

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE, JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S  
ISSUES AND COMMITTEE ON JUVENILE JUSTICE

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May 12, 2016  
Start: 10:12 a.m.  
Recess: 4:56 p.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E:  
JULISSA FERRERAS-COPELAND  
Chairperson  
STEPHEN T. LEVIN  
Co-Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Ydanis A. Rodriguez  
James G. Van Bramer  
Vanessa L. Gibson  
Robert E. Cornegy, Jr.  
Laurie A. Cumbo  
Corey D. Johnson  
Mark Levine  
I. Daneek Miller  
Helen K. Rosenthal  
Steven Matteo  
Rory I. Lancman  
Barry S. Grodenchik  
Stephen T. Levin

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Fernando Cabrera  
Elizabeth S. Crowley  
Ritchie J. Torres  
Rafael Salamanca, Jr.  
Ben Kallos  
Inez D. Barron

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

Steven Banks  
Commissioner  
NYC Human Resources Administration/  
Department of Social Services

Ellen Levine  
Chief Program Planning &  
Financial Management Officer  
NYC Human Resources Administration/  
Department of Social Services

Erin Villari  
Executive Deputy Commissioner Finance  
NYC Human Resources Administration/  
Department of Social Services

Jennifer Yeaw  
Chief of Staff  
NYC Department of Social Services

Lorraine Stephens  
First Deputy Commissioner  
NYC Department of Homeless Services

Lulu Urquhart  
Deputy Commissioner  
Fiscal & Procurement Operations

Gladys Carrion  
Commissioner  
NYC Administration for Children's  
Services

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

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

Jill Kraus  
Deputy Commissioner  
Communications and Community Affairs  
NYC Administration for Children's  
Services

Felipe Franco  
Deputy Commissioner  
Division of Youth and Family Justice  
NYC Administration for Children's  
Services

Julie Farber  
Deputy Commissioner  
Family Permanency Services  
NYC Administration for Children's  
Services

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2 [gavel]

3 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Quiet please.

4 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Good  
5 morning and welcome to the City Council's 5th day on  
6 the hearings on the Mayor's Executive Budget for  
7 Fiscal 2017. My name is Julissa Ferreras-Copeland  
8 and I am the Chair of the Finance Committee.

9 We are joined by the Committee on General  
10 Welfare, chaired by my colleague, Council Member  
11 Steve Levin. Today we've also been joined by Council  
12 Members Matteo, Lancman and Grodenchik. [background  
13 comments] Yes. Today we will hear from the Human  
14 Resource Administration, the Department of Homeless  
15 Services and the Administration for Children's  
16 Services.

17 Before we begin I'd like to thank the  
18 Finance Division staff for putting this hearing  
19 together, including the Director, Latonia McKinney;  
20 Committee Counsel, Rebecca Chasan; Deputy Directors  
21 Regina Poreda Ryan and Nathan Toth; Unit Head, Dohini  
22 Sompura; Finance Analysts Brittany Morrissey, Nameera  
23 Nuzhat, and the Finance Division Administrative  
24 Support Unit, Nicole Anderson, Maria Pagan and  
25

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2 Roberta Caturano, who pull everything together.

3 Thank you all for your efforts.

4 I would also like to remind everyone that  
5 the public will be invited to testify on the last day  
6 of budget hearings on May 24th, beginning at  
7 approximately 3:00 p.m. in this room. For members of  
8 the public who wish to testify but cannot attend the  
9 hearing, you can e-mail your testimony to the Finance  
10 Division at [financetestimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:financetestimony@council.nyc.gov) and the  
11 staff will make it a part of the official record.

12 Today the Executive Budget Hearing kicks  
13 off with the Human Resource Administration. HRA's  
14 Fiscal 2017 Executive Budget totals \$9.73 billion,  
15 which is \$53.9 million less than its Fiscal 2016  
16 Adopted Budget and includes \$56.5 million in new  
17 needs for Fiscal 2017. Many of HRA's new needs  
18 relate to the results of the Mayor's 90-day review of  
19 the Department of Homeless Services, which brought a  
20 majority of the services from the homeless under the  
21 purview of the Human Resources Administration. These  
22 new needs include funding for homeless programmatic  
23 enhancements, subsidized jobs for homeless clients  
24 and the enhancement of rental assistance program.  
25 The Council looks forward to learning more about how

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2 HRA intends to implement these services that were  
3 previously assigned to other agencies, as well as how  
4 it intends to make its budget transparent so that the  
5 Council and the public can track its spending on  
6 homeless services.

7 In addition, as part of the budget  
8 response, the Council calls on HRA to right-size its  
9 employment services contracted by adding \$6 million  
10 to the RFP; however, this funding was not included in  
11 the Executive Budget even though it is estimated that  
12 the current value of the RFP does not support a  
13 viable cost per participant as outlined in the scope  
14 of services. The Committee would like to hear  
15 testimony as to why HRA did not include this  
16 additional funding in its budget and how it intends  
17 to successfully roll out these new programs without  
18 adequate funding. Moreover, we look forward to  
19 engaging on how this particular example fits into the  
20 larger issue of the administration's failure to  
21 properly fund human service contracts across the  
22 city.

23 Before we begin I'd like to remind my  
24 colleagues that the first round of questions for the  
25 agency will be limited to five minutes per council

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3 member and if council members have additional  
4 questions, we will have a second round of questions  
of three minutes per council member.

5 I now turn my mic over to my Co-Chair,  
6 Council Member Levin for his statement and then we  
7 will hear testimony from the Commissioner after he is  
8 sworn in. Co-Chair.

9 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you. Good  
10 morning; I am Council Member Stephen Levin, Chair of  
11 the General Welfare Committee.

12 Thank you for joining me and Chair of the  
13 Finance Committee, Julissa Ferreras-Copeland and I  
14 thank her for her great work as our Finance Chair for  
15 the Fiscal 2017 Executive Budget Hearing for the  
16 General Welfare Committee today, held jointly with  
17 the Committee on Finance.

18 Today we will hear from three agencies,  
19 the Human Resources Administration, the  
20 Administration for Children's Services and the  
21 Department of Homeless Services on each of their  
22 proposed Fiscal 2017 Executive Budget.

23 The City's Fiscal 2017 Executive Budget  
24 total \$82.2 billion of which \$14 billion fund HRA,  
25 ACS and DHS or roughly 17 percent of the City's total



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2 expense budget for Fiscal 2017. With each social  
3 services agency here today we will be asking how new  
4 needs, various funding adjustments and new policies  
5 will impact and enhance each agency's ability to  
6 serve the most vulnerable population in our city.

7 This morning we will begin with testimony  
8 from the Human Resources Administration. HRA  
9 provides cash assistance, food stamps; HIV/AIDS  
10 support services, also referred to as HASA, legal  
11 services, homeless services, and many other public  
12 assistance programs to aid low-income New Yorkers.  
13 HRA's proposed Fiscal 2017 Executive Budget totals  
14 \$9.73 billion; when compared to its Fiscal 2016  
15 Adopted Budget, HRA's Fiscal 2017 Executive Budget  
16 decreased by \$54 million. HRA's Fiscal 2017 budget  
17 reflects large investments in enhanced programs for  
18 the homeless, anti-eviction legal services, the LINC  
19 program and efforts to improve client service  
20 delivery by upgrading background information,  
21 communication and technology systems.

22 Many of the recommendations that resulted  
23 from the recent 90-day review of the Department of  
24 Homeless Services directly impact HRA's Fiscal 2017  
25 Executive Budget. The Homebase program will

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4 transition from DHS to HRA and services will be  
5 expanded to include on-site processing and triage for  
6 HRA benefits, including public assistance and rental  
7 assistance, as well as case management services to  
8 include landlord and family mediation, education  
9 advancement, employment and financial literacy  
10 services.

11 In addition, HRA will enhance funding for  
12 various rental assistance programs and aftercare  
13 services that the agency oversees, increased funding  
14 for subsidized jobs for homeless clients and allocate  
15 additional funding towards new affordable housing  
16 units. We look forward to hearing more from the  
17 agency in-depth on these issues.

18 In addition, HRA's Fiscal 2017 Executive  
19 Budget reflects much-needed additional funding for  
20 Adult Protective Services, otherwise known as APS, to  
21 address the increase in APS caseloads. As part of  
22 the Council's Fiscal 2017 Preliminary Budget  
23 response, we called on the administration for an  
24 increase in the Emergency Food Assistance Program,  
25 otherwise known as EFAP, the funding to be increased  
to \$22 million annually. I am disappointed to see  
that HRA's Executive Budget does not include any

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3 additional funding for EFAP and in fact represents a  
4 decrease from the 2016 Adopted Budget. Increased  
5 funding for this program is imperative, as the  
6 current EFAP budget is not sufficient to meet the  
7 needs of every food-insecure New Yorker and in fact,  
8 this Council is working on a letter to send that has  
9 the signatures of 42 out of the 51 council members,  
10 calling on the administration to increase the funding  
to \$22 million annually.

11 The Council also calls, as Chair  
12 Ferreras-Copeland mentioned, for right-sizing  
13 contracts for the new employment programs in its  
14 budget response; this was in response to testimony  
15 that we received from advocates and providers at our  
16 preliminary budget hearing and the goal is to ensure  
17 that providers are able to effectively provide the  
18 services that the RFP calls for and that constituents  
19 and clients need.

20 There is concern that the proposed per  
21 participant rate for these RFPs remains too low for  
22 smaller niche-driven providers to apply. I would  
23 like to hear how HRA plans to address this  
24 aforementioned issue and others that have been  
25

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2 mentioned during our preliminary budget hearing and  
3 today's hearing.

4 Before I welcome the commissioner I would  
5 like to thank the committee staff for their work --  
6 Nameera Nuzhat, Legislative Finance Analyst; Dohini  
7 Sompura, Unit Head; Regina Poreda Ryan, Deputy  
8 Finance Director; Latonia McKinney, our Finance  
9 Director; Andrea Vazquez, Counsel to the committee,  
10 and Tonya Cyrus, Policy Analyst for the committee in  
11 preparing for this hearing today. And one other  
12 thing I wanna mention is that this hearing is live on  
13 social media, so we're listening to you on Twitter  
14 and Facebook; if you have any questions that you  
15 would like to propose, please send me a tweet at  
16 @StephenLevin; that's Stephen with a P H L E V I N,  
17 33 or @JulissaFerrereras or use the #NYCBudget17 and  
18 we'll be monitoring that throughout the course of the  
19 hearing.

20 At this point I wanna ask the counsel to  
21 the committee to swear in the commissioner.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Do you affirm that  
23 your testimony will be truthful to the best of your  
24 knowledge, information and belief?

25 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yes I do.

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3 Thank you, good morning. I wanna thank  
4 the Committees on Finance and General Welfare and  
5 Chairs Julissa Ferreras-Copeland and Stephen Levin  
6 for giving us this opportunity to testify about HRA's  
7 budget and our continuing work to move forward with  
8 reforms of HRA's policies and procedures.

9 My name is Steven Banks and I'm the  
10 Commissioner of the New York City Department of  
11 Social Services and in that capacity I oversee the  
12 Human Resources Administration.

13 Joining me today are Chief Program  
14 Planning and Financial Management Officer, Ellen  
15 Levine, our Executive Deputy Commissioner for  
16 Finance, Erin Villari and the Department of Social  
17 Services Chief of Staff, Jennifer Yeaw.

18 HRA is the nation's largest social  
19 services agency, assisting over three million New  
20 Yorkers annually through the administration of more  
21 than 12 major public benefits programs. Fiscal Year  
22 2017 budget reflects the administration's priority  
23 addressing poverty and income inequality. Through  
24 policy reforms and changes in procedures we continue  
25 to make our programs and services more effective and

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3 efficient so that the low-income and vulnerable New  
Yorkers are better served.

4 With an annual budget of \$9.7 billion,  
5 HRA provides assistance and services to three million  
6 low-income children and adults; this includes  
7 economic support and social services for families and  
8 individuals through the administration of major  
9 benefit programs; namely, cash assistance,  
10 supplemental nutritional assistance program benefits  
11 or food stamps, Medicaid and child support services,  
12 homelessness prevention assistance, educational,  
13 vocational employment services, assistance for  
14 persons with disabilities, services for immigrants,  
15 civil legal aid, and disaster relief. And for the  
16 most vulnerable New Yorkers, HIV/AIDS services, Adult  
17 Protective Services, homecare and programs for  
18 survivors of domestic violence.

19 On March 15th, I testified before the  
20 General Welfare Committee concerning the preliminary  
21 budgets for HRA and the Department of Homeless  
22 Services (DHS); that hearing coincided with the  
23 completion of the 90-day review of homeless services  
24 and on April 11th the Mayor announced significant  
25 reforms of the City's programs to prevent and

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3 alleviate homelessness. The Executive Budget for HRA  
4 reflects the result of the 90-day review, as well as  
5 further adjustments to the HRA budget as the  
6 Executive Budget was finalized. Following this HRA  
7 hearing we'll be discussing the DHS budget. For this  
8 hearing we'll highlight key HRA program reforms and  
9 discuss those specific to the 90-day review of  
10 homeless services. Let me first talk about changes  
from the January plan to the Executive 17 plan.

11 The HRA budget, as of the Executive 2017  
12 plan, is \$9.4 billion/\$7.1 billion City tax funds in  
13 2016 and \$9.7 billion/\$7.4 City in Fiscal 17. The  
14 2017 plan increases by \$356 million compared to 2016  
15 \$314 million City funds primarily as a result of the  
16 integration of the administrative management  
17 structure of HRA and DHS within the Department of  
18 Social Services, as well as the consolidation and  
19 prevention of rehousing services at HRA. Two pie  
20 charts in the PowerPoint we've provided to you show  
21 in more detail how the HRA budget is allocated in  
22 2016 and 2017 as of the Executive Budget submission.

23 HRA's Fiscal 2017 Executive Budget  
24 includes a combination of savings and repurposed  
25 funding and increases to support reforms.

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3 First, increases of \$18.5 million, \$2.5  
4 million in City funds in 2016 and \$240 million/\$149  
5 million in City funds in 2017 are principally related  
6 to the implementation of the integrated  
7 administrative management structure and homelessness  
8 prevention and rehousing initiatives, as well as  
9 funding for additional adult protective services  
10 caseworkers, additional transitional jobs related to  
11 unemployment services reforms and a re-estimate of  
12 cash assistance expenditures related to reforms in  
13 our state-approved employment plan to address  
14 unnecessary fair hearings and the new state law  
15 reforming public assistance sanction process.

16 Annual Medicaid savings of \$305 million  
17 offset the new needs and the restructuring and  
18 integration adjustments; this savings is related to  
19 increased federal Medicaid reimbursement to the City  
20 and the State under the Affordable Care Act.

21 Excluding the homeless services  
22 reorganization, changes to the HRA/DSS head count in  
23 the Executive Budget include 81 positions for adult  
24 protective services (APS) caseworkers and supervisors  
25 and legal and support staff to enhance client  
services; repurposing 310 Medicaid-funded positions



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3 to city lines to provide temporary assistance to the  
4 SNAP food stamp offices as reengineering technology  
5 and business process improvements take hold. The  
6 repurposing of these positions also preserves jobs  
7 for eligibility staff as the state takeover of  
8 Medicaid operations continues to reduce HRA Medicaid  
9 responsibilities and converting 55 technology consult  
lines to city positions, producing city savings.

10 I will now give you a summary of the 90-  
11 day review recommendations and the implementation  
12 process.

13 As part of the 90-day review, leadership  
14 and staff from the administration, including the  
15 Human Resources Administration, the Department of  
16 Social Services and the Mayor's Office of Operation,  
17 assess the strength and challenges of the current  
18 homeless services delivery system in order to  
19 determine ways in which delivery of client services  
20 could be more effective and efficient with a clear  
21 focus on improving client outcomes.

22 The review included interviews with a  
23 variety of stakeholders; we interviewed more than 400  
24 people, meeting with homeless people in the shelters,  
25 on the streets and in focus groups, advocates,

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shelter and homeless services providers, other  
nonprofit organizations, national experts and  
researchers, former DHS commissioners, and elected  
officials, and staff union leadership and managers  
and staff at DHS and HRA and other City agencies. In  
all, 24 different government agencies and 60  
nonprofit providers participated in the review  
process. Comprehensive review of the City's homeless  
services policies and practices resulted in 46  
perform recommendations; the reforms can be  
characterized under four broad categories --  
prevention, addressing street homelessness,  
sheltering and rehousing. Funding of \$66 million  
across both agencies is provided to implement the  
reforms, which will be offset by \$38 million in  
savings from integration, consolidation and  
reorganization of administrative management  
functions. The review process determined that DHS'  
scope of activity evolved over the last two decades  
to encompass multiple services that are also being  
performed by other agencies, including HRA. The  
integrated structure allowed DHS and HRA to leverage  
shared administrative operations to generate  
efficiencies and improve service delivery.

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3 \$25 million in City funding for former  
4 investments [sic] is allocated between HRA and DHS  
5 and includes \$25 million added to the HRA budget  
6 total in City funds for homelessness prevention and  
7 rehousing services consolidated at HRA, including  
8 additional aftercare services and funding to convert  
9 temporary housing sites into permanent housing  
10 through master leases and other innovative models;  
11 this will improve client outcomes through streamlined  
12 services and improve targeted clients who would  
13 benefit from such programs and services and will  
14 eliminate duplicative programming; 153 new positions  
15 at HRA include staff for rehousing, intake and  
16 diversion, HRA staff for Homebase and new  
17 initiatives, including restored domestic violence in-  
18 reach programs and shelter, a unified HRA housing  
19 command center and a source of income discrimination  
unit.

20 \$41 million was added to the HRA budget  
21 for 110 new positions, including staffing for HOME-  
22 STAT/Shelter Repair Squad, 70 staff positions and  
23 family shelter oversight, 40 positions; funding for  
24 street outreach contract enhancements; shelter rate  
25

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3 adjustments, and contracting in current non-contract  
shelter sites.

4 The \$38 million in savings is generated  
5 from efficiencies resulting from a shared  
6 administrative services model; the shared  
7 administrative services model integration moves  
8 funding and positions from DHS to HRA to create the  
9 Department of Social Services shared services  
10 structure. The integration of functions, including  
11 legal, budget, finance, procurement, information  
12 technology, human resources, communications, and  
13 program accountability will maximize resources and  
14 leverage knowledge, skills and experience across the  
15 department to gain efficiencies and realize savings.  
16 The \$38 million in savings includes repurposing  
17 positions for new program initiatives, improved  
18 administrative claiming and elimination of  
19 ineffective programming and duplicative functions.

20 Structural Reforms:

21 HRA's Homelessness Prevention

22 Administration was formed as one of the many reform  
23 initiatives within HRA over the last two years and  
24 comprises the following units: Homelessness  
25 Diversion Unit, Rental Assistance Unit, Landlord

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3 Ombudsman Services Unit, Early Intervention Outreach  
4 Team, Rental Assistance Program, Legal Services Unit,  
and Customized Assistance.

5 In order to streamline prevention in  
6 rehousing operations, the units focused on these  
7 areas that were formerly housed at DHS will be  
8 consolidated with units that perform the same  
9 function at HRA. For example, DHS' Homebase  
10 Prevention Unit will join HRA's Homelessness  
11 Prevention Administration.

12 In prior administrations, HRA had always  
13 provided some homelessness prevention services and  
14 understanding from day one that homelessness had  
15 become a more significant problem during the years  
16 before the change in administrations following the  
17 elimination of the Advantage Rental Assistance  
18 Program and the 211 [sic] state budget, the de Blasio  
19 Administration consolidated all HRA Homelessness  
20 Prevention Units into the Homelessness Prevention  
21 Administration and then expanded prevention services  
22 substantially. Within this operating unit we  
23 restored and expanded rental assistance programs  
24 which were essential to preventing and alleviating  
25 homelessness and we exponentially increased anti-

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3 eviction and anti-harassment legal services, which  
4 help keep New Yorkers in their homes and preserve  
5 affordable housing.

6 In order to maximize the administration's  
7 rehousing efforts, a unified HRA management  
8 structure, based on the recent Veterans Move-Out  
9 Initiative, will focus on finding permanent housing  
10 for shelter residents; DHS will focus on improving  
11 and managing shelter operations, including the  
12 development of new types of shelter, such as the  
13 Gateway and Home Stretch models that combine  
14 temporary and permanent housing and community space.

15 And in order to advance accountability  
16 for preventing and alleviating homelessness across  
17 multiple City agencies, the City is creating an  
18 interagency Homelessness Accountability Council that  
19 will report to the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human  
20 Services, Herminia Palacio.

21 In prevention, no price can be put on the  
22 human and social cost of homelessness and the high  
23 level of homelessness over the past years has also  
24 had a substantial impact on the City's fiscal  
25 operations. However, an ounce of prevention is worth  
a pound of cure and we will continue to make sure

that the tools of government that can prevent and  
alleviate homelessness are readily available and  
accessible for those who are in need. Investment in  
preventive and restorative services is money well  
spent. For example, the cost of legal services in  
rent arrears provided by HRA is much less than the  
cost of shelter and these costs do not include other  
costs of homelessness that are imposed on adult and  
children, including loss of jobs, loss of social  
supports that makes them more vulnerable to future  
crisis; a disruption of medical care and disruption  
of children's education.

The 46 reforms from the 90-day review  
refocused the homeless services system to place an  
increased emphasis on the role of prevention services  
and to build the administration's ongoing prevention  
initiatives; the provision of legal assistance and  
the payment of rent arrears that have already  
resulted in a 24 percent drop in evictions.

Programmatic Reforms:

Homebase -- Homebase plays a critical  
preventive role and therefore we are expanding the  
scope of Homebase as the first point of entry for  
those at risk of homelessness so that people can be

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2 served in their home borough. Further program  
3 management will move from DHS to HRA and we are  
4 realigning the roles of HRA staff and Homebase to  
5 prevent evictions and provide assistance. This  
6 integration will reduce inefficiencies and allow for  
7 more seamless and effective client service delivery.  
8 Staff will use data analytics to proactively target  
9 prevention services for the most at risk; there will  
10 be expanded on-site processing and triage for HRA  
11 benefits, including public assistance and rental  
12 assistance and Homebase not-for-profit staff will  
13 expand their case management services to include  
14 family mediation, educational advancement, employment  
15 and financial literacy services.

16 Rental Assistance:

17 Building on the targeted rental  
18 assistance that we have implemented to date, we will  
19 expand our targeted rental assistance for at-risk  
20 clients to include those with mental health needs  
21 cycling between Rikers and homelessness, youth and  
22 DYCD shelters before they transition to DHS shelters  
23 and doubled-up families with school age children. As  
24 part of the 90-day review, we've asked the state to  
25 participate in two task forces with the City: 1. to



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3 implement alternatives to avert discharges from state  
4 prisons to shelter; 2. to implement community-based  
5 programs to replace mental health shelters. We look  
6 forward to working with our state partners to address  
7 the critical problem of homelessness in our city.

8 Rehousing:

9 Finding safe and affordable housing is  
10 essential to addressing homelessness; coordinating  
11 rehousing resources in the city under one management  
12 structure, making the rental assistance programs  
13 easier to navigate and enhancing aftercare services  
14 and enforcing housing discrimination laws will  
15 improve shelter move-outs and housing stability.

16 This unified HRA management structure, based on the  
17 Veterans Move-Out Initiative, will enhance our  
18 shelter move-out efforts.

19 Key components of our rehousing strategy  
20 include the following: enhanced shelter relocation  
21 programs by consolidating and streamlining the LINC,  
22 SEPS and CITYFEPS rental assistance programs,  
23 increased enforcement of the Source of Income  
24 Discrimination Law, streamline the housing placement  
25 process to connect homeless clients to HPD finance  
units that are available and appropriate for needs,

continue to utilize NYCHA apartments within the  
annual needs-based allocation for clients on the  
waiting list who are in DHS and HRA domestic violence  
shelters, enroll qualified shelter residents in SSI  
and SSD disability benefits to increase income and  
promote rehousing, implement more effective aftercare  
services, incorporate the federal HUD continuum of  
care strategic planning and to homeless strategy  
development and establish a leadership reporting  
structure, and ask the state to permit the use of  
Medicaid funds for apartment search and shelter  
relocation services for homeless clients with  
disabilities and to approve HRA's FEPS plan  
modifications.

Finally, additional major Executive  
Budget HRA initiatives include the following:

Adult Protective Services:

A total of \$6.4 million/\$3.2 million City  
tax levy were added for an additional 81 positions to  
address the increased APS caseload and enhance client  
services; this enhancement also addresses the  
increase caseloads in the contracted Community  
Guardian Program;

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3 Cash assistance -- there is an \$82  
4 million/\$39 million City tax levy re-estimate of the  
5 cost of cash assistance benefits which supports a  
6 monthly caseload average of 386 clients in FY17, with  
7 the annual and unduplicated caseload projected as  
8 remaining constant at 500,000, as it has in past  
9 years; the monthly caseload also includes one-shot  
10 emergency assistance to prevent evictions and utility  
11 shut-offs; the unduplicated annual caseload for both  
12 ongoing assistance and one-shot emergency assistance  
13 is projected as remaining in the 600,000 range, where  
14 it has been for the past nine years. The total cash  
15 assistance budget in FY17 will be \$1.4 billion/\$600  
million City tax levy.

16 Job Center Operations:

17 \$16.4 million and \$10.2 million City tax  
18 levy in a net increase for the repurposing of 72  
19 positions through HRA from our Office of Child  
20 Support to support job center operations, as well as  
21 funding to support positions slated to be eliminated  
22 as a result of the previous administration's  
23 premature estimate of savings in the out years  
24 related to cash assistance reengineering.

25 SNAP/Food Stamps:

HRA is repurposing 310 Medicaid positions  
to support the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance  
Program operations while technology and business  
process improvements continue to be phased in. The  
SNAP initiative reduces federal and state Medicaid  
dollars and increases City funds by \$7.7 million in  
FY17. Funding is also added to support positions  
slated to be eliminated as a result of the previous  
administration's premature estimate of savings  
related to SNAP reengineering. The 310 positions and  
additional funding will be phased out by the end of  
FY18 as the reengineering implementation is  
completed.

Subsidized Job Programs:

\$3.4 million in City funds are added for  
300 transitional job slots for Department of  
Sanitation as part of the HRA's Employment Services  
reforms.

Access NYC:

\$2.7 million is added for Access NYC  
maintenance and upgrades in order to support upgrades  
to the online benefits portal and mobile technology  
enhancements.

Public Engagement Unit:

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3 Rental assistance has played a critical  
4 role in the administration's success in enabling  
5 34,943 children and adults and 12,149 households to  
6 avert entry into or move out of DHS and HRA shelters;  
7 \$2.1 million is allocated for the Public Engagement  
8 Unit to continue the public engagement campaign to  
9 recruit landlord support for the Rental Assistance  
Program.

10 Action NYC:

11 \$309,000 is added for Action NYC to  
12 support community schools, immigration legal services  
13 and provide services on-site at 25 community schools.

14 Finally, Medicaid re-estimate based upon  
15 the Affordable Care Act: a savings of \$305 million  
16 City tax levy in FY16 and in the out years.

17 As part of the Affordable Care Act, the  
18 federal government provided an enhanced matching  
19 percentage called FMAP to incentivize states to  
20 expand childless adult coverage to 138 percent of the  
21 federal poverty line; they also rewarded the states  
22 who are already covering part of this group with a  
23 transitional increase in the FMAP percentage. Since  
24 New York State and New York City were already  
25 covering childless couples up to 100 percent of the

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2 poverty level, the FMAP for the previously covered  
3 population increased from 50 percent to 75 percent  
4 and the ACA also requires states to share these  
5 savings generated by federal increases with  
6 localities like New York City; this produces \$305.3  
7 million in savings for New York City, which accounted  
8 for 73 percent of the statewide childless adults  
9 receiving Medicaid in State Fiscal Year 2014.

10 The last few slides of our PowerPoint  
11 presentation highlight a number of the reforms that  
12 have been implemented since our prior testimony in  
13 March. As you know, we've accomplished a great deal  
14 over the last year in implementing reforms, but we  
15 know there is much more to accomplish and we will  
16 continue to work on our reform initiatives and in  
17 partnership with you during the coming year. There  
18 were a number of questions that you had concerning  
19 our budget, so I'm happy to answer, as part of the  
20 Q&A, particularly with respect to employment and food  
21 programs. Thank you again for this opportunity to  
22 testify and I welcome your questions and we  
23 appreciate your support for our initiatives.

24 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank you  
25 for your testimony, Commissioner. Some of our

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2 questions will be a little repetitive with your  
3 statement, but as you know, we need to get things  
4 clear for the record, so bear with us... [crosstalk]

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Understood.

6 Understood.

7 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:

8 [background comments] Gotcha. Thank you.

9 So I wanted to focus on a budget response  
10 item that we had included. HRA released an RFP for  
11 employment services for a total contract value of  
12 \$135 million; the Council has called for HRA to  
13 increase the value by \$6 million to support a viable  
14 cost per participant as out lined in the scope of  
15 services. In your opinion, is the current RFP for  
16 employment services adequately funded to support the  
17 viable cost per participant to provide the services  
18 requested and if so, how?

19 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yes, but let me give  
20 you the context of the RFP. As we said in the RFP  
21 itself and in an addendum that we issued before  
22 responses were due, which followed your hearing on  
23 some of our budget issues and we wanted to be  
24 responsive, so in the addendum that we issued, we  
25 repeated what we had said in the RFP itself and all

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2 responses, by the way, were due on May 3rd, so I'm  
3 limited in some of the things I can say, but as a  
4 general matter, what was said in the RFP and in the  
5 addendum was HRA's total investment in employment  
6 services is \$200 million of which the current RFPs  
7 seek to procure \$61 million in services per year.  
8 The \$61 million in these RFPs in effect leverages  
9 another \$139 million from HRA, as well as other HRA  
10 initiatives. For example, the additional 300 slots  
11 that I described that have been added to the budget  
12 at a cost of \$4.3 million in one year alone for  
13 additional job training positions.

14 Accordingly, the RFPs do not represent  
15 the full range of the employment programs and  
16 services that we are funding and operating and which  
17 will be available to the contractors who are  
18 successful bidders to use to leverage their services  
19 paid for through the RFP.

20 As HRA no longer takes a one-size-fits-  
21 all approach to employment, we are instead using the  
22 many resources of our city to match clients with  
23 opportunities which suit their skills and give them  
24 the best chance for long-term success. HRA  
25 employment programs that contractors can make use of



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3 include internships related to a career pathway that  
4 meet the State Department of Labor standards that's  
5 funded through a separate HRA RFP; internship  
6 placement services; subsidized transitional jobs,  
7 including positions at the Parks Department and in  
8 the private sector, for example, the Parks  
9 Opportunity Program (POP) and the Shelter Exit  
10 Transitional Jobs Program, which have been  
11 transferred to HRA from DHS to promote shelter move-  
12 outs, and this was -- I'm reading to you directly  
13 from the RFP and the addendum, and obviously since we  
14 issued this we added an additional transitional jobs  
15 program at Department of Sanitation; private sector  
16 employment opportunities through HireNYC which  
17 leverages the purchasing power of the City, including  
18 HireNYC human services, the requirement that City  
19 human services contractors hire HRA cash assistance  
20 clients; this applies to the contracts of HRA, DHS,  
21 the Administration for Children's Services, the  
22 Department for the Aging, the Department for Youth  
23 and Community Development and the Department of  
24 Probation and HireNYC development, employment targets  
25 related to hiring, retention and advancement for  
permanent jobs created by businesses at City-

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3 supported development projects, and also WeCARE,  
4 which HRA funds to provide employment services for  
5 disability benefits assistance and other support  
6 services for clients with mental and physical health  
needs.

7           So again, I come back to the fundamental  
8 [background comments] core issue with the employment  
9 program reform that we've testified previously before  
10 the Council, which is that we essentially took an  
11 overall program of \$200 million and other programs  
12 that HRA's had and ask providers to say we have \$61  
13 million to go directly to you, but we have \$139 [sic]  
14 million to go to all these other services that you  
15 will be able to use in order to help clients move off  
16 of public assistance and into employment. But I  
17 wanna emphasize that the employment reforms are aimed  
18 at not having a one-size-fits-all approach and so  
19 some clients will come to a provider and will be  
20 appropriately sent back to other funded HRA programs  
21 after very limited contact; other clients will  
22 require more extensive services. But as we said in  
23 the RFP itself; as we said in public testimony; as we  
24 said in the addendum, to look only at the \$61 million

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2 for these contracts is only part of the picture that  
3 is part of the reform process.

4 Having said that, as you can see between  
5 the time of our preliminary budget testimony and our  
6 testimony here today, we added \$4.3 million for  
7 additional job training programs to increase the  
8 overall employment program that the contracts will be  
9 able to draw upon.

10 I know there are other concerns raised  
11 with regard to fringe rates and regard to  
12 administrative costs in indirect rates and so again,  
13 I'll read what we said in the addendum to the RFP.  
14 The fringe rate is 25 percent; if a proposed fringe  
15 rate exceeds 25 percent, HRA will review the backup  
16 for an apparent winner's rate during the  
17 negotiations, so we've left open for the apparent  
18 winners the ability to negotiate with us about what  
19 the fringe rate is, but our experience tells us that,  
20 you know, this is the level that we have previously  
21 been providing; the actual fringe rate is provider by  
22 provider, so we have a specific number that we've  
23 asked for providers to identify and we specifically  
24 have said in negotiations we're happy to consider  
25 other things with the apparent winners.

2 Similarly, there is an indirect rate  
3 which is capped at 12 percent. For the purposes of  
4 the RFP, if the proposers -- and again, I'm reading  
5 directly from the RFP addendum -- if the proposer's  
6 indirect rate exceeds 12 percent, the proposers  
7 should enter 12 percent, but they can discuss the  
8 actual indirect rate as part of the proposal and that  
9 will be part of the discussions with apparent  
10 winners. So we've made it very clear transparently  
11 that there's an amount of money that's allocated to  
12 you as the provider; there are certain constraints on  
13 what we're providing for indirect and for fringe  
14 rates, but those will also be issues subject to  
15 negotiations, but that there most importantly is  
16 another \$139 million at the time of the addendum  
17 available to leverage and now yet again, an  
18 additional \$4.3 million for job services.

19 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Well  
20 obviously we've been engaging with the advocates and  
21 the challenge that we have is that they have... you  
22 know they've worked on this, they work with these  
23 clients; they know that, as you mentioned, some  
24 clients are more... some cases are more complex than  
25 others and therefore the support needs to be

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2 available to them, so that's why the Council is very  
3 much interested in seeing the increase; this is just  
4 the beginning of our budget negotiations, so we just  
5 wanted you to understand that we're going to be  
6 pushing for this and it's a priority for this  
7 Council.

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Understood. And as  
9 you know from our relationship before I held this  
10 position and **[inaudible]** obviously we understand the  
11 budget process; we're happy to have discussions; I  
12 wanna highlight though that the request was to add \$2  
13 million a year to the employment program and we  
14 actually added \$4.3 million to the employment program  
15 to provide actual job training slots for clients in  
16 order to enhance the services that can be provided to  
17 through the overall program. So we took the approach  
18 that we wanted to enhance direct services to clients...  
19 [crosstalk]

20 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Got it  
21 [sic]. I have a question on smaller community-based  
22 vendors; are you confident that smaller providers  
23 should be able to bid in the RFP? It is our  
24 understanding; customarily when you're a smaller  
25 nonprofit or a smaller vendor you're not able to

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2 compete with HRA's larger contracts, so what is the  
3 agency doing to provide for opportunities for smaller  
4 niche nonprofits or vendors that would like to  
5 participate?

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: What we've been  
7 doing in all of our RFP processes, and as you know, I  
8 come out of a not-for-profit world; I ran a not-for-  
9 profit and I understand a very important part of the  
10 services of that our city provides is the breadth and  
11 diversity of nonprofit organizations in the city, so  
12 one of the things that we have been focused on in all  
13 of our RFP processes is to encourage the creation of  
14 consortiums, because for clients, one of the concerns  
15 I had in representing clients over the course of many  
16 years is; the difficulties clients have in  
17 negotiating a system which is not a navigable system  
18 and so in all of our RFPs we've been looking to  
19 encourage not-for-profits that are smaller to come  
20 together and propose as a consortium and that way  
21 clients can negotiate through the consortium and not  
22 end up going to a particular provider who may or may  
23 not provide the full range of services and instead  
24 will be able to come and say you know what; I need  
25 this service and part of a consortium it can be

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2 directed to another provider rather than be told, we  
3 don't provide that service. And I can show you an  
4 example of how that has been successful; in this  
5 particular bidding process, and again, I have to be  
6 careful what I can say, because it's a pending RFP;  
7 we explicitly said in the RFP materials and in the  
8 addendum that we encourage that sort of consortium  
9 application and the proof is in what we've actually  
10 done. So when we had an RFP for anti-harassment  
11 legal services, some said oh well that's just gonna  
12 go to the big providers, Legal Services NYC and The  
13 Legal Aid Society; they have services in every  
14 borough; as a requirement in the RFP we said you have  
15 to have services in every borough because we wanted  
16 clients to be able to navigate seamlessly through the  
17 system, and in fact what happened is that there are  
18 three contractors; two of them are The Legal Aid  
19 Society and Legal Service NYC, who are large  
20 programs, but one of them is a consortium of small  
21 groups led by The Urban Justice Center, the LEAP  
22 Organization -- so I'll read off the names of the  
23 organizations -- BOOM!Health in the Bronx, Bronx  
24 Defenders in the Bronx, Brooklyn Services Corporation  
25 A in Brooklyn, Brooklyn Defenders in Brooklyn, CAMBA

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2 Legal Services in Staten Island, Catholic Migration  
3 Services, Queensborough, JASA Legal Services in  
4 Queens, Lenox Hill Neighborhood House in Manhattan,  
5 Make the Road New York, Staten Island and Brooklyn as  
6 well, MFY Legal Services, the Bronx, Brooklyn and  
7 Manhattan, New York Lawyers for Public Interest in  
8 the Bronx, Brooklyn and Manhattan, Northern Manhattan  
9 Improvement Corporation, Bronx Borough League [sic],  
10 Bronx and Manhattan, and of course, The Urban Justice  
11 Center as the lead. So when we did the RFP, we were  
12 asking not-for-profits to not build for a little  
13 piece of the program and then leave it to the clients  
14 to have to negotiate through the program; we wanted  
15 groups to come together and bid as a consortium and  
16 this is exactly what happened here. I don't know  
17 what the bids were because it's a sealed bid process;  
18 our hope is that providers in the employment area did  
19 exactly what these legal services providers did and  
20 came together for a consortium, which strengthens  
21 their services and also I think provides better  
22 services for clients because clients can negotiate a  
23 consortium much more seamlessly than they can  
24 negotiate a list of different organizations.



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2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Agreed.

3 So the consortium concept is something that obviously  
4 this Council is supportive of, especially if it  
5 works, but I guess this is something that you'll  
6 figure out after the RFP's awarded and..

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: You're absolutely  
8 right; again, with all of our reforms at HRA over the  
9 last two years and now with the reform process with  
10 both DHS and HRA, we are putting forth new ways of  
11 approaching things to enhance client services and  
12 we've not been afraid if something didn't go exactly  
13 the way we projected it to go; to make changes as we  
14 go along, but here the legal services bidding process  
15 worked as we hoped it work and we're optimistic that  
16 the employment services process will work in the same  
17 way and we'll evaluate the proposals and obviously  
18 consult with you as... [crosstalk]

19 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Great.

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: as we proceed at  
21 further oversight hearings.

22 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So I have  
23 two additional questions and then I'm gonna come back  
24 in a second round, but I did wanna give my... obviously  
25 my co-chair and other members an opportunity to ask

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3 questions. One is, according to your testimony, HRA  
4 will be saving \$305 million through Medicaid and the  
Executive Budget includes \$149 million in new needs;  
5 why can't any of the Medicaid savings be allocated to  
6 the increase for the EFAP budget, or I should  
7 rephrase that. We suggest that you take this savings  
8 and invest it into the EFAP budget.

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well I guess the  
10 question is; are you asking that we substitute that  
11 particular funding for ones that we have put in the  
12 budget or are you asking that we add that as funding  
13 on top of the reforms that we're making?

14 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: I think  
15 that you can do it on top of.

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well just like with  
17 the employment services request, although we took an  
18 approach in the Executive Budget to put funding in  
19 for additional employment slots for clients, clearly  
20 there's a budget process to discuss the employment  
21 services funding; same with the food needs in the  
22 city; we certainly see that they're significant and  
23 related to federal cuts; as you can see throughout  
24 the HRA budget and the DHS budget, you see a  
25 substantial City commitment which is filling the gap

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2 left by the role that the federal government used to  
3 play; in the Council's response and in what we see in  
4 our centers, you are identifying one of the very  
5 significant problems, which is federal reductions in  
6 food stamp benefits and the impact that has on people  
7 in New York City. Throughout our budget we have  
8 filled the gaps if the federal government has left  
9 holes for us and we're certainly, as always,  
10 interested in having the discussion with you about  
11 how to address yet another gap... [crosstalk]

12 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right.

13 COMMISSIONER BANKS: beyond the ones  
14 we've already addressed in this area, so... [crosstalk]

15 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Yes. And  
16 there are plenty, but we believe that we can get  
17 there in this budget; I think this is the budget to  
18 do it, especially when it comes to the emergency...  
19 through our food program.

20 And talking about EFAP and talking about  
21 food stamps program, I know that this administration,  
22 the prior administration, all of our Council offices  
23 have worked really hard at promoting for our  
24 constituents to go and apply for food stamps to get  
25 SNAP benefits and so on and so forth; I wanna

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2 personally talk about, and you know, I think you've  
3 gotten a copy of this letter, so you know exactly  
4 where I'm going; this happens to be a family member  
5 who -- I went to her home on Sunday; she tells me  
6 that that morning she got a call from HRA at 7:00 in  
7 the morning on Sunday asking her to call back about  
8 her SNAP benefits; she gets into a frenzy, she's  
9 nervous; she calls back, but of course no one's gonna  
10 answer on Sunday at 8:00 in the morning. So what  
11 happened; what is going on in your agency where  
12 constituents are getting calls on Sunday for a  
13 program that we're telling everyone to apply for?

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I bet you wouldn't  
15 expect a commissioner to say, I'm really glad you  
16 asked me that question; I'm really glad you asked me  
17 that question, because the problem that your family  
18 member had illustrates a problem that we have  
19 inherited and we're fixing. She lives in Queens, if  
20 I'm not... [interpose]

21 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Yes.

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Okay. So one of the  
23 things that we discussed as a reform that we were  
24 seeking to address in the food stamp program was to  
25 be able to do what Florida and certain other states

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3 have done, which is to convert a "we call you; you  
4 have to be available when we call you" to a "you call  
5 us at your convenience within a certain window of  
6 time program; other states did this; we submitted a  
7 waiver request; it required a federal waiver, to be  
8 able to convert to what's called an on demand  
9 telephone interview system. The state supported our  
10 waiver request; our waiver request has been granted.  
11 If you lived in Staten Island and Manhattan, I would  
12 have been happy to tell you we've already implemented  
13 the on demand system in Staten Island and Manhattan..  
[interpose]

14 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:

15 Unfortunately for you, I don't live there..  
16 [crosstalk]

17 COMMISSIONER BANKS: unfortunately for  
18 me, but your question has given me an opportunity to  
19 explain to you what the reform is. Look... [crosstalk]

20 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right.

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: the Bloomberg  
22 administration, to their credit, implemented a  
23 telephone system to try to avert people having to  
24 come into the centers..

25 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right.

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2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: and it was done I  
3 think for the best of reasons, but it outgrew the  
4 size of the caseload and so when we looked at this,  
5 we looked at certain reforms that the Bloomberg  
6 administration was proposing to make and we built  
7 upon those to create this waiver system where you can  
8 do on demand calling and so we didn't wanna implement  
9 it citywide because, as I said before, if something  
10 is implemented and doesn't work; don't wanna have  
11 every single recipient having a problem; we  
12 implemented it in Staten Island; we completed  
13 implementation in Manhattan the beginning of May and  
14 we are ready to roll it out in the Bronx, Brooklyn  
15 and Queens next. One fact I wanna just raise for you  
16 is it requires us to have additional telephone ports;  
17 we had a plan that Verizon was going to do that for  
18 us; that is now delayed and we expect that as soon as  
19 they're able to do that we'll be able to continue  
20 that... [crosstalk]

21 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So what's  
22 your timeline for this?

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Prior to the Verizon  
24 delay we would've expected to get to Queens... we were  
25 gonna do the Bronx in June and Brooklyn in July and

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2 August and then we would've been in Queens in  
3 September; we are off track now about a month-and-a-  
4 half so far.

5 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So for  
6 constituents between now and November, they can still  
7 be getting calls on Saturdays and Sundays and..  
8 [interpose]

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yeah.

10 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: total  
11 confusion?

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Unfortunately the  
13 system.. you know look, the clients can go in to our  
14 centers; we discourage that because we set up a  
15 system to avoid them having to do it; to have direct  
16 interviews. But until then... [crosstalk]

17 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: And I  
18 just wanna be clear; this is of course was after her  
19 waiting an entire Friday for a call.

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Understood; that's  
21 exactly what the problem is; it's set up in a way in  
22 which it doesn't work efficiently; it doesn't work  
23 effectively; the redeployment of the Medicaid staff,  
24 by the way, is to help us bridge this gap during this  
25 period of time... [interpose]

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3 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay.

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: So as you know, we  
5 addressed this problem right away, but that's not to  
6 say... say this is a good thing... [crosstalk]

7 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay. So  
8 I just... I... I really wanna give an opportunity for  
9 other members to ask questions... [crosstalk]

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Sure.

11 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: but I  
12 need to have the second part of this case, same case.  
13 She received a letter on April 11th stating that  
14 she's approved; great news, very happy, for SNAP  
15 benefits from May 17th, 2010 to April 30th, 2016. So  
16 she got this letter on April 11th, 2016, so she's  
17 been approved, according to this letter, for two  
18 weeks of SNAP benefits. But we go down further, it  
19 says, "you will get zero dollars, which is a combined  
20 benefit for the month of May and June," and we go  
21 down further; it says, "Beginning May, you will get  
22 what is the equivalent of a single person's monthly  
23 SNAP benefit," and that's it.

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: So I'm also gonna  
25 say like I answered the first question; I bet you  
don't expect... you haven't had a commissioner



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2 **[inaudible]** question like that to say, I'm glad you  
3 asked me that question. The notice she got is a  
4 state-generated notice and there are limits on what  
5 we can do; on the other hand there are things that we  
6 can do at the local level; there are several thousand  
7 different notices that HRA issues that have built up  
8 over many years; we have a project to essentially  
9 reduce the number of notices that we ourselves issue  
10 to try to make them more understandable to avert the  
11 kind of confusion that your family member had; there  
12 are some limitations because we can't change state  
13 notices; there are some things we can do and again,  
14 as part of the reform we'll address the problems that  
15 you got [sic]... [crosstalk]

16 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right.  
17 And you know, it's one thing to have these automated  
18 forms, and I get the challenges that you have, but  
19 this is like errors in what should be entered by your  
20 staff, which is a simple error of a date, of May...  
21 you're giving a notice of approval from 2010 to 2016.

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I agree with you,  
23 but remember, you've got the interface between  
24 multiple levels of government -- it's not an excuse,  
25 I'm just giving an explanation -- multiple levels of

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2 government, multiple forms that are involved here and  
3 we're trying to streamline it; we think that  
4 ultimately, when we complete the benefits  
5 reengineering process, which I talked about in the  
6 testimony, that clients will be able to go online and  
7 look up their own information and have a more direct  
8 understanding of what is going on with their case.  
9 One of the other waivers that is in the process of  
10 proceeding will allow someone like your family member  
11 to go online and have an exact understanding what  
12 their benefit levels are, when they can expect to  
13 receive them and have a more interactive experience  
14 that we all do with services that we get; this is a  
15 system that is still living based upon... it's  
16 basically a computerized paper system, for lack of a  
17 better way to describe it, and we're moving to a  
18 system in which people can submit documents on  
19 smartphones; people can go online and see what their  
20 benefits are; when they can expect to receive them,  
21 instead of this system that relies upon what formerly  
22 were paper notices now generate electronically.

23 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So I  
24 guess for us, and this just happened, in this case  
25 because I happened to be going to my aunt's house

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2 that day and the letter came two weeks later when I  
3 visited here, but obviously I think constituents and  
4 council members should also have an opportunity to  
5 help their constituents when these confusing notices  
6 come before us, so I'm hoping that you will continue  
7 to engage with members, should they need the support  
8 for their constituents, because your notices are  
9 horrible.

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Absolutely, though I  
11 wanna be careful of your pronoun. The notices that  
12 are issued by the State and the City have challenges,  
13 'cause remember... [crosstalk]

14 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay,  
15 both; fine.

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: 'cause that  
17 particular notice is a state-generated notice; they  
18 have the same limitations that we do in that they  
19 have federal limitations on what they have to issue,  
20 but that's why we're trying to move away from this  
21 system over the course of this year..

22 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay.

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: to be able to  
24 address it, but your questions to me also highlight I  
25 think something that might be very helpful, which is

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2 we'd be happy to do a training for constituent  
3 [background comment] services staff of the Council on  
4 the changes that are coming; that doesn't change what  
5 you experienced last week with your family member,  
6 but I think we provided a lot of information at prior  
7 oversight hearings about the SNAP changes; it sounds  
8 like it would be a good thing for us to do for  
9 constituent services staff training... [crosstalk]

10 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Yes.

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: on the changes that  
12 are coming.

13 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: We would  
14 greatly appreciate that... [crosstalk]

15 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Happy to do it.  
16 [sic]

17 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: We have  
18 been joined by Council Members Cabrera and Crowley;  
19 we will now hear from Chair Levin.

20 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you very much,  
21 Chair Ferreras. Thank you Commissioner for your  
22 testimony and you touched on all the main issues that  
23 we're asking about in your testimony, but I wanna ask  
24 for you to delve a little bit deeper on some of the  
25 specifics.

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2 With the interagency changes between DHS  
3 and HRA that are coming out of the 90-day review, can  
4 you lay out for us a little bit more specifically  
5 where additional new costs are going to be and where  
6 the savings are going to be and describe the actual  
7 programmatic areas to those savings, and if you... to  
8 the extent possible that you're able to be specific.

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: So let me give you a  
10 little bit of sort of the background that's important  
11 to consider as you consider this particular change.

12 So as you know, we came before you two  
13 years ago with an extensive series of reforms to  
14 implement at HRA, most of which have already been  
15 implemented; some, like the food stamp ones that I  
16 talked about with the Chair are in the process of  
17 being implemented; a result of federal waivers that  
18 were needed and technology changes that are needed.  
19 We were given the ability by the Office of Management  
20 and Budget working very closely with us to  
21 essentially repurpose 550 positions within HRA to  
22 support reforms. So for example, you know you...  
23 **[inaudible]** and I appreciated your comment at an  
24 earlier hearing; you said we would be able to make  
25 all these reforms within basically a flat budget and

2 we did that by, for example, taking the  
3 administration positions and repurposing them to  
4 comply with Local Law 49 and HASA, which had been a  
5 challenge in the prior administration and so we  
6 repurposed positions to be able to do that.

7           The concept here is the same kind of a  
8 concept, which is, if you put all of the  
9 administrative processes together, so instead of  
10 having two law departments, two communications  
11 departments, two budget departments; if you put all  
12 those departments together, that we will be able to  
13 create positions that can be repurposed for things  
14 like deploying more staff at Homebase for prevention  
15 or putting more staff into the street operation or  
16 putting more staff into the move-out operation. So  
17 I'm just giving you that as a background that the  
18 technique that we use to implement reforms at HRA of  
19 repurposing existing positions for reform positions  
20 is where savings is realized. So just in terms of a  
21 very simplistic example; if the reform costs \$2  
22 million because it's gonna cost \$2 million worth of  
23 personnel to perform the new service but you can take  
24 half of the positions you need to do that from  
25 something that is now duplicative and you can

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2 repurpose those positions; you've got a 50 percent  
3 savings on that reform and that was the way that we  
4 proceeded with the 550 positions over this last  
5 period to repurpose and that's how we're proceeding  
6 now, but let me give you some more concrete examples,  
7 if I **[inaudible]**... [crosstalk]

8 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: If I may, is that more  
9 complicated by the fact that you're dealing with two  
10 separate agencies in some regard, right; it's all  
11 under DSS, but is that matter more complicated than  
12 it was under the previous reforms just within HRA?

13 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well there are civil  
14 service limitations, labor management needs to be  
15 met, but we followed all of them with the changes  
16 that we made at HRA and we have a very good working  
17 relationship with our labor unions and we will  
18 continue to work with them in making these changes.  
19 But to the point of what you're asking me, in a  
20 concrete example. So Homebase operates within DHS;  
21 the anti-eviction legal services programs, the rent  
22 arrear programs, all the tools to prevent  
23 homelessness operate within HRA and so we're simply  
24 saying we can get efficiencies by having everything  
25 work and operate together and we will be working with

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3 the staffs on the two programs about what makes sense  
4 to do. To give you an idea of the complexity here,  
5 just because somebody is working on Homebase doesn't  
6 mean they might not have other responsibilities  
7 within DHS, so simply saying we'll take everybody  
8 who's working on that and move them over here is not  
9 how it can be done; it takes a much more granular  
10 consultative process to do, which is why we have  
11 sketched out with you in broad brush how we're gonna  
12 proceed in the same way that we did when we started  
13 with those HRA reforms. You know within the larger  
14 lumps of money, or you know, grossed up pieces of  
15 money, you know for example, there is \$36 million  
16 worth of investment relating to improvements in the  
17 shelter system, whether it be the rate adjustment for  
18 providers or bringing under contract entities that  
19 had no contracts previously; the job training program  
20 that we're adding for shelter residents, which again  
21 is on top of the existing job training programs;  
22 that's an additional expenditure; additional shelter  
23 transportation; more DV [sic] services; all of that  
24 adds up to approximately \$36 million, or the street  
25 homelessness initiatives for increases for HOME-STAT,  
increases in the staffing for the outreach providers



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2 that we talked about at the April hearing, for  
3 example, you know that's \$22 million; rehousing  
4 initiatives to do more master leasing and converting  
5 clusters into permanent housing and additional  
6 aftercare or federal... helping clients get federal  
7 disability benefits to prevent move-outs, and the  
8 income discrimination unit that we're creating to  
9 supplement the work and enhance the work that the  
10 Human Rights Commission is already doing; that's \$16  
11 million. So all of those pieces add up to the larger  
12 numbers, but in terms of whether this particular  
13 person in this line will be moving in this particular  
14 way, that's gonna be an **[inaudible]** process in the  
15 same way that we did with the 550 positions that we  
16 repurposed at HRA.

17 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: In light of those facts,  
18 how is HRA able to get to such specificity with the  
19 number as prescribed in the FY17 budget, if it's kind  
20 of yet to be determined how everything's gonna  
21 **[inaudible]**?

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: In the same way that  
23 we were able to within our existing budget say we  
24 could repurpose 550 positions to implement all those  
25 reforms we took the approach that at this point in

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3 time that we will be able to do it in this particular  
4 way but we were committed to do it within our budget  
5 number. And so we are committed to make these  
6 changes within our budget numbers; in the event, as I  
7 think you've seen, a new need should arise, we would  
8 have to address that new need as it arises, but  
9 within our budget numbers, we believe that we can  
10 make these changes; they may be done in a different  
11 way as we proceed, but overall we'll get to where we  
12 need to get to in terms of enhancing our ability to  
13 move people out of shelter in terms of enhancing  
14 prevention and enhancing shelter services and street  
services.

15 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Can you catalog  
16 additional duplicative roles that you and your team  
17 have identified that are going to be able to be the  
18 source of efficiency moving forward?

19 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well we gave the  
20 Homebase example in terms of operations, but one of  
21 the things that was highlighted in the 90-day review  
22 is that -- I've had four different focus groups  
23 directly with clients and heard directly from them;  
24 one was done by the Urban Justice Center; another one  
25 was done by Coalition for the Homeless; there was one

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2 done by Vocal, and I'm blanking on the last one, but  
3 it will come to me. We were able to -- clients said,  
4 look, three people are asking the same question; I'm  
5 being asked the same question by HRA; I'm being asked  
6 the same question by DHS; I'm being asked the same  
7 question by Homebase, so if you think about all of  
8 that person power that's asking the same question; we  
9 have the ability to redeploy and repurpose positions  
10 to provide different kinds of services just right  
11 there.

12 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Okay, I wanna move on to  
13 a couple more questions around -- If employees are  
14 working on programs that span... [crosstalk]

15 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Picture the  
16 Homeless... that was the name of the group; I can't  
17 believe I forgot them; it was a great session with  
18 them.

19 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: If employees are working  
20 on programs that span both HRA and DHS, like for  
21 example, Homebase, how will you determine which  
22 agency employs that position? If they're doing  
23 services that are covered by, essentially now both...  
24 you know both agencies' responsibility and then how  
25

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2 is that... 'cause that would have to in some way be  
3 reflected in the PS budget of each agency; correct?

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right. Well  
5 Homebase though is moving from DHS to HRA to be  
6 consolidated with the other programs, so the question  
7 there really is; in our analysis, do we need to make  
8 any changes about the numbers of people that would be  
9 in one place versus the other? And you're quite  
10 right; if we underestimate or overestimate it, we're  
11 gonna have to make those kind of PS changes as we go  
12 forward.

13 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: And just to be clear,  
14 strictly in just the numbers; in the Executive Budget  
15 for FY17, HRA is adding -- as a result of these  
16 reforms, HRA is adding how much to its Executive  
17 Budget? As a result of the reforms, just between  
18 DHS... if there's an interagency change between the two  
19 agencies, you know, there's a plus on one side and a  
20 minus on the other side; how **[inaudible]**... [crosstalk]

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: \$25 million is going  
22 to HRA.

23 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: And that's then  
24 reflected by \$25 million coming out of the DHS  
25 budget?

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2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yes.

3 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Okay.

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: But again, I wanna,  
5 you know, caution you and be transparently cautioning  
6 you about the following; that there are pieces coming  
7 out of the HRA budget too because we're creating a  
8 shared services for both agencies...

9 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Right.

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: and so to again,  
11 have one legal department, we'll create efficiencies  
12 and savings and that will be reflected as we get to  
13 the conclusion of it in the next iteration of the  
14 budget.

15 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Right; I think honestly  
16 that we're gonna have to probably have a follow-up  
17 hearing later in the year, probably in November; I  
18 would prefer before next year's preliminary budget,  
19 to talk about how the efficiencies are playing out in  
20 real time; I think that would probably be the most  
21 appropriate [sic]... [crosstalk]

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: As you know, I've  
23 been testifying about once a month, so I'm happy to  
24 testify at another hearing.

25 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Very good.

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2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: And I think it would  
3 be helpful to continue to reflect. Again, we  
4 appreciated it during the HRA reforms that you held  
5 frequent hearings and we were able to give you real  
6 time reports about the changes and adjustments that  
7 we were making as we were going along and so we're  
8 happy to do that as these reforms proceed as well.

9 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: I'm gonna turn it over  
10 to my colleagues for questions; I'll come back for  
11 another round; questions for Council Member  
12 Grodenchik first.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Thank you,  
14 Madame Chair; Mr. Chair. Good morning, Commissioner.

15 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Good morning.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Good to see  
17 you again.

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Always good to see  
19 you too.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: I came here  
21 this morning really wanting to talk about emergency  
22 food and I was really upset, to put it mildly, to  
23 learn how little the City spends on emergency food at  
24 our annual hearing on hunger; it was one of my first  
25 hearings, and at that Mayor's preliminary budget,

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2 when he spoke to the members of the Council, I got to  
3 ask the last question; I was the newest member at  
4 that time, and I spoke to him and he said he would  
5 look into it, and the result is that we've gone  
6 backwards and that is very disappointing and as a  
7 city we're only spending 96 cents -- it was proposed  
8 that we spend 96 cents per New Yorker out of a budget  
9 of about 80 some odd billion dollars and the Chair  
10 alluded to this -- well he didn't allude to it; he  
11 spoke it in his opening remarks; we have a letter  
12 that's signed on... almost 90 percent of the members of  
13 the Council have signed on asking that we double what  
14 had been the funding to \$22 million and I believe,  
15 and I'm speaking to my colleagues here and speaking  
16 to the advocates, that the most effective food  
17 delivery system that we have are the pantries that  
18 exist; I have been working with one in my private  
19 life for almost a decade and I know other people  
20 participate as well and I just wanted to hear, as  
21 commissioner of Social Services, what was the thought  
22 process that went into cutting the budget for  
23 emergency food?

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well again, we take  
25 seriously the concern that there's a letter with

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2 multiple signers on it and we'll certainly look at it  
3 and consider it, but I think I wanna come back to  
4 what I said to the Chair, which is, our budget fills  
5 many, many holes left by the federal government and  
6 this is another hole left by the federal government  
7 that we will certainly be discussing with you as the  
8 budget process proceeds, but if you look at what  
9 we're doing with rental assistance; if you look at  
10 what we're doing with legal services; if you look at  
11 what we're doing with... [interpose]

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: I've looked  
13 at all that and I **[inaudible]**... [crosstalk]

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: you can see all the  
15 gaps are **[inaudible]**...

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: I appreciate  
17 it and I'm glad to see that we're do so many of those  
18 things, but if people don't eat, it really doesn't  
19 matter much, because they're gonna get sick; they're  
20 gonna end up in our hospitals and it's extremely  
21 important, and of course I'm concerned about all  
22 people; I'm especially concerned about the children  
23 that are affected by this. You know I support  
24 personally; most of my colleagues support a full  
25 lunch program our schools, but I really wanna hammer



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2 away at this point; I appreciate what you've done and  
3 I know you have a very... two very difficult jobs now,  
4 but I would ask that you would take this message back  
5 to the Mayor and the rest of the administration that  
6 we are not happy with the amount of funding for  
7 emergency food; it's really a very, very small amount  
8 that we're asking for and I think that if behooves  
9 the wealthiest city in the nation and certainly one  
10 of the wealthiest on the planet to do better than we  
11 are currently doing.

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Certainly hear what  
13 you're saying, understand what the concerns are and  
14 as we proceed with the budget process, the  
15 conclusion, we'll certainly consider what you're  
16 saying and I appreciate your recognition of all the  
17 holes we're filling in other places in the budget.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Thank you,  
19 Commissioner. Thank you, Chairman.

20 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you, Council  
21 Member Grodenchik. Following up on Council Member  
22 Grodenchik's point there, Commissioner, last year I  
23 went out and visited a fairly large emergency food  
24 provider in Brooklyn and after the tour of the  
25 program -- they're an EFAP provider, and the other

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3 various programs -- after the tour I asked, well how  
4 much do you have to privately fundraise in order to  
5 meet the needs of your clients and they came back to  
6 me and said somewhere around like \$7-8,000 every week  
7 they have to raise privately in order to fill that  
8 gap and that struck me as -- you know, here you have  
9 a -- you know basically you're having then emergency  
10 food providers having to go far outside of their  
11 mission of services to -- you know, essentially they  
12 have to act as fundraisers and you know there are a  
13 lot of very generous New Yorkers, every day New  
14 Yorkers that decide that the one -- you know, that  
15 the one thing that they're able to do or a couple of  
16 things that they're able to do every year [bell] in  
17 terms of charitable giving is for their local food  
18 pantry, and my discomfort or my -- the reason why  
19 that bothers me is that we've become essentially  
20 reliant on every -- you know this isn't foundation  
21 giving mostly; this is every day New Yorkers giving  
22 and we've become reliant on that type of charity to  
23 really allow the providers to accomplish their core  
24 mission and because it's a relatively modest sum; in  
25 the grand scheme of things we're talking about an HRA  
budget that is \$9.73 billion; an additional \$11

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2 million is not extraordinary; it's something to  
3 really consider.

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We'll consider that.  
5 I wanna though keep coming back to what I think the  
6 people who do terrific work in the food pantries see,  
7 which is they see people coming in towards the end of  
8 the month because their federal food stamp amounts  
9 are insufficient or they see people coming in that  
10 aren't even receiving federal food stamps anymore  
11 because the cut was so deep it's not work it for the  
12 small amount of money that they would be getting at  
13 \$10 or \$15. So as we focus on what more the City  
14 should be doing, I think we have to keep reminding  
15 ourselves that fighting hunger was a federal priority  
16 and our hearing today has spent most of the time  
17 talking about what should the City be doing to fight  
18 hunger.

19 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Absolutely. And I think  
20 that that's -- you know, we recognize that and we  
21 continue to make the case to our federal partners.  
22 Be that as it may, we don't have the power to control  
23 the federal budget and we do have the power to  
24 control our city's budget and our city's reflect our  
25 priorities and we can lead by example. [sic]

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2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: That's certainly  
3 true and as you can see, while the Federal Section 8  
4 program is not what it used to be; we have a city  
5 rental assistance program based upon the Federal  
6 Section 8 program or the federal legal services  
7 funding isn't what it used to be and we have  
8 essentially a City legal services program that's  
9 exponentially larger than what the federal  
10 government's program would be. So you raise a really  
11 important point about fighting hunger; it's just I  
12 think it's important to put it in the context of why  
13 we're even having this discussion in this hearing.

14 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Absolutely. Council  
15 Member Steve Matteo for questions.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Thank you,  
17 Mr. Chair.

18 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Minority Leader.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Commissioner,  
20 welcome. I wanna talk about the cash assistance  
21 benefits, the one-time, one-shot deal that we call --  
22 I mean a lot of my constituents call the biggest HRA  
23 issue in my office, so I just wanna go over it a  
24 little bit, just to clarify some things.

25

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2 GENERAL WELFARE, COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S ISSUES AND  
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4 One, you have to go there in person;  
5 right; this is for utility shut-off and eviction. So  
6 I guess my first question is; how far do they have to  
7 be; do they have to get the actual utility shut-off  
8 notice to get assistance and do they have to have an  
9 eviction notice to get assistance?

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: So let's step back  
11 for a moment. So under federal and state law we have  
12 the ability to provide rent arrears payments for  
13 people who are receiving public assistance and people  
14 who are not receiving public assistance and we also  
15 have the ability to pay utility arrears for people  
16 who are on public assistance and not on public  
17 assistance. Just like we've been developing new  
18 systems to deal with food stamps, we're developing a  
19 way to be able to make applications and  
20 recertifications online for cash assistance as well  
21 to address the needs of people who may be working,  
22 may be in school; may be in other programs.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: you said you're  
24 working on it or that's in place now?

25 COMMISSIONER BANKS: It's actually a  
program that will be rolled out over the course of  
this year, during this calendar year. We have

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2 requests in to the State to be able to permit an  
3 application for a one-shot payment to be made online  
4 that is still an open issue; we have worked through  
5 the ability to do recertifications and other kinds of  
6 things online, but the question you're asking -- do  
7 you have to come in -- really hinges on that issue..

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Hinges on that.

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: on that issue.

10 Ultimately there is a requirement for face to face  
11 discussion. Under state law for rent arrears, the  
12 basic standard is; do you have the ability to retain  
13 the housing as opposed to, you know, will good money  
14 be thrown after bad; that's essentially the state law  
15 standard and comes from federal law as well.

16 The fact that there is a shut-off notice  
17 or is an eviction notice is an indication that it  
18 really is an emergency; we have been paying rent  
19 arrears in particular increasingly in the absence of  
20 an actual eviction notice; if we can avoid evictions  
21 cases we will..

22 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: But they have to  
23 come with that proof; right?

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Under current law,  
25 under current operational approvals that we have,

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2 that is true; however, that is -- come back to  
3 Homebase -- there are a number of different ways in  
4 which clients in the community, whether they're on  
5 public assistance or not, can access our prevention  
6 services and one of the reasons why we're enhancing  
7 prevention services is to really, I think address  
8 what's underlying the question -- someone who has a  
9 job that fall... [crosstalk]

10 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Can't get there  
11 from 9 to 5.

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: that fall behind in  
13 rent; how do you create a no wrong door approach for  
14 such a person? So we thought online would be one  
15 way, so we have some challenges being able to  
16 implement that; hours of operation; Homebase is  
17 another way. We'll work with you on this and maybe  
18 we can have some models; I don't wanna offend any  
19 other borough; maybe we could have some models in  
20 Staten Island about how to do it [sic].

21 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: No, I appreciate  
22 that because you said it; for the person who's  
23 working, the family's struggling; you can't get there  
24 and that's the biggest... I think the obstacle at this  
25 point.

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2 Do you have numbers for Staten Island,  
3 how many you're seeing?

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I'd have to get you  
5 that borough num... [interpose]

6 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Could you please  
7 get it to me?

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: overall, we have  
9 provided rent arrears to 53,000 cases over the last  
10 year **[inaudible]**... [crosstalk]

11 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Annually; 53,000  
12 annually?

13 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yeah...

14 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Okay. And how...  
15 [interpose]

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: which is an increase  
17 from before, which I think reflects...

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Right.

19 COMMISSIONER BANKS: both our reforms and  
20 wanting to prevent every possible preventable  
21 eviction and at the same time I think reflects the  
22 realities of increased rents and the problems that  
23 people have paying rent.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: The money goes  
25 straight to the applicant or it goes...



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2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: To the landlord.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: I'm sorry?

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: To the landlord.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: To the landlord?

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: And the utility  
8 company the same?

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Correct.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: So if someone  
11 comes in with a utility bill, Con Ed bill that says  
12 they're gonna be shut off by Wednesday, they're to  
13 you at Friday; is that enough time for you to get... I  
14 guess my question is; how long, you know utility  
15 shut-offs and sometimes they call us and we get them  
16 an extension, we do everything we can, working with  
17 National Grid and Con Ed; how long do they need to  
18 come to you before payment can be processed?

19 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Emergencies are  
20 emergencies, but we encourage people to come in as  
21 early as possible and the example that you gave,  
22 someone who got a notice on a Wednesday; if they come  
23 in on a Friday, it makes that much harder to get it  
24 shut off in time. We too do the same thing that your  
25 staff does, which is try to get extensions...

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Right.

3 COMMISSIONER BANKS: to pay... [interpose]

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: But you'll call,  
5 your staff too will call Con Ed and say... [crosstalk]

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We will try to get...  
7 Yes, we'll try...

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: we're processing;  
9 would you give us some time?

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yep.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Okay. And we're  
12 adding \$82 million... we're adding \$82 million to this  
13 in this fiscal year; is that... is re-estimate?

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: That's the overall  
15 cash caseload; [bell] some of that is for rent... some  
16 of that is for exactly the kind of benefits you  
17 talked about; some of that results from the fact that  
18 two years ago there was a state law that penalized  
19 the City potentially \$10 million for unnecessary fair  
20 hearings; one of the causes of unnecessary fair  
21 hearings was cutting people off and then having to  
22 have them reapply and then they would win the fair  
23 hearing and be put back on; although we've kept the  
24 number constant, in terms of the numbers of  
25 unduplicated cases; the churning back and forth month

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2 to month has been reduced, so there needs to be an  
3 adjustment in the monthly caseload, but I want to  
4 assure you that the annual caseload, the duplicated  
5 [sic] number has been flat for the last nine years..  
6 [crosstalk]

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Flat?

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: even with the  
9 reforms that we've been making.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Okay, thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank  
12 you, Council Member; we will now hear from Council  
13 Member Cabrera, followed by Council Member Van Bramer  
14 and we've been joined by Council Member Van Bramer.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Thank you to  
16 both of the chairs; Commissioner, thank you for all  
17 you do; I know you have your hands definitely full.  
18 I just have one question, so let me get to the point.

19 I had a lot of groups this year, more  
20 than ever in the last six years; I never had so many  
21 requests for food trucks, groups that are dealing  
22 with food pantries, they wanna be able to take food  
23 into -- instead of having some of the constituents  
24 who have to travel very far to go and get their food,  
25 they're basically gonna go to areas where we may

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2 have, you know, the lack of availability to food  
3 pantries. My question to you was; have there been  
4 any thoughts or any strategies from the  
5 administration to provide trucks in the future for  
6 some of these agencies or do you think it's a good  
7 idea?

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: And I think,  
9 notwithstanding the question back and forth about the  
10 exact funding of the network, I think we feel that  
11 there's a strong network of food pantries in place;  
12 whether those services could be enhanced by taking  
13 them even deeper in the community, these are groups  
14 that have very deep roots in the community; in any  
15 case, the food pantries, they're faith-based, they're  
16 nonprofit organizations that are well-known in  
17 communities; whether there's a need to take it even  
18 further is certainly worth a conversation.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Okay. Thank you  
20 so much.

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Okay.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Thank you so  
23 much to the chairs, thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank  
25 you, Council Member. Council Member Van Bramer.

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2 [pause]

3 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Thank you  
4 very much, Madame Chair and Chair Levin as well.

5 So Commissioner, I very much wanna talk  
6 to you about Pam's Place, formerly known as The  
7 Verve, but I understand that we're going to go into  
8 your sort of DHS role subsequently, so anxious to  
9 hear about how personally involved you are in all of  
10 these matters, and of course I have several questions  
11 about that, but I think we can probably punt that  
12 into the next phase of your testimony.

13 COMMISSIONER BANKS: It's a long day.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Yeah.

15 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Thank you very much.

16 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: And who  
17 better to spend it than with us?

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Absolutely.

19 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank  
20 you, Majority Leader.

21 We're gonna start our second round of  
22 questions; I have on term and conditions. As the  
23 Council negotiates the budget, one of the things that  
24 we will be discussing with the administration is  
25 additions to term and condition. Would HRA support a

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2 term and condition that provides the number of move-  
3 outs through the LINC program year-to-date, as well  
4 as the fiscal year tracked against what the allotment  
5 is for the fiscal year target and percent achieved on  
6 a quarterly basis?

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well we've been  
8 providing at the oversight hearings I believe  
9 information like that, but certainly in the  
10 conversations, you know we'll discuss... happy to  
11 discuss what we have been providing and to see if  
12 there's the ability to provide anything in addition,  
13 but I think as you note, in our PowerPoint even from  
14 today, we've got data that we're providing I think  
15 each time we're coming before the Council we'd want  
16 to provide that kind of information to you.

17 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Great; we  
18 just wanna make...

19 COMMISSIONER BANKS: But I don't know if  
20 the specifics... [interpose]

21 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right.

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: of exactly what  
23 you're asking for; if it's feasible, if we have it,  
24 if we've already been doing it... [interpose]

25

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2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: I'm sure  
3 you have it.

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I heard the  
5 question, but I'm... I'm a very good listener, but I  
6 don't wanna... [interpose]

7 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay.

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: simply answer  
9 without reflecting on it.

10 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Great.  
11 Okay. In 2017 an additional \$8 million will support  
12 1500 new affordable housing units, including  
13 conversion of appropriate shelter sites to permanent  
14 housing or make-use programs. Are these 1500 units  
15 family-appropriate or for single adults; if both;  
16 what is the breakdown between family and single adult  
17 units?

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: This is part of  
19 twofold initiatives that we've been operating, which  
20 is to convert cluster units which house families to  
21 permanent housing and also to continue the effort  
22 that we've doing to move veterans out of the shelter  
23 system. You know, in December and January we moved  
24 527 veterans out of the shelter system and we're  
25 tabulating -- we can give you a more up-to-date

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2 number, but you can see that we've been using through  
3 that mechanism master leases and other kinds of  
4 initiatives with landlords and not-for-profit groups  
5 to be able to secure housing to move veterans out;  
6 that's veteran families, veteran adult families, but  
7 predominantly singles; the clusters are largely  
8 occupied by families with children. The dollars that  
9 are in the budget represent what our goal is in year  
10 one in terms of the cluster conversions, but..  
11 [interpose]

12 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: And how  
13 many are those?

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We're looking to try  
15 to convert as many as we can; we have a goal to end  
16 by 2018 the use of clusters; approximately 3,000 of  
17 them are in use; we've already projected to  
18 eliminated 260 of them by the end of the year and we  
19 are, you know actively working to convert units in  
20 other buildings, but that's a negotiating process  
21 with landlords and not-for-profits; the budget  
22 reflects what our projection is and what we can  
23 accomplish, but our ability to accomplish that is  
24 gonna be dependant on negotiations with landlords and  
25 not-for-profits to be able to do so.



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3 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So while  
4 we understand that you're kind of just taking the  
5 helm on DHS, the programmatic component of DHS and I  
6 guess I'll ask you the same question in a couple of  
7 minutes when we wrap up this hearing, but how do we  
8 ensure that these new sites don't fall into disrepair  
9 like a lot of the other shelter sites or other  
10 facilities; is there a maintenance component or some  
11 other mechanism that you know to ensure that once  
12 we've gotten these sites to be converted to permanent  
13 that they then don't fall into disrepair and that  
14 we're not here five or 10 years from now asking for  
15 capital investment into something that we could've  
16 been -- it's cheaper to maintain it than to have to  
repair it.

17 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yeah, I couldn't  
18 agree with that more, living through reinvesting  
19 capital dollars to fix up things that should've been  
20 fixed years ago; yes, I couldn't agree with you more.  
21 As we move forward with trying to take units that  
22 have been temporary housing and turn them into  
23 permanent housing, I think the model of some of the  
24 things we've been doing with the veterans is a good  
25 one, which is that rather than have the private

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3 landlord responsible for maintaining the conditions,  
4 we've got agreements with the not-for-profit to  
5 maintain conditions and some of the problems that we  
6 can see with the shelter sites are the sort of hybrid  
7 ownership of who's responsible; is it the landlord;  
8 is it the not-for-profit operator; who has the  
9 ability to effectuate a repair; that's why for a lot  
10 of the shelter repairs we've gone in and made the  
repairs ourselves... [interpose]

11 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right.

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: but I think you  
13 raise a good question; I'm not ignoring it, but I do  
14 think that this is an area that we have had some good  
15 success in the veterans move-out that we're gonna try  
16 to apply to the families conversion initiatives.

17 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: We'd just  
18 like to see some expense dollars put towards, or you  
19 know, in speaking to nonprofits, giving the nonprofit  
20 organizations the support to provide for maintenance  
21 of all of these facilities [sic].

22 Okay and now I'll give it to our co-  
23 chair.

24 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you very much,  
25 Madame Chair.

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2 Commissioner, I'm gonna jump around,  
3 'cause there's a couple of areas that we would like  
4 to get your response on the record, so my apologies  
5 for jumping around, Chair.

6 First question; there is an increase in  
7 aftercare services in the Executive Budget of \$12  
8 million; what kind of aftercare services -- how is  
9 that gonna compliment the current aftercare services  
10 provided by DHS?

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well as we move more  
12 people out of shelter we want to expand the numbers  
13 of people that get aftercare, so the dollars reflect  
14 increases and reflect gaps that we identified during  
15 the review. You know, in some cases people -- the  
16 view was, well Homebase can follow up and we think  
17 more may be required in those situations, given that  
18 Homebase is contracted essentially to provide  
19 services to prevent homelessness. So the additional  
20 dollars going forward reflects both the sense that  
21 there's be additional people that will need the  
22 services and some identification of gaps in current  
23 services.

24 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: And that will be out of  
25 the Homebase program?

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2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: No.

3 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: No. Okay.

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: No, in terms of one  
5 of the things that we identified during the review...  
6 one of the things we identified during the review is  
7 that there were certain gaps in handoffs and we wanna  
8 be more focused on that. Believe the amount -- by  
9 the way, it's \$5 million rather than \$12 million, but  
10 we can offline review that together to make sure I've  
11 got the right number.

12 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Okay. We also have here  
13 an additional \$8 million for 1500 new units of  
14 affordable housing that are identified as new needs;  
15 this was all under the -- Homeless Programmatic  
16 Enhancements is where this -- we have \$8 million for  
17 1500 units of new affordable housing, \$5 million for  
18 daytime programs at shelters, including literacy and  
19 job training; then \$12 million for aftercare  
20 services.

21 For that \$8 million portion, the 1500  
22 units of new affordable housing; what types of  
23 housing is that gonna be?

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: That's what the  
25 answer that I... that I just gave to your colleagues;

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2 that's part of our initiatives to convert clusters  
3 back into permanent housing... [crosstalk]

4 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: That's... okay.

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: and also to continue  
6 with the veterans move-out **[inaudible]**... [crosstalk]

7 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: It's not new... it's not  
8 new supportive housing or anything?

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: No, that was  
10 reflected in the preliminary budget; that's separate  
11 from the supportive housing funding initiatives.

12 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: With regard to  
13 supportive housing, in January the Mayor announced a  
14 Supportive Housing Task Force to help the City  
15 implement the plan to create 15,000 units of  
16 supportive housing; do you have a sense of when the  
17 task force is gonna have its recommendations ready?

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well the task force  
19 has been meeting and there are subcommittees that  
20 have been convened and we issued a concept paper  
21 asking for input; we're on a tight timetable 'cause  
22 we wanna start to get supportive housing units funded  
23 by the end of the year and I think we're aiming to  
24 have the RFP and further input from the task force by  
25 the summer. But I wanna emphasize that this is an

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2 ongoing task force; it's first, you know task was to  
3 work on particular areas that we've seen with NY/NY  
4 I, II and III that need to be addressed and to help  
5 us get the kind of input we need to formulate the RFP  
6 based upon the concept paper.

7 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Since you brought up  
8 NY/NY I, II and III, how are the prospects on NY/NY  
9 IV?

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well the legislative  
11 process is still ongoing; we know that there are  
12 issues with respect to the memorandum of  
13 understandings that need to be addressed with dollars  
14 that were in the state budget for supportive housing,  
15 for ending the AIDS epidemic; for other initiatives  
16 that are very important to us, so we're very focused  
17 on concluding the legislative process in a positive  
18 way.

19 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Okay. Jumping around  
20 here; with regard to ending the epidemic, HASA -- we  
21 included in the Executive Budget \$26.2 million in  
22 funding for HASA expansion that is dependent upon  
23 state commitments that aren't there yet; what is our  
24 plan for that funding; does it stay in HASA; does it  
25 move out of HASA if the state doesn't meet its end of

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2 the equation; how are we looking at that \$26.2  
3 million right now?

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well I think as the  
5 Council's pending legislation indicates, that we  
6 can't actually implement an ending the epidemic  
7 initiative that we want and you want without the  
8 partnership that we're hopeful still to get. As I  
9 said, the legislative session is not over yet; there  
10 are still discussions about this within the MOU  
11 discussions for the amounts of money that were in the  
12 state budget and we're hopeful. We think it best at  
13 this point to let the legislative process play itself  
14 out and then determine what if anything could be  
15 done. Clearly we can't do what we think the ending  
16 the epidemic blueprint calls for, which is to expand  
17 services to beyond current HASA eligibility, without  
18 the partnership that we're looking for.

19 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Moving over to new  
20 funding for subsidized jobs for homeless clients, 300  
21 slots added to Department of Sanitation for JTP. I  
22 guess my first question is; are there any WEP slots  
23 still being filled in various city, state; not-for-  
24 profit agencies?

25

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2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well as you know, we  
3 set December 31st, 2016 as the ending date for WEP;  
4 we've gone from 19 agencies down to 8 and cut the  
5 numbers of placements by about half and we're  
6 continuing to work down those placements and the  
7 sanitation program will clearly be part of that  
8 effort.

9 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Sorry, but do you have  
10 the number of WEP slots still being filled at the  
11 moment?

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: There are about a  
13 1000 FTE positions; several hundred of those though  
14 are at the MTA...

15 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Okay.

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: and...

17 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: And the MTA is working  
18 with the City to bring those numbers to zero?

19 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We have been in  
20 contact with MTA to come up with a plan to move  
21 forward.

22 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: We're not... I mean,  
23 ultimately the City calls the shots on that, right,  
24 the MTA does not have like a legal right to WEP  
25 clients; is that right? I mean in other words,



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2 within City agencies, it's an intracity discussion  
3 and with regard to the MTA, obviously it is a state  
4 agency, but they don't have... in other words, HRA  
5 could stop referring clients to the MTA for WEP  
6 assignments, you know and the MTA does not have a  
7 legal right to those clients; is that right?

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well as we have said  
9 publicly, we have a state-approved employment plan to  
10 phase out WEP over the course of this period of time;  
11 we're well on the way to do that; we're gonna keep  
12 making that progress; on the other hand, look, we  
13 have a very good partnership with the MTA on homeless  
14 outreach in which they put some funds in; we put  
15 additional funds in and that's a very important  
16 relationship that we have there... [interpose]

17 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Yeah.

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: and so the  
19 discussion about the phase-out of WEP is in the  
20 context of a very good working relationship we have  
21 MTA.

22 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: I don't... you know, I  
23 don't mean to jump the gun here; I trust that we'll  
24 be able to meet the deadlines that we've set out for  
25 ourselves. Why Department of Sanitation identified

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2 for those JTP slots and is there a plan for other  
3 agencies to open up more JTP slots?

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well simply  
5 eliminating WEP placements at a whole range of  
6 agencies and in particular agencies there have been  
7 opportunities that we thought might be more conducive  
8 to ultimately permanent employment; not at that  
9 particular agency, but in jobs that are available in  
10 the labor force, so we think there's a benefit there  
11 of those particular positions helping someone  
12 potentially get employed in the labor force, versus  
13 other jobs not being as helpful.

14 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: If you don't have it  
15 right now, that's fine, but does HRA have a breakdown  
16 of where each WEP assignment currently is right now,  
17 at least in broader categories, so whether it's the  
18 MET, City agency or not-for-profit agencies...?

19 [crosstalk]

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We... We can provide  
21 that to you. I could go through them, but my  
22 colleagues at the table are gonna tell me don't --  
23 it's not a memory test.

24 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Also, my colleagues are  
25 ready to move to DHS. Wanted to just ask about APS;

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2 there's new funding in APS, obviously; how do you  
3 expect quality of service to improve at APS with this  
4 additional funding?

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well I think that  
6 it's like with other reforms that we've made at HRA  
7 and are in the process of making, additional  
8 resources have given us the opportunity to rethink  
9 how services should be delivered and so APS, of all  
10 places, is not a one-size-fits-all and so taking  
11 additional staff lines will allow us to deploy  
12 additional staff to do certain functions and again,  
13 there are some cases that need less involvement,  
14 those maybe simply paying the rent cases and there  
15 other cases that need more involvement, so that will  
16 help us address what we've identified as part of the  
17 reform analysis, the need for additional positions.

18 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Couple more questions  
19 here. In terms of legal services, HRA announced in  
20 September of 2015, the administration announced that  
21 it would expand anti-eviction legal services to  
22 target high-need communities in which the highest  
23 number of children and adults are losing their homes  
24 and entering shelter and it was said that there was  
25 gonna be legal services provided in schools in high-

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need communities; have those been identified yet and  
what criteria is being used for that?

COMMISSIONER BANKS: I think the schools;  
you're referring to the immigration legal services...

CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER BANKS: in community  
schools...

CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Yes.

COMMISSIONER BANKS: and that's an  
ongoing process and we'd be happy to give you  
additional information on which schools will be  
identified. In terms of the overall legal services  
programs, there are multiple programs in our budget;  
the anti-eviction and anti-harassment programs will  
be fully implemented, now that the RFPs have been  
decided, during the coming fiscal year and those are  
aimed at serving 33,000 households, a total of  
113,000 people; it's the increase in funding from  
\$6.5 million to \$62 million for anti-eviction and  
anti-harassment services.

CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Do you know the  
percentage increase that that represents?

COMMISSIONER BANKS: It's a tenfold  
increase.

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3 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Tenfold. So the  
community schools have yet to be identified for those  
4 immigration...

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I'm gonna have to  
6 get back to you on the exact information about that.

7 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: One of the things about  
8 the legal services -- you've heard me say this before  
9 -- I represent a district that had its rezoning 10  
10 years ago and are still suffering the brutal  
11 consequences of those rezonings and you know, just  
12 the broader forces of gentrification; Furman Center  
13 Report that came out this week identified Greenpoint-  
14 Williamsburg as the most gentrified neighborhoods or  
15 some of the most gentrified neighborhoods in the City  
16 of New York -- rent-stabilized; non rent-stabilized;  
17 long-term tenants; intergenerational tenants are  
18 facing all of those forces and need every bit of  
19 assistance that they can get to combat that and legal  
20 services obviously is an important part of that; is  
21 there any consideration given to using some of the  
22 expanded legal services to areas that might not be,  
23 you know, proposed rezoning areas, but areas that  
24 have -- you know, where forces of gentrification are  
25 well underway, but people are still facing the

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3 pressures and trying to hold on with everything they  
4 have?

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well as you  
6 indicated in your question to me earlier, it is a  
7 tenfold increase in the amount of funding that had  
8 been available before and I think I've said before  
9 this committee and others that if we had had these  
10 programs in place in the prior decade we would've  
11 seen the kind of difference that frankly these  
12 programs have made over the last two years. In terms  
13 of additional needs, consistent with the local law,  
14 setting up the civil justice office, we are in the  
15 process of developing our first annual report and  
16 we're looking at needs in housing court; the last  
17 study that was really done in terms of needs in  
18 housing court was done in the early 1990s and we're  
19 trying to gauge where we are as a result of the  
20 significant investments by the chief judge and now by  
21 the Mayor where that leaves us, which is in a  
22 different plan than it was 20 years ago and we'll  
23 make appropriate evaluations based upon what that  
24 data shows us.

25 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: I mean with regard to  
Greenpoint-Williamsburg, in 2005, when they did the

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3 rezoning there, they did set up an anti-harassment  
4 legal services program that the funding sunsetted a  
5 few years back on that and so it was there for those  
6 that were facing the brunt of it back then; there are  
7 still other tenants who often come to my office for  
8 assistance when they're faced with eviction or  
9 harassment in an ongoing fashion, so it's still very  
10 much an issue and the legal services providers that  
11 serve the community take on as many cases as they  
12 can, you know and what my office does is we'll like  
13 refer, you know we'll like do a rotating basis so  
14 we're not like referring all of our constituents that  
15 come to us to one legal services provider, but at a  
16 certain point you can only do so much with the staff  
17 that you have, so I would just, you know, ask you  
18 guys to consider allocating some of those resources,  
19 or allowing some flexibility perhaps with the  
catchment areas of the ZIP code.

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Alright; I mean  
21 we'll continue to look at what the needs are as we  
22 complete the first report.

23 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Okay. Oh, Council  
24 Member Helen Rosenthal and then we wanna introduce  
25 Council Member Rosenthal, Ritchie Torres and Corey

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2 Johnson, who have joined us and Council Member Helen  
3 Rosenthal for questions.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you so  
5 much, Chairs.

6 Good to see you, Commissioner, as always.

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Good to see you too.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So I'm gonna  
9 ask you questions with my chair of the Contracts  
10 Committee hat on, so let's start with the easy ones.

11 How is it going implementing the \$11.50  
12 per hour wage increase and the 2.5 percent COLA?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Well I think  
14 at this point, for the HRA contracts, vendors with 90  
15 percent of the contracts, they're in the process,  
16 meaning they've either got a registered contract and  
17 it should be able to implemented or it's on the road  
18 to being registered very shortly; vendors of about 10  
19 percent of the contracts, there are particularized  
20 individual problems that we're trying to work through  
21 with those vendors, but we expect to be completed  
22 very short order with all of the HRA ones.

23 There have been greater challenges with  
24 the Department of Homeless Services contracts, 'cause  
25 I think, as you know, this was a responsibility that



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2 was transferred to HRA in November to address a range  
3 of challenges and so essentially in one year we're  
4 doing three procurements -- FY15... [interpose]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yeah.

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: FY16 and FY17 and so  
7 the 2.5 percent, the COLA issues are as part of that  
8 process... [crosstalk]

9 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Right.

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: some of the  
11 contracts have appropriately so been slowed down with  
12 the need to put in plans of correction for conditions  
13 in those facilities. I know as a former not-for-  
14 profit head how concerning this can be, but I also  
15 know that for the staff at HRA and DHS, they're  
16 working very hard to complete three procurements in  
17 one year so that we can put this behind us and not  
18 have this problem happen again.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: That sounds  
20 great. So just for me to get a sense of scale, for  
21 HRA, what percentage of the work -- so I guess we set  
22 aside the administration -- what percentage of the  
23 work is done with your own staff and what percentage  
24 is done with contracted out staff?

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2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: For HRA, the vast --  
3 I mean se serve 3 million people, so the vast  
4 majority of the work we do is with HRA staff.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Within your  
6 own staff?

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yeah. I can get you  
8 exact percentages, but the 3 million people who get  
9 food stamps, who get... [interpose]

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yeah.

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: cash assistance, who  
12 get Medicaid assistance, that's from direct provision  
13 of services by... [crosstalk]

14 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Okay.

15 COMMISSIONER BANKS: HRA staff; within  
16 that number of people there are people that get  
17 additional services that are paid for through  
18 contractors, like legal services for example...

19 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yes. Yes.

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: so every one of the  
21 3 million clients doesn't get legal services;  
22 approximately 33,000 housing type cases will be  
23 handled in a given year for 113,000 clients, so you  
24 can get a sense of what the scale is... [interpose]

25 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you.

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2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: jus ton that basis  
3 and we could go through each of the programs, but I  
4 want to assure you the primary service delivery  
5 mechanism is by City staff... [crosstalk]

6 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yep; that's  
7 helpful.

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: supplemental  
9 enhanced services are provided through terrific not-  
10 for-profit partners.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yeah. So I  
12 had a hearing recently on the human service contracts  
13 and the challenges the providers have and one thing  
14 that I heard you say addressed spot on one of their  
15 concerns, which is the desire for the agencies to  
16 develop concept papers with the providers themselves  
17 before they go to RFP and it sounds like, you know  
18 you're... I just don't have that concern with your  
19 agency. But two of the other concerns that I wanna  
20 ask you about are delayed payments -- actually, I  
21 only wanna ask you about delaying payments. For the  
22 contracted work, do you have a sense, you know, best  
23 and worse scenario of the time differential between  
24 when a contractor starts doing their work and then  
25

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2 the time when they can start invoicing and being  
3 paid?

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right. Can I answer  
5 that question, but actually, answer your first  
6 question, which you said I didn't need to answer,  
7 'cause we were doing well... [crosstalk]

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Well here's  
9 why and... [crosstalk]

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: but I think it's an  
11 issue.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: then you can  
13 go ahead, but here's why...

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yeah.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: is that my  
16 final question is just gonna be what can we do to  
17 help...

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Okay.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: move the  
20 contracting process along from our end.

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: So let me come back...  
22 [crosstalk]

23 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So go at it.

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: come back to you on  
25 that. But we do use concept papers, but I think one

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2 of the challenges we have under the procurement rules  
3 is to call everybody in pre-concept paper and I think  
4 we are certainly looking at ways with MOCS and OMB  
5 that we could either be more creative or look at ways  
6 in which we'll proceed with that, because we've tried  
7 to use consultative processes every place we can, but  
8 there are limits; I talked at the beginning; the  
9 Chair asked me a lot of questions about the  
10 employment services contracts. We were in a position  
11 where we issued -- we consulted with lot of different  
12 people before we issued the concept paper, but not in  
13 a formal concept paper consultative process because  
14 of the concerns about giving different vendors  
15 favored treatment, so we consulted with clients, we  
16 consulted with advocacy groups, [bell] but we had  
17 challenges consulting with potential vendors. So we  
18 spoke to the vendor community through -- and I was  
19 very grateful that the General Welfare Committee  
20 Chairman Levin did this; we spoke to the vendor  
21 community as much as any time by having there be a  
22 hearing on our concept paper, which we thought at  
23 least provided additional level of transparency, but  
24 there are other steps that could be taken and I think  
25 working together we could address some of those.

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2 I think in terms of payment challenges,  
3 it really actually relates to contracting and it  
4 relates to issues about getting contracts to move  
5 through the registration process and all the issues  
6 that I actually answered you about in respect to the  
7 COLA; I think payment relates to that and when  
8 services are provided and there's not yet a contract  
9 in place, then it's a challenge, and we've looked for  
10 very creative ways to try to get payments to people  
11 through loans for other things and we'll keep doing  
12 that, particularly with the assumption of the DHS  
13 contracting process; we have been using loans, so I  
14 know, again, as a former not-for-profit, even that's  
15 a challenge, but we'll keep working with you and keep  
16 working with them. It's an important sector and we  
17 wanna keep being effective.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you very  
19 much.

20 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank  
21 you, Council Member. We've been joined by Council  
22 Member Levine. So I have one final question before  
23 -- you don't go anywhere; we just change papers up  
24 here --

25

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2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: You might let me  
3 take a brief break though.

4 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Of  
5 course. We're not trying to torture you here at all.

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: No, I don't think  
7 so.

8 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: A unit of  
9 appropriation -- there's a lot of shift and it's very  
10 difficult for us to be able to follow those shifts  
11 and I know that you discussed the terming condition  
12 earlier, but this would be a unit of appropriation  
13 and budget function analysis for homeless services in  
14 order to provide transparency; would you be in  
15 agreement to engage with OMB for a unit of  
16 appropriation?

17 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I mean we had a  
18 similar conversation about the legal services funding  
19 and we talked about sort of giving you more  
20 functional ways to look at the information and so  
21 we'd certainly be amenable to having a conversation  
22 about how to give you sort of that functional  
23 understanding of where the dollars were; the intent  
24 is to be transparent; like we found with the legal  
25 services dollars, where they were in many different

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2 programs, the ability to give you transparency by a  
3 single unit of appropriation versus giving you the  
4 functional analysis, I think we came to an agreement  
5 about how to do that and we're certainly willing to  
6 have that kinda conversation.

7 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:

8 Excellent.

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: But I would caution  
10 about having a rigid unit of appropriation for  
11 services that may be provided in multiple different  
12 places within any of the agencies... [crosstalk]

13 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Well  
14 let's engage on what the best way to do -- and we'll  
15 share with you the information that we're looking for  
16 so that we can figure out the best way to get the  
17 information.

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Okay.

19 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay?  
20 Excellent. Well seeing no... oh... [background comments]  
21 Council Member Johnson will have his second round of  
22 questions and then we will... [interpose]

23 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: This is my first  
24 round; I haven't asked a question...

25



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2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: well  
3 we're gonna do it in the second..

4 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Oh, okay.

5 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: allotment  
6 of time.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Okay.

8 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So...

9 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: I'll be very  
10 quick; it's one question.. [crosstalk]

11 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Sure, go  
12 ahead.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: one.. one quick  
14 question. Good to see you, Commissioner. I  
15 understand that New York City has received a fairly  
16 serious cut in funding for Housing Opportunities for  
17 People with AIDS (HOPWA) from the federal government  
18 and I also understand that those funds are shared  
19 between HRA and DOHMH to provide housing but that  
20 DOHMH uses HOPWA dollars to house low-income HIV  
21 positive, ineligible people that don't receive HASA  
22 benefits, and it was brought to my attention that OMB  
23 has chosen to have DOHMH bear the brunt of those  
24 funding cuts while HRA has actually received an  
25 increase in funding and I just wanted to understand

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3 more specifically from you how HRA plans to protect  
4 the 400 households that DOHMH currently funds through  
HOPWA dollars.

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Actually, thanks for  
6 asking that question, 'cause I wanna try to dispel  
7 some concerns. Obviously the problem is the cut in  
8 federal dollars; it's like a lot of things we talked  
9 about earlier in the hearing that the City is in the  
10 position of having to make up gaps for things that  
11 should be federal roles. The issue here is that in  
12 our budget-making for FY17, essentially the Office of  
13 Management and Budget, the Health Department and HRA  
14 are putting forward a plan to keep everybody whole  
15 for this year; as we go through the further part of  
16 the year, come up with a more long-term plan to deal  
17 with what is an ongoing cut, 'cause we're gonna be  
18 looking at continuing cuts. So I understand what  
19 your concern is, but I wanna try to assure you that  
20 the budget allocation between the two agencies is not  
21 intended to advantage or disadvantage clients in  
22 either one of the agencies, but simply to be a budget  
23 marker to proceed into the year to deal with the cuts  
24 as we proceed into... [interpose]

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: So we're gonna  
3 ensure that those 400 people are protected?

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: There's no intention  
5 by the administration to have 400 people lose  
6 services as a result of this.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: So is there  
8 anything that needs to happen between HRA and DOHMH  
9 between now and the adopted budget to clarify any of  
10 that?

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: OMB and the Health  
12 Department and HRA are all working together to deal  
13 with this; it's a -- you know as I said, it's a  
14 problem caused by a federal withdrawal and moving  
15 forward we wanna protect the residents of the City;  
16 we had to make a budget at this point to allocate  
17 dollars and we did, but we want to ensure that people  
18 don't suffer in the immediate timeframe until we can  
19 come up with a more long-term solution to this cut,  
20 which is not helpful at all to us.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you. So  
22 when it all gets sort of figured out with the  
23 specificity of where the money's gonna come from and  
24 all that, can you just report back to us so we  
25 understand?

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2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Absolutely; as we  
3 have done [bell], we'll keep **[inaudible]** with you...  
4 [crosstalk]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Yeah, thank you  
6 very much. Thank you, Madame Chair.

7 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank  
8 you, Council Member; Council Member Levine.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Thank you, Madame  
10 Chair. Commissioner, great to see you; I wanna  
11 commend you and the administration for the  
12 unbelievable commitment you've shown to increasing  
13 legal services for tenants facing eviction, tenfold  
14 increase in the budget in the last three fiscal  
15 years; it's really remarkable. I wanted to see if I  
16 could get some clarity on a couple questions I had  
17 asked Director Fuleihan on Friday, which is that the  
18 role -- the question is the role of the funding  
19 dedicated to upzoned neighborhoods is going to play  
20 in the future growth of our spending on such legal  
21 services; I believe that the commitment is \$5 million  
22 per upzoned neighborhood a \$1 million for outreach  
23 and organizing and I'm wondering how many  
24 neighborhoods are now being funded and what we'll be  
25 at once we expand to all 15.

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2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right. We're  
3 currently providing services in seven neighborhoods,  
4 but I wanna caution one aspect of your analysis,  
5 which is; when we were asked at HRA to make a  
6 projection and termination of need, we looked at  
7 court filings and other **[inaudible]** of need for  
8 representation and it varied, depending on what ZIP  
9 codes are involved and what the court filings look  
10 like, so in each area it's gonna be a separate  
11 analysis that I'm sure we'll be asked to do about  
12 what the need is. So at this point our budget  
13 contains funding for the announced rezoning areas and  
14 should there be more, I know there'll be dialogue  
15 about it; I just wanted to be careful **[inaudible]**  
16 number... [crosstalk]

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Very helpful  
18 **[inaudible]** clarification. So for the seven  
19 announced, what's the total pot then?

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: For the seven  
21 announced, including all services, it's \$36 million...

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: 36. So...

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS, but those include... in  
24 the services, some of it is our ability to actually  
25 administer the program, so there'll be some

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2 efficiencies as you go forward and some of those  
3 dollars relate to our management of the parallel  
4 program that's essentially an anti-eviction program  
5 in addition to an anti-harassment... [crosstalk]

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Got it. But 36  
7 divided by 7 is 5 and changed, so... [crosstalk]

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I understand how you  
9 got that.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: understanding  
11 there would be some efficiencies going forward, but  
12 would it be fair to assume that once you add eight  
13 more there'll be roughly a similar amount added to  
14 the budget?

15 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Again, it's gonna --  
16 and I'm not trying to be resistant to answering the  
17 question -- it's gonna depend on the number... which  
18 ZIP codes, the numbers of filings and what we see,  
19 because they differed among the seven areas. You're  
20 right, if you gross it up and divide it, you get  
21 that, but it differed among different communities,  
22 depending on what the needs looks like.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: And can you, in  
24 the closing seconds, just speak to the extent to  
25 which we are meeting the need in those upzoned

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3 neighborhoods; are we covering somewhere close to all  
4 evictions cases or is there a more narrow definition  
of who's eligible?

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well in the... again,  
6 these programs will be fully [bell] implemented in  
7 FY17, so I think we'll have a better picture where we  
8 are, but we do know in the anti-eviction programs in  
9 those 10 ZIP codes that, you know there's virtually  
10 coverage of evictions cases that are coming in from  
11 the reports we get from the providers, but I think,  
12 as you know as a result of the very important local  
13 law that The Speaker and you championed, we'll be  
14 doing a report; we're looking at where there are gaps  
15 as a result of the chief judge's investments and our  
16 investments and that will give us a sense of where we  
17 are this year, pending the full implementation next  
18 year of the resulting [sic] programs and anymore  
19 programs that may occur.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Great. Thank you  
21 very much; thank you, Madame Chair.

22 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank  
23 you, Council Member. Commissioner, we will take a  
24 10-minute break while we turn over some documents;  
25 then we'll be back... [crosstalk]

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2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: with  
4 Homeless Services. Thank you.

5 [background comments]

6 [pause]

7 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: We will  
8 now resume the City Council's hearing on the Mayor's  
9 Executive Budget for FY 2017. The Finance Committee  
10 is joined by the Committee on General Welfare,  
11 chaired by Council Member Levin. We just heard from  
12 the Human Resources Administration and now we will  
13 hear testimony from Commissioner of Social Services,  
14 Steve Banks, regarding the Department of Homeless  
15 Services.

16 In the interest of time I will forego  
17 making an opening statement, but before we hear  
18 testimony, I will open my mic to my Co-Chair, Council  
19 Member Levin.

20 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you, Chair  
21 Ferreras-Copeland; I will make a quick opening  
22 statement, if that's alright.

23 I am Council Member Steve Levin, chair of  
24 the General Welfare Committee; this is our second of  
25 our Executive Budget Hearings for the General Welfare



Committee today with the Finance Committee being held  
this afternoon. At this point we will hear testimony  
from Department of Homeless Services, also referred  
to as DHS, regarding its Executive Budget and general  
agency operations within its proposed \$1.29 billion  
budget, as well as updates on the implementation of  
the reforms resulting from the 90-day review of the  
agency those reforms that were not part of what we  
discussed in a previous hearing with HRA.

DHS provides emergency shelter, rehousing  
support and services to single adults and families  
with little to no alternative housing options. As  
the homeless population continues to grow to  
unprecedented levels in New York City, so does the  
demand for financial resources required to meet the  
needs for this very vulnerable population.

The proposed FY17 Executive Budget for  
DHS increased by \$215 million when compared to the  
FY16 Adopted Budget; this increase in funding can  
largely be attributed to new needs totaling \$292  
million; some of these new needs include additional  
shelter costs to accommodate the current shelter  
census, increased investment in street outreach  
efforts and increased investments in shelter

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3 security, as well as an unprecedented commitment to  
4 capital repairs in the shelter system, and the agency  
5 deserves credit for that.

6 Under the guidance of Commissioner Banks,  
7 DHS underwent a 90-day review period to assess how  
8 DHS can address the current homelessness crisis more  
9 effectively. In conclusion of the 90-day review, it  
10 was recommended that homeless prevention and  
11 rehousing be moved to HRA to join other programs that  
12 had already been established or moved over to HRA  
13 over the last several years. As a result, DHS will  
14 focus on adults and family shelter operations,  
15 shelter security, maintaining shelter conditions and  
16 enhanced outreach efforts. In addition, DHS' FY17  
17 Executive Budget includes \$22.9 million in new  
18 funding for the HOME-STAT program, which will build  
19 on existing homeless response and prevention programs  
20 to better identify, engage and transition homeless  
21 New Yorkers from the streets to appropriate services  
22 and permanent housing. While we support the  
23 provision of shelter services and making sure  
24 capacity is adequate enough to accommodate everyone  
25 who needs it, we are anxious to see when all the  
investments that the administration is making in

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2 homeless services, rental assistance and anti-  
3 eviction services will have a significant impact on  
4 the shelter census population. DHS' capital  
5 commitment plan increased \$89.6 million or 49 percent  
6 when compared to the FY16 Adopted Budget.

7 I am happy, as I said before, to see that  
8 DHS' capital budget finally reflects much needed  
9 funding to address external and internal upgrades to  
10 family and single adult shelters; this has been a  
11 perennial issue for shelter providers.

12 Before I welcome the commissioner, I  
13 would like to thank the committee staff for their  
14 work -- Nameera Nuzhat, Legislative Financial  
15 Analyst; Dohini Sompura, Unit Head; Andrea Vazquez,  
16 Senior Counsel for the committee; Tonya Cyrus, Senior  
17 Policy Analyst for the committee, as well as our  
18 Deputy Finance Director, Regina Poreda Ryan and our  
19 Finance Director, Latonia McKinney, and also, I was  
20 remiss in not acknowledging my staff at the previous  
21 hearing -- Jonathan Boucher, Chief of Staff; Edward  
22 Paulino, Budget Director and Julie Bero, Legislative  
23 Director. Now I welcome the DHS Interim Commissioner  
24 and Commissioner of... sorry, DHS Commissioner of  
25 Social Services -- sorry; we'll have to figure that

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2 out for the record with you, Commissioner, but before  
3 we do that, I would like to ask the counsel to the  
4 committee to swear you.

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

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I do.

9 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: You may  
10 begin.

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Good afternoon. I  
12 would like to thank the Council's Finance and General  
13 Welfare Committees and Chairs Julissa Ferreras-  
14 Copeland and Stephen Levin for giving us an  
15 opportunity to testify today about the Department of  
16 Homeless Services' budget in efforts to address  
17 homelessness in our city.

18 My name is Steven Banks and I'm the  
19 Commissioner of the New York City Department of  
20 Social Services and in that capacity I now oversee  
21 the Department of Homeless Services.

22 Joining me today are DHS' First Deputy  
23 Commissioner Lorraine Stephens and Deputy  
24 Commissioner Fiscal and Procurement, Lulu Urquhart

25

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2 and Department of Social Services Chief of Staff,  
3 Jennifer Yeaw.

4 The Executive Budget of the Department of  
5 Homeless Services reflects the completion of the 90-  
6 day review of homeless services that the Mayor  
7 announced on April 11th as well as further  
8 adjustments as the Executive Budget was finalized.  
9 In this testimony I'll highlight key DHS reforms and  
10 discuss those specifics of the 90-day review of  
11 homeless services in New York City.

12 Let's first do changes from the January  
13 17 to executive 17 [sic] plan.

14 DHS budget increases in FY17 by \$187  
15 million in total funds; \$169 million in tax levy  
16 between the January plan and the Executive Budget due  
17 to a combination of increases to support the agency's  
18 core mission as well as restructuring, repurposing  
19 related to the 90-day review. The new funding  
20 includes \$194 million for shelter capacity; \$161  
21 million in City tax levy, \$25 million for shelter  
22 security, 300 peace officers, supervisors and  
23 critical intake staff and related services at mental  
24 health shelters, high-needs shelters, and commercial  
25 hotels and \$53 million; \$41 million in tax levy for

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2 service enhancements related to reforms. These new  
3 needs are offset by restructuring and repurposing  
4 savings; DHS and HRA will leverage shared  
5 administrative operations, including legal, budget,  
6 finance, procurement, information, technology, human  
7 resources, communications, and program  
8 accountability; this will maximize resources and  
9 leverage knowledge, skills; experience across the  
10 department to gain efficiencies, realize savings and  
11 improve service delivery.

12 As I noted at my earlier HRA testimony  
13 this morning, this enhanced funding for DHS is part  
14 of \$66 million that was provided across both agencies  
15 to implement the reforms and is offset by \$38 million  
16 in savings from integration, consolidation and  
17 reorganization. The DHS share includes funding for  
18 110 new positions, HOME-STAT, shelter repair squad  
19 with 70 positions, family shelter monitoring and  
20 oversight -- 40 positions, street outreach contract  
21 enhancements, contract shelter rate adjustments,  
22 contracting in non-contract shelter sites. These new  
23 needs are offset by restructuring and repurposing  
24 savings of \$38 million and as I previously described  
25 in my HRA testimony, the consolidation also moves

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3 funding in positions from DHS to HRA to create the  
4 DSS shared services structure. \$38 million in  
5 savings includes repurposing positions from new  
6 program initiatives, improved administrative claiming  
7 and elimination of ineffective programming and  
8 duplicative functions. Now we'll go into additional  
9 details regarding these new needs.

10 First, Shelter Re-estimates.

11 There's been 115 percent. Let me repeat  
12 that; there's been 115 percent increase in  
13 homelessness over the past two decades in New York  
14 City, from 23,526 people in the New York City shelter  
15 system on January 1, 1994 to 33,194 people on January  
16 1, 2002 to nearly 51,000 on January 1, 2014. Based  
17 on this trajectory we were heading to a shelter  
18 census of 71,000 New Yorkers next year before the  
19 prevention and rehousing programs took hold, that  
20 were implement and despite these efforts, we continue  
21 to see entry into shelter as a result of the  
22 multifaceted drivers of homelessness and housing  
23 insecurity.

24 FY 2017 shelter budget will be \$105  
25 billion of which \$587 million are City funds, another  
\$65 million will be spent on shelter intake

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3 administration support; the Executive Budget provided  
4 an increase of \$194 million; \$160 million tax levy  
5 shelter capacity above the January plan based upon  
6 the current spending levels.

6 Capital Budget.

7 The DHS capital budget has been enhanced  
8 during the Executive Budget process to make good on  
9 the promise of providing safe and secure shelter and  
10 to have sufficient funding available to address the  
11 results of the shelter repair squad findings. The  
12 five-year plan totals \$272 million, including an  
13 increase of \$54 million in the September plan and an  
14 increase of \$89.5 million in the executive plan. The  
15 executive plan increase supports over 60 new capital  
16 repair and shelter upgrade projects. The two pie  
17 charts in the PowerPoint we've provided to you show  
18 in more detail how the DHS budget is allocated as of  
19 the Executive Budget submission.

20 Now let's discuss the 90-day review  
21 reforms. As a result of the 90-day review, the  
22 administration developed a comprehensive homeless  
23 services plan focused on prevention and rehousing;  
24 there are four key elements of the plan -- prevention  
25 and rehousing, street homelessness outreach;



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2 improving shelter conditions, a total of 46  
3 individual systemic reforms. In order to focus  
4 resources on prevention and rehousing, as well as  
5 reduce inefficiencies and duplicative services, the  
6 City is implementing an integrated administrative  
7 management structure with both the Human Resources  
8 Administration and Department of Homeless Services  
9 reporting to a single commissioner of Social  
10 Services.

11 Street Homelessness - HOME-STAT.

12 City street homelessness reforms work  
13 together to better identify, engage and transition  
14 homeless New Yorkers from the streets to appropriate  
15 services and permanent housing. The full launch of  
16 HOME-STAT builds on our street homelessness  
17 prevention and response initiatives and enhances  
18 funding for additional safe haven beds, drop-in  
19 centers and the development of 15,000 units of  
20 supportive housing to make sure that those living on  
21 the streets have opportunities to come inside and  
22 connect to the services and supports they need.

23 In April, the City launched HOME-STAT  
24 Daily Dashboard, an online reporting system that maps  
25 requests for homeless outreach assistance from the

public and HOME-STAT canvassers and other related  
data; a monthly dashboard that reports on aggregate  
outcomes, conditions and performance was launched  
earlier this month. Together these dashboards  
provide an unprecedented, consistent, transparent and  
broad set of data to track the City's efforts to  
address street homelessness and improve the lives of  
all New Yorkers.

Shelter.

The City is committed to providing decent  
living conditions and high-quality social services  
and every family and individual living in shelter;  
the following reforms address immediate concerns  
around shelter security and building conditions and  
include long-term strategies for sustaining these  
reforms into the future; these reforms also address  
pressing social services needs, targeting services to  
specific high-risk client groups and giving clients  
opportunities to enhance their income-building  
capacity by developing a career pathway while in  
shelter.

Structure Reform.

We're focusing DHS operations on  
overseeing the not-for-profit shelters and related

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3 services and implementing a new accountability system  
with prevention services aligned with HRA.

4 First, improving shelter security. As  
5 we've announced previously, the deployment of an NYPD  
6 management team to develop an action plan to upgrade  
7 security at all shelters; Chief Thompson is actively  
8 involved in this effort and I meet with him once a  
9 week. NYPD is providing retraining for all DHS peace  
10 officers; we're providing enhanced domestic violence  
11 services in DHS shelters; HRA's No Violence Again  
12 (NoVA) out-stationed domestic violence services will  
13 be expanded to DHS Tier II family shelters to provide  
14 families with access to domestic violence services;  
15 trained staff from HRA will go to designated Tier II  
16 shelters to provide these services, existing social  
17 services staff in Tier II shelters will participate  
18 in enhanced training that will provide them with the  
19 tools to identify and refer families and individuals  
20 to the HRA NoVA team, an NYC Family Justice Center or  
21 other community-based domestic violence providers.

22 We'll be implementing more extensive  
23 reporting for critical incidents that occur in  
24 shelters; DHS has implemented a new, more  
25 comprehensive system for reporting of critical

1 incidents in shelters to ensure that problems are  
2 identified; violence is now defined much more broadly  
3 to include wide-ranging definitions of domestic  
4 violence assault and both child abuse and neglect,  
5 and DHS is implementing thorough reforms to ensure  
6 that all critical incidents, especially violence  
7 incidents are appropriately characterized and there  
8 is appropriate follow up.

10 Shelter conditions and operations are  
11 being improved by expanding the shelter repair squad  
12 operations; the City will continue to aggressively  
13 inspect homeless shelters to identify and address  
14 building violations and shelters in need of repair by  
15 establishing a unit of City staff to conduct twice a  
16 year inspections at all sites used to house homeless  
17 families and individuals; this unit will identify and  
18 address conditions; a publicly available shelter  
19 report card will be produced regularly to hold the  
20 City and other providers accountable concerning  
21 ongoing reporting of apparent violations. Further,  
22 the City will ensure that all providers have clear  
23 information about the standards and regulations  
24 against which they are measured, explore ways to  
25 reduce the time it takes for violations to be cleared

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2 and create a working group of shelter providers to  
3 focus on the best means of working together to  
4 improve shelter conditions.

5 As we conduct these semi-annual, monthly  
6 agency inspections, we are asking OTDA and the  
7 controllers to participate in order to streamline  
8 inspections and work collaboratively with our  
9 providers and partners in government to improve  
10 shelter conditions without creating unnecessary  
11 burdens and to avoid duplication.

12 We're expanding the capital repair  
13 program to address unmet needs that resulted in  
14 unsafe and unacceptable conditions in our shelters;  
15 the City will implement a program to systematically  
16 review and fix capital repairs at shelters.

17 We're rationalizing shelter provider  
18 rates. For too long our contracts have not kept pace  
19 with the increases in costs to deliver quality  
20 program services and shelter to our clients; by  
21 rationalizing our provider rates we are committed to  
22 working with providers to improve the conditions in  
23 our shelters; the City is evaluating payments to  
24 shelter providers to ensure they're sufficient to  
25 fund maintenance and services and is assessing the

capital needs of shelters which have not been adequately supported for many years. We're addressing ADA compliance in shelters; the City is hiring a consultant to evaluate ADA accessibility in the DHS shelter system and to formulate a compliance plan.

Additionally, we're expanding the scope of HRA's ADA coordinator, which as you know is one of the reforms at HRA over the past two years; in order to cover the shelter system, HRA's coordinator will coordinate and oversee ADA compliance and initiatives in the shelter system and the coordinator will also develop and implement staff training and address client complaints.

We're phasing out the use of cluster shelters; the City will phase out the use of cluster shelter units, returning them to market so that the apartments can be restored as low-rent housing; 260 cluster units have already been designated for closure during this fiscal year; the City will continue with the plan to phase out the 16-year-old cluster program through a combination of code enforcement to address inadequate conditions, working with owners to return units to the permanent housing

1 stock, rehabilitate the buildings and permit families  
2 to remain in the upgraded units whenever possible,  
3 and to the extent necessary, replacing units with a  
4 new shelter model that combines traditional housing,  
5 permanent housing and community space known as Home  
6 Stretch or Gateway.  
7

8 We continue to assess the conversion of  
9 existing shelters to permanent housing and replacing  
10 them with those Gateway and Home Stretch models and  
11 at other sites that may be possible to convert entire  
12 shelter site into permanent housing and will begin to  
13 evaluate those certain locations in East New York as  
14 the beginning of that process.

15 We're also gonna be promoting career  
16 pathways for shelter residents by implementing adult  
17 literacy and high school equivalency program in  
18 shelters; these new programs will help shelter  
19 residents move forward on a career pathway; adult  
20 literacy and high school equivalency programming will  
21 be implemented at shelters for residents who need  
22 additional supports in these areas and will be  
23 integrated into employment services enhancements that  
24 are already underway at some adult shelters.  
25

3 The City will also implement a training  
4 and employment program at select shelters for  
5 residents to learn trades by providing system-wide  
6 shelter maintenance services.

7 The remaining slides that are here  
8 provide additional details and reforms; as you can  
9 see, the Executive Budget reflects the breath of the  
10 comprehensive reforms that were announced as the  
11 result of the 90-day; much has been accomplished; we  
12 know that much more needs to be accomplished and we  
13 look forward to working with you as we implement  
14 these essential reforms and we thank you again for  
15 your support and the opportunity to testify and we  
16 welcome your questions.

17 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank  
18 you, Commissioner. If you see us on our phones,  
19 we're like trying to manage this tweeting situation  
20 that we're trying too, so we're very much paying  
21 attention to your presentation... [interpose]

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: You've had to listen  
23 to that same tone for four hours almost now.

24 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: and we're  
25 very much appreciative of you hanging in there with  
us.



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3 So I wanted to ask; DHS FY 2017's  
4 Executive Budget reflects \$193 million in increased  
5 shelter capacity to address projects needed in FY17,  
6 of which \$160.1 million are City funds, using shelter  
7 census data; how does DHS and OMB project the need  
8 for shelter capacity in FY17?

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well first of all,  
10 the projection of dollars is based upon where we are  
11 with current spending and so I know that in prior  
12 hearings before the 90-day review there were  
13 questions about forecasting and projections and so  
14 going forward we're projecting the level of spending  
15 that we're currently experiencing. The projections  
16 that we've looked at as part of the 90-day review are  
17 really a product of looking at several different  
18 factors, but I must come back to something I said at  
19 the beginning, which was, without the prevention; the  
20 rehousing programs that in place, we'd be at 71,000  
21 during the courts of the fiscal year, so we're  
22 building.. all these new reforms are building on what  
23 has come before, which is essentially to stabilize  
24 the system and the projections relate to the numbers  
25 of move-outs we can reasonably accomplish, the  
numbers of entries that are entering, and although we

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2 have reduced the numbers of evictions by 24 percent  
3 through a combination of paying additional rental  
4 assistance, dependent support work and the legal  
5 services assistance, we see people coming every day  
6 to our shelter system as a result of domestic  
7 violence, as a result of family discord, of a whole  
8 range of reasons; people being discharged from  
9 prison, people coming out of mental health situations  
10 and needing those services. So the projections are  
11 reflective on a number of factors that we don't have  
12 control over -- numbers of people released from  
13 prison, for example or numbers of people that may be  
14 coming out of institutions run by other levels of  
15 government. So we monitor very closely on a weekly  
16 basis exits and entrants and we adjust accordingly  
17 and one of the things we wanted to do in our FY17  
18 projection was to take a bottom line view of where we  
19 are today and make the assumption that we would need  
20 a certain amount of dollars to continue where we are  
21 today and if we can do better, we'll do better.

22 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay. So  
23 we're gonna be following up with you on this.

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Absolutely, I know  
25 you will.

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2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Great.

3 So this speaks part of the 90-day review;  
4 would you be able to provide us a breakdown of the  
5 \$38 million savings in DHS' budget as a result of the  
6 changes implemented by the 90-day review, and if we  
7 don't have that available right now; can we have this  
8 part of the other briefing that we're gonna have with  
9 the committees and your agencies for more detail?

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I think that would  
11 be best, 'cause it really relates to what I had  
12 testified during the HRA hearing... [crosstalk]

13 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right.

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: and I think we got  
15 to a, I hope, a good place... [crosstalk]

16 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Yes.

17 COMMISSIONER BANKS: of saying let's look  
18 at functional...

19 [interpose]

20 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Yes.

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: analysis as opposed  
22 to units for appropriation and that would provide  
23 you, I think, this transparency that you're looking  
24 for, beyond the larger numbers that I gave in the  
25 earlier hearing.

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2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Great, so  
3 we can make this kind of a... [crosstalk]

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Absolutely.

5 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: both  
6 agencies.

7 Cluster sites; how many contracts with  
8 cluster sites have been terminated thus far? I know  
9 you talked about this in your testimony, but I wanted  
10 to know if you had an exact number, and is DHS on  
11 track of accomplishing closing the 260 cluster sites  
12 by the end of this fiscal year?

13 COMMISSIONER BANKS: To the second  
14 question, yes and the calculation -- the closure of  
15 cluster sites, some have involved providers, for  
16 example, Acacia is a provider we have a longstanding  
17 relationship with; they, along with the department  
18 identified certain sites that we thought were  
19 important to no longer use and although they continue  
20 to have an overall contract, there are particular  
21 units that are within that 260 that are being phased  
22 out; there is also a contract that had been, or a  
23 program with a provider called We Always Care and  
24 that is being totally phased out. So the short  
25 answer to your question is; the number 260 reflects

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2 units within different providers' contracts that  
3 we're eliminating at the initial phase of the phase-  
4 out and an entire contract with one particular  
5 providers.

6 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay. So  
7 I guess if you can also share with us how many those  
8 are and how many we still have to go; if you don't  
9 have that now... [crosstalk]

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well there's a... Well  
11 there's a... there's 260 units...

12 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right.

13 COMMISSIONER BANKS: and the overall  
14 numbers in clusters are approximately 3,000. One of  
15 the issues that came up during the HRA hearing,  
16 however, was the opportunity to try to convert some  
17 of the units into permanent housing where people  
18 could remain in place...

19 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right.

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: and so in our first  
21 initial phase we tried to identify units that under  
22 any sort of circumstances we want no placements to  
23 continue in beyond a very short-term basis and now  
24 we're moving into other units where there may be  
25 opportunities to convert them, even as we continue to

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3 identify units that we still may wanna phase out  
4 sooner rather than later.

5 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: And do  
6 you find that, for example, one of the shelters in my  
7 district that was most recently opened is The  
8 Landing, which was a former hotel, and you're still  
9 going through the capital process of being able to  
10 install kitchens, but would those sites, or do hotels  
11 or motels or -- are these facilities most amenable to  
12 kind of transferring them to permanent housing,  
13 permanent affordable?

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: The units that have  
15 been used that are most amenable to conversion are in  
16 that 16-year-old cluster program; I mean it's been  
17 now through multiple mayoral administrations that  
18 apartments that were low-rent housing were rented as  
19 shelter...

20 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right.

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: and although there  
22 may need to be rehabilitations; there are certainly  
23 gonna be issues with respect to whether or not we can  
24 successfully conclude agreements with landlords, but  
25 those are the most amenable to being changed. On the  
other hand, for other populations we may be able to

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convert a hotel into supportive housing, for example...

3 [crosstalk]

4 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right.

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: for adult families  
6 or for single adults. Every location will be a  
7 location by location analysis. As we pointed out,  
8 one of the things that we are setting in motion as a  
9 forward part of the reforms is to actually analyze  
10 every existing shelter for potential repurposing.

11 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay. So  
12 the capital funding increased by almost \$90 million  
13 and this funding will address exterior and interior  
14 upgrades at shelters, bringing fire alarm systems up  
15 to code as well as installing CCTVs in all shelters  
16 as part of the initiative to enhance shelter  
17 security. Going forward, how will DHS ensure that  
18 the capital needs are addressed in the existing and  
19 new contracts; I guess that speaks to my last  
20 question in the prior hearing today about how do we  
21 start looking at maintenance being a part of the  
22 capital spending that we do so we're not here 10, 20  
23 years from now?

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well I think there  
25 are multiple moving parts here with the providers

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4 that are meant to address that. The first part is  
5 what we have been doing during this fiscal year on  
6 **[inaudible]** of next fiscal year, which is this  
7 massive repair effort through the shelter repair  
8 squad, which is substantially reduce the numbers of  
9 violations in the non-cluster shelters; that was our  
10 priority, the shelters were gonna stay in; we want to  
11 correct violations. We have substantially reduced  
12 the numbers of violations and we're now at a place  
13 where we're beginning to have to address capital  
14 needs that will take a longer period of time, so  
15 that's one work stream.

16 The second work stream is the process  
17 that we met with Homeless Services United about that  
18 we're going into in terms of rationalizing the rates  
19 and one of -- you know, we met with shelter providers  
20 as part of our 90-day review process; they identified  
21 something that you've identified, which is; is there  
22 sufficient budgeting for maintenance and some  
23 maintenance funds could be budgeted within a shelter  
24 budget or otherwise it could be budgeted within our  
25 own administrative budget and that's gonna be..

[crosstalk]

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right.



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2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: part of the process  
3 of rationalizing the rates to address I think your  
4 very valid concern about what's gonna happen going  
5 forward, and then the third work stream is the  
6 capital dollars.

7 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: And how  
8 do our non City-owned shelters apply for capital?

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well that will be  
10 part of the process, because if we've got the need  
11 for television cameras for security in a privately-  
12 run building and we've got that in a City-owned  
13 building, we're gonna have to bridge that tradition  
14 [sic] problem. On that note, by the way, I wanna say  
15 that although the Bellevue shelter has operated for  
16 30 years without any security cameras, we're  
17 expecting by the beginning of the summer to have  
18 installed security cameras; that came out of the 90-  
19 day review; obviously the recent tragedy highlighted  
20 the fact that for 30 years there hadn't been any  
21 cameras, but I think that the speed with which we're  
22 trying to move to correct some of these things is  
23 illustrated by that particular example. But there's  
24 three pieces -- funds directly to the providers,  
25 which could be for maintenance or making significant

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2 repairs and then there's capital funding and then  
3 there's our own expenditures to keep things up.

4 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: And you  
5 know, from our perspective there's a huge investment  
6 and not to say that the -- obviously the population  
7 and the growth justifies some true investment and  
8 **[inaudible]** change and I think that the  
9 administration is doing that and if anyone can do it,  
10 you can do it and we believe in you; how, after the  
11 90 days and after we've done this assessment, is this  
12 open-ended where you're consistently reevaluating or  
13 what are the tools that you're using, because this is  
14 a significant investment in our budget to help  
15 address this issue and you know, if we come back here  
16 next fiscal year or two fiscal years from now and  
17 we've only moved the needle a certain point, you  
18 know, are we gonna do another 90-day review, it just  
19 seems -- what is the measurable that you have given  
20 yourself along the way?

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well let's sort of  
22 review what we've been able to do during 90 days,  
23 which I think will give you some confidence about how  
24 we're gonna proceed with capital reduction.

25

3 So just a week or so ago we came out with  
4 the monthly shelter repair score card, so we're  
5 holding ourselves publicly accountable for what the  
6 conditions are and we're continuing to inspect twice  
7 a year, so we're both aggressively inspecting and  
8 transparently reporting so everybody can see what's  
9 going on. At the end -- and again, we're talking  
10 about the non-cluster units -- at the end of April we  
11 had 4500 pending violations in the non-cluster  
12 buildings; this is about 300 odd shelters; that  
13 compared to 5,852 at the end of March, so a 23  
14 percent decline in that one month, but it's also a 57  
15 percent decrease since the end of January; at the end  
16 of January we had 10,474 violations in the non-  
17 cluster units and we also kept finding new  
18 violations, so including new violations found and  
19 cleared, we basically cleared a total of 9,120  
20 violations. So this is a very aggressive ongoing  
21 process, the shelter repair squad reform that the  
22 Mayor announced at the beginning of January was not  
23 meant to be, we'll do it during the 90-day period;  
24 this is gonna be the regimen of how we're gonna deal  
25 with shelter conditions. In terms of the capital  
dollars, there is a very clear process that Office of

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2 Management and Budget, the Mayor's Office of  
3 Operations, the Department of Social Services,  
4 overseeing both HRA and DHS will be embarking on  
5 together with our partners at HPD and Buildings, to  
6 move through the capital repairs that are needed.  
7 But also, I wanna just, you know, note a caution;  
8 these repairs and problems built up over years; we're  
9 moving very aggressively to fix them; my concern was  
10 one thing you said, well we don't wanna be here next  
11 year and have some of these problems still be there;  
12 some of these are very substantial capital repairs  
13 that need to be addressed and this a multi-year  
14 capital initiative; on the other hand, we must make  
15 sure that we provide people with safe accommodations  
16 and so we're moving as aggressively as we possibly  
17 can to address that.

18 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank  
19 you, Commissioner. We will now hear from our co-  
20 chair, Co-Chair Levin.

21 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: I'll turn it over to my  
22 colleagues first; then I'll come back for some  
23 questions. Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer and we've  
24 been joined by Council Members Jimmy Van Bramer,  
25 Daneek Miller, Steve Matteo and Ydanis Rodriguez.

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3 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Thank you  
4 very much to both chairs.

5 Commissioner, I just wanted to ask a few  
6 questions about the funding for new staff positions  
7 for the family shelter oversight. As you probably  
8 know, I have two fairly large homeless shelters in my  
9 district, but neither is a family shelter; both  
10 Borden Avenue, which is a shelter, as you know for  
11 homeless veterans, male veteran and Pam's Place,  
12 formerly known as The Verve Hotel shelter for single  
13 women and is there an increase for single adult  
shelters as well?

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I wanna try to  
15 assure you of the following, which is, like when we  
16 made the HRA reforms we said look, we thought we  
17 needed 550 positions to repurpose and we were given  
18 the authority from OMB to proceed with that  
19 repurposing; this represents our best snapshot at the  
20 end of 90 days about where there gaps in services and  
21 how we would address them, but I wanna assure you  
22 that as we... we didn't take a view that it was 90 days  
23 and then we're done and if we find gaps, for example,  
24 looking at the two shelters in your more direct  
25 purview, we know each other a long time; if you have

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2 identified gaps and might send some questions

3 **[inaudible]** you may have; we're certainly gonna

4 continue to take a fresh look at what's needed; this

5 is not a frozen in time reform process; this is an

6 ongoing interim process; I know that the Finance

7 Committee chair asked me about a particular problem

8 involving a family member which both gave me an

9 opportunity to reflect on the change that we've made

10 and how far we have to go and this is a robust reform

11 process we have for shelters and I'm sure we will

12 still have problems that we're gonna need to address

13 as we... [interpose]

14 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: So let me

15 follow up, 'cause I'm on a time. The Verve, now

16 known as Pam's Place, is also primarily a mental

17 health shelter and I obviously support more staffing

18 for families and elder oversight, but you know there

19 is some very specific need and challenges that you

20 all face with respect to some of the shelters like

21 Pam's Place and they seem equally deserving of

22 additional oversight and in fact some of those

23 challenges faced by the women at Pam's Place require

24 it, so I would just urge you then to, as part of this

25

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3 overall process, continue to seek additional  
4 oversight over those kinds of shelters.

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We'll do that and  
6 I'd be happy... as I said, we know each other a long  
7 time; I'd be happy to sit down with you and talk  
8 about any particular concerns you have with either of  
9 the facilities in your district, which might help us  
10 either come up with a solution we haven't thought of  
11 before or alternatively see a gap in services; I'd be  
12 happy to do that... [crosstalk]

13 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Yeah. Look,  
14 Commissioner Stevens was out at the shelter with us  
15 and we were very impressed, I wanna say that on the  
16 record, and she was terrific in coming there in a  
17 challenging situation, but I also wanna say I'm proud  
18 of the work that we've done to work with you all on  
19 this and our community has avoided some of the issues  
20 that other communities have averted, which is a  
21 tribute to the Dutch Kills community as well and the  
22 leadership of that civic association. Despite the  
23 fact that there have been significant local  
24 challenges out the outset, I think things are getting  
25 better. But I wanted to ask one... a more global  
question, right, and it speaks to sort of the overall

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2 crisis that the city faces, but it relates in some  
3 ways to The Verve. As you know, Pam's Place is about  
4 200 capacity and I know that that's what you need in  
5 terms of beds for single adult women, but there's the  
6 question of what's needed in the short-term and then  
7 what's optimal for the best long-term outcomes and I  
8 guess I just wanna ask you because I know that you're  
9 so thoughtful about these things and we know your  
10 work for all these years; how do we get to a place  
11 where we're not simply get into the number based on  
12 the crisis but actually knowing what is the number in  
13 terms of the best long-term outcomes for these women  
14 and staying there? Do you understand what I'm  
15 saying?

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I do and it's an  
17 excellent question and I appreciate your compliment  
18 to Lorraine Stephens, but I also wanna take the  
19 opportunity [bell] to throw a compliment back to you  
20 because the leadership that you've shown in this has  
21 been terrific, both in terms of initially and then  
22 dealing with problems that arose and I appreciate the  
23 partnership with you on that.

24 You raise a very fundamental question and  
25 that I think I can answer in the following way. As



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2 we look to be more effective at bringing people in  
3 off the streets, we're very focused on safe haven,  
4 small, low demand ways to convince people who ended  
5 up on the streets for a whole range of different  
6 reasons to come in and start back on a pathway  
7 towards supportive housing and that's the model we  
8 are moving towards. We're in a short run situation  
9 to deal with a lot of different problems we have  
10 inherited, I mean the driver of mental health and the  
11 First Lady and the Mayor have been very focused on  
12 addressing that challenge. So your point is well  
13 taken; we're gonna continue to aim for what we think  
14 is best, but also make sure that in the short run  
15 we're providing a roof over the head for people, but  
16 your question is one that we think about a lot and I  
17 appreciate your challenging us to continue to think  
18 about it.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Thank you and  
20 I know my time is up, but I just wanna say again that  
21 you know we want both the men at Borden Avenue and  
22 the women at Pam's Place to get all the services that  
23 they rightfully deserve to be able to live the lives  
24 that all of us were intended to live and finding that  
25 right balance is really the most important thing.

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2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Understood.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank  
5 you, Council Member. We'll have Council Member  
6 Miller, followed by Council Member Rodriguez.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you, Madame  
8 Cha... [interpose]

9 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: I'm  
10 sorry, Council Member Miller; Council Member Matteo  
11 and then followed by you; my apologies.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Sorry, Council  
13 Member Miller; tryin' to step up in my questioning.

14 Commissioner, thank you for being here  
15 again. I wanna talk about the hotels in my district  
16 and I appreciate your staff and you working with me  
17 personally on the issues of our hotels, so I just  
18 wanna get right into it. Obviously the triple  
19 homicide in the Ramada, I just wanna make sure that  
20 we are... no families are in there right now and that  
21 we've kept that commitment.

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We immediately  
23 stopped using that hotel and are not using it and  
24 have no plans to use it.

25

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3 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Great. And so if  
we could shift a little bit to the Travis Hotels; you  
4 have honored your commitment to get down to half the  
5 families, so can you give me the update of the  
6 numbers or the number of families in the Travis  
7 Hotels?

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right...

9 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: And if all three  
10 are being used or I think two out of the three now.

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We've been able to  
12 reduce the numbers down to less than 30, so less than  
13 50 percent; we've gonna keep working on that; we had  
14 concerns, as you did, about the location of it in  
15 terms of being able to provide appropriate services  
16 to our clients. I appreciate frankly that you  
17 reached out to us and we were able to work together  
18 to come up with a solution and I look forward to keep  
19 working with you. I also want to assure you that, as  
20 in all the commercial hotels, we have deployed  
21 additional contracted security to make sure that we  
22 have 24-hour security in the remaining hotels on  
23 Staten Island and all the other hotels.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: And I appreciate  
25 that and we obviously will continue to meet; we have

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3 a lot of work to do and I look forward to working  
4 with you.

5 So I just wanna just talk about now the  
6 issue of security in the hotels. So I understand the  
7 PD is putting together a strategy, so in the meantime  
8 we have private security at the Travis Hotels and in  
9 other hotels in the city?

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: That's correct. The  
11 system that's built up in the city over the last 20  
12 years is one that involves DHS peace officers at  
13 certain facilities, primarily directly run  
14 facilities, privately contracted security currently  
15 through the FJC Company, contracted directly with the  
16 City that deploys security at certain locations, like  
17 now the commercial hotels and then providers  
18 themselves have security on staff, and so the Police  
19 Department is undertaking a thorough review and  
20 developing an action plan; as I noted earlier, Chief  
21 Thompson has been assigned and he meets with us now  
22 weekly and we're very confident that they will have  
23 an action plan in place to take a fresh look at this  
24 system that's built up over 20 years.  
25

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Okay. So the  
3 security, do you need the owner of the hotel to okay  
4 the security or can we just put them in?

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We reached out to  
6 each hotel owner, as part of the 90-day review,  
7 reached out to each hotel owner and each hotel owner  
8 agreed to accept additional security at our expense.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Okay. So 'cause  
10 I assume, just in reality there's a security guard  
11 placed in the lobby; is... I'm trying to found out  
12 where in the hotel the security is.

13 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right, there was an  
14 assessment conducted as to how many security guards  
15 would need to be deployed and the security guards are  
16 deployed in order to monitor and protect entrants  
17 into the facility... [crosstalk]

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: So does a family  
19 have to check in with the security guard; does anyone  
20 at the hotel have to check in, because the Ramada  
21 incident brought about the fact that he came to visit  
22 them and that is an extreme concern to me and you as  
23 well, you know, for the protection of the families,  
24 for the protection of the people in the hotels; for  
25 the protection of the area, so I guess I'm concerned

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2 about protocol and you know just coming in and out of  
3 the hotels, especially in light of the horrific  
4 incident a few months back. So I guess is security  
5 -- I get that they're doing checks, but are they  
6 actually checking people in and checking to see where  
7 visitors might be going in the hotels?

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I think the incident  
9 in Staten Island, the tragedy there just illustrates  
10 how complex this is, even to answer your questions.  
11 In the tragedy that happened there, it was caught  
12 entirely on a security camera and anyone monitoring  
13 the camera would have found absolutely no reason for  
14 alarm at all; there was a man, a woman and children  
15 and totally appropriate family interaction that was  
16 captured on security camera; they went behind the  
17 closed door and within five minutes the tragedy had  
18 occurred. So the security is deployed in order to  
19 provide the best possible security one can provide to  
20 prevent tragedies, the cameras are there to prevent,  
21 [bell] to the maximum extent possible, tragedies.  
22 But the reason why we want the Police Department to  
23 conduct a review is they're the professionals here;  
24 there has never been this sort of review conducted in  
25 all the years in the shelter system, going back

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2 decades and the Mayor and we want the Police  
3 Department to do that; they're doing it on an  
4 expedited basis and I'm confident that they'll give  
5 us the kind of guidance that you're looking for; I  
6 also think that we're likely to have completed our  
7 use of those particular hotels before they complete  
8 the review.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Yeah, I agree  
10 with you and we... we... certainly that... I mean obviously  
11 I have specific protocol issues that I will also  
12 bring up with them and you know I ask that you do  
13 that because we have to... I agree with you, you know  
14 I'm not being critical of the process, but my point  
15 is, we have to do as much as we can if we're gonna  
16 spend monies at these hotels, we have to protect the  
17 families that are there, we have to protect the...  
18 whether we like it or not, they are now mixed in with  
19 other hotel-goers and we have to make sure that the  
20 property security is in place; we are also working  
21 with PD to make sure that they are patrolling outside  
22 the hotel to make sure that issues aren't arising  
23 outside the hotel, which is... as you know, the Travis  
24 Hotels and the Ramada Inn are very close to  
25 residential areas; in fact, they abut residential

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2 streets, so you know, I think we have to just  
3 continue to do that and continue to work with the  
4 NYPD. So I appreciate your cooperation and I know my  
5 time's up, so I'll just bring up this last point.  
6 The cost of the hotels, obviously it's not something...  
7 it's more expensive -- I guess I'm asking you; what  
8 are the costs to use the hotels; are we paying the  
9 going rate \$150 a night; are we paying by room, by  
10 night; is there a contract with the hotel owner, and  
11 quite frankly, is it, you know, financially feasible  
12 to be using them?

13 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right. The costs  
14 vary by room; they're in the range that you talked  
15 about, the process that's in the reforms going  
16 forward is to bring any facility that's in use on a  
17 contract, this a direct contract, commercial hotels  
18 historically have not been contracted and that's one  
19 of the reforms, to bring everything that we're using  
20 under contract. But I also wanna go back to  
21 something that came up during the HRA hearing, which  
22 is; the expenditures for shelter raise the following  
23 question, they raise, isn't an ounce of prevention  
24 worth a pound of cure, and one of the very critical  
25 pieces we need is the additional assistance and



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3 approval of our family eviction prevention supplement  
4 program to keep as many people as possible out of the  
5 shelter system and that ultimately will have the  
6 outcome that the clients want; that I know these  
7 committees want and that we all want, which is to not  
8 just stop the trajectory to 71,000 as we've done, but  
to actually go even further.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Well

10 Commissioner, I mean I thought the meeting that you  
11 had with myself and the Borough President was very... a  
12 great start and the Borough President and I will  
13 continue to work with you and I look forward to our  
14 next meeting; we have a lot, obviously specifically  
15 to talk about in terms of the Travis Hotels and the  
16 Ramada, so I look forward to doing that and I  
17 appreciate your cooperation. Thank you, Madame  
18 Chair... [crosstalk]

19 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Thank you. I  
20 appreciate the partnership with you.

21 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: And I  
22 gave you a little extra time, 'cause of my mistake  
23 [background comment]. Okay, so we're even. We've  
24 been joined by Council Members Gibson, Cornegy and  
25 Cabrera; we will now hear from Council Member Miller,

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2 followed by Council Member Rodriguez. [background  
3 comment] I'm sure it's your turn.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you, Madame  
5 Chair. Good afternoon, Commissioner... [crosstalk]

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Good afternoon.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: good to see you  
8 and your team here -- couple of questions. So  
9 obviously we've had some conversations over the past  
10 year about transparency of your agency and some of  
11 the services that were being provided and I kind of..  
12 I'd be remiss if I didn't wanna talk about it, for a  
13 number of reasons; obviously to kind of identify  
14 where they exist and talk about what's being done to  
15 ensure that they are being located in the optimum  
16 location, given that obviously land is a premium, but  
17 also, to provide the services that are necessary so  
18 that we can grow people from shelters to permanent  
19 housing, as well as that we know that communities are  
20 not being disproportionately impacted. But one thing  
21 I do wanna say about that is that where elected and  
22 community leaders are involved, I think that that has  
23 made for a better environment for all involved and I  
24 would hope that that continues to happen; I will say  
25 that even in my experience, that has been a positive

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2 experience that when we are able to move forward and  
3 have an exchange that benefits both the client and  
4 the community and hopefully that client can become a  
5 real viable part of the community and you guys have  
6 done well, but where you don't have leadership  
7 involved, how then do we make sure that clients are  
8 receiving the type of resources that are necessary to  
9 help them to transition; is it a self-reporting  
10 process with providers that you've contracted with or  
11 is there some type of oversight that allows you to  
12 kind of understand, and I know it's a major task, so  
13 how do we know that this is working and what needs to  
14 be done?

15 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right, I think it's  
16 a good question; again, I appreciate your leadership  
17 on the veterans housing initiative in your district,  
18 it really was important for the veterans involved and  
19 for the seniors as well that.. [crosstalk]

20 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Working well.

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: it ended up..

22 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: **[inaudible]** was  
23 there last night; it's working well.

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Great; we appreciate  
25 your leadership on that. Part of the review did

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2 identify gaps in services and oversight; part of the  
3 challenge, of course, for the Department of Homeless  
4 Services is that with the increase in the census that  
5 I described from 1994 and coming to 2014, the size of  
6 the system grew substantially from about 24,000 in  
7 1994 to 34,000 almost in 2002, heading to 51,000 in  
8 2014, so the growth of the system was not matched  
9 entirely against what the staffing model has been and  
10 what the oversight model has been, so part of the  
11 reform is to look at setting up new systems and to  
12 put one of our highest priorities on enhancing the  
13 ability to move people out as expeditiously as  
14 possible and we're putting a lot of emphasis on  
15 reforms of enhancing shelter move-outs because we  
16 think that's the best way to effectively deliver  
17 services; where there are other situations where  
18 someone may need more ongoing services, we're gonna  
19 have to address that too. The problem you identify I  
20 think historically has been a real one and our  
21 reforms are aimed at trying to address that, but I  
22 don't wanna mislead you; some of these things we're  
23 not gonna be able to solve overnight, but I believe  
24 together with you and the committee we'll get on the  
25 right track.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: So I have two  
3 other questions. Now what I see is, in the family  
4 shelters there are some great things happening, some  
5 great support happening; I had the opportunity to  
6 visit a family shelter in the district and actually,  
7 more than visit, but some of the great things that  
8 are going on with the outside agency that is  
9 contracted there, with the young people and the  
10 educational opportunities going on, as well as the  
11 opportunities for the parents, but we're not seeing  
12 the same level of resources being dedicated to the  
13 single men and women's shelters, so what can we do,  
14 or is there something that I'm missing? And then  
15 secondly, and I wanna get this into my **[inaudible]**;  
16 is the mental health component; are there mental  
17 health evaluations and services being given on the  
18 shelter grounds or is it something that we're doing  
19 in the future, considering the magnitude of that?

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: So there are dollars  
21 allocated for shelter programming for single shelters  
22 [background comment] that would address both women  
23 and men's shelters that are reflected in the budget,  
24 so that is happening; it's gonna be... it's been rolled  
25 out in certain places [bell] and will continue to be

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2 rolled out. In terms of mental health, there is an  
3 evaluation process, but some of the additional  
4 funding we're getting, particularly through the NYC  
5 Safe Program, is to enhance services in the mental  
6 health area, but it's certainly an area which we  
7 wanna work together with the state on to address the  
8 fact that, of course decades ago, when all across the  
9 country institutions, there was the  
10 deinstitutionalization movement; I don't think that  
11 the aim of it was to end up with us running  
12 essentially de facto mental health facilities within  
13 the shelters... [crosstalk]

14 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Right.

15 COMMISSIONER BANKS: so we're hopeful  
16 that that will be a larger [sic] issue that can be  
17 addressed.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: How soon before  
19 we actually see that on the properties **[inaudible]**..  
20 [crosstalk]

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well I think the  
22 programming will be rolled out during the course of  
23 the fiscal year... [interpose]

24 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: That's...

25

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3 COMMISSIONER BANKS: the larger problem  
4 of dealing with operating de facto mental health  
5 facilities within the shelter system is gonna require  
6 cooperation among multiple levels of government, but  
7 we're hopeful, we're not gonna stop until we can make  
the kind of reforms we think are needed.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you so  
9 much.

10 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank  
11 you, Council Member. We will now hear from Council  
12 Member Rodriguez.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Thank you,  
14 Chair.

15 First of all, I would like to thank again  
16 Mayor de Blasio, as well as the Commissioner and  
17 also, of course like, from our end [sic], Speaker  
18 Melissa Mark-Viverito for having the vision, but  
19 especially with the leadership of Mayor de Blasio.  
20 You know trying to address a crisis that we have  
21 created in this society for decades when it comes to  
22 lack of housing for our homeless population and the  
23 lack of real solutions to address, you know a problem  
24 that is so big in our society and to have so many  
25 people responsible for that and everyone recognizes,

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2 you know, all the contribution that you have made,  
3 not only, you know as the commissioner for the HRA,  
4 but also connecting those services to those New  
5 Yorkers who need it the most.

6 I have a few questions, one is;

7 [background comments] of course we have addressed it  
8 before, you know that you want to do that, but to see  
9 the best you can do; I know that we had challenges  
10 and restrictions by the state, but one area that it  
11 looks so simple, but for me is very important because  
12 very often there's someone that go to my business  
13 office saying, I lost one of my relatives; I don't  
14 have the money to cover the expense for the burial or  
15 for the funeral expenses and as we have in the  
16 website, well we have that we as a city has a  
17 financial assistance for residents of the five  
18 boroughs of New York City, but only going up to \$900;  
19 we know that you're being flexible, you know that  
20 sometimes try to do the best you can; you have great  
21 staff who always when we made the call, try to be  
22 helpful, but the discretion [sic] as it is, it's  
23 supposed to be used only when the costs of the burial  
24 or the funeral is \$900; we know that there is no  
25 funeral that costs \$900 in our city, so how can we,



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2 you know, where are we right now; I know that you  
3 have intention you know that you have seen it; can we  
4 do something without going to Albany at the city  
5 level, giving some flexibility for those families who  
6 need it the most in their most difficult moment  
7 saying here you can go to the place and apply for the  
8 financial assistance to bury your relative, but not  
9 limiting to the \$900?

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right, I mean you're  
11 absolutely right that we have a state regulatory  
12 challenge and I'm certainly willing to be available  
13 to work with you to see how we might surmount that,  
14 but it is a regulatory challenge we have with this  
15 particular grant. I know it's not a good answer to  
16 give, but we do have to operate within the grant  
17 levels that we're authorized to issue grants for, but  
18 perhaps if we join forces we could make some change.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: But as someone  
20 that has been creative in other areas, can you also  
21 use your creativity and together working with Mayor  
22 de Blasio and all of us here be able to put something  
23 additional in place where we also can match some of  
24 those costs, because you know what we know is that  
25 there is not a \$900 cost for funeral, so it's like,

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2 how are we **[inaudible]** something that is not real,  
3 you know of course I know -- and even as we apply  
4 today, it's not for someone to say here, you can be  
5 whole by the City with \$900, go and look for the  
6 rest. The program as it is says that the cost of the  
7 funeral or the burial has to be \$900.

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I appreciate your  
9 kind words about my creativity and I will try to be  
10 as creative as we can to look for some solution to  
11 this regulatory problem.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

13 My second question is, and first of all,  
14 thank you, because I know that you've also been a  
15 champion in your previous area of service in our  
16 city; you know you have that track record of helping  
17 those who need it the most and one of those groups  
18 that now you've been helping in the new role is our  
19 CUNY college students. In the past, you know,  
20 students going to our colleges, they were asked to  
21 work 35 hours in order to be able to get the public  
22 assistance; we know that now in a CUNY community  
23 college student, they can apply and they can qualify  
24 to get the public assistance without the requirement  
25 of 35 hours; how has this program worked; how many

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2 students do you see have benefits, and what is your  
3 vision on expanding this program?

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well it was a very  
5 important reform that happened at the beginning that  
6 we were able to change the state law to enable  
7 participation in college, four-year college to be  
8 [bell] a way to fulfill the federal and state work  
9 requirements, and then I think, as you know, we added  
10 work study on the CUNY campus as an available option  
11 for our clients who are in four-year college, because  
12 the state law said you don't have do the 35 hours  
13 anymore, but you still need 20 hours of work activity  
14 and so we added a very special program for work study  
15 for our clients. I must say the numbers are  
16 increasing and we can get you those numbers; I think  
17 when we fully implement our two-year employment  
18 program, that the state gave us a two-year phase-in,  
19 that we'll have better tools to even encourage more  
20 clients to go to CUNY to get that degree. You've  
21 said this, I've said this; the difference between  
22 having a high school credential and having at least  
23 two years of college is the difference between living  
24 in poverty and moving out of poverty. So we're very  
25 focused on trying to expand it and hopeful that we'll

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2 be able to encourage more clients who are ready for  
3 it to be able to proceed.

4 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank  
5 you, Council Member; we'll now hear from Council  
6 Member Cabrera.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Thank you to the  
8 chairs. Commissioner, again, I know we spoke  
9 earlier, but I have a question regarding the  
10 overwhelming amount of shelters that I have in my  
11 district. I spoke to a principal the other day and  
12 she told me that we had 29 students who came from  
13 Staten Island; this is just one school, some of my  
14 schools have 20 percent of the populations are coming  
15 from shelter; I think one of them goes to 39 percent,  
16 so it's a twofold question; one, are there any plans  
17 to open more shelters and what would be the criteria  
18 moving forward and do we foresee of closing some of  
19 these as now that we're so successful, and I was glad  
20 to be part of the inclusionary zoning, that hopefully  
21 we'll have more space in the affordable housing for  
22 those who are in shelters right now?

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I mean I appreciate  
24 your reference to the housing plan; I think that's  
25 really a critical piece; it's not gonna happen

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2 overnight and in the sort of here and now we have to  
3 deal with the need to shelter individuals. In your  
4 district I think you have a number of cluster  
5 shelters and so part of the plan to phase those out  
6 will have the benefit for the individuals involved  
7 and we'll certainly be interested in working with you  
8 as part of that phase-out process to eliminate the  
9 use of essentially permanent housing as shelter and  
10 we think that will have a beneficial effect, so happy  
11 to work with you on... [interpose]

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: I really  
13 appreciate that and hopefully we will not be like the  
14 tail end district; that we could... or there could be  
15 some kind of equity citywide and we could be part of  
16 the equity. Really appreciate your response...  
17 [crosstalk]

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: 'Kay.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Thank you so  
20 much.

21 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank  
22 you, Council Member. Council Member... [background  
23 comments]

24 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you very much,  
25 Madame Chair and Commissioner, thank you. I have

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3 some questions that may have been touched upon by my  
4 colleagues, but I do want to address and so I might  
be jumping around here a little bit.

5 In your testimony you mentioned adult  
6 literacy and high school equivalency programming at  
7 shelters; if this is reflected in the DHS budget,  
8 which program area would that be in, because you  
9 mentioned similar programs in HRA's budget and I just  
10 wanna make sure that that is not duplicative or the  
11 same programming, you know, reflected in two separate  
12 budgets.

13 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I think it actually  
14 gets to that unit of appropriation issue, which is  
15 that there are pieces of it that relate to our own  
16 employment plan; there are pieces of it that relate  
17 to the shelter programming dollars that the Mayor  
18 added as part of the 90-day review, and so it'll be...  
19 I think it'll be a helpful way to sort of work  
20 through with you in the staff meeting how to give you  
21 the kind of transparency you're asking for. So  
22 you're gonna find those dollars in multiple different  
23 places. In the actual reforms, I believe there's  
24 approximately \$1 million allocated, but it builds  
25 upon other dollars that are in the shelter

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2 programming for DHS in their budget, in that agency's  
3 budget and then of course, as part of the employment  
4 plan we have particularized employment services for  
5 clients in shelter.

6 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Right; I was referring  
7 to the \$5 million that's in the homeless programmatic  
8 enhancements as part of the new needs in the HRA  
9 budget... [crosstalk]

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right. Right.

11 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: So you're saying that it  
12 is in fact in the DHS -- there's a separate line in  
13 DHS that is for similar...

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I didn't mean to  
15 confuse you; you'll...

16 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: 'Kay.

17 COMMISSIONER BANKS: In the DHS budget  
18 there'll be the underlying reform of adding more  
19 shelter programming...

20 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Right.

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: and that includes  
22 things like literacy; you'll also see in the HRA  
23 budget the larger employment plan funding and you'll  
24 see things like these kinds of services for  
25 employment and then in that particular unit of

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2 appropriations you're looking at you'll see some  
3 additional enhancements as well. But again, I think  
4 it'll be beneficial to give you more of a functional  
5 work-through of where all those dollars are.

6 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Okay; just to be clear,  
7 in the HRA budget it's reflected as daytime programs  
8 at shelters -- job training, literacy; not employment  
9 plan-related, but shelter-related.

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right, but some of  
11 those plans, some of those services are services that  
12 relate to employment plan services; some of those --  
13 for example, the shelter repair trades training..

14 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Uh-huh. Right.

15 COMMISSIONER BANKS: that's a new  
16 program; that's reflected in the HRA budget, but it's  
17 also reflective of other programs that we've got to  
18 try to connect people to work in shelter.. [crosstalk]

19 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: 'Kay [sic].

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: so I think again, a  
21 more functional presentation would be helpful, but I  
22 understand the question and... [crosstalk]

23 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Okay.

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I think it's part of  
25 the complexity of making substantial reforms like



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2 this and at the same time being in the midst of it  
3 while we're also trying to be helpful for the  
4 oversight role that you've got.

5 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Okay. In new needs  
6 reflected in DHS homeless programmatic enhancements,  
7 there's \$22.9 million reflected in FY17 for the HOME-  
8 STAT program, which you spoke about in your  
9 testimony; my understanding when HOME-STAT was  
10 announced was that it was gonna be repurposed funds;  
11 there was not gonna be any new -- wasn't gonna be new  
12 needs -- this was I think spoke... we spoke about this  
13 at the preliminary budget hearing; is that still the  
14 case; is this repurposed funds... [interpose]

15 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yes.

16 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: is this... where is it  
17 coming from if it's repurposed?

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: It's coming from the  
19 same... you know, large transaction, what's the total  
20 cost, \$66 million; \$38 million worth of savings  
21 through repurposing positions, so it comes out of the  
22 same savings mechanism, again similar to the 550  
23 position at HRA over the last two years.

24

25

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2 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Okay, but it is still  
3 reflected as new needs in the DHS Executive Budget,  
4 but it's as a result of savings achieved elsewhere.

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right and the whole  
6 \$66 million overall is presented as a new need, but  
7 some of it's simply repurposed positions. We thought  
8 that was a better way to identify it, since they were  
9 new programs rather than to identify it otherwise.  
10 But again, the savings is offsetting against those  
11 costs.

12 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: With regard to HOME-  
13 STAT, has the amount of training and this kind of  
14 scope that staff, in terms of training, is gonna be  
15 undergoing, has that been entirely determined at this  
16 point, and is DHS proposing metrics that will be  
17 incorporated into the MMR reports for how successful  
18 HOME-STAT efforts are going to be moving forward?

19 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right, we're  
20 certainly going to evaluate that, but I think the  
21 first information we have is what we wanted it to be;  
22 the intent of HOME-STAT is to be able to be  
23 responsive to where the public or others see homeless  
24 New Yorkers who may be in need, but at the same time  
25 to create a way for us to deliver services in a more

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2 coordinated, effective way; the first piece of that  
3 is enhancing the funding for outreach workers to have  
4 more than 300 from where we were before, almost  
5 doubling or essentially doubling it and then to be  
6 able to build an individualize caseload so that we  
7 could look on a citywide basis with multiple agencies  
8 to determine how to get a particular individual off  
9 the street rather than leaving that only to the  
10 outreach workers and I think the early work shows  
11 that 861 clients are actively on the caseload now;  
12 there are 1600 additional people that have been  
13 identified, still determining whether they're  
14 actually on the street or not.

15 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: And what are we  
16 comparing that to, so that's 861 people that have  
17 cases that didn't have cases before or how is that  
18 measured?

19 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I was gonna get to  
20 that. Some of those people had cases, but previously  
21 the focus had been on people who were determined to  
22 be chronically homeless; they had to have been  
23 homeless on the street for a particular period of  
24 time; that was how the City had defined outreach as  
25 the most vulnerable group of people or a chronic

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3 group of people that were the main focus; we've gone  
4 beyond that, to move forward to begin to catalogue  
5 everybody, to begin to set up a way to address all  
6 their needs; again, not gonna happen overnight. But  
7 the next number that I think is important is  
8 identifying 1604 people who are likely chronically  
9 homeless who are in addition to where we were before,  
10 but we don't wanna conclude just yet that they're in  
11 need of services, 'cause all of them haven't accepted  
12 services, some of them are people who are panhandling  
13 or not homeless, but we're trying to address people  
14 on the street to make an accurate assessment of what  
15 kind of services we can give and there's 952 clients  
16 that are in transitional housing as a result of these  
17 outreach efforts, but again, more granularly, if you  
18 look at what we're posting on the website, 149  
19 clients, you know one week alone were brought in off  
20 the streets and 46 of them placed into permanent  
21 housing. You're right to be searching for, you know,  
22 what's the baseline and that's how we're gonna have  
23 to be very careful about what metrics to determine  
24 and to present that for you.

24 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Ultimately will those  
25 metrics be reflected in something that's presented to

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2 the public through the MMR or some other reporting  
3 mechanism?

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I mean right now  
5 we're presenting this data in a monthly dashboard  
6 that's available to the public and for now we're  
7 certainly gonna continue to do that until we can get  
8 to a place where there's a better way to report it.  
9 But we think, again, like shelter repair report card,  
10 monthly reporting is giving an extraordinary level of  
11 transparency for this particular City service.

12 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Moving over to shelter  
13 security; what exactly is the cost associated with  
14 the NYPD training of DHS peace officers?

15 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I knew when you  
16 turned to that area you were gonna ask me for that  
17 number [background comment] and I have to find the  
18 number; it may take me more time to find it and to  
19 give it to you off... [interpose]

20 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: And that's out of DHS'  
21 budget or NYPD's budget...? [crosstalk]

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yeah. Yeah, it's a  
23 Department of Social Services/DHS expense..  
24 [crosstalk]

25 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Uh-huh.

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2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: something we wanted  
3 to have done, but again I wanna highlight that  
4 there's two things going on at once; one is the  
5 management review and the other is the training and  
6 the management review is gonna give us a broader  
7 picture of where we should go beyond the training.

8 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: And... [interpose]

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: And the training is  
10 for the DHS peace officers and the overall review is  
11 focused on again, that system that I described..

12 [crosstalk]

13 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Yeah.

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: for your colleague  
15 that's built up over 20 years, a patchwork of..

16 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Yeah.

17 COMMISSIONER BANKS: peace officers,  
18 contracted security; provider-provided security.

19 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: With regard to CCTVs,  
20 who's gonna be monitoring the CCTV and where is the  
21 monitoring gonna happen? Obviously that requires a  
22 fair amount of staffing; if it's offsite, if it's at  
23 the Police Department or somewhere offsite at DHS, I  
24 mean, you know, that's a lot of shelters with a lot  
25 of cameras..

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2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right, but I think..

3 again, we're going to await the recommendations of  
4 the NYPD from the review, but there are shelters now  
5 with CCTVs that have excellent systems in place. For  
6 example, the Win shelter..

7 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Right.

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: which I think  
9 you've... [crosstalk]

10 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: I went there, right.

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: also been to; they  
12 have a security room, they have a particular security  
13 officer deployed to review the cameras and monitor  
14 the cameras and... [interpose]

15 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: They have somebody,  
16 yeah, monitoring them I think most the time..  
17 [crosstalk]

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yeah. Yeah. And so  
19 you're seeing a live feed and the person is  
20 monitoring; I've seen it; I think you saw it as well  
21 and that's one model. But again, I think in terms of  
22 how we should go forward, we're gonna defer to the  
23 police recommendations.

24 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Okay. I would  
25 recommend, if you haven't yet, to speak to the

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2 Housing Authority, because you know, they rolled out  
3 their layered access security program for a lot of  
4 NYCHA developments; part of it was CCTV, over the  
5 last few years and they've obviously had challenges  
6 there in terms of the monitoring, so I would check in  
7 to see what lessons they've learned through their  
8 process, because... [interpose]

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: And again, for us it  
10 also may depend on the nature of the facility; what  
11 might work in a WIN facility may not work at  
12 Bellevue, for example.

13 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Uhm-hm. I wanted to  
14 ask, and I know we're running low on time here, but  
15 wanted to ask about last year's COLA and how that is  
16 impacting workers at agencies that have contracts  
17 with DHS, because it's my understanding that the COLA  
18 can't go into effect -- this is a 2.5 percent COLA  
19 from last year -- can't go into effect if the  
20 contract is not registered; because of the various  
21 reviews and outside entities or agencies getting  
22 involved, there are significant hurdles to contracts  
23 being finalized and registered and as a result of  
24 that there are workers at these agencies that are not  
25 receiving the COLA that they were given a year ago



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2 and that's obviously a concern, because you know your  
3 lower level and mid-level staff, you know bear no  
4 responsibility for managerial problems or larger  
5 systemic agency problems or you know, the fault of  
6 previous DHS structure that were allowing capital  
7 problems to be exacerbated and somehow now that falls  
8 on a lower, mid-level staffer at an agency because  
9 they can't get the contract registered because of a  
10 certificate of occupancy issue or something like that  
11 [sic].

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: No, I understand the  
13 concern clearly; all I can say is that our staff are  
14 working literally as expeditiously as anyone would  
15 want them to work to process three procurements,  
16 FY15, FY16 and FY17, in order to be able to get the  
17 COLAs to flow and at the same time working with the  
18 providers to address conditions problems that will  
19 prevent the registration of a contract without a  
20 corrective action plan in place. We're almost at the  
21 end of the fiscal year; a lot of progress has been  
22 made in trying to undo these problems, but again,  
23 like my answer's been to a number of things, we  
24 didn't get here overnight and we're moving very  
25 quickly to try to solve them overnight, but we can't

2 get there as quickly as I know you would like us to  
3 get.

4 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Is there a potent... I  
5 mean it's something... I mean just for example, if  
6 there's a... you know, workers were promised a 2.5  
7 percent COLA in June of 2015; if we are in June of  
8 2017 and there are still contracts that haven't been  
9 registered because of large outstanding issues that  
10 are things that -- I mean, you know, a certificate of  
11 occupancy in a building that was built before  
12 certificates of occupancy were given, or some type of  
13 large systemic problems that require millions of  
14 dollars of capital needs and then those capital jobs  
15 have to be procured; I mean I've seen capital  
16 projects in the City of New York take many years to  
17 finish and my concern is that we're gonna be... there  
18 are gonna be people who were promised a COLA that are  
19 gonna be waiting 24, 36 months and the promise of it,  
20 you know is not all that reassuring when they're, you  
21 know, like having to choose between -- like if  
22 they're making like \$25-30,000 a year and they, you  
23 know have a \$1500 a month rent and trying to make  
24 everything else work in their lives.

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2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right. Again, with  
3 all the challenges we're gonna expect to be through  
4 all the procurements, I have an idea; if we're not,  
5 I'll be before you in an oversight hearing [sic].

6 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Sorry, say that one more  
7 time... [crosstalk]

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I have an idea if  
9 we're not through all the procurements, you'll be  
10 asking me questions at an oversight hearing..

11 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Yeah, I know, I mean;  
12 you know... [crosstalk]

13 COMMISSIONER BANKS: which I understand,  
14 I totally understand.

15 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Yeah. Okay. I think we  
16 touched upon this a little bit at the HRA hearing;  
17 maybe we can do this in follow-up, but a breakdown of  
18 the \$38.2 million savings, you know by category would  
19 be I think helpful for our oversight role in terms of  
20 where the savings are coming in for each; we could do  
21 this broken down into categories of repurposing  
22 positions, improved administrative claiming or  
23 elimination of ineffective programming, so some...  
24 [crosstalk]

25 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right.

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2 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: some type of breakdown  
3 where we can get a clear picture of how these savings  
4 are being achieved.

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right. We can do  
6 this with you in that functional review that we  
7 talked about with Council Member Ferreras-Copeland; I  
8 think that a lot of the information we provide you  
9 gives you broad information or we can provide more  
10 granular information as you look at it in a  
11 functional way.

12 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: It's our understanding  
13 that the funding for the Homebase program is  
14 currently being held in DHS in a funding code as of  
15 now; do you have a sense of when the funding code  
16 will be moved over to HRA?

17 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Again, this is a  
18 massive reorganization of two agencies and we're  
19 gonna do it as quickly as possible 'cause we think it  
20 makes client service delivery sense and we'll  
21 certainly keep you advised.

22 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: And I apologize if this  
23 was touched upon before, but with regard to hotels,  
24 how many hotels have been phased out since the 90-day  
25 review was commenced?

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2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I need to get back  
3 to you with that information, because one of the  
4 challenges that we uncovered during the 90-day  
5 review, and I think this came up when you and I were  
6 together for announcing one of the shelter repair  
7 cards, is that entities that are not under contract  
8 with the City have historically sometimes been  
9 characterized as hotels or Tier IIs, even though they  
10 were hotels or not hotels, and so the process is one  
11 of, we're going through every location by location;  
12 some are hotels that we might be able to convert into  
13 permanent housing, so there are a range of different  
14 processes underway; it might be helpful in that same  
15 back and forth to discuss that with you.

16 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Do you have a timeline  
17 and a target for when all hotels will be phased out  
18 or is that part of the long-term strategy?

19 COMMISSIONER BANKS: It is a long-term  
20 strategy; we also have to remember that we... our  
21 jurisdiction with **[inaudible]** right to shelter and we  
22 plan, as effectively as we can plan, to provide  
23 shelter, but if there should be a time when we need  
24 to find shelter and hotels are an option, as we put  
25 these reforms in place we're currently continuing to

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3 use hotels. On the other hand, as we get to the end  
4 of all the reforms, the aim is to have the prevention  
5 programs in place, to have the rental assistance  
6 programs in place, the cluster conversions, the  
7 supportive housing, all the many tools that are being  
8 funded will create a very different looking shelter  
9 system than the one that currently relies to a  
significant degree on commercial hotels.

10 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: My final couple of  
11 questions here, I just wanna **[inaudible]** for a  
12 second; I don't think we got a chance to talk about  
13 this so much at the preliminary budget hearing, but  
14 there are around 22,000 children in the shelter  
15 system or maybe more; the impact on those young  
16 people's lives is so extraordinary and in some cases  
17 devastating to be in the shelter system for extended  
18 periods of time; what it does in terms of toxic  
19 stress, how that impacts their mental and emotional  
20 development and do we... do you think that we have an  
21 adequate number of social services, including social  
22 workers in the family shelter system to serve the  
23 needs of those children? One thing we did at the  
24 Council last year was an initiative to provide  
25 trauma-informed care with a select number of shelter

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2 providers in each borough, but you know that's... to be  
3 totally candid, it's just not... we don't have enough  
4 money, there's just not enough money to -- it's going  
5 towards mostly training, but do you think that  
6 there's the structural support in place that's  
7 meeting the needs of these children or helping to  
8 alleviate some of that toxic stress that has an  
9 impact on their development?

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well look, obviously  
11 focusing on reducing numbers of children has been a  
12 priority and there has been some reduction in the  
13 numbers of children in the shelter system and we will  
14 continue to prioritize that; the supports in the  
15 Department of Education's initiative to address the  
16 needs of school age children I think is an important  
17 step forward there; DHS has some additional social  
18 work staffing that is being deployed; the efforts to  
19 keep people out of the shelter system and move them  
20 out are all important; you're clearly identifying an  
21 area that we will continue to focus on with you and  
22 independently as part of our looking at whether more  
23 reforms than we've laid out are needed.

24 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: And then one other  
25 suggestion I wanted to throw out there; has there any

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2 consideration been given to the idea of having more  
3 housing specialists affiliated or working in family  
4 shelters so that there's somebody, a staff position  
5 where it's not a caseworker; they're not working with  
6 just, you know, they're not doing the individual  
7 family in-depth work, but more acting as the liaison  
8 for a number of clients at once so that, for example,  
9 there's somebody that's whole job would be out there  
10 to say look, I have 60 clients in my shelter; I'm  
11 gonna go to all the landlords and try to... like you  
12 know, all the big landlords and say look, I've got 60  
13 clients, they have the LINC vouchers, because one  
14 thing that we've heard, honestly, is that you know,  
15 there are people with LINC vouchers that are just  
16 having a hard time getting the apartment; obviously  
17 we saw the case of the family that was profiled in  
18 the WNYC report earlier; I guess it was late last  
19 year or earlier this year, and she eventually I think  
20 got an apartment, but it took six months and I've  
21 talked to shelter providers about what could be done  
22 to make that situation better; the idea of having a  
23 housing specialist that's not necessarily your  
24 caseworker, so your caseworker's not dealing with



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3 trying to find you an apartment as well, but somebody  
4 that's maybe aggregating some of that work.

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Look, I mean as we  
6 know, some shelters do that; some shelters do not;  
7 we'll look at that as part of the rate discussion;  
8 some of the initiatives that we have on the City side  
9 is to put more resources into helping people move  
10 out; that's what ultimately enabled the chronic  
11 veterans certification from the federal government  
12 that we invested significant City staff time in this  
13 and we're proposing to do the same thing here, but  
14 it'll be part of the discussions with the providers  
15 and part of our own reforms in terms of putting more  
16 resource into it. But I do agree with you that more  
17 specialized focus, whether it's by City staff or by  
18 provider staff would be helpful.

19 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Last question. There  
20 was an article that came out in the last couple of  
21 days about funding cuts from HUD that's gonna impact  
22 certain providers in New York City; are we seeing --  
23 it's a fairly long list here of impacted providers --  
24 is DHS gonna have to make up HUD funding shortfalls  
25 in this budget and I mean is this something that  
we're now -- I mean obviously this came down

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2 apparently after the Executive Budget was already  
3 out, but are we gonna have to look to make an  
4 adjustment in the budget that we're gonna adopt in  
5 the coming weeks?

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right. Each of the  
7 providers are in different circumstances; it's also  
8 important to consider the context, and essentially  
9 HUD increased the funding allocated within New York  
10 City, just changed the kinds of programs that it  
11 wanted to fund, and so it's de-emphasized renewals  
12 and emphasized permanent housing; the providers that  
13 were cut, you know are reputable organizations and  
14 important partners of ours and you know clients are  
15 getting important services, so we're gonna be sitting  
16 down and evaluating how best to address it, but these  
17 are groups that provide excellent services.

18 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you very much,  
19 Commissioner.

20 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank  
21 you, Commissioner. And you may not have this now,  
22 but if you can follow up with the committee and get  
23 us the information. I know that you have the  
24 landlord incentive program, to piggyback on what the  
25 chair mentioned, to see if there's more -- there's

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2 the broker I believe incentive and the landlord

3 [crosstalk]

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yes there is.

5 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: it's 15  
6 and \$1,000; I'm not sure.

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yeah, it's a 15  
8 percent fee for the broker and \$1,000 payment to the  
9 landlord.

10 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: If you  
11 can share with both the committees how many landlords  
12 and how many brokers have taken advantage or come  
13 through the whole placement of families.

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We will do that, but  
15 just as a conceptual matter, so when we present that  
16 11,000 households moved out, 34,000 people, a  
17 significant portion of those individuals moved out to  
18 the rental assistance programs -- CITYFEPS, the  
19 various LINC programs -- and for the most part those  
20 have required the landlord bonus and the brokers fee,  
21 so... [crosstalk]

22 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay. If  
23 you can just give us those breakdowns...

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Sure.

25

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3 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: so we can  
understand that, I would appreciate it.

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Sure.

5 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Great.

6 And we have been joined by Council Member Salamanca;  
7 we will now hear from Council Member Gibson.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you very  
9 much, Madame Chair and thank you, Chair Levin. Good  
10 afternoon, Commissioner to you and your team. I know  
11 a lot has been said and talked about, but I wanted to  
12 first echo the sentiments; one of my colleagues that  
13 talked about cluster and scatter site housing, so I  
14 know we are in a very aggressive plan of downsizing  
15 and getting down to zero, which I appreciate; most of  
16 the scatter and cluster housing is in the Bronx and  
17 Brooklyn and overwhelmingly in the Bronx; I have  
18 almost 40 buildings that have cluster and scatter  
19 site families that they are giving temporary housing  
20 to. So in this phasing out plan, what I'd like to  
21 know is the permanent plan of getting many of these  
22 residents into long-term housing; what I don't want  
23 to happen nor see are these families moving out of  
24 these apartments which will go back onto the  
25 traditional role of affordable housing; I don't want

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2 them to go into another shelter; I would love it if  
3 they can go into long-term housing, because we in the  
4 Bronx have past and we also face a major saturation,  
5 as Council Member Cabrera described, of special needs  
6 housing all over the place, so I don't want us to  
7 open more standalone shelters; I have to be very  
8 clear about that, 'cause I have a lot of cluster and  
9 scatter site and I've said to the Mayor's Office many  
10 times I want these families moved into long-term  
11 housing. So the plan that we have I know we are on  
12 timeline, but is there a greater concentration being  
13 given since we have so many families in this housing  
14 in the Bronx?

15 COMMISSIONER BANKS: The focus of  
16 families in units like the ones you describe in the  
17 Bronx or in any borough is to be able to convert  
18 those into apartments that they can remain in and..  
19 [interpose]

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Great, even  
21 better.

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: so obviously we  
23 don't control that process..

24 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Right.  
25

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2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: we've already  
3 received assistance with certain landlords being  
4 willing to enter into discussions to do so; if there  
5 are particular local landlords in your district that  
6 we could meet with and follow up with...

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay.

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: we think that that's  
9 the best route to go; there may be buildings which  
10 need repairs and we're willing to work that out as  
11 well, but the aim is to... [crosstalk]

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay.

13 COMMISSIONER BANKS: convert as many  
14 units as we can with the families in place to let  
15 them remain there; many of them... [crosstalk]

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay.

17 COMMISSIONER BANKS: have been there for  
18 a very long period of time.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Right and it  
20 makes sense to keep them where they are; many of the  
21 school children in the local school districts as  
22 well. In addition to what Chair Levin described,  
23 many of our students living in temporary housing,  
24 School District 9 in my area, in addition to District  
25 23 in Brooklyn, have the highest concentrations of

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2 students in temporary housing, so I know you're  
3 working very closely with DOE; I've spoken to them on  
4 many occasions about the education plan, but I know  
5 that in this budget we are looking to provide more  
6 support services for many of these families and  
7 children; right?

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: The DOE has  
9 additional services that are being provided to our  
10 clients who are in shelter and attending schools..  
11 [crosstalk]

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay.

13 COMMISSIONER BANKS: and we appreciate  
14 that additional investment by the Mayor.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay. Can you  
16 give us an update on the three-quarter housing task  
17 force, I know HRA, DHS, HPD, DOB; there's a  
18 multiagency task force; can you give us an update on  
19 where we are with that?

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I can, if you'll  
21 just hold on one moment.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay. So while  
23 you're looking, I'll ask another question, great. I  
24 recognize several months.. [crosstalk]

25

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2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Can I... Can I... Can I  
3 answer now?

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: You're ready?

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yeah.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Oh great. Thank  
7 you, Commissioner; you're good... [crosstalk]

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I see that she's  
9 going too fast, depending on how you go [sic].

10 Again, this goes back to the underlying metrics that  
11 we're using, which is we're looking for locations  
12 where 10 or more HRA clients... [crosstalk]

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Uhm-hm. Right.

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: are receiving the  
15 state set shelter allowance of \$215...

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay.

17 COMMISSIONER BANKS: and again, the  
18 metrics we're using is 10 or more HRA clients  
19 receiving the state set shelter allowance of \$215 and  
20 we identified, outside of the Narco Freedom  
21 buildings, we identified 72 sites and at 37 of them  
22 we found overcrowded conditions and we relocated 361  
23 clients from those overcrowded conditions voluntarily  
24 and so far we've been able to connect 103 of those  
25 clients to permanent housing, with subsidized rents



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3 paid for by the City. The Narco Freedom buildings,  
4 there are 18 of them, they are subject to a federal  
5 court proceeding and there are currently just shy of  
6 500 residents in them, 67 of those clients have been  
7 placed into permanent housing and we're continuing to  
work on that initiative as well.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Great. My last  
9 question as I run down; can you just give me an  
10 update on the level of services [bell] that providers  
11 are giving to many of our clients during the day?  
12 You remember many months ago clients were being asked  
13 to leave their shelter by 9 a.m. and return by curfew  
14 and many of them had nowhere to go, nothing to do; a  
15 lot of the vocational and other workforce training  
16 programs, we have made changes to that, so there are  
17 programs for clients during the day; right?

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Correct. Let me  
19 give you a status update..

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay, great.

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: One of the first  
22 things we did during the 90-day review was reinforce  
23 for shelter providers that clients were not to be  
24 told to leave during the day and the next thing that  
25 happened was the Mayor added additional resources for

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2 programming at not-for-profit shelters and the City  
3 shelters; the not-for-profit shelters are operational  
4 and the City shelters are in the process of being  
5 implemented in those programs; some of the programs  
6 that Chair Levin asked me about, as part of the  
7 reforms, are enhancements beyond that because we saw  
8 that there might be gaps in programming; if there are  
9 additional gaps, we wanna look very carefully at  
10 trying to meet them.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay. Thank you  
12 very much; I appreciate all the work you do; whenever  
13 I call, you answer and I thank you and the entire  
14 team for all the work you're doing; we really are  
15 making a difference and certainly the dialogue will  
16 continue through this budget process. Thank you,  
17 Madame Chair and thank you, Chair Levin.

18 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank  
19 you, Council Member; we'll now hear from Council  
20 Member Salamanca.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Thank you,  
22 Madame Chair. Commissioner, good afternoon...  
23 [crosstalk]

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: How are you?  
25

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3 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Commissioner,  
4 last time you were here I spoke about providers  
5 providing services without a contract and as a  
6 result, they are not able to provide adequate  
7 services to their clients, such as Acacia for  
8 example; I have not heard back; just wanted to find  
9 out from you; was this issue resolved with Acacia?

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Substantially all of  
11 Acacia's contracts are currently registered; I want  
12 to also say what I said to you before, which is that  
13 there are loans that we provide to providers, but we  
14 appreciate the partnership with the comptroller; I  
15 think when I testified in April I said we were  
16 working very closely with the comptroller to come up  
17 with a way to register Acacia's main contract for  
18 clusters and with the comptroller we were able to do  
19 that; there are certain things that Acacia still has  
20 to do and we're working with them to do that, but  
21 dollars are able now to flow to them and again, we  
22 appreciate the partnership with them; we appreciate  
23 the partnership with the comptroller to make that  
24 happen.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Alright.

3 My other question is; how many providers  
4 in the City of New York are operating without a  
5 contract?

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: There are different  
7 groups of providers operating without contracts;  
8 there's one group of providers that never had  
9 contracts; that group of providers simply offer it on  
10 a per diem payment structure; we have announced that  
11 we're not gonna continue that anymore; that was  
12 something that the DOI report of more than a year ago  
13 identified as an issue, the reforms were identified  
14 as an issue, so we have dollars in the reforms to  
15 bring all the non-contracted providers to contracts.

16 We have another group of providers that  
17 are operating on loans because of the challenges of  
18 getting their contracts registered because of poor  
19 housing conditions and we have been determined, as  
20 has the comptroller, to use the contracting process  
21 to address the conditions under which the clients are  
22 living. So there's a range of different groups and  
23 depending on which provider it is, they may fall in  
24 one category or another. I would guess that the  
25 providers that are having per diem payments that  
don't have contracts like that may not like getting

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2 contracts, because that I think creates important  
3 leverage for us to make sure that we're getting the  
4 conditions that the clients are entitled to have and  
5 the services they're entitled to have. The providers  
6 that are operating shelters that don't yet have  
7 registered contracts because of conditions problems,  
8 which is largely the cluster providers, not the non-  
9 cluster providers; those providers clearly have  
10 concerns about the process that we are operating  
11 under, which is to ensure that we address conditions  
12 before registering contracts.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: So is there an  
14 exact number, for example, providers running clusters  
15 that are operating without a contract?

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Again, there are a  
17 whole range of reasons why a provider would not have  
18 a contract; I'd prefer to give the committee a  
19 breakdown of all of them..

20 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Okay.

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I think that would  
22 be a helpful way to do it..

23 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Alright.

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: but I also wanna  
25 highlight that of those that don't have contracts, as

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2 substantial number of them have not had contracts for  
3 years and are paid on a per diem basis and we're  
4 changing that, 'cause we think that's an important  
5 reform to stop that practice... [crosstalk]

6 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Alright. My  
7 final question; I brought this up yes... [interpose]

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I'm sorry, and the...  
9 [crosstalk]

10 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Yeah.

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: and the second group  
12 of providers that don't have contracts are largely  
13 cluster providers and as part of the reform to phase  
14 the use of clusters or address inadequate conditions  
15 in them, the contracting process is part of the  
16 process of improving those conditions to the clients.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Alright. My  
18 final question is; yesterday I was... the Department of  
19 Buildings was here; a few years back within Community  
20 Board 2, we had a building that was built on 731  
21 Southern Boulevard; the landlord overbuilt this  
22 building and he overbuilt it by two stories and in  
23 2009, once he overbuilt, he handed this building over  
24 to a provider, New Hope transitional housing, in  
25 which they're housing families from the shelter

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3 system. The Department of Buildings gave him a  
4 temporary certificate of occupancy, but ultimately  
5 they informed him that he needed to go through a  
6 rezoning, a ULURP process, which he did; it went  
7 through the process and it got denied and so the  
8 landlord is operating out of this building without a  
9 certificate of occupancy, has two floors that are  
10 illegally there that need to be knocked down and I  
11 just got a call from my community board right before  
12 I got here [bell] to follow up on that. Are there  
13 any plans from Department of Housing, from DHS to  
14 hold this landlord accountable and are there any  
15 plans to remove these families from this building,  
16 since they are occupying this building illegally?

17 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I have to look into  
18 the facts of that particular building, whether it's a  
19 shelter, whether it's under contract or whether it's  
20 permanent housing I'd be happy to look into it and  
21 follow up with you.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: I would like  
23 that, and unfortunately, this same landlord has two  
24 buildings in my council district in which he's done  
25 the same thing and he's leased the entire building to  
New Hope transitional housing; now the provider is a

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2 good provider, but the concern is the actual  
3 landlord.

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Okay. As I said,  
5 we'll be happy to follow up with you.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Thank you.  
7 Thank you, Madame Chair.

8 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank  
9 you, Council Member. Ben Kallos is going to ask one  
10 question within 30 seconds..

11 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Oh wow, 30  
12 seconds..

13 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: and you  
14 can respond with two minutes. I'm gonna put you on a  
15 clock, Commissioner, is what I'm saying. [laughter]  
16 Okay. Go ahead, Council Member.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you for all  
18 the great work you're doing and also, with the HOME-  
19 STAT daily reporting I wanted to just check in on how  
20 the outreach is going and what communities can do  
21 when they.. we're doing a great job with a lot of the  
22 folks, but where you have the specific folks who are  
23 there and maybe they're dealing with emotionally  
24 disturbed or aggressive panhandling and how we can  
25 deal with that piece versus the unsheltered number,



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2 which is what we're largely looking at and another  
3 piece is just where are we on the opening doors  
4 program and really just working on opening more  
5 doors, from faith-based institutions and otherwise  
6 and are we looking at a second round anytime soon so  
7 that hopefully it can open doors in neighborhoods  
8 like in my district on the Upper East Side?

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I know the chair's  
10 not gonna give me enough time to answer all those  
11 really good questions and I wouldn't blame her  
12 either.

13 Look, in general I think that the HOME-  
14 STAT process does identify the difference between  
15 people that may be on the street because they're  
16 unsheltered and people that may be on the street  
17 because they're simply panhandling and I think that  
18 you correctly, and I appreciate your... you've always  
19 done this; you correctly identified that there are  
20 two different challenges there; one relates to  
21 services we can provide and one is something that is  
22 a more complicated problem. We're gonna keep  
23 providing the services to people who are unsheltered  
24 to try to bring them in and in terms of issues with  
25 respect to faith-based shelters, we appreciate the

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3 partnership; again, and I think this is also relevant  
4 to Council Member Salamanca's question; we're trying  
5 to bring people into contract and I know that that is  
6 sometimes a challenge for everybody, but I think in  
7 the end it's a better system to have a totally  
contracted system.

8 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: That was  
9 great, thank you. Thank you so much, Commissioner;  
10 we really appreciate you coming to testify in these  
11 executive hearings. So we have some homework, so  
12 you're gonna put on your HRA hat and DHS hat just to  
13 get the information. First we need the breakdown of  
14 WEP phase-out, we asked for the community schools  
15 providing immigration legal services; the senior  
16 walk-through conversion discrimination... [background  
17 comments] oh, right; a session or a conversation  
18 between the committees and your agency to understand  
19 HRA's budget and to better understand the line by  
20 line; as we suggested through U of A's, but you  
21 suggest that there might be a better way to do that  
22 in line with how we brought more clarity to the legal  
23 services within HRA, something very similar to that.  
24 And I know that also Council Member Rosenthal talked  
25

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2 about some clarity on contracts. Okay; do I have  
3 your commitment?

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: The last question  
5 I'm not sure from Council Member Rosenthal, but let  
6 me follow up at the staff level...

7 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay.

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I'm not sure that I  
9 understood that question **[inaudible]**... [crosstalk]

10 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Great,  
11 thank you. And we have some additional questions;  
12 we're gonna send you a letter; if you can get me  
13 those answers back expeditiously, 'cause we need to  
14 use them for budget negotiation purposes.

15 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Okay, will do..  
16 [crosstalk]

17 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank you  
18 so very much, Commissioner...

19 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank you  
21 to our committee chairs and also to our committee  
22 members. We are going to take a 10-minute break  
23 before we hear from ACS. Thank you.

24 [pause]

25

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4 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: We will  
5 now resume the City Council's hearing on the Mayor's  
6 Executive Budget for Fiscal 2017; the Finance  
7 Committee is joined by the Committee on General  
8 Welfare, chaired by Council Member Levin; the  
9 Committee on Women's Issues, chaired by Council  
10 Member Cumbo and the Committee on Juvenile Justice,  
11 chaired by Council Member Cabrera. We just heard  
12 from the Department of Homeless Services and now we  
13 will hear from the Commissioner of the Administration  
14 for Children's Services, Gladys Carrion. In the  
15 interest of time, I will forego making an opening  
16 statement, but before we hear testimony, I will open  
17 the mic to my Co-Chairs, Council Member, followed by  
18 Council Member Cumbo; followed by Council Member  
19 Cabrera.

20 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you very much,  
21 Madame Chair; I also will forego my opening  
22 statement, but I do want to let folks know that today  
23 we are live on social media for the hearing, so if  
24 you have any issues that you want to point out, you  
25 want us to ask about, you could send me a tweet at  
@StephenLevin, Stephen with a P H L E V I N, 33 on  
Twitter with the #NYCBudget17 and Chair Ferreras is

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3 @JulissaFerrereras; you can see it all in front of us  
4 here; every Council Member has their twitter handle;  
5 tweet at us; let us know your areas of concern and  
6 then I do wanna just thank staff that has worked on  
7 putting together this hearing -- Brittany Morrissey,  
8 the Finance Analyst for General Welfare Committee  
9 relating to ACS; Counsel to the Committee, Andrea  
10 Vazquez; Policy Analyst Tonya Cyrus, as well as  
11 Dohini Sompura, Unit Head; Deputy Finance Director,  
12 Regina Poreda Ryan, and our Finance Director, Latonia  
13 McKinney. And with that I'll turn it over to my  
colleagues for opening statements.

14 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Okay. Thank you, Chair  
15 Ferreras-Copeland; thank you, Chair Levin; I will not  
16 be foregoing my opening statement; I don't get to  
17 make quite as many as my colleagues, so I will take  
18 this opportunity to do so now.

19 Good afternoon, I am Laurie Cumbo, Chair  
20 of the Women's Issues Committee. I'd like to thank  
21 Chair Ferreras-Copeland, Chair Levin and Chair  
22 Cabrera for their support and collaboration with this  
23 committee.

24 I'd also like to thank my committee staff  
25 -- Finance Analyst Brittany Morrissey; Counsel Aminta

3 Kilawan and Policy Analyst, Joan Povolny for their  
4 work in preparing this hearing.

5 I want to express my gratitude for the  
6 fact that ACS has heard the Council's calls to  
7 provide additional funding in its Fiscal Year 2017  
8 Executive Budget to better support children and youth  
9 in foster care.

10 After listening to the concerns of the  
11 young women and men who participated in the Council's  
12 first ever Foster Youth Shadow Day in October, I  
13 understand the need for resources that help youth  
14 aging out of foster care to securely start their own  
15 independent lives.

16 We must see the addition of discharge  
17 grants and college supports as a stepping stone and  
18 we're so pleased that you heard us, that you heard  
19 our youth that are graduating out of foster care and  
20 we're beginning the process to put funding that will  
21 be a stepping stone in the right direction for  
22 thousands of youth.

23 Today, as the Fiscal 2017 Executive  
24 Budget is happening, I would like to hear more about  
25 ACS' long-term vision for caring for New York City's  
children and youth in foster care. Additionally,

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3 while I understand that ACS has a limited ability to  
4 speak about the next EarlyLearn RFP, which I am very  
5 concerned about, I welcome any updates that you are  
6 able to provide. Although this budget does not  
7 address the wage parody issue for EarlyLearn child  
8 are providers, I look forward to hearing testimony  
9 regarding how ACS is going to better support these  
vital providers.

10 Thank you and I look forward to hearing  
11 from Commissioner Carrion. Thank you.

12 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: Good afternoon, I am  
13 Council Member Fernando Cabrera, Chair of the  
14 Juvenile Justice Committee. I would like to thank  
15 Chair Ferreras-Copeland, Chair Levin and Chair Cumbo  
16 for their collaboration with the committee. I'm  
17 going to keep my opening remarks short, but I would  
18 like to remind you that in March, at the Fiscal 2017  
19 preliminary budget hearing and again in April at a  
20 hearing of this committee, we discussed how ACS is  
21 improving oversight of its Close to Home facilities;  
22 during today's hearing I hope to discuss not only the  
23 additional investment that the City is making in  
24 improving the agency's juvenile detention facility,  
25 but I would like to hear more about the agency's

3 overall plan for potentially permanently  
4 consolidating the two facilities. I would also like  
5 to review ACS' work in the Cure Violence initiative  
6 and discuss a tentative plan for the upcoming fiscal  
7 year.

8 Before we hear from Chair Cumbo, I would  
9 like to thank Brittany Morrissey, our Financial  
10 Analyst; Beth Golub, our Legislative Counsel and  
11 William Hongach, our Policy Analyst for the work they  
12 did in putting together today's budget hearing. I  
13 look forward to hearing from the Commissioner. Thank  
14 you so much.

15 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank you  
16 so much co-chairs. We've been joined by Council  
17 Members Salamanca, Kallos and Miller and after the  
18 committee counsel swears you in -- it's a lot of  
19 chairs, so she's all the way at the end -- you may  
20 begin your testimony, Commissioner.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Do you affirm that  
22 your testimony will be truthful to the best of your  
23 knowledge, information and belief?

24 COMMISSIONER CARRION: I do. Thank you.  
25 Good afternoon, Chairs Ferreras-Copeland, Cumbo,  
Levin and Cabrera and members of the Finance, Women's



Issues, General Welfare and Juvenile Justice  
Committees.

I am Gladys Carrion, the Commissioner of  
the Administration for Children's Services and with  
me today is Susan Nuccio, our Deputy Commissioner for  
Financial Services; she's to my right, and Jill  
Kraus, my Deputy Commissioner for Communications and  
Community Affairs, to my left.

Thank you for the opportunity to update  
you on our 2017 Executive Budget and to address the  
improvements that ACS is making to our system for our  
providers and most importantly, for the children and  
families that we serve.

For the past 20 years, ACS has been  
working to promote the safety, permanency and well-  
being of New York City's children; the families who  
come to our attention are among the most challenged  
and most vulnerable in New York City. Including this  
year's proposed additions, the de Blasio  
Administration has added over \$160 million to ACS in  
the past two years to help us strengthen our work;  
we're adding 829 new staff positions and we're able  
to maintain historically low child protective  
caseloads.

2 This past January, in partnership with  
3 CUNY School of Professional Studies, ACS launched a  
4 state-of-the-art Workforce Institute that will train  
5 and support New York City's entire frontline child  
6 welfare workforce. As part of the mayoral  
7 commitments, I'm happy to share that this plan  
8 proposes 106 staff and \$30 million that increases to  
9 \$66 million over the next three years to support  
10 children and families.

11 To implement a new primary prevention  
12 approach to reach families before they are in crisis,  
13 expand preventive services for high-risk families,  
14 reduce the likelihood of children returning to foster  
15 care and increase the availability of skilled  
16 clinical consultation services, we're investing \$19  
17 million new dollars in FY17, which will grow to over  
18 \$53 million in FY19. To fund increases in subsidies  
19 for foster care, for kin [sic] gap and adoptive  
20 parents, as well as special payments to youth in  
21 foster care and discharge grants for youth leaving  
22 foster care we're adding over \$10 million. And for  
23 the first time the City is making an extraordinary  
24 commitment to young people in foster care who want to  
25 attend college; over 200 young people will be able to

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3 afford college through a partnership with CUNY that  
4 adds \$1.4 million in FY17, growing to \$2.7 million to  
5 support the housing, daily living and tuition  
6 expenses for foster youth who attend CUNY schools.

7 Children's Services' budget for the 2017  
8 Executive Financial Plan provides for operating  
9 expenses of \$2.96 billion of which approximately \$901  
10 million is City tax levy dollars.

11 Last year's adopted 2016 budget was \$2.95  
12 billions; the difference of \$33 million is primarily  
13 due to new need funding that enhances services for  
14 children and families throughout New York City. Like  
15 all agencies across the City, ACS has been asked to  
16 identify efficiencies in our budget and we are able  
17 to do this through three main initiatives.

18 The first is savings from consolidating  
19 juvenile detention operations that will save \$5  
20 million in FY18; the second is through a citywide  
21 vacancy reduction of 250 headcount that will lead to  
22 a \$4 million City savings and the third is for foster  
23 care re-estimate for \$4 million funds, which is due  
24 to an anticipated reduction in the foster care  
25 census. These savings will be reinvested to fund  
enhanced child welfare services. I'm pleased to say

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3 that these savings will no way impact services to  
4 families.

5 As a result of the Human Services Wage  
6 Adjustment Initiative announced in 2016 Executive  
7 Budget, ACS and other City agencies were able to  
8 increase wages for more than 50,000 employees of  
9 Human Services providers under City contracts. A  
10 total of 400 ACS childcare, child welfare and  
11 juvenile justice contracts were eligible for the wage  
12 adjustment; eligible employees will receive a wage  
13 increase of either 2.5 percent or up to \$11.50 per  
14 hour; whatever results in the higher wage. As  
15 announced in the preliminary budget, this will be  
16 followed by the phase-in of an additional increase to  
17 a minimum of \$15.00 per hour by FY2019.

18 The 2017 Executive Budget proposes  
19 substantial resources to bolster our ability to  
20 support children and families; these funds will allow  
21 us to undertake a robust expansion of our preventive  
22 services and provide additional financial supports  
23 for youth in foster care and the families that care  
24 for them.

25 Families are strongest when they're  
connected to and supported by their communities. As

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3 the number of children in foster care continues to  
4 decline, we are increasing investments in a number of  
5 preventive services so that more children can be  
6 cared for safely by their families in their  
7 communities without having to enter foster care.  
8 Using a public health approach for preventing child  
9 maltreatment, this year's budget allows us to  
10 implement a new primary prevention initiative that's  
11 designed to reach families before they come to the  
attention of the child welfare system.

12 ACS will establish three family  
13 enrichment centers, accessible storefront centers  
14 that will offer a welcoming and supportive  
15 environment to walk in for families. The centers  
16 will connect families to services and supports in  
17 child development, housing, parenting skills and in  
18 health and in whatever else they need assistance  
19 with. We are proud to partner with the Federal  
20 Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to bring  
21 financial literacy as part of this initiative.

22 In addition to offering primary  
23 prevention services to decrease the need for ACS  
24 involvement, we are also expanding preventive  
25 services for our highest risk families. When fully

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3 implemented, \$31 million will support 2,350 new  
4 preventive slots; the new slots will include a  
5 combination of expanding existing preventive  
6 contracts and an RFP for additional services in  
FY2018.

7 In addition, ACS has long recognized that  
8 families who are reunited with their children need  
9 additional strong support to ensure stability and  
10 success during the transition from foster care back  
11 to home. By FY18 we will add a total of \$8 million  
12 for 580 slots that will support families prior to  
13 discharge and continuing after family reunification.  
14 We also add attorney and support staff to help  
15 prepare provider agencies for court appearances and  
16 to reduce the caseloads of our family court  
17 attorneys.

18 We celebrate National Foster Care Month  
19 this May with some terrific news about increase  
20 funding through our system. Starting in 2017 we will  
21 be able to support youth in foster care to attend  
22 CUNY, increase the stipend pay to foster parents,  
23 double special payments for youth in care and  
24 reinstitute the discharge grant for youth leaving  
25 foster care. Building pathways for success for our

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4 youth transitioning out of foster care is a major  
5 priority and we are committed to supporting more  
6 young people as they attend and succeed college.

7 Beginning in FY2017, ACS will provide financial  
8 assistance for up to 50 youth, growing to 200 by FY19  
9 in care who attend CUNY schools to help support their  
10 tuition, living and housing expenses each year and  
11 connect them to academic and other supportive  
12 services to help them succeed. ACS will also invest  
13 \$10.2 million to increase the stipend and subsidy we  
14 pay to foster and adoptive parents and kinship  
15 guardianship caregivers by 5 percent. We're also  
16 increasing supports for young people in two ways; the  
17 first is to enhance the special payment allowance  
18 that foster care providers offer to support the needs  
19 of children in foster care, anything from car seats  
20 to graduation attire, summer camp tuition, tutoring,  
21 music, or dance lessons; ACS is doubling the special  
22 payment from \$175 per child to \$350 per child.

23 Second, youth aging out of foster care will receive  
24 discharge grants of \$1,000 to help them to transition  
25 to independent living. ACS will also invest \$3  
million in FY17, increasing to \$6.1 million FY18, to  
expand our clinical consultation program which pairs

experienced clinicians with expertise in mental health, domestic violence and other areas to support child protection staff and to help families understand their challenges and navigate services. The FY17 budget allows ACS to extend these clinical consultations to our staff at the Children's Center, to our preventive and foster care and provider agencies as well; it will also bring more resources to address substance abuse and the needs of families with young children.

Now, last week DOI released a report regarding our child welfare work in three particular cases; while no three cases represent the 55,000 investigations we conduct each year, we take the responsibility to address case practice gaps very seriously and we are committed to continuous improvement. This administration's unprecedented investment in ACS has dramatically improved our ability to keep children safe and well; the additional investments of the plan brings the total FY2017 commitment to support enhanced child welfare services to \$87 million in total funds, \$37 million of which are City funds, growing to \$122 million in total funds, \$52 million in tax levy dollars, by



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3 FY2019; this includes the creation of the Workforce  
4 Institute, a partnership with CUNY that created our  
5 state-of-the-art Professional Development Institute.  
6 The institute to date has trained over 1500 staff and  
7 we'll train 5,000 frontline staff in the skills they  
8 need to better serve children and families.

9 In partnership with the CUNY School of  
10 Professional Studies, the Workforce Institute focuses  
11 on core competencies for child welfare and juvenile  
12 justice workers, such as analytical thinking,  
13 interview and investigation skills and critical  
14 interpersonal skills of empathy, adaptability and  
15 advocacy. The institute also teaches our supervisory  
16 staff ways to more effectively coach and support  
17 their teams; we now provide learning opportunities  
18 for thousands of staff employed by ACS and by more  
19 than 75 provider agencies in the child welfare and  
20 juvenile justice sectors, and as I've said, we've  
21 already trained over 1,500 staff.

22 Since 2012, the number of justice-  
23 involved youth who requirement confinement has  
24 decreased dramatically; our secure detention average  
25 daily population has declined by 54 percent, from 188  
in December of 2012 to 87 youth in April of 2016,

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2 while non-secure detention has seen a decline of 55  
3 percent, from 137 youth to 62 during the same  
4 timeframe. Our preventive providers, sister City  
5 agencies and the City Council should be applauded for  
6 helping to bring about this tremendous reduction. As  
7 a result of the decline, ACS was able to close one of  
8 our non-secure detention operations at the Beach  
9 Avenue Non-Secure Detention facility in the Bronx on  
10 March 31st, 2016; we reduced personnel without a  
11 single staff layoff, but rather by redeploying staff  
12 to other opened positions and through attrition.  
13 Closing the Beach Avenue facility created \$1.3  
14 million in City savings in the FY17 budget. Both of  
15 our secure detention facilities, Horizon in the Bronx  
16 and Crossroads in Brooklyn, are in need of  
17 substantial repairs; the declining population at each  
18 facility makes this an opportune moment to undertake  
19 the much needed facility renovations and consolidate  
20 operations into a single facility. Beginning this  
21 spring, the New York City Department of Design and  
22 Construction is assessing both existing facilities to  
23 determine what renovations are needed at each and  
24 make recommendations for consolidation into a single  
25 facility.

3 As the Council is aware, the Department  
of Investigation released a report about a June 2015  
4 Close to Home incident in which three youth escaped  
5 from a non-secure placement residence and perpetrated  
6 a horrific crime. In response, ACS took immediate  
7 and decisive action; we closed the site in question  
8 and determined that the provider would cease all  
9 Close to Home operations. In the year since, NYPD  
10 Crime Prevention officers have assessed safety and  
11 security in all of our 27 Close to Home sites and we  
12 have substantially increased the number of site  
13 visits we conduct; ACS has retained a nationally  
14 recognized expert in juvenile justice quality  
15 assurance to implement performance-based standards,  
16 which is a comprehensive, data-driven system for  
17 improvement in juvenile justice operations that's  
18 been adopted by 200 programs in over 30 states across  
19 the country.

20 As we testified in March, the  
21 administration added close to \$4 million to our Close  
22 to Home budget, which will allow us to hire 35 new  
23 positions across that division. The additional staff  
24 will improve our ability to respond to critical  
25 incidents, monitor provider agencies, continue the

steep downward trend of AWOL incidents, and develop a  
data-driven approach to inspecting and evaluating  
programs.

This time last year, the administration  
announced a set of reforms in support of EarlyLearn  
programs geared toward improving the financial  
stability of providers, making services more  
affordable, better compensating the workforce and  
ensuring safe and healthy learning environments. In  
addition to the \$2.5 cost of living adjustment and  
the \$11.50 minimum wage for EarlyLearn staff, ACS is  
transitioning to an expense-based reimbursement  
system; we are reducing the fee paid by low-income  
parents whose children receive part-time care and  
improving our ability to keep facilities safe by  
adding staff to implement necessary repairs and  
renovations at child care facilities.

As we testified in March, the  
administration is investing \$4.1 million to implement  
a trauma-informed care model across our EarlyLearn  
New York City system; the investment is made up of  
three components, all which are part of the larger  
ThriveNYC Mental Health Roadmap. ACS will spend \$1.7  
million to hire 22 social worker staff to provide

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2 support for EarlyLearn programs across the city. ACS  
3 will dedicate another \$1.6 million to procure an  
4 evidence-based trauma-informed model that we will  
5 implement in approximately 90 childcare programs in  
6 the South Bronx and the Brownsville area of Brooklyn  
7 that serve particularly high-risk families. Finally,  
8 we're allocating \$800,000 of our \$4.1 million  
9 investment in one-time funding to train early care  
10 and education providers in the social and in  
11 emotional foundations of learning, addressing  
12 everything from promoting a positive classroom  
13 environment, engaging parents and helping children  
14 cope.

15 As ACS testified at our preliminary  
16 budget hearing, EarlyLearn contracts expire in 2016,  
17 at which point we'll take advantage of the option to  
18 renew contracts to two years, through September 2018.  
19 We recognize how tirelessly our providers have been  
20 working since EarlyLearn began in 2012; we hope that  
21 our two-year renewal, coupled with the transition to  
22 an expense-based reimbursement system and ongoing  
23 wage adjustments help stabilize the system so that  
24 our providers can continue to help the city's  
25 youngest children learn and grow.

3 In conclusion, this is very challenging  
4 work; there is no magic bullet, but with smarter  
5 investments and more effective interventions we can  
6 make sure that more families and children receive the  
7 support they need. As I endeavor to continue  
8 strengthening the work of ACS, I'm also refocusing  
9 our work on the strengths and successes of our  
children, families and communities.

10 I wanna thank our dedicated workforce for  
11 their tireless efforts to support children and  
12 families of New York City. I look forward to a  
13 continued productive collaboration with the City  
14 Council; I wanna thank you for your time this  
15 afternoon and I welcome your comments and questions.  
16 Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank you  
18 very much, Commissioner; thank you for your  
19 testimony.

20 We're going to have members coming in and  
21 out 'cause budget negotiating team is gonna start  
22 their meeting shortly.

23 The Council's FY2017 preliminary budget  
24 response called upon the administration to add  
25 funding into the budget to make the wages of

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2 EarlyLearn teachers, directors and support staff  
3 equal to those paid to Universal Pre-K staff  
4 contracted to the Department of Education. Where is  
5 ACS and the administration in the process of  
6 establishing pay parity between UPK and EarlyLearn  
7 providers?

8 COMMISSIONER CARRION: As you know, that  
9 issue is a matter of collective bargaining and those  
10 collective bargaining negotiations are underway right  
11 now.

12 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Do you  
13 have an anticipated timeline to address this issue?

14 COMMISSIONER CARRION: I really don't;  
15 those negotiations are not conducted by ACS.

16 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay. In  
17 the citywide savings program, ACS claimed  
18 approximately \$3.9 million in savings from the  
19 reduction of 250 agency-wide vacancies; why were  
20 there so many vacancies and after these vacancy  
21 reductions, how many open positions will remain at  
22 ACS?

23 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Susan; you wanna  
24 take that one?

25

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2 SUSAN NUCCIO: Sure. Hi, I'm Susan  
3 Nuccio, Deputy Commissioner for Financial Services.

4 There are vacancies in a couple of areas  
5 due to attrition and so we're always trying to  
6 replace DPS workers or juvenile counselors, attorneys  
7 are the three areas where we have higher attrition  
8 than we would like, so there are savings that are  
9 generated from that turning, the attrition and then  
10 refilling positions, but these vacancy reductions  
11 [sic] [background coughing] will not affect our  
12 operations; we're still gonna hire as if we had the  
13 headcount and they are not in our model-driven areas,  
14 like the juvenile counselors or our child protective  
15 workers; they're in more of the administrative and  
16 the other support areas.

17 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay; if  
18 you can just share with us a list of those vacancies  
19 for the committee.. [crosstalk]

20 SUSAN NUCCIO: Sure.

21 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: we'd  
22 appreciate them.

23 So as I mentioned earlier, when it comes  
24 to EarlyLearn, we can't urge, and I know that you're  
25 part of the collective bargaining; this is very



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2 important to the chair of Women's Issues Committee; I  
3 know she's gonna follow up on this, but this is a  
4 priority for the Council; this was her priority; it  
5 was included as a budget response because we  
6 understand the severity of creating two different pay  
7 scales and also, it kind... it's bleeding out the  
8 system where people are going to go and join UPK if  
9 you continue to pay workers less than those that are  
10 making the rate of the UPK teachers, and the fact  
11 that it's predominantly women also [background  
12 comment] speaks to the... to how unfair it is, but more  
13 so, how this impacts families and oftentimes you may  
14 see some of your own staff going to get additional  
15 help from the City because of the rates that we're  
16 paying to these workers. But I'm sure that our chair  
17 will articulate this again and articulate it, but I  
18 just wanted to lend my support and our full force of  
19 this Council behind the importance of pay parity.

20 And I'm gonna now give the mic over to my  
21 Co-Chair... [background comments] okay, so we'll pass  
22 it over to... [background comments] Okay, so we're  
23 gonna... we're trying to figure out who gets it.

24 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: Okay.

25

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3 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So we're  
gonna pass the mic over to our co-chair, Council  
4 Member Cabrera and also, I'm going to ask to be  
5 excused so that I can go get a briefing before we  
6 start our budget negotiations. So thank you again  
7 for coming to testify and I will be back a little  
8 later.

9 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: Thank you so much to  
10 both of the chairs, actually, for all three chairs  
11 for this collaboration together and Commissioner,  
12 thank you for all that you do; I can only imagine  
13 what it would be to be in your shoes, carrying  
14 literally the thousands of children in your heart  
15 every single day; the grant responsibilities that you  
16 carry and also, to celebrate, the numbers continue to  
17 go down; I don't think that that's celebrated enough;  
18 I know usually when we get this type of hearing we're  
19 hearing about... **[inaudible]** about, you know when you  
20 comes to... fiscally, when it comes to the funding and  
21 numbers and monies, but we are forgetting sometimes  
22 that we're dealing with real lives and just to see  
23 the reduction; who would have ever thought years ago  
24 that we would have come down to the numbers that we  
25 have right now is just simply amazing.

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2 Having said that, let me focus on the  
3 renovations and thank you for the clarity that you  
4 brought today as to the plan of bringing the young  
5 people who are in Horizon and Crossroads, and I know  
6 with your deputy commissioner we had many  
7 opportunities to... had gone to both of them and tour  
8 it and do different events there, wonderful events,  
9 but if you could give us further clarification; they  
10 will be moving from... which detention center is gonna  
11 be hosting while the renovations begin and which  
12 detention?

13 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So we will be  
14 moving our young people from Crossroads over to  
15 Horizon and Crossroads will be the first facility  
16 that will be renovated. And Crossroads, like  
17 Horizon, needs substantial rehabilitation.

18 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: And then once that's  
19 completed, will the young people be moving back to  
20 Crossroads so we can finish Horizon?

21 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes.

22 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: And what's your  
23 estimated time of completion?

24 COMMISSIONER CARRION: It's about...  
25 Felipe, do...

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2 FELIPE FRANCO: Felipe Franco, Deputy  
3 Commissioner, Division of Youth and Family Justice.

4 The timeline that has been developed by  
5 the Department of Design and Construction expects to  
6 have Horizon ready to consolidate operations  
7 temporarily by late 2017; the timeline, which is very  
8 aggressive, expects the renovations for Crossroads to  
9 begin in late 2017 and taking about two years. So it  
10 would be 2019 that Crossroads will finally be  
11 repaired and redesigned for the needs of young people  
12 in New York City.

13 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: And then we can  
14 anticipate another two years... two, because I'm sure  
15 the other one will start going to design; will the  
16 other one start going to design at the same time?

17 FELIPE FRANCO: Yes, we're doing

18 **[inaudible]**... [crosstalk]

19 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: Okay, so then it will  
20 be another two years before we finish the other one.  
21 So we're looking at 2021... [interpose]

22 FELIPE FRANCO: That's the estimate by  
23 the Department of Design and Construction; I mean we  
24 are hoping to lean and try to do things as quickly as  
25 possible... [crosstalk]

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2 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: So... So would it be a  
3 good speculation on my part to not expect the 16- and  
4 17-year-olds that are currently on Rikers Island to  
5 go to any other detention centers if that was even in  
6 the plans after 2021? Does that make sense?

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: That's correct. I  
8 would say that certainly while no plans have been  
9 finalized concerning the young people from Rikers,  
10 the 16- and 17-year-olds; certainly our facility is  
11 an option, but given our timeline for renovation, it  
12 is in the out years.

13 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: And they're renovating  
14 -- from your understanding, there's funding to  
15 renovate the adolescent unit on Rikers; right,  
16 that's... have you been informed of that?

17 COMMISSIONER CARRION: I really don't  
18 know.

19 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: Okay, that's what we  
20 heard I believe from Commissioner Ponte, so. Has  
21 there been any discussion to look at another ACS  
22 facility for the 16- and 17-year-olds at Rikers that  
23 will go any of the five boroughs?

24 COMMISSIONER CARRION: No. You know, the  
25 16- and 17-year-olds, until Raise the Age is passed

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2 at the state, ACS doesn't really have jurisdiction or  
3 the authority to house 16- and 17-year-olds. We  
4 certainly have been in conversations with  
5 Commissioner Ponte and we have been working in  
6 partnership to identify best models for working for  
7 16-year-olds and 17-year-olds on Rikers and helping  
8 -- certainly Felipe has been part of conversations  
9 and planning sessions with Commissioner Ponte staff  
10 around what are the best practices in serving young  
11 adults and serving 16- and 17-year-olds.

12 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: And let me put a plug  
13 while I'm at it; I urge the state to hurry up; I mean  
14 I can't believe this New York State and there's only  
15 two states left, North Carolina and New York, and we  
16 still have not raised the age, I mean it just baffles  
17 me, it's just shocking. And again, I know the  
18 administration's been pushing for that at the state  
19 level, the City Council as well; I just can't  
20 understand why the state is taking so long.

21 Are there any legal issues that will  
22 prevent the City from housing DLC adolescents and ACS  
23 youth in the same detention facility?

24 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes, there are.  
25

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2 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: Or there are. Okay.

3 Can you explain that?

4 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Well once again,  
5 there's federal law that doesn't allow -- I mean 16-  
6 and 17-year-olds are considered adults and so you  
7 can't have minors with adults and so we have they  
8 dichotomy in the State of New York; as you pointed  
9 out, New York and North Carolina. So without passing  
10 Raise the Age, we would not have the legal authority  
11 to be able to house 16- and 17-year-olds with a  
12 younger population or within ACS, even if we had  
13 separate facilities, we don't have the authority.

14 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: It's ironic we're  
15 speaking about minors, but the reality is; they are  
16 minors. But so... so what's holding us here basically  
17 is Raise the Age... [interpose]

18 COMMISSIONER CARRION: It is Raise the  
19 Age and so it would be the Department of Corrections,  
20 under Commissioner Ponte, who has the legal  
21 responsibility to provide placement facilities and  
22 they are in his custody, so it is within his  
23 responsibility to find those placement options.

24 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: And are we gonna fine  
25 savings since we're transferring -- now we only have

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2 one facility and we're gonna have daily operations;  
3 are there gonna be any substantial savings at all?

4 COMMISSIONER CARRION: There are savings.

5 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: Okay.

6 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Susan; do you  
7 wanna share?

8 SUSAN NUCCIO: Yes, there is; projected  
9 in the out years there are four positions that we  
10 will save; as we change the ratios of the staff to  
11 halls.

12 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: So those four  
13 positions, are they gonna be eliminated through  
14 attrition or...

15 SUSAN NUCCIO: Attrition.

16 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: Attrition. Okay. And  
17 how much is that; I'm just curious?

18 SUSAN NUCCIO: I'm gonna get you the  
19 savings on it; hold on.

20 FELIPE FRANCO: I think it's important to  
21 point out that we have actually been consolidating  
22 operations internally within the two facilities that  
23 we run, so actually, I think you may have seen this  
24 in your visit; we only run **[inaudible]** institution at  
25 five halls in Crossroads and Horizon. So at the



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2 moment we're actually, we're ready for consolidation;  
3 we will run a facility of 10 halls, so we actually  
4 are expecting to need the staff that comes from the  
5 facility, other construction, to be able to run a  
6 full operation in one of the facilities, so that's  
7 why the savings are so small.

8 SUSAN NUCCIO: Alright, so the total  
9 savings associated with those positions are \$2.7  
10 million gross; \$1 million City tax levy.

11 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: Okay, that's  
12 substantial.

13 FEMALE VOICE: That's substantial.

14 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: My other question...  
15 [crosstalk]

16 SUSAN NUCCIO: That includes OTPS.

17 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: Now the licensing and  
18 -- how many will we be able, after renovations, to...  
19 what will be the maximum that we'll be able to host  
20 in each of the detentions?

21 FELIPE FRANCO: We're working now with  
22 the designers and a consulting firm to figure out  
23 what is the right size. I think, as some of you have  
24 seen in detention, as we move into integrating mental  
25 health services within the halls or what we call the

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3 **[inaudible]**, we have actually built mental health  
4 offices within what used to be rooms, so none of the  
5 two facilities right now are fully available in terms  
6 of their license capacity. As the Commissioner  
7 mentioned early on in terms of numbers, we have less  
8 than 100 kids in secure detention. At any one moment  
9 we possibly are expecting with the designers to build  
10 a facility of 100 or less in terms of capacity, which  
11 will allow us to have space for **[inaudible]**...  
12 educational services that we believe older youth that  
we serve now need.

13 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: Your licensing per  
14 facility is depending on the C of O or is it  
15 dependant on how many staff do you have?

16 FELIPE FRANCO: It's dependant on the  
17 license provided by the state, based on a set of  
18 regulations that includes square footage, regulation  
19 on space, medical space, mental health, and other  
20 services and both facilities are licensed at 124  
21 **[inaudible]**... [crosstalk]

22 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: So they could change  
23 it at any mo... If any moment, God forbid we to have a  
24 surge of 100 young people coming in and you are only  
25

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2 licensed for 150; now you've got 250, that license  
3 could change as soon as...

4 FELIPE FRANCO: It's not that easy; you  
5 have to go to the state and ask for permission to do  
6 that.

7 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: So what would happen  
8 at the moment -- since it's not that easy, I'm just  
9 curious, 'cause I don't know the answer to this --  
10 that there was a surge -- God forbid; we don't want  
11 that, but you never know -- that there will be a  
12 surge and then you don't have the space for it  
13 because of the licensing restriction...

14 FELIPE FRANCO: Again, as the  
15 Commissioner mentioned before, we are under 100 kids;  
16 we have a license of up to 124; it's hard to foresee  
17 with a 24 percent reduction by year of numbers of  
18 admissions that there would be a surge that would be  
19 so exponentially large.

20 COMMISSIONER CARRION: What we could do  
21 also, in response to your question, is we can  
22 actually... we have capacity in our non-secure  
23 detention; we would have to do some retrofitting, but  
24 we would be able to use that as a back... you know as  
25 assurance should that be the case.

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2 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: Is \$124 million in the  
3 renovations; what...

4 COMMISSIONER CARRION: I think... We don't  
5 have... We have a projection and until we see the  
6 design we won't have, but I think we have in the  
7 budget right now \$157 million...

8 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: \$157. So you don't  
9 know what the renovations are gonna be as of right  
10 now; do you have a pretty good idea... [interpose]

11 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Well we have a  
12 pretty idea, because the place is pretty bad right  
13 now; we have some serious plumbing issues, we have  
14 electricity, you know electric issues with the wiring  
15 in the building, we have issues with the heating and  
16 cooling systems or lack thereof, we have problems  
17 with the way the space was designed and sight lines  
18 for security issues, we have problems with the walls  
19 and how sturdy or unsteady they are; there are many,  
20 many problems that we have that are very concerning  
21 to us that impact our ability. Space is important,  
22 right, in these facilities, so the major... all the  
23 major systems' life has expired and there have never  
24 been the capital investments made into these  
25 facilities to ensure their continuing operation.

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2 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: So these are critical  
3 issues, building structure issues that we're dealing  
4 with. By the way, is there gonna be -- I'm just  
5 curious -- aesthetic changes to make it more...

6 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes.

7 FELIPE FRANCO: Yeah, **[inaudible]**...

8 [crosstalk]

9 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: I could use the word  
10 home **[inaudible]**... [crosstalk]

11 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Right, more than  
12 just slapping paint on it, yes... [crosstalk]

13 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: Okay.

14 COMMISSIONER CARRION: which is what  
15 we've been doing.

16 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: We don't want that  
17 hospital look.

18 COMMISSIONER CARRION: No, absolutely  
19 not; green is banned.

20 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: I'm gonna switch real  
21 quick here and then I'm gonna turn it over to Council  
22 Member Cumbo; I believe you're next, and that is  
23 something that I always bring up that is dear to my  
24 heart, is adoptions; how are we doing with adoptions  
25 and do we have any new plans; have we seen the

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2 numbers go down; are they increasing; are they taking  
3 longer, shorter amount of time since we last spoke?

4 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So certainly we  
5 have less children in the system, so we will have  
6 less adoptions as a result; there are less children  
7 eligible for adoption, but I think that to your point  
8 and expediting, we have worked very hard in this past  
9 year to implement changes in the way we do our work  
10 to expedite adoptions. And so for instance, we  
11 actually have been working with... we have a workgroup  
12 and we have a national consultant who's been working  
13 with us to identify business processes in ACS that  
14 hinder a speedy adoption process. So for instance,  
15 we have revamped the whole adoption subsidy process  
16 and we've reduced the time to approve an adoption  
17 subsidy by 63 percent..

18 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: Wow.

19 COMMISSIONER CARRION: so we've also, in  
20 collaboration with the Department of Health, have cut  
21 substantially the time necessary to obtain birth  
22 certificates that are essential in order to process  
23 an adoption. So we have taken a really deep look at  
24 how we can expedite and where the inefficiencies are  
25 in the system that create delay. We're also working

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2 with our judicial partners in family court to work to  
3 see what changes in case processing can happen in the  
4 family court to expedite the processing of adoption;  
5 all designed to really have children adopted at a  
6 much shorter span of time than has been in the past.

7 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: Well thank you so  
8 much, Commissioner for that systemic transformational  
9 change, because the sooner we could get these kids  
10 into families, the less risk and the potential for  
11 them to go through the trauma really of that non-  
12 bonding, you know, missing... having that structure  
13 called family that is just essential for society, so  
14 thank you, thank you for doing that; I'm looking  
15 forward to hearing what the data will show in the  
16 future.

17 Well thank you so much and again, I  
18 commend you for the work that you're doing and let me  
19 pass it now to... the baton to my friend and colleague,  
20 Laurie Cumbo, Council Member Cumbo.

21 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Thank you, Chair  
22 Cabrera; thank you, Chair Levin; thank you, Chair  
23 Ferreras-Copeland. Thank you so much for being here;  
24 I want to say how pleased I am again that the work of  
25 the agency is reflective of what so many young people

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2 that have been aging out of foster care have been  
3 saying, in terms of the discharge process.

4 Wanted to know, on average, because we  
5 put forward legislation on this, on average wanted to  
6 talk about how many youth in foster care on average  
7 currently attend college; do you have those numbers  
8 in terms of how many are attending college?

9 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So we do; it's  
10 about 400 young people that are in college today.

11 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: 400 people total?

12 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Total, yes.

13 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Total. So on average,  
14 are we seeing maybe 100 or so young people that are  
15 aging out of foster care are entering into college?

16 COMMISSIONER CARRION: You know we don't...  
17 So I really don't know what the number is; we know  
18 the total number is about 400; we collect that data  
19 from our providers, and so part of this initiative is  
20 also to give us the resources for us to be able to  
21 track that number and for us to be able to identify  
22 the young people that are going to college that are  
23 eligible to go to college and work with them  
24 directly.

25



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2 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Okay. Out of that  
3 number, in terms of the 400, how did you come up with  
4 the number in terms of how you would be able to  
5 provide tuition support for them; how many young  
6 people will this particular allocation provide  
7 funding for?

8 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Over three years  
9 it will provide funding for 200 young people.

10 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: So 200 young people over  
11 the course of three years?

12 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Three years.

13 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: What happens in the  
14 final year?

15 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Well hopefully.. Oh  
16 no, the funding will provide for the four-year period  
17 of being in college.

18 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Okay.

19 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes. Yes.

20 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Alright, we don't wanna...

21 [crosstalk]

22 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yeah, but we're  
23 not [sic]...

24 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: set 'em up for three.

25

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2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: No. No, we're  
3 not... we're not doing that, absolutely not.

4 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Okay.

5 COMMISSIONER CARRION: And we know that  
6 number more or less because for young people that are  
7 in college who are over the age of 21, we do  
8 extension to placement, because we provide support  
9 for young people if they're in college to stay and  
10 graduate and **[inaudible]** in our care.

11 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: So you have the  
12 opportunity to send our young people, our children to  
13 college through a CUNY education; do we understand  
14 what the criteria will be; is all that needs to  
15 happen is that you're accepted to a CUNY institution  
16 or is it that above that you need to have a certain  
17 GPA; you have to maintain a certain criteria; you  
18 have to have a certain GPA; how do we manage how they  
19 continue to have that level of assistance?

20 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Those details are  
21 being worked out right now as we speak with CUNY; we  
22 just had one of the first meetings with them  
23 yesterday.

24 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Okay. Because that's  
25 going to be very important to understand what the

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2 criteria is going to be; how young people are going  
3 to be assessed, making sure that they have the  
4 opportunity to have this for the entire four years;  
5 what happens if they have a difficult year; how will  
6 they still be supported during that time, so just  
7 wanted to put that out there.

8 COMMISSIONER CARRION: We totally  
9 understand and part core [sic] of this to make sure  
10 that we have the educational supports that young  
11 people need, so it's not just a matter of getting  
12 them in; it's getting them graduated; right...?  
13 [crosstalk]

14 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Right. Now during that  
15 particular time while they're in college, what if  
16 they have an opportunity to be accepted to a college  
17 outside of CUNY, so if they're accepted into a  
18 private institution; is there money available for  
19 them to do that as well?

20 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So under this  
21 initiative we will be providing them with 20... they  
22 will be entitled to the personal expense allocation,  
23 which is \$28.00 a day, but this funding will not  
24 provide tuition support or housing support for any  
25 young person attending a non-CUNY college. We have a

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2 separate program with that, with our partners, New  
3 Yorkers for Children; they have the Guardian Scholar  
4 Program and they provide support and what we're  
5 hoping is, as we assume responsibility for the CUNY  
6 students, that will free up more money for them to be  
7 able to provide support for young people that are not  
8 in CUNY; that they're in SUNY or into a private  
9 college.

10 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Do we know at this time,  
11 when our young people are graduating, if graduating  
12 on track; they've gone to four years of high school  
13 on time; do we have an understanding of what  
14 percentage of them are actually graduating in that  
15 four-year timeframe and then are eligible to go on to  
16 college?

17 COMMISSIONER CARRION: I don't at this  
18 moment.

19 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: I think that number  
20 would be very important... [crosstalk]

21 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes.

22 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: to give us a real  
23 snapshot of what's happening.

24 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So the capacity  
25 that we're building, 'cause now that we are getting

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2 information from the Department of Education, we can  
3 actually see what the educational attainment levels  
4 are of our young people and who is on track to  
5 graduate; who needs remediation, tutoring; what kinds  
6 of educational support, which has to be part of this  
7 also, 'cause we need to create the pool; right? We  
8 need to create... [crosstalk]

9 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Definitely.

10 COMMISSIONER CARRION: the pipeline...

11 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Right.

12 COMMISSIONER CARRION: because we need to  
13 make sure that young people are ready to attend  
14 college and are ready to succeed, and so we need to  
15 develop that. And so we will be developing and part  
16 of the resources here is to be able to develop that  
17 capacity, to interpret that information and data and  
18 to be able -- right now we get the information from  
19 the Department of Education, educational academic  
20 information; we just started getting it recently in a  
21 manner that we could understand it and use it and we  
22 provide that information to our provider agencies; we  
23 will be doing more of mining that data to be able to  
24 see what the educational outcomes are for our young  
25 people and how many are ready for college and what it

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2 is that we need to get them all ready for college or  
3 a career training program.

4 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: What is ACS' strategy  
5 for ensuring that more foster youth apply for and  
6 enroll in college; is there something that happens  
7 within their school system; is there something that  
8 happens through their foster parents; is there  
9 something that recognizes that they need additional  
10 support in order to be college-ready?

11 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So there is a  
12 program implemented that has been developed by  
13 Fedcap, which is a nonprofit organization that's...  
14 [interpose]

15 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Say that once...

16 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Fedcap, F E D C A  
17 P... [crosstalk]

18 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Uh-huh.

19 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So they have  
20 created a program where working with foster parents  
21 in our system and they work with the provider  
22 agencies to create what they're called "education  
23 affirming homes," to be able to train foster parents  
24 to support young people going to college, young  
25 people to understand the importance of education

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2 through -- so educating the foster parents. We need  
3 to be doing more of that and I think that this  
4 funding will allow us to do more of that; how do we  
5 reinforce the importance and the opportunity and the  
6 fact that any of our young people can succeed and  
7 that that should be something that they aspire to;  
8 what kinds of supports do we need to put in place in  
9 order to support that? Many of our foster care  
10 agencies have robust educational support programs; I  
11 wanna make sure that they all have very robust  
12 educational support programs that are tracking kids  
13 to college.

14 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: I just wanna reiterate;  
15 I believe that's very important, because there's  
16 going to be an additional \$33.1 million added to the  
17 budget and I certainly think that tracking,  
18 understanding to the exact number how many young  
19 people are graduating; doing an evaluation of those  
20 organizations such as Fedcap; are they actually doing  
21 the work in order to prepare young people; how many  
22 are succeeding through this program; how many are  
23 falling through the cracks and where do we need to  
24 shore up additional resources?

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2 So wanted to go on to cover additional  
3 questions; wanted to know in the... I'm very excited  
4 about this, but wanted to the \$1,000 discharge grant  
5 that's being put in the budget to youth leaving  
6 foster care. Previous to this year, were young  
7 people receiving any sort of discharge grant when  
8 aging out of foster care?

9 COMMISSIONER CARRION: It's my  
10 understanding that it was discontinued a number of  
11 years ago.

12 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Do we know the number  
13 that they were discharged with at that particular  
14 time?

15 COMMISSIONER CARRION: It was \$750 when I  
16 was doing this work, so that's the last that I  
17 remember and I think... yeah, it was \$750.

18 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: What year was that  
19 discontinued?

20 COMMISSIONER CARRION: And the last one  
21 was 2010.

22 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: 2010. So during that  
23 timeframe there was no funding...? [crosstalk]

24 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Nothing.  
25



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2 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Nothing allocated. Is  
3 this a one-time grant?

4 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes.

5 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Has there been  
6 discussion in terms of making this renewable to some  
7 extent and what is it anticipated that young people  
8 would utilize this funding to do?

9 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So I have to tell  
10 you; I'm thrilled that we got it, right.. [crosstalk]

11 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Right.

12 COMMISSIONER CARRION: I'm thrilled that  
13 we got it and so I start there, but young people use  
14 these funds to be able to secure housing, for their  
15 you know first month's deposit; they use it to buy a  
16 laptop, they use it for books, they use it for  
17 clothing, they use it to buy furniture, a variety of  
18 things. You know when I was running a foster care  
19 agency, my young people used that money primarily as  
20 a first month's deposit and first month's rent; I  
21 will tell that's my recollection.

22 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: When was this?

23 COMMISSIONER CARRION: A very long time  
24 ago.

25

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2 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Right. It's a  
3 challenging one because we recognize that they were  
4 receiving nothing prior to, but to receive \$1,000 in  
5 this economy really won't even allow them an  
6 opportunity to put a substantial down payment or a  
7 security deposit and first month's rent; laptops have  
8 also, with all the software and things you have to  
9 download have also gotten very expensive. So I would  
10 say this is like a huge baby step, but certainly that  
11 needs to be done more so that it's reoccurring, the  
12 amount is larger and that they're given that level of  
13 support they need.

14 COMMISSIONER CARRION: I think we have to  
15 remember that the \$1,000 discharge grant, they're  
16 also eligible for a housing grant, both from ACS and  
17 from HRA and we knit this money **[inaudible]** together...

18 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Got it.

19 COMMISSIONER CARRION: so that they have  
20 the resources that they need; it's certainly.. you  
21 know, in New York City, you know it's very expensive,  
22 housing and living in New York City, but really  
23 putting all of those funds together really is a good  
24 beginning.

25

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2 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Okay. Wanted to ask you  
3 a question in terms of the expansion for foster care  
4 and adoption stipend; currently what does a family  
5 receive that is a foster care family per child?

6 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Well it depend on  
7 the age of the child and Susan will be able to give  
8 you the numbers.

9 SUSAN NUCCIO: Sure. Currently we are  
10 following this schedule. There's three levels of  
11 need that the state defines as normal, special and  
12 exceptional and then it's broken down by age, so...  
13 [crosstalk]

14 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Okay.

15 SUSAN NUCCIO: to give you an example --  
16 and it's a daily rate. So for a 0-3 foster care  
17 child, now it's \$21.16, if they're normal, if they're  
18 categorized as normal and it's going up to \$22.20;  
19 it's going up about 5 percent. For exceptional it's  
20 currently... [crosstalk]

21 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Per month?

22 SUSAN NUCCIO: No, this is per day; this  
23 is a daily rate [sic]...

24 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Per day; it's a  
25 daily rate [sic].

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2 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Oh \$21.16.

3 SUSAN NUCCIO: Correct a day; this is  
4 daily rate; that's how they reimburse us at.

5 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Can you... okay, so the  
6 math is like, I guess something like \$600 or so  
7 dollars a month?

8 SUSAN NUCCIO: Sure, if you wanna do  
9 \$21.16, the current, times 365, is 77... well I was  
10 doin' a year; you wanna do it at a year; \$7,723 a  
11 year; we can do it by a month, \$643 or \$644 a month;  
12 that's the current; it's going up 5 percent. Now  
13 exceptional, to just give you the other range, is  
14 currently \$63.42 a day and that will be going up;  
15 again, for the 0-3 category, to \$66.75.

16 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Let me ask you a  
17 question, 'cause I didn't realize it was that low; is  
18 this what we're seeing nationally; is this the rate  
19 that we're seeing nationally across the board,  
20 because that rate in many ways makes it really a loss  
21 for a family financially; I mean you're hoping that a  
22 family is doing this out of the kindness of their  
23 heart and that they wanna love a child, but at the  
24 same time they also have to maintain that they have  
25 expenses and living in New York City is certainly

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2 quite expensive; I also see here that there is an  
3 opportunity for additional resources to be provided  
4 for one-time expenses, such as a car seat or a  
5 stroller; am I understanding that correctly?

6 SUSAN NUCCIO: Yes, a foster parent has  
7 this daily rate paid to them; the foster care agency  
8 also gets an admin rate, and so some of the support  
9 services that the family receives is through that, as  
10 well as there is additional funding for special  
11 payments that... [interpose]

12 COMMISSIONER CARRION: And there's a  
13 clothing allowance... [crosstalk]

14 SUSAN NUCCIO: there's clothing  
15 allowance, there's a diaper allowance... [crosstalk]

16 COMMISSIONER CARRION: **[inaudible]**

17 SUSAN NUCCIO: add-ons, so there's a lot  
18 more than just this.

19 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So to respond;  
20 actually, as low as this may seem, we have one of the  
21 highest rates in the country.

22 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Really?

23 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes.

24 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Okay. I don't know  
25 quite what to say about that, but I... [crosstalk]

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2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: I know.

3 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Is there talk or  
4 discussion about the fact that this number has to be  
5 raised? And the reason why I ask that question is  
6 because when we met with many of the young people  
7 that were aging out of foster care or who had aged  
8 out, one of the challenges that they spoke of is that  
9 they found that many of their needs on a day to day  
10 basis were often not met, so example, things like  
11 clothes or food or things like that; has there been  
12 any way to understand how to make it so that we  
13 ensure that the resources are going to the child,  
14 because that was one of the complaints, as well as  
15 the fact that when young people did complain, it  
16 created some retaliation with the foster care parents  
17 about the fact that they were going to the agency.  
18 So has there been discussion about that, but now also  
19 recognizing that it really isn't a great deal of  
20 money?

21 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So these rates are  
22 set by the state, so this is an issue that has to be  
23 taken up with the state legislature, and so are there  
24 discussions concerning -- yes, there are discussions  
25 underway and part of the work that we're doing now,

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2 as we're looking at foster care and looking at how we  
3 redesign this and how we recruit foster parents. You  
4 know most foster parents that we have are very good  
5 foster parents, but you always have those foster  
6 parents that are not using the money to support the  
7 young people and we hear that from the young people,  
8 so we're looking now; when you say, do we have  
9 discussions ongoing? Yes, we have a workgroup that's  
10 looking and those are one of the issues. How do we  
11 ensure that the needs of the children, the young  
12 people are being met by the foster parents and we  
13 have to start by making sure that we get the right  
14 people to do this, that they're trained, that they  
15 have the competencies; not only do they love the  
16 children, but they understand what their  
17 responsibilities; what the fiscal responsibilities  
18 are; that we support them and that we monitor that  
19 and that we listen to young people, and so we wanna  
20 make sure that, for instance, when we recertify  
21 foster homes that we talk to young people directly to  
22 hear what they have to say about what their  
23 experience has been in this particular home; we often  
24 don't listen to young people and we have to  
25 incorporate their voices to that work. So I will

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2 assure you that that is certainly something that is  
3 under consideration that is being factored in as we  
4 look at what do we need to do to improve our foster  
5 parents and our foster care system.

6 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Also, for a young person  
7 that's graduated or been discharged from foster care  
8 and they've been discharged maybe two years ago;  
9 three years ago; are they eligible to apply for the  
10 \$1,000 or is this now just for young people coming  
11 out the system right now...? [crosstalk]

12 COMMISSIONER CARRION: It's for young  
13 people coming out of the system right now.

14 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Okay. Next question  
15 goes into -- this was brought up at a previous  
16 hearing that there have been over 200 assaults  
17 against ACS child protective specialists; we wanted  
18 to know at this particular time; is ACS aware of this  
19 issue; do they regularly track assaults against child  
20 protective specialists or in this budget, was there  
21 any thought about how to better protect workers who  
22 are reporting being stalked, attacked, because they  
23 often have to give their own name, which then allows  
24 families who feel that they have had their children



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3 taken away from them wrongfully to then go forward to  
stalk or attack ACS workers?

4 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So ACS is aware of  
5 these assaults as staff reports it to us and so while  
6 we are aware and we've reported about 200 incidents,  
7 it's my understanding that fewer than 30 have  
8 resulted in a physical assault, but one assault is  
9 one too many and we... [crosstalk]

10 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Correct.

11 COMMISSIONER CARRION: recognize that  
12 these are very dangerous neighborhoods in some  
13 instances or fraught with challenges; there is a lot  
14 of tension when our... could be a lot of tension in  
15 these homes when our workers go out, so we're very  
16 concerned about their well-being and we've worked  
17 very closely with the union to address and there are  
18 a couple of things that we've done already. So staff  
19 is encouraged and is able to go out as teams. I've  
20 personally had conversations with Police Commissioner  
21 Bratton; I've spoken to his deputy, Susan Herman,  
22 about working with the police in cooperation so that  
23 these complaints are taken seriously and in fact  
24 there is a code that the Police Department has when  
25 this is called in to alert the police that it's a

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3 child welfare worker that's being assaulted or is  
4 involved in an incident; there is a commitment to  
5 work together to increase the awareness and the  
6 responsiveness of the Police Department and we have a  
7 good partnership. I've also raised this issue with  
8 the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice and the  
9 Director, Liz Glazer, to be able to talk with the DAs  
10 and raise this as an issue with the DAs, 'cause about  
11 two years ago, 2012, law was passed that made any  
12 assault on a child protective worker a felony, to  
13 make sure that DAs know that, that they charge  
14 accordingly and prosecute these cases, and so we will  
15 be working with the Mayor's Office of Criminal  
16 Justice to make sure that they're aware of this.  
17 I've talked to Anthony Wells, who's the president at  
18 the union, recently and asked him to join with me in  
19 a letter to the DAs to make them aware of this  
20 problem and I'm sure... and he's agreed to do that and  
21 we're gonna do that jointly, and I'm sure that we'll  
22 get a good response from the DAs.

23 The other things that we are doing is  
24 that whenever we think a worker feels that a  
25 particular case might have higher risk, we have our

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3 investigative consultants who are on staff that are  
4 retired New York City Police Department detectives...

5 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Right.

6 COMMISSIONER CARRION: and police  
7 officers; they review the case record; they review...  
8 they do a background... a criminal background check;  
9 they look for the domestic violence incidents and if  
10 they feel that there is a potential here or higher  
11 risk; they will advise the staff to go with a New  
12 York City police officer to do the visit or they will  
13 go out with them and we will team that or we will  
14 have the family come to the office. There are  
15 precautions that we can take and will take to ensure  
16 the safety of our staff.

17 The other initiative that's underway now  
18 is that we've been exploring technology that would  
19 help our staff; for instance, a smartphone, we are  
20 going to be issuing smartphones to our workers, our  
21 CPS workers and they will have a panic button on them  
22 that they can press whenever they feel they're in  
23 danger and then it would be alert to our office or  
24 911 and we're working on that right now.

25 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Is that at this current  
time reflective in the budget?

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3 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Well the  
4 telephones are, right, that's part of our capital; we  
5 were doing a couple of thousand telephones that are  
6 gonna be deployed to the field and also the  
7 development of that app is.

8 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Okay. Wanted to  
9 continue to follow up, because we just wanna make  
10 sure, and I understand from the recommendations that  
11 you've put forward; we wanna make sure that staff is  
12 certainly safe and we appreciate the measures that  
13 you have taken thus far in order to ensure that; at  
14 the next hearing we're hoping that this number of 200  
15 reported incidents -- even though all of them may not  
16 be violent, someone stalking you or calling you or  
17 outside your home or any of those sorts of things  
18 really fall within that number to me of 200, because  
19 just the fear of it happening is quite serious...

20 [crosstalk]

21 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Absolutely. Yeah,  
22 you raise the... which is a... I must admit, was the  
23 first time that I heard, after a recent incident, the  
24 issue with the name and so we're looking at that,  
25 whether or not it could be a number instead of a name  
or just a first name rather than a last name. And

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2 the other caution that all of us need to be mindful  
3 of, including our staff, is we tend to expose on  
4 social media more information than we should that  
5 gives information out about where we live...

6 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Right.

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: and we need to be  
8 careful about that and we remind our staff of that  
9 and that's an unfortunate byproduct, but it's the  
10 kind of work that we do that we need to ensure that  
11 we protect ourselves and that we take steps to keep  
12 safe, and so we will support staff and help them  
13 understand some of the exposure and liability when we  
14 provide as much information as we do on social media.

15 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: What kind of recourse  
16 does a family have if they feel that their child has  
17 been wrongfully taken from them, perhaps through a  
18 spouse who is upset or vengeful or a neighbor or a  
19 family member; what type of support does a family  
20 member have should they believe that their child was  
21 wrongfully taken?

22 COMMISSIONER CARRION: They have to go to  
23 family court.

24  
25

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2 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Are they provided any  
3 legal support or assistance or counseling...?

4 [crosstalk]

5 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes. Yes.

6 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: And who pays for that?

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: The City of New  
8 York.

9 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: The City of New York  
10 pays for every family who feels that way?

11 COMMISSIONER CARRION: I don't know if  
12 it's for every family, but certainly for families  
13 without economic means.

14 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Okay. Okay. Wanted to  
15 just close and turn it over back to my colleagues;  
16 certainly wanna get into the EarlyLearn RFP process.

17 ACS has stated that it is going to renew  
18 currently EarlyLearn contracts through September  
19 30th, 2018; at the preliminary budget hearing, the  
20 agency was unable to say when the next RFP will be  
21 released. When will ACS release a concept paper for  
22 the next EarlyLearn RFP and do you have any other  
23 updates regarding the RFP planning process, because  
24 what happened in prior years we certainly do not as a  
25 Council wanna go through that process again; we

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2 wanted to see more transparency, we wanted there to  
3 be an ability for providers that have been doing the  
4 work for decades with a stellar reputation an  
5 opportunity to continue to do so; what's changed from  
6 when we first came in to now moving forward?

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So we anticipate  
8 issuing a concept paper over the summer, and that's  
9 my -- right? -- So over the summer we anticipate  
10 issuing a concept paper; we also will be doing and we  
11 have started to do forums with parents; we've  
12 completed a series of forums with parents to get  
13 input from parents; we will be conducting more forums  
14 and we welcome the opportunity to sit down and speak  
15 with council members so that we can hear from you  
16 what your concerns are and we anticipate then that we  
17 would issue that RFP sometime in the fall. Is that  
18 the plan, Lorelai? Okay. So we understand [cough]  
19 while **[inaudible]** certainly the challenges in the  
20 last RFP process when EarlyLearn was launched.

21 I think I have to remind you, you know  
22 always that in an open competitive process there are  
23 some winners and there are some losers, but we would  
24 endeavor, as we did in our last RFP for the funding  
25 that we received from the City Council for the 17

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3 Early Education Programs, that we really weighted, as  
4 we looked at the criteria, that we weighted heavily  
5 prior experience in the community providing that  
6 service and we recognize the importance of that, the  
7 continuity and the experience and being part of a  
8 community and having that experience in a community,  
9 so we understand that and we hope to continue the  
10 conversation with you as we get further along.

11 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Just wanna say that open  
12 competitive process sounds great initially at face  
13 value, but part of the challenge that we had was that  
14 we didn't understand if an organization that had five  
15 years of experience working in the community versus  
16 an organization had 45 years; it seemed like there  
17 was no way to weigh that one way or the other, so we  
18 wanted to make sure that 45 years is much more  
19 heavily weighted than five years; we also wanted to  
20 make sure that we had real transparency, openness in  
21 terms of the individuals that are serving on those  
22 panels. Currently we really still don't have any  
23 idea of who's serving on the panels and who's making  
24 those types of decisions based on our communities.

25 And the other one that I would like as  
far as a recommendation is that there needs to be



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2 similar to here for individuals that are serving on  
3 those panels cannot accept any type of employment at  
4 a winning agency for a certain amount of years after  
5 that particular organization has won the RFP process.  
6 So we wanna make sure that there's transparency, that  
7 there's openness, that all individuals have an  
8 opportunity to understand what that process was, who  
9 weighed in on it, who voted; that experience really  
10 does count in a very heavily weighted way and we also  
11 wanna make sure that there is that lag in time  
12 between individuals leaving the agency and then going  
13 to work for award-winning RFPs. So those are a few  
14 of the recommendations that I wanna put forward and  
15 we want the Council to have a real meaningful input  
16 in what this RFP is going to look like and to have an  
17 opportunity to have some sort of commitment or  
18 process or way that we're involved in how these RFPs  
19 are awarded in our own communities and our own back  
20 yards.

21 And I'm just going to ask two more  
22 questions as it pertains to the issue around pay  
23 parity that the chair brought up and I too wanna ask  
24 questions in terms of that.

25

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3 So we understand that we're in the  
4 process currently of coming to a final negotiation as  
5 it pertains to this, that an offer was made and that  
6 we are going to have a decision within the next day  
7 or two; is that your understanding?

8 COMMISSIONER CARRION: No; that's news to  
9 me, but I think that's great.

10 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Well not everyone thinks  
11 it's great at this particular time, but just..  
12 [crosstalk]

13 COMMISSIONER CARRION: I think it's great  
14 there's a decision; I hope it's the right decision;  
15 right?

16 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: I hope it's the right  
17 decision as well. Can you talk to us about -- it  
18 says here last year the 2016 Executive Budget  
19 included a 2.5 percent cost of living increase for  
20 childcare employees with a minimum wage floor of  
21 \$11.50 per hour; these increases became effective  
22 July 1st, 2015. This increase was applicable to  
23 staff working in EarlyLearn child care programs. In  
24 the 2017 Executive Budget, the Mayor has used a  
25 \$15.00 per hour wage proposal as the means to address  
increases for the support staff. Starting this

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2 October, support staff can expect to receive either  
3 the higher of the minimum wage floor for each year or  
4 2 percent through 2020, and so that's what we're  
5 understanding. Is that the final offer that's being  
6 offered at this particular time?

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: I really don't  
8 know.

9 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Okay. Are you aware in  
10 terms of discussions about the insurance issues as it  
11 pertains to workers, health insurance...? [crosstalk]

12 SUSAN NUCCIO: Yeah. So let me answer  
13 your previous question. Regarding the 2.5 percent,  
14 that was part of the Mayor's wage initiative and so  
15 yes, we have received many requests for that 2.5 and  
16 in child care, the value of what we are seeing and  
17 approving is close to \$7 million and that's getting  
18 processed through contract amendments, so it is  
19 retroactive from back to July 1.

20 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yeah, I thought  
21 you were referring to the current offer on  
22 **[inaudible]**... [crosstalk]

23 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: No. No. No.

24 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Oh okay.  
25

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2 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Well what about the  
3 staffing; where are we going to... how are we going to  
4 address in this budget cycle, because it's not clear  
5 to us at this time, the pay parity as it pertains to  
6 staff, teachers from the EarlyLearn to UPK?

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: That's part of the  
8 collective bargaining negotiations; it's not part of  
9 this budget.

10 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Okay. And how do you  
11 understand this is going to relate to issues around  
12 health insurance? Because as we understand it, a lot  
13 of the staff, teachers can't afford the health  
14 insurance packages as they currently exist; is this  
15 going to change moving forward?

16 SUSAN NUCCIO: That's part of the  
17 collective bargaining negotiations as well; we don't  
18 have any details on that.

19 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Right.

20 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: And do you have an  
21 understanding of when that will all be decided or  
22 when you'll have a clear understanding of that?

23 SUSAN NUCCIO: No.

24 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Okay. I'm gonna turn it  
25 over to Chair Levin, who I'm sure is gonna ask more

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2 detailed questions about this particular issue and  
3 thank you so much for your testimony.

4 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Thank you.

5 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you very much,  
6 Chair Cumbo. I wanna just acknowledge my colleagues  
7 that were here at some point during this hearing --  
8 Council Member Salamanca, Kallos, Miller and Crowley,  
9 for the record.

10 Thank you, Commissioner, thank you for  
11 your patience and for answering all of our questions.  
12 I have a few questions and I'll be kind of jumping  
13 around because there are various programmatic areas  
14 that I wanna touch upon, but obviously my colleagues  
15 asked a lot of questions about [sic] a lot of the  
16 topic areas.

17 I'll start with the EarlyLearn issue and  
18 both Chairs Ferreras-Copeland and Cumbo have  
19 obviously asked numerous questions about this, but  
20 from a broader perspective -- I guess my first  
21 question is; ACS has done a needs analysis of the  
22 system; is that correct?

23 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes.

24 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: And has that been  
25 finalized and is it available for.. [interpose]

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2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: It hasn't been  
3 finalized yet. We certainly... you know and our needs  
4 analysis that we have completed really is about  
5 understanding what the... by neighborhoods and we  
6 actually looked at this by neighborhoods as to what  
7 the availability of child care services were by  
8 neighborhood, by age and modality, so you know  
9 infant, toddler and the 4s and really looking at the  
10 impact of UPK for all and so to get a sense of where  
11 the gaps were and where the needs were based on that.  
12 So what we're seeing now, preliminary, is that we  
13 need a lot more infant and toddler seats and 3s and  
14 not 4s... [crosstalk]

15 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Yeah. Right.

16 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Right?

17 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Reasonable [sic].

18 COMMISSIONER CARRION: And that's really  
19 what our assessment is about. We would love to sit  
20 down and talk to you and share with you what we've  
21 learned... [crosstalk]

22 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Yeah.

23 COMMISSIONER CARRION: but that's where  
24 we are right now.

25

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3 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Great. And I mean I  
4 would love to have that opportunity. Obviously my  
5 concern is, you know, UPK has been a significant  
6 success, clearly and that's been a very positive  
7 thing for our city; the EarlyLearn system was  
8 designed without a pre-K for all option available in  
9 the public school system and as such, even before  
10 pre-K for all came into being with this  
11 administration, even before that the EarlyLearn  
12 system was teetering, it had significant growing  
13 pains, you know, it was a difficult system that was  
14 never necessarily fully funded and had major budget  
15 shortfalls and we've been talking about this since  
16 2010 really, I mean and definitely since 2012 when  
17 the awards were given out and we've you know been  
18 through it, you know for years now, but my concern is  
19 that just as a system, under the current framework,  
20 it can't really survive without the 4-year-old  
21 enrollment in its current format. Now there are ways  
22 to address that and maybe there's ways to address  
23 that without having a brand new contract, but  
24 obviously that's something that you're looking at,  
25 right and that's a point that the needs assessment is  
gonna be addressing?

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2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: That's correct.

3 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: That structural

4 challenge I believe is exacerbated by this pay parody

5 issue, in that on top of the challenges of enrollment

6 it's also facing the challenges of being able to

7 attract and retain the qualified staff in the context

8 of the city's significant city/state resources

9 funding going into UPK; if I was coming out of school

10 and had the option of going for one or the other, you

11 know I would read the writing on the wall and say I'm

12 gonna go to a school and become a UPK teacher,

13 because clearly that's what the City is focusing on,

14 and so I... you know, I understand because your

15 jurisdiction covers the CBOs and part of UPK and the

16 EarlyLearn system and not the rest of the system and

17 so I understand that it's not entirely under your

18 jurisdiction to make all of these decisions and labor

19 relations, long-term contracts and all of that, it's

20 difficult, but I just wanna make sure that -- and I

21 know that you understand that; I wanna make sure that

22 everybody else that has other parts of the system and

23 responsibility for other parts of the system are also

24 recognizing that these programs are struggling and

25 they may not hold on much longer and as we lose the



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2 programs we lose the capacity. Case in point, I mean  
3 last year when John Orovec [sp?], Catholic Charities  
4 in my district went under, we couldn't get, I mean  
5 you guys were great in working with us; we couldn't  
6 get another provider to take up the program because  
7 the neighborhood now has more UPK seats than you  
8 could want and it just couldn't work and so it wasn't  
9 anybody's fault, but I just wanna make sure that the  
10 system as a whole is taking all of this into account.  
11 You know, I just wanna make sure that everybody else  
12 is getting it too, so.

13 COMMISSIONER CARRION: I hope so too.

14 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: 'Kay. And I think that  
15 we're gonna continue to make the point; I mean  
16 Council Member or Chair Cumbo and Chair Miller and I  
17 wrote an op ed last week trying to get this out  
18 there, because it's gonna take money, it's gonna take  
19 money to age down the seats, it's gonna take money to  
20 pay for pay parody within the system, it's gonna take  
21 a lot of money, it's gonna take like, you know,  
22 hundreds of millions of dollars; I don't know the  
23 exact amount, but it's gonna be a lot and the City  
24 has to understand and we don't really have the option  
25 -- I'm sorry, I'm being long-winded here, but we

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2 don't really have the option to not do it, because  
3 otherwise the system is gonna start to -- it's  
4 already fraying and it's gonna start to show  
5 significant, you know stress cracks, stress  
6 fractures. So that's my rant on that. Okay.

7 I'm very happy to see, and Chair Cumbo  
8 mentioned this, the resources going into the  
9 discharge grants and the special funding for extra  
10 curricular activities for foster youth and that's  
11 fabulous; I really is showing that you can make a lot  
12 of impact with a relatively modest amount of funding  
13 and so we're really thrilled to see that and thank  
14 you for adding that into the Executive Budget.

15 With regard to the new funding, the \$18.6  
16 million for primary prevention; can you explain a  
17 little bit more, go in a little further in-depth into  
18 how we plan to... how do we get families to be part of  
19 the primary prevention system?

20 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So the notion  
21 really and the idea that we have is really to create...  
22 we're starting off with three demonstration projects  
23 to really test the model and we're really looking to  
24 work with communities to create a support system  
25 within a community to really encourage and to respond

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2 to the needs of people, families have without having  
3 to come into ACS in a crisis situation, so what we're  
4 hoping to do is, working with a community-based  
5 organization, to provide them with funding for them  
6 to be, who are in the community, for them to make the  
7 connections to provide the supports and connect  
8 families when they come in to the services that are  
9 there, the services that are available, and help them  
10 identify and navigate systems, which can be difficult  
11 for anyone to do in the City of New York, and so  
12 really is about establishing -- though we're calling  
13 them family enrichment or family support centers or  
14 family success centers, but it really is to provide a  
15 venue for families to come in in a non-threatening  
16 way; not necessarily identified with ACS, and for  
17 many of our families in our poor communities we are  
18 seen in a very negative light, unfortunately, and I  
19 think that that creates a barrier to accessing  
20 services that we have available. So it's really that  
21 we have a front door in the community that is not at  
22 all stigmatizing that just allows families,  
23 individuals to come in and say, I need some service,  
24 I need some support; where can I get help and help  
25 also in identifying what are the services that you

1 need; what are the supports that are available and  
2 testing what model works best. And then once we can  
3 show the model is working, how we tweak it, how we  
4 bring that to scale. You know we've looked at some  
5 different states that are doing something similar;  
6 New Jersey being one of them, and it really serves as  
7 the front door to services in the city; it translates  
8 services; it breaks down barriers; it helps families  
9 get the services they might need -- and it doesn't  
10 necessarily have to be service; how do I file for an  
11 application for public housing, you know how do I  
12 apply for food stamps or SNAP; how do I go about  
13 getting an after-school program or I need family  
14 counseling or I need a parenting class; where do  
15 people go and families go to get that kind of support  
16 and maybe it's just an ear that you need, for someone  
17 to listen to you explain what is happening in your  
18 life; maybe it's your child, your young, you know  
19 your teenager doesn't wanna go to school; how do we  
20 help you without necessarily being part of the ACS  
21 system, explaining the services that are available;  
22 what do preventive services mean; accessing daycare  
23 services and bringing them into our EarlyLearn or  
24 working with the providers in a community and  
25

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2 providing that infrastructure that sometimes is  
3 missing in communities that helps make the  
4 connection. And it is evolving, you know we're gonna  
5 do a demonstration and then at some point we're  
6 hoping there will be an RFP process with a better  
7 defined model that helps us identify what works in  
8 communities and it might look different in different  
9 communities based on the resources and supports that  
10 are already available and the infrastructure in  
11 communities and how robust is or not and so we're  
12 saying, how do we deliver supports and services in  
13 communities differently as a child welfare agency.

14 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: And these will be based  
15 out of CBOs; is that right?

16 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yeah, that's what  
17 we're thinking, but we would want them to have a  
18 storefront kind of setup in communities... [crosstalk]

19 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Something... but... but... and  
20 it may be groups that do preventive services or  
21 foster care or EarlyLearn... [crosstalk]

22 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Or not.

23 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: or not...

24 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes.

25

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2 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: right; it would be  
3 something that could open... [crosstalk]

4 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yeah.

5 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: to... if the RFP goes out,  
6 it wouldn't necessarily be that you... [interpose]

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes.

8 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: you have to, but  
9 assuming... it wouldn't be ACS workers...

10 COMMISSIONER CARRION: We would not be  
11 delivering the service in the first instance. They  
12 might be referred to a service that we fund; they  
13 might be referred to a Beacon; to a Cornerstone, you  
14 know, DYCD program; they might be referred to the  
15 Department of Health and their family centers; it's  
16 how do we leverage the resources in the community.

17 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: It in some ways reminds  
18 me of the Homebase model that DHS has been doing...  
19 [crosstalk]

20 COMMISSIONER CARRION: If Steve copying  
21 again?

22 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: I'm sorry.

23 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Is Steve copying  
24 me again?

25

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2 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Right. Right. But no,  
3 this has been for a long time, you know since 2005 or  
4 so that Homebase has had, you know storefronts  
5 providing an array of services that are not, you know  
6 that are aimed at front door primary prevention  
7 issues.

8 So that's very exciting. So not all 18.6  
9 is going towards that; is that right?

10 COMMISSIONER CARRION: It's 1.5; right?

11 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Oh okay. The rest is  
12 then going to... [interpose]

13 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes.

14 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: additional preventive  
15 slots...

16 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Increasing  
17 preventive slots, yes.

18 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: And is that... those slots  
19 are going to be evidence-based; is that right?

20 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes, some of them  
21 will be evidence-based; we're looking to expand our  
22 evidence-based intervention, particularly working  
23 with young children, but we will be expanding our  
24 evidence-based and we're looking at those  
25 interventions that are yielding good results for us.

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2 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: And can you explain a  
3 little bit about what differentiates evidence-based  
4 models from general models?

5 COMMISSIONER CARRION: An evidence-based  
6 model is supported by research and it's based on the  
7 science of what works and there is a developer and we  
8 call them evidence-based models because there's been  
9 evaluations that show the efficacy of the model in  
10 getting results and addressing a particular challenge  
11 issue that's presented and so there is support in an  
12 evaluation that says this works.

13 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: And then in terms of  
14 cost, is there a specific cost per slot for evidence-  
15 based or does it change depending on which model it  
16 is?

17 COMMISSIONER CARRION: It changes  
18 depending on the model, but there is a cost for each  
19 slot, even for general.

20 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Right.

21 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yeah.

22 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: It's different though  
23 for evidence-based than for general... [crosstalk]

24 COMMISSIONER CARRION: It is different.

25 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: it's more expensive?



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2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: It could be more  
3 expensive; right? Yeah, it is more expensive..

4 [crosstalk]

5 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Not necessarily a bad  
6 thing **[inaudible]**.

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: No. No.

8 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Okay and that's...  
9 ultimately ACS' goal within the preventive system --  
10 and I actually intend to have a hearing about  
11 preventive services later in the fall so we could get  
12 into it more there, but is to maintain a certain  
13 amount of a certain amount of general preventive  
14 slots within the system; not turn it all over to  
15 evidence-based; is that right?

16 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes. Yeah.

17 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: I wanna turn it over to  
18 my colleague, Vanessa Gibson for questions; then I'm  
19 gonna **[inaudible]** some more.

20 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Sure.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you. Thank  
22 you so much, Chair Levin, Chair Cabrera, Chair Cumbo.  
23 Good afternoon, Commissioner; good to see you today.  
24 I just have one big broad question. I appreciate all  
25 the work that ACS is really doing around addressing

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2 many of our youth aging out of the foster care  
3 system; I am a huge fan of supportive housing for  
4 youth, to allow them to integrate into long-term  
5 housing with supportive services, so I wanted to  
6 understand a little bit more of what the agency does  
7 and the level of support. Chair Levin and Chair  
8 Mathieu Eugene, several months ago, we were able to  
9 have a really innovative program here where we  
10 invited foster care youth to come to us here in the  
11 City Council and shadow council members for the day  
12 and they gave us a lot of insight on what their  
13 everyday life is about. And so I wanted to  
14 understand when a youth ages out of foster care I  
15 know there is a housing shelter allowance, I know  
16 there are proposals in Albany to try to raise that  
17 allowance, right, from \$300 to something that's more  
18 reasonable in 2016, but I wanted to find out, in  
19 addition to the arrangement and set-asides we have  
20 with the Housing Authority, what other options are  
21 out there for youth to transform into long-term  
22 housing, but also with that, obviously the  
23 expectation for our youth to be fully independent is  
24 really dependant on their ability to get a job and to  
25 get into school and to continue to live life and not

3 necessarily always be associated with being a foster  
4 care child. So could you just expand a little bit on  
5 what the agency is doing and what level of support  
6 we're providing for many of the youth aging out of  
foster care?

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Absolutely and  
8 I'll introduce my Deputy Commissioner for foster  
9 care, but I will tell you that you'll hear the things  
10 that we're doing and I think that we're on our way  
11 and we're doing a lot of the things we need to do,  
12 but it's not enough; I will tell you that and I will  
13 open with telling you that we need to do much more..

14 [crosstalk]

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: 'Kay [sic].

16 JULIE FARBER: Hi, Julie Farber, Deputy  
17 Commissioner, Family Permanency Services. Thank you  
18 for your questions.

19 This population of young people that are  
20 aging out of foster care are incredibly important to  
21 us and as the Commissioner mentioned, there's a  
22 tremendous amount of work happening, but still a lot  
23 more that we need to do. We're extremely pleased to  
24 be able to reinstitute the discharge grants and I  
25 think, as the Commissioner mentioned earlier, the

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2 thing that's also important to remember is that we're  
3 working very closely with these young people at [sic]  
4 our foster care agencies are when they are getting  
5 ready to leave care to ensure that they have housing,  
6 whether it's housing with NYCHA, housing with NY/NY  
7 III Supportive Housing if they have mental health  
8 issues, housing with a relative, housing with a  
9 roommate, and so there is a huge book of work that is  
10 happening around that and tremendous attention to  
11 that issue and I think the most recent data that I  
12 looked at actually, there's been a pretty significant  
13 decline in the number and proportion of young people  
14 that have aged out of foster care that are entering  
15 the shelter system, so I think some of that work is  
16 going well.

17 To your question about employment, it's  
18 so important, right; we were talking earlier about  
19 the efforts that we're making around both our  
20 coordination with the DOE, as well as programs that  
21 we have with CUNY and with the Hilton Foundation;  
22 there's some... [crosstalk]

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Uhm-hm. Right.

24 JULIE FARBER: really important  
25 initiatives that we're working around education, but

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2 you know, employment, employment, employment and so  
3 we just recently launched a new Office of Employment  
4 and Workforce Development Initiatives specifically to  
5 work with young people in both the foster care and  
6 juvenile justice systems to improve their employment  
7 outcomes; we have a lot going there. I can say a  
8 little more if you'd like... [crosstalk]

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: 'Kay. Okay,  
10 great. [crosstalk, background comments] Okay, great.  
11 So recognizing that, like NYCHA, for instance, has a  
12 policy, so we can't really encourage roommates,  
13 because you know NYCHA has its own policy and you  
14 know, dealing with some of the guidelines. So what  
15 I'd like to ask is; are you thinking about working  
16 with maybe HRA; we have a lot of rental subsidy  
17 programs for targeted communities -- domestic  
18 violence victims, veterans -- is it possible because  
19 of the large number of young people aging out that we  
20 could really look at having something dedicated for  
21 youth aging out of the foster care system, 'cause  
22 \$300 is nothing to live on and you know, I don't want  
23 to allow many of our young people to really fall into  
24 the shelter system; I mean obviously the challenges

25

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2 we face there, it would be great if we had more solid  
3 avenues for these young people.

4 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So let me share  
5 with you that we have a housing subsidy -- in  
6 addition to the \$300 housing subsidy that we are  
7 trying very hard to get the legislature to increase,  
8 we have the ability to provide up to \$10,000 over a  
9 three-year period, if I recall, \$10,000 in housing  
10 assistance for a young person aging out of foster  
11 care; that allows for a one-time \$1800, if I  
12 remember, one-time... [interpose]

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: \$1800 payment  
14 [sic]? Okay.

15 [bell]

16 COMMISSIONER CARRION: and then over a  
17 three-year period we can expend up to \$10,000 in  
18 supporting their... for housing stability that could go  
19 to pay for arrears, for first month deposit...  
20 [crosstalk]

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Furniture...

22 COMMISSIONER CARRION: furniture, also we  
23 provide... [crosstalk, background comments]

24 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Furniture, right.  
25

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2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: provide furniture,  
3 but we partner with HRA -- we partner with HRA to  
4 access their subsidies, right... [crosstalk]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay.

6 COMMISSIONER CARRION: their one-time  
7 shot...

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Right.

9 COMMISSIONER CARRION: so that we... we  
10 have worked out with HRA where our young people can  
11 go there first, access their housing support grants  
12 and then still leverage our dollars to be able to  
13 carve out the necessary dollars they need to secure  
14 housing. The housing subsidy bill that's in the  
15 state legislature, and there are a couple, also  
16 contains a provision to allow for a roommate, which  
17 we think is the way that other young people...

18 [crosstalk]

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay.

20 COMMISSIONER CARRION: do in the City of  
21 New York; why limit that ability. But as I said to  
22 you, so we do have... that we also, with HRA, have an  
23 office that's dedicated at HRA where just our young  
24 people aging out of foster care go to, so they don't  
25 have to navigate the HRA system, there is an office

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3 for them dedicated, with staff trained to know how to  
4 work with our young people and we think that's  
5 important for the experience that they have with  
6 navigating HRA. But the housing options for our  
7 young people are limited because they're not seen  
8 necessarily as a designated priority in all the  
9 housing possibilities. Now in the Mayor's housing  
10 plan, he has designated youth aging out of foster  
11 care as a priority population, so they're included in  
12 the City's housing plan, but they're not included  
13 necessarily in any of the state housing programs as a  
designated priority for supportive housing.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay. Thank you;  
15 did you wanna...

16 JULIE FARBER: I was just gonna say that  
17 I, you know, completely agree that housing is an  
18 issue where you know we would welcome more dedicated  
19 resources for youth aging out of foster care.

20 But to your point earlier about  
21 employment, I also just wanted to mention that we  
22 have a great partnership with DYCD where we have just  
23 issued a joint RFP and launched a new program, the  
24 Young Adult Internship Program, it's called YAIP  
25 Plus, right, so there's regular YAIP, so this is a



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3 special YAIP for youth in the foster care and  
4 juvenile justice systems to provide them with  
5 internship opportunities and then you know, further  
6 educational opportunities and planning for careers.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you. I  
8 appreciate all the information; my time is up, but I  
9 will say that, you know it sounds like you recognize  
10 the importance of prioritizing youth aging out of  
11 foster care, as I do too, and we are more than happy  
12 to help with your efforts and also with pushing the  
13 legislation in Albany before they leave next month,  
14 and then a lot of the initiatives and partnerships  
15 you have, please share it with the City Council; we  
16 have such an outlet through our constituent groups  
17 and others where we can really get this information  
18 out -- community boards -- so that many residents  
19 understand what's out there and what's available and  
20 that we are at least recognizing the importance of  
21 this very, very unique population and my  
22 conversations with potential development  
23 opportunities I always say, youth aging out of foster  
24 care, but their responses; we don't have the tax  
25 credits and other incentives to drive it. We're  
going to change that conversation and be able to

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2 offer something so that we can stimulate a different  
3 conversation and recognizing how important it is to  
4 provide long-term housing for youth aging out of  
5 foster care. So I thank you all and I wanna thank  
6 all of our chairs for allowing me to go past my time.  
7 Thank you.

8 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: Commissioner, I need  
9 to come back to the consolidation of the two  
10 detention centers, I neglected to ask you a question  
11 that I think is quite important. How are we gonna  
12 address the issues related to distance? As I  
13 understand, the young people who are... they go to a  
14 particular detention center is dependant upon how  
15 close they live to home, right, so if you're from the  
16 Bronx you're gonna go to Horizon; if you're in  
17 Brooklyn and so forth you go... so are there gonna be  
18 special provisions made, I mean people are gonna be  
19 coming from Brooklyn, Staten Island, to the Bronx,  
20 we're gonna have longer visiting hours; how is that  
21 gonna... [interpose]

22 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yeah.

23 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: What is that gonna  
24 look like?

25

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2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So Felipe is gonna  
3 personally -- no. We will always, I mean visiting is  
4 very important and so if we have to extend visiting  
5 hours, we will extend visiting hours; if we have to  
6 provide transportation for families to come to the  
7 Bronx, we will provide transportation... [interpose]

8 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: Okay.

9 COMMISSIONER CARRION: this will not  
10 negatively impact the ability of families to visit  
11 children.

12 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: I'm happy to hear  
13 about the transportation, because I know for some of  
14 them that that may be an issue and the accommodations  
15 that are gonna be required, 'cause it is quite a  
16 distance and so I'm very happy to hear about that.

17 Something that is very dear to my heart  
18 that Council Member Jumaane Williams and myself got  
19 started here through one of the initiatives, was the  
20 Cure Violence anti-gun violence initiative; the  
21 Council allocated \$250,000 to ACS to bring violence  
22 interrupters to non-secure placement facilities; can  
23 you provide us a status update on how the five  
24 organizations are doing?

25

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2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes. I understand  
3 they're doing well and Felipe will provide you with  
4 some details, Felipe, on Cure Violence.

5 FELIPE FRANCO: Yeah, I think it's  
6 important to clarify that the work begins in our  
7 sites, including detention, in Horizon and Crossroads  
8 and follows the young person into placement, if that  
9 is actually the case, that they get adjudicated, but  
10 actually, our ultimate goal, and I believe you have  
11 seen some of this in the Cure Violence provider in  
12 your district, is to provide the support when the  
13 young people come back home. So we, in a way, from a  
14 public health perspective, we are trying to identify  
15 youth that actually have histories of gang  
16 affiliation and gun violence; we wanna kind of  
17 inoculate them and be ready for them when they go  
18 home to have disrupters or interrupters available to  
19 make sure that they don't have to go back to their  
20 old ways. So our approach is really kind of grounded  
21 and having weekly support meetings and kind of  
22 creating a positive peer culture around these young  
23 people who used to be part of negative peer cultures,  
24 but now we embed it in the Cure Violence sites.

25

2 We began in the Bronx and my  
3 understanding is that we have a weekly meeting; I've  
4 only been to one of them, with about six or seven  
5 kids at any one moment; some of them actually had to  
6 attend those meetings as part of their aftercare;  
7 many of them continue to be part of the culture  
8 provided by Good Shepherd just because they like it  
9 and they wanna be there in a positive environment.  
10 We actually are doing really good work with GOSO in  
11 East Harlem and GMAC [sic] in Brooklyn and in Staten  
12 Island, so just beginning to kind of come together.  
13 Actually, as of yesterday we were looking at  
14 additional training that the Cure Violence provider  
15 staff needs around motivational interviewing and  
16 group development that actually can be provided now  
17 through **[inaudible]**.

18 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: Fantastic. And I know  
19 we had several meetings throughout the last year --  
20 was it last year or this year, it's starting to mesh  
21 together -- regarding the whole mentorship piece and  
22 I think this is a good strategy to use to cure  
23 violence.

24 I wanted to ask you; what would it cost  
25 for a full year; would it be... what are we talking

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2 about, half-a-million or because it's a full year is  
3 it gonna cost more; is there like economy [sic] of  
4 scales here...? [crosstalk]

5 FELIPE FRANCO: I mean I think the... Yeah,  
6 I mean there are two things that we have identified  
7 -- GAP [sic], again is a new program, so we don't  
8 have enough data to show anything besides  
9 implementation success. But something is going on, I  
10 mean the credible messengers [sic] that Cure Violence  
11 providers have have done something that is hard to do  
12 with our kids; they have connected to them with very  
13 strong respect and actually, these kids wanna be part  
14 of it. So based on our [inaudible] experience, we  
15 believe that actually this is a promising model that  
16 actually a lot of people should be interested and  
17 provide a grounded neighborhood-based support by  
18 folks who have been in those same experiences, maybe  
19 10-20 years before. I think the two things that  
20 actually we [inaudible] we look at geography; we have  
21 some spots in the city that actually are known to  
22 have a lot of our clients and also known for gun  
23 violence where we don't have a provider, so I think  
24 if we work to plan together and figure out a way of  
25 finding a Cure Violence site, for example, in Far

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2 Rockaway, where we don't have one, I think that would  
3 be a good place to **[inaudible]**... [crosstalk]

4 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: But in terms... Maybe I  
5 didn't catch it, but in terms of how much would it  
6 cost us to do year-long? Right now it's costing us  
7 -- what is it, \$250,000... [crosstalk]

8 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Fifty...

9 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: for... [crosstalk]

10 FELIPE FRANCO: Yeah, for... for six  
11 months.

12 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: six months; would it  
13 be half-a-million for the year or?

14 FELIPE FRANCO: At least; possibly more...  
15 [crosstalk]

16 JULIE FARBER: Yes.

17 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: Or probably more.  
18 Okay... [crosstalk]

19 JULIE FARBER: Yeah.

20 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: And I know that we had  
21 you know in my district, and with your tremendous  
22 help, we started that pilot mentoring program; then  
23 you applied to... I was so happy that you took that,  
24 you applied at the federal level and you were  
25 successful in getting \$3 million from the federal

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2 government; can you give us an update on that; where  
3 are we at; have we received the funding yet or is  
4 this... when do we expect to get it started and what it  
5 would look like...? [crosstalk]

6 FELIPE FRANCO: To be honest, I'm not  
7 clear about what federal grant you're talking about.

8 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: The \$3 million that  
9 you received from the fed... It was \$3 million that you  
10 [background comments]... am I...

11 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Which... Which...

12 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: It was \$3 mil... You had  
13 applied for a federal grant and ended up receiving...  
14 wasn't it \$3 million for mentoring?

15 FELIPE FRANCO: We... I mean...

16 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: Did I...

17 FELIPE FRANCO: no, we haven't.

18 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: Okay.

19 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yeah, **[inaudible]**  
20 look at that.

21 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: Maybe I'm prophesize  
22 to your guys [sic].

23 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yeah. Hopefully.

24 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: Okay, so we could  
25 follow up with that... [crosstalk]



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2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yeah, we'll follow  
3 up.

4 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: Okay, good; I was  
5 under the impression that you have received \$3  
6 million; maybe it's time to apply this and there's \$3  
7 million sitting there somewhere... [crosstalk]

8 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Oh, probably.  
9 Yeah.

10 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: What other steps are  
11 you taking to ensure that this program -- getting  
12 back to the Cure Violence -- will continue; do you  
13 need any other support as of right now; do you see  
14 that it's kind of self-standing because you're  
15 working with tremendous groups like Good Shepherd  
16 that are doing tremendous work; do you find that you  
17 need extra support from ACS to be able to quantify  
18 what's happening? What other support **[inaudible]**...  
19 [crosstalk]

20 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So one of...

21 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: ACS has to bring in?

22 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So one of the  
23 things that has already come... that we've come to  
24 understand is that we need some additional training  
25 for the program, but with our Work Institute we're

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2 able to do that and provide that training. I'm sure  
3 that we'll probably need additional support to be  
4 able to do an evaluation of the program; that's  
5 always really important; we think it's a promising  
6 practice and so we would need to... One of the things  
7 that we think would be important is to evaluate the  
8 program; it looks like it's a promising practice; we  
9 would like it to be evidence-based and so I think  
10 that we would need additional resources to be able to  
11 do an evaluation and to be able to capture the data  
12 to be able to do that evaluation.

13 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: And does that [sic]  
14 initial resources would look like in terms of  
15 funding?

16 FELIPE FRANCO: I mean I think we should  
17 have a conversation with folks who are evaluating  
18 Cure Violence, because we are adopting an  
19 intervention that is actually ecologically based on  
20 doing... changing the neighborhood to target a group of  
21 kids who are at high risk; I know that folks at John  
22 Jay and you know, Jeffrey Butts, who's doing the Cure  
23 Violence evaluation with the City Council would love  
24 to look into this. I got a call as of two days ago  
25 from Chicago, because they have been doing Cure

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2 Violence, but they have never thought about using it  
3 as an aftercare component, so I think there's a lot  
4 of promise in what we're doing, I mean in New York  
5 City and across the nation, but we don't have the  
6 date, we've just begun **[inaudible]**... [crosstalk]

7 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: But is it in this  
8 budget; would it be included.. are you looking to have  
9 extra funding in this budget for all these pieces...?  
10 [crosstalk]

11 FELIPE FRANCO: I think it would be wise..  
12 I think it would be wise to have an evaluator come on  
13 board sooner rather than later, so even if we aren't  
14 ready for an evaluation, to start doing the  
15 implementation aspect of it.

16 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: Okay. So I..  
17 [interpose]

18 COMMISSIONER CARRION: And John Jay would  
19 probably be a good partner to do that.

20 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: And have you had  
21 discussion with our people in the Council to  
22 negotiate that piece within the budget...? [crosstalk]

23 COMMISSIONER CARRION: No, we really  
24 haven't.

25

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2 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: Okay, I think that  
3 will be... [crosstalk]

4 FELIPE FRANCO: But we will.

5 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: it'd be good to do it  
6 sooner than later... [crosstalk]

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes.

8 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: that'll be great,  
9 fantastic. Alright, thank you so much; I'll turn it  
10 over to Council Member and Chair Cumbo.

11 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Thank you, Chair  
12 Cabrera. Just wanted to follow up on Council Member  
13 Vanessa Gibson's questions in terms of housing. A  
14 thought it and didn't know if you had put it together  
15 in this way, but with the closing of some of your  
16 juvenile justice centers and some of the facilities  
17 closing, had there been any thought about utilizing  
18 those particular closures as a space or a place to  
19 recreate, reimagine and to build housing there,  
20 particularly maybe dormitory style housing for young  
21 people aging out of foster care? I know when I went  
22 to college, when you're on a campus you have a dorm,  
23 you have rooms, you have an RA and someone to manage  
24 the whole -- you know you do need that extra level of  
25 support; even when you're on a college campus,

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2 oftentimes with a family, with parents, you still  
3 need that extra level of support. Was there any  
4 thought about how those facilities could be utilized,  
5 since they're already within the City's portfolio, to  
6 transition them to housing?

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So to your point,  
8 Councilwoman, Spofford is being redesigned for and  
9 including supportive housing is my understand. So  
10 we're actually having... you know part of the  
11 consolidation, we're not sure yet whether or not we  
12 will have a site that we won't need; I mean if Raise  
13 the Age passes, we would need to have that capacity.  
14 But your idea of really looking at what are the  
15 possibilities of creating housing specifically for  
16 this population and designed to meet their needs I  
17 think is an important one. We're not a housing  
18 agency, so we need to partner with other agencies in  
19 the city that do that. You know it's very curious  
20 that child welfare, both within the city and within  
21 the state is the only agency that doesn't have a  
22 separate allocation for housing for their population.  
23 At the state level for instance, the Office of Mental  
24 Health, the OTDA, the Department of OASIS, all have  
25 set-asides to provide housing for their populations

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2 and the special needs and in fact, in the Medicaid  
3 Redesign there is funding for housing and all the  
4 populations were included except ours. So in the  
5 conversations for supportive housing and affordable  
6 housing, the needs of young people aging out of  
7 foster care have never been included.

8 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: I'm glad you brought  
9 that to my attention; I think that you know the time  
10 is certainly now with those cost savings by  
11 consolidating or no longer utilizing or needing  
12 certain facilities; I recognize that we're waiting to  
13 see if the legislation is gonna pass, but I would  
14 hope that we can work together to see to it that  
15 we're able to build the type of housing that young  
16 people could have; not only housing, but also the  
17 ability to have supportive staff there to assist with  
18 their needs, their educational, their employment  
19 needs, family needs, those sorts of things that they  
20 have somebody there to assist, because I know from  
21 the council members, when we shadowed with the young  
22 people aging out of foster care, you know they  
23 mentioned that often a lot of their housing comes  
24 within a lot of the NYCHA developments, in areas that  
25 they're unfamiliar with, there's no supportive staff

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2 there for them and it may not necessarily be where  
3 they wanna live and some of the apartments they also  
4 spoke of were not up to par or were not safe; the  
5 person that shadowed me for a day said that there  
6 wasn't even a lock on the door in the particular  
7 housing that she was assigned to, so I just wanted to  
8 add the importance of that.

9           Wanted to also ask you a question; do you  
10 have an understanding of the number of young people  
11 that are in your portfolio that participate in summer  
12 youth programming and/or the SONYC after-school age  
13 summer camp slots?

14           COMMISSIONER CARRION: We do, I think we  
15 do. We have our own set-aside from DYCD to serve our  
16 population. We also work very closely with every  
17 provider to make sure that they apply, you know, that  
18 they have young.. [crosstalk]

19           CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Yeah.

20           COMMISSIONER CARRION: young people apply  
21 and ACS has its own summer internship program..

22           CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Okay.

23           COMMISSIONER CARRION: both for college  
24 students within the agency and we also have one for..  
25 a site for summer youth employment, so.. oh, so we

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2 have... we have completed 120 juvenile justice SYEP  
3 applications to date. So we do have set-asides and  
4 we work really hard to make sure that young people  
5 have a summer job and a summer experience, so in our  
6 college program, where we've had about 100 young  
7 people participate in our summer internship program.

8 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Okay.

9 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yeah.

10 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: What about the SONYC,  
11 because I'm imagining -- now that I'm understanding  
12 what that number looks like -- we understand now that  
13 the administration is cutting 34,000 slots of summer  
14 camp for middle school age students and I don't know  
15 how that's going to affect young people in foster  
16 care or maybe perhaps young people in group homes  
17 that you may oversee; what their options are going to  
18 be for summer, because that was a free summer option  
19 for them.. [crosstalk]

20 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So...

21 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: and on \$700 a month, on  
22 average, you're not gonna be able to afford a camp in  
23 the City of New York.

24

25



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2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Right. So we... oh,  
3 we have a million dollar SONYC grant for juvenile  
4 justice.

5 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: What does that mean?

6 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Felipe, what does  
7 that mean? Oh that's right. So we have a  
8 partnership with DYCD for SONYC programs, for after-  
9 school programs in our facilities, just... [crosstalk]

10 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Over the summer or after  
11 school...? [crosstalk]

12 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Year-long, it's a  
13 year-long program that we negotiated with DYCD to do  
14 a set-aside for our young people and so we did an RFP  
15 for a million dollars for services and they're  
16 actually already providing services in our program.

17 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: I see. I just wanted  
18 to... 'cause I know we were looking at the numbers,  
19 from the Local Law 49 that we passed in 2014, for  
20 youths 17 and older in high school who are on the  
21 path to graduate, we found the number to be 23.3  
22 percent. So we've gotta make sure that we continue  
23 to work towards getting that number substantially  
24 higher, particularly with the opportunities for young  
25 people to go off to college and to have that

2 particular experience and to have that support, but  
3 did want it to be noted for the record that that's  
4 what the number is right now.

5           So in closing, I just have one final  
6 question; we talked about it previously. I just have  
7 to take my council member hat off and just have to  
8 ask, because it's too important of an issue for me to  
9 get not the clarity of understanding that I need. So  
10 next year is gonna be my last year of my first term,  
11 so every year it's starting to become a thing that we  
12 have the press conference and the rally around pay  
13 parody and women's issues and what the EarlyLearn  
14 versus the UPK -- it's starting to become like an  
15 annual event, right, and it's something that I can't  
16 understand why right now I feel that next year we're  
17 gonna be having the event again and we're gonna be  
18 having the rally again and it's gonna be a movement;  
19 soon we'll have tee shirts and a color and signs. So  
20 I can't understand from your answer why we can't make  
21 progress on this particular contract negotiation when  
22 so many of the other ones have been resolved; why  
23 don't we have clarity; what are the conversations  
24 that you're urging with OMB on this particular issue;  
25 why can't we have particularly those women, women of

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2 color, who are the majority of this workforce; why  
3 can't we bring them up to the level of equality as  
4 their UPK counterparts? I just... I don't understand  
5 it and perhaps I'm not savvy enough or haven't been  
6 in the Council enough to understand the contract  
7 negotiations and how it all works, but are we gonna  
8 be in this position again next year; is that a  
9 likelihood or are we gonna solve this issue, because  
10 I would imagine if we don't solve it in the next  
11 couple of weeks and the budget passes, out of my own  
12 naiveness, we might be back here again next year or  
13 maybe there's something, obviously I hope that you  
14 know that I don't know that says, oh it could still  
15 be resolved in July or -- break it down for me.

16 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Well I hope... I  
17 wish I had answers for you, Councilwoman; I am  
18 hopeful and I know that the Mayor has a commitment to  
19 ensure that all children have quality early education  
20 opportunities and that we have a stable system. I  
21 don't have the answers for you; many, many other  
22 parties are involved in these conversations, but I am  
23 hopeful that there will be a resolution; it is  
24 important to have a resolution to make sure that my  
25 system is stable, that our programs are able to

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2 provide the quality services, that they have the  
3 staff they need to provide the services. So I join  
4 with you in wanting this to be resolved to ensure  
5 that we have the best system from 0-4 in the country  
6 and I know that the Mayor shares that commitment;  
7 I've had these conversations with the Mayor and he's  
8 been very supportive; he understands the importance  
9 of providing quality early childhood opportunities  
10 for all of our children and so I'm hopeful, and maybe  
11 I'm as naïve as you, having been just two years in  
12 this job also, but I am hopeful and I think that  
13 everyone is aware of what the situation is and what  
14 is at risk here and everybody is working very  
15 diligently to have a resolution.

16 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: I too share in that; I  
17 feel a strong level of embarrassment in terms of our  
18 inability to be able to provide answers for that  
19 particular workforce and when we look our children,  
20 ages 0-4, the most vulnerable in our country -- well  
21 just vulnerable all over the world; I mean that's the  
22 age group that needs the most support; that's the  
23 staffing that needs all of the support that they can  
24 possible garner; that's the same staffing that can't  
25 really afford to run up and down the steps of City

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2 Hall every day and to bring children out of the  
3 centers and to have them stand on the steps of City  
4 Hall; they do it, but they really don't have the  
5 ability to function in that way as maybe some other  
6 groups do, because they're caretakers for small  
7 children. So you know I feel that because they don't  
8 have the ability to stand out there and have big  
9 rallies and to bring children forward on a regular  
10 and continuous basis that they are being left out of  
11 the negotiation process or just kind of pushed along  
12 to next time, next time and at the same time we're  
13 eroding their educational experience and making it  
14 very difficult for our EarlyLearn teachers, who are  
15 professionals with advance degrees, to not be able to  
16 afford to provide proper care for themselves as well  
17 as their own families. So as chair of the Women's  
18 Issues Committee, I can't imagine coming back to have  
19 this same question written in these packets again  
20 about where are we with pay parity, I just...

21 [interpose]

22 COMMISSIONER CARRION: I agree with that;  
23 I don't wanna be back here having this **[inaudible]**...

24 [crosstalk]

25

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2 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: We need to move on to  
3 some new business...

4 COMMISSIONER CARRION: I agree.

5 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: and some new issues and  
6 some new challenges.

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Well you know,  
8 Councilwoman, you've been an excellent advocate on  
9 behalf of these programs and the workforce and we  
10 appreciate that.

11 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Thank you. The advocacy  
12 will be felt in the pockets, so I'll accept that  
13 compliment when our EarlyLearn teachers can say that  
14 they are equal with their UPK providers and that they  
15 are receiving all of the resources that they need to  
16 do their job at the highest level possible. Thank  
17 you.

18 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Thank you.

19 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you, Chair Cumbo.  
20 Commissioner, I just have a couple more questions and  
21 then we'll let you go. Couple things came up in  
22 anticipation of our preliminary budget hearing and I  
23 didn't get to ask at the time and I wanna make sure  
24 that we ask them on the record.  
25

2 One thing that came up from some legal  
3 services providers that represent families, you know  
4 that are in the ACS system, has to do with family  
5 visiting, the experience of family visiting, you know  
6 as part of the family unification process and  
7 obstacles that parents face in that process. Has ACS  
8 identified any issues that you believe may be able to  
9 be addressed perhaps with additional resources;  
10 that's something that kind of came to us during our  
11 budget roundtable.

12 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes, and as you  
13 saw, Julie ran up to share what we're doing in that  
14 space [sic].

15 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: 'Kay.

16 JULIE FARBER: So family visiting is  
17 critical and it's actually the first item in our  
18 foster care strategic blueprint, because research  
19 shows that the amount of time that kids and family  
20 visit is directly related to reunification outcomes  
21 and so we have a family visiting unit at ACS and that  
22 unit actually just completely revamped the training  
23 on the family visiting policy, 'cause this is complex  
24 work, right; these children have been removed because  
25 of protective issues..

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2 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Yep.

3 JULIE FARBER: and so it's complex to  
4 determine the appropriate nature, frequency, type,  
5 location, supervision level of these visits...

6 [crosstalk]

7 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Right.

8 JULIE FARBER: and so we've completely  
9 revamped the training and our team is now providing  
10 that training on-site at all 27 foster care agencies,  
11 and so we're really emphasizing that work, as it's  
12 extremely important to reunification outcomes.

13 COMMISSIONER CARRION: And so in  
14 addition, we're actually looking at cases to see how  
15 long it takes to move from supervised visitation to  
16 unsupervised visitation and we're tracking that  
17 information, we're tracking the visiting, we're  
18 tracking the movement from how long is it taking and  
19 if we don't see that it's moving, those cases are  
20 evaluated and assessed -- what's happening here; why  
21 haven't we progressed in the visitation.

22 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Have you sought or  
23 received any feedback from legal services providers  
24 about issues that they've identified, you know

25



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2 because they're looking at it from obviously a  
3 different perspective as **[inaudible]**... [crosstalk]

4 COMMISSIONER CARRION: No, they actually  
5 sit on a workgroup with us.

6 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Okay.

7 JULIE FARBER: In terms of the training?  
8 Oh... Oh... [crosstalk]

9 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Yeah, of the training  
10 and other logistically obstacles... [crosstalk]

11 JULIE FARBER: Yeah. Yes.

12 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: that they come across.

13 JULIE FARBER: We interact on a daily  
14 basis with the legal services providers and the  
15 Commissioner is referencing that the Commissioner has  
16 launched these workgroups with the advocates where  
17 there's intensive conversation and then on a daily  
18 basis my colleague, who's the head of FCLS, Family  
19 Court Legal Services, Alan Sputz and I are in regular  
20 contact with the legal offices almost every day about  
21 feedback on individual cases...

22 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Okay.

23 JULIE FARBER: and systems issues. They  
24 also did have a big role in reviewing the family  
25

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2 visiting training, 'cause their perspective is  
3 critical.

4 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Right. The issue that  
5 they brought up, if I can remember correctly; this  
6 was a couple months ago, is having to do with  
7 requirements for supervised visits...

8 JULIE FARBER: Yeah.

9 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: whether or not they're  
10 able to...

11 JULIE FARBER: Yeah.

12 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: at times when, you know,  
13 they should be able to move towards unsupervised  
14 visits... [crosstalk]

15 JULIE FARBER: Right.

16 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: **[inaudible]**... [crosstalk]

17 JULIE FARBER: That's right and that's  
18 something...

19 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: getting somebody to  
20 supervise I think also if a supervised visit is  
21 required.

22 JULIE FARBER: That's right and that's  
23 something that we're looking at and we're also  
24 working on having more what they call visit hosts, so  
25 those are community members that can help to

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2 supervise visits, which is, you know different than  
3 an ACS or a foster care agency staff person  
4 supervising a visit... [crosstalk]

5 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Right.

6 JULIE FARBER: 'cause that has a more  
7 natural and community feel to it...

8 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Yep.

9 JULIE FARBER: But you know, there is  
10 complexity in making these decisions and you know we  
11 have to consider... [crosstalk]

12 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: The safety of the child.

13 JULIE FARBER: safety and... and...  
14 [crosstalk]

15 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yeah.

16 JULIE FARBER: **[inaudible]**...

17 COMMISSIONER CARRION: But what is  
18 important to know is that they've been part of the  
19 conversation.

20 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Great.

21 JULIE FARBER: Very much so.

22 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you. Thank you.  
23 Let's see, I want to ask about child care vouchers,  
24 non-mandated vouchers, so the -- sorry, I'm moving  
25 back and forth here -- the SCCF vouchers. Can you

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2 provide us with a level, the number of children that  
3 are enrolled in that program right now...? [crosstalk]

4 COMMISSIONER CARRION: 1700 is my  
5 recollection.

6 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Okay. So we're at 1700...

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes we are.

8 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: that is the sustainable  
9 level at...

10 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Currently the  
11 resources that we have.

12 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: for FY16, but right now,  
13 FY17... the Executive Budget has... I think there's a  
14 little bit of a shortfall, because there was some not  
15 baselined; is that right? The Council funding, money  
16 the Council added last year.

17 SUSAN NUCCIO: The Council added...

18 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Four...

19 SUSAN NUCCIO: \$12 point... the City has  
20 12.6 and the Council added 4.4... [interpose]

21 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Right.

22 SUSAN NUCCIO: right, which that total  
23 supports 1700... [crosstalk]

24 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: teen... Right. Okay.

25 And when a child ages out of an SCCF voucher, how

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2 long does it take to then recycle that voucher or how  
3 does that... and how is that also relating with  
4 Priority 5 and if a child ages out of Priority 5,  
5 then how long does it... does that then convert to an  
6 SCCF voucher or does that... or is it... the next... that..  
7 that is... that aged out child, that voucher then goes  
8 away; is that right?

9 JILL KRAUS: So they're two separate pots  
10 of money, the SCCF... [crosstalk]

11 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Right.

12 JILL KRAUS: vouchers are City tax levy  
13 funded dollars only; the Priority 5 vouchers are CCBG  
14 funded.

15 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Sorry; can you speak a  
16 little bit closer to the mic?

17 JILL KRAUS: Sure.

18 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Okay, thanks.

19 JILL KRAUS: The Priority 5 vouchers are  
20 CCBG funded...

21 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Uh-huh.

22 JILL KRAUS: and the SCCF vouchers are  
23 City tax levy funded, so it's two entirely separate  
24 pots of money... [crosstalk]

25

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2 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Got it. So when a  
3 Priority 5 family or child ages out, that can then go  
4 with block grant funding that then... there's a new  
5 space that opens up for the next in line for P5; is  
6 that right?

7 JILL KRAUS: No.

8 JULIE FARBER: So... [background comments]  
9 So when they age out, they age out and on the SCCF  
10 side, those vouchers, children are allowed to -- not  
11 on the SCCF side, I'm sorry, but on the kind of  
12 regular voucher side, children age out; they can hold  
13 the voucher up until the age of 13...

14 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Right.

15 JULIE FARBER: or up until the age of 18  
16 if they're special needs.

17 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Okay. But if...  
18 [background comment] I'm sorry, but if a child ages  
19 out at 13 that has a Priority 5 voucher, there's  
20 other families that qualify for block grant vouchers  
21 under Priority 5 that are... it's a separate waiting  
22 list; is that right or is it... [crosstalk]

23 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes, it's a  
24 separate waiting list.

25

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2 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Separating waiting list.

3 And a spot then opens up on the Priority 5 waiting  
4 list?

5 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes.

6 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Right. Okay.

7 Similarly, when a SCCF voucher, when a child ages out  
8 of that, a spot then opens up for the next child on  
9 the waiting list.

10 COMMISSIONER CARRION: That's right.

11 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Do you know how... I mean  
12 I don't know if we've really approached that  
13 situation yet because it took a while to ramp up to  
14 the full... [crosstalk]

15 COMMISSIONER CARRION: How long would it  
16 take to refill that slot is what you're asking?

17 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Right, how long does it  
18 take?

19 JULIE FARBER: We have a wait list, so  
20 the process is pretty quick of, you know, moving a  
21 child off a wait list to receiving a voucher when  
22 there is an opening.

23 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Is it a manner of  
24 months or weeks?

25 JULIE FARBER: No, it's a matter of days.

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2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Days.

3 JULIE FARBER: Yeah.

4 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Okay, so then it's  
5 actually good to know that there is a wait list now  
6 because it took a while obviously to get the system  
7 back up and running. Do you know how many children  
8 are on the wait list right now? Probably not a lot  
9 [sic].

10 JULIE FARBER: It's about 24,000.

11 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: That have re...

12 COMMISSIONER CARRION: No, in to... that's  
13 the total.

14 JULIE FARBER: That's the total.

15 COMMISSIONER CARRION: That's the total  
16 wait list.

17 JULIE FARBER: Oh I'm sorry. Yeah, that  
18 is the total wait list on the vouchers; not for... not  
19 specifically for SCCF.

20 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Okay, so that would be  
21 the total wait list for P5 and SCCF?

22 JULIE FARBER: Correct.

23 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Any non-mandated  
24 voucher, 'cause a mandated voucher is...

25 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Right.



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2 JULIE FARBER: Correct.

3 [background comments]

4 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Okay. Okay, so 24..  
5 that's a much bigger number than I was expecting.  
6 Those are... that's a wait list of people that have  
7 registered in the last couple of years, since SCCF  
8 has been up and running, which is two budget years.

9 JULIE FARBER: Right. So you'll recall  
10 that last year, when we first rolled out SCCF we went  
11 through a wait list that had been pretty static for  
12 quite some time...

13 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Right.

14 JULIE FARBER: the process of going  
15 through that wait list, many of those children had  
16 already aged out, did not need care, but word got out  
17 in the community that ACS was issuing vouchers and so  
18 we saw that wait list just grow.

19 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: I see. Okay, 'cause I  
20 had thought since you went through that process of  
21 going through the wait list and essentially culling  
22 the wait list that then it would have shrunk  
23 significantly, but then it... you've gotten a lot more  
24 applications [inaudible]... [crosstalk]

25 JULIE FARBER: Yes.

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2 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Okay, that's very good  
3 to know. What's the process for parents getting  
4 their children on the wait list; how do they go about  
5 doing that? If it's not through a public assistance  
6 case, 'cause they're not eligible for... [crosstalk]

7 JILL KRAUS: That's right, there is an  
8 application; they just have to apply for care;  
9 there's an application on our website and...

10 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: On ACS' website?

11 JILL KRAUS: Uhm-hm.

12 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Okay, so it's not... Okay  
13 and it's not through a public assistance process...  
14 [crosstalk]

15 JILL KRAUS: No. No.

16 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Okay.

17 JULIE FARBER: And it's not until... you  
18 know they fill out a very short form application and  
19 it's not until there is an opening that they actually  
20 fill out an eligibility application and we accept  
21 eligibility at that time.

22 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: And how long... I'm sorry,  
23 how many... is there a rate of how many children per  
24 month are aging out? Is that a... do you have...  
25 [crosstalk]

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2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Do you wanna know  
3 how fast the list moves?

4 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Yeah, I'm just getting a  
5 sense of what the... you know, what's the rate of...  
6 [background comments]

7 JULIE FARBER: We'll have to get back to  
8 you on that **[inaudible]**... [crosstalk]

9 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yeah, the turnover  
10 rate is what you're interested in. Yeah.

11 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Yeah.

12 JULIE FARBER: I mean for the most part,  
13 because you age out at age 13, you know, kids stay on  
14 it for quite some time.

15 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Right. Right. Right.  
16 Okay. Let me see if there's... oh. I'm going to just  
17 touch on this very briefly, because it's not  
18 necessarily the appropriate hearing to do this, but  
19 on the DOI report, are there any budgetary impacts  
20 that you see in FY17 that are a result of  
21 recommendations that ACS has accepted from the DOI  
22 report; is there a budgetary impact that you can  
23 quantify?

24

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2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So this budget  
3 does include initiatives that we're taking that  
4 address the recommendations made in the DOI report.

5 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Okay and that would be  
6 reflected in the new needs..

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes.

8 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: some of the new needs  
9 **[inaudible]**... [crosstalk]

10 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes, particularly  
11 those around monitoring and enhancing our staff for  
12 monitoring and also, even some of the past  
13 initiatives, for instance, the technology, we're  
14 doing.. on the child welfare side for our child  
15 protective workers we're doing a dashboard which is  
16 very important for them to be able to have the  
17 information on their caseload right on their computer  
18 screen; we're also doing a risk assessment tool for  
19 them so that they could see what high-risk families  
20 are on the caseloads; we're increasing staff ad  
21 that's reflected in the new needs. So there are  
22 several of the new needs that respond directly to the  
23 recommendations that were made by DOI.

24 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Okay. I think at some  
25 point in the coming months we should probably

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2 reconvene a hearing on child protective services,  
3 just to get an update, a little bit more in-depth  
4 about the initiatives that ACS has been laying out  
5 and we could kind of address some of the issues in  
6 the DOI report **[inaudible]**... [crosstalk]

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Sure.

8 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: The Head Start audit  
9 from last year from the federal government; has there  
10 been any update -- I just haven't heard anything  
11 since **[inaudible]**... [crosstalk]

12 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So we completed  
13 all the items that were in the audit successfully; in  
14 fact we've had two other audits -- they're doing a  
15 cycle of audits and we just had one recently that was  
16 completed and it appears that we did well, so there  
17 have been no other issues that have been identified.

18 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Okay. And that's been  
19 an ongoing dialogue?

20 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yeah.

21 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Okay.

22 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yeah.

23 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Okay. And then one last  
24 question, I'm sorry, about the vouchers, I'm sorry,  
25 just to be clear. Do we have a sense of how many... I

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2 asked about the SCCF, the rate of aging out of SCCF;  
3 do we have an assessment of the rate of aging out of  
4 Priority 5 vouchers?

5 COMMISSIONER CARRION: No; we'll get back  
6 to you with a number.

7 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Okay. Okay. Thank you  
8 very much, Commissioner. Thank you everybody.  
9 There's probably gonna be additional questions, but  
10 being that it's 10 to 5... oh sorry, I wanna  
11 acknowledge Council Member Barron has joined us. I'm  
12 sorry; do you have any questions? And then do my co-  
13 chairs have any other questions? So I think there  
14 may be some additional questions that we didn't get  
15 to that we'll send up in a follow-up letter. One  
16 issue just on that point is that, and we mentioned  
17 this to Commissioner Banks as well, that if it's  
18 possible to get a fairly quick response to those  
19 questions, because they're subject to... there are  
20 gonna be issues that are gonna be addressed in our  
21 budget negotiations, so we would probably need to  
22 have those answers so that we can talk about it for  
23 adoption.

24 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Certainly.

25

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2 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: And also, additional  
3 meetings that you've committed to with regard to  
4 EarlyLearn as well.

5 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Oh sure.

6 CO-CHAIR LEVIN: Okay, this concludes our  
7 hearing today; I'm speaking on behalf of Chair  
8 Julissa Ferreras of the Finance Committee. The  
9 Finance Committee will resume Executive Budget  
10 hearings for FY17 tomorrow, Friday, May 13th, 2016 at  
11 10 a.m. in this room. Tomorrow the Finance Committee  
12 will hear from the Department of Sanitation, the Law  
13 Department, the Board of Elections, the Campaign  
14 Finance Board, and the Department of Citywide  
15 Administrative Services.

16 As a reminder, the public will be invited  
17 to testify on Tuesday, May 24th, the last day of  
18 budget hearings, at approximately 3 p.m. in this  
19 room; that is Tuesday, May 24th, the last day of the  
20 budget hearings, at approximately 3 p.m. in this  
21 room. For any member of the public who wishes to  
22 testify but cannot make it to the hearing, you can  
23 email your testimony to the Finance Division at  
24 FinanceTestimony@Council.NYC.gov; that is

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2 COMMITTEE ON JUVENILE JUSTICE 328

3 FinanceTestimony, one word, @Council.NYC.gov, and the  
staff will make it part of the official record.

4 I wanna thank you all very much for your  
5 attendance today; this hearing is now adjourned.

6 [gavel]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date June 9, 2016