



**David A. Hansell, Commissioner**  
**Testimony to the New York City Council**  
**Committees on Finance, General Welfare, Juvenile Justice, and Women's Issues**  
**May 15, 2017**

***"New York City Council Fiscal Year 2018 Executive Budget Hearing"***

Good afternoon, Chairs Ferreras-Copeland, Levin, Cabrera, and Cumbo, and members of the Finance, General Welfare, Juvenile Justice, and Women's Issues Committees. I am David Hansell, Commissioner of the New York City Administration for Children's Services. With me are Eric Brettschneider, First Deputy Commissioner, Susan Nuccio, Deputy Commissioner of Financial Services, and Felipe Franco, Deputy Commissioner of Youth & Family Justice. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss ACS' Fiscal Year 2018 Executive Budget with you this afternoon.

I have now had the honor to serve as ACS Commissioner for slightly more than two months. I have spoken with hundreds of staff in all of our program areas, met with most of our provider partners, and visited many of our facilities across the City. Every encounter has increased my admiration for the work that our ACS team and our partner organizations do, each and every day, to protect our children and ensure that our City's safety net for struggling families is as strong as possible. When I testified before you in March, I talked about the top-to-bottom management review I was undertaking, and I want to report to you today about the major results of that review and the reforms it has spurred. I will also talk about the investments that are embodied in the Mayor's Executive Budget for Fiscal Year 2018, and I will describe a number of significant initiatives we have underway in our child welfare, juvenile justice, and early care & education programs, to promote healthy child development, strengthen families, help young people reach their full potential, and foster thriving communities.

## **Management Review**

I assumed this role knowing that the Council, and the public at large, were concerned about recent incidents in which ACS was involved. Immediately after my appointment as Commissioner, I initiated a top-to-bottom review to identify strengths and gaps throughout the agency, and to make necessary changes in our child protection and preventive work. As a result of this review, we have thus far re-launched a new ChildStat model, enhanced our collaboration with the NYPD, embarked on major initiatives to strengthen our child protective activities, and reinvigorated the response to many prior external investigative findings. I want to describe these activities to you in some detail.

- 1) Re-launching ChildStat: One of my first areas of focus was the restructuring and reinvigoration of the ChildStat model. ChildStat is a vital tool in strengthening the agency's focus on performance accountability around child protection, and building a more unified culture of excellence in practice across all five boroughs. The newly restructured ChildStat launched last week is the result of extensive review and analysis of previous iterations, observation of CompStat, and incorporation of best practices from other jurisdictions. It features the following major components:

- An emphasis on frequent, rigorous review of randomly selected high risk cases, including ongoing investigations, and a deep analysis of critical performance data;

- Inclusion of regular participation of executive leadership-- myself included—to demonstrate the priority placed on the process;
- A focus on accountability at all levels of the agency;
- Continuity from session to session to ensure that change results from each meeting; and
- Engagement of Division of Child Protection (DCP) management across the city by videocast and through borough-based sessions, to disseminate the learnings and improvements that result.

Our goal is to be rigorous but not punitive, with a focus not on blame but on honest discussion that leads to accountability and quality improvement.

- 2) Collaboration with the NYPD: NYPD Chief of Detectives Robert Boyce has advised us on the new ChildStat model, based on his CompStat expertise. In addition to advising our ChildStat reforms, NYPD is collaborating on other important areas of our child protective work. Working with the NYPD, we are enhancing our protocols around requesting police assistance in high-risk child protective cases, and have instituted a new notification process to alert the multi-disciplinary team leaders at the Child Advocacy Centers of incoming Instant Response Team cases. NYPD and our Child Protective Specialist (CPS) staff frequently encounter one another in the course of their respective work in the community and, as I mentioned when I was last here in March, our DCP Borough Offices are building stronger relationships with the NYPD's Neighborhood



Coordination Officers on the ground in the community. Now when our CPS workers request police assistance while working in the community, they are more likely to receive this assistance from a familiar face.

- 3) External Agency Reviews: As I discussed at the Preliminary Budget Hearing, Casey Family Programs, a nationally recognized child welfare organization, has conducted a review of system-wide data and a statistically-valid sample of cases to complete a comprehensive assessment of ACS' initiatives, policies, casework practice, and decision-making processes.

Casey's findings and recommendations from their assessment were submitted to ACS last week, and we are currently reviewing them in depth. The assessment found that overall, ACS has a strong system with core safety practices in place, serves as a national model for the collection and use of child welfare data to match services with families' needs, is a national leader in investing in a continuum of preventive services and supports, and generally performs well in relation to other large cities and other jurisdictions in New York State. Casey identified several areas of particular strength, including CPS' overall assessments of children, families, and homes; service referral and linkage; and overall child safety assessment. They also identified areas of opportunity for ACS, the state, and our partners to improve, including modernizing the state's tools for assessing safety and risk, which have been in place for more than 25 years. Casey provided ACS with a set of 12 recommendations for strengthening

our practice. Work is already underway to address several of them, including streamlining our process for updating, communicating, and reinforcing safety policies with our frontline staff. We look forward to working with our partners to analyze Casey's findings, and we will develop solutions that implement all of their recommendations.

In addition, our work with our state-appointed monitor, Kroll Associates, has commenced, and we have found the relationship to be collegial and productive, as we await their recommendations. Kroll has begun to meet staff and has initiated their case review, which will include child protective and preventive cases. We have also received recommendations from our management consultant on organizational structure and process.

#### Review of External Findings & Recommendations:

Lastly, we have completed our full-scale review of the external findings and recommendations that were issued over the past few years. Our review included an analysis of ACS' progress in implementing recommendations, identification of recommendations that need to be expedited, as well as an assessment of the ways in which recent assessments and reforms impact implementation of the recommendations. Overall, a total of 73 recommendations followed from those recent reviews and reports, and ACS accepted all but five. I am currently reviewing the five recommendations that were previously not accepted by ACS and determining whether any should now be adopted and implemented. Of the

68 recommendations that were accepted, ACS has fully implemented 36, and the 32 remaining are well on their way to full implementation. We have also identified the most significant barriers to implementation of the remaining recommendations and are working to remedy them.

While this management review has been an important immediate component of my work, we have also been moving our reform agenda forward aggressively in many areas, and I'd like to give you an overview of them.

### **Preventive Services**

We are making significant ongoing and new investments in preventive services. The FY 2018 Executive Budget includes funding to continue our historic expansion of preventive services -- from 12,500 slots at the end of the previous administration to almost 16,000 slots when fully ramped up in FY 19. The budget provides additional resources to support our partner agencies by funding case conferencing and training activities which I'll describe below. We estimate the increased value of these additions and accompanying citywide wage adjustment increases to be approximately \$1,500 per preventive service slot.

### **Funding Conference Facilitators**

To strengthen decision making and reduce future risk of harm to children after ending preventive cases, ACS instituted new case conferencing protocols in fall 2016, including a requirement that programs invite ACS to facilitate a service

termination conference with families in cases assessed before or during preventive services as having high service needs. This allows for additional safety and risk assessment and strengthening of decision making before closing cases. However, this reform resulted in a lag in preventive case closings, reducing the availability of placements for new cases and contributing to a waitlist for families in need of services. Prior to this change in policy, preventive programs were not required to have these conferences. Many of our provider agencies did not have adequate capacity to attend or facilitate these conferences without taking staff away from their other supervisory roles and conflicting with other areas of their daily work. To meet this need, the FY 18 Executive Budget adds \$11.2 million to support the addition of 147 facilitators at our preventive agencies.

#### Boosting Training for Preventive Providers

Through the Workforce Institute, ACS is developing a new 12-day onboarding curriculum to support training for new preventive agency staff before they receive any cases. The curriculum will consist of a new two-day course available once a month for all new preventive staff before they take any cases, followed by an additional 10-day course provided every other month, which new staff will complete within 2 months of hiring. In addition, new funding of \$2.45 million will be available to preventive agencies so that they can send staff to six days of required training each year. We recognize that sending front line staff, such as case workers and supervisors, to training has created coverage challenges for preventive agencies. To

address that, ACS will cover the costs associated with case coverage while staff fulfill the new training requirement. Providers can satisfy the training requirement by participating in courses offered by their own or other agencies, as well as at our Workforce Institute.

### Contract Reviews

Coming out of the resiliency work with non-profit providers, the Administration has indicated that specific categories of non-profit providers will undergo a model contract review process. ACS intends to begin this process with many of our preventive providers and we expect this review to be completed over the summer. As part of this process, ACS has begun to review preventive contract budgets to assess where more resources may be needed. All of this work is being done in conjunction with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and builds upon the commitments already made in the Executive Budget for funding providers for conference facilitators and training.

### Increasing Services for Higher-Risk Families

In expanding our continuum of preventive services, we are making a deliberate effort to bolster services for our higher-risk families under Court-Ordered Supervision. The process began this month for amending contracts with our preventive providers to add 960 additional slots specifically for families under Court-Ordered Supervision or at risk of court intervention. This will be completed by

November. Many of these slots will be concentrated in communities in the Bronx and Brooklyn where a disproportionately high need for services has been identified.

Additionally, ACS will procure 500 slots for services to help families experiencing domestic violence. Remaining funds, up to \$10.4 million, will support an additional 600 slots to expand services for families under Court-Ordered Supervision citywide, including in Manhattan, Queens and Staten Island. Finally, we are also adding \$4.6 million this summer to fund transition support services for families as children are discharged from foster care and reunify with their families.

#### Promoting Efficiency in Referral Process

The Executive Budget will add \$1.1 million to hire 17 additional staff for ACS' Office of Referral Management, to promote efficiency in our process for making referrals for preventive services. The additional staff will perform several key functions to improve efficiency, such as facilitating communication between DCP and preventive providers to ensure alignment of family need with services provided, performing clearances to ensure child welfare history is well documented in each referral, tracking the availability of preventive slots community by community across the system, and matching children and families with the preventive models that most appropriately meet their needs. The staff will be better equipped to monitor staffing concerns at preventive agencies, and redistribute slots as necessary. This office will also add administrative staff to speed up and track referrals as they are processed by our preventive agencies. In addition, we are working with the respected child

welfare entity Chapin Hall, to analyze our business processes and determine ways in which we can streamline our service referrals even further. In the longer term, we will look at technology support to improve this business process.

#### Increased Investigative Resources to Address Domestic Violence

Domestic violence has a devastating impact on our families, children and communities. Thirty-eight percent of families with ACS involvement have some history of domestic violence. Tackling domestic violence and its adverse impact on families requires the collaboration of multiple City agencies and provider organizations. As you may know, the Mayor's Office convened a Domestic Violence Task Force, and earlier this month the Task Force issued recommendations for the implementation of a coordinated response to prevent domestic violence, help victims and their families heal, and hold perpetrators accountable.

As part of the Task Force's recommendations and to enhance the child welfare system's ability to intervene in cases involving domestic violence, ACS is extending our Investigative Consultant unit, to support our preventive services providers in service planning and to enhance the safety of children, particularly those who are not yet in school. Currently, our CPS staff have access to Investigative Consultants who can assist them in identifying domestic violence and other safety risks in the course of a child protective investigation. The Executive Budget funds the addition of four Preventive staff and twelve dedicated Investigative Consultants who will assist our preventive providers in cases where domestic violence concerns are

indicated, so that providers have access to the comprehensive family information they need to make thorough safety assessments in their cases.

### New Safe Sleep Campaign

On average, about 50 infant fatalities occur each year due to unsafe sleeping practices. As part of our ongoing work to prevent such tragedies, we will launch – one week from today -- our new Safe Sleep public awareness campaign, in partnership with the Department of Health & Mental Hygiene (DOHMH). The multi-pronged campaign will concentrate on zip codes with the highest numbers of Safe Sleep fatalities—mainly in the Bronx and Brooklyn. As you can see, the campaign will feature the simple and clear message that our children's lives depend on safe sleep practices—infants sleeping alone, on their backs, in their own crib or bassinet and without blankets, pillows, or toys--and will clearly highlight specific unsafe practices, such as sharing a bed with an infant and placing an infant to sleep on the stomach.

The campaign will feature posters in check cashing venues, laundromats, barbershops and salons at 530 locations, 80 bus shelter ads, and the dissemination of over 40,000 brochures in five languages. In addition, there will be promotion on social media and a video should be distributed at the end of June. We will focus our collaboration on hospitals and birthing centers, which are vital messengers of child safety information for maternity patients. We are eager to spread awareness of this important issue, and hope the Council can join us in promoting this campaign.



## **Child Protection**

In the weeks since my appointment as Commissioner, I have met with CPS staff across the city, including visits to three DCP borough offices (toward the goal of visiting all 17 of them in the coming months), shadowed two CPS Units in the field, and visited the Child Advocacy Center in Staten Island. I also plan to meet with each graduating CPS class and will speak to our newest cohort of CPS trainees on May 26 at our James Satterwhite Academy Queens site. My time with our frontline CPS staff has allowed me to hear firsthand from many of them about the challenges they face in their day-to-day work, and has given me the unique opportunity to receive their ideas for improvement, many of which we are moving aggressively to implement.

### **Enhancing Technological Tools for Frontline Staff**

Based in part on the experiences CPS workers shared with me, I have expedited and implemented several technology-related reforms that improve our investigative capacity and resources:

- First: As of April 20<sup>th</sup>, we are providing internet access on all ACS-issued smartphones. CPS staff are now able to use their ACS smartphones to search subject names and addresses, and to help families navigate systems such as housing, public assistance, child care assistance and other benefit programs. Internet access also gives staff the capability to access domestic violence, substance abuse, medical, and mental health resources as needed while working in the community. We have also installed quick access icons on the smartphones

so that helpful materials, such as informational videos, are more readily available to staff, especially when they are working with families in their homes. One such video, “A Life to Love,” speaks to recommended care for infants, including a segment on safe sleep practices that we would like to share with you.

- Second: We are launching a pilot for the deployment of tablet devices for use by our CPS staff. The tablets will provide access to all databases and case records used to research family history in the field, and allow CPS to enter case information directly into the electronic case record system from outside of the office. This will make the use of non-investigative time more efficient for CPS staff – including while waiting for court cases to be called, during travel time to conduct investigations, or between field assignments—and will reduce reliance on paper notes. On June 30<sup>th</sup> we plan to launch a three-month pilot with 300 CPS staff to evaluate the use of tablets in the field and to assess their experience using the devices. After this trial period we plan to begin distributing tablets to all CPS staff in the fall.
- Third: Our CPS staff are first responders who work in every corner of the city, at every hour of the day, and often encounter dangerous situations. We will continue to seek and support aggressive enforcement of felony provisions for assaulting a CPS worker in the line of duty. And to further promote their safety as they do this difficult work, ACS is procuring an enhanced smartphone app that will activate a request for NYPD assistance when CPS feel they are at risk. The app uses a cord plugged into the smartphone’s headphone jack that will

automatically activate a call for assistance when pulled out of the jack. This is the first of an expanded set of safety enhancements that will be available to our frontline CPS workers.

### Bridging Training with Practice

More than 7,200 frontline staff from ACS and our provider agency partners have participated in our learning programs since the launch of the ACS Workforce Institute in early 2016. The Institute, a \$12 million City investment, is a collaboration between ACS and the City University of New York that is designed to build the professional strength of our child welfare and juvenile justice workforce. The Institute is helping our professionals develop and sharpen the interviewing, investigation, and interpersonal skills needed for effective family engagement. The coaching courses offered at the Workforce Institute boost the leadership capacity of frontline supervisors and managers, and deepen their assessment and decision-making skills. But we also want to make sure that the best practices from training and coaching aren't just taught at the Institute, but are built into everyday practice.

This coming year, ACS is placing Workforce Institute coaches in all DCP borough offices. This \$2.3 million annual investment established in the FY 18 Executive Budget will create a dedicated team of coaches who will provide direct support for child protective supervisors and managers to help ensure that the knowledge and skills gained in training programs are transferred and fully integrated into staff's day-to-day work. We expect that the initiative will build a strong bridge between training

and actual practice, improve staff retention, and help maintain a healthy work culture.

We look forward to discussing with the Council additional needs to support our frontline CPS workers, as FY18 budget conversations continue.

#### Strengthening coordination with Department of Homeless Services

Twenty-five percent of families in the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) shelter system have child welfare involvement with ACS, and we are committed to expanding our collaboration with DHS to ensure that these families receive the services and interventions they need. This past March, ACS and DHS signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that builds on our existing practices to enhance coordination between our agencies and our providers, and to better support ACS-involved families residing in the shelter system. The MOU, which we expect to be fully implemented by this fall, requires ACS and DHS to share information and notify each other at critical points in a family's case, such as when a family ACS serves enters shelter, when there is a plan for a family to change shelter, and when there is a change in a child welfare case that may require a different level of intervention by DHS. In addition, the agreement will also require shelter providers to issue vital information to families, such as information on availability of child care and safe sleep practices for infants.

## **Family Permanency**

One of our most noteworthy achievements has been safely reducing the number of New York City children in foster care to historic lows. As of February 2017, there were 8,993 children in foster care, compared to a census of over 41,000 children in care when ACS was established 20 years ago. We are proud that 90% of children in foster care are placed in family settings rather than in institutional settings—one of the best standards of performance in the country. Through several strategies, such as expanding intensive family supports to stabilize families and employing new approaches to helping relatives and friends care for children, fewer children need to be separated from their families. When foster care is necessary, we have made progress in improving permanency outcomes for children and youth. Nevertheless, we face continuing challenges in reducing the time some children remain in foster care prior to achieving permanency, recruiting the number and range of foster homes we need, and helping older youth transition successfully to independence. I'd like to discuss some of the initiatives we're undertaking to address those challenges.

### **Achieving Timely Permanency**

While the number of children in foster care continues to decline, we know we can do better to achieve permanency, expedite reunification when safe, and reduce long stays in foster care. One of the ways we are working to improve permanency is through our "No Time to Wait" Initiative, which aims to expedite permanency for youth in foster care through several targeted strategies. One such strategy is our

focus on improving family visiting between children and their parents. The majority of children who enter foster care are able to safely return home to their families, and quality visits while the child is in care are critical for promoting reunification. Last year, 2,500 children were reunified with their families, and the proportion of children who re-entered foster care after reunification fell from 9.1% in 2015 to 7.9% in 2016.

Through “No Time to Wait,” we also are helping children achieve permanency through adoption and kinship guardianship. Kin guardianship avoids the need to terminate parental rights, and allows relatives and family friends to care for children with the same financial support as adoptive parents. I will be meeting regularly with the Honorable Jeannette Ruiz, Chief Administrative Judge of the Family Court, to discuss how we can partner more effectively with the courts in many areas, including expediting permanency where termination of parental rights may be required as a prerequisite to adoption. Through increased staff training and streamlining processes such as centralizing birth certificate requests, ACS and our provider partners increased the number of adoptions by 5% from 2015 to 2016, and the number of children achieving permanency through kinship guardianship increased by 25% during the same time period.

All of these efforts have resulted in an 8% reduction from July 2016 to April 2017 in the number of young children aged 12 and under who remain in foster care more than two years. To drive home permanency for all children, we initiated the Rapid Permanency Reviews (RPRs) in partnership with Casey Family Programs. The

RPRs reviewed the cases of 2,500 children who have been in foster care for two years or more to examine the commonalities, barriers, and promising opportunities to expedite permanency. We will complete all of these reviews by the end of this month and are working with our foster care providers, the Family Court, and others to address practice issues related to these cases in real time. We look forward to sharing a plan to address these barriers to permanency at the end of the year as part of our reporting requirements under Local Law 143.

### Improving Foster Care Placements

While we are working hard to make sure children spend less time in the foster care system, we are working just as hard to improve their experiences while they are in care. By far, one of the most important impacts on a young person's experience in foster care is the family that cares for them while they are in placement. Ultimately, a foster family becomes among the most significant people in a child's life. While in foster care, we want all of our young people to achieve their developmental milestones and experience childhood as their peers do. Through our "Home Away from Home" initiative we are focused on improving the quality of foster care placements to enhance child well-being. Research shows that children in foster care tend to fare best when placed with relatives, and so we are increasing placements with relatives whenever possible. We are also increasing our pool of foster parents to improve matches between children and foster homes, and we are providing supports to foster parents to help the foster home thrive.

ACS is awarding \$2 million in additional funding over two years to five foster care agencies to pilot new approaches to recruit foster parents and provide support. We have also created a new \$300,000 fund to help cover incidental expenses that foster parents often incur during the foster home certification process, such as making necessary home repairs. In addition, with a \$1.1 million grant from the Conrad Hilton Foundation, we are working with experts to provide intensive assistance to our foster care agencies to develop and support foster homes specifically for older youth.

#### Transition to Independence for Older Youth in Care

Young people in foster care need wraparound support that actively prepares them -- *before* they transition out of foster care -- with the tools they need to build a successful future. To support older youth in care, we have just issued a concept paper (published on our website) and plan to issue an RFP to re-establish Supervised Independent Living Programs (SILPs), with a capacity of 40 beds. The SILPs will offer short-term, six to twelve-month housing for young adults in foster care ages 18 and older. With the re-establishment of SILPs, older youth in care will once again be able to benefit from home-like settings that prepare them for independent living, and connect them to educational and employment support and to community resources.

ACS will continue to work aggressively to reduce the foster care census, promote kinship placements, and expedite permanency.



## **Juvenile Justice**

I want to take a moment to discuss the tremendous progress ACS and our City partners have made in serving youth and families in the juvenile justice system, which has paved the way for the expansion of our youth and family-focused framework to 16 and 17 year olds under the recently passed Raise the Age legislation. New York City has seen significant improvements in the juvenile justice system over the past several years:

- Juvenile arrests have decreased dramatically, down 55% from 2011 to 2015.
- Admissions to detention decreased by 22% from 2014 to 2016. While admissions are declining, so are lengths of stay in detention, and we consistently see a large percentage of youth staying in detention for less than a day.
- Admissions to non-secure placement are down 31% from 2014 to 2016. In 2016 our Juvenile Justice Initiative (JJI), which is an alternative-to-placement diversion program, served more than 200 young people who would otherwise have been placed in a non-secure placement residence. These youth and their families received intensive in-home, evidence-based therapeutic services along with added educational supports.

## **Family Assessment Program**

As the number of youth in out-of-home juvenile justice residential settings declines, we continue to serve a greater number of young people in our juvenile justice preventive programs. Our Family Assessment Program (FAP) identifies

services and provides referrals to help families work through their challenges *before* the need for court involvement arises. In 2016, FAP served over 5,000 families. For the first time, we are now working to link all youth leaving detention and their families with referrals to our preventive Family Assessment Program, in an effort to help these young people avoid further involvement in the justice system.

### Close to Home

As you know, Close to Home allows youth who have been adjudicated juvenile delinquents to be placed in non-secure or limited-secure residences located in or near the five boroughs. Close to Home is guided by a positive youth development framework that recognizes young people's capacity to rise above their challenges with support from their families and communities, and with services and programs that promote social and vocational engagement, education, creative arts, and positive adult and peer mentoring. Our Close to Home program is grounded in a number of key principles, including:

- **Public Safety:** Youth receive intensive supervision and monitoring by program staff. ACS has also created a comprehensive quality assurance and oversight monitoring regimen, which includes inspecting each Close to Home site twice per quarter. In 2016, we made 348 site inspections to 29 Close to Home sites.
- **Family Engagement & Collaboration:** Close to Home is structured to develop, support and maintain permanent connections for the youth and their families, allowing frequent and meaningful opportunities to participate in treatment. Right

now, we are partnering with Community Connections for Youth to provide young people and their families access to coaches and peer mentors to help them navigate the juvenile justice system.

- **Evidence-Based & Trauma-Informed Treatment:** Almost all of our young people in juvenile justice have experienced trauma. Close to Home uses a strength-based continuum of care that empowers and supports through services that have a proven track record of results.
- **Educational Continuity & Achievement:** Central to Close to Home is the ability for young people to receive individualized educational services through the Department of Education (DOE), allowing them to earn transferrable academic credits. Of the 191 of our Close to Home students enrolled in the 2015-16 school year, 75% earned academic credit and students passed over 88% of their courses.
- **Community Reintegration:** Once discharged from residential care, youth remain connected to positive adults, peers, and community supports embedded in their neighborhoods.

#### Bronx Youth & Family Justice Support Center

A hallmark of our entire continuum of juvenile justice services is our involvement and partnership with families and the community—key assets for helping to prevent youth from entering our system, and helping them prepare to return to their home community from the system. To better support our work with families and the

community, we will open the Bronx Family Support Center next month. The Center, established in partnership with the Vera Institute, is the first of its kind and will be located adjacent to the Bronx Family Court to facilitate engagement and retention of families who have children in Close to Home, and for families in need of or participating in the Family Assessment/PINS Diversion program and alternative programs like JJJ. This one-stop center will integrate the services of our entire juvenile justice continuum, so families can be more involved in their children's progress, and brings together local partners like the NYPD, school suspension centers, and community-based service providers.

#### Raise the Age

We are delighted that New York State will finally treat our young people as young people in our justice system, and we look forward to working with our partners to extend the principles and services of our detention and Close to Home programs to 16 and 17-year-olds, including broadening our community-based programs, expanding our residential continuum to include adolescent detention facilities, and delivering program models and treatments at these facilities that meet the developmental needs of older adolescents. With the success of the young people we've served and the strides we have made to build a juvenile justice system that promotes positive youth development, we join the Mayor, the City Council, and our partner City agencies in embracing the passage of Raise the Age legislation as a critical and long-overdue reform.

ACS is working in partnership with the Mayor's Office and our sister City agencies on planning to implement the initial requirements of the Raise the Age legislation by October 1, 2018. A citywide workgroup meets on a weekly basis to identify and work through specific issues around implementation, such as siting, facility specifications, procurements, funding, and legal and regulatory questions, to name only a few. Our Division of Youth & Family Justice also conducts weekly internal meetings with key ACS divisions and program areas to identify and plan for ACS-specific implementation actions. Much of the City's planning hinges on the clarification of uncertainties in the legislation itself, as well as clarification from state oversight bodies – the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) and State Commission of Correction (SCOC) -- on the regulations that will apply to programs for this population of young people.

Raise the Age is a rapidly evolving endeavor. While we continue to examine the costs associated with implementation, we need the State to provide its fair share of funding to support this massive reform. We thank the Council for your advocacy in support of the Raise the Age legislation, and we look forward to working with you on implementation and in advocating with the State for the funds, supports and flexibility needed to make this immensely consequential reform a reality.

## **Early Care & Education**

We are excited to play a pivotal role in the Mayor's expansion of pre-kindergarten, through 3-K for All, to strengthen the continuum of high quality early childhood education for children from birth to five-years-old. Our evolving knowledge of brain development underscores that early childhood is the critical time to shape the foundation for life-long learning, healthy development and growth.

Since 2012, ACS' EarlyLearn NYC has provided high quality, full-day early care and education to over 30,000 children from birth through five-years-old each year. We are proud that this program has become a pillar for promoting healthy childhood development, while also providing wraparound support to families—a hallmark of EarlyLearn NYC. This past fall, ACS rolled out the country's largest early childhood trauma-informed care program, named Trauma Smart, to build our children's abilities to face challenges later in life. In 2016, our centers achieved unprecedented "all clear" audits from the Federal Office of Head Start. As the Council heard in March, we have also implemented a number of reforms to improve the financial stability of our providers.

With the announcement of 3-K for All, the Mayor and the City agencies also recognized that our children and families will benefit greatly from a unified early care and education system that is linked to the larger K-12 system. Given the overlap of DOE's early care and education programs with ACS' EarlyLearn NYC, provided at 380 centers and via 30 family child care networks, EarlyLearn NYC contracts will be integrated into DOE's Division of Early Childhood Education. This integration will create

consistent high quality standards across the publicly-funded early childhood continuum that better transitions to elementary school.

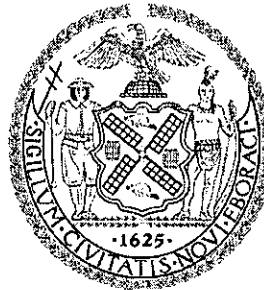
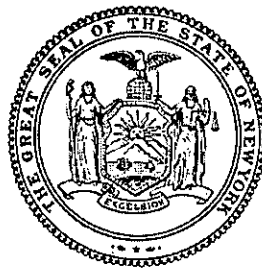
ACS has already been working with DOE to begin the integration, which we plan to complete by July 2018. 3-K for All will ultimately be the largest program of its kind in the nation, and will begin in the upcoming school year with the creation of three-year-old preschool seats in School District 7 in the South Bronx and School District 23 in Brownsville, Brooklyn. ACS is working with our EarlyLearn Providers, many of whom already partner with the DOE to provide Pre-K for All, to transition them to DOE. Teachers of three-year-olds at EarlyLearn sites will begin to receive additional support from DOE Instructional Coordinators and Social Workers. Today, these individuals focus on quality standards in four-year-old classrooms; as the transition progresses, that support will begin extending to EarlyLearn three-year-old classrooms. ACS and DOE will also work with the Mayor's Office of Labor Relations, the Day Care Council of New York, and DC 1707 Locals 95 and 205, which represent EarlyLearn center-based teachers, to help support teachers and other employees.

As EarlyLearn NYC transfers to DOE, ACS will continue to administer the City's child care voucher system. We will continue our efforts to bolster the quality of care in this system, which serves 29,000 children under the age of 5, in collaboration with the Human Resources Administration (HRA), the Department of Health & Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) and DOE.

## **Conclusion**

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss ACS' work this afternoon. I am honored to serve the children and families of our city as ACS' Commissioner and am humbled every day by the extraordinary dedication of the thousands of women and men at ACS and our provider agencies, and by the resilience and strength of the children and families we serve. I consider it my charge to help our agency move beyond a difficult period of transition and reform, and forward to a future of innovation and accomplishment. I also want to express my gratitude to the Council for your leadership and for your steadfast support for our efforts to make sure our children and families are safe and can thrive. I look forward to our continued partnership in these efforts. I am happy to answer your questions.





May 8, 2017

Mayor Bill de Blasio  
New York City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

Mayor de Blasio,

We are writing today with deep concern and frustration surrounding the process of siting 1790 Marmion Avenue, located in our respective Council and Assembly districts, as a drop-in center for homeless men.

Our community already has a very high concentration of shelters. As such, we are outraged that the administration has not been more diligent in working with South Bronx local elected officials to address the issues that often come with such facilities prior to this facility being sited.

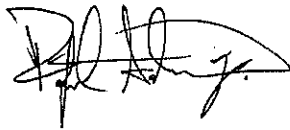
Specifically, we have the following issues with the process and the facility in general.

1. As the local elected representatives for this area, we are incredibly disappointed at the lack of transparency surrounding the siting of this project and the muddled communication provided to our offices on what we could expect regarding timelines, contracts and other very important aspects on how this facility will operate, and when.
2. We are dumbfounded by the total disregard surrounding community input. These types of facilities should not open under the cloak of night, notably when they are located in predominantly residential areas. Marmion Avenue is a quiet street only steps from Crotona Park, one of the South Bronx's largest parks. Simply put, a drop-in men's shelter in this area is deeply concerning considering the structure and hours of this type of facility. Failing to work with neighboring property owners, tenants and businesses to alert them of this new facility is outrageous and frankly disrespectful to the people of the Bronx.
3. When siting these facilities, greater emphasis needs to be made on ensuring that a community is not having a disproportionate number of facilities, like homeless drop-in centers, allocated to them. There is no denying that this part of the Bronx is overburdened with services for the homeless. This is supported by DHS statistics from February of 2017 that show that Bronx Community Board 6, where this facility is proposed, had a shelter capacity of 1,222 while only 705 from the same community district were tallied as currently homeless. In Bronx Community Board 3, which is less than a block away from the site, there is a shelter capacity of 1,142 with 840 tallied as homeless in the community district. Between the two, there is an excess capacity of 819 over what this community currently needs.

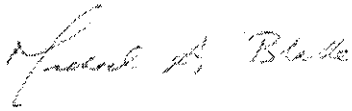
We certainly are not denying that we all need to work in unison to address the very real homelessness crisis that is affecting all communities in our city. With that said, the process that surrounds the siting of 1790 Marmion is unacceptable.

As a result, we cannot support this facility as proposed, and if our concerns are not addressed, we will stand opposed to any new efforts to open homeless facilities in our neighborhoods of the Bronx.

While both of our offices have consistently reached out requesting meetings, these requests have fallen on deaf ears. Please note that we will be sharing our aforementioned concerns with our respective constituents and reiterate our request to meet immediately.



**Hon. Rafael Salamanca, Jr.**  
New York City Council  
17th District, Bronx



**Hon. Michael Blake**  
New York State Assembly  
79th District, Bronx

Cc: Commissioner Steven Banks, Department of Homeless Services, Human Resources Administration  
Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr.  
New York State Senator Rev. Ruben Diaz, Sr.  
New York State Senator Gustavo Rivera  
Bronx Community Board 3  
Bronx Community Board 6



**Department of  
Social Services**

**Testimony of Steven Banks, Commissioner  
The New York City Department of Social Services**

**Before the New York City Council Finance Committee and General Welfare Committee  
HRA and DHS Fiscal Year 2018 Executive Budget  
May 15, 2017**

I would like to thank the City Council's Finance and General Welfare Committees and Chairs Julissa Ferreras-Copeland and Stephen Levin for giving us this opportunity to testify today about the budgets for the Human Resources Administration (HRA) and the Department of Homeless Services (DHS), and our continuing work to move forward with reforms of policies and procedures for both agencies.

My name is Steven Banks and I am the Commissioner of the New York City Department of Social Services (DSS) and in that capacity I oversee the Human Resources Administration and the Department of Homeless Services. Joining me today are HRA's Administrator Grace Bonilla, Department of Social Services Chief Program Planning and Financial Management Officer Ellen Levine, Executive Deputy Commissioner for Finance Erin Villari, and Acting Chief of Staff Raquel Lucas.

Under the new integrated management structure for HRA and DHS, shared agency resources within the Department of Social Services include: the General Counsel and the Office of Legal Affairs which includes the Agency Chief Contracting Officer, Fair Hearing Administration, and the Policy, Procedures and Training program; the Chief Program Accountability Officer and integrity and accountability programs which include the Investigation, Revenue and Enforcement Administration, Audit and Quality Assurance Services, and the Special Investigations Division; the Chief Operating Officer and administrative programs which include the Staff Resources office, Management Information Systems, General Support Services, Police Operations, and Business Process Innovation; the Chief Program Planning and Financial Management Officer and financial and planning programs which include the Finance, Evaluation and Research, and Planning and Performance Management offices; the Chief External Affairs Officer and external programs which include Constituent Services, Advocacy and Outreach, Communications and Marketing, Legislative Affairs, Public Private Partnerships, and Citywide Health Insurance Access as well as IDNYC; and EEO and Disability Access and Compliance as well as Strategic Initiatives.

At the Human Resources Administration the management structure includes the Chief Program Officer who oversees the Family Independence Administration, Child Support Enforcement, and the Medical Insurance and Community Services Administration; the Chief Special Services Officer who oversees Emergency and Intervention Services, which includes our Domestic Violence programs and services, Customized Assistance Services, the HIV/AIDS Services Administration, Adult Protective Services, Home Care Services, Supportive/Affordable Housing and Services, and Crisis and Disaster Management; and the Chief Homelessness Prevention Officer who oversees Housing and Homeless Services Initiatives, Legal Assistance Initiatives, and Outreach, Rehousing and Landlord Management.

At the Department of Homeless Services the management structure includes the senior managers and programs for Capacity Planning and Development, Family Services, Adult Services, Street Homelessness, Health Care Policy and Administration, Maintenance, Repair and Capital Construction, and the Shelter and Support Program Budget Office.

Today I will first discuss the Executive FY18 budget for the Human Resources Administration, which includes the budget for the Department of Social Services, and then I will discuss the Executive FY18 budget for the Department of Homeless Services.

### **Human Resources Administration**

Every day across the city, HRA is focused on providing supports to individuals who are most impacted by income inequality. HRA's programs and services support individuals who are looking for work or who are working, but whose income is not enough to afford basic expenses for themselves or their families, by providing cash assistance, food stamps, employment and education programs, and medical insurance. HRA also provides these supports for New Yorkers who are unable to work, most of whom are children, seniors, individuals with disabilities, and others who are unable to work as determined under federal and state law. HRA also administers a range of housing programs to support low-income New Yorkers, including supportive housing which combines affordable housing with supportive services. HRA also provides housing services for New Yorkers who are low-income and have been diagnosed with HIV so that they do not have to make the difficult decision of choosing between housing and healthcare. And through the agency's Homelessness Prevention Administration, we connect New Yorkers to a wide-range of comprehensive prevention programs and supports, including civil legal services, rental assistance, and emergency grants to avert entry into shelter and assist clients as they transition from shelter to permanent housing.

Over the past three years, this Administration has implemented and expanded fundamental and key initiatives in order to address income inequality and prevent and alleviate homelessness. First, the Administration rebuilt rental assistance and rehousing programs that had been eliminated, with the result that between 2011 and 2014 homelessness increased 38% and the DHS shelter census increased by more than 14,000 men, women, and children. Reinstating rental assistance and rehousing programs enabled 51,500 children and adults to move out of shelter or avert shelter entry in the first place from the summer of 2014 through December 31, 2016, and another 6,205 so far this year, as of April 1 – thereby helping 57,705 individuals move out of shelter or avert shelter entry.

Further, we have committed to the largest municipal program to build and expand supportive housing by funding 15,000 new units of supportive housing over the next 15 years, with the first 550 units coming on line this year. This critical investment will address the barriers that prevent stable housing for vulnerable New Yorkers, such as those with mental illness, substance use disorders and other chronic conditions, as well as New Yorkers with HIV/AIDS, and young adults aging out of foster care.

This coincides with the historic investment in civil legal services; we have seen a 24% decline in evictions over the past three years, resulting in more than 40,000 New Yorkers being able to stay in

their homes in 2015 and 2016. And the increased payment of rent arrears means that more than 161,000 households were able to keep a roof over their heads.

HRA's budget reflects the Administration's priorities to support low-income New Yorkers while providing comprehensive prevention services to reduce shelter entries.

### **Overview of the Executive 2018 Plan**

The HRA budget as of the Executive 2018 Plan is \$9.7 billion (\$7.3 billion City funds) in Fiscal 2017 and \$9.9 billion (\$7.5 billion City funds) in Fiscal 2018. For FY18, the DSS/HRA headcount is funded at 14,689, of which 11,269 are City positions.

The 2018 Executive Budget increases by \$169 million in total funds (\$230 million City funds) compared to the 2017 budget.

The primary reasons for the increase are as follows:

- \$84 million is related to the final transfer of administrative and program funding from DHS to DSS and HRA in FY18, as part of the reform and consolidation of homeless services. This includes a total of nearly \$50 million for Prevention and Aftercare Services, which will be administered by HRA beginning in 2018, as well as the full implementation of the DSS shared services model that started phasing in beginning in this current fiscal year.
- \$15 million for Universal Access to Counsel in Housing Court and \$18.2 million for legal defense for Immigrants facing deportation beginning in FY18.
- One-time City funds savings of \$112 million in FY17 for prior year revenues.

The two pie charts in the PowerPoint we have provided to you show in more detail how the HRA budget is allocated in 2017 and 2018 as of the Executive Budget.

### **HRA Executive Budget Highlights | New Funding**

#### **Legal Services**

As discussed in detail at the Preliminary Budget hearing before the Courts and Legal Services Committee on March 7 of this year, HRA's Office of Civil Justice oversees the provision of civil legal services for New Yorkers in need, including tenants facing eviction, immigrant New Yorkers in need of deportation defense, access to benefits, support for survivors of domestic violence, assistance for veterans, and other legal assistance for tenants in need.

In Fiscal Year 2017, for the first time, New York City's overall investment in civil legal services for low-income City residents exceeds \$100 million. In the current fiscal year, Mayoral programs exceed \$83 million and City Council awards are nearly \$28 million. In Fiscal Year 18, this investment will increase to fund two historic initiatives.

In February of this year, the Mayor and the Speaker announced the nation's first Universal Access to Anti-Eviction Counsel in Housing Court program. This program will be phased in over five years and builds on existing programs serving tenants in Housing Court.

In the first year of the phase in, we plan to target zip codes identified through input from providers, advocates, and Councilmembers. We will be taking into account relevant housing pressures and dynamics, including the pervasiveness of rent-regulated housing in a particular zip code; the volume of court filings and evictions; and shelter entries from the community. This approach, in the first year, provides for the best and only way for the Housing Court to facilitate such an expansion while ensuring accountability that cases in a selected category are provided with access to services.

We are committed to annual growth in each of the five boroughs as well as a robust program evaluation as we fully implement this critical program. We will continue to work with the Council as we move forward with implementation and we will provide regular updates on our progress.

The Executive 18 Plan includes baseline funding as follows \$77.1 million for legal services programs for tenants facing eviction, harassment and displacement, compared to the Adopted 17 Budget funded at \$62 million, not including City Council funding. The Executive 18 Plan includes \$40.7 million for eviction defense legal services for low-income tenants in Housing Court and \$33.9 million for anti-harassment/displacement legal services, as well as \$2.5 million for administrative and staff support, which includes additional headcount for the expansion of universal access to counsel in Housing Court.

The increase in the Executive 18 Plan is due to funding the first phase of the Universal Access to Counsel in Housing Court program funded at \$15.1 million in total funds and \$10.8 million in City funds. This investment increases to \$30.8 million and \$22.7 million City funds in FY19 and \$53.9 million in total funds and \$37.6 million City funds in FY20. This amount grows to \$93 million in total funds by FY22 when the Access to Counsel in Housing Court program is fully implemented. At full implementation, the total annual investment in anti-eviction and anti-harassment legal services will be \$155 million and approximately 400,000 New Yorkers will benefit annually through this program.

The Executive 18 Plan adds Fiscal Year 2018 baseline funding at HRA of \$16.4 million in total and City funds for immigration legal assistance, and an additional \$1 million for outreach through the ActionNYC program operated in partnership with MOIA and CUNY. This increase in baseline funding for immigration legal services is focused on expanding access to representation for complex immigration cases and deportation defense. This funding includes the Immigrant Opportunities Initiative (IOI) and dedicated funding for complex legal cases. This representation of immigrant New Yorkers in complex legal cases can include representation in asylum proceedings; seeking permanent status for immigrant children through the family courts; and visa applications on behalf of survivors of domestic violence.

The Administration's Adopted FY17 budget included baseline funding at \$14.0 million for immigration legal assistance, as well as outreach through the ActionNYC program operated in partnership with MOIA and CUNY; and Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funding which funds citywide and community-based legal services organizations to provide a range of services such as legal assistance to help immigrant adults and youth attain citizenship and lawful immigration status; legal and social

services for immigrant survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking; and services designed to provide information, education, advocacy and legal services to protect low-wage immigrants from exploitation and violations of their employment rights.

These investments were complemented by the Council's' discretionary adds in FY17, including \$2.6 for the Immigrant Opportunities Initiative (IOI) as well as \$6.2 million for the New York Immigrant Family Unity Project, for detained immigrants in deportation proceedings, and \$1.5 million for I-Care, for unaccompanied children and recently arrived families in deportation proceedings.

It is our estimate that this funding of more than \$30.7 million in the baseline for FY18 will provide more than 15,000 individuals with free, safe, immigration legal representation.

### **Homeless Prevention Enhancements**

Within HRA's Homelessness Prevention Administration Unit, the Executive budget adds resources to support rehousing and placement out of shelter of 17 positions, complemented by 13 additional positions in DHS. This investment provides additional support to move individuals and families from shelter to permanent housing.

Staff teams work directly with families in shelter to move them to housing placements with rental assistance or subsidized housing. These teams assist clients with locating apartments, completing rental assistance applications and interviews, and moving into apartments.

Since Fiscal 2015, through comprehensive rental assistance programs and subsidized housing, more than 57,705 individuals have avoided entry into or moved out of shelter.

The increase in HRA's budget is \$1.9 million of total funds and City funds in FY18 and in the out years for 17 positions. Additionally, the Executive 18 Plan funds 13 positions within DHS with \$1.1 million of total funds and City funds in FY18.

As part of the reform of Homeless services programs, homelessness prevention services were consolidated in HRA. A total of nearly \$59 million annually starting in 2018 will support a new HomeBase program that will provide coordinated preventive, aftercare and community support services, including benefits advocacy, budgeting, employment, short-term financial assistance, and help with housing relocation. The new program includes the baseline funding for prevention programs previously in DHS totaling \$39.2 million as well as \$18.2 million in HRA that was added to the budget with the advent of the new rental assistance programs and as part of the 90-day review.

### **Healing NYC**

This initiative aligns with the Administration's commitment to addressing the serious opioid epidemic in New York City. This work at HRA and DHS will help address the opioid epidemic through overdose prevention efforts, including expanding treatment and increasing public awareness.

Funding is provided for three additional staff, one in the HRA budget and two in DHS. At HRA, this position will serve as an overdose prevention coordinator to manage agency prevention efforts across

programs such as HASA and DV, substance use assessment and case management programs as well as programs for clients in transitional housing as a result of relocation from overcrowded conditions in Three Quarter Houses. The two staff at DHS will have similar functions ensuring Naloxone training and distribution across the shelter system, as well as drug use prevention and harm reduction services.

### **Service Provider Wage Adjustment**

New York City has a vibrant and extensive nonprofit sector and the institutions which comprise it work every day to serve New Yorkers and partner regularly with the Human Resources Administration, the Department of Homeless Services as well as other City human service agencies. As such, in the fall of 2016, the Mayor announced the creation of the Nonprofit Resiliency Committee charged with identifying, designing and launching solutions to support the nonprofit sector in administrative processes, service and program design, and organizational infrastructure.

The Executive budget includes an allocation to provide wage increases for HRA's not-for-profit contract providers. The allocation is funded at \$3.6 million of total funds and \$2.7 million City funds in FY18; \$7.2 million of total funds and \$5.4 million City funds in FY19; \$10.9M of total funds and \$8.2 million City funds in FY20. This initiative funds both a COLA as well as a wage floor.

### **HRA Efficiencies**

#### **Fair Hearing Chargebacks**

We have testified before the Council previously about our reform efforts aimed at ensuring access to benefits for our clients as well as addressing staff workload and operational inefficiencies, resulting in savings for the City.

As a result of implementing changes such as plain language notices and expanding the use of technology, we are making it easier for our clients to obtain and keep benefits without having to expend the time and resources when clients challenge benefits problems at State Fair Hearings.

The HRA Fair Hearing program continues to make significant progress in addressing the issues that cause people to ask for fair hearings. A Centralized Packet Review Unit was created to fully assess a client's request for a fair hearing. This unit was fully trained to resolve cases by doing a thorough review of the agency's actions and also by outreaching to clients in order to determine if cases should be settled before the hearings are scheduled. There is also a new program that began in December of 2016, in which outreach is done on the day of the hearing in order to determine if the client's case can be resolved. The Fair Hearing Administration, in collaboration with other HRA areas, also implemented various computer solutions to identify cases that should not close, thereby avoiding unnecessary hearing requests. The agency has utilized robo calls and outreach to clients in order to remind them of deadlines and actions that need to be taken so they can continue to receive their benefits. The Fair Hearings unit also created dedicated email boxes for advocates to contact in order to resolve cases, again avoiding the need to request fair hearings. And the Fair Hearings unit continues to run its Pre-Notice of Intent program, designed to review cases in order to identify appropriate resolutions prior to the issuing of any client notices about adverse actions.



As a result, we re-estimated the State fair hearing costs that are charged back to NYC by the State because Fair Hearing requests have declined by over 40% since the beginning of the Administration. The Exec 18 includes a reduction of \$3 million of total funds and \$3 million in City funds in FY17 and in the out years.

### **OIT Consultant Insourcing**

Cost avoidance savings are included in the FY18 budget as a result of the conversion of former DHS IT consultants to City-funded headcount in FY18 and the out years. The addition of 49 headcount in FY18 resulted in a reduction of \$1.5 million in total and City funds in FY18; the addition of 99 HC in FY19 and in the out years resulted in a reduction of \$3.0 million in total and City funds in FY19 and the out years.

### **HRA Capital Plan**

The HRA Ten-Year Capital Plan for 2018-2027 totals \$285.3 million, of which \$168 million are City funds. This includes \$206.2 million, of which \$122.1 million are City funds, in the 2018-2021 Four-Year Plan. The 10-Year Capital Plan includes \$156.2 million for technology, including key investments related to Client Services Re-engineering. In the Executive Capital Plan, funds were added for HRA One Number, continued ACCESS HRA development, and a new landlord portal.

### **ACCESS HRA**

The ACCESS NYC portal has been re-launched as ACCESS HRA. In addition to allowing food stamps clients to check the status of their case, review upcoming deadlines and appointments and see what documents have been requested and received by the Agency, clients are able to submit telephone number, language preference and mailing and email address changes through the portal.

As of February of this year, clients can opt to receive local notices electronically, ensuring receipt of their notices even if they do not have immediate access to their mail.

ACCESS HRA also allows clients to:

- View E-notices that remain viewable for 365 days.
- Go Paperless! Clients are able to opt-in to reduce the number of paper notices sent from HRA.
- Request an electronic budget letter from the Case Details page, which will appear as an e-notice the next business day.
- Recertify a Cash Assistance case.
- Reprint the barcoded, prepopulated Medicaid renewal.
- Document Reuse: Select documents on file at HRA for identity, age, and other eligibility documents to re-use when submitting an online application.
- Receive text message and email alerts about their case. For example, a client can now receive a text when their SNAP recertification period begins.
- After submitting a recertification form, track the date it is received by HRA on the Case Details page.

- After completing a SNAP interview, see when the status of the interview updates to “KEPT” under My Appointments.

HRA also launched the new ACCESS HRA Self-Service Mobile app that provides access to case information including appointments and documents requested and continues to allow clients to upload images of SNAP and Cash Assistance eligibility documents. HRA was awarded a \$1.5 million US Department of Agriculture grant for this initiative. Since the application’s launch, clients have uploaded over 1 million images (representing more than 180,000 SNAP and Cash Assistance cases).

As clients apply for benefits online they create their online account, we currently have 890,000 such accounts. At January’s Hunger Hearing we reported that there were 126,363 linked HRA online accounts for SNAP and Cash Assistance households; as of last week there are now 211,005 linked accounts. These linked accounts allow clients to manage their cases online – track their benefit balance, request case letters and many other tools. As we continue to build out the functionality of ACCESS HRA, more clients can link their accounts in order to manage their accounts, including recertifying for benefits.

ACCESS NYC is accessible in English and the six Local Law 73 languages (Arabic, Chinese, Haitian Creole, Korean, Russian and Spanish).

### **HRA One Number**

HRA One Number, an upgrade of the Agency’s Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system, will ensure adequate support for all programs and avoid additional maintenance costs. This upgrade will support the integration of HRA and DHS administrative functions under DSS, compliance with lawsuit settlements related to disability access, and a multi-agency public awareness campaign that will be launched in 2017 around public benefits like SNAP.

### **Landlord Management System**

We are introducing a Landlord Management System to reduce payment errors and create staff efficiencies through electronic funds transfer (EFT) payments to landlords. Now with the integration of DHS and HRA under the Department of Social Services, this new system will provide additional opportunities to streamline programs and create more efficient ways of doing business.

With the development of a Landlord Management System we are creating a system that will transform the way we do business for the over 158,000 payments we make each month to landlords. In addition to providing EFT payments to landlords, the Landlord Management System will provide a multifunctional, public facing portal for landlords and clients.

Clients will access their case information through ACCESS HRA allowing them to provide information necessary to keep their cases current as well as reduce the need to go to an HRA Center in person in order to provide documentation or update their case information. Clients will also have the ability to renew rental subsidies and view payments made on the client’s behalf to landlords. As a result, there will be better coordination across program areas and a more straightforward process to move out of shelter and into permanent housing.

For landlords, they too will be able to use the public facing portal to create a user profile and update account information such as address and bank information and thereby register for electronic funds transfer of rental payments. Landlords will also be able to designate users such as managing agents on their behalf. In addition, landlords will be able to notify DSS of clients/tenants who have moved.

For HRA staff, the need for data entry into multiple systems will be reduced, resulting in reductions in calls and emails to get real time updates on client case status. Documents will be accessible to staff within the new secure system, thereby cutting down on the need to scan and email them. This will result in reduced call volume from landlords and managing agents and better coordination of information across the DSS programs working to rehouse clients.

## **Reform Updates**

### **HRA Employment Plan**

On April 3, HRA launched a comprehensive new approach to help clients connect to and build a career that will lead to success and financial security. HRA's Career Services, formerly known as Employment Services, offers programs that work closely with Cash Assistance clients to help them find the right opportunities that match their skills, needs, and career goals.

The new approach leaves behind the one-size-fits-all approach of the past to offer services that take into consideration the individual needs of clients while providing specialized services for youth and other groups with specific needs. These new programs expand on the reforms HRA has already made, aimed at reducing unnecessary sanctions and case closings that have an adverse impact on staff workload and have severe consequences for clients. The new approach offers more meaningful opportunities to clients. For example, HRA ended the one-size-fits-all Work Experience Program (WEP) in December 2016, replacing it with more choices like internships, community services, and work-study opportunities.

Depending on their situation, clients are matched with new programs provided by Career Services providers. CareerCompass works with adult clients to assess their individual skills and experience, and helps in finding employment, training, or education programs as well as internship and community service opportunities that best suit their goals. YouthPathways works with clients ages 18-24 to assess their skills and experience; provides career, education, and training services; and helps clients find programs, including internships and community service, tailored to the needs of a younger population. CareerAdvance offers career, education, and training services in specific industries and neighborhoods in New York City, and to groups such as those with Limited English Proficiency or older adults.

These service providers work with clients to help them set career goals, come up with a plan to achieve them, and connect clients to opportunities to build skills, improve their resumes, and grow their careers. In addition to connection to employment, Career Services offers work-study and internship programs, skill-based training programs in growth industries, literacy and English as a Second Language classes to improve employment prospects, and the ability for clients to work in

their community through community service. The training and education programs that Career Services providers offer clients are free.

Career Services providers and HRA also continue to connect clients to services offered by the NYC Department of Small Business Services (SBS) and to HRA's Business Link, which matches employers with jobseekers who have the skills they need. Business Link hosts several job fairs during the year and offers job opening alerts by text message through TEXT 2 WORK.

Career Services providers stay involved with clients to make sure their employment opportunities are working out, to help them move from education to employment, and to present them with new opportunities. Career Services providers keep working with clients for at least one year after they enter employment to help them advance in their careers. A training program might lead to a new job, which might lead to an advancement opportunity. Building a career is a long-term process, and HRA's Career Services is designed to help clients along the way—not just at the very beginning.

### **HIV Services: HASA for All**

On August 29, 2016, we expanded medical eligibility for the HASA program so as to permit all financially-eligible New York City residents with HIV to seek and obtain HASA services. Although the financial requirements remain unchanged, an applicant need no longer have AIDS or be "symptomatic" in order to be eligible for HASA services.

The HASA program has successfully implemented this change. From August 29, 2016 through March 31, 2017, HASA has accepted 3,487 new clients; compared with 2,436 new clients during the same period in 2015 and 2016. This represents a 43% increase. Of the 3,487 accepted between August 29, 2016 and March 31, 2017, 1907 were expansion clients. Expansion clients were 55% of the new cases. To accommodate the increase in caseload, HASA was provided with additional funding to hire 28 new case managers through FY18.

This was a major policy change that this Administration supported together with the Council and advocates. Under previous state policy a client needed to not only be low income but have an AIDS diagnosis or a clinically symptomatic HIV diagnosis in order to be eligible for HASA benefits, such as an enhanced shelter allowance. This outdated policy meant that low-income New Yorkers with HIV were left to make choices between necessities such as housing and food or their medication. The lack of access to healthcare coupled with unstable housing, homelessness and poverty are all drivers of the AIDS epidemic yet for far too long necessary assistance was provided only to those New Yorkers' whose health deteriorated rather than taking a prevention approach to invest in enhanced rental assistance, increased food and transportation allowances, and seamless support services. Now HASA programs and services are available to all low-income New Yorkers with HIV so they can maintain viral suppression and meet their basic needs.

As of March 31, 2017, HASA had a caseload of 33,320 clients. Including family members, we are serving a total of 43, 636 individuals through the HASA program.

## **Supportive Housing NYC 15/15**

The Mayor's NYC 15/15 plan to create 15,000 units of new supportive housing over the next 15 years includes more units than the combined number of units from the three previous New York/New York supportive housing agreements and is larger than any other supportive housing effort in the country. From decades of research, we know that this comprehensive plan will benefit New Yorkers in need, including homeless veterans, domestic violence survivors, and street homeless individuals. The first 550 scatter-site units will be coming online this year and will serve single adults and Adult Families with SMI/SUD.

The RFP for 7,500 units of congregate supportive housing has been issued and we are accepting proposals. These units will serve single adults and adult families with SMI/SUD, adults with children in which the head of household has SMI/SUD, young adult families and single young adults ages 18-25. These units will require new construction and development and will come online in 18 – 24 months.

The RFP for the remaining 6,905 scatter-site units will be released this month and will serve single adult and adult families with SMI/SUD, adults with children in which the head of household has SMI/SUD, and single young adults.

We expect to release an RFP this summer for an additional 90 units of scatter-site supportive housing for young adult families, utilizing a new model to serve this population.

Supportive Housing is a multiagency initiative in which HRA plays a lead role in procuring scattered site units as well as procuring services for congregate Supportive Housing locations. HRA also determines eligibility for these units across various criteria established through the NY/NY agreements as well as the NYC 15/15 program. HRA partners with HPD which is the lead for developing congregate Supportive Housing and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) which will manage the contracts for Supportive Housing.

The Exec 18 budget includes \$26.4 million in total funds and City funds in FY18, \$50.2 million in total funds and City funds in FY19, and \$74.4 million in total funds and City funds in FY20 that will be transferred from HRA to DOHMH for supportive housing contracts.

According to a 2014 study of Supportive Housing by the Urban Institute, 85 percent of all clients remained housed in the program one year after placement, and two years after placement 74 percent remain housed. This supportive environment can also reconnect individuals with family members and integrate individuals into a neighborhood, the community and the workforce, thereby creating a web of social supports that are difficult to maintain when housing is unstable or non-existent. Supportive Housing has a proven track record of reducing costs. A DOHMH study showed NY/NY III clients who were placed into supportive housing used public benefits, Medicaid, psychiatric institutions, jails and shelters less than clients who were not placed, resulting in net cost savings.

Over the course of FY17, HRA has continued to implement core reforms to better serve our clients. The elimination of WEP and the new Employment Plan are key examples of this Administration's commitment to serving our clients and supporting them on their path to self-sufficiency. Technology and business improvements continue to be made so that clients are able to apply and recertify for

the benefits for which they are eligible without fear of disruption in these critical supports. This Administration has placed an increased emphasis on the role of prevention services, and continues to actively expand the tools and resources available to those in need. Each day the staff members at HRA carry out this work. This prevention-first strategy is critical to reducing the number of families and individuals living in shelter, and is a cost-effective and common sense solution to address homelessness. However, each day families and individuals in New York City turn to the City when they are unable to keep a roof over their head and we must meet our moral and legal obligation to provide shelter for those who are in need.

### **Department of Homeless Services**

The homelessness problem we face is the result of decades of changes in our economy and past choices made in New York City, Albany, and Washington. From 1994 to 2014, the DHS shelter census skyrocketed 115 percent—rising from 23,868 men, women, and children in January 1994, to 31,009 in January 2002, before reaching 51,470 in January 2014. At the same time, the City lost tens of thousands of affordable or rent-stabilized units. This steady decline in housing affordability, coupled with the decline in real wages has driven many working families and individuals into homelessness.

In April 2011, this affordability crisis was made worse when the City and State ended the Advantage rental assistance program, which had offered subsidies for people in shelters if they took part in job training. In less than three years after the end of the program, the shelter population increased by 38 percent – some 14,000 people.

Had this administration not stopped this trajectory, the DHS shelter census would have likely reached nearly 70,000 in December 2016, rather than the 58,646 it was on Friday. As the City's new plan attests, this Administration has stemmed the tide of homeless shelter census growth in New York City and we are now focused on achieving a sustained reduction in the shelter census.

Nonetheless, while the structural forces driving homelessness in New York City — poverty and a lack of affordable housing — are similar to other urban areas of the U.S., the scale of the problem the City now faces is unique in its intensity and scope.

A few statistics emphasize the severity of the problem. Between 2000 and 2014, the median New York City rent increased by 19 percent in real dollars and household income decreased by 6.3 percent in real dollars. Meanwhile, between 1994 and 2012, the city suffered a net loss of about 150,000 rent-stabilized units. Combined, these and other trends mean that by 2015 the city had only half the housing it needs for about three million low-income New Yorkers.

As a result, these New Yorkers end up sacrificing a great deal to stay in their homes and maintain their connections to their communities. Some 360,000 New York City households pay more than 50 percent of their income on rent and utilities. Another 140,000 households pay more than 30 percent. This means a total of a half a million New York City households are paying an unaffordable amount of their income for housing.

Many people who face these rent burdens cycle in and out of poverty, living just one personal crisis away from homelessness. In fact, an ongoing longitudinal study suggests that nearly half of all New

Yorkers lived in poverty at some point between 2012 and 2014 (the three-year period studied). As a result of these economic factors, 70 percent of the shelter system census now consists of families, and 34 percent of the families with children have an adult who is working.

At the same time, domestic violence is a major driver of homelessness, with some 30 percent of the families with children in the DHS shelter system having a history of domestic violence.

In April of last year, the Mayor announced 46 reforms following a comprehensive 90-day review of homeless programs and services in New York City. During this review period we took specific and immediate action to address the homelessness problem. During this time, we committed to the largest municipal supportive housing expansion in the nation; provided additional Tier II and emergency beds for survivors of Domestic Violence; expanded the number of dedicated youth beds for runaway and homeless youth and implemented a plan to double the number of drop-in centers which are a critical tool to bring individuals off the street that the prior Administration had cut. Last month, I testified in detail about each of these 46 reforms.

But our work did not end there. Following our work addressing management and immediate operational issues during and after the 90-day review, this February the Mayor released *Turning the Tide*, a comprehensive borough-based plan to shrink the footprint of the City's homeless shelter system by 45 percent and reduce the shelter census over the next five years.

Our vision of *Turning the Tide* relies on three approaches:

- First, doing more to keep people in their homes by stopping evictions, helping families and individuals remain with family members in the community, and making housing more affordable.
- Second, continuing to enhance our HOME-STAT program to bring people in from the streets.
- Third, a reimagined approach to providing shelter that:
  - Ends use of the 17-year cluster apartment program by the end of 2021 and the decades-old use of commercial hotel facilities by the end of 2023;
  - Cuts the total number of shelter facilities by almost 45% by getting out of 360 cluster apartment and commercial hotel locations and replacing them with a smaller number of 90 new high quality shelters in all five boroughs; and
  - Provides homeless families and individuals with an opportunity to be in shelter as close as possible to their own communities and the anchors of life – like schools, jobs, health care, houses of worship and family – to help them get back on their feet and out of shelter more quickly.

#### **Keeping people in their homes and moving them off the streets:**

- **Affordable housing:** Committed to build or preserve 200,000 affordable apartments; in just three years the City has already financed a record 62,506 affordable residences.
- **Affordable Housing Update:** Committed \$1.9 billion to expand our housing programs to include 10,000 apartments focused on seniors, veterans and other low-income families.

- **Added rental assistance for seniors:** We continue our work with our colleagues in Albany to pass the mansion tax that will create a new Elder Rental Assistance program to help more than 25,000 seniors stay in their homes.
- **Rental assistance/rehousing initiatives:** Since 2014, 57,705 people have secured permanent housing through our rental assistance and rehousing initiatives.
- **Emergency rental assistance:** We provided emergency rental assistance to 161,000 households, helping rent burdened New Yorkers at risk of eviction stay in their homes.
- **Supportive Housing:** 15,000 new units of Supportive Housing will be provided over the next 15 years, representing the largest municipal commitment to supportive housing.
- **Legal assistance:** As the Administration provided increased funding for legal services, more than 40,000 New Yorkers were able to stay in their homes and evictions are down 24%.
- **Legal Assistance Update:** As I mentioned, in the FY18 Executive budget the City included \$15.1 million to provide universal access to counsel in Housing Court proceedings for year one of the five-year phase in.
- **Street homeless:** We moved 748 individuals off streets into transitional programs or permanent housing during the first year of HOME-STAT.

### **Making Long-Needed Operational Reforms:**

- **90-day review:** At the Mayor's direction, we took an in depth look at homeless services resulting in 46 reforms aimed at preventing homelessness, addressing street homelessness, improving conditions and safety in shelter, and helping New Yorkers transition from shelter to permanent housing.
- **Shelter conditions:** Inspections are up 50%, while violations are down 83%. In 2016, the City conducted almost 13,000 inspections – a 50% increase from 2015 – and with nonprofit providers fixed more than 14,000 code violations.
- **Close Cluster Apartments:** We have gotten out of 831 cluster apartments, prioritizing those with the most serious problems and working to end the use of clusters all together.
- **Security:** Doubled Investments, and the NYPD takes the lead: in 2016, the NYPD conducted a comprehensive review of security at homeless shelters. The Administration doubled the 2013 investment in DHS security, with a total annual security spending of \$217 million for FY17.
- **Security Update:** As of 2017, NYPD oversees DHS shelter security, including standardizing and professionalizing security, surveillance, staff training and deployment.
- **End Vets Homelessness:** The Administration placed 3,153 homeless veterans into permanent housing; and in December 2015, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) declared chronic veteran homelessness a thing of the past.

### **Reimagined Shelter Strategy:**

- **Closing All Cluster Apartments and Commercial Hotel Facilities:** Over the course of this plan, we will get out of all 360 cluster apartment sites and commercial hotels and replace them with a smaller number of 90 new borough-based shelters. As a result of our work so far, there are now less than 250 buildings with cluster apartments in them with approximately 10,000 people in less than 2,900 units. And around 7,500 individuals occupy hotel rooms.
- **Creating Fewer New Borough-Based Replacement Shelters:** The City will open approximately 20 shelters annually over the next five years with a wide range of services onsite. This



borough-based approach will allow families and individuals to be placed in proximity to schools, jobs, health care, houses of worship, family and neighbors.

### **Turning the Tide Together:**

- As we shrink the footprint of shelters citywide by 45%, we will reform how we notify communities about our plans to open shelters when they are needed to meet multiple court-ordered right to shelter mandates. And we welcome the support of this body in bringing our providers suitable locations to open these needed facilities.

In the past two months, I have testified in detail at several hearings about the Administration's plan to address homelessness in the *Turning the Tide* plan released in February and most recently provided an in-depth update on our post 90-review reforms last month.

Today I will discuss the DHS Budget as of the FY18 Executive Plan.

### **Overview of the Executive 2018 Plan**

The DHS budget as of the FY18 Executive Plan is \$1.6 billion (\$883 million City funds) in Fiscal Year 2018. The DHS headcount is funded at 2,483 positions in FY18.

The FY18 Executive Budget reflects the new initiatives that were funded in the Financial Plan as well as full implementation of the DSS consolidation and transfer of prevention and rehousing services to HRA. As I noted in the HRA section, this includes Prevention and Aftercare, as well as the full implementation of the DSS shared services model that started phasing in beginning in this current fiscal year.

The FY18 Executive Plan added \$63 million (\$54 million City funds) and 79 positions in 2017 and \$177 million (\$110 million City funds) and 80 positions in 2018.

The two pie charts in the PowerPoint we have provided to you show in more detail how the DHS budget is allocated in 2017 and 2018 as of the Executive Budget submission.

### **Homeless Shelter Provider Rate Reform and Investment in the Not-for-Profit Sector**

The FY18 Executive Plan adds \$36 million (\$18 million in City funds) in FY18 and growing to \$71 million (\$34 million in City funds) in FY20 to fund rate reform for shelter providers. Including funding added in prior plans, funding for rate reform added since Executive 17 totals \$146 million (\$80 million in City funds) at full implementation. Last April in the 90-day review reforms, DHS announced that it would rationalize payment rates for shelter providers, to ensure that all contracted shelter programs can provide consistent and high quality levels of service and are able to maintain their facilities in accordance with City and State standards for operations, including caseload ratios; resources for special needs and facilitation of housing placement; real-time maintenance and repairs; and funding for health and safety needs, including security and support staff.

As also discussed within the context of the HRA budget, our agency partnerships with nonprofits are critical to meeting the needs of New Yorkers in shelter. And at DHS this rate reform investment is one that supports the nonprofit sector itself. Funding for rate reform was developed through a model budget process that included analysis of current rates to determine where there were providers that were below standards; meetings were held with providers to understand the process from the provider perspective and to hear concerns that were most critical for them; and DHS and DSS worked with OMB to develop operating principles which we intend to use as a model for developing a schedule to adjust provider budgets. Our goal is to begin by bringing those providers with programs in the lower percentiles in the areas that require adjustment up to the model. This will entail a contract amendment process and we are cognizant that this should be managed in coordination with other changes such as the most recent not-for-profit COLA.

The “model budget” or “rate reform” does not stand in isolation. The model really includes more than just \$146 million. The rate reform includes a series of new initiatives that must be viewed holistically and that together form the model budget. This includes Thrive (\$34 million); the FY16 and FY17 COLAs (total of \$11 million); and the FY18 provider wage adjustment (\$5.7 million in FY18 growing to \$10.7 million in FY19, although this is inclusive of non-shelter providers as well). The Jan 17 Plan added Adult shelter enhancements of \$9 million for not-for-profit providers; \$17 million was added for security at mental health shelters in the Jan 17 and Executive 17 Plans; and \$5 million is provided annually for one-time shelter maintenance and repair costs that are not capitally eligible. Taken together, these investments for not-for-profit shelters total over \$200 million when fully annualized.

In addition to this more than \$200 million investment, which goes directly into provider budgets – or supplements them in the case of DHS-provided security staff – the Administration has doubled the investment in shelter security since 2013, with a total annual security spending of \$217 million. Some of these increases are in directly operated shelters and intake sites, but the funding is also to provide additional security at many of our provider operated programs. Finally, we have an Executive budget 10 year Capital program that devotes nearly \$600 million to the rehabilitation of City-owned shelter facilities, the majority of which are operated by our not-for-profit partners.

Last year, when DSS began to reform the contract process there were outstanding contract issues dating back to FY14 and FY15. All FY14 and FY15 issues have been resolved. We are currently in the process of completing the FY16 and FY17 contract and associated amendment transactions, as well as initiating all FY18 contract transactions.

Of those contract and amendment transactions that I discussed at the Preliminary Budget hearing at the end of March, 99 percent of the FY16 contracts and 96 percent of the FY17 contracts are registered, and 87 percent of the FY16 and FY17 amendments are registered.

Since the Preliminary Budget hearing, a number of completely new contracts and amendments to existing contracts have been initiated. These additions are part of the normal course of the contracting process, as new projects come on line and vendors’ budgets change over the course of the fiscal year. The additional contracts include those for new shelters and the additional amendments include funding for additional social workers in family shelters as part of ThriveNYC, COLA adjustments, and other new needs identified by providers and funded by DHS.

In addition to completing all outstanding FY16 and FY17 contract and amendment transactions, we have also been working to initiate all FY18 contracts. We plan to have the majority of FY18 contracts in place at the beginning of the fiscal year for the first time in years.

### **Street Homelessness**

The City continues to address street homelessness through a comprehensive program to provide immediate and ongoing services to New Yorkers who are living on the city's streets. And our investments are showing progress, between implementation of our HOME-STAT program in March 2016 and February of this year, we have helped 748 individuals move off the streets. And we have 1,737 individuals on our by name list that our HOME-STAT outreach workers use to help people come in off the streets; and another 1,901 individuals who we continue to try to engage to determine their needs.

The Executive 18 Plan adds 17 positions with \$1.3 million total and City funds in FY17 and \$1.9 million total and City funds in FY18 and the out years. This funding is for additional staff to support DHS Street Solutions operations. And the additional positions will provide oversight and management of the expanded HOME-STAT street homeless outreach, DHS Drop-in locations, and Safe Haven programs.

### **Capital**

The DHS 10-Year Capital Plan for 2018-2027 totals \$650.4 million in City and total funds, of which \$437.3 million funds projects between 2018 and 2021. \$245.3 million is provided for homeless family facilities, \$349.5 million for single adult facilities, \$50.3 million is allocated for computer systems and equipment purchases and \$5.3 million is provided for City Council and Borough President items. An additional \$65.8 million in FY17 funds is for adult and family shelter facilities. There are over 130 projects currently in the design and/or construction phase and between FY17 and 18 alone, over \$210 million is allocated to projects remedying conditions in city-owned shelters.

Of the \$650 million, \$315.9 million was added in the Executive Plan to renovate and expand existing family and adult shelter sites to help meet the goals outlined in the Homeless Plan ("Turning the Tide on Homelessness").

Thank you for this opportunity to testify and I welcome your questions.

# DSS Executive Budget Testimony

**Steven Banks, Commissioner**

May 15, 2017



Human Resources  
Administration  
Department of  
Homeless Services

# HRA Executive 2018 Budget



**Human Resources  
Administration**

Department of  
Social Services



<u><b>DHS</b></u>	<u><b>DSS</b></u>	<u><b>HRA</b></u>
<p><b><u>Shelter Program Operations:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult Services</li> <li>• Family Services</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Shelter Support Operations:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity Planning &amp; Development</li> <li>• Shelter Maintenance &amp; Repair</li> <li>• Shelter Administration (e.g. supplies, food, etc.)</li> <li>• Office of the Medical Director</li> <li>• Shelter Security</li> <li>• Public-Private Partnerships</li> <li>• DHS Program Budgeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocacy &amp; Outreach</li> <li>• Citywide Health Insurance Access</li> <li>• Constituent Services &amp; Ombudsperson</li> <li>• Contracts/ACCO</li> <li>• EEO</li> <li>• External Affairs</li> <li>• Facilities (Offices)</li> <li>• Finance</li> <li>• Human Resources</li> <li>• IDNYC</li> <li>• Infoline</li> <li>• Labor Relations</li> <li>• Legal Affairs</li> <li>• MIS/OIT</li> <li>• Policy &amp; Planning</li> <li>• Program Accountability &amp; Audit</li> <li>• Security (Offices)</li> <li>• Emergency Management</li> <li>• Public/Private Partnerships and Grants</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>HRA Benefits Programs:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cash Assistance</li> <li>• SNAP/ Food Stamps</li> <li>• Health Insurance</li> <li>• Child Support</li> </ul> <p><b><u>HRA Special Services:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HIV/AIDS Services</li> <li>• Domestic Violence</li> <li>• Adult Protective Services</li> <li>• Home Care</li> <li>• Customized Care</li> <li>• Disaster Relief</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Homelessness Prevention:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversion/ Prevention</li> <li>• Legal Services</li> <li>• Permanency (Rental Assistance &amp; Housing)</li> </ul>



# OVERVIEW: NYC Human Resources Administration (HRA)

Education, training, and job placement services to assist low-income New Yorkers in obtaining employment

Cash Assistance (CA) to meet basic human needs

Rental assistance to prevent homelessness

Federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)/Food Stamps benefits and emergency food assistance to food pantries and community kitchens to fight hunger

Services for survivors of domestic violence

Services for New Yorkers with HIV/AIDS

Services for children, including child support and child care

Protective services for adults unable to care for themselves

Home care for seniors and individuals with disabilities

Home energy assistance

Legal Services, including homelessness prevention and anti-harassment services and immigration assistance

Temporary Relocation of New Yorkers living in Three Quarter Housing

HomeBase prevention programs, operated in 24 locations

# **OVERVIEW: Reducing Income Inequality and Preventing/Alleviating Homelessness**

- Reinstating rental assistance and rehousing programs has enabled more than 57,705 children and adults to move out of shelter or avert shelter entry in the first place
- Committed to the largest municipal program to build and expand supportive housing by funding 15,000 new units of supportive housing over the next 15 years, with the first 550 units coming online this year.
- Historic investment in civil legal services; we have seen a 24% decline in evictions over the past three years, resulting in more than 40,000 New Yorkers being able to stay in their homes in 2015 and 2016
- Increased payment of rent arrears means that more than 161,000 households were able to keep a roof over their head.



# OVERVIEW: NYC Human Resources Administration (HRA)

The HRA budget as of the Executive 2018 Plan is \$9.7 billion (\$7.3 billion City funds) in Fiscal 2017 and \$9.9 billion (\$7.5 billion City funds) in Fiscal 2018.

The DSS/HRA headcount is funded at 14,689, of which 11,269 are City positions, in FY18.

The 2018 Executive Budget increases by \$169 million in total funds (\$230 million City funds) compared to the 2017 budget.

Operating budget of \$9.9 billion in Fiscal Year 2018 (\$7.5 billion in City funds)

- 80% is for Medicaid payments and cash assistance benefits
- HRA continues to be responsible for much of the Medicaid program - which totals \$33 billion in NYC, although only one-fifth of these costs are part of the HRA budget
- In addition, HRA administers \$3 billion in federal SNAP (food stamps) benefits that do not pass through the City budget
- The HRA Capital budget Ten-Year Capital Plan for 2018-2027 totals \$285.3 million, of which \$168 million are City funds. This includes \$206.2 million, of which \$156.2 million are City funds, in the 2018-2021 Four-Year Plan.

# Executive Budget Overview

The primary reasons for the increase from fiscal 2017 to 2018 are as follows:

- \$84 million is related to the final transfer of administrative and program funding from DHS to DSS and HRA in FY18, related to the reform and consolidation of homeless services. This includes a total of nearly \$50 million for Prevention and Aftercare Services, which will be administered by HRA beginning in 2018, as well as the full implementation of the DSS shared services model that started phasing in beginning in this current fiscal year.
- \$15 million for Universal Access to Counsel in Housing Court and \$18.2 million for legal defense for Immigrants facing deportation beginning in FY18.
- One-time City funds savings of \$112 million in FY17 for prior year revenues.

# Executive Budget Overview

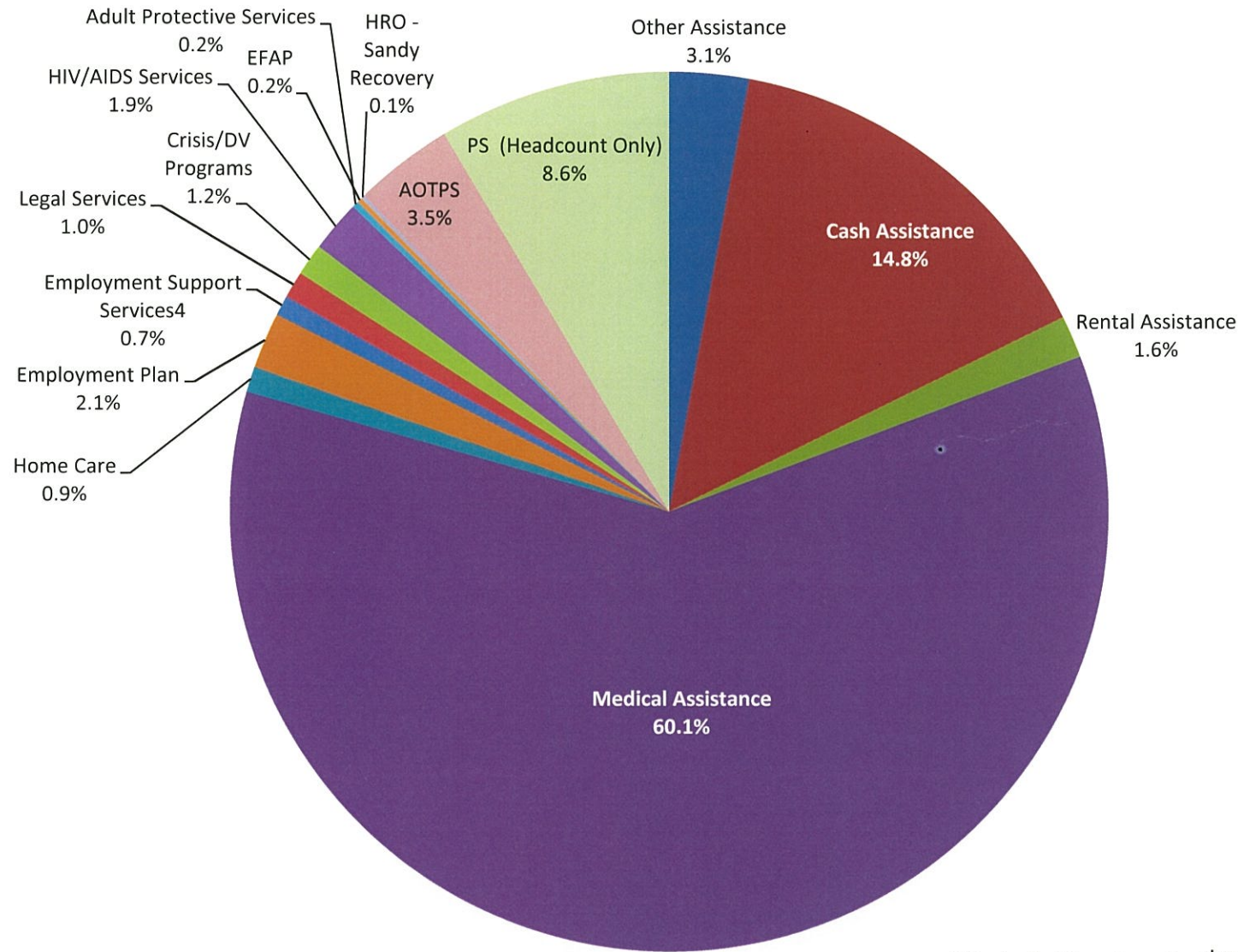
HRA's 2018 budget includes:

- \$5.8 billion for **Medicaid** (\$5.8 billion tax levy, or 59% of the total HRA budget and 77% of the HRA City funds budget);
- \$1.8 billion (\$844 million tax levy) for **Cash Assistance grants**;
- \$165 million (\$114 million tax levy) for **rental assistance**;
- \$104 million in **legal services** (\$73 million tax levy);
- \$265 million (\$90 million tax levy) for **employment and related support services** such as transportation;
- \$182 million (\$89 million tax levy) for **HIV/AIDS housing and support services**;
- \$131 million (\$30 million tax levy) for **domestic violence, crisis and adult services**;
- \$11 million (\$9 million tax levy) for **emergency food**;
- \$848 million (\$286 million tax levy) for staff, working with clients in SNAP and Job Centers, child support offices, HIV/AIDS service centers, and Medicaid offices; and
- \$404 million (\$185 million tax levy) for **administrative costs**: leases and supplies for HRA's 68 Job Centers, SNAP centers, HASA offices and other client serving locations.



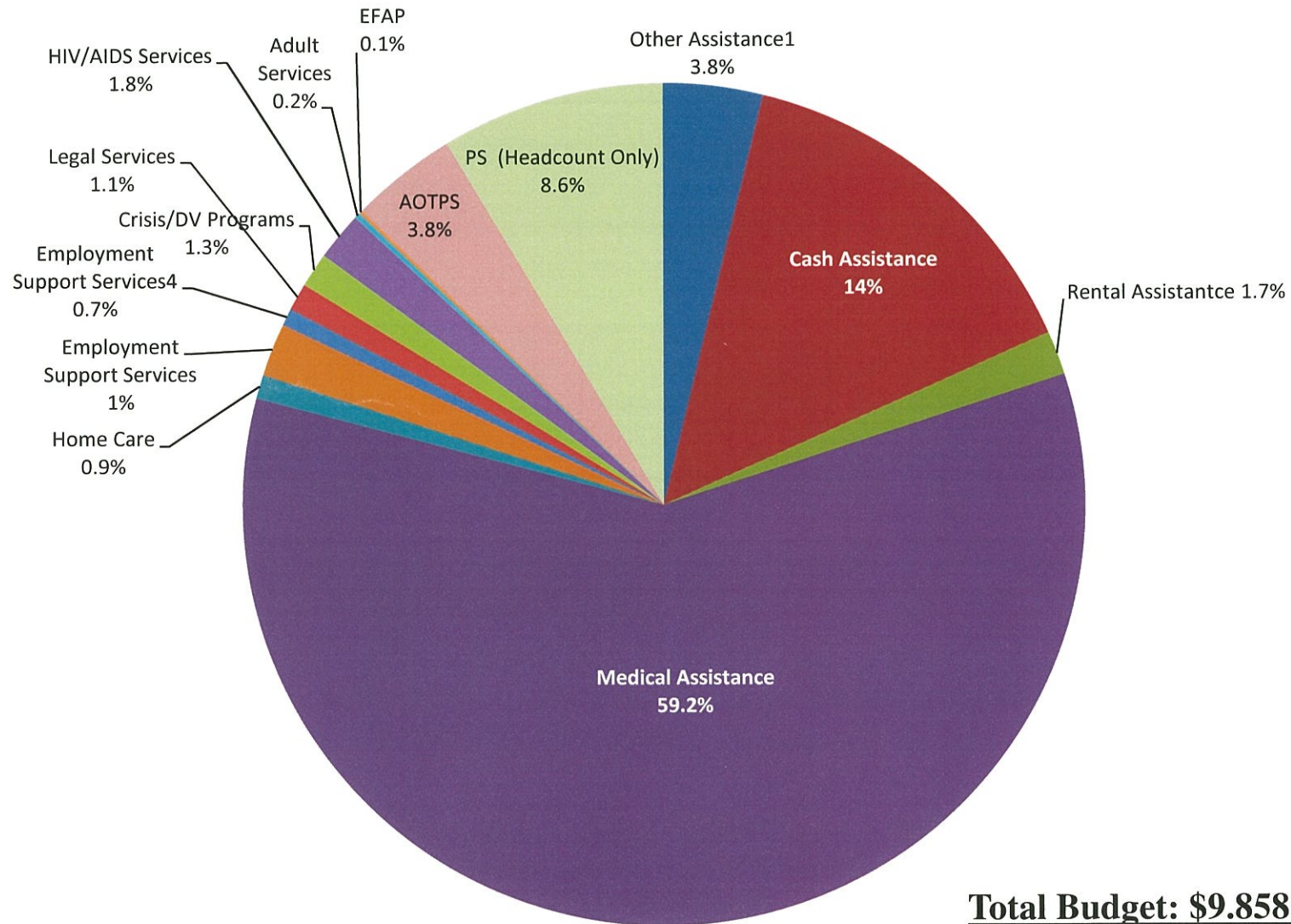
# CHART 1:

## HRA Executive Plan Budget FY 2017



**Total Budget: \$9.689 billion**

## CHART 2: HRA Executive Plan Budget FY 2018



**Total Budget: \$9.858 billion**

# **Executive Budget Highlights: New Funding**

## **Legal Services: Universal Access to Counsel**

- In Fiscal Year 2017, for the first time, New York City's overall investment in civil legal services for low-income City residents exceeds \$100 million. In the current fiscal year, Mayoral programs exceed \$83 million and City Council awards are nearly \$28 million.
- The Executive 18 Plan includes baseline funding as follows \$77.1 million for legal services programs for tenants facing eviction, harassment and displacement, compared to the Adopted 17 Budget funded at \$62.2 million.
- The Executive 18 Plan includes \$40.7 million for eviction defense legal services for low-income tenants in Housing Court and \$33.9 million for anti-harassment/displacement legal services, as well as \$2.5 million for administrative and staff support.



# **Executive Budget Highlights: New Funding**

## **Legal Services: Universal Access to Counsel**

The increase in Executive FY18 Budget is for funding for the first phase of the Universal Access to Counsel in Housing Court program funded at \$15.1 million in total funds and \$10.8 million in City funds.

This investment increases to \$30.8 million and \$22.7 million City funds in FY19 and \$53.9 million in total funds and \$37.6 million City funds in FY20. This amount grows to \$93 million in total funds by FY22 when the Access to Counsel in Housing Court program is fully implemented.

At full implementation, the total annual investment will be \$155 million and approximately 400,000 New Yorkers will benefit annually through this program.

# Executive Budget Highlights: New Funding

## Legal Services: Immigrant Legal Services

- The Executive 18 Plan adds Fiscal Year 2018 baseline funding at HRA of \$16.4 million in total and City funds for immigration legal assistance, and an additional \$1 million for outreach through the ActionNYC program operated in partnership with MOIA and CUNY.
- This increase in baseline funding for immigration legal services is focused on expanding access to representation for complex immigration cases and deportation defense. This funding includes the Immigrant Opportunities Initiative (IOI) and dedicated funding for complex legal cases.
- This representation of immigrant New Yorkers in complex legal cases can include representation in asylum proceedings; seeking permanent status for immigrant children through the family courts; and visa applications on behalf of survivors of domestic violence.



# Executive Budget Highlights: New Funding

## Homeless Prevention Enhancements

- The Executive budget adds resources to support rehousing and placement out of shelter of 17 positions, complemented by 13 additional positions in DHS.
- Staff teams work directly with families in shelter to move them to housing placements with rental assistance, or subsidized housing. These teams assist clients with locating apartments, completing rental assistance applications and interviews, and moving into apartments.
- Since Fiscal 2015, through comprehensive rental assistance programs and subsidized housing, more than 57,705 individuals have avoided or moved out of shelter.
- The increase in HRA's budget is \$1.9 million of total funds and City funds in FY18 and in the out years. Additionally, the Executive 18 Plan adds \$1.1 million of total funds and City funds in FY18 to the DHS budget.

# Executive Budget Highlights: New Funding

## Healing NYC

- This new need aligns with the Administration's commitment to addressing the serious opioid epidemic in New York City. This funding is provided to address the opioid epidemic through overdose prevention efforts, including expanding treatment, and increasing public awareness.
- At HRA, this position will serve as an overdose prevention coordinator to manage agency prevention efforts across programs such as HASA and DV, substance use assessment and case management programs, as well as programs for clients in temporary housing as a result of relocation from overcrowded conditions in Three Quarter Houses. The two staff at DHS will have similar functions ensuring Naloxone training and distribution across the shelter system, as well as drug use prevention and harm reduction services.

# **Executive Budget Highlights: New Funding**

## **Service Provider Wage Adjustment**

The Executive budget includes an allocation to provide wage increases for HRA's not-for-profit contract providers. Funded at \$3.6 million of total funds and \$2.7 million City funds in FY18, \$7.2 million of total funds and \$5.4 million City funds in FY19; \$10.9M of total funds and \$8.2 million City funds in FY20. This funds both a COLA as well as a wage floor.



# **Executive Budget Highlights: Efficiencies**

## **Fair Hearing Chargebacks**

The Executive budget includes a re-estimate for the State fair hearing costs that are charged back to NYC by the State due to the fact that Fair Hearings have declined by more than 40% since the beginning of the Administration. The Exec 18 includes a reduction of \$3 million of total funds and \$3 million in City funds in FY17 and in the out years.

# **Executive Budget Highlights: Efficiencies**

## **OIT Consultant Insourcing**

The Executive budget includes a cost avoidance savings resulting from the conversion of former DHS IT consultants to City-funded headcount in FY18 and the out years. The addition of 49 headcount in FY18 resulted in a reduction of \$1.5 million in total and City funds in FY18; the addition of 99 HC in FY19 and in the out years, and a reduction of \$3.0 million in total and City funds in FY19 and the out years.

# HRA Capital Plan

The Ten-Year Capital Plan for 2018-2027 totals \$285.3 million, of which \$168 million are City funds.

This includes \$206.2 million, of which \$122.1 million are City funds, in the 2018-2021 Four-Year Plan.

The 10-Year Capital Plan includes \$156.2 million for technology, including key investments related to Client Services Re-engineering.

# HRA Capital Plan

## ACCESS HRA

ACCESS HRA also allows clients to:

- View E-notices that remain viewable for 365 days.
- Go Paperless! Clients are able to opt-in to reduce the number of paper notices sent from HRA.
- Request an electronic budget letter from the Case Details page, which will appear as an e-notice the next business day.
- Recertify a Cash Assistance case.
- Reprint the barcoded, prepopulated Medicaid renewal.
- Document Reuse: Select documents on file at HRA for identity, age, and other eligibility documents to re-use when submitting an online application.
- Receive text message and email alerts about their case. For example, a client can now receive a text when their SNAP recertification period begins.
- After submitting a recertification form, track the date it is received by HRA on the Case Details page.
- After completing a SNAP interview, see when the status of the interview updates to “KEPT” under My Appointments.



# HRA Capital Plan

## HRA One Number

HRA One Number, the Department's Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system, will ensure adequate support for all programs and avoid additional maintenance costs.

This upgrade will support the integration of HRA and DHS administrative functions under DSS, compliance with lawsuit settlements related to disability access, and a multi-agency public awareness campaign that will be launched in 2017 around public benefits like SNAP.



# HRA Capital Plan

## Landlord Management System

With the development of a Landlord Management System we are creating a system that will transform the way we do business related to the over 158,000 payments we make each month to landlords.

The Landlord Management System will provide a multifunctional, public facing portal for landlords and clients.

# HRA Reform Initiatives Update

## Employment Plan:

- HRA's new employment services model connects clients to individualized education, training, employment and other services that give them the skills and training they need to compete in the job market and reach their maximum earning potential.
- The new approach leaves behind the one-size-fits-all approach of the past to offer services that take into consideration the individual needs of clients while providing specialized services for youth and other groups with specific needs.
- These new programs expand on the reforms HRA has already made, aimed at reducing unnecessary sanctions and case closings that have an adverse impact on staff workload and have severe consequences for clients. The new approach offers more meaningful opportunities to clients.

# HRA Reform Initiatives Update

## Employment Plan:

In November of 2016, HRA announced contracts for our Employment Plan programs that will benefit more than 68,000 clients annually.

In April 2017, HRA launched its new approach to help clients connect to and build a career that will lead to success and financial security.

Youth Pathways  
Career Compass  
Career Advance

# HRA Reform Initiatives Update

## HIV Services: HASA for All

- On August 29, 2016, medical eligibility for the HASA program expanded so as to permit all financially-eligible New York City residents with HIV to voluntarily seek and obtain HASA services.
- The financial requirements remain unchanged, an applicant need no longer have AIDS or be “symptomatic” in order to be eligible for HASA services.
- From August 29, 2016 through March 31, 2017, HASA has accepted 3,487 new clients; compared with 2,436 new clients during the same period in 2015 and 2016. This represents a 43% increase.
- Of the 3,487 accepted between August 29, 2016 and March 31, 2017, 1907 were expansion clients. Expansion clients were 55% of the new cases.
- To accommodate the increase in caseload, HASA was provided additional funding to hire 28 new case managers through FY18.



# **HRA Reform Initiatives Update**

## **Supportive Housing NYC 15/15**

The Mayor's NYC 15/15 plan to create 15,000 units of new supportive housing over the next 15 years

- The first 550 scatter-site units will be coming online this year and will serve single adults and Adult Families with SMI/SUD.
- The RFP for 7,500 units of congregate supportive housing has been issued and we are accepting proposals.
- The RFP for the remaining 6,905 scatter-site units will be released this month.
- We expect to release an RFP this summer for an additional 90 units of scatter-site supportive housing

The Exec 18 budget includes \$26.4 million of total funds and City funds in FY18, \$50.2 million of total funds and City funds in FY19 and \$74.4 million of total funds and City funds in FY20 will be transferred from HRA to Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) for supportive housing contracts.

# DHS Executive 2018 Budget

# Drivers of Homelessness





# Turning the Tide on Homelessness

## The Rise of Homelessness

- There has been a 115% increase in homelessness over the past two decades – from 23,868 men, women and children in January 1994 to 31,009 in January 2002 to 51,470 in January 2014.
- Between 2000 and 2014, the median New York City rent increased by 19% in real dollars and household income decreased by 6.3% in real dollars.
- Between 1994 and 2012, the city suffered a net loss of about 150,000 rent-stabilized units. Combined, these and other trends mean that by 2015 the city had only half the housing it needs for about three million low-income New Yorkers.



# Turning the Tide on Homelessness

## The Rise of Homelessness

- A total of a half a million New York City households are paying an unaffordable amount of their income for housing.
  - Some 360,000 NYC households pay more than 50% of their income on rent and utilities.
  - Another 140,000 households pay more than the 30%.
- Many people who face these rent burdens cycle in and out of poverty, living just one personal crisis away from homelessness:
  - Nearly half of all New Yorkers lived in poverty at some point between 2012 and 2014 (the three-year period studied).
- 70% of the shelter system census now consists of families, and 34% of the families with children have an adult who is working.
- At the same time, domestic violence is a major driver of homelessness, with some 30% of the families with children in the DHS shelter system having a history of domestic violence.

# Major HRA Initiatives

## Rental Assistance Results:

<u>Move outs FY15, FY16 &amp; FY17 (thr. March 2017)</u>		
	Total Households	Total Individuals
DHS LINC 1	1,465	5,098
DHS LINC 2	687	2,390
DHS LINC 3	604	2,102
DHS LINC 4	2,464	2,799
DHS LINC 5	1,371	1,524
DHS LINC 6	87	290
HRA LINC 3	526	1,830
CFEPS	3,919	13,638
NYCHA	5,251	18,083
SECTION 8	1,875	6,087
SEPS	2,377	2,666
HOME TBRA	372	1,197
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20,998</b>	<b>57,705</b>



# Turning the Tide on Homelessness

## Our vision relies on three approaches:

- First, doing more to keep people in their homes by stopping evictions, helping families and individuals remain with family members in the community, and making housing more affordable.
- Second, continuing to enhance our HOME-STAT program to bring people in from the streets.
- Third, a reimagined approach to providing shelter that:
  - Ends use of the 17-year cluster apartment program by the end of 2021 and the decades-old use of commercial hotel facilities by the end of 2023;
  - Cuts the total number of shelter facilities by almost 45% by getting out of 360 cluster apartment and commercial hotel locations and replacing them with 90 new high quality shelters in all five boroughs; and
  - Provides homeless families and individuals with an opportunity to be in shelter as close as possible to their own communities and the anchors of life – like schools, jobs, health care, houses of worship and family – to help them get back on their feet and out of shelter more quickly.

# Turning the Tide on Homelessness

- **Moved ahead of schedule on the largest affordable housing plan ever**—the City's landmark *Housing New York* plan to build or preserve 200,000 affordable apartments;
- **Committed to adding 10,000 affordable apartments for seniors, veterans, and New Yorkers earning less than \$40,000 per household;**
- **Created a new Elder Rental Assistance program**, planned to be funded through the Mansion Tax proposed to Albany, that would help more than 25,000 seniors with monthly rental assistance of up to \$1,300;
- **Stepped in to immediately fill the gap left by the cancelation of the Advantage program by creating three new rental assistance programs and reinstating rehousing programs** — implementing the Living in Communities (LINC), City Family Eviction Prevention Supplement/Family Exit Plan Supplement (CityFEPS), and the Special Exit and Prevention Supplement (SEPS) rental assistance programs and restoring Section 8 and New York City Housing Authority priorities — which have helped 51,500 people, most of them homeless, to secure permanent housing, from the summer of 2014 through December 2016 and an additional 6,205 through March 31, 2017, for a total of 57,705 men, women, and children who have been helped by these programs.

# Turning the Tide on Homelessness

- **Provided emergency rental assistance to 161,000 households**, helping rent-burdened New Yorkers at risk of eviction stay in their homes;
- **Launched the largest municipal commitment ever to build and expand supportive housing** by committing to building 15,000 new units in 15 years, with the first 550 units coming online this year;
- **Aggressively expanded free legal assistance for New Yorkers** in danger of illegal eviction by increasing funding for legal services for tenants to \$62 million — a more than tenfold increase. Evictions then dropped by 24% and more than 40,000 New Yorkers were able to stay in their homes in 2015 and 2016;
- **Made a commitment to phase in over the next five years the funding necessary to provide universal access to legal services** for all New York City tenants facing eviction in housing court;
- **Implemented 46 systematic and management reforms to streamline how we address homelessness;**



# Turning the Tide on Homelessness

- **Conducted almost 13,000 shelter inspections in 2016 — a 50% increase from 2015 — and fixed more than 14,000 code violations** with help from nonprofit shelter providers thanks to the work of the Shelter Repair Squad, a multi-agency task force. The number of outstanding violations within traditional shelters has dropped 83% since January 2016;
- **Gotten out of 831 cluster sites**, prioritizing units with the most serious problems, and moved toward ending the use of cluster units altogether by reducing the number of cluster units from 3,658;
- **Doubled the previous investment in DHS shelter security**, with a total annual security budget of \$217 million for fiscal year 2017;
- **Put the New York City Police Department (NYPD) in charge of security at DHS shelters**, which includes standardizing and professionalizing security, surveillance, staff training and deployment; and
- **Placed 3,153 homeless veterans into permanent housing and ended chronic veterans homelessness.**

# Turning the Tide on Homelessness

## Reimagined Shelter Strategy

**DHS will overhaul our shelters to distribute resources and responsibility in a more equitable way across the city and finally begin to reduce the shelter population for the first time in a decade.**

### **We will:**

- **Get out of all 360 cluster apartments and commercial hotel facilities and thus shrink the shelter footprint by 45%;**
- **Replace 360 shelter locations with a smaller number of 90 new high quality shelters by opening approximately 18-20 new shelters annually for the next five years;**
- **Expand shelter capacity in 30 existing shelter sites, with the renovation of the first sites beginning in 2018 and taking place on a rolling basis over the next seven years;**
- **Fund the new shelters to provide a wide range of social services** so that residents have access to social services and mental health counseling when needed as well as education and career training; and
- **Ensure that shelters are well-maintained and secure.**

# Executive 18 Budget Overview

The DHS budget as of the FY18 Executive Plan is \$1.6 billion (\$883 million City funds) in Fiscal Year 2018. The DHS headcount is funded at 2,483 positions in FY18.

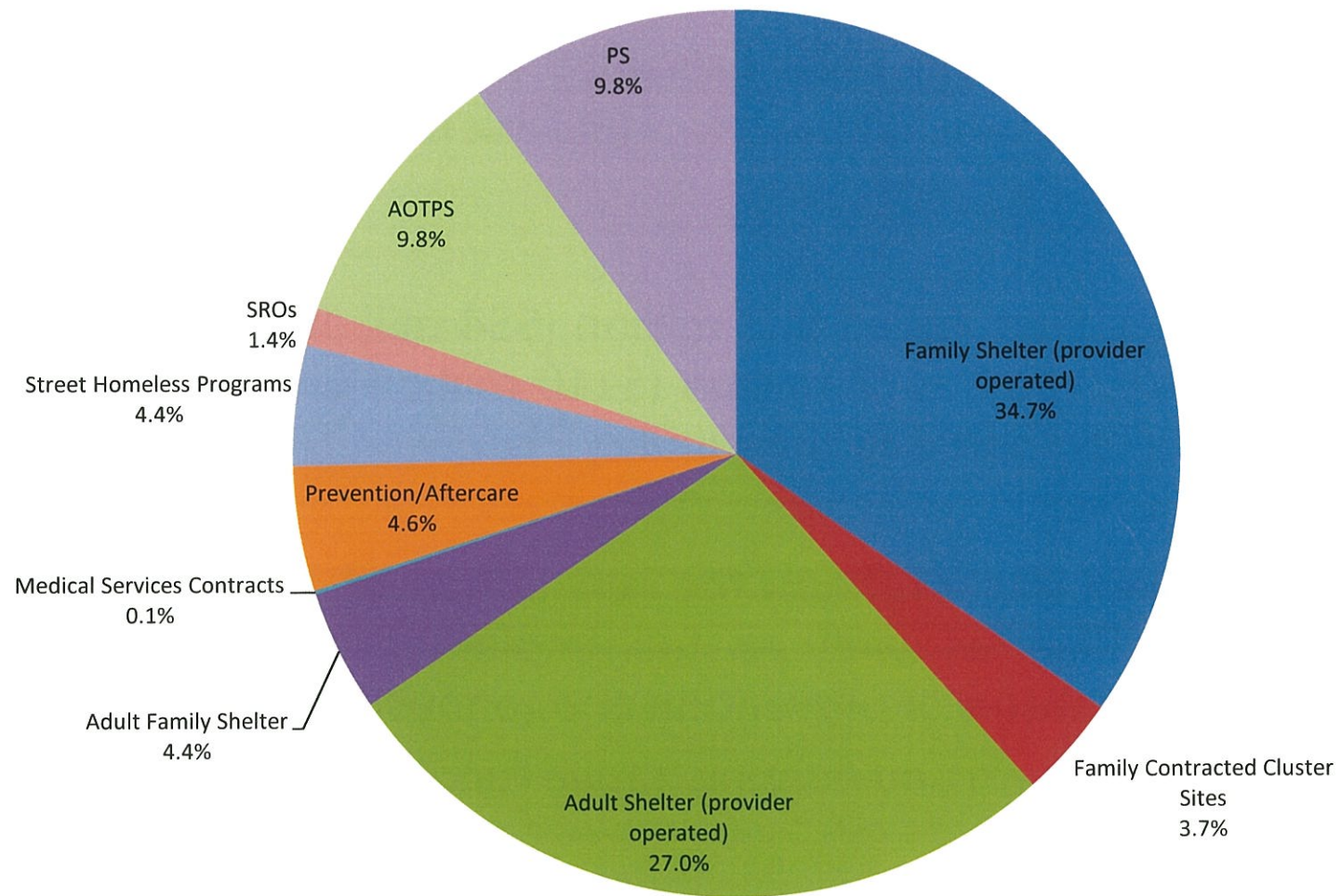
The FY18 Executive Plan added \$63 million (\$54 million City funds) and 79 positions in 2017 and \$177 million (\$110 million City funds) and 80 positions in 2018, compared to the January Plan.

The FY18 Executive Budget reflects the new initiatives that were funded in the Financial Plan as well as full implementation of the DSS consolidation and transfer of prevention and rehousing services to HRA.

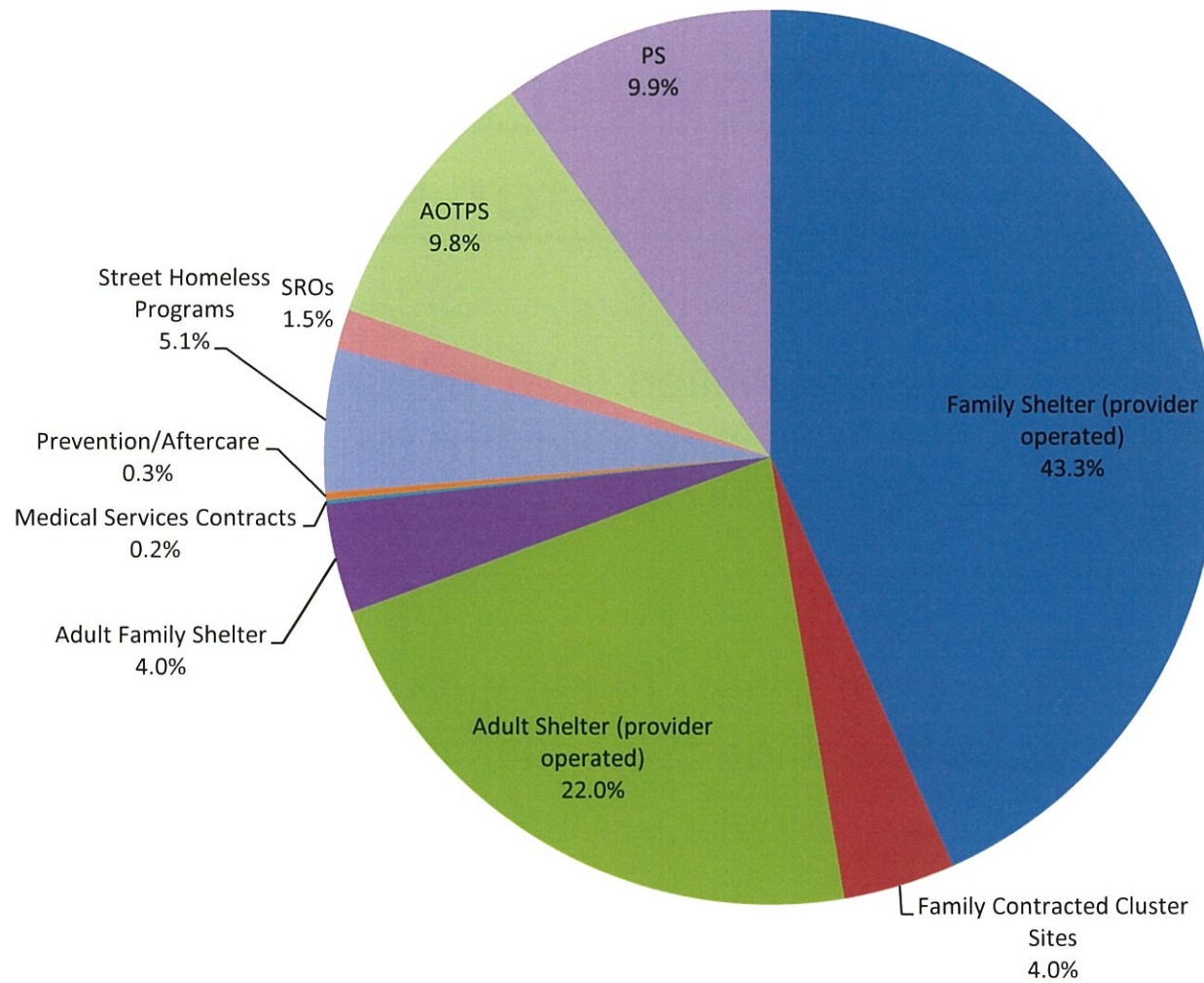
- \$84 million in program and administrative funding is transferred from DHS to DSS in FY18.



## FY 2017 DHS Budget



## FY 2018 DHS Budget



# **Executive Budget Highlights: New Funding**

## **Homeless Shelter Provider Rate Reform and Investment in the Not-for-Profit Sector**

The FY18 Executive Plan adds \$36 million (\$18 million in City funds) in FY18 and \$71 million (\$34 million in City funds) to fund rate reform for shelter providers.

Including funding added in prior plans, funding for rate reform added since Executive 17 totals \$146 million (\$80 million in City funds) at full implementation.



# Executive Budget Highlights: New Funding

## DHS Model Budget

Funding for rate reform was developed through a model budget process that included analysis of current rates to determine where there were providers that were below standards; meetings were held with providers to understand the process from the provider perspective and to hear concerns that were most critical for them; and DHS and DSS worked with OMB to develop operating principles which we intend to use as a model for developing a schedule to adjust provider budgets.

- The rate reform includes a series of new initiatives that must be viewed holistically and that together form the model budget.
- This includes Thrive (\$34 million); the FY16 and FY17 COLAs (total of \$11 million); and the FY18 provider wage adjustment COLA (\$5.7 million).
- The Jan 17 Plan added Adult shelter enhancements of \$9 million; \$17 million for security at mental health shelters is provided in the Jan 17 and Executive 17 Plans; and \$5 million is provided annually for one-time shelter maintenance and repair costs that are not capially eligible.
- Taken together, these all investments total over \$200 million when fully annualized.

# Executive Budget Highlights: New Funding

## DHS Contract Reform Update

- All FY15 and FY15 issues have been resolved.
- Of those contract and amendment transactions that were in place in the beginning of March, 99 percent of FY16 contracts and 96 percent of FY17 contracts are registered; and 87 percent of FY16 and FY17 amendments are registered.
- Additional contracts include those for new shelters and the additional amendments include funding for additional social workers in family shelters as part of ThriveNYC, COLA adjustments, and other new needs identified by providers and funded by DHS.
- We plan to have the majority of FY18 contracts in place at the beginning of the fiscal year for the first time in years.

# **Executive Budget Highlights: New Funding**

## **Street Homelessness Staffing**

The Executive 18 Plan adds 17 positions with \$1.3 million total and City funds in FY17 and \$1.9 million total and City funds in FY18 and the out years.

This funding is for additional staff to support DHS Street Solutions operations. And the additional positions will provide oversight and management of the expanded HOME-STAT street homeless outreach, DHS Drop-in locations, and Safe Haven programs.



# Budget Overview: Capital

The DHS 10-Year Capital Plan for 2018-2027 totals \$650.4 million in City and total funds, of which \$437.3 million funds projects between 2018 and 2021.

- \$245.3 million is provided for homeless family facilities;
- \$349.5 million for single adult facilities;
- \$50.3 million is allocated for computer systems and equipment purchases and
- \$5.3 million is provided for City Council and Borough President items.



# Budget Overview: Capital New Needs Summary

There was \$315.9 million of newly funded new needs added to the Executive Capital Plan above what was in the January Capital Plan.

The increase is to expand and renovate existing family and adult shelters to help meet the goals outlined in the Homeless Plan (*“Turning the Tide on Homelessness”*).

# DSS Reforms: Prevention

## Move Homebase program management from

**DHS to HRA:** The management of the Homebase program moved to HRA, which already runs a number of homeless prevention programs and services. Integrating all prevention services under one agency will reduce inefficiencies and allow for more seamless and effective client services. The integration was completed in January 2017.

**Expand Homebase staffing and services:** HRA staff at Homebase offices will provide expanded on-site processing and triage for HRA benefits, including public assistance and rental assistance. Homebase not-for-profit staff will also expand their case management services to include landlord and family mediation, educational advancement, employment, and financial literacy services. A Request for Proposals (RFP) was issued in February with contract awards to be announced in the coming weeks and the expanded services in place by this summer. Since 2014, we expanded the Homebase program to 24 locations across the five boroughs and more than doubled the program's funding. As a result of these increases Homebase reached 25,632 households in FY16, a 115% increase of households served compared to FY14.

## Expand the scope of Homebase as the first point of entry for those at risk of homelessness:

The City developed an intake model that builds on Homebase to focus greater attention on the role of communities in supporting families at risk of becoming homeless. Families seeking homeless prevention or shelter services will be able to obtain these services within their borough, rather than through the City's centralized intake center in the Bronx. A Staten Island pilot launched in March 2017 for Staten Island families at risk of homelessness.

**Use data analytics to proactively target prevention services for at-risk clients:** HRA will use client data collected by the agencies to proactively identify and target prevention services for New Yorkers who are most at risk of becoming homeless, such as families who are at risk of having their public assistance case closed administratively or reapplying for shelter.

**Target outreach to doubled-up families with school-aged children:** HRA will work with the Department of Education (DOE) to identify and proactively target prevention services for students of families living in doubled-up situations who are reported as homeless under the McKinney-Vento Act. Outreach was conducted in June 2016 to doubled-up families with school-aged children who were offered homelessness prevention services. Planning is under way to implement this outreach annually beginning in June 2017, prior to the end of school when typically applications for family shelter increase.

**Deploy additional HRA prevention staff to single adult and adult family intake sites:** In May 2016, an intervention process was established at the Borden Shelter for veterans and at HRA's Veterans Services unit to help veterans avoid entering shelter. As of April 2017, data is being analyzed to identify other populations that would benefit most from additional prevention services at intake. A similar initiative is being implemented for adult families.

**Target services and rental assistance for youth in DYCD shelters:** Rental assistance programs will be expanded to include youth living in DYCD youth shelters at risk of entering DHS shelters. A workgroup between DHS and DYCD was formed to facilitate expansion of rental assistance programs. This expansion will occur with the streamlining of the City's rental assistance programs, which is expected to be finalized in the summer of 2017 following the recent FEPS settlement in The Legal Aid Society's litigation against the State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance.

**Target services and rental assistance for clients with mental health needs cycling between jail and homelessness:** We are currently finalizing plans for the implementation of a 24-hour hotline to support at-risk clients, including clients being discharged from NYC Health and Hospitals. The City has also recently announced the provision of 97 units of supportive housing targeted for such clients.

**Create two new City/State Task Forces to increase homelessness prevention:** In connection with the recent FEPS settlement, the State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance and DSS worked together to enhance the rental assistance tools to prevent homelessness, including increasing the level of rental assistance provided through the State FEPS program and expanding assistance for survivors of domestic violence.



# DSS Reforms: Street Homelessness

## Fully launch HOME-STAT to address street homelessness:

HOME-STAT was fully launched by April 2016.

In the first year, 748 individuals came off of the street and remained off of the street as a result of the work of HOME-STAT.

## Enhance tools for outreach teams to bring people in from the streets:

The City will increase safe haven beds, increase the number of drop in centers, and develop 15,000 units of supportive housing to provide essential tools to address street homelessness.

The new Queens drop in center at 100-32 Atlantic Avenue opened in April, the Manhattan drop in center at 14<sup>th</sup> Street and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue will open before the end of the year, and the Brooklyn drop in center is in the development stage.

The City has already opened 284 additional Safe Haven or Stabilization beds and plans to open at least 220 more Safe Haven beds in 2017.

# DSS Reforms: Shelter

**Increase safety in shelters through an NYPD management review and retraining program:** In March 2016, NYPD began retraining all DHS security staff and sent an NYPD management team to the Agency to develop an action plan for upgraded security and a related retraining curriculum at all shelter facilities. In January 2017, NYPD began to oversee security services in the DHS shelter system. The Administration has doubled the 2013 investment in DHS security, with a total annual security spending of \$217 million for fiscal year 2017.

**Enhanced domestic violence services in DHS shelters:** As of December 2016, trained staff from HRA go to designated Tier II shelters to provide access to domestic violence services. Existing social services staff in Tier II shelters participate in enhanced training to provide them with the tools to identify and refer families and individuals to the HRA NoVA team, a NYC Family Justice Center, or other community-based domestic violence providers. By September 2016, DHS employees and contracted staff system-wide had undergone intimate partner violence training. Additional NoVa trainings are scheduled.

**Implement a more extensive reporting system for critical incidents that occur in shelters:** To ensure that problems are identified, violence is now defined much more broadly to include wide-ranging definitions of domestic violence, assault, and both child abuse and neglect. In October 2016, the new reporting categories were finalized. A plan was sent to OTDA for confirmation and DHS is awaiting a response in order to proceed. Staff training and implementation is planned for May 2017.

**Expand Shelter Repair Squad 2.0 Operations:** The inspection process has been enhanced and inspections are being conducted twice a year at all sites used to house homeless people. The Shelter Report Card is produced monthly to hold the City and providers publicly accountable, and it has been available online for every month since December 2015. To reduce the initial backlog, a report called the Building Compliance Unit Daily Update was developed to monitor the status of all activities to address violations. Shelter providers have also been engaged in a work group to discuss the best means of collaborating to improve shelter conditions. In 2016, the City and nonprofit shelter providers cleared nearly 14,000 violations in non-cluster shelters. City agencies also conducted nearly 13,000 inspections—a 50 percent increase from 2015—and the number of outstanding violations in traditional shelters dropped by 83 percent in 2016.

**Increase coordination among inspectors:** By September 2016, the City had coordinated all City Agencies with inspection responsibilities so that there are now semi-annual multi-agency inspections. Coordination with OTDA and with the Coalition for the Homeless on Callahan inspections was completed as of January 2017.

**Phasing out the use of cluster shelters:** At the high point, there were 3,658 cluster units in this 17-year program. As part of the phase out, we have already stopped using 831 units, and we are continuing to identify units that we will stop using. In May 2016, the DHS open-ended Request for Proposals for new shelters was revised to include a model with both transitional and permanent housing. The City is also working with contracted providers to close out or convert cluster units to permanent housing. DSS leadership recently briefed the Bronx Council delegation on our progress, and we look forward to more opportunities to speak directly with members and answer questions regarding the phase out.

**Assessing the potential conversion of existing shelters to permanent housing:** Where feasible, the City will partially convert current shelter sites into permanent housing using new shelter models like Gateway Housing and Homestretch, which include affordable permanent housing, shelter units, and community space at the same location. Potential conversion sites are currently being assessed.

**Phasing out use of commercial hotels:** As the cluster takedown, the shelter conversion process, and the enhanced shelter move-out efforts proceed, the City will prioritize ending reliance on renting blocks of rooms in commercial hotels as shelter. The *Turning the Tide* plan set forth the roadmap to get out of 360 cluster and commercial hotel sites and replace them with a smaller number of 90 high quality borough-based shelters. The first five replacement shelters were announced in February and three are already open and operating.



# DSS Reforms: Shelter

## Implement the domestic violence shelter

**expansion:** In FY16, HRA conducted an emergency procurement for emergency shelter beds and Tier II units; and 150 emergency beds were opened. The second phase of contracting and opening the remaining 150 emergency beds this year is underway. One contract for 52 Tier II units was awarded in April 2017 and these units are expected to open in the summer of 2017; additional Tier II contracts are expected to begin to be awarded by September 2017.

**Implementing a capital repair program:** As of January 2017, the City has implemented a large scale, new needs, repair program for city-owned, capitolly eligible shelter sites. A new needs process for provider owned, non-capitolly eligible sites has also been implemented to provide funding for repairs in these buildings.

**Rationalizing shelter provider rates:** DSS, DHS, and HRA are evaluating shelter provider rates to ensure they are sufficient to fund maintenance and services. Funding was added in the Executive 17 budget. Focus groups were conducted with providers and the leadership of Homeless Services United as part of the process to develop model shelter budgets. Development of a rate template and parameters for inclusion in the Open-Ended RFP is being developed, and contract adjustments will be implemented during the coming fiscal year.

**Address ADA compliance in shelters:** The City will hire a consultant to evaluate ADA accessibility in the DHS shelter system. A consultant firm has been identified to conduct surveys of selected shelters and assist in the development of compliance plans. We are now proceeding to take the necessary steps to bring the firm on board. We are also concluding settlement of the *Butler* litigation to address long-standing accessibility issues.

**Expanding the scope of HRA's ADA coordinator to cover the shelter system:** The DSS Executive Director of Disability Affairs added a Director of Disability Affairs for Homeless Services (ADA Coordinator) to her team in February 2017. The Disability Affairs Unit has been assessing all aspects of access in the shelter system, and, since the fall of 2016, has been identified as the contact on the DHS website regarding disability discrimination complaints and questions regarding access.

**Promote career pathways for shelter residents:** The City will implement new programs to help shelter residents move forward on a career pathway towards self-sufficiency.

**Targeting services for emerging new trends in the single adult population (persons 50 or older and 18 to 24):** In June 2016, the concept paper for 10,000 units of affordable senior housing was released and we expect to release a Request for Proposals this spring. In February of this year, in partnership with Councilman Torres, we opened an 81-bed shelter in the Bronx for LGBTQ young homeless adults (ages 21-30). And a shelter for seniors (age 62 and older) has been developed in Crown Heights for senior men from Brooklyn.

**Targeting services for families to move away from a one size fits all approach:** We are working to develop initiatives that focus on the varying needs of homeless families. We are working with providers to develop shelter models in which placements may be differentiated based on the family's readiness to be rapidly rehoused; families who are assessed to likely have a shorter stay in shelter may be placed in different programs than families with higher needs and a likely longer stay.



# DSS Reforms: Shelter

**Eliminate the requirement for school-age children to be present at PATH for multiple appointments:** By the end of 2016, this requirement was eliminated for families who reapply within 30 days at PATH. A second phase eliminating this requirement for families reunifying with children in foster care was launched in March. An evaluation of these programs will occur during the summer.

**Align access procedures for adult families with procedures for families with children:** The City will modify the intake process and improve capacity planning to avoid long waits and/or transporting clients in the middle of the night as a result of the delay in identifying available shelter placements. This month, we are dedicating additional shelter space to meet the needs of adult families and to enhance intake services for such families.

**Streamline access to DYCD shelter for homeless youth:** Liaison staff were identified for DHS intake centers, and fact sheets for distribution to staff and homeless youth have been developed. The first staff training session occurred in January and the second follow up training took place in April.

**Implement tripling of DYCD shelter capacity for Runaway and Homeless Youth:** The City has opened 205 Runaway and Homeless Youth beds since 2014, and 295 additional beds are funded and planned to open by 2019. This will bring the total system capacity from 253 when Mayor de Blasio took office to 753 by FY19.

**Provide increased notice prior to non-emergency transfers:** In non-emergency situations, clients will be given more notice that they are being transferred to another shelter. DHS program areas are finalizing an updated procedure for this policy.

**Increasing transportation resources to reduce placement waiting time:** Currently, an analysis of data to determine new transportation models and needs is under way.

**Deploy social workers to accompany families found ineligible who are returning to a community resource to provide on-the-spot assistance:** Social workers are currently being brought on board. Social workers will follow up with families during the conditional status, and contact primary tenants to offer such on the spot assistance.

**Expand the shelter conditions complaint process through HRA's Infoline:** The 24/7 Shelter Hotline launched in February 2016 and takes complaints from shelter residents as well as the public on shelter services and conditions. We completed this expansion in December 2016.

**Communicate more information to clients through flyers, posters and other media:** We recognize that better information for clients will enhance access to services, including employment and housing assistance. In March 2017, flyers and posters were provided to shelter sites for distribution and posting. We continue ongoing work to ensure flyers and posters are updated and replenished regularly as appropriate.



# DSS Reforms: Rehousing

**Move Rehousing program management from DHS to HRA:** DSS, DHS, and HRA are developing a more coordinated program structure to promote move-outs, leveraging the expertise of each Agency. The DHS Supportive Housing Unit is on track to transfer to HRA in May 2017.

**Streamline the HPD housing placement process:** The City will establish a streamlined process to connect homeless clients to HPD-financed units that are available and appropriate for their needs. Planning is under way to identify and assist shelter residents who are eligible to apply for HPD lotteries for affordable housing.

**Continue to utilize NYCHA placements to address homelessness:** We have continued to place 1,500 DHS families and 300 survivors of domestic violence in HRA or DHS shelters last year and this year.

**Consolidate and streamline the LINC, SEPS and CityFEPS rental assistance programs:** The City will consolidate and streamline the operations of its rental assistance programs to enhance shelter move-outs. The streamlining plan is expected to be finalized this summer, now that the FEPS lawsuit has been settled.

**Increase enforcement of source of income discrimination law:** The City will train and dedicate HRA staff to conduct testing to identify potential discriminatory practices and take enforcement action to supplement the efforts of the City Human Rights Commission. We reported previously that we had been involved with 35 cases, including cases that we worked on with CCHR over the past year, most of which have resulted in a favorable outcome for the client. DSS has distributed a Source of Income Discrimination Informational flyer with a phone number to contact, and New Yorkers can also call 311. Both HRA's Infoline Central Complaint Unit number and 311 are advertised on the flyer.

**Implement a more effective aftercare program:** Using the critical time intervention as a model, the City will enhance aftercare services for rehoused clients. In October 2016, a concept paper was released; and a Request for Proposal for enhanced community supports for persons exiting shelter with subsidies was released in February. The new services are expected to be in place in this summer. In the interim, current Homebase providers are providing this assistance.

**Provide assistance to obtain federal disability benefits:** Earlier this year the City dedicated services to focus on enrolling shelter residents on SSI/SSD to increase income and promote rehousing. This year, SSI/SSD enrollment assistance is planned for clients in shelter who receive Cash Assistance and are determined to need home visits.

**Incorporate Continuum of Care strategic planning into homeless strategy development and establish a leadership reporting structure:** Drawing on the model in other jurisdictions, the City will enhance the role of the Continuum of Care in the policy and planning process. As part of this initiative, the City is exploring ways to further coordinate access and assess need for those experiencing homelessness, following the HUD approach. By September 2016, a leadership reporting structure had been created, and regular meetings were scheduled with the Continuum of Care co-chairs and DHS and HRA leadership.

**Provide clear and concise information and written materials to clients about available assistance and programs:** Materials describing available assistance and programs have been compiled and are ready for distribution; materials will be distributed throughout the spring. We continue with ongoing work to provide updated materials as appropriate and replenished supplies.

**Call on the State to: (a) permit use of Medicaid funds for apartment search and shelter relocation services for homeless clients with disabilities; and (b) approve HRA's requested FEPS plan modifications:** (a) permit use of Medicaid funds for apartment search and shelter relocation services for homeless clients with disabilities; and (b) approve HRA's requested FEPS plan modifications: These policy changes will enhance both rehousing and prevention efforts. Though the FEPS settlement, the HRA FEPS plan was approved and will be implemented after the settlement is approved by the court. Medicaid waiver issues have been affected by the change in administrations in Washington.



# Thank you!



**Human Resources  
Administration**

Department of  
Social Services

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rosine Ferdinand

Address: 4 WTC

I represent: HRA Deputy Commissioner of Budget

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Grace Bonilla

Address: 4 WTC

I represent: HRA Administrator

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ellen Levine

Address: 4 WTC

I represent: DSS Chief Program Planning + Financial

Address: management

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Erin Villari

Address: 4 WTC

I represent: Executive Deputy Commissioner for Finance

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Raquel Lucas

Address: 4 WTC

I represent: DSS Acting Chief of Staff

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. 2004

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Felipe Franco

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: ACS

Address: 150 William Street NY NY



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: David Hansell

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: ACS

Address: 150 William Street NY NY

▶ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◀

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*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/15/2017

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Susan Nuccio

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: ACS

Address: 150 William Street NY NY

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*Appearance Card*

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/15/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dr. Andrew Whitely

Address: 15150 111th Street, NY 10030

I represent: ACS

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ERIC BROTTSCHEIDER

Address: 366 5 ST. Bklyn NY 11215

I represent: ACS

Address: 150 William St

◆ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◆