONER CARRION: To be funded.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And if you scored  
8 above 70?

9 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Then you were in  
10 the pool to be considered, and if 70 was the highest  
11 score you would be funded, but if someone got higher  
12 than 70, the highest score would be funded.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay, so you  
14 needed 70 to be considered and then within that the  
15 highest, okay. So, there were five categories for  
16 program expectation, experience, early care and  
17 education services, experience diversity and  
18 culturally sensitive practice, organizational  
19 capacity was organization structure, and program  
20 governance, also an organization capacity, budget  
21 management, and proposed approach was 30 points. Is  
22 it possible then to have scored let's say an 80 and  
23 let's see, 30, 30, 60--okay. is it possible to have  
24 scored a 70 and only have gotten five points in  
25 experience and education services and five points in

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2 diversity and culturally sensitive practice, whereas  
3 another group might have had 20, which is the highest  
4 in each of those categories, but fell down in the  
5 other categories and didn't get the 70? Is there a  
6 minimum score that you have to get in each of these  
7 categories?

8 COMMISSIONER CARRION: I don't know the  
9 answer to that.

10 LORELEI VARGAS: Oh, I'll respond to  
11 that. So, there isn't a minimum score that I know of  
12 that where--for each of the categories. The scores  
13 were cumulative. So, each program, each proposal  
14 received a score. One score that was basically  
15 agreed upon by the team that reviewed the proposal,  
16 and you know, it is possible to have, you know, in a  
17 competition in a particular zip code area for a  
18 number of seats if a provider scored a 90, and in  
19 scoring that 90, you know, proposed to have 50 seats,  
20 and we only procured for 50 seats in that particular  
21 zip codes, then that provider would take that--that  
22 proposal takes those seats. Even if there might be  
23 somebody with an 85 or an 80 or a 75 or a 73.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So that provider  
25 would get all of them?

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2 LORELEI VARGAS: That's the process.

3 That's correct. If they procured for all of them, if  
4 they in their proposal procured for all of them, yes,  
5 then they would get all of them.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: That may be  
7 something we want to look at also. And one last  
8 question. For those that did not, were not eligible  
9 in that zip code that you have listed, you said there  
10 are five zip codes, can they be in the next round of  
11 consideration for RFP's?

12 LORELEI VARGAS: Yes. Yes.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay. So they'll  
14 be able to see where they fell short, identify those  
15 areas that are deficient, and then submit a new  
16 proposal?

17 LORELEI VARGAS: There will be an  
18 opportunity in those five zip code areas to submit  
19 new proposals, and it's again, it's an open  
20 competition. So anybody can apply.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So they'll be able  
22 to see that before the deadline, which is June 1<sup>st</sup>,  
23 within the next I guess week or 10 days. They'll  
24 have access to their scores--

25

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2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: [interposing] I  
3 don't think so.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So that's a  
5 problem.

6 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Well, the timeline  
7 is a very short timeline because we want programs to  
8 be in place for the June 1<sup>st</sup>.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Right. So my  
10 question is will they know where they were deficient?  
11 Will they be able to access? If you already scored  
12 it, I don't see why it's a problem.

13 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Because it has to  
14 go through procurement. It had to be finalized, and  
15 the responsibility determinations have to be made--

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing]  
17 Okay, maybe I'm not phrasing my question.

18 COMMISSIONER CARRION: I understand what  
19 you're saying. The process is not completed. They  
20 can actually get their score. I'm not sure if  
21 they'll be able to see their proposal--

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing]  
23 That's a problem. Then how do--that is a problem with  
24 transparency. If you've told me that I did not  
25



2 qualify and I got 60, you should be able to tell me  
3 where each of the categories is that gave me the 60.

4 COMMISSIONER CARRION: They will be able  
5 to get the breakdown of points.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: That's a problem.  
7 Your point system is based on an evaluation. Someone  
8 should have written and made a notation as to what  
9 the deficiency is. It seems to me now that that's  
10 going to be after the fact. If you can't already  
11 give it to me, saying, "Well, you know, you only got  
12 a 60 because you can see here the score was this and  
13 this and this. You didn't have this according to  
14 what the criteria is." That's a problem.

15 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Well, I understand  
16 what you're saying, but I don't think the procurement  
17 process will be finished in time for this mini-RFP  
18 that we're doing because we didn't receive sufficient  
19 proposals for these zip codes.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Or they didn't  
21 qualify. It's not that you didn't receive sufficient  
22 or that they didn't qualify.

23 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Or they--well,  
24 usually, they--yes, they didn't qualify for a variety  
25 of reasons.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And my point is,  
3 something is wrong with the system. If you've  
4 already made a decision that they did not qualify,  
5 you should be able to say you did not qualify because  
6 of A, B, C, D. So if you want to resubmit, make sure  
7 you look at those areas and address the deficiencies  
8 so that you will meet the eligibility. There's a  
9 problem if you can't tell the organizations that  
10 you've already said are deficient what those  
11 deficiencies are and allow them to now correct those  
12 and resubmit it.

13 COMMISSIONER CARRION: I think in the  
14 usual course of a procurement, we would be able to do  
15 that. We have to--

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing]  
17 Madam Chair, do you understand what I'm saying?

18 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: I understand what  
19 you're saying--

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing]  
21 There's a big problem here.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Yes.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: In terms of  
24 transparency.

25

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Yes, Council  
3 Member. We're going to follow up immediately after  
4 this hearing.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: And we would also  
7 like for you to share with us the timeline issue that  
8 you're having, because you're focusing on a  
9 turnaround time issue. So, we want to better  
10 understand this. You don't have to do it now. We're  
11 going to follow up in a separate letter, and then the  
12 committee will also follow up with separate  
13 conversations, and hopefully this will all be  
14 resolved sooner rather than later. We will have a  
15 second round Council Member Wills, and I know that  
16 DHS is right behind this. Oh, I'm sorry, Council  
17 Member Cumbo will speak before.

18 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Thank you, Chair. I  
19 just wanted to--the more that I'm sitting here and  
20 the more that I'm hearing the testimony, I feel even  
21 more uncomfortable with this process than when I  
22 initially came in. To understand that potentially  
23 three people in a room that we may have access to or  
24 not have access to in terms of understanding who made  
25 that decision is highly problematic when we think

2 about the testimonies that many of my colleagues have  
3 given about organizations that have been in existence  
4 for 25, 35, 40 years, and to allow these institutions  
5 in our community, particularly in highly gentrifying  
6 communities to just simply be wiped out because three  
7 people in a room depending on their mood, depending  
8 on what they ate that day, depending on how they  
9 feel. I've sat on panels, and depending on which  
10 proposal you read first at the beginning of the day  
11 and which proposal you read at the end of the day  
12 when you're ready to get home, the number system and  
13 the metrics change dramatically. And so, I wanted to  
14 know were there any other criteria before you just  
15 make--I mean, I started a not for profit, and to have  
16 someone through one--you know, to run a not for  
17 profit, you write about 50 proposals and you may win  
18 20 if you're lucky. This is one of those situations  
19 where you send in one wrong proposal and its lights  
20 out for you. That's it for you. Pack your stuff,  
21 close the door, it's over. And to have such a  
22 sweeping decision made just like that to wipe out a  
23 whole community's history where their children were  
24 raised, potentially where they have senior centers  
25 and all of those things is so detrimental, and the

2 decisions that we're making right now are going to  
3 contribute dramatically to the gentrification of our  
4 communities while we're having our hospitals closed,  
5 while our schools are closing, while all of these  
6 different elements, we're participating in the  
7 closing of our daycare centers as well. We're all  
8 participating through all of these policies and  
9 procedures and procurement processes and RFP's and  
10 fancy acronyms. We're all participating in this in  
11 some way, shape or fashion. I wanted to know, were  
12 there any letters of recommendations that were a part  
13 of this RFP process so that other people or  
14 stakeholders in the community could speak to their  
15 criteria or what it is that they bring forth? Are  
16 there any site visits that are done before we say  
17 lights out on this particular organization that's  
18 been doing this service? Is there any other weight  
19 other than these three people in the room to decide  
20 the fate of our young children and our communities  
21 and what we're doing? Is there any other criteria,  
22 letters of recommendations, site visits done on the  
23 part of the panel of ACS, or anything like that?

24 COMMISSIONER CARRION: No, there wasn't.

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2 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Can you describe for  
3 me in addition to that what were the circumstances  
4 that had a decision like the one that you all made  
5 then overturned?

6 COMMISSIONER CARRION: There is an appeals  
7 process.

8 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Yes.

9 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Every person that-  
10 -every agency that submitted and was not awarded  
11 received a letter from us outlining what the appeals  
12 process is. They have 10 days to appeal. They have  
13 10 days to appeal from the date of publication in the  
14 city register that certifies the awards for this  
15 particular procurement, which we expect will happen  
16 next week, will be published.

17 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Has a decision ever  
18 been overturned?

19 COMMISSIONER CARRION: I don't know the  
20 answer to that. I imagine in the course of city  
21 procurements the answer would have to be yes.

22 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: And who is going to  
23 be making that decision about what's going to be the  
24 future or the fate of those that wish to challenge  
25 the decision that was made?

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2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: We review those  
3 appeals.

4 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Who's we?

5 COMMISSIONER CARRION: The General  
6 Counsel in ACS.

7 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Okay. The other  
8 question that I have is in terms of budget. Budget  
9 seems to be one of those criteria on the application.  
10 So, if an organization was considered wealthier than  
11 another organization, so if an organization says  
12 we're going to provide laptops or smartphones or  
13 vegan meals, or different things like that, things  
14 that would go above and beyond what maybe another  
15 organization could do. We're going to take them on  
16 trips to Washington D.C. We can go to Seattle, or we  
17 can do all these different sorts of things. Would  
18 that then change the grading or the metric system in  
19 terms of how you evaluate or one that could  
20 contribute greater to the process, or even one that  
21 even says, "You know what? City doesn't need to pay  
22 our rent. We can front that ourselves." Are any of  
23 these things criteria that could evaluate or change a  
24 group's grading system?

25

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2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: You want to answer  
3 that, Lorelei?

4 LORELEI VARGAS: So, I would answer that  
5 by saying that the, you know, the scoring process  
6 that we had looked at experience, looked at diversity  
7 and culturally sensitive practices, award 40 points  
8 for that particular area, looked at organizational  
9 capacity, both organizational structure and program  
10 governance, and budget management, and then awarded  
11 30 points for that and then awarded 30 points for the  
12 quality of the proposed approach.

13 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Okay. I just want to  
14 say in closing, and I apologize because I'll have to  
15 leave after this one, just very quickly. When I went  
16 to elementary school it was predominantly a very  
17 mixed school, but all of the teachers in the school  
18 were white except for one teacher, a fourth grade  
19 teacher that taught the gifted class. Her name was  
20 Gwen Gardner [sp?]. She was an African-American  
21 woman. I was not in that gifted class, but I  
22 recognize that an African-American woman was teaching  
23 that gifted class. And while I learned a great deal  
24 from the education that I received in that particular  
25 school in Canarsi [sp?], the greatest lesson that I



2 learned was that I too could also be a teacher,  
3 because I saw an African-American woman teacher at  
4 that school. So while I learned my ABC's, while I  
5 learned mathematics and geometry and all of these  
6 different sorts of things which made me who I am  
7 today. At the same time, I got an education that was  
8 equally important that I could be a teacher, because  
9 I saw one that looked like me. So, I don't want us  
10 in this process and your evaluations and all the  
11 things that you're looking at to overlook the fact  
12 that when you have people that look like you that are  
13 teaching you, that are guiding you, that are in  
14 leadership positions, there is an education for our  
15 young children in that as well. So, I just want to  
16 put that forward. I look forward to working with my  
17 colleagues because I just can't let this go. It  
18 doesn't sit well in my soul. It doesn't sit well in  
19 my heart. I don't want to be a Council Member that's  
20 overseeing a process and voting on a budget that does  
21 something like this. This is really something that  
22 is quite disturbing and I have to work and fight for  
23 my community and for this particular organization.  
24 Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, Council  
3 Member Cumbo. Commissioner, I just had a couple of  
4 other questions that I wanted to address before we  
5 turn it back over to Council Member Wills. I wanted  
6 to just ask about, I've received a lot of  
7 correspondence from supporters of You Got to Believe,  
8 and wanted to ask about what exactly happened here?  
9 I know it was addressed a little bit at our  
10 preliminary budget, You Got to Believe and COAC  
11 [sic]. My understanding is that they were awarded,  
12 at least You Got to Believe was awarded a contract in  
13 March of 2014. They responded to an RFP that was  
14 issued in December of 2013, was awarded the contract  
15 in March of 2014. That contract was subsequently  
16 cancelled, and that they provided--the contract was  
17 to provide services, adoption services, for older  
18 youth. And I just wanted to get an understanding of  
19 what went into that decision, why cancel the contract  
20 entirely, and what's being done? I mean, in light  
21 obviously of the fact that adoption numbers have gone  
22 down. Even if they've decreased by--even if the  
23 overall number of children in foster cares decreased,  
24 they haven't decreased by the same level as adoptions  
25 have decreased. If adoptions are down 22 percent,

2 the number of children in foster care hasn't  
3 decreased 22 percent in a year. So, in light of  
4 that, in light of the fact that we're returning money  
5 that's not being spent in the millions of dollars,  
6 why pull out of this contract at this time?

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So the contract was  
8 not renewed.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: It was re-RFP'd,  
10 right? It was--

11 COMMISSIONER CARRION: It was RFP. It  
12 had renewal clauses and I did not renew it. So, it  
13 wasn't renewed. That, you know, that's very  
14 different. So, COAC was contracted to find 50 homes  
15 for teenagers, special needs youth and hard to place  
16 children. As of March 2015, 11 children were placed  
17 in these homes. Each--

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] In the  
19 Fiscal Year or?

20 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes. Each of  
21 these contracts under perform. It costs the city for  
22 COAC's contract 60,000 dollars per child to find an  
23 adoptive home.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And that's not for--I  
25 imagine that that's--

2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: [interposing] I  
3 think that's excessive, and I shared with the Council  
4 before. They did not perform. They did not perform.  
5 They did not meet--they were supposed--contracted to  
6 find 50 homes. They placed 11. You Got to Believe  
7 was contracted to find 80 foster and adoptive home.  
8 That's the extent of their contracts. They were  
9 doing no other work for us. That's what they were  
10 doing. As of March 2015, six teenagers were placed  
11 in homes that were recruited by You Got to Believe. I  
12 did not feel that this was and continue to feel that  
13 this was a wise expenditure of our dollars. These  
14 contracts were underperforming. I was not going to  
15 renew the contracts.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: In terms of--is the  
17 only measure how many children are placed? Because I  
18 have to--

19 COMMISSIONER CARRION: [interposing] That  
20 was the contract. They do many other things with  
21 somebody else's money, not ours. Our contract was  
22 for them to find homes. They did not find the homes.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: What I meant is that  
24 in terms of placements or is it training? I don't--  
25

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2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: [interposing] No,  
3 it wasn't training. They were doing that not under  
4 my contract.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So the contract with  
6 ACS was purely for--

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: [interposing]  
8 That's correct.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: There was--

10 COMMISSIONER CARRION: [interposing]  
11 Finding homes.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Finding homes.

13 COMMISSIONER CARRION: That's right.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And so who--how are  
15 they--it seems to me like that's a difficult process,  
16 to find, to place an older child, a teenage child, a  
17 teenager with an adoptive family. Seems like there's  
18 a--that's a lengthy process. It's a difficult  
19 process. And if nobody is there to specialize in it,  
20 how are those, the needs of those children that are  
21 older children in the foster system, how are their  
22 needs met? Who has that expertise at this point?

23 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Well, in my  
24 opinion, not You Got to Believe. So, we have been  
25 evaluating, I have been evaluating the entire

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2 adoption process because it hasn't worked all that  
3 well, and these two providers have not been  
4 successful. They may do other things well, but they  
5 didn't perform well under these two contracts.

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I'm sorry. Just to go  
7 back, Commissioner--

8 COMMISSIONER CARRION: [interposing] So--

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: The only con--the  
10 only thing, the contract was just one thing? It was  
11 just placement of children?

12 COMMISSIONER CARRION: It was, yes.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Can you provide--

14 COMMISSIONER CARRION: [interposing] Oh,  
15 and home, there's home finding.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Sorry? Home finding?  
17 Can you provide--

18 COMMISSIONER CARRION: [interposing] See  
19 every agency in our system is responsible for finding  
20 homes and every agency does placements and finds  
21 foster homes.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So how many  
23 placements of children over the age of 16 did  
24 collectively the rest of the 26 foster care agencies--

25 -

2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: [interposing] I'd  
3 have to get back to you on that. I don't have that,  
4 but I don't have that in my head right now. I'd be--  
5 you know, I'd get back to you. But I do want to  
6 share with you that we are doing an entire emulation  
7 of our adoption process. I've been able to secure  
8 private dollars from a foundation to help us convene  
9 a group of providers and parents and foster parents  
10 to help us develop a new model to help us look very  
11 closely at what's working and not working and how we  
12 redesign our system in a way that actually meets the  
13 needs of all of our children. It is an undertaking  
14 that we have to do in order to be able to do this  
15 work well. It will not serve us well to have these  
16 small contracts with these small contracts with these  
17 agents, any agency. This approach in order to solve  
18 a large problem where we need to have more homes,  
19 adoptive homes, foster homes that are prepared to  
20 meet the needs of all of our children.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So there's just two  
22 things that I could ask for in a follow up is a copy  
23 of the contract that was cancelled, because I want to  
24 see exactly what the deliverables are on that  
25 contract and whether if it's just placements, because

2 I've heard something very different. I've heard that  
3 there's training, that ACS worked with You Got to  
4 Believe and COAC over the years to do training,  
5 working with other foster care agencies, working  
6 with--and the reason that it bring that up is that I  
7 haven't heard from You Got to Believe and COAC.  
8 They're not the ones contacting. I'm being contacted  
9 by families that have adopted older youth that have  
10 worked with You Got to Believe and COAC and have gone  
11 through the system with their assistance and said  
12 that they wouldn't have been able to do it without  
13 You Got to Believe and COAC's assistance, that other  
14 foster care agencies are just not equipped, because  
15 it's a very specialized population. Youth in the  
16 foster care system over the age of 15 or 16 that have  
17 gone through a significant amount of trauma in their  
18 lives, have a very specific set of needs that foster  
19 care agencies are just not equipped to train parents  
20 how to go through the adoption process, who are there  
21 to recruit parents to adopt, that very specialized  
22 population that needs love. I mean, older youth in  
23 the foster care system need a support system. They  
24 need a family. They need a family, and if there are  
25 people out there that want to be that family, we



2 should be doing everything that we can and utilizing  
3 organizations that have expertise. So, my concern is  
4 just that a foster care agency that runs the spectrum  
5 of foster care services may not have that expertise.  
6 That's my concern. So that's actually why I want to  
7 know how many over this--so, this Fiscal Year how  
8 many placements were done by the 26 foster care  
9 agencies of youth that was normally was previously  
10 served by these two organizations.

11 COMMISSIONER CARRION: We'll get you that  
12 information, and I submit to you that these two  
13 agencies weren't doing their job, and they have a  
14 long history. This is not the first time they've  
15 contracted. They had contracts before. Those  
16 contracts were not renewed or were terminated. There  
17 was an RFP process. They were--apparently once  
18 again, I don't understand how that happened. I  
19 wasn't here. They received the contracts again, and  
20 again they're not performing.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. I think that  
22 this warrants a longer conversation, because in light  
23 of the fact that adoptions are down, in light of the  
24 fact that this is a very specialized set of children  
25 that have a very specialized set of needs, you know,

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2 I think that it's worth considering whether  
3 organizations that don't specialize that are equipped  
4 to be able to handle it.

5 COMMISSIONER CARRION: I'm sure there's  
6 another way to do it. I'm telling you it's not these  
7 two organizations.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you,  
9 Commissioner.

10 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you, Chair.  
11 I wanted to ask two questions before we go to Council  
12 Member Wills. My--this is regarding the Head Start  
13 audit, the findings. Have all the deficiencies been  
14 remedied?

15 COMMISSIONER CARRION: All the  
16 deficiencies have been remedied that are--for  
17 instance, we had different due dates. So, the latest  
18 due date of that was in April, the end of April. All  
19 of those were remedied. Now we have on May 20<sup>th</sup>--

20 SUSAN NUCCIO: [interposing] Yes, May 21<sup>st</sup>  
21 [sic].

22 COMMISSIONER CARRION: deadline, and  
23 we're--for to remedy another set, and we will meet  
24 that deadline. And then there's a final set of  
25 deficiencies that we have to remediate, and those

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2 involved primarily public spaces parks that we had to  
3 and also classroom size that we have to wait to the  
4 end of the school term, because we don't want to  
5 disrupt, and we receive extensions from Head Start to  
6 be able to do that.

7 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Okay. So, for the  
8 deficiencies that we had to remedy for tomorrow,  
9 right, the due date is tomorrow. We're on timeline  
10 with that?

11 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes, we are.

12 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Okay. And then  
13 did the federal office of Head Start sign off on the  
14 plan to implement the Early Learn Head Start  
15 oversight?

16 COMMISSIONER CARRION: They are aware of  
17 it, but they don't have to sign off, but they're  
18 aware. They were here recently, made a visit, and we  
19 shared all the changes that we were implementing.

20 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: So there's no sign  
21 off, we should have no issues?

22 COMMISSIONER CARRION: We shouldn't have  
23 any issues with the oversight and the improvements  
24 we've made. They're very happy that we're making  
25 additional investments.

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2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Okay, thank you.

3 Council Member Wills followed by Council Member--

4 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Thank you.

5 Commissioner, I want to just make sure this is on the  
6 record that some of these proceedings seem a little  
7 adversarial and it's not personal. This is just  
8 that, you know, there is no zero sum in a lot of the  
9 issues that are before us in the Council now. You  
10 just happen to come in in a time where I myself and a  
11 lot of other minorities are sick and tired of getting  
12 the short end of the stick on a lot of things being  
13 placed in our communities. So, with that, I wanted  
14 to make sure you don't feel that I'm attacking you,  
15 but you are the head of the agency, so there is a  
16 respo--you are the person that we have to go at,  
17 right? Now, going into these little mini jails of  
18 yours that are going into the communities, the  
19 procurement for limited secure occurred in spring and  
20 summer of 2013, but none of the six limited secure  
21 placement facilities were sited in New York City were  
22 included in the citywide statement of needs for 2013-  
23 2014 or 2014-2015. And according to the Article Nine  
24 of the Fair Share Criteria Guide, the criteria  
25 requires that the affected Community Board be

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2 notified as soon as a specific site is identified,  
3 and if it did not appear in the statement of needs,  
4 then that means CB10 was never notified directly by  
5 ACS or OFCS and the approval of the SAPO's [sic] or  
6 LSP site procured by sheltering arms. Could you  
7 please speak to that? Because if it was--we weren't  
8 notified, then you're in violation of that.

9 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So, Council Member,  
10 what I can share with you in this as you know these  
11 decisions were made prior to this Administration  
12 taking office and prior to my becoming Commissioner.  
13 When I became Commissioner I put, delayed the  
14 implementation of limited secure for more than a  
15 year. So, as we move forward to implement Limited  
16 Secure, we were surprised to learn a number of things  
17 that were apparently required to be done that had not  
18 been done by the prior Administration. So we have  
19 endeavored to meet those, to be able--we were not  
20 aware. I certainly was not aware that the community  
21 at the time that the RFP was let out that the  
22 procurement was made that the sites were--the  
23 providers were identified that communities  
24 specifically were not notified. There were general  
25 public hearings in each of the boroughs, but I did

2 not realize that communities had not been--for  
3 instance, South Ozone [sic] had not been notified at  
4 that time that a facility would be sited. Once we  
5 decided that we were going to launch in Limited  
6 Secure, we went and met with the Borough President  
7 and we met with the Community Board at that time.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: But I appreciate  
9 it. I need some more time. I appreciate what you're  
10 saying. I appreciate what you're saying,  
11 Commissioner, but that doesn't really cut it when  
12 you're talking about putting a mini jail on a  
13 residential block in area that's by your own document  
14 shows it was saturated with these types of  
15 facilities. Going out to the community and saying,  
16 "Hey, guys, we're putting this here, but I wasn't  
17 here before you." Kind of flies in the face of what  
18 the Mayor has said when we're talking about Stop,  
19 Question and Frisk. The Administration can't take  
20 credit for something that was started before they  
21 came in on one hand and not take the responsibility  
22 for something else that was started before they came  
23 in. You were involved in this. So you have the  
24 power as the Commissioner to stop it or just delay it  
25 until we find another space that is--

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2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Council Member  
3 Wills?

4 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: She spoke  
5 throughout my entire three minutes.

6 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: I understand. We  
7 have another agency directly behind--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: [interposing] Okay,  
9 so let me ask one more question then. Please, if  
10 you, Madam Chair? You said that in your testimony  
11 that there were other challenges that you had faced  
12 with these Limited Secure facilities when you spoke  
13 to Council Member Cabrera. I know of our challenge  
14 and our challenge does not include the city yet. Can  
15 you speak on these other challenges you were talking  
16 about?

17 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Well, your  
18 challenges are part of those challenges.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Right.

20 COMMISSIONER CARRION: But also being  
21 able to finish the construction. So our projections  
22 as to when construction would be completed were off.  
23 It's taken much more time. We uncovered always with  
24 old buildings when you retrofit or you do some  
25 renovations, you find more problems that become

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2 costlier and take more time, and so we've experienced  
3 those kinds of problems.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: But what about the  
5 problems that--

6 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: [interposing]  
7 Council Member Wills, I'm really--I really don't want  
8 to cut you off.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Okay, I'm sorry.  
10 Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Commissioner.

11 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you.  
12 Council Member Barron. Thank you.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you, Madam  
14 Chair. Just one question. As you spoke about  
15 children being placed in homes and finding homes for  
16 children to be adopted into, what are the services  
17 and support and incentives that are given to those  
18 families to encourage them to adopt a child?

19 COMMISSIONER CARRION: There primarily is  
20 adoption subsidies that are provided up to the age of  
21 21 to support the adoption and the family being able  
22 to provide for that child or young person.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So, it's a  
24 financial subsidy?

25



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2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: It's a financial  
3 incentive, yes.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And does it also  
5 include medical care and doctors and dentals, or is  
6 that a part of the cost that they would have to bear?

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: There's--it covers  
8 medical.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay, thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you, Council  
11 Member Barron. And we'll have Chair Levin, and then  
12 we will have DHS.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you.  
14 Commissioner, just had a couple of housekeeping  
15 questions here. With--can you give us an update on  
16 child welfare reform and Operation Safe very quickly?  
17 I know we haven't covered that too much in this  
18 hearing. We talked about it in our preliminary  
19 budget hearing. Could you just give us a brief  
20 update of how things have evolved since our  
21 preliminary budget hearing and if there are any  
22 changes in the Executive Budget?

23 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So, in Project  
24 Safe we're about over 60 percent in the hiring  
25 process. We're phasing it in, and we have started to

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2 do much of the work. There haven't been any changes,  
3 so to speak, to report. We're busy implementing.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Can we continue to be  
5 in contact with your agency as the rest of the hiring  
6 is made and as the programs are implemented fully?

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Oh, certainly.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Just wanted to--one  
9 other question having to do with capital. I know that  
10 there is a significant amount of capital now being  
11 allocated to Early Learn and Head Start programs, and  
12 I want to ask, those are just for city owned sites,  
13 is that correct, or are they for city contracting?

14 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So, the maintenance  
15 and repair is for all our programs that fund. It's  
16 to be able--and the hiring of our maintenance staff  
17 is in order to allow us to be able to respond to  
18 those maintenance and repair needs of our entire  
19 Early Learn system.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So that's not just  
21 city owned sites?

22 COMMISSIONER CARRION: It's not just city  
23 owned sites. In terms of repair and the additional  
24 dollars that are there. In terms of capital dollars--

25 -

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] In  
3 capital, capital.

4 COMMISSIONER CARRION: The capital  
5 dollars are city leased and city owned property.

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So, if there's a--

7 SUSAN NUCCIO: [interposing] The contract  
8 providers could be eligible for some of the capital  
9 repair work if they meet the capital eligibility.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And what's the  
11 process for--because often times I hear from  
12 providers, not necessarily in ACS, in other agencies  
13 that submitting for new capital needs in a non-city  
14 owned facility is a nightmare, and so is that  
15 something that is--

16 SUSAN NUCCIO: [interposing] I can't say  
17 it's a nightmare--

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] being  
19 streamlined?

20 SUSAN NUCCIO: or not, but I can say that  
21 you need the--you need the landlord to allow us to  
22 have a lien on the property for some of the--for the  
23 work. So that might be the harder part of getting it  
24 done.

25 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

2 SUSAN NUCCIO: But it would meet the  
3 eligibility of capital, which is the 35,000 and the  
4 five-year life cycle.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. If we could  
6 keep in touch about that as we hear from providers if  
7 there's any concerns that they have, and if we're  
8 hearing from CSA or others that are kind of in charge  
9 of that as that moves forward. And then lastly, I  
10 just want to ask about the savings, the efficiencies  
11 that ACS has found. So, I understand that its 16  
12 million dollars, right, eight million dollars from  
13 the childcare vouchers and another eight million  
14 dollars from--is that the adoption subsidy re-  
15 estimate and current year under spending, is that  
16 right?

17 COMMISSIONER CARRION: That's series of  
18 savings efficiencies and those are two among a number  
19 of them. For instance, the state charge back  
20 reduction, which is a savings for us. There's fringe  
21 recalculation of the federal fringe. That also is a  
22 savings for us. There are a number of those.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Are all those funds  
24 in FY 15 going back into the general fund or are they  
25 able to be reallocated within the agency?

2 SUSAN NUCCIO: Some--those are re--all  
3 the negatives are reductions to our budget, and then  
4 we got the new needs, which are reinvestments in our  
5 budget, but I can't tell you what the city is doing  
6 with all the savings and the efficiencies. I don't  
7 know.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Because I know  
9 that hearing from HRA this morning, they said that  
10 their efficiencies, they're basically able to  
11 reinvest in other programs within the agency and not  
12 giving the money right back to OMB basically for the  
13 general fund. I know that ACS has a structural  
14 deficit and the childcare system obviously, needs  
15 within the adoption services, preventive services  
16 always could be augmented, no lack of needs within  
17 the agency. I was just wondering if it's been a  
18 conversation with OMB about the ability to reinvest--

19 COMMISSIONER CARRION: [interposing] it's  
20 always a conversation with OMB. I mean, we're very  
21 grateful for the new needs and the investments.  
22 There's substantial investments in our system, and  
23 we're very grateful for that, and as you know, all of  
24 that is always a negotiation.

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2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Alright. Thank  
3 you very much, Commissioner.

4 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you,  
5 Commissioner. Thank you for coming to testify today.  
6 We're going to be following up with any questions  
7 that were not asked today. I would just ask that you  
8 respond to this committee's questions expeditiously,  
9 because we will be using it for negotiation purposes.

10 COMMISSIONER CARRION: We certainly will.

11 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Okay, thank you.  
12 We're going to take a two minute break just to clear  
13 up some paperwork and we will hear from DHS.

14 [break]

15 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Good afternoon.  
16 We will now resume the City Council's hearing on the  
17 Mayor's Executive Budget for FY 2016. We just heard  
18 from the Administration of Children's Services and  
19 now the Finance Committee will hear from Gilbert  
20 Taylor, Commissioner of the Department of Homeless  
21 Services. Due to time, I will forgo an opening  
22 statement. For this portion of the hearing, the  
23 Finance Committee's joining the General Welfare  
24 Committee. Before we do, I will open the mic up to my  
25 Co-Chair, Council Member Levin.

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much,  
3 Chair Ferreras Copeland. Good afternoon. I'm  
4 Council Member Stephen Levin, Chair of the General  
5 Welfare Committee. This is the third and last of our  
6 Executive Budget hearings for the General Welfare  
7 Committee today. I want to apologize for everybody  
8 who's been waiting since 2:00 p.m. for this section  
9 of the hearing. We've been running late because  
10 Council Members and the Chairs have had a lot of  
11 questions for the Administration and the  
12 Administration has had a lot of answers. So, we  
13 appreciate everyone's cooperation. At this point, we  
14 will hear testimony from the Department of Homeless  
15 Services, also referred to as DHS, regarding its  
16 Executive Budget and general agency operations within  
17 its proposed 1.07 billion dollar budget. This is the  
18 first time that an Executive Budget for DHS has  
19 exceeded one billion dollars, and hopefully we can  
20 work together to make sure that we bring that down as  
21 the shelter census comes down in the coming year.  
22 DHS provides emergency shelter, rehousing support and  
23 services to single adults and families with little to  
24 no alternative housing options. DHS's priority of  
25 reducing the shelter census population transitioning

2 clients into stable and permanent housing and  
3 preventing adults and families entering shelter is  
4 clearly evident through DHS's Fiscal 16 budget. When  
5 compared to its Fiscal 15 adopted budget, DHS's  
6 Fiscal 16 Executive Budget increased by 121.6 million  
7 dollars or 11.2 percent. The agency's Fiscal 16  
8 budget reflects large investments in the city's new  
9 homeless rental assistance program known as Living in  
10 Communities or LINC, street homelessness and homeless  
11 prevention and aftercare services. I applaud the  
12 Administration and DHS for taking a strong stance in  
13 addressing the homelessness crisis that has been  
14 plaguing this city over the last five years. DHS's  
15 Fiscal 16 budget also includes increased funding for  
16 shelter maintenance and repairs in both the agency's  
17 expense and capital budget. After the recent  
18 Department of Investigation's report citing numerous  
19 violations at family shelters and cluster sites  
20 across the city, this investment in repairing and  
21 maintaining shelters is long overdue but very  
22 welcomed. Although I am disappointed with the  
23 state's initial reaction to the DOI report, which  
24 withheld state funding for 16 of the shelters cited  
25 until all necessary repairs were made, I am pleased



2 to see that the city and the state eventually reached  
3 a compromise. DHS will now submit a corrective action  
4 plan for the State Office of Temporary Disability  
5 Assistance, OTDA, to address all violations at these  
6 shelters and the state will no longer withhold  
7 funding. So I am very pleased at that solution. I am  
8 eager to hear DHS's plans for these 16 shelters and  
9 the timeline for repairs. Before I introduce  
10 Commissioner Taylor, I'd like to thank the committee  
11 staff for their work, Dohemi Sampora [sp?], Senior  
12 Legislative Finance Analyst, Andrea Vasquez [sp?],  
13 Counsel to the Committee, and Tanya Cyrus [sp?],  
14 Policy Analyst for the Committee in preparing this  
15 hearing. And I now welcome Commissioner Gilbert  
16 Taylor and his staff, and we have to swear you in,  
17 Commissioner.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Do you affirm that  
19 your testimony will be truthful to the best of your  
20 knowledge, information and belief?

21 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: I do.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, and we've  
24 also been joined by Council Member Helen Rosenthal  
25

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2 and Council Member Ruben Wills and Council Member  
3 Inez Barron.

4 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Okay. Good  
5 afternoon, Chair Levin, Chair Ferreras and members of  
6 the General Welfare and Finance Committees. I'm  
7 Gilbert Taylor, Commissioner to the Department of  
8 Homeless Services. Joining me today are Lula  
9 Urquhart, Deputy Commissioner for Fiscal Procurement  
10 Operations and Audits, and Diana Rodela, Assistant  
11 Commissioner for Budget and Revenue. In my testimony  
12 this afternoon I will outline Mayor de Blasio's  
13 Fiscal Year 2016 Executive Budget for DHS, which is  
14 part of an announced 100 million dollar new  
15 initiative to address the needs of New Yorkers who  
16 are threatened with housing instability and how are  
17 homeless. The Mayor has demonstrated an unwavering  
18 commitment to provide the resources that DHS needs to  
19 tackle the many issues associated with homelessness.  
20 He has increased inter-agency collaboration to an  
21 unprecedented level, as to leverage the City's  
22 collective power so that we can maximize our efforts.  
23 While we are doing our work, we cannot lose sight of  
24 the larger systemic forces that result in individuals  
25 ending up homeless. Income inequality remains a

2 central issue in our time and a leading cause of  
3 homelessness. We continue to witness a tale of two  
4 cities as wages stagnate and the cost of living to  
5 escalate. Approximately 46 percent of New Yorkers  
6 live near poverty and approximately 22 percent live  
7 below the poverty line. This stark reality combined  
8 with the drivers of homelessness such as eviction,  
9 domestic violence and overcrowding manifests itself  
10 in the City's shelter system, which currently has a  
11 census of approximately 56,729 individuals. Over the  
12 last year we've made significant strides at DHS to  
13 fundamentally reimagine how our agency operates. The  
14 creation of our 2015 to 2017 operational plan has  
15 given the agency a clear framework on which to  
16 achieve our vision of reducing homelessness and  
17 improving lives. This plan offers a methodical  
18 approach towards instituting necessary reforms and  
19 improving the quality of our services. Best of all,  
20 it's already being executed and is having a tangible  
21 result on how the agency operates and the outcomes we  
22 are seeing for our clients. At DHS, we continue to  
23 focus our efforts on reducing our census, while  
24 strengthening our ability to deliver highest quality  
25 services to our clients. As you will see in this

year's budget we are going further than ever before in terms of ensuring habitability of our shelters, as well as the security of our clients and our staff. The DHS Fiscal Year 2016 budget will be 1.1 billion dollars. The 1.1 billion dollars for 2016 comprises 552 million dollars in City funds, 135 million dollars in State funds, 382 million dollars in Federal funds, 4.1 million dollars in Community Development grant funding, three million dollars in MTA funding for Outreach, 851,000 dollars in intra-city funding. The 1.1 billion dollar budget allocates 522 million dollars to services for families, 368 million dollars to services for single adults, 36 million dollars for administrative services, and 149 million dollars to agency-wide personnel services. The DHS Capital Plan for the five year period of Fiscal Year 2015 through Fiscal Year 2019 is currently 107.8 million dollars. Capital projects for family shelters total 25.6 million dollars. Projects for single adult shelters total 59 million dollars, and 13.5 million dollars has been allocated for IT upgrades; 9.5 million dollars is designated for City Council-funded projects. With a 1.1 billion dollar budget, we have the means to

2 reduce our census and improve the quality of care  
3 within our system, and as you will see, this plan is  
4 netting positive outcomes. As you know, prevention  
5 services are the foundation of DHS' efforts to combat  
6 homelessness. In collaboration with our partners, we  
7 strive to stop homelessness before it begins by  
8 providing comprehensive services that combat the many  
9 drivers of homelessness. Our Homebase Prevention  
10 Program is nationally-recognized and proven to be  
11 effective in helping clients remain stably housed and  
12 out of shelter. Of the more than 12,000 households  
13 served in FY14, 95 percent were able to remain stably  
14 housed in the community and avoid entering shelter.  
15 In FY 15, a 20 million dollar investment allowed us  
16 to increase Homebase's offices from 14 to 23, located  
17 in the neighborhoods with the largest number of  
18 shelter entrants. The Homebase program's expansion  
19 allows us to serve 20,000 households annually.  
20 Following the success of the "Imagine" prevention  
21 campaign in spring of 2015, DHS requested and  
22 received an additional one million dollars in funding  
23 for FY 16 to continue spreading the word about our  
24 homeless prevention programs. DHS is also enhancing  
25 its grassroots efforts to inform New Yorkers of the

2 Homebase program going forward. This summer, we will  
3 be working with community based organizations in the  
4 neighborhoods with individuals most at risk of  
5 homeless--most at risk of becoming homeless to  
6 disseminate information about the prevention  
7 programs. Our Homebase locations are already engaged  
8 in this work, and DHS will support and greatly  
9 increase these efforts in the summer. Our Homebase  
10 providers recently increased their outreach work in  
11 the communities by giving presentations and trainings  
12 by sending out mass mailings of information to  
13 prospective clients and by doing grassroots street  
14 outreach. These efforts had enrollment targets for  
15 our Homebase programs exceed 100 percent of the goals  
16 for the past seven consecutive weeks with providers  
17 achieving 137 percent of their target for enrollment  
18 just last week. In addition to the prevention and  
19 diversion efforts being made through Homebase, DHS  
20 received 400,000 dollars in funding each year in FY  
21 16 and FY 16 to enhance diversion efforts at the  
22 front door of our single adult system. These funds  
23 are administered through our partnership with  
24 Palladia Homebase, which provides on-site diversion  
25 services and aftercare. The clients will continue to

receive these benefits if they remain out of shelter and maintain regular contact with the provider for aftercare services. We've been able to rapidly return clients to the community who we otherwise would not have been able to divert. In addition to prevention, DHS is committed to serving all unsheltered individuals across the city. We deploy teams around the clock, across the five boroughs, to ensure people living on the streets and in subways can move into transitional and permanent housing. We expanded our street and subway outreach work and developed a network of transitional housing specifically to serve this population. We have been successful in decreasing the unsheltered homeless population in the city streets and subways through the use of these transitional housing programs. HOPE 2015 showed a five percent reduction in the street homeless population since 2014 and a 28 percent reduction since 2005, the first year when the count took place. Additionally, we have seen significant reductions in Queens, the Bronx and Staten Island. The DHS outreach teams keep in regular contact with over half of the street homeless population, whom they are regularly working with to bring off the

2 streets and into shelter. DHS added more Safe Haven  
3 and stabilization beds to our system, which are  
4 alternative housing options for street homeless  
5 individuals who are unwilling to enter traditional  
6 shelter. Clients are referred to Safe Havens by  
7 outreach teams, who prioritize Safe Haven beds for  
8 street homeless individuals who are the most  
9 vulnerable and who have been outdoors for the longest  
10 period of time. Outreach providers are able to place  
11 clients directly from the streets into stabilization  
12 beds and provide on-site services. DHS also increased  
13 its efforts to work collaboratively with community  
14 organizations and religious institutions across the  
15 city to help expand the reach of this valuable  
16 program. The approved outreach funding, 6.8 million  
17 dollars in FY 16, 9.2 million dollars in FY 17, 18.9  
18 million dollars in FY 18 will fund 375 additional  
19 Safe Haven beds, 63 stabilization beds and two new  
20 24/7 drop-in centers. This funding, which builds on  
21 the 7.6 million dollar baseline investment made in  
22 November in the Preliminary Plans, will assist in  
23 expanding the number of low-intensity shelter beds  
24 targeted at chronically street homeless individuals  
25 from 800 to 1,400 by FY 18. Providing shelter and



2 social services for those need continues to be the  
3 core function and mandate of DHS. We provide  
4 temporary, emergency and safe transitional housing to  
5 eligible families and all individuals presenting  
6 needing shelter. It is essential that we provide  
7 appropriate mental health services to clients who  
8 need them. The Executive Budget funds 16.3 million  
9 dollars in FY 16 and 27.2 million dollars in FY 17  
10 and the out years to be dedicated to mental health  
11 programming at city shelters. These funds will  
12 support 362 social workers in 72 contracted DHS  
13 shelters for families with children to coordinate  
14 mental health across city agencies and community-  
15 based providers. This is a part of a larger city  
16 effort to build a more effective and inclusive mental  
17 health system in New York City. This investment  
18 represents the first step in an unprecedented effort  
19 to ensure that we are fully addressing mental health  
20 needs of New Yorkers in shelter. The safety and  
21 security of our staff and clients at our shelters  
22 continues to be of the utmost importance. We have a  
23 legal mandate and a moral obligation to provide  
24 shelter, and as such, our system's population  
25 reflects that of the greater society at large, in

2 that it comprises many people with a wide array of  
3 histories and needs. We're responsible for providing  
4 safe shelter for the benefit of our clients and our  
5 staff who are dedicated to assisting our clients in  
6 their journey towards housing independence. The  
7 tragic death of shelter director Ana Charle last  
8 month highlights the importance of staff safety and  
9 the need to support our staff in the difficult work  
10 that they do each day. We honor her memory by  
11 learning from this tragedy and by putting systems in  
12 place within our shelters to keep staff and clients  
13 safe. Our commitment to security is reflected in  
14 this year's budget, which allocates 5.1 million  
15 dollars in FY 16 and the out years to fund prevailing  
16 wage increases and enhanced security. DHS will also  
17 use FY 16's funding to enhance security at adult  
18 shelter sites. The allocated 3.6 million dollars in  
19 FY 16 and the out years will fund new staff. The new  
20 staff will comprise 17 security coordinators,  
21 including one coordinator for the central office, two  
22 housing specialists, and 57 special officers for  
23 shelters serving high-risk individuals. We have also  
24 begun doing crime prevention surveys with the NYPD to  
25 assess existing security protocols and procedures at

2 our various shelters. Our child safety campaign and  
3 the work of the Safety First teams continues to be  
4 major part of this Administration's vision and  
5 efforts. Due to the significant number of children in  
6 our system, it is critically necessary that our  
7 agency be attentive to child safety and wellbeing.  
8 The Safety First teams include 30 social workers who  
9 will engage and assess high-risk families with  
10 children to determine an appropriate plan of action  
11 for services when needed. The Safety First staff  
12 will coordinate with DHS Family Services and shelter  
13 providers through case conferencing, effective case  
14 management, coaching, and interventions that support  
15 the family in keeping children safe while in shelter.  
16 DHS has received 1.7 million dollars in funding in FY  
17 16 and the out years for these efforts. DHS is also  
18 actively involved in the Mayor's Safe Sleep Campaign.  
19 We're working in partnership with DOHMH, ACS, HHC,  
20 and other agencies on this critically important  
21 initiative. Preventive maintenance and necessary  
22 repairs are essential components of our agency's work  
23 to improve shelter conditions for individuals and  
24 families within our system. Last week, alongside the  
25 Mayor and agency colleagues from the Fire Department,

Housing Preservation and Development, the Building  
Department, the Health Department, the Human Resource  
Administration, and the Department of Investigations,  
we announced the launch of the shelter repair squads  
which will address urgent health and safety  
conditions in the City shelter system. The repair  
squads will include teams of workers from multiple  
agencies across the city. Alongside our colleagues,  
DHS will be working to remediate physical plant  
issues that have been identified by the inspectors.  
Teams of city workers and contractors will address  
outstanding violations within days of identification.  
In addition, they will bring--they will be able to  
rapidly dismiss violations that have proven to be  
remediated. Shelters requiring additional assistance  
complying with health and safety requirements will  
have their progress closely monitored in a  
streamlined corrective action process. In support of  
this new initiative, DHS has expanded its budget for  
maintenance and repair. The Executive Budget  
provides funding of seven million dollars in FY 16  
for maintenance and repairs to city-owned and  
provider-owned, provider-operated shelters where  
maintenance is not adequately covered in the

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2 contract, 2.4 million dollars in FY 16 and FY 17 to  
3 obtain certificates of occupancy for various  
4 buildings, and 450,000 dollars in FY 16 and the out  
5 years for six capital managers to assist in managing  
6 the increased number of projected capital  
7 commitments. The LINC rental assistance programs are  
8 becoming increasingly successful at exiting families  
9 and individuals from shelter into permanent housing.  
10 We have added staff to further our progress. We  
11 received one million dollars in FY 16 to fund 16  
12 housing specialists to assist single adults at DHS  
13 directly-operated sites to move to permanency.  
14 Anticipated savings from census reduction will fund  
15 the added staff in the out years. In addition to  
16 LINC, we continue to assist individuals to find  
17 permanent housing through placements in NYCHA, the  
18 use of Section 8 vouchers and the utilization of the  
19 CITY FEPS rental assistance program. The Mayor's  
20 Fiscal Year 2016 budget builds upon this past year's  
21 efforts to reduce the census, improve conditions in  
22 shelter and enhance services for our homeless clients  
23 across the city. I greatly appreciate the support of  
24 the City Council in partnering with DHS as we  
25 continue to take aggressive steps on behalf of the

2 most vulnerable New Yorkers. However, we also note  
3 that New York City cannot truly address the issues of  
4 homelessness without working with the State. For all  
5 the work that DHS does and continues to do, we all  
6 know that we cannot actually combat homelessness  
7 without addressing its root causes, poverty and  
8 income inequality. It is simple arithmetic. If we  
9 increase the salaries of those earning the least,  
10 they will be better able to afford housing and not be  
11 forced to enter the system. We need to be bold. We  
12 need a bold move from the State: to raise the minimum  
13 wage, to reform our rent regulation laws, to preserve  
14 our affordable housing, and to adequately fund  
15 homelessness programs as well as raising the shelter  
16 allowance. The city is using every tool that we can  
17 to address the problem and now it's time for the  
18 state to join the fight. Thank you for the  
19 opportunity to testify today. I look forward to  
20 answering any questions that you may have.

21 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you,  
22 Commissioner. I'm going to ask a couple of questions  
23 and then I'm going to open it up to my Co-Chair.  
24 Then we will be followed by Council Members who will  
25 be on a five minute clock for the first round of

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2 questions and then three minute for the second round  
3 of questions. We've been joined by Council Member  
4 Miller and Gibson. I wanted to talk about the LINC  
5 program. With the city spending millions of dollars  
6 to reduce the shelter population through the LINC  
7 program and other rental assistance programs for  
8 homeless clients, how is DHS measuring if these  
9 programs are successfully, and what additional  
10 reports or metrics will DHS make public to show the  
11 impact of the LINC program?

12 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So we are looking  
13 very closely at census reduction across our agency in  
14 total, and LINC is one resource that we're using to  
15 move families as well as single individuals from  
16 shelter to permanent housing, and we've been  
17 measuring our progress in partnership with HRA,  
18 because we're working on these programs in tandem  
19 with them. We have been looking at the number of  
20 families and the number of individuals that are  
21 getting certified to receive LINC subsidies for LINC  
22 families. They can get the subsidy if they are  
23 working, if there's a household member who is working  
24 full time or if there's a family that has been in  
25 shelter on more than one occasion who are

2 episodically homeless or a family who has in the  
3 household composition, a survivor of domestic  
4 violence. That's LINC I through III. LINC IV and V  
5 are programs that we've structured for single  
6 individuals and for adult families for a finite  
7 number of them to move. So LINC IV is for medically  
8 frail and elderly clients, and LINC V is a project to  
9 assess the efficacy of moving single individuals who  
10 are working from shelter to permanent housing. And  
11 so to answer your question, Chair, we are looking at  
12 every move. We're looking at how we are casting our  
13 net wide beyond the certification process. We're  
14 looking at the process in total in terms of how we're  
15 moving families from not being certified to being  
16 certified, to engaging them in housing searchers,  
17 working with brokers, working with landlords, you  
18 know, really identifying exactly what each step needs  
19 to be in order to move them to housing permanency and  
20 ultimately getting leases signed. And so for every  
21 lease that's signed, we actually aggregate those  
22 numbers, and we are looking very closely to assess  
23 how effectively each of the programs are moving. So,  
24 I'm happy to report we have moved hundreds of  
25 families and hundreds of individuals since these



2 programs took effect from shelter into permanent  
3 housing, and we've also moved them with aftercare.  
4 And so for each individual and each family that's  
5 moving, we are also supporting that move by offering  
6 them services that will help them to connect to their  
7 communities in a way that will be longstanding and  
8 ultimately prevent re-entry into shelter. And so the  
9 metrics continue to evolve, and I think right now the  
10 metrics that we're using are lease signings. Every  
11 time a lease is signed, we know then their family is  
12 stably housed, and then beyond that, you know, we can  
13 think in partnership with HRA whether there are other  
14 metrics that we can use in order to assess our  
15 progress.

16 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: We had the HRA  
17 Commissioner earlier and one of the challenges or one  
18 of the obstacles that he is trying to overcome or the  
19 administration as a whole, because you're all in this  
20 together, we're all in this together, is that we need  
21 to do a better job at engaging landlords, because at  
22 the end of the day, as you say, we're measuring  
23 leases. We have to have landlords that are willing  
24 to sign those leases. So, you know, from the  
25 Council's perspective, we want to do everything we

2 can from a legislative end, and you know, to ensure  
3 that discrimination isn't being--you know, that  
4 families aren't being discriminated against, but also  
5 being able to reach out to the landlords that we work  
6 with consistently that are the friendlier landlords  
7 and the landlords that, you know, understand that  
8 they also play a role in helping us reduce these  
9 numbers. So, we let the Commissioner know that we  
10 wanted to engage in that way, but so I thought I'd  
11 share that with you. So, I wanted to talk about the  
12 state cap on youth facilities, buildings. Local  
13 social service district saves the districts a  
14 sufficient amount of money. New York City is required  
15 to invest its share of savings, estimated to be 220  
16 million in rental assistance programs such as the  
17 LINC program or other homelessness services to  
18 address the homeless population. How is DHS'  
19 proposal to the state to spend these savings?

20 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So these--

21 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: [interposing] Not  
22 how, what is DHS'? It's been a long day.

23 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So we would want to  
24 reinvest the savings into continued funding for  
25 rental assistance programs. You know, specifically

2 whether that's in LINC or whether that's in other  
3 initiatives. You know, that's still being discussed.  
4 But to have the additional funds available would  
5 enable us to expand the population of families and  
6 individuals that we can serve and offer rental  
7 assistance to. And so, right now, you know, we're  
8 very fortunate to have in our budget funding for the  
9 continuation of LINC. We're also very fortunate to  
10 have other resources that are on the table to support  
11 our efforts to move our clients to housing  
12 permanency, but I think that that added financial  
13 investment will be one that can really deepen the  
14 traction that we've been having and hopefully keep it  
15 going for a longer period of time for many more  
16 people.

17 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Great. I have two  
18 more sets of questions. One is on former foster  
19 youth and the other will be on Homebase. But right  
20 now, how many former foster youth are residing in  
21 your DHS and Department of Youth and Community  
22 Development shelters? What is the percentage of  
23 discharged youth who use the shelters within two  
24 years of discharge, and how is DHS coordinating with  
25 other city agencies to address the issue of former

foster youth ending up in shelter after aging out of  
the system?

COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So, to give a very  
general answer and then a more specific one, this is  
an issue that we are working very closely on with  
ACS. It is something that we are very thoughtful  
about in terms of how can we as a city upstream, you  
know, before a child is aging out of foster care or  
being discharged from foster care, put in place  
whatever we need to put in place in order to  
effectively maintain their stability in their  
community without them having to ever enter shelter.  
And so that work is underway by Child Welfare, and  
you know, there are instances when, you know, the  
best planning and sometimes life circumstances may be  
as such that any person, you know, whether they've  
been in foster care or not may need to enter the  
shelter system, and the system is available to them.  
So we are tracking these numbers very closely. I do  
not have the numbers with me today. I can give you  
the numbers. I can make sure that my staff send a  
number to both committees so that you have it. I  
don't want to misspeak and offer something that is  
inaccurate, but I will just say in terms of the

2 structure of our system, we have clients who have had  
3 some stay in foster care who are now in shelter with  
4 their children, and we also have clients who are in  
5 the single adult side of our system as well. And for  
6 all of those clients, we're really trying to find  
7 ways in which we can move them to housing permanency  
8 as quickly as possible and to have them exit shelter.

9 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Well, clearly for  
10 this Council, this is something that's very  
11 important. We just finished talking to ACS about  
12 foster care support on one end and helping foster  
13 children find permanent families, and for those that  
14 in between us negotiating finding more time, finding  
15 more money are actually not being able--they are not  
16 able to take advantage to whatever program or  
17 creative idea that you're establishing now,  
18 Commissioner. You know, we need to be able to provide  
19 them all the protections necessary, and to hear that  
20 a foster potential mom or dad is now in shelter with  
21 their children is the reality of today, but we want  
22 to figure out how we can help avoid that as much as  
23 we can. So, this Council looks forward to working  
24 with you. Those numbers are important for us,  
25 because we're thinking about initiatives. We're

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2 thinking about other ways to solve some of this issue  
3 or enhance what's already happening in the  
4 Administration, and we need to have those numbers to  
5 be able to make those decisions.

6 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: We will get them to  
7 you.

8 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Great. And then I  
9 just wanted to talk about Homebase before I open it  
10 to my Chair. Currently, there is no indicator in the  
11 PMMR that tracks the effectiveness of the Homebase  
12 programs. What services are being offered at  
13 Homebase and what follow up does DHS do after the  
14 service is offered, like rental arrears, to make sure  
15 clients don't fall behind on rent again? What  
16 metrics are DHS tracking to assess the effectiveness  
17 of Homebase? These are going to be a couple  
18 questions. So maybe keep them in cue. What are the  
19 criteria for being accepted into Homebase? How many  
20 people are turned away from Homebase, and what are  
21 the options available after being turned away from  
22 Homebase?

23 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: That's a lot of  
24 questions.

25 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: I know.

2 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So I will try to  
3 take them in the order that they were asked, and if I  
4 miss anything, please--

5 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: [interposing] I  
6 will circle back.

7 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: And so Homebase is-  
8 -it is a program that we know is effective in helping  
9 individuals and families remain in their housing. We  
10 know that the best outcome has to be that before  
11 anyone would ever come into shelter that we can  
12 maintain them in the home that they're currently  
13 living in, and that is the work that Homebase does  
14 every day. And so Homebase is a program that works  
15 with individuals and with families who are threatened  
16 with housing instability. It is community-based.  
17 It's located--we have 23 offices that are located in  
18 the neighborhoods where we know the majority of our  
19 shelter entrants are coming from. They are working  
20 using a risk assessment questionnaire. When someone  
21 comes through the door to discern what their level of  
22 service need will be. And so the level of service  
23 need is tailored to whatever the score is that comes  
24 out of the RAQ, the Risk Assessment Questionnaire.  
25 So everyone doesn't need the same interventions.

Some people may need mediation with their landlord, which is something that a Homebase case worker can provide by actually going to the building with the tenant and having a conversation to see whatever issues there are can be settled. Others may need financial assistance. Others may need legal assistance. They may actually need to be connected to an attorney because they're going to be in Housing Court or they're already in Housing Court, and so the RAQ gives us an indication of exactly what that level of service need is and then what the companion service delivery should be. And we are--just to make sure that we're getting the word out for Homebase I talked a bit about the Imagine campaign which was recently on television and subway ads in the spring of this--a few months ago. I do hope that you had seen it, but it was really to get the word out so that people knew that if they were threatened with housing instability where they could go. You can call 311. They will refer you to Homebase. You can come into our offices and we will work with you. We try to make sure that whatever your service need is is one that we can actually meet. We have also asked our Homebase providers, and I had testified to this,



2 to do more than just campaign. So we set targets for  
3 enrollment, and we wanted them to achieve 100 percent  
4 of those targets, and we ask them to use, you know,  
5 hit the ground, go out, actually go to where people  
6 are and tell them about what you can do. Send out  
7 mass mailings. We have presentations. Go to  
8 churches. Go to schools. Go to Community Board  
9 organizations and tell them about Homebase. And by  
10 doing that we were successful in seeing particularly  
11 over the past seven weeks I was very proud to report  
12 last week they were at 137 percent of their target.  
13 So, in terms of actually getting the word out and  
14 making sure that people who knew what Homebase was  
15 and enrolling those clients into the Homebase  
16 program, in respect of whatever means of--whatever  
17 level of service they would need, just having them  
18 come to the front door was critically important. And  
19 so Homebase will work with the family for a certain  
20 number of months, and they will work to remediate  
21 whatever issues there are that is causing the family  
22 to be at risk of losing their home, and whether that  
23 is financial planning, whether it is, you know,  
24 addressing issues of discord in a household to the  
25 extent that they can do so safely, whether it's

2 navigating, you know, kind of the way in which a  
3 household is being managed, you know, having our  
4 clients reside in their homes or in their apartment  
5 in ways that are, you know, more accepting of their  
6 landlords, whatever the work would require, that's  
7 what Homebase will do. Once the intervention is  
8 completed, then Homebase remains available for the  
9 client to actually re-engage in the event that they  
10 feel there is a need for a continued service  
11 delivery, and that process is one that we monitor  
12 closely because we want to make sure that the 95  
13 percent effectiveness rate in terms of I finish with  
14 you on July 1<sup>st</sup>, in order for my interventions to  
15 have been effective with you, we're measuring a year  
16 out to make sure that you're not, you know, entering  
17 shelter one year from that time period. And so being  
18 available and being attentive and being responsive to  
19 what the needs of our clients are is what Homebase is  
20 doing, and they're doing it very well.

21 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: So, I just wanted  
22 to--what are the cases where Homebase, where a person  
23 is denied from Homebase, or that they don't qual--  
24 what are the things that they might not qualify for?

2 And if someone is being denied, what other options  
3 are they offered?

4 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So, if a client is  
5 found ineligible, most common reason for  
6 ineligibility is that they household income--that the  
7 household income is above--I'm just looking at this--  
8 above the threshold for them to receive full Homebase  
9 services, but even if a family is found ineligible  
10 because of high income, there are other referrals  
11 that can be made to other partner community based  
12 organizations in order to aid that family in  
13 addressing whatever the issues are. So, they may not  
14 necessarily be appropriate for the Homebase  
15 intervention, but it's not the case that Homebase  
16 will leave the family high and dry. We would then  
17 look at what are the other community based anchors  
18 that we can, you know, connect that family to in  
19 order to assist them for whatever the presenting need  
20 may be. Options for families who are turned away  
21 from Homebase can include, as I had mentioned, CBO's  
22 and other community services, some of which are  
23 actually funded by the Council. But these are  
24 partnerships that our Homebase providers have and  
25 they are routinely--if they're not able to meet the

2 need for the client who is presenting at the front  
3 door connecting that client to someone who can meet  
4 that need.

5 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Great. Thank you  
6 very much, Commissioner. Again, I want you just to  
7 thank you for being a part of the--not the taskforce  
8 but your--the homeless--you rolled it out in Corona.  
9 I can't believe I just drew a blank. Of course I  
10 did.

11 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: The shelter repair  
12 squads?

13 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Yes, yes. Thank  
14 you so much. I need probably more water. It's been a  
15 long day. But thank you, and I really--you know,  
16 what you do for New York and what you do for families  
17 that are in urgent need is really something that is  
18 immeasurable. So, thank you very much, Commissioner.  
19 And we will now hear from Chair Levin.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you. Thank you  
21 very much, Chair Ferreras Copeland. Commissioner,  
22 thank you very much for your testimony. I want to  
23 follow up a little bit about the shelter repair  
24 squad. Can you--is there a dollar amount attached to  
25 that of what that's going to be in FY 16? Is it

2 going to be--in terms of the--do you have a sense of  
3 is it a cross agency? I mean, is the entire budget  
4 going to be borne by DHS or is this kind of something  
5 that is resources from all agencies going to be going  
6 into it?

7 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So, the initial  
8 investment for the work of the shelter repair squads,  
9 as I had testified to, as was in my testimony, shall  
10 I say, I believe was 12.--you know that number? Was  
11 it 12.6? I know. I know. I know. I just want to  
12 give the whole number.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I'm sorry. You  
14 testified seven million in FY 16 for maintenance and  
15 repairs, for city-owned and provider-operated  
16 shelters.

17 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: But there was an  
18 allocation actually for the shelter repair squads.  
19 I'm sorry that I'm not able to find it. But we will  
20 find it. We are working closely with the other  
21 agencies to understand exactly what the expenses will  
22 be based upon each agency's involvement in the work  
23 of the squads. And so, you know, as you know, Chair,  
24 some agencies are actually doing inspections. Others  
25 are actually doing repairs. Some of us are doing it

2 using contracted workforce. Some of us are also using  
3 our direct maintenance staff who work directly for  
4 our agencies, and so what we're doing is trying to  
5 figure out the financing since it was announced last  
6 week to get a sense of exactly how the expenses will  
7 be shared across the agency. There was a particular  
8 map that was--it was just in here. Was it seven  
9 million dollars? 12.5 million dollars.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: 12.5.

11 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: 12.5 million  
12 dollars.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And when you  
14 testified to the seven million dollars for  
15 maintenance and repairs in city-owned and provider-  
16 operated shelters, what about non-city owned shelters  
17 that--we've heard obviously from--we have brought his  
18 up in previous hearings from tier two providers that  
19 have had a hard time in the past with capital, new  
20 capital needs being granted. Is any funding  
21 dedicated to those that are not in city-owned  
22 facilities?

23 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So what we're  
24 talking with the state about is creating reserve  
25 funds, a pool of funding that would be available for

2 access by the providers that you're describing who  
3 may not have in their budgets some monies available  
4 to do necessary repairs. And so while we explore  
5 that as a standing option, hopefully something that  
6 can be longstanding and go forward for many  
7 Administrations to come, we are also being responsive  
8 to new need requests that are begin made by our  
9 providers in the event that they have a specific  
10 situation at one of their buildings that they require  
11 additional funding to cure. And so we have allocated  
12 new needs and we continue to review them, and we  
13 continue to, you know, evaluate our ability to  
14 actually fund them, and when we can, we do.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Now, in terms  
16 of larger capital expenses that may be part of this,  
17 can you detail? I don't know. Did you announce  
18 today what the agreement was with the city, I mean,  
19 with the state on the 16 shelters that they were  
20 going to--that they had announced that they were  
21 going to withhold funding from. I know that there  
22 was a plan that was to be announced. Was it--it was  
23 announced today, or is this--

24 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So, we had been  
25 working with OTDA.

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

3 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: They had begun as  
4 you know going out and inspecting a number of our  
5 shelters for health and safety issues, and as a  
6 result of their inspections--they did it in waves.  
7 And so they had done it looking first at the  
8 buildings that were inspected by DOI last year into  
9 this year. And as a result of those inspections,  
10 they had identified 16 buildings in which they were  
11 initially considering withholding funding if we did  
12 not remediate conditions. I definitely want to thank  
13 the Council for their support in our, you know,  
14 working with the state to resolve this in a different  
15 manner. They ultimately decided against withholding  
16 the funding, and instead, elected to work with us to  
17 create a corrective action plan that we are  
18 submitting, which would in very broad strokes, you  
19 know, convey to them how we will be remediating  
20 conditions by category and by type at the various  
21 shelters that they've gone to, right? And so  
22 thinking about things related to fire code, thinking  
23 about things related to physical plants and  
24 structures, and really giving them for each building  
25 some details about our estimation as to when we can



2 actually conduct the repairs, when our providers can  
3 conduct the repairs, and the further assurance that  
4 by use of the shelter repair squads that we now have  
5 more resources in our arsenal that will help us to  
6 improve our shelter stock. And so that plan is  
7 actually being transmitted to the state today. We had  
8 discussions with them about what should be in it.  
9 There was a meeting of the minds in terms of, you  
10 know, the practicalities about long term and short  
11 term. There are some items, as you know, that are  
12 very long term that will require a longer period of  
13 time to repair and others that will be remediated  
14 very quickly.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Could you provide us  
16 some examples of what some of the longer term, longer  
17 than 30 days repairs could be?

18 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So, it could be a  
19 repair to a roof, like a roofing repair. There was  
20 something about pointing facades, re-pointing [sic]  
21 the façade of a building, which I think some type of  
22 brick work. There could be replacements of fire  
23 panels, some upgrading fire panels. So, we have fire  
24 panels that work but they have to be upgraded from  
25 time to time in order to meet the codes, and some of

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2 those projects are more long term than the other  
3 shorter term fixes that we could remediate very  
4 quickly.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And on average, how  
6 long is it taking DHS or the city, you know, the  
7 collective agencies to remediate violations?

8 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So, we started our  
9 work last week. We actually made a great deal of  
10 progress. We were able to support our providers in  
11 giving them clear direction about what needed to be  
12 fixed, and many of them took it upon themselves and  
13 actually did the repair work. From the instances  
14 where we had to actually deploy staff, we were able  
15 to do so in partnership with HPD. I think we made  
16 our announcement about a week ago, actually a little  
17 over a week ago. Last Monday--

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Right,  
19 right.

20 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: is when we had made  
21 our announcement, and we're on track to actually move  
22 things very quickly. So we had estimated that the  
23 short term fixes could be completed within seven  
24 days, and that's our goal, but we're pushing forward,  
25 you know, full throttle and full speed ahead, and we

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2 have the resources and support to help us to get it  
3 done.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Of the 25 shelters  
5 that were cited in the DOI report, how many are now  
6 fully compliant?

7 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So, we are only  
8 occupying 23 of the 25.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

10 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Vacated two of  
11 them. And as of last week when we had made the  
12 announcement of the shelter repair squads, there was  
13 one--I'm sorry. There were seven issues, seven  
14 violations that were cited by DOI of over 400 total  
15 that remained outstanding.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

17 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: And those seven,  
18 either the work has begun or the work has been  
19 completed since last week.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And what types of  
21 violations are those?

22 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So those--

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Since  
24 there's so few, you could just numerate--  
25

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2 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: [interposing] So  
3 those were the longer term ones.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uh-huh.

5 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: I know one I  
6 believe was--one I believe was roof repair, and I  
7 would have to tell you what the others are, but they  
8 were the longer term projects.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: it's seven out of 400.  
10 So 300--

11 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: [interposing] Seven  
12 out of 400.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So 393 haven't [sic]  
14 been remediated.

15 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Yes.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

17 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: As of last week.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Just going over to  
19 cluster sites for a moment. How many cluster sites  
20 have--are being brought under contract currently?  
21 And are they going to remain any cluster sites that  
22 are going to be outside of contract?

23 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So, our decision  
24 making at this point in time is to move anything that  
25 is non-contracted to contract if we are going to

2 continue using it as shelter, right? And so, for  
3 example, the two sites that were visited by DOI that  
4 we elected to vacate. When the report was coming  
5 out, they were non-contracted. So we would not be  
6 moving those to contract. The balance of our  
7 portfolio, we've made some decisions about what  
8 should come to contract. I would have to get you the  
9 specific numbers. Not everything is coming to  
10 contract, but the vast majority of it is, and it's  
11 coming to contract because we deal--we still need the  
12 units in order to shelter the families that are  
13 currently in place. Our goal, aspirationally [sic],  
14 is to, as I've testified to before, to reduce our  
15 reliance on cluster capacity and to return those  
16 apartments to the extent that we can, to the  
17 affordable housing market. But as we continue our  
18 work towards census reduction, we're very thoughtful  
19 that if we're going to continue to have these units  
20 of shelter, that they should be under contract, which  
21 would then give us more ability to enforce, you know,  
22 our standards and what we want our standards to be in  
23 terms of service delivery to clients who are in those  
24 units. So I can get you the whole numbers. I don't  
25 have it right now, but I can send it to you.

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: In the new City FEPS  
3 program there is one possibility that a family living  
4 in shelter slated for imminent closure could be  
5 eligible for City FEPS, does that--is it right that  
6 we take that to mean that DHS is planning on closing  
7 some shelters or is that in reference to cluster  
8 sites that may be closing, or what could that be in  
9 reference to?

10 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So, it's referencing  
11 both. So, if in deed when we are at a place where we  
12 will be exiting a particular building, we will then  
13 be able to offer City FEPS to families who are in  
14 those buildings. We do have one shelter where the  
15 provider has elected not to renew their contract, and  
16 so at the end of this Fiscal Year we'll be exiting  
17 that building, and when we exit that building, all  
18 those families have now been given City FEPS because  
19 we're coming out of that location. But in instances  
20 where it's either the provider has discontinued  
21 business with the city or the city's decision to  
22 discontinue business with the provider, we want to  
23 have the resource available for our families to move  
24 as quickly as possible to permanent housing instead  
25 of re-sheltering them in other shelter units. And so

2 the construct of that program I thought was rather  
3 elegant in terms of helping us to have a better  
4 outcome for our clients.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: In those instances  
6 where the city may be vacating a cluster site, what--  
7 I asked Commissioner Banks this similar question.  
8 What does the city do in terms of due diligence to  
9 ascertain the rent stabilized rent level of that  
10 apartment? Is there something that the city does to  
11 work in coordination with DHCR so that there's an  
12 assurance that the apartment will be not rented at a  
13 level that's higher than the rent regulated rent?

14 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So what we've been  
15 doing for any of the units that we've been vacating  
16 is we've certainly let the housing agent, the housing  
17 enforcement agency know that we're coming out of  
18 those units. We have in some instances had  
19 conversations with landlords of those buildings to  
20 inquire of them would be they amenable to now leasing  
21 those apartments to clients who have been in shelter  
22 now as tenants instead of as shelter residents. And  
23 as part of those conversations, we've done what  
24 you're referencing, which is trying to get a sense of  
25 exactly what is a fair market rent for those

2 apartments. We are working with DHCR in the event  
3 that subsequent to our departure we see any large  
4 rent increases. It's a challenge for our agency,  
5 because typically when we leave a site, you know,  
6 we're gone, right?

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right.

8 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: And so, you know,  
9 unless there's some connection or some reason for us  
10 to be back there, we're doing something else with the  
11 other--balance of a portfolio, but we're trying to  
12 make every effort and be thoughtful about if we're  
13 leaving housing stock, how can it then be repurposed  
14 to what it had originally been built for, which was  
15 to be used for families to rent.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. It remains a  
17 concern. I brought it up with your predecessor just  
18 when, I think, when we were acquiring more and more  
19 cluster sites throughout the city, that it, you know,  
20 remains a concern that we don't know exactly what the  
21 picture is as it relates to rent stabilization and  
22 rent stabilized rents under DHCR. My fear is that,  
23 you know, a subsidy might go above a rent stabilized  
24 level and then a landlord is not bound to that, does  
25 not--I mean, they're not bound to it unless it's



2 discovered, and they become accustomed to receiving a  
3 rent level that's above a rent stabilized rent. Just  
4 one other question and then I'll turn it over to my  
5 colleagues and I'll return later. In terms of mental  
6 health services, I was wondering if it might be  
7 possible to delve into that a little bit more. We  
8 are excited to see that there's a real commitment  
9 from this Administration over the next few years for  
10 real, you know, real social services, workers, social  
11 workers, and 362 social workers and 72 contracted  
12 shelters. Can you explain a little bit more about  
13 what the portfolio of those social workers would be  
14 and what the services they'll be providing?

15 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So, the 362 social  
16 workers that are going to be assigned to our 72  
17 contracted DHS shelters of families with children  
18 will play primarily a coordination of services  
19 function. And so, we know that our families who are  
20 in shelter very often are involved with other systems  
21 and when someone is affected by mental illness, we  
22 want to make sure that the coordination of services  
23 that that family is receiving is optimal. And so,  
24 you know, being in shelter and thinking about the  
25 traumatic effect of not being--of being homeless,

2 right, compounded by whatever the mental illness may  
3 be, whether it's affecting a child or affecting a  
4 care taker, we felt that it would be important to  
5 have a licensed clinician who would be able to work  
6 in partnership with the shelter staff as well with  
7 our family services oversight staff and our providers  
8 to really make sure that if referrals are being made,  
9 that they are being made to complement each other as  
10 opposed to being in conflict with each other, and to  
11 make sure that if there's medication management  
12 that's in place that our family, that the client who  
13 would require the same is connected to a healthcare  
14 provider that can help them with that, or if it's a  
15 shelter that can assist with that particular issue,  
16 that they know exactly what the medication may be.  
17 So, having this cadre of staff who are skilled in  
18 this particular area and how know these other systems  
19 will then be able to really bring to bear that  
20 expertise and really wrap around our clients as they  
21 transition from shelter to permanent housing and  
22 still attend to whatever mental health needs they may  
23 have. So this is something we're really excited  
24 about. We really feel as though it will be  
25 tremendously useful to our clients, and right now I

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2 believe the proposed case load will be one social  
3 worker for every 25--one to 25, which we think is  
4 manageable because there will be other social service  
5 providers involved in the lives of those families to  
6 help pull it all together.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you. I'll turn  
8 it over to my colleagues. First for questions,  
9 Council Member Helen Rosenthal.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you,  
11 Chair Levin and Chair Ferreras Copeland. And just to  
12 echo Chair Levin's sentiments, thank you,  
13 Commissioner for your dedication to the Department of  
14 Homeless Services. I don't know how you do it every  
15 day. Totally grateful. I wanted to know two quick  
16 questions. The--some of your--some of the workers  
17 via your contracts are going to receive wage  
18 increases to \$11.50 an hour and the 2.5 percent  
19 increase. And I'm assuming you like the other  
20 Commissioners filled out a survey that would tell OMB  
21 what the age range is for your contracts and how many  
22 employees or workers would be affected, and I'm  
23 wondering if you have the number for your agency of  
24 how many workers would be affected, full time and  
25 part time?

2 LULA URQUHART: Lula Urquhart, Deputy  
3 Commissioner for School Procurement.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Hi.

5 LULA URQUHART: We completed a form and  
6 submitted it to OMB with the number of staff that  
7 would be eligible based on our current budgets. So,  
8 we don't have it here today, but we can get it for  
9 you.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Oh, great. So,  
11 I'd be interested in knowing the number. And would  
12 you also have the contracts, not the specific ones, I  
13 don't mean that, but like the number of contracts  
14 involved and, you know, how many are in homeless  
15 services, how many are in the different categories  
16 that you might have? That would be helpful.

17 LULA URQUHART: Yes, in the budget, annual  
18 review budget, we have all the categories and that's  
19 based on the various contracts.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yeah. Do you  
21 know how many contracts in total it applied to?

22 LULA URQUHART: I don't know--

23 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: [interposing]  
24 Off the top of your head?

25 LULA URQUHART: No.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Okay. So,  
3 we'll look forward to getting that information.  
4 Thank you. And are you--on a different matter, when  
5 you do intake for your clients, whether it be  
6 families or individuals, are you able to find out if  
7 prior to becoming homeless if they were rent  
8 regulated tenants?

9 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So, when we do  
10 intake on the family side of our system, we do ask  
11 for the housing history of the applicant family, and  
12 as part of that housing history they can either  
13 provide us preferably some lease agreement that they  
14 had that expired or whatever the issue is, but some  
15 demonstration that they actually had been either  
16 renting or living with another primary tenant. And  
17 so, if they were the primary tenant themselves, I do  
18 think that we would, depending on the documentation  
19 that we would receive, we would be able to get some  
20 of that information, but not all of it.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: And is that--

22 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: [interposing] On the  
23 single side of our system it's a bit different. So  
24 there is not--we do ask about housing history. We do  
25

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2 ask, you know, about information related to where our  
3 clients have come from.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yeah.

5 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: But there is no  
6 eligibility process on that side of our system, and  
7 so that documentation is not required. If it is  
8 submitted, then we, you know, again thereto depending  
9 on the nature of the documentation, we may or may not  
10 have that information, but not on a regular and  
11 ongoing basis.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So, to the  
13 extent that you do have the information and its  
14 collected, is that something that is summarizable  
15 [sic], or is it in disparate places?

16 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So, it would be in  
17 our system of record and we would actually have to  
18 get a sense of exactly what it can tell us, you know?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yeah.

20 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: I don't think it's  
21 something that we can run a report on. I think that  
22 we would actually have to go in and, you know, do  
23 some reviews. So it would be labor intensive to  
24 actually get that information in an aggregate  
25 fashion.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Okay.

3 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Based on my  
4 knowledge of the system, but we may have it.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Okay, if you  
6 could let us know. I'd be curious to understand  
7 that, and I'm trying to, what I'm getting at is just  
8 trying to understand the connection between, you  
9 know, when people are harassed out of their rent  
10 regulated apartments and we don't always know what  
11 happens to them, if any of them end up homelessness.  
12 If you can help us answer that question from your  
13 side of the equation.

14 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: We will.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Okay, great.  
16 Thank you very much. That's it. Thank you very much.

17 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you, Council  
18 Member Rosenthal. We'll have Council Member Barron  
19 followed by Council Member Gibson, and we've been  
20 joined by Council Member Cohen.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you, Madam  
22 Chair. Thank you to the panel for coming. A few  
23 quick questions. What is the threshold to qualify  
24 for the LINC program?

25

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2 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So, our LINC  
3 programs for families are targeted for families who  
4 have been in shelter the longest period of time for  
5 LINC I, II and III. And so we are looking. For the  
6 most part, the length of stay in shelter would guide-  
7 -

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing] No,  
9 what is the financial cut-off threshold?

10 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Oh, the financial  
11 threshold. So, there--the requirement for LINC I  
12 would be someone who is working fulltime, a certain  
13 number of hours, but I don't think that there's a  
14 certain amount of income that they would have to be  
15 earning. They just have to be working a certain  
16 number--for LINC I, for working families.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay.

18 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: For LINC II the  
19 family has to be, I believe, on PA or PA eligible.  
20 So, I don't believe that there's a financial  
21 threshold or requirement for that group either. And  
22 for LINC III these are families that are certified as  
23 domestic violence survivors.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay.  
25



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2 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: And again, I don't  
3 think that there is--

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing] In  
5 your testimony you say that you received a million  
6 dollars for 16 housing specialists that would help  
7 move from DHS shelters to permanency. How many  
8 people benefitted from that program?

9 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So we have not--the  
10 funding has been put into our budget for this Fiscal  
11 Year. We've actually begun the process of hiring the  
12 housing specialists. I don't believe that they're  
13 all on board, and these are for our direct run sites  
14 for single individuals who are in our single shelters  
15 and really to work with them around either  
16 identifying rooms that they can rent or apartments  
17 that they can rent.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So, no one has  
19 been moved yet, is that what you're saying?

20 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Not from that cadre  
21 of staff. I think we're still being that group of  
22 staff on. Those funds were committed for FY 16 and  
23 partial FY 15.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: It says we  
25 received one million dollars in FY 16 to fund 16

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2 housing specialists to assist single adults at DHS  
3 directly operated sites to move to permanency. So,  
4 have any of them been moved? Any people benefitted  
5 from that million dollar investment that we gave?

6 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So, I know that we  
7 began the hiring process. FY 16 will begin on July  
8 1<sup>st</sup>, but we began the hiring process to identify  
9 those staff to bring them on board.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay.

11 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: I'd have to--I could  
12 let you know, Council Member.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay.

14 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Whether they were  
15 hired and who they moved.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you. And  
17 how many shelters are there that are operated by DHS  
18 and that are operated by other providers?

19 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: [off mic] We have  
20 that answer.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay. And while  
22 you're looking for that, another question. Why aren't  
23 we moving all the cluster sites into contracts with  
24 the city so that we can have that ability to make  
25 sure that they operate--

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2 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: [interposing] So we  
3 are. I mean, that's--

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: All of them are.

5 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Anything that's  
6 non-contracted we're trying to move into contract.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay.

8 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Predominately those  
9 cluster apartments that are not in contract, we're  
10 trying to. We want to move them under contract with  
11 the city.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Oh, so you do want  
13 to move all of them in, okay. And finally, you  
14 talked about housing permanency for NYCHA, using  
15 NYCHA Section 8 vouchers and City FEPS. Can you give  
16 me a number as to how many people have gotten into  
17 NYCHA, particularly into NYCHA.

18 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So, our NYCHA  
19 numbers. I can tell you that in FY 15 we had moved  
20 688--no. FY 15, going back to calendar year 14 when  
21 it began, we moved 1,700 families into NYCHA.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay. And do you  
23 have a number for Section 8 vouchers?

24 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Section 8, we had  
25 received an allocation of 500 additional Section 8

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2 vouchers last year. we had moved in Fiscal Year 15  
3 to date 370 of those 500 families have moved, and the  
4 lion's share of the balance are actually matched to  
5 apartments and in the process of moving, hopefully  
6 sooner than later.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you. Oh, I  
8 did have another question. The location of the  
9 Homebase program, is there one in my district? Is  
10 there a known location? Is there something that  
11 people know this is a site that you go to if you need  
12 assistance, or is it something that's--you know?

13 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So, there is one in  
14 your district. I have to tell you exactly which one.  
15 I want to make sure I give you that information.  
16 I'll make sure someone gets it to you today.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you.

18 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: But, yes. I mean  
19 there are storefront locations. They're accessible  
20 by public transportation and they're readily  
21 available for clients who need them. To your  
22 question, Council Member, there are eight directly  
23 run DHS shelters.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: There are eight?  
25

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2 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Eight and the  
3 balance are provider run shelters.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And the balance  
5 being?

6 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Nonprofit providers  
7 who run.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And the number?

9 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: I would have to get  
10 you a number, hundreds.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you, Council  
13 Member Barron. We will have Council Member Gibson  
14 followed by Council Member Cohen.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you very  
16 much, Madam Chair, and good afternoon, Commissioner  
17 to you and your staff. I appreciate all the work that  
18 you are truly doing to really address a crisis that  
19 we're having in this city. So, just a couple of  
20 questions. I just wanted to get some updates. We  
21 speak all the time. So, I wanted to know, last  
22 hearing we talked about expanding the Path Center.  
23 We have one Path intake center for the entire city's  
24 homeless population in the Bronx in my district and  
25 we were looking at a second location in Brooklyn.

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2 Where are we with those conversations in terms of  
3 locating and expansion?

4 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So, we publicly  
5 announced that we wanted to decentralize our family  
6 intake and actually have them be more focused on  
7 prevention as opposed to just being built for family  
8 intake. And we're looking--we were looking for  
9 location in Brooklyn in order to open up another  
10 site. I will admit to you, Council Member, that it  
11 has been hard to find property in Brooklyn to rent  
12 for this process. So we're still working very  
13 closely with DCAS and other city agencies to get a  
14 sense of exactly where we can set up shop. We  
15 believe that if we're able to structure a prevention  
16 first model at family intake, that when a family  
17 walks through the front door, instead of only being  
18 able to offer them shelter, we hope that we can then  
19 offer them whatever it is that their housing need may  
20 be. So, co-locating with Homebase, co-locating with  
21 HRA staff on site--

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: [interposing]  
23 Right.

24 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: and you know, other  
25 partners who will then be able to--

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: [interposing]  
3 DOE, ACS?

4 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: DOE, ACS, or wrap-  
5 around the family, and to say, you know, look, I know  
6 that you know, you're having an issue, but is there  
7 another way that we can address the issue as opposed  
8 to you having to come into shelter safely. And so  
9 we're working, doing that work, and we're looking now  
10 not only in Brooklyn, but we're also looking in other  
11 boroughs to see whether we can find locations sooner  
12 than later in Queens or in Manhattan.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay. Well, no, I  
14 know we'll continue to have conversations, and I  
15 certainly know how other communities would feel  
16 because I know how I feel, because that's been there  
17 for many, many years. We used to call it the EAU.  
18 So, I certainly appreciate the opportunity to make  
19 sure there's equity. You know I always say the Bronx  
20 should not be the burden for the entire homeless  
21 population in this city, and I will keep speaking out  
22 about it, because it really unfair to the Bronx and  
23 to every person who is homeless in this city.  
24 Secondly, I know that we have a new partnership with  
25 DHS, MTA and BRC to address subway and street

2 homelessness, and I'm very proud that the Bronx has  
3 been able to reduce the street homelessness the way  
4 they have, and I will always recognize Bronx Works  
5 for the work they do. But I guess what I'd like to  
6 know is we're looking at about, it was seven million  
7 in FY 15, no, FY 16 and we're looking in FY 17 it's  
8 going to go up to about 9.2 million. So my question  
9 is, as we're getting these individuals off the  
10 streets, I'm assuming that they're going into one of  
11 the drop-in centers for homeless single men or women,  
12 right? So that brings me to my next question, because  
13 I'm always of the mindset that I want to close  
14 shelters and not open brand new ones. I recognize we  
15 have an issue and challenge with single men and  
16 women. We recently opened a single men's facility in  
17 the Bronx at Pyramid, which we're now starting to  
18 have issues with. So my question gets to security  
19 and what Council Member Cohen will speak about,  
20 because if we're going to look at addressing  
21 security, obviously the tragedy that happened, I want  
22 us to look at security at every single DHS operated  
23 shelter that has single men and women. I want to be  
24 preventative. I don't want to wait for something to  
25 happen and recognizing these are challenging



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2 communities and populations we're dealing with. So  
3 we have to look at security in the total picture and  
4 start to address that as we can.

5 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: And so, Council  
6 Member, to your point, we fully agree. We are  
7 looking at security across our entire portfolio, not  
8 just for single adults, but also for families with  
9 children. We're looking, you know, at security not  
10 just for the benefit of our clients, but also for our  
11 staff who work at all these--

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: [interposing]  
13 Right.

14 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: shelters and also  
15 for the benefit of the community, right, and really  
16 wanting to make sure that our clients are safe, staff  
17 are safe, and so we've been working very closely. We  
18 actually began the work in examining security  
19 measures last years. And so it's kind of come to  
20 more of ahead this year in light of the tragic death  
21 of the shelter director, but really wanting to make  
22 sure that our security needs are funded, wanting to  
23 make sure that the security are well trained, that  
24 they have resources that they would need, that they  
25 would have the equipment that they would need in

2 order to make sure that sites are safe. You know, to  
3 your point about the Safe Haven that you referenced  
4 at the Pyramid Center, you know, we're looking very  
5 closely at all of our programming, but we know that  
6 our clients who are in our Safe Havens are some of  
7 the most vulnerable.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Right.

9 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: And it's a harm  
10 reduction model. It's a safer and better alternative  
11 for anyone that have to live on the street to get  
12 them into Safe Haven and then get them housed.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay.

14 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: And so, you know,  
15 to the extent that we're effective in creating the  
16 Safe Havens and keeping them safe and having  
17 security, you know, that's something that we can do  
18 for the benefit of anyone who's unsheltered in order  
19 to really bring them out of the cold and to help them  
20 move to permanent housing safely or to some other  
21 living situation that would be better for them, and  
22 that's what we're working to do.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay. Just to  
24 close, the reason why that's important is because the  
25 local precinct in that area, the 42, is now being

2 called. So you have to, you know, recognize with  
3 security if people feel unsafe they're going to call  
4 911 and the precinct will respond. So it's important  
5 that you have that partnership and that conversation  
6 with your security staff as well as the precinct,  
7 because again, we don't want to have to keep calling  
8 911 to address issues that are coming out of that  
9 particular location.

10 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: You're absolutely  
11 right.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay.

13 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: We're looking at  
14 that very closely.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you very  
16 much. Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank  
17 you, Mr. Chair.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, Council  
19 Member Gibson. Council Member Andy Cohen?

20 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Thank you, Chair  
21 Levin. Good afternoon, Commissioner. As you know, on  
22 February 2<sup>nd</sup> I came to see you and I asked you for  
23 additional security resources for the project renewal  
24 site. I'm aware that after the murder of the director  
25 that there were additional security resources

2 deployed. I have no idea what those security  
3 resources are. I don't know if they're permanent.  
4 I'd like to know what the status is of security at  
5 that center today.

6 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So, Council Member,  
7 there are peace officers, DHS peace officers at the  
8 project renewal site, I believe in your district.  
9 They're going to stay there. They are no permanently  
10 assigned to that location. We--in response to the  
11 conversation that we had you and I believe with  
12 Council Member King, we began looking at that site  
13 and really trying to understand exactly what the  
14 security needs were in the site and with respect to  
15 the reliance on the local precinct, right, for  
16 responses to the site. And so while none of could  
17 have predicted the tragedy that had happened, you  
18 know, it is something now that lends itself to us to  
19 consider outside of shelter, right? So how do we make  
20 sure that our staff are trained on personal safety?  
21 How do we make sure that we are being thoughtful  
22 about interactions with staff in and outside of  
23 shelter and what they mean, you know, and really just  
24 wanting to learn from this horrible, horrible event  
25 in order to strengthen our system and to keep our

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2 clients and our staff and communities safe? So, to  
3 answer your question, there are peace officers now at  
4 that location.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Do you know how  
6 many are there? How--what are their shifts?

7 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So, I can get you  
8 that information. There is a full complement of  
9 peace officers. They're there on three tours and so  
10 we can tell you the numbers in terms of the staffing.  
11 I think there's a sergeant and there's a number of  
12 peace officers and there's a whole hierarchy and  
13 structure that I can certainly share with you.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Do you know when  
15 Project Renewal first requested additional resources  
16 for security at that facility?

17 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Project Renewal had  
18 requested an additional security guard. There was a  
19 request for one additional security guard for a night  
20 shift, and I don't remember the exact date, but I can  
21 get that to you.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: But it's fair to  
23 say it was many months ago?

24 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: It was some time  
25 ago.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: I saw in your  
3 testimony our said that 5.1 million would be  
4 increased for use for security and prevailing wage.  
5 Can you tell--break down what is prevailing wage  
6 money and what is security money?

7 LULA URQUHART: Lula Urquhart again.  
8 It's all prevailing wage. It's compounded prevailing  
9 wage for FY 16.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: So none of that  
11 money is for security?

12 LULA URQUHART: The additional funding--  
13 sorry. None of that is for security in that five  
14 million. We're still working with OMB to come up  
15 with a number that we would use to fund additional  
16 security, but in the meantime--

17 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: [interposing] Okay,  
18 well there's apparently an error then in the  
19 Commissioner's testimony, because our commitment to  
20 security is reflected in this year's budget which  
21 allocates 5.1 million in FY 16 and the out years for  
22 prevailing wage increases and enhanced security.

23 LULA URQUHART: We are enhancing security,  
24 but the enhanced security funding was moved to the  
25

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2 shelter to one of the other budget codes, but we are  
3 enhancing security.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: The DHS peace  
5 officers at the Project Renewal site, are they  
6 provided for in the contract for Project Renewal?

7 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: They are going to  
8 be base lined into the contract with Project Renewal.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: They will be?

10 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Yes.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: I appreciate that.  
12 Another thing I've been asking the agency and I've  
13 not been able to get any information on is the Muller  
14 Center, another men's homeless shelter that is  
15 proposed for around the corner from Bronx Renewal.  
16 When we met I was told I was going to get updates if  
17 anything happened. Now there is work going on there.  
18 I know nothing about that. I have not heard from  
19 your agency in terms of what activity is taking place  
20 there. I believe it is a Doe [sic] fund site, but I  
21 have not gotten an update, and there is work taking  
22 place there presently.

23 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So it is a Doe fund  
24 site. We can get you that information. I know that  
25 there is construction that needs to happen at the

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2 site. Its years out before it will open, and it's  
3 actually a project that began before my tenure in  
4 this agency. Contracts had been signed, land had  
5 been deeded by the Army, I believe, to the Doe fund  
6 and there was a lot that had been done  
7 foundationally, so if there's now activity, we'll  
8 find out what it is from the provider and let you  
9 know. I believe its two years away.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: You believe that  
11 the shelter will be ready for occupancy in two years?

12 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Uh-hm.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Do you know who's  
14 going to occupy the shelter?

15 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So, I believe for  
16 veterans. I believe that it was deeded by the army to  
17 the Doe fund for use for veteran shelter.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Do you contemplate  
19 a need for veteran's housing in two years from now?  
20 I mean, I thought we were going to be--

21 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: [interposing] So,  
22 we're moving to end veteran's housing, but we always  
23 know that there will be veterans who may become  
24 homeless. After we finish one cohort, I mean, the  
25 federal government has a functional zero number



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2 that's been testified to and the HUD, you know, that  
3 HUD actually disseminates, so you can never say  
4 there'll be no homelessness for veterans. But when--  
5 if there is and if a veteran becomes homelessness,  
6 then we would want to make sure that we get them a  
7 housing plan as quickly as possible and move them to  
8 permanent housing. So, I can get you information  
9 about the Mulla [sic] site, but I believe it is two  
10 years away.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: But it's the  
12 agency's position today that that's going to be used  
13 for homeless veterans?

14 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: I believe that's  
15 what the covenant required. I have to get that  
16 information for you, but the covenant that deeded the  
17 land to the Doe fund, I think there was a restrictive  
18 covenant that said that it needed to be used for  
19 veterans. And we can--

20 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: [interposing] Can  
21 I just sneak in--

22 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: confirm that.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: I appreciate. If I  
24 can sneak in one more question. I realize its a  
25 billion dollar budget, and I realize that each

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2 contract. Do you have any sense, could you say what  
3 percentage of the budget goes for security services?

4 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So, the total  
5 funding for security is 123 million dollars across  
6 the entire system, and that's for contracted security  
7 as well as peace officers.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, Council  
10 Member Cohen. Commissioner, I actually, I wanted to  
11 follow up a little bit on Council Member Cohen's line  
12 of questioning, because I heard last year from a  
13 Council Member who had requested security, extra  
14 security guards or security enhancements at a single  
15 adult shelter in their district, and Council Member  
16 Cohen actually came to me about the Project Renewal  
17 site months before this tragedy occurred, and so  
18 there seems to be, you know, multiple examples of  
19 where either community or a Council Member or a  
20 provider is requesting new security measures and for  
21 some reason or another they're not happening in a  
22 quick fashion. Can you just take us a little bit  
23 through the process of how a security request is  
24 handled at DHS?

25

2 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So, requests for  
3 additional security would come to us by way of new  
4 needs request, and that new needs request, the way  
5 that it's managed at this point in time is that the  
6 request goes to fiscal, and they actually assess what  
7 the monetary amount is, and then its program is  
8 brought in, whether it's either adult services. If  
9 it's for security we'd bring in our security division  
10 to make an assessment about what is being requested,  
11 right? And so in the instance of the project renewal  
12 site, that assessment was taking place and it  
13 actually did entail our security staff going with the  
14 local precinct to deal with crime prevention survey  
15 at the location. We had also deployed a task force  
16 of officers who we have at the location at peak hours  
17 when we knew that 911 calls were taking place more  
18 frequently. I think it was Thursday, Friday and  
19 Saturday, or maybe it was Friday, Saturday and  
20 Sunday. But the assessment would then be used to  
21 inform whether or not the needs request would be  
22 granted, right? And that assessment would be done in  
23 partnership with the provider to get a sense of  
24 exactly why are they making the request, what is a  
25 predominant need, what is a basis for the request,

2 you know, really to ask the questions that we need to  
3 ask. I will say that the length of time for granting  
4 of new needs in my opinion had been too long, right,  
5 and so that has contracted a great deal, and that was  
6 a process we started looking at last year, when you  
7 have a number of different divisions in one agency  
8 that are looking at a process.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right.

10 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: That we could  
11 simplify it and we did. We have simplified it,  
12 right? We have simplified it and we've actually made  
13 it much more streamlined so that we can give a  
14 provider a yes or a no sooner than later. But as it  
15 pertains to security requests, we take those as well  
16 as other requests very seriously and we want to make  
17 sure that we're being responsive in a way that would  
18 be consistent with what needs are at the shelter and  
19 also be, you know, a request that we could fund  
20 financially. Right? And so to the extent that we  
21 have the funds in our budget, we will certainly make  
22 every effort to fund that request, and now we're at a  
23 place where, you know, because of the commitment to  
24 this issue and many of the other homeless issues, we  
25 have more funding available and we're very committed

2 to looking at security across our entire portfolio to  
3 understand what the needs are and to augment them if  
4 needed at any one site.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Does DHS alone make  
6 the determination or does OMB have a role in this?  
7 Does OMB have to approve a new need?

8 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So, OMB certainly  
9 does. I mean, once we've, you know, made the  
10 recommendation then it has to go to OMB for them to  
11 commit the funds, but for all intents and purposes,  
12 we are--

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Sorry,  
14 just to interrupt, how long does that take? So once--  
15 -because it sounds like an involved process on the  
16 DHS end obviously. You have to go through all the  
17 processes that you just laid out. That takes like--  
18 that sounds like it would take a long time.

19 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So, it could take a  
20 long time.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: But then--so say that  
22 takes you three months, and then you send--and then  
23 you make a determination, okay, we need new security  
24 at this location. You send over the--and the cost is  
25 going to be two and a half million dollars annually.

2 You send that over to OMB. How long does it take to  
3 get a response from OMB?

4 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So, you know, OMB  
5 will acknowledge receipt of the new needs request,  
6 right? And I'm fortunate to have a fiscal--

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] That's  
8 not enough, though, right?

9 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: No, but I'm  
10 fortunate to have a fiscal team that's very  
11 aggressive in terms of, you know, they're not shy in  
12 terms of contacting OMB to say, "Okay, what is the  
13 status of what we perceive to be a reasonable amount  
14 of time for them to have reviewed it?" So we will  
15 call a week after. We will call two weeks after. We  
16 will say, "What do you need?" Sometimes there's an  
17 interactive process where OMB will say we need more  
18 information in order to consider this request, and  
19 then we have to get it either from the provider or  
20 from our staff, and so we try to push things forward  
21 as quickly as we can. You know, but to your point,  
22 Chair, I think that, you know, to hammer home the  
23 point right now, we're looking at all this very, very  
24 closely and wanting to make sure that delays that can  
25 be avoided are avoided, because these are important

2 requests and important matters that need to be  
3 attended to quickly.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah. I mean, I'm  
5 just--what I had, you know, what I had kind of heard  
6 or there was some rumor at some point, not in this  
7 particular instance, but in another instance that,  
8 you know, they requested and OMB said no. OMB said  
9 they're not doing it, and so there had to be a whole  
10 push and pull with OMB about it, and if that's the  
11 case, I mean, that's like a mystery to us, you know?  
12 OMB is like a total mystery to elected officials. We  
13 have no idea. We work with our Commissioners. We  
14 have a great relationship with our agencies. It goes  
15 to OMB, and then it just like gets lost, right? And  
16 so, you know, there's a frustration there that, you  
17 know--and we're not sure if like--if that's just  
18 being used as an excuse. "Oh, OMB, somebody at OMB  
19 says no." You know, Helen Rosenthal, she could have  
20 given us a little more insight because she used to  
21 work at OMB. You know, it's not acceptable. You  
22 know, it's acceptable for us, I believe. It's  
23 acceptable for me as a chairman that the agency goes  
24 through due diligence when a request from a provider  
25 or a Council Member comes in that says we need new

2 security, we got to do some due diligence,  
3 understood. That's acceptable. If that takes a  
4 couple of months, it sounds a little long, but okay,  
5 you know, as long as know the agency's working on it.  
6 It just goes to OMB and OMB sits on it for six  
7 months, that's not acceptable. So, that's kind of my  
8 point.

9 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: And so I'm not  
10 saying that that is what happens. You know, I want  
11 to say, you know, very publicly OMB, we have been in  
12 constant conversation with OMB since I came into this  
13 role, and they have been very diligent in terms of  
14 being responsive to our request. They've also been  
15 good partners in helping us to think through kind of  
16 fiscal priorities and, you know, how we could  
17 actually achieve things that were related to the  
18 baseline budget, but I'm also very thankful that the  
19 fiscal team that I have has a very good relationship  
20 with OMB, and they're not shy to contact OMB in the  
21 even that OMB's maybe dealing with other agencies.  
22 We make sure that we're heard. We make sure that  
23 they know that we are waiting for a response, and  
24 they will hear from us, and if it needs to get  
25 escalated it does. I have contacted, you know, Dean



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2 Fullihan [sp?] as necessary and other folks who work  
3 at OMB, and we will, you know, make sure that the  
4 lines of communication stay open and that we move the  
5 work forward and that the bureaucracy doesn't get in  
6 the way. So, that's what we're committed to doing.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Sorry, just following  
8 up on Council Member Cohen's question. The 5.1  
9 million dollars in FY 16 that's--is that a new need  
10 or is that as part of the Executive Budget or was  
11 that reflected in the prelim? I'm trying to get to  
12 exactly where this--

13 LULA URQUHART: [interposing] It is a new  
14 need part of the executive, FY 16 Executive Budget.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. And that is--  
16 and I'm sorry, how much of that is going to  
17 prevailing wage and how much of it is going to  
18 "enhanced security?"

19 LULA URQUHART: The five million  
20 compounded for the full year is going to prevailing  
21 wage. The prevailing wage in FY 15 was 2.9 million,  
22 and FY 16 is projected to be five million. There are  
23 funding for--we do have funding for shelters for  
24 security. That has been put into the remediation  
25 budget for singles and families.

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2 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: is that the 3.6  
3 million?

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And how much exactly  
5 is that then?

6 LULA URQUHART: We have one 3.6 million  
7 dollars that's going to 17 facilities. We also have  
8 another 1.--I don't have the exact number, but it's  
9 probably 1.6 million that's going to three additional  
10 shelters for security also.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Council Member  
12 Gibson?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you. I  
14 just wanted to ask a very quick question about the  
15 partnership and a lot of the contracts you have with  
16 providers that are at the non-DHS-owned shelters.  
17 The biggest concern and so much feedback I get from  
18 constituents who are chronically homeless and have  
19 been in these shelters for over six months, the  
20 frustration of the staff that's at these locations in  
21 terms of housing assistance, right, linking them with  
22 City FEPS or any one of the LINC's programs. How do  
23 you monitor the performance of these providers in  
24 getting these families out of these shelters?  
25 Because I feel all the work we're doing, massive

2 infusion of millions of dollars, and yet we still  
3 have almost 57,000 people that are in shelters every  
4 night. So it's concerning. How are we making sure  
5 that these providers are really getting these  
6 families out of shelters?

7 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So we are measuring  
8 performance in terms of placements for each of our  
9 providers on the single side as well as on the family  
10 side of our system. Our program administers at DHS  
11 who oversee the portfolio shelters in their  
12 respective regions are actually quantifying how many  
13 movements are happening, like what resources are you  
14 using to move families out with and we have targets.  
15 And we're measuring our providers against those  
16 targets to ascertain whether or not they're  
17 performing at the levels that we would want them to  
18 perform at. And so for those that are not, then the  
19 question becomes why not, right? And we have tried  
20 to be as innovative as we could be. I know some of  
21 the programs, particularly the subsidy programs again  
22 are relatively in the grand scheme of things newer,  
23 right? And based upon landlords and other broker's  
24 experience with previous rental assistance programs,  
25 there was some getting use--there'd have to be some

2 getting used to it. And so we offered our leadership  
3 team and our staff to talk with providers, to brokers  
4 and to landlords. We hosted forums. We hosted  
5 broker's forums. We hosted housing fairs where we  
6 actually had client who moved with LINC come to speak  
7 to clients who had LINC certificates to tell them  
8 about their experience moving, right? And also to  
9 tell providers who were in attendance about, you  
10 know, how they were able to find these apartments.  
11 So really transferring knowledge and peer to peer  
12 training and just saturating the market as much as we  
13 can to make sure that it's easier for our providers  
14 to access housing resources for our clients who now  
15 have these subsidies to help them to move. So, it's  
16 a work in progress. We are measuring it for every  
17 provider, and for those who are not performing, we  
18 are having conversations with them about their  
19 failure to do so, and trying to support them in their  
20 efforts to do so.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay. So, you  
22 know, I always know how to reach out to you, so I  
23 will continue to have conversations with you because  
24 although I appreciate the effort, I just feel like we  
25 need to be a little more progressive. Too many people

2 reach out to me because they're not getting the  
3 assistance they need at that location, and then when  
4 I get involved then things start to move. I always  
5 want to make sure we get and draw down on cluster  
6 sites. You know I'm not a fan of them at all. I  
7 appreciate the efforts to provide mental health. I  
8 think therapeutic services are also good in our  
9 shelters, so I appreciate that effort and certainly  
10 will keep working with you. Thank you for your work,  
11 and thank you again to our Chairs.

12 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you, Council  
14 Member Gibson. We'll have Council Member Cohen.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Thank you, Chair  
16 Ferreras Copeland. Just to--you have some discretion  
17 though when it comes to security. Like, as I recall,  
18 I specifically asked for interim security while DHS  
19 evaluates at Project Renewal, and I believe that you  
20 had the authority to provide interim security if you  
21 had chosen to do so, but you didn't. Is that  
22 correct?

23 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So, we did. We  
24 actually did deploy the taskforce that we had talked  
25 about and really requiring them to go to a site at

2 the peak periods when we knew their presence would be  
3 required was something that we committed to doing and  
4 that we actually did do. And as we think about all  
5 the shelters, this taskforce are a cadre of peace  
6 officers that are mobile, right? And so we deploy  
7 them wherever there is a need in order to supplement  
8 security at shelters that may already have security  
9 or even some of our DHS peace office staffed  
10 shelters, but to say to them that every week we  
11 wanted them to go to the Project Renewal location on  
12 a specific days, to require them to do so was our  
13 effort in terms of using the resources in a different  
14 way to support what was needed at that site.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: In fairness, I do  
16 know that you did inspect the site, I guess for  
17 additional--but there was no additional security  
18 deployed on any regular basis up until the day after  
19 the murder, right?

20 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Well, I would  
21 submit, Council Member, that the taskforce who are  
22 peace officers, the DHS peace officers, their  
23 presence on a specific loca--on the specific days  
24 that we had talked about, which was the weekend days,  
25 that that was in our--that was one way in which we

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2 did deploy additional resources by having them there,  
3 by having them there in order to support what was  
4 going to be outreach to NYPD and the local precinct.  
5 And so in response to our discussion, we did deploy  
6 them, and you know, while they were not there--they  
7 were not there full time, but they were--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: [interposing]

9 Commissioner, I just want to understand you, are you  
10 saying now that there were DHS peace officers there  
11 Friday night, Saturday night and Sunday night weekly  
12 prior to the time the director was murdered?

13 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: The taskforce was  
14 deployed to go to the site on specific days, and we  
15 had had them on the schedule to actually be there  
16 based upon the conversations that we had had so that  
17 they would be at the site, present for some period  
18 time and then they would leave.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: There were three  
20 shifts of peace officers weekly at the DHS--DHS peace  
21 officers at the Project Renewal site in the weeks  
22 prior to--

23 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: [interposing] No,  
24 no, no. I'm not saying that they were there every  
25 shift. I'm--

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: [interposing] No,  
3 but regular, that they had a regular shift?

4 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So, no. I think we  
5 may want to talk offline, but no, it is not the  
6 construct that is currently in place at the site  
7 where they are there and they are staffed every  
8 shift. The work of the taskforce is different, and  
9 their work in visiting the sites on those days was  
10 different.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Were there any set  
12 shifts for DHS peace officers at that site?

13 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: No.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: That's why--okay,  
15 that's why I wanted to be clear. Could you just  
16 briefly tell what the policy is in terms of informing  
17 the community of shelter siting and activity  
18 shelters?

19 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: In terms of? I  
20 didn't--

21 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: [interposing]  
22 Community Advisory Board, what are the things that  
23 happened? I know that the Project Renewal, I mean, I  
24 first went to a Project Renewal Community Advisory  
25 Board, I think, in March of 2014. So, what are



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2 things that you do to notify the community of what's  
3 going on in the shelters?

4 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So we are very  
5 intentional about creating community advisory boards  
6 at all of our shelters, which is an opportunity for  
7 community residents as well as elected officials to  
8 come and to hear about the programming within the  
9 shelter, also to discuss and offer their feedback as  
10 to how the shelters are being hosted in their  
11 communities. We welcome, you know, residents of the  
12 shelter to also participate in those forums in order  
13 to, you know, share with leadership from DHS and from  
14 the provider their experience in being hosted by  
15 these communities, and the CAB for Bronx, for that  
16 shelter, Project Renewal Shelter did convene in  
17 March, because I believe the shelter opened in  
18 January of 2014. And so as soon as we can get it  
19 convened and up and running we work with your office  
20 and other elected officials and extend the invitation  
21 and, you know, open the forum for dialogue.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Thank you,  
23 Commissioner. If you can just make sure we follow up  
24 on those few things we asked for, I appreciate it.  
25 Thank you.

2 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: We will.

3 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, Council  
4 Member Cohen. Thank you, Commissioner. I just have  
5 one last question regarding capital funding. Is the  
6 position, given that there are going--the SWAT team  
7 that's out there and a lot of attention being given  
8 to shelter conditions both city owned shelters and  
9 provider run shelters that are not city owned, in  
10 addition to obviously OTDA has taken an increased  
11 interest in shelter repair issues, do you believe  
12 that there is enough, that the funding level for FY  
13 16 for capital or shelter repair and maintenance at  
14 family and adult facilities is at an adequate level  
15 right now to meet all of those obligations that have  
16 kind of been made in recent months?

17 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So, we are--you  
18 know, as I testified to, we do have money in our  
19 capital budget for necessary repairs at our city  
20 owned buildings and we are continuing to work with  
21 OMB to discern exactly what additional funds we may  
22 need. So, it's kind of as we go, and each building,  
23 these are buildings that have been in use for a very  
24 long period of time that require some of them go  
25

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2 quite an amount of investment in terms to bring them  
3 where they need to be.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right, it's not  
5 surprising. I mean, as somebody's who been on the  
6 Council for five and a half years now, capital is  
7 always more expensive than you think it's going to  
8 be, and it's always--it takes longer, too.

9 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: But we're in a place  
10 where at least foundationally we have the right  
11 structures in place within the organization to attend  
12 to our capital portfolio. We're fortunate to have  
13 the additional funding for the capital managers  
14 that's been put into our budget to really help us to  
15 get the projects committed to get the other work kind  
16 of moving forward, and we're working with OMB to  
17 really understand exactly what the need will be in  
18 light of the evolution of the shelter repair squads  
19 and also the continued inspections that we're doing  
20 ourselves and in partnership with the other agencies  
21 to assess the structures that we're currently in.  
22 So, we're looking at it.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: If during FY 16  
24 there's going to be new capital needs that are  
25 identified and that DHS wants to commit funding to,

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2 how would that then proceed? How would you proceed  
3 in FY 16 in terms of increasing your capital budget?

4 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So, if we didn't  
5 have sufficient reserve, we would actually go back to  
6 OMB and we would ask for more, and we told them that,  
7 you know, this is something, it's a Mayoral priority,  
8 it's our priority, and they're fully aware of it, and  
9 we're at a place where they're receptive to what  
10 requests we'll be making, and we're going to see as  
11 we go.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. We'll just go  
13 and hopefully--we'll send signals to OMB. Hopefully  
14 we'll get signals back, right?

15 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: We'll pick up the  
16 phone and talk to them. We know exactly where they  
17 are.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Commissioner,  
19 thank you very much for your time. I want to thank  
20 Chair Ferreras. Chair Ferreras Copeland, do you have  
21 any other questions?

22 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you, Chair  
23 Levin. No, we are done with this hearing. Thank you  
24 very much for your testimony. This committee will be  
25 following up with questions, if you can get them back

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2 to us expeditiously, because we use them for  
3 negotiation purposes. Okay?

4 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you,  
6 Commissioner. This concludes our hearing for today.  
7 The Finance Committee will resume Executive Budget  
8 hearings for Fiscal 2016 tomorrow at 10:00 a.m. in  
9 this room. Tomorrow, the Finance Committee will hear  
10 from the Health and Hospitals Corporation, the  
11 Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the  
12 Office of the Chief Examiner, the Economic  
13 Development Corporation, and the Department of Small  
14 Business Services. As a reminder, the public will be  
15 invited to testify again on June 9<sup>th</sup>, the last day of  
16 budget hearings at approximately 1:30 p.m. in this  
17 room. For any member of the public who wishes to  
18 testify but cannot make it to the hearing, we can  
19 email your testimony. You can email your testimony  
20 to the finance division at  
21 [financetestimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:financetestimony@council.nyc.gov) and the staff will  
22 make it a part of the official record. Thank you.  
23 This hearing is now adjourned.

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date June 8, 2015